Negotiating Nature:
Ecology, Politics, and Nomadism in the Forests of Mediterranean Anatolia, 1870-1920

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The intellectual content of this dissertation, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education apart from those of the specified dual or joint degree program. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

Negotiating Nature: Ecology, Politics, and Nomadism
in the Forests of Mediterranean Anatolia, 1870-1920

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at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University
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This dissertation examines the politics of forestry in the context of late Ottoman Mediterranean Anatolia. Exploring the power struggles among forest officials, timber traders, and Tahtacı communities, this study discusses how modern forestry practices were negotiated at the local level. In the nineteenth century, in order to gain more effective control over forests, the Ottoman government introduced a series of reforms in the name of "scientific forestry." In the implementation of these reforms not only did opposing interests clash at the central level but local interest groups involved in regional trade networks also appeared as influential actors. On the one hand, negotiations between officials and traders undermined "scientific forestry" as a high modernist ideal. On the other hand, this complex network constituted an integral part of Ottoman modern forestry practices and prevailing power struggles. Despite fragmented interests within the administration as well as various obstacles officials encountered in monitoring forests, the new forestry practices brought about a dramatic transformation of the countryside. Most importantly, increasing pressure on forests and forest-dependent communities due to intensified commercialization caused an overexploitation of nature and labor. Focusing on the changing subsistence strategies of Tahtacı communities in the Taurus Mountains, this study investigates the impact of these changes on the hill societies of Mediterranean Anatolia.

72,300 words

Özet

Doğayı Müzakere Etmek: Akdeniz Anadolusu Ormanlarında
Ekoloji, Politika ve Göçerlik, 1870-1920

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Bu tez Osmanlı son döneminde Akdeniz Anadolusu bağlamında orman politikalarını incelemektedir. Orman memurları, kereste tüccarları ve Tahtacılar arasındaki iktidar mücadelelerine odaklanan bu çalışma, modern orman pratiklerinin yerel düzeyde nasıl müzakere edildiğini ele almaktadır. Osmanlı hükümeti, on dokuzuncu yüzyılda ormanlar üzerinde daha etkin bir denetim sağlamak amacıyla "fennî ormancılık" adına bazı reformları gündemine aldı. Bu reformlar hayata geçirilirken, merkezî düzeydeki çıkar çatışmalarının yanında, bölgesel ticaret ağlarına eklemlenmiş yerel çıkar grupları da etkin birer aktör olarak ortaya çıktı. Memurlar ve tüccarlar arasındaki müzakere süreçleri, bir yandan, yüksek modernist bir ideal olarak "fennî ormancılık"ın altını oydu. Diğer yandan, bu karmaşık ilişkiler ağı, Osmanlı modern ormancılık pratiklerinin ve hâkim iktidar ilişkilerinin ayrılmaz bir parçasını oluşturdu. İdare bünyesindeki iktidar mücadelelerine ve yerel düzeyde ormanların denetimini zora sokan engellere rağmen, yeni ormancılık pratikleri Osmanlı kırsalında köklü bir dönüşüm yarattı. En önemlisi, artan ticarileşmeyle birlikte ormanlar ve ormana bağlı topluluklar üzerindeki baskının derinleşmesi, doğa ve emeğin yoğun sömürüsünü beraberinde getirdi. Bu çalışma, Toros dağlarındaki Tahtacı toplulukların değişen geçim stratejileri üzerinden, bu dönüşümün Akdeniz Anadolusu dağ toplulukları üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir.

72.300 kelime

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To my daughter Ayşe

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1

Introduction

Wood has played a pivotal role throughout history. In various forms, such as firewood, charcoal, pellets, chips, and sawdust, it is the first and still one of the most widely-used fuels. Being the construction material of shelters, houses, mills, wells, bridges, and canals and the raw material of paper, furniture, and various tools such as weapons, ships, the first submarines and airplanes, musical instruments, and sports equipment, wood has been an indispensable part of human life for centuries.[1]

Being such a crucial resource, the struggle over the control of wood has been one of the central focuses of rivalries among human communities. In modern times, this struggle has not only intensified but also took a novel form. Increasing demand for timber at local and global levels, the intensification of commercial forestry, and the implementation of modern natural resource management techniques designed to control forested areas and forest products brought about dramatic transformations in the countryside. Focusing on the relations among forest-dependent communities, timber traders, and forest bureaucrats in the Taurus region, this study depicts the power struggles over forests under these new conditions.

1 For a long-term history of the interaction between wood and humans, see Joachim Radkau, *Wood: A History*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

Although not simultaneously and not in the same way, the subsistence strategies of almost all forest-dependent communities in the Taurus region have been influenced by the aforementioned processes. Among these communities, this study concentrates on the Tahtacıs, literally "woodmen," a semi-nomadic community specialized in lumbering in the Taurus Mountains. By examining the changing survival strategies of the Tahtacıs, I explore the interrelationship between the forest-dependent communities of Mediterranean Anatolia and their geographical, social, and political environment in an era of intensified globalization.[2] I evaluate the adaptive strategies of Tahtacı communities within the scope of changing ecological conditions of the region,[3] the expectations of the world economy in the late nineteenth century,[4] and in relation to these ecological and economic factors, Ottoman administrative practices designed to increase the political capacity of the government in the countryside in order to more strictly control the natural resources. My research covers the period starting in the 1870s, when, due to continuous wars, the end of the Little Ice Age, and increasing demand for wheat and cotton, the landscape, economy, and social composition of Mediterranean Anatolia was radically altered. Furthermore, in this period, modern Ottoman scientific forestry management was institutionalized, which was a turning point for rural populations, including the Tahtacıs.

This study not only analyzes the changing adaptation strategies of the Tahtacıs but also offers a new perspective that posits peripatetic groups within

2 See David Held et al., *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

3 See Faruk Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550–1870: A Geohistorical Approach* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

4 On the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy in the nineteenth century, see Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914: A Book of Readings* (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1966); Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: Methuen, 1987); Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Huri İslamoğlu, ed., *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

a broader context of the environmental and social history of the Mediterranean in the late nineteenth century. Even though these craftsmen were significant since the services and goods provided by them were vital for other nomadic communities and for sedentary people living in towns and villages, they have received little attention from historians, sociologists, and anthropologists focusing on Turkey. To a large extent, the surveys on nomadic communities in Anatolia are restricted to pastoral nomads. By illustrating the flexibility of the Ottoman government in dealing with the nomadism issue as well as the diversity of the strategies that mobile communities developed, this illuminating literature provides insight into discussions of a sedentary-nomad divide.[5] However, it remains incapable of reflecting the strategies of non-pastoral groups. Similarly, the current literature on craftsmen concentrates on settled craftsmen who are organized in formal networks.[6] Nomadic craftsmen and service providers deprived of these networks are not present in these studies.

By studying the Tahtacıs, one of the largest peripatetic groups of the Taurus region - about 150,000 people according to an official report prepared in 1918,[7] - this study reveals the contribution of these communities to the imperial economy and depicts a more dynamic, interactive image of daily life in the

5 Some examples include Andrew Gordon Gould, "Pashas And Brigands: Ottoman Provincial Reform and Its Impact on the Nomadic Tribes of Southern Anatolia, 1840-1885" (PhD diss., University of California, 1973); Meltem Toksöz, "The Çukurova: From Nomadic Life to Commercial Agriculture, 1800-1908" (PhD diss., Binghamton University 2000); Yonca Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studiess* 42 (2006): 469-491; Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

6 See Donald Quataert, ed., *Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500-1950* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994); Suraiya Faroqhi, *Artisans of Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople Under the Ottomans* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

7 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918]; BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 54/34, n.d. The total population of this region (Aydın province, Adana province, and coastal subprovinces of Konya province) in 1914 was about 3 million. See Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 170-187.

Ottoman countryside. It also develops an alternative perspective by pulling so-called marginal groups into the center of the history.[8]

It should be noted in advance that this study deals with the Tahtacıs neither as passive victims of state policies and local interest groups nor as authentic, self-marginalized communities resisting these by their nature. Both approaches tend to see these groups as closed, non-adaptive people with a frozen culture representing an "anomaly." By looking at these communities from a marginal-mainstream duality paradigm, both are likely to make the concrete motives behind "othering" discourses invisible. What is needed instead is concrete research at the local level, focusing on their economic role and the prevailing power relations by moving beyond the dichotomy of resistance and compliance. The Tahtacıs were one of the rural segments usually seen as distinct and unmarriageable by other local people.[9] However, they were not "marginal" but an integral part of the Mediterranean world, as they were the experts on the Taurus forests and the foremost providers of timber in the region, which constantly brought them "in touch" with other communities via their products and networks. Like nomads who traveled with their herds,[10] they were not disconnected from economic developments in the world and adapted their survival strategies according to changing conditions.

In this period, as a result of the intensification of commercial forestry, Tahtacı communities became more dependent on timber merchants than ever before. These merchants gave the Tahtacıs advances in pay, food, and other provisions with heavy interest rates, which drove them into chronic debt starting in the 1850s. In these circumstances, the Tahtacıs had to accept bad working conditions imposed by the merchants. This bonded labor and their specialized expertise made the nineteenth century the "golden age" of timber

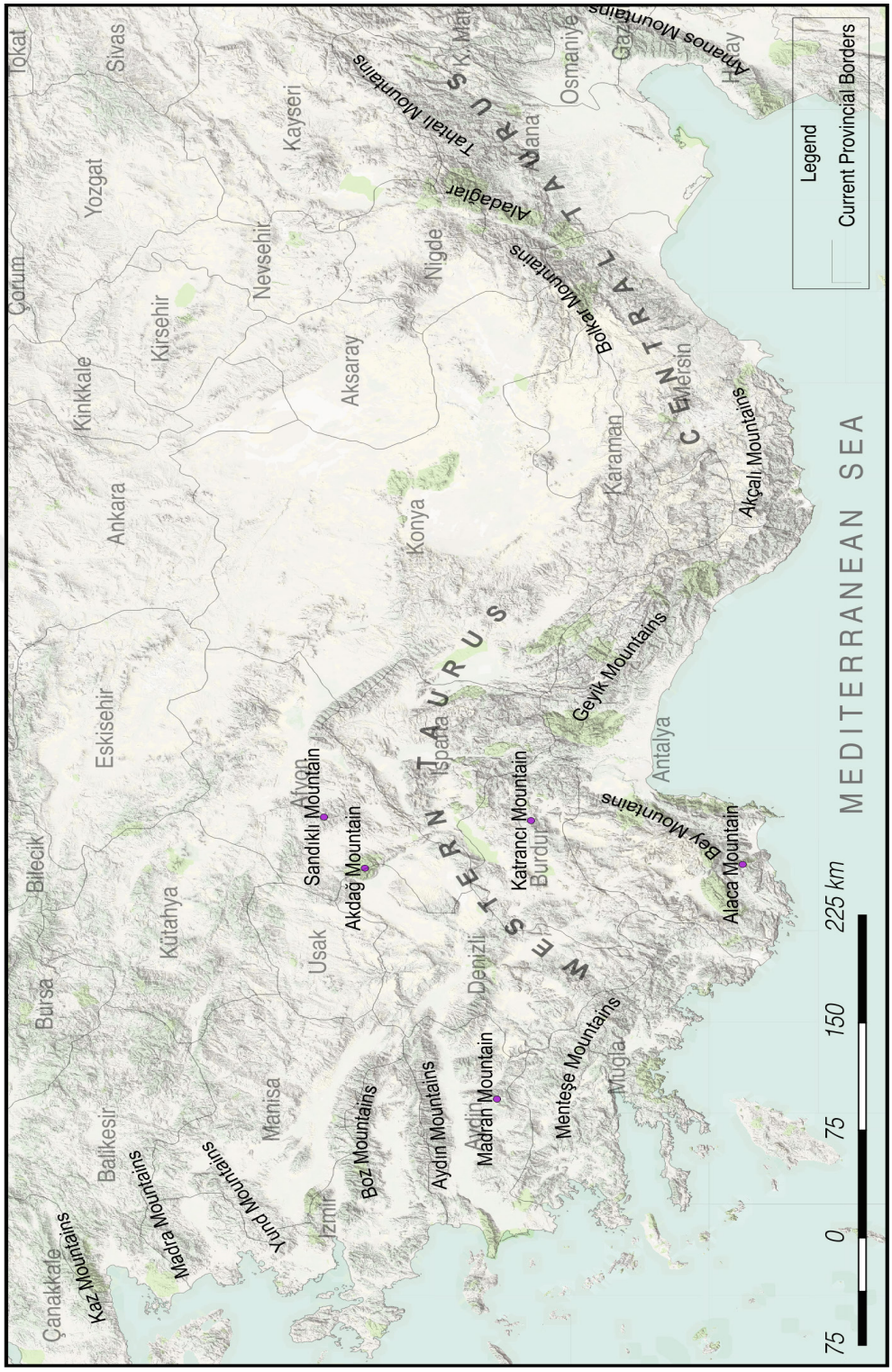
8 See also Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems, and Annemarie Cottaar, *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups: A Socio-Historical Approach* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

9 Leyla Neyzi, "Beyond 'Tradition' and 'Resistance': Kinship and Economic Development in Mediterranean Turkey" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1991), 73.

10 Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*; Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Anatoly Khazanov and Andre Wink, eds., *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001).

trade in the Mediterranean region.[11] In the same period, the Tahtacıs also had to cope with new taxes and military conscription enforced by the central state. In these challenging new conditions, the Tahtacı communities found novel ways to survive. By developing a highly flexible range of strategies, they struggled to cope with the impositions of local notables and penetration of the administration.

11 See. J. R. McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 248. For "debt bondage" and "bonded labor," see Dale W. Tomich, "The 'Second Slavery': Bonded Labor and the Transformations of the Nineteenth-Century World Economy," in *Rethinking the Nineteenth Century: Movements and Contradictions*, ed. F. O. Ramirez (New York: Greenwood, 1988), 103-117; Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999); Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf et al., eds., *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th-21st Century)* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2016).



Map 1.1 Major Mountains in the Mediterranean Anatolia (Made with QGIS)

§ 1.1 Narratives on the Tahtacı Communities

The central question in current scholarship on the Tahtacıs is the ethnic origin of these communities. Western missionaries and researchers who visited Anatolia in the late Ottoman and early Republican eras claimed that the Tahtacıs were the descendants of ancient communities of Anatolia, whereas the trend in state and academic discourses in Turkey stressed the Turkishness and Central Asian roots of the Tahtacı communities.

Toward the turn of the nineteenth century, Felix von Luschan, an Austrian doctor and anthropologist, conducted the first fieldwork among Tahtacı groups as a part of his ethnographic survey of local communities in the Teke region, also known as Lycia. As a classical nineteenth-century researcher, Luschan made a comparative craniometric study, which was at the time thought to be the most reliable method of classifying human communities. Luschan measured the skulls of Tahtacıs in order to "prove" their pre-Greek, Anatolian origin.[12]

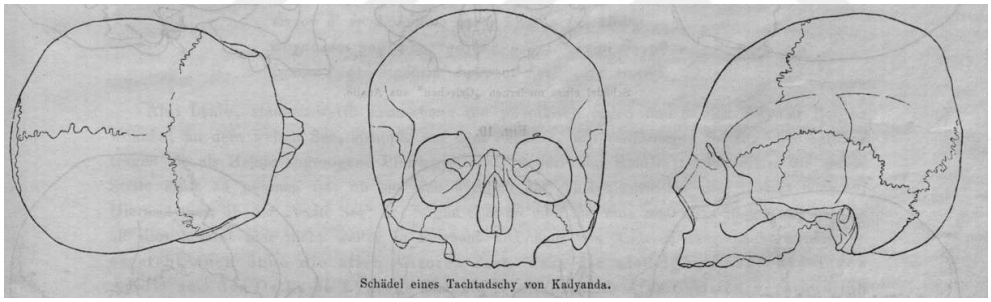


Figure 1.1 Illustration of a "typical" Tahtacı skull made by Felix von Luschan, 1891[13]

In the same vein, based on his investigations in Anatolia in the 1880s, Theodore Bent, an English archaeologist, argued that the religion of the Tahtacıs

12 Eugen Petersen and Felix von Luschan, *Reisen in Lykien, Milyas und Kibyratis* (Wien: C. Gerold, 1889); Felix von Luschan, *The Early Inhabitants of Western Asia* (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1911).

13 Felix von Luschan, "Die Tachtadschy und Andere Überreste der Alten Bevölkerung Lykiens," *Archiv für Anthropologie* 19 (1891): 45.

exemplified "a half-formed or decayed form of Christianity."[14] According to Bent, nearly all nomads along the southern coasts of Anatolia, including the Tahtacıs, had a "secret religion," which meant that their religious practices differentiated them from Sunni Muslims even though they were considered Muslims.[15]

These researchers were influenced by the assumptions of American Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. In the mid-nineteenth century, communities called *Kızılbaş* (redheads), including the Tahtacıs, aroused the interest of these missionaries. Ottoman authorities had used the label *Kızılbaş* in order to designate communities that were considered the descendants of those who supported the Safavids against the Ottoman state in the sixteenth century.[16] The Ottomans widely used the term *Kızılbaş,* which ascribed pejorative meanings such as disloyalty and immorality, until they shifted to an assimilation policy in the early twentieth century designed to include these groups within the Sunni Islam doctrine.[17] From that time on, both officials and the communities themselves widely used the term Alevi, which has, in Dressler's expression, "an integrative aim, softening the strong connotations of political disloyalty and religious sectarianism associated with the label Kızılbaş."[18] It is a dominant trend in nationalist discourses to identify Alevism with Turkish-speaking communities, though communities that are called Alevi do not constitute a homogenous population but consist of ethnically diverse groups that are different from each other in terms of their languages as well as religious practices. Today, Tahtacıs are considered one of the subgroups of the Alevi population. On the other hand, they have unique practices and organizational characteristics that differentiate them from other Alevi groups. Tahtacıs are attached to two religious hearths *(ocak)*, which are identified only

14 Theodore Bent, "The Yourouks of Asia Minor," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 20 (1891): 270.

15 ibid., 269.

16 See Halil İnalcık, "The Yörüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," *CEDRUS: The Journal of MCRI* 2 (2014): 471.

17 See Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-28.

18 ibid., 276.

with their community and do not involve any other segments of the Alevi population.[19]

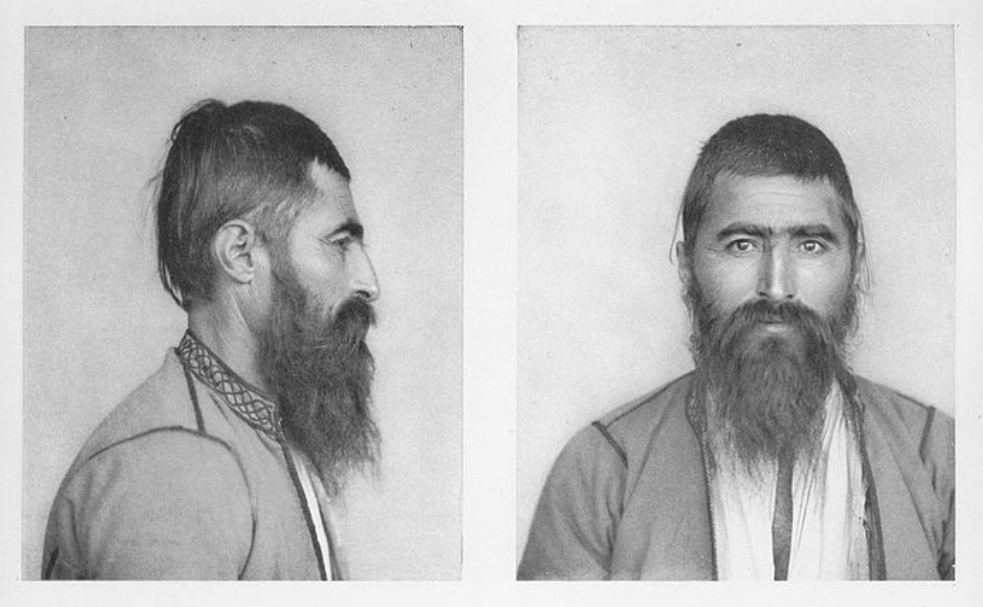


Figure 1.2 A Tahtacı man in Luschan's study published in 1884[20]

The missionaries of the nineteenth century thought that these communities were more prone to conversion compared to Sunni communities. By emphasizing religious practices similar to those of the Pagans and Christians, they claimed that the ancestors of these non-Sunni groups were ancient Anatolian communities.[21] English historian and archaeologist F. W. Hasluck differed from earlier researchers and missionaries in his emphasis of the variations within Islam and problematized the assumption that divergence from Orthodox Islam was an indication of conversion from Christianity. On the other

19 One is Hacıemirli Ocak, located in Reşadiye, Aydın. It is believed that the founder *(pir)* of this hearth was İbrahim Baba, whose shrine is in Islahiye, Gaziantep. The other is Yanyatır Ocak, located in what is now Narlıdere, Izmir. According to the Tahtacıs, Durhasan Dede, whose shrine is situated in Ceyhan, Adana, founded this hearth.

20 Petersen and von Luschan, Figure XXXII.

21 Ayfer Karakaya Stump, "Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008), 9.

hand, he did not reject the possibility that Tahtacı groups had Christian and ancient Anatolian roots. By stressing the interactions between religious communities, he identified the Tahtacıs as a "heterodox" tribe that predominantly practiced in the line with the Shia sect of Islam and embraced certain Christian elements.[22]

The rise of Turkish nationalism among the Ottoman elites led to the emergence of a novel discourse on non-Sunni groups. After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) of the Young Turks, that gained power in 1908, attempted to develop a demographic, social engineering policy based on Turkish nationalism mixed with some Islamic elements.[23] Within this framework, these communities became a concern for the government both as a threat against their nation-building project given their assumed relations with Western foreigners and as the ideal reference point of "pure" and "real" Turks. In 1914, the committee appointed Baha Said to research Alevi groups in Anatolia. During his fieldwork, he was fascinated by the religious practices of these communities. According to Baha Said, Alevis had preserved their Central Asian roots, unlike other Turkish communities that had been degenerated by mingling and mixing with other ethnic groups.[24]

In 1918, as a part of the same agenda and upon the request of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,[25] Niyazi Bey[26] was appointed to write a report on the Tahtacıs, who were considered a subgroup of the Alevi community. The report

22 F. W. Hasluck, "Heterodox Tribes of Asia Minor," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 51 (1921): 310-342.

23 See also Erik J. Zürcher, "Demographic Engineering, State Building and the Army - The Ottoman Empire and the First World War," in *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 530-544; Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

24 See Nejat Birdoğan, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik Bektaşilik Araştırması (Baha Sait Bey)* (Istanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 1994).

25 BOA, DH.ŞFR, 87/350, 19 Şaban 1336 [30 May 1918]; BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 38/13, 30 Mayıs 334 [30 May 1918].

26 In 1918, Niyazi Bey was the vice-principal of Adana High School *(Mekteb-i Sultanî)*. For a biography of Niyazi Bey, see Serdar Sarısır, *İttihat ve Terakki Dönemi Tahtacı Araştırmaları: Niyazi Bey ve Adana Bölgesi Tahtacıları* (Konya: Kömen, 2012).

of Niyazi Bey[27] not only includes information on Tahtacı villages; the plateaus and forests they exploited; their occupations, religious practices, family structure, and inheritance norms; and some thoughts on their ethnic origin, but also reflects on the political ruptures and continuities that characterized the nation-building project of the CUP. During the turbulent years of the Balkan Wars and World War I, Turkish and Muslim identities became intermingled in official language that it was impossible to distinguish them. This was a reflection of the ongoing struggle to form a new ideological hegemony among intellectuals and the officials. This ambivalence can also be seen throughout the report of Niyazi Bey.

Since the sixteenth century, Kızılbaş groups had been perceived as a threat to the central authority and Sunni communities. As discussed in Chapter 6, after the introduction of compulsory military service, a group of Tahtacıs obtained Iranian passports from the diplomatic missions of Iran in the empire and claimed continued exemption from military duty. Iranian passport-holding Tahtacı groups were considered to be an indication that political links with Iranian officials still existed. Niyazi Bey addressed this issue in his report, too. In his fieldwork, he attempted to explore whether the Tahtacıs identified themselves as *Acem* (Iranian), and spoke any language other than Turkish. He stated in his report that the Tahtacı communities just spoke Turkish and regarded the expression *Acem* to be an insult.[28]

In his report, Niyazi Bey also emphasized the close relations of non-Muslim timber traders with the Tahtacıs. Describing these networks as a potential threat to the state, he tried to ascertain the level of interaction of Tahtacıs with these people. Niyazi Bey also criticized the claims of missionaries that the Tahtacıs were not Turkish but the descendants of Christian and Pagan communities of Anatolia. Niyazi Bey argued that the language, traditions, migration routes, and clans of the Tahtacıs indicate their Turkish origin. Like Turkmen tribes in the lowlands that were involved in agriculture and those in higher altitudes engaged in stockbreeding, Tahtacı Turks, Niyazi Bey wrote, were like "islets scattered to this vast Turkmen sea." According to him, the

27 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918]; BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 54/34, n.d.

28 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

Tahtacıs were from the same "Turkish race" as other Turkmens but differed from the majority as they belonged to a distinct religious sect of Islam.[29]

The report of Niyazi Bey is an important first attempt to describe the Tahtacıs as a "pure" example of Turkishness. As an indication of the rupture in official ideology, Niyazi Bey defines the Tahtacıs within the circle of Islam, not as a threat to the Muslim community. This approach remained the dominant framework for academic study on Tahtacı communities since then.

In the early Republican era, when Turkish nationalism gained more secular overtones, the political leaders and intelligentsia engaged more closely with non-Sunni communities. Like Hasluck, secular elites of the Republic described the religious practices and groups outside of Sunni Islam as heterodox. On the other hand, unlike Western missionaries and travelers and similar to Niyazi Bey, these elites identified these groups as "heirs of an idealized Central Asian Turkish culture, religion, and nation."[30] This discourse was functional as it employed both the creation of a "national religion" purified from Sunni Islamic elements and the assimilation of these communities into the newly invented Turkish identity. Throughout the following decades, Alevi identity was also widely accepted as a pure example of Turkishness by these communities.

In this context, the Tahtacıs as a Turkish-speaking "heterodox" community became a romantic element that played a key role in the construction of Turkish identity. In the early Republican era, Yusuf Ziya Yörükan conducted research among the Tahtacıs while a member of the Faculty of Theology. His emphasis on the shamanistic roots of the Tahtacı groups, which was also asserted by Niyazi Bey a decade earlier, was in harmony with the official Turkish historiography. He argued that the Tahtacıs were from "a pure Turkmen clan of the Turkish nation," that preserved the pre-Islamic Turkish culture from generation to generation.[31]

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29 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

30 Dressler, 273.

31 Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, *Anadolu'da Alevîler ve Tahtacılar* (Ankara: Ötüken, 2006). This book is based on his articles published in *Dârülfünûn İlâhiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* from 1927 to 1932.

A question discussed in the literature with respect to the ethnic origin of Tahtacı communities is whether the Ağaçeris, literally "men of trees," a Hunnish tribe, were the ancestors of the Tahtacıs of Anatolia. First asserted by Ziya Gökalp,[32] this claim was then advocated by various researchers.[33] Sümer argues that the Ağaçeri Turkmens arrived in Anatolia due to a Mongolian influx and lived in the Maraş and Malatya regions from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. He describes the Ağaçeris both as one of the groups that were encouraged by the Seljuk state to live in this border region to protect against external threats such as those of the Armenian Kingdom and Ayyubid Dynasty and as an armed bandit community that threatened regional trade and the central authority.[34] Stressing their pure origins and furthering the romantic image of a combative past, the representation of the Tahtacıs as an ethnically-unified warrior community functioned as a tool for nation building. This assumption, on the other hand, comprises the perception that the community is a hidden threat, which is rooted in the report of Niyazi Bey.[35]

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32 Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1339 [1923]).

33 See Taha Toros, *Toroslarda Tahtacı Oymakları* (Mersin: Mersin Halkevi, 1938); Abdurrahman Yılmaz, *Tahtacılarda Gelenekler* (Ankara: CHP Halkevleri Yayınları, 1948); Faruk Sümer, "Ağaçeriler," *TTK Belleten* 26, no. 103 (1962): 521-528; Faruk Sümer, "Ağaçeriler," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türk Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 460-461; Murat Küçük, *Horasan'dan İzmir Kıyılarına Cemaat-i Tahtacıyan* (Istanbul: Nefes Yayınları, 1995); Birdoğan.

34 Sümer, "Ağaçeriler," 460-461.

35 It is a commonly accepted methodology in the literature to trace the names of the subgroups of today's Tahtacı communities, such as "Çobanlı," "Evci," "Nacarlı," and "Çaylak," in historical records in order to find out their ethnic "origin" and their earlier occupations. This approach assumes that these communities preserved their group names for centuries. Sümer's studies referring to the sixteenth century-registers exemplify this tendency. See Sümer, "Ağaçeriler," 460-461; Faruk Sümer, "Tahtacılar," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010), 436-437. However, existing data do not allow one to retrace such a continuous lineage. First, as Yörükan also points out in his book on the Tahtacıs, it is common practice for the communities to change their group names. Yörükan, 160. Furthermore, these group names may refer to more heterogeneous communities than often thought. For example, with reference to Yalman's study, Engin underscores that "Evci," which is today considered a subgroup within the Tahtacı community, cannot be identified with Tahtacıs as the name refers to a kind of confederation comprised of various communities, not only Tahtacıs. İsmail Engin,

Parallel with the rise of identity politics, academic interest in Tahtacı communities revived starting in the 1980s. Thanks to the contribution of contemporary researchers, knowledge of the demography, language, and religious practices of the Tahtacıs improved.[36] However, the debates on the community are still restricted to a relatively narrow area. Locating their past in the history of a homogenous Turkish nation is still the most prominent concern of the current literature. Most studies that question the "marginality" of the Tahtacı groups link these communities to other societal groups by defining them as one of the main constituents of the Turkish nation. However, concrete contributions to local and regional societies remain invisible in this approach. This representation pays no attention to actual practices such as their struggles and the subsistence strategies that shaped their culture. All in all, despite the large number of studies, the actual contributions of Tahtacı communities and their interactions with other people are still lacking in the literature.

Unlike the approaches that define the Tahtacıs as a clearly-delineated ethnic group, this study does not intend to determine the distinct origin of the groups known as Tahtacı or a single historical turning point when they began woodwork. Instead, the main concern of this study is to investigate the concrete subsistence practices of the Tahtacıs given the impact of modern, bureaucratic, and highly commercialized forestry. The ecological anthropology literature provides useful conceptual tools that can carry analyses of the

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Tahtacılar: Tahtacı Kimliğine ve Demografisine Giriş (Istanbul: Ant, 1998), 42. By either changing or preserving their group names, it is not a rare situation for peripatetic communities to move as an "attached" group to a wider pastoral community. For example, when discussing the ecological niche of the Basseri, a pastoral nomadic group in Southern Iran, Barth mentions the Ghorbati, an "attached" peripatetic community consisting of nomadic tinkers and smiths. Barth states that this guest population of fifty to sixty tents was an endogamous "despised pariah group" and "their importance to the nomads derives from their usefulness as an alternative source of supply of the utensils and equipment." Fredrik Barth, *Nomads of South Persia: The Basseri Tribe of the Khamsey Confederacy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 92.

36 Some examples are as follows: Krisztina Kehl, *Die Kızılbaş-Aleviten : Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Anatolien* (Berlin: Schwarz, 1988); Küçük; Engin; Ali Selçuk, *Tahtacılar: Mersin Tahtacıları Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, 2 ed. (Istanbul: Yeditepe, 2005); Nilgün Çıblak, *Mersin Tahtacıları - Halkbilimi Araştırmaları* (Ankara: Ürün Yayınları, 2005).

Tahtacıs beyond the dominant, ethno-national fixations and problematize the interrelationship between the Tahtacı communities and their geographical, social, and political environment. The next part presents an overview of these concepts and discusses their possible contributions to the literature.

§ 1.2 An Alternative Tool: Subsistence Strategies

For a long time, studies on nomadic adaptations were predominantly limited to archival and field research on pastoral nomads.[37] In these studies, nomadic craftsmen were ignored or considered to be "social anomalies" or "aberrant cases."[38] From the end of the 1970s onwards, some anthropologists criticized this tendency and offered new tools and perspectives to broaden the analyses of nomadic communities. These anthropologists were inspired by Rada Dyson-Hudson and Neville Dyson-Hudson's emphasis on the need for dynamic models in nomadic studies,[39] Bruce Winterhalder's attempts to connect social behavior and ecological theory,[40] and Fredrik Barth's call for comparative studies of nomadic communities.[41]

Joseph C. Berland was one of the anthropologists who discussed the possible reasons for the disinterest of anthropologists in non-pastoral nomads. According to Berland, many anthropologists "remain satisfied with romantic or pejorative stereotypes based on folklore, cursory information and contact

37 Joseph C. Berland, "Peripatetic Strategies in South Asia: Skills as a Capital among Nomadic Artisans and Entertainers," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 13 (1983): 17.

38 Matt T. Salo and Joseph C. Berland, "Peripatetic Communities: An Introduction," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 21-22 (1986): 1; Berland, 19.

39 Rada Dyson-Hudson and Neville Dyson-Hudson, "Nomadic Pastoralism," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9 (1980): 15-61.

40 Bruce Winterhalder, "Environmental Analysis in Human Evolution and Adaptation Research," *Human Ecology* 8, no. 2 (1980): 135-170.

41 Fredrik Barth, "A General Perspective on Nomad-Sedentary Relations in the Middle-East," in *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in the Wider Society*, ed. Cynthia Nelson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 11-21.

limited to specific settings."[42] He adds that by confining the research on nomadic groups to hunting-gathering and pastoral-herding strategies, "mainstream anthropology has overlooked the most pervasive and widely dispersed of all nomadic activities."[43]

To overcome this weakness, Berland extends the concept of nomadism to include subsistence and market activities beyond the traditional pastoral and hunter-gatherer strategies.[44] He suggests the term "peripatetic" for "spatially mobile, endogamous groups of entertainers, artisans, beggars and peddlers" and describes them as follows:

> By combining a variety of specialized individual skills related to their subsistence activities with spatial mobility, these peripatetic groups exploit human needs as primary resources within socio-ecological systems which often contain pastoralists, agriculturalists and urban-industrial communities.[45]

Berland calls these human socio-ecological resources the "peripatetic niche," which contrasts with the "bio-physiotic niche" exploited by pastoral and agriculturalist groups.[46] With reference to Simmel, Berland emphasizes that like the "inner enemies of Sirius," peripatetics are not seen as "organically connected" members of communities, even though they are constitutive elements of every society.[47] For example, peripatetic groups in South Asia are not considered a part of village economic organization, even though between six to thirty different peripatetic groups visit every village in this vast area annually, providing essential goods and services to sedentary peasants.[48]

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42 Joseph C. Berland, "Paryatan: 'Native' Models of Peripatetic Strategies in Pakistan," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 21/22 (1986): 191.

43 ibid., 189.

44 Joseph C. Berland, "Peripatetic, Pastoralist and Sedentist Interactions in Complex Societies," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 4 (1979): 7.

45 ibid.

46 ibid.

47 Berland, "Paryatan: 'Native' Models of Peripatetic Strategies in Pakistan," 191.

48 ibid., 192.

Another common term to refer to mobile groups that are neither pastoral nomads nor hunter-gatherers is "commercial nomads." Thomas Acton first applied this concept to emphasize their economic activity based on selling goods and services.[49] A further term is "service nomads," which was first mentioned by Robert M. Hayden to describe the nomadic groups in India that supply goods and services to villagers and townspeople.[50] He uses this term because these people do not sell labor but rather their goods and services in order to purchase food. Aparna Rao criticizes Hayden's conceptualization because this term is not valid for people who sell goods but not services. As an alternative, she suggests the term "non-food-producing nomads."[51] Nevertheless she later shifts to the term "peripatetic." According to Rao, the term "non-food-producing nomad" is too restrictive considering that some groups are food-producing one year and non-food-producing the next.[52]

"Symbiotic nomads" is a further term used to identify non-pastoral groups. In a 1978 seminar on Indian nomads, Misra put Indian nomads in three groups: Symbiotic nomads, natural nomads, and hunting-collecting nomads. The first refers to people who sell goods and services to sedentary populations. According to Berland, Misra's categorization fails because all nomadic groups in India establish symbiotic relationships.[53]

There are two common characteristics of peripatetic groups underscored in the aforementioned definitions: Selling several specialized services or products and spatial mobility as survival strategies. As Hayden points out, these groups produce only a small part of their own subsistence needs and are dependent on food produced by sedentary people.[54] Since their cyclical, spatial

49 Aparna Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," in *The Other Nomads: Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Aparna Rao (Köln: Böhlau, 1987), 2.

50 Robert M. Hayden, "The Cultural Ecology of Service Nomads," *The Eastern Anthropologist* 32, no. 4 (1979): 297.

51 Aparna Rao, "Non-Food-Producing Nomads and the Problem of their Classification: The Case of the Ghorbat of Afghanistan," *The Eastern Anthropologist* 35, no. 2 (1982): 115-134.

52 Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," 2.

53 Berland, "Peripatetic Strategies in South Asia: Skills as a Capital among Nomadic Artisans and Entertainers," 25.

54 Hayden, 298, 301.

mobility is structured by the demands of sedentary groups and pastoral nomads,[55] the patterns of migration of peripatetic groups are shaped according to the needs of their customers. Because regularly-maintained relations with agricultural and pastoral groups are vital for peripatetics and because no area can support them permanently, these groups have to choose migration routes that lead them to places where provisions are available.[56] The flexibility to adapt their skills to changing conditions is dependent on this ability, so their patterns of mobility and choice of particular skills, goods, and services are determined according to their expectations with respect to ecological, political, economic, and other factors.[57] In addition to organizational, spatial, and occupational flexibility, their generally low level of spending, use of household labor, and acceptance of narrow profit margins without material and capital accumulation let them exploit marginal opportunities successfully.[58]

It should be noted that travel patterns and levels of mobility and sedentariness are not fixed categories; rather, they depend on various factors. As Salo stresses when talking about the peripatetic groups in the United States,

> travel was never continuous, but varied in extent, frequency and constancy, depending on the resources sought and the constraints affecting access to those resources. Nor was sedentism a fixed state; people who had been associated with a particular place, property or fixed abode, could subsequently take to the roads, living in tents and earning their living while traveling. The potential for mobility seems to be built into social and cultural repertoires; its actualization dependent on situational stimuli."[59]

55 Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," 4.

56 Hayden, 300.

57 Salo and Berland, 3.

58 Sharon Bohn Gmelch, "Groups That Don't Want In: Gypsies and Other Artisan, Trader, and Entertainer Minorities," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15 (1986): 307.

59 Matt T. Salo, "Peripatetic Adaptation in Historical Perspective," *Nomadic Peoples*, no. 21/22 (1986): 31.

Rao emphasizes that "peripatetics" constitute a socio-economic category that includes various ethnic groups speaking different languages and dialects around the world.[60] There is an extensive literature on these groups and their adaptation strategies. Matt T. Salo's study on Irish travelers (tinkers and hawkers), the Romnichel (horse traders, tinkers, traders, basket makers, knife sharpeners, umbrella menders, rat catchers, medicine salesmen, peddlers, and fortunetellers), the Ludar (woodworkers and travelling showmen), and Roma (coppersmiths, horse traders, fortune-tellers, car sellers, fender repairers, blacktoppers, and roofers) in the United States;[61] J. C. Berland's study on the Qalandar (animal trainers and leaders, magicians, acrobats, jugglers, and impersonators), the Kanjar (makers of terracotta toys, carnival-type ride operators, singers, dancers, musicians, and prostitutes), the Jogi (peripatetic snake handlers and potion makers and peddlers), and the Chungar (basket makers and broom weavers) in Pakistan;[62] and Olesen's study on the Sheikh Mohammadi (peddlers) in Afghanistan[63] are just a few.

The literature on peripatetics emerged in the relatively short period of time from the end of the 1970s to the end of 1990s. Since then, this socio-economic conceptualization has not been widely used in academia. A possible reason is the change that the political representation of these groups has undergone in the last decades. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc brought about the neoliberal reconstruction of formerly-socialist, Eastern European countries that had large peripatetic populations. Parallel to the beginning of negotiations of the states for European Union membership, these ethnically-diverse groups came to be considered a European ethnic minority. Along with the Europeanization of these groups[64] from different ethnic origins, it became accepted to identify all as Roma, a peripatetic group of

60 Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," 3.

61 Salo, 7-36.

62 Berland, "Paryatan: 'Native' Models of Peripatetic Strategies in Pakistan," 189-205.

63 Asta Olesen, "Peddling in East Afghanistan: Adaptive Strategies of the Peripatetic Sheikh Mohammadi," in *The Other Nomads: Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Aparna Rao (Köln: Böhlau, 1987).

64 See Huub van Baar, "The European Roma: Minority Representation, Memory and the Limits of Transnational Governmentality" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2011).

Indian origin with a distinct language, Romanes. Roma has become an umbrella term to refer to groups previously known as Gypsy. Due to pejorative meanings attributed to this term,[65] the usage of the term Roma was promptly internalized. Correspondingly, along with the term Gypsy, anthropological concepts that stressed the means of subsistence instead of ethnic identity, such as peripatetics and commercial nomads, fell into disuse. These concepts are also not widely used in the literature on communities considered Gypsy in Turkey. Roux's article on the Tahtacıs in Rao's collection[66] and Yılgür's research on Roma tobacco-workers in Turkey[67] are two rare examples.

However, these concepts are helpful to highlight and explain the ethnical heterogeneity of such itinerant groups. They also have the potential to provide the basis for further discussions in social history. These conceptual tools have already made two important contributions. First, this literature has developed a critical approach toward mainstream anthropology by making "other nomads"[68] and their contributions to society more visible. Second, it offered ethnologists a socioeconomic category that provided new perspectives and themes.

On the other hand, the scope of this literature needs to be widened with further research and discussion. For instance, it remains incapable of histori-

65 For an analysis of the historical roots of the stigmatization of travelling groups in academic and state discourse in Europe, see Leo Lucassen, "A Blind Spot: Migratory and Travelling Groups in Western European Historiography," *International Review of Social History* 38, no. 2 (1993): 209-235; Leo Lucassen, "Eternal Vagrants? State Formation, Migration, and Travelling Groups in Western-Europe, 1350-1914," in *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, ed. Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), 225-251.

66 Jean-Paul Roux, "The Tahtacı of Anatolia," in *The Other Nomads: Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Aparna Rao (Köln: Böhlau, 1987), 229-245.

67 Egemen Yılgür, "Geç-Peripatetik Roman Tütün İşçilerinde Ücretli İstihdam ve Politizasyon Deneyimleri" (PhD diss., Mimar Sinan University, 2014). See also Egemen Yılgür, "Ethnicity, Class and Politicisation: Immigrant Roma Tobacco Workers in Turkey," *Romani Studies* 25, no. 2 (2015): 167-196.

68 Aparna Rao, ed., *The Other Nomads: Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987).

cizing social dimensions. Non-pastoral groups from various geographical areas and periods can be defined as peripatetics if they are not pastoral nomads and not hunter-gatherers. The following quotation from Rao is an example of this tendency. Rao gives some examples of peripatetic communities:

> Nomadic smiths who inhabited or visited the rock shelters of Central India from 6th to 1st centuries B.C.; travelling entertainers in ancient India; musicians and dancers imported and then banished by Sassanian monarch Bahram Gur into Iran; itinerant artisan castes in Central Asia prior to the Genghis Khan era; itinerant singers and beggars in 17th century Ethiopian society; mobile communities of artisans, pedlars and entertainers in Europe from the 15th century onwards.[69]

As this reference shows, the existing scholarship on peripatetic communities tends to fail to catch the specificities and uniqueness of the historical context.[70] Related to this weakness, this literature is generally silent about administrative practices toward peripatetic communities. In this study, by contextualizing the "peripatetic niche" of the Tahtacıs, I put this timeless, space-less notion in its proper sociopolitical context. In order to go beyond this fixed narrative, I locate the adaptive strategies of the Tahtacı groups within the context of ecological changes following the Little Ice Age, general tendencies in the world economy in the late nineteenth century, and Ottoman administrative practices among which I focus on the attempts at scientific forestry. Focusing on the interactions between the Tahtacıs and the surrounding local actors, mainly timber merchants and forest officials, not only broadens the perspective on peripatetic communities by historicizing and politicizing their ecological niche but also enables a discussion of wider issues such as state formation processes and practices of state avoidance.

69 Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," 20-21.

70 Gmelch states that all these terms tend to lump different social groups together and exclude other sedentary groups that are structurally similar. See Gmelch, 309.

§ 1.3 Context: Ecology, Economy, and Politics

1.3.1 *The Invention of Scientific Forestry*

An important objective on the agenda of nineteenth century Ottoman bureaucrats was monopolizing control over revenues in the countryside. Attempts at scientific forestry management aiming to make the forests more profitable and beneficial for the administrative power was one of the policies developed within the framework of this agenda.

The Forest Regulation of 1870 was the first attempt to codify the norms of forestry in the Ottoman Empire and establish a legal basis for scientific and bureaucratized forestry. This regulation was a reflection of the concern of the government to build and maintain a uniform body of regulations that could be applied throughout the empire.[71]

Before the introduction of this regulation, the administrative body monitored the forests, which were reserved for the demands of the Imperial Shipyard *(Tersâne-i Âmire),* the Imperial Arsenal *(Tophâne-i Âmire),* the residents of the Palace, and the population of Istanbul; however, there was no strict control over the resources on lands called *cibâl-i mübâha* (permitted mountains). These forestlands were officially owned by the state, but were open to the public in practice.[72] A series of legal arrangements in late nineteenth century recalibrated the legal boundaries of forest utilization and restricted the usufruct rights of local people that had existed since time immemorial. The disposal of the *cibâl-i mübâha* category was one of the most critical decisions taken in this period.

The emergence of the need to redefine forest rights was closely connected to the intensification of commercial forestry. As depicted in Chapter 3, increasing demand for timber had become a global phenomenon in the decades of the first phase of the industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth cen-

71 Selçuk Dursun, "Forest and the State: History of Forestry and Forest Administration in the Ottoman Empire" (PhD diss., Sabancı University, 2007), 16.

72 ibid., 66.

tury. One indication of "progress" in this era was sustainable scientific forestry,[73] which reduced forests, according to Harrison's analysis, to their most "objective" status, the status of a material resource: Timber.[74] The value of a forest began to be evaluated according to its physical output.[75] In other words, as James Scott put it, "the actual tree with its vast number of possible uses was replaced by an abstract tree representing a volume of lumber or firewood."[76] The radical change in the form of forest exploitation is best represented in the utilitarian discourse that replaced the term "nature" with the term "natural resources."[77]

In order to maximize the income from natural resources, modern states developed new disciplines and technical areas of specialization to measure both the vegetation and people of the forests. Since the usefulness of the forest depended on its capacity to provide timber, measuring the mass of wood became crucial. This was how "forest mathematics" was born. This field made it possible for the forester to calculate the volume of wood.[78] Cartography and statistics as forms of measurement, abstraction, and reduction of complex diversity were some methods that served the regulation and management of natural resources. The invention of these fields was closely associated with territorial politics. Referring to one of its classical definitions, territoriality is "the attempt to affect, influence, or control actions, interactions, or access by asserting and attempting to enforce control over a specific geographic area."[79]

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73 Richard Hölzl, "Historicizing Sustainability: German Scientific Forestry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Science as Culture* 19, no. 4 (2010): 439.

74 Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 108, 120.

75 Tobias J. Lanz, "The Origins, Development and Legacy of Scientific Forestry in Cameroon," *Environment and History* 6, no. 1 (2000): 100.

76 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 12.

77 ibid., 13.

78 Harrison, 122.

79 Robert D. Sack, "Human Territoriality: A Theory," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73, no. 1 (1983): 55. See also Nancy Lee Peluso, "Territorializing Local Struggles for Resource Control: A Look at Environmental Discourses and Politics in Indonesia," in *Nature*

Since territories are constituted by maps and charts, modern cartography and statistics play a central role in the implementation and legitimation of territorial rule.[80] The main purpose of these new fields is to empower the administration to manage and reclaim nature and the human. It was no coincidence that the first step of the General Administration of Forests and Mines (Orman ve Maâdin İdâre-i Umûmiyyesi) to manage forests was to demand detailed information about the forests that were of particular concern to the administration from forest investigators in 1890, such as the forests' names, the quantity and types of trees, their distance from ports, the condition of the roads, and the places to which their products were transported.[81]

If one side of the new forestry was the measurement, abstraction, simplification, and standardization of forests through maps, cadastral surveys, land registers, and annulment of local property regulations, the other side was making the population more "legible" and relocating local communities,[82] "whose value could not be converted into fiscal receipts."[83] Abolishment or restriction of customary rights, the *cibâl-i mübâha* category in the Ottoman case, and criminalization of forest practices were intimately bound to this new agenda.

Although the first examples of forest restoration in Europe go back as far as the eleventh century,[84] the theoretical and practical starting point of quantitative forest management was the German forestry science developed in the

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in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and South-East Asia, ed. Paul Greenough and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 233.

80 Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, "Territorialization and State Power in Thailand," *Theory and Society* 24, no. 3 (1995): 387.

81 "Taht-ı İnzıbata Alınan Ormanların Mikdarını Mebnî Defter İrsâline Orman ve Maâdin İdâre-i Umûmiyesinden Orman Müfettişlerine Tebligat," *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası*, no. 12 (1 Şubat 1305 [13 February 1890]): 350.

82 For examples of more aggressive and violent confrontation of the state and the local people, see Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Peter Sahlins, *Forest Rites: The War of the Demoiselles in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994).

83 Scott, 12.

84 Yücel Çağlar, *Türkiye Ormanları ve Ormancılık* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1992), 32.

eighteenth century as a result of the state's need for an economic recovery after the Seven Years' War.[85] One of the countries influenced by Germany was France where modern forestry emerged with the establishment of a forest school and enactment of the Forestry Code in the 1820s.[86] The first efforts to build a "rational" management system in Ottoman forestry were made soon afterwards in the wake of the Tanzimat (1839). Despite some arguments that scientific forestry began only in the Republican period, it was in fact the first Tanzimat governments that took the initial steps to utilize and protect forests in order to meet the demand of the navy and urban centers.[87] Restrictions on the free utilization of forest products in this period marked the advent of scientific forestry in the empire. The pursuit of new forest resources by industrialized countries was a further factor that encouraged the Ottoman government to take steps to bureaucratize forestry.[88]

With the outbreak of a deep financial crisis resulting from the Crimean War[89] and the world economic depression in the 1870s, the Ottoman government's pursuit of new resources intensified.[90] Due to growing pressure on the treasury, ensuring the utilization and protection of natural resources, including forests, became even more important. In order to achieve these purposes, Ottoman bureaucrats invited foresters first from France and then from Germany and Austria-Hungary. The work of these experts, such as measuring forests, training foresters, and codifying forest regulations, paved the way for a

85 Henry E. Lowood, "The Calculating Forester: Quantification, Cameral Science, and the Emergence of Scientific Forestry Management in Germany," in *The Quantifying Spirit in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Tore Frängsmyr, J.L. Heilbron, and Robin E. Rider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 318-319.

86 Laurent Simon, Vincent Clément, and Pierre Pech, "Forestry Disputes in Provincial France During the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Montagne de Lure," *Journal of Historical Geography*, no. 33 (2007): 335.

87 Dursun, 7-9.

88 See Bekir Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 24, no. 37 (2005): 234.

89 For how the Ottomans financed the war, see Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 289-328.

90 Dursun, 12-13.

more systematic scientific forestry policy in the Ottoman Empire. Needless to say, the main purpose of applying scientific methods to forest management was the maximization of forest revenues. With the same purpose, more concessions were granted to private enterprises. These concessions made it possible to utilize forests more "efficiently." As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, negotiations and alliances between forest officials and contractors in bargaining processes constituted the backbone of the resource extraction mechanism. The main purpose of the legal regulations in forestry was to build direct control over resources. In practice, however, the closer the relations the officials had with the mediators, the stricter control they could establish over forest resources and forest labor. The expansion of commercial lumbering, which was actualized through the collaborative work of "corrupt" officials and merchants, on the other hand, caused more intense exploitation, hence more rapid deforestation. Utilization and protection of forests were paradoxical targets in many respects.

However, in the eyes of the Ottoman government, it was not these concessions but poor communities living in and around the forests, both pastoral and peripatetic, that caused the deepening deforestation. According to officials, the Tahtacıs were one of the foremost communities responsible for the "inefficient" and "parasitic" exploitation of forests, so it was necessary to restrict their mobility or to impose additional taxes on them. They did not intend to remove this valuable labor reserve from the forests but bound them to mass production processes. The Ottoman administration and the experts perceived their practices, knowledge, and techniques as the main obstacles to scientific, rational usage of forests. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, despite the fact that human pressure on the Taurus forests did not intensify due to the activities of nomadic communities but because of the settlement of peripatetic and pastoral nomads and their shift to a peasant economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[91] nomads were accused of the destruction of the forests. The knowledge of the Tahtacıs, which was based on

91 McNeill, 292.

local experience, was perceived as backward, primitive, irrational, and illegitimate and needed to be overcome through modern, scientific resource management methods.[92] Nygren's study on the perspective of experts in Nicaragua is also valid for the Ottoman case: "The capacity of local people to innovate, systematize and transfer knowledge was seen as limited, while scientific knowledge was considered rigorous and cumulative."[93] This discourse justified the abolishment of customary rights.

Parallel to criticisms of modernity, the concept of local knowledge has been reevaluated in recent years. Since the early 1980s, western scientific knowledge has been criticized for being theoretical and unsuccessful, whereas many scientists and activists have idealized local knowledge as an example of pure, environmental wisdom and a holistic, utilitarian element inherited from a romantic past.[94] What both approaches suppose is that "local" knowledge is a product of a frozen, unchanging tradition that has no interaction with its environment.

By underlining the dynamic character of human societies and their knowledge systems, such static representations of "local" and "scientific" knowledge have been questioned by several scholars. First, it has been proven that technical knowledge in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, which was recognized as "scientific" knowledge, absorbed preexisting indigenous European folk knowledge and local knowledge that came from other parts of the world.[95] Second, the ahistorical conceptualization of "indigenous" knowledge and the dichotomy of local versus universal knowledge has been challenged by putting it in a politicized context. One of the first examples of this is Nygren's study. She criticizes the representations of local knowledge as

92 See Roy Ellen and Holly Harris, "Introduction," in *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and its Transformations: Critical Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Roy Ellen, Peter Parkes, and Alan Bicker (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 10.

93 Anja Nygren, "Local Knowledge in the Environment–Development Discourse: From Dichotomies to Situated Knowledges," *Critique of Anthropology* 19, no. 3 (1999): 273.

94 ibid., 274-275.

95 Ellen and Harris, 7; David Turnbull, *Masons, Tricksters and Cartographers: Comparative Studies in the Sociology of Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2003), 13.

a "scapegoat for underdevelopment" or a "panacea for sustainability" and offers more diversified models to analyze the relationships of "heterogeneous knowledges" produced with the involvement of multiple actors and complex power relations.[96] Furthermore, Davison-Hunt demonstrates that local knowledge is not a tradition but an adaptive learning process that is realized via relationships among various actors linked to each other in socio-ecological networks.[97] Similarly, focusing on the emergence of scientific forestry in Mexico, Mathews shows how so-called official knowledge is created not only by officials and foresters but also with the participation of indigenous communities.[98]

Without romanticizing the knowledge of forest-dependent communities and by taking this knowledge as a "process" rather than an unchanging, static "archive,"[99] this study tells the story of the accumulation of these communities' knowledge over the course of hundreds of years. This expertise and their ability to create new techniques not only contributed to the regional economies but also helped them adapt to changing conditions and develop flexible strategies. Not only the local timber merchants but also the Ottoman forest officials were aware of the importance of the accumulated knowledge of the Tahtacıs. On one hand, they wanted to eliminate these communities from the forests for the sake of state forestry. On the other, they knew that the labor and the expertise of the Tahtacıs were irreplaceable by any available techniques and indispensable for the continuation of production in the forests. This paradox shaped their policy toward forest communities.

In this period, forest communities were overwhelmed by the new demands of the state, mainly with respect to forestry, conscription, and taxation. However, they did not become passive recipients of these policies. Oppressive administrative practices coexisted with the state-avoidance practices, self-

96 Nygren, 267.

97 Iain J. Davidson-Hunt, "Adaptive Learning Networks: Developing Resource Management Knowledge through Social Learning Forums," *Human Ecology* 34, no. 4 (2006): 597.

98 Andrew S. Mathews, *Instituting Nature: Authority, Expertise, and Power in Mexican Forests* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2011).

99 See Heather Goodall, "Riding the Tide: Indigenous Knowledge, History and Water in a Changing Australia," *Environment and History* 14, no. 3 (2008): 355.

adapting strategies, and sometimes organized counter-struggles of the communities. The case of the Tahtacıs exemplifies this multidimensional process. In various ways they manipulated administrative practices. They gradually adjusted their way of subsistence to new ecological and economic conditions. When they gained the opportunity to possess land, for example, they gave up lumbering and began cultivation. Otherwise, they continued peripatetic strategies but in a narrower area and at lower altitudes. Only rarely were they involved in violent confrontation with the state agencies. Their highly flexible coping strategies were shaped by the ecological, economic, and political environment.

What I refer to as new ecological and economic conditions are basically two developments in the second half of the nineteenth century: The end of the Little Ice Age and the trend of rising demand for wheat and cotton.[100] As a result of these, permanent settlement at lower altitudes, clearing of lands for cultivation, and agricultural production increased in Mediterranean Anatolia. The decline in forestlands and commodification of forest products increased competition over forests. Given these processes, almost all Tahtacı families gradually descended to lower altitudes. Most kept on lumbering under new conditions, while some became involved in alternative crafts or worked as wage-laborers. The high land-to-labor ratio made it possible for a few Tahtacı families to acquire land. In short, it was not only forced settlement policies, but also market conditions that made them adopt new strategies.

1.3.2 *Beyond Marginality*

The analytical framework developed by James C. Scott in *The Art of Not Being Governed* discusses state-making and state-avoidance issues with a special focus on space. In his book, Scott concentrates on Zomia, a term first used by Willem van Schendel to define the upland areas of Southeast Asia. By reconsidering the conceptual tools he created previously, such as "rational peasant behavior," "everyday forms of resistance," and "legibility," Scott explores the

100 See Pamuk, 18-40, 82-107; Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century*; Tabak; Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (London: Penguin Books, 2014).

evolution of hill and valley societies as a process of the emergence of state and non-state spaces. He argues that state-evading hill societies of Southeast Asia were intentionally barbarian, mobile, illegible, flexible, illiterate, and culturally diverse, whereas state-making societies of lowland valleys were civilized, sedentary, legible, inflexible, literate, and mono-cultural. He also claims that people of Zomia inhabited the hills since this area was geographically inaccessible and difficult for the state to appropriate. By developing a mobile way of living based on temporary and dispersed cultivation, which was difficult to monitor and tax, hill societies chose marginality not to be governed by state mechanism. Due to these flexible strategies, Zomian societies escaped forced labor practices, taxes, conscription, and formal education, at least until 1945 when the institutions of nation-states began to appropriate the highlands.[101]

There are similarities between the Tahtacıs and the Zomian people in some respects. A mobile, flexible way of life made it possible for the Tahtacıs and the other hill societies in Mediterranean Anatolia to escape from the taxation and recruitment policies of Ottoman Empire. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, pastoral and peripatetic nomadic communities occupied the mid and high altitudes of the Taurus Mountains.[102] During the period covered by this dissertation, these nomadic groups gradually lost their state avoidance opportunities. First, the Ottoman government was able to penetrate a wider area more easily and actively. Starting at the end of the seventeenth century, to bring powerful nomadic tribes under the control of the central government and to have a more predictable tax base, the Ottoman government implemented sedentarization policies. Especially sedentarization operations conducted in the late nineteenth century were aggressive.[103] The first attempts were far from successful; however, from the nineteenth century onwards, when efforts toward sedentarization combined with compelling market factors, permanent settlement in Mediterranean Anatolia increased.

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101 James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

102 McNeill, 91-92; Faruk Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870" (PhD diss., Binghamton University, 2000), 157.

103 See Gould; Toksöz.

In this period, not only due to administrative pressure but also due to the increasing importance of cities, towns, and villages in the valleys, both sedentary and mobile hill societies descended to lower altitudes. As a hill society, the Tahtacıs also adapted to the ecological and economic conditions and intentionally chose to live closer to the lowlands. On the other hand, in order to escape new property regimes and conscription and taxation policies, they developed state-avoidance strategies that were not based on space but on complex, hybrid techniques. They detected the shortfalls of the system and used them in their favor. A good example of such state-avoidance strategies was that, from the 1870s onwards, rather than deserting the army and escaping to higher mountains, some Tahtacı communities demanded the continuation of their exemption from military service on account of the fact that they were *Kıbtî*s, a term used in the Ottoman Empire to designate ethnically diverse peripatetic population groups, such as the Roma, the Poşa and the Abdal known to outsiders as "Gypsies."[104] Some obtained Iranian passports for the same purpose. In other words, in so-called "state spaces," they manipulated administrative practices in their favor. As Mitchell points out, "political subjects and their modes of resistance are formed as much within the organizational terrain we call the state, rather than in some wholly exterior social space."[105]

A study that problematizes the dichotomy of hill societies and valley societies as well as the concept of marginality is C. Patterson Giersch's on the trade networks that linked the Zomian people in Kham to East Asian metropolises and Southeast Asian ports in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Analyzing goods and people on the move shows that "networks of state and commercial power did sneak through the highland regions, however tentatively, and

104 For detailed information on the terms used to designate peripatetic groups in the Balkans, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia, see Egemen Yılgür, "Türkiye'de Peripatetik Topluluklar: Jenerik Terimler ve Öz Etnik Kategorizasyon Biçimleri," *Nişantaşı Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5, no. 1 (2017): 1-25.

105 Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 93.

local peoples had to take notice"[106] even before the rise of nation states. As Giersch argues, one of the advantages of emphasizing networks is that such a perspective shows not only that these communities were connected to the developments in the wider world but also unveils the mechanisms people built for interaction.[107] From a similar standpoint, Bernard Formoso questions whether Zomian peoples were really marginal by choice and whether they had always been in conflict with the state due to their "immemorial" traditions. He argues that hill communities were always linked to lowland societies and world trade through complex relations.[108]

Criticizing approaches that stress the binary positions of hill and lowland societies, these studies show that there is a constant interaction between these different livelihood strategies. Even though conceptual tools such as "non-state spaces" and "state-evading strategies" serve the purpose of revealing the limits of state-making processes and the agency of so-called "marginal" societies, these concepts remained incapable of reflecting these interactions, networks, and adaptation strategies.

What enabled the interaction and transmission between Tahtacı communities and other people were timber trade networks. These were extensive albeit weak ties that made it possible for the Tahtacıs to develop flexible strategies according to changing conditions.[109] These strategies were shaped by hundreds of years of experience in lumbering and trade. Their constantly changing local and empirical knowledge was accumulated through practical engagement in everyday life by transmitting experiences and knowledge orally from generation to generation. Focusing on the construction of their networks

106 C. Patterson Giersch, "Across Zomia with Merchants, Monks, and Musk: Process Geographies, Trade Networks, and the Inner-East – Southeast Asian Borderlands," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 219.

107 ibid., 218-219.

108 Bernard Formoso, "Zomian or Zombies? What Future Exists for the Peoples of the Southeast Asian Massif?," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 2 (2010): 313-332.)

109 It has been often argued that the Tahtacıs constitute a closed community that keeps itself apart from other groups (von Luschan, 230.) which resulted in their cultural practices not changing over hundreds of years. See. Nilgün Çıblak Coşkun, "Tahtacılar ve Tahtacı Ocaklarına Bağlı Oymakların Yerleşim Alanları," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, no. 68 (2013): 34.

and the formation process of their knowledge and tracing their goods in motion not only provides a view of the strategies of the Tahtacıs from a different angle but also makes so-called marginal societies more visible by showing that they are not disconnected from the world and that they contribute to civilization with the products and services they provide, and the techniques they develop. Furthermore, issues such as how and which local actors were involved in these processes, how some dominated others, and how local communities adapted themselves to new conditions enable a look at the "local" and the "rural" from a critical perspective. After all, these actors are not just individuals but interest groups shaped within power relations.

§ 1.4 Central Questions and Main Arguments

One key question this research raises in the broadest sense is what sort of strategies the Tahtacıs of the Taurus Mountains developed in order to cope with modern taxation and conscription policies and commodification after 1870. If one follows Scott's argument in his work on hill people in Southeast Asia and more in general on the high modernist effects of state building,[110] the expectation would be that with the intensification of Ottoman state formation processes and resource extraction, especially in forestry, hill people like the Tahtacıs would move deeper into the mountains to escape the administrative practices.

As I will show, however, this is not what happened in the Taurus Mountains. Depending on power balances, allegedly powerless groups like Tahtacıs employed a wider range of strategies that were highly flexible, diverse, and changeable. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, despite the growing pressure of new forestry, taxation, and conscription regimes on mobile groups, Tahtacıs did not prefer to escape to higher elevations but adopted a less mobile life at lower altitudes, closer to the settled population and the administration. Their craftsmanship, which became more crucial due to the intensification of commercial forestry, and new economic opportunities in the lowlands were

110 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*; Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*.

the main factors behind this strategy. This process also led to the commodification of labor, thus the increasing dependency of the Tahtacı communities on local notables. On the other hand, given the new challenging conditions, they developed complicated strategies to avoid the demands of the modern state. Taking the means of subsistence - the "peripatetic niche" - of the Tahtacıs as its starting point, this dissertation reveals these sophisticated techniques. Such an approach allows to go beyond the dichotomy of compliance and resistance when discussing the reactions of local communities facing modern administrative practices.

Moreover, this research investigates how high modernist projects are negotiated in the local context. Instead of perceiving the state as an autonomous, monolithic structure, this research emphasizes the fragmented practices within the bureaucracy as well as the alliances of bureaucrats in the fragmented periphery. During the actualization of modern forestry, not only different interests clashed at the central level but state officials on the ground in the provinces also had to negotiate with local sedentary power brokers and interest groups, which severely weakened high modernism as an ideal. This dissertation therefore uncovers a complicated interaction in the triangle constituting the members of the bureaucracy, local interest groups and Tahtacı groups.[111]

111 The role of local actors in the establishment of Ottoman rule in remote areas has been so far studied through the lens of provincial studies centered on provinces at the frontiers of the empire. Analyzing the local politics in the frontier zones, these studies challenged the existing literature by problematizing dichotomies of center-periphery and state-society. These studies are concerned with a variety of issues such as taxation practices, commercialization, identities, and property disputes. Some examples are as follows: Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); Nilay Özok-Gündoğan, "The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery: The Politics of Land and Taxation, 1840-1870" (PhD diss., Binghamton University, 2011); Gülseren Duman Koç, "Governing a Frontier Sancak in the Ottoman Empire: Notables, Tribes, and Peasants of Muş (1820s-1870s)" (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2018).

From this point of view, I demonstrate that the officials at the central and local levels were prone to take advantages of the expanding market for forest products and partner with entrepreneurs at the expense of the long-term interests of the national treasury. In academic surveys as well as in official records, these bureaucrats are usually described as "corrupt" officials who caused the administration to "fail" in its attempts to use natural resources rationally. This narrative supposes that the illegal activities of officials are the product of individual immorality or the backwardness of the system. Such a representation stems from the assumed dichotomy of the "ideal state" and "actual states", which are perceived as "deviations from the ideal or corrupted versions of the ideal."[112] Similarly, "state failure," just as "corruption," is an aspect of the idealized conceptualization of state. "By taking the model of the modern state for granted, and by analyzing all states in terms of their degree of correspondence with or deviation from this ideal,"[113] this notion offers no visibility to the logic behind practices that seem "irrational" at first glance.[114] In the implementation of new forest regulations, Ottoman bureaucrats encountered various obstacles that forced them to negotiate with notables, who were influential in the timber trade and local politics. In this process, tax revenues from forestry did not increase as much as expected, and deforestation increased dramatically. However, that does not mean that Ottoman state officials "failed" in their attempts to establish "rational" forestry. These "economic 'failures' have produced their

112 Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constituted One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14. In the same vein, Gupta sees the discourse of corruption as "a mechanism through which 'the state' itself is discursively constituted." Akhil Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State," in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, ed. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 212.

113 Stein Sundstøl Eriksen, "'State Failure' in Theory and Practice: The Idea of the State and the Contradictions of State Formation," *Review of International Studies*, no. 37 (2011): 246.

114 For an overview of the critics of state-centered approaches from an anthropological perspective, see Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Steppuat, "Introduction: States of Imagination," in *Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Steppuat (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 1-38; Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad, "Introduction," in *State Formation: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Christian Krohn-Hansen and Knut G. Nustad (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 3-26.

own political rationality."[115] Despite the limited technical capacity of the government to monitor and implement the regulations, the new forestry created a substantial transformation of the Ottoman countryside. Most importantly, the officials managed to restrict the centuries-old customary rights of forest-dependent communities. Consequently, forest labor became more dependent on the timber merchants.

As Migdal points out, what is called a state is a "field" shaped by both "the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory" and "the actual practices of its multiple parts," which "can be overlapping and reinforcing, or contradictory and mutually destructive."[116] I argue that the discourse of "state failure" due to "corrupt" forest officials not only masks the power struggles over natural resources but also fortifies the image of the state. These criminal acts are described as an indication of individual immorality and thus considered examples of deviation from the state. Instead, this dissertation approaches these practices as an integral part of a complex set of relations among concrete actors at local and central levels that enabled resource extraction to occur. Thus, by taking bureaucratized forestry as the unit of analysis and by focusing on the interactions between the local forest officials and the timber merchants, this study problematizes the normative understanding of the state.

§ 1.5 Sources

This study is based on data collected from various sources. The records from the Ottoman Archives, especially those of the Administration of Forest and Mines (Orman ve Maâdin İdaresi), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Dâhiliye Nezareti), the Ministry of Finance (Mâliye Nezareti), and the Ottoman Prime Ministry (Sadâret) constitute the main primary sources for the research.

The Ottoman Archives not only provide detailed information on the forestry regime, forest crimes, punishment practices, law cases, the profile of the

115 James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 264.

116 Migdal, 16.

contractors, forest concessions, and the reports of bureaucrats on the forests of the empire but also the grassroots reactions of merchants, officials, and laborers. Complaint letters from different social segments enable a look at the local power balances, struggles, alliances and negotiation processes. Official records also make visible the limits of the technical capacity of the government, such as communication and transportation problems and the insufficient number of foresters. Even though these documents were written by officials and therefore reflect the perspectives of members of the bureaucracy, they also include crucial information on the relationship between the forest-dependent communities and merchants, the arbitrary practices of the officials towards the laborers, and the avoidance strategies of the laborers.

The second main source for this study is data compiled in field research in Mersin, Antalya, and Aydın provinces where many semi-nomadic and settled Tahtacı groups still reside. The primary intent of in-depth interviews with the members of the Tahtacı community is to go beyond the data in the official records and listen to the community's own stories about their former migration routes, their settlement, and the administrative practices toward them. Since the routines of "ordinary" people are rarely visible in official records - they are usually seen only when deemed crimes against "public order" - the field research was vital to complete the picture.[117]

Furthermore, the reports prepared by the British consulate in the Ottoman Empire, which are located in the National Archives of the United Kingdom, provides crucial information on the local history of Mediterranean Anatolia, nomadic groups, local economies, and trade and forest management in particular. These reports, as well as travelers' accounts and the periodicals of the time, make it possible to draw a more vivid and detailed picture of the Ottoman countryside.

117 For a discussion of the "reliability" of oral history, see Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118-172.

§ 1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

Examining a long-term view of ecological niches and forestry practices in the Mediterranean Anatolia, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 provide the background for the ensuing chapters, making the ruptures and continuities in Ottoman forestry visible. Chapter 2 describes the natural environment and delineates the subsistence strategies that were developed in the Taurus region - both pastoral and non-pastoral - before the introduction of scientific forestry. This chapter also concentrates on the demography of the Tahtacı groups and points to the formation of the community. In order to review the contributions of the Tahtacıs to the region and clarify the uniqueness of modern natural resource management, Chapter 3 briefly portrays forest management and the trade of forest products in Mediterranean Anatolia before bureaucratized emerged.

Chapter 4 depicts the "state image" represented by the laws and regulations toward bureaucratized forestry. It examines the introduction of scientific forestry in the Ottoman Empire by focusing on legal and institutional developments in the late nineteenth century. The training of forest officials, emergence of new forest taxes, and invention of new forest crimes are the central subjects upon which this chapter touches. This chapter also demonstrates that the discourse of "deforestation at the hands of local people" functioned as a tool to legitimize the abolishment of customary rights of sedentary and mobile communities and to make the role of commercialized forestry in the destruction of forests invisible.

Chapter 5 explores the "actual state practices" in forestry by examining how the new forestry regime was negotiated at the local level. It also makes the power relations in the forests of the Taurus Mountains more visible by illustrating struggles and alliances between social actors, basically the contractor merchants and the forest bureaucrats. A closer look at the local power struggles not only reveals that there were different interests within the central government but also moves the narrative beyond the reified conception of the state. The members of the bureaucracy and the merchants were active agents who were trying to enjoy the new opportunities. Especially a case concerning illegal logging in the *mirî* forests of Teke is a good example since it reveals that

bureaucrats, financiers, and local and regional merchants acted in unison in forest theft.

Chapter 6 examines how these practices were perceived by the laborers. It focuses on the effects of bureaucratized, scientific, commercial forestry on the forest-dependent communities and evaluates how these communities, basically the Tahtacıs, reacted to the ecological and economic developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as to modern administrative practices including the new forestry regime. This chapter shows that the dependency of forest laborers gradually increased in parallel to the expansion of market relations in forestry. It also demonstrates the complexity and the diversity of the coping strategies of the Tahtacı groups.

2

A Long-Term History of the Subsistence Strategies in the Taurus Mountains

Our ancestors escaped the state and hid in the remotest mountains; since then we have been a hill people.[1]

The geographical focus of this study is the Taurus Mountains. Throughout history, this majestic mountain chain has been a shelter for people escaping natural disasters, particularly floods and disease, as well as massacres, taxes, and military conscription imposed by the local and central authorities. The limits on available resources high up in the hills, on the other hand, made this secure place a zone of challenge, forcing the escapers to develop flexible subsistence strategies.

Located in Southern Asia Minor, the Taurus Mountains constitute a barrier between the central Anatolian massif and the Mediterranean Sea. Running more than 2,000 kilometers along the Mediterranean coast and the Syrian border, this mountain complex extends from the Lakes Region on the Teke peninsula, also known as Lycia, in the west to the Maraş Plateau of Northern Mesopotamia in the east. Since the Taurus Mountains are situated in one of the transitional zones between the Mediterranean and continental climate

1 H.B. (1950), A Tahtacı from Gökbük/Antalya, 20.04.2016. *"Atalarımız devletten kaçıp en ücra dağlara saklanmış; o günden sonra dağ toplumu olmuşuz."*

zones, its southern face is under the effects of the Mediterranean climate characterized by a combination of short, mild, and wet winters and long, hot, and dry summers, whereas its interior regions and highlands have a continental climate, which brings cold, dry winters and warm, humid summers.

The Taurus Mountain chain, especially the zone affected by the Mediterranean climate, is covered with rich forests providing a wide range of timber and non-timber products. Deciduous trees characterize the middle zone - the region at altitudes between 500 and 1,200 meters. Oak is the dominant species in this area, though maple, elm, sycamore, cypress, pine, and some juniper are also widely found.[2] *Quercus cerris*, commonly called Turkey oak, is the fastest growing and the tallest of the oak and is found in Anatolia, Italy, and Greece. There was a huge demand for those in Anatolia in the nineteenth century since the oak of Italy and Greece had a poor reputation.[3] Conifers, such as pine, fir, cedar, juniper, and beech prevail in the upper zone. *Pinus brutia,* also known as Turkish pine, is commonly found in Mediterranean Anatolia. Black pine, another variety grown in the mountains of Cilicia and the most abundant species in the forests of the western Taurus Mountains is grown between 900 and 1,500 meters and was widely used in the construction of ships and buildings. *Abies cilicica,* known as Cilicia or Taurus fir, is one of four varieties of fir that grow from the Taurus Mountains to Lebanon. It likes higher altitudes from 1,600 to 1,900 meters. Other dominant species in the Eastern Mediterranean are cedar, which is usually found between 1,500 and 1,800 meters,[4] and junipers that grow to heights of up to twenty-five meters in the higher altitudes of the Taurus.[5]

Throughout the Taurus Mountains, not only various climates and vegetation zones but also human communities and their products intersected with each other throughout history. Rivers and passes functioned as bridges linking

2 McNeill, 22; Russell Meiggs, *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 42.

3 Meiggs, 45.

4 McNeill, 21-22, 44.

5 Meiggs, 122.

people and goods. Strong rivers reaching from the Anatolian plain to the Mediterranean coast cut the Taurus Mountain chain in a number of valleys. One of them, the Göksu River, coincides with the central Taurus Mountains at Mut. This route connects the Konya Plain with the sea at Silifke Plain. Another is the Çakıt River, whose canyon creates the Cilician Gates (Güllük Pass), which was for centuries the most important such pass in the Taurus Mountains.[6] For at least a millennium, rivers and trade routes linking the sea, lakes, mountains, and plains enabled army and caravan traffic across Anatolia. Seljuks, Mongols, and Ottomans passed through the Taurus Mountains in a north-south direction. Not only caravans and armies, but also local nomadic groups used these paths - in addition to more challenging ones. Until the late nineteenth century, enjoying the proximity of the highlands and lowlands, pastoral nomads moved continuously between the Taurus Mountains and coastal plains,[7] and nomadic lumberjacks used rivers to float logs and other forest products from the mountains down to the coasts.

§ 2.1 From Nomadism to Permanent Settlement

As societies with nomadic origins, Turkmen communities massively penetrated Asia Minor from the eleventh century onwards,[8] establishing countless new pastures in the Taurus Mountains as well as the mountains of the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia.[9] Due to available lands at low and high altitudes, nomadic newcomers found the opportunity to utilize a wide territory, which allowed them to continue their nomadic way of life based on a mixed economy that included stockbreeding and temporary cultivation.[10] From the eleventh

6 William M. Ramsay, "Cilicia, Tarsus, and the Great Taurus Pass," *The Geographical Journal* 22, no. 4 (1903): 366.

7 McNeill, 20-22.

8 For a discussion of earlier migrations of the Turkish-speaking communities into Asia Minor, see Alemdar Yalçın, "Anadolu Aleviliğinin Başlangıç Evreleri II: Anadolu'ya Geliş ve Yerleşim," *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 2 (2010): 1-18.

9 McNeill, 94.

10 Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870," 115-116.

to the fifteenth centuries, when the Byzantine Empire retreated and the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires were established, they preferred to live in the highlands to escape from wars, brigandage, landlords, tax collectors, and disease.[11]

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nomadic groups cultivated more land and spent more time in their winter pastures. In this process, temporary lowland settlements gradually transformed into villages. In the İçil subprovince, for example, a considerable part of the rural population shifted to a semi-nomadic life and constituted villages where they spent their winters. In the sixteenth century, the Yörüks, a term denoting pastoral nomadic tribes with various ethnic origins,[12] constituted only seven to eight percent of the total population.[13] The population of the Yörük groups diminished due to the trend toward sedentarization.[14]

Despite the fact that in this period pasturelands along the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts were narrowed due to the cultivation of the plains,[15] until the mid-nineteenth century, transhumance, based on the seasonal movement of shepherd tribes between summer and winter pastures, was the main subsistence strategy in the region. The Taurus Mountains remained a "shepherd massif" almost until the twentieth century.[16] In winter, herder communities grazed their flocks in lowland pastures, and in the beginning of spring they moved up the mountains. A major factor that shaped this adaptation strategy was disease in the lowlands. Seasonal migration was a response of the local

11 McNeill, 91-92.

12 Salâhaddin Çetintürk, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yürük Sınıfı ve Hukuki Statüleri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (1943): 108.

13 ibid., 114.

14 See Abdüllatif Armağan, "XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Teke Sancağı'nda Konar-Göçerler: Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Demografik Durumları," in *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Yörükler ve Türkmenler*, ed. Hayati Beşirli and İbrahim Erdal (Ankara: Phoenix, 2008), 78-80.

15 Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870," 117-121.

16 McNeill, 292.

communities to malaria.[17] Until the end of the nineteenth century, a typical pastoral nomadic community of the Taurus Mountains planted vegetables at their summer ranges in May at the latest, and they made cheese in June. In August and September they harvested grain and then fruits and vegetables. In early October they planted the grain for the next year and moved back to the plains.[18]

There were also peripatetic communities - mobile groups who were involved neither in agriculture nor in stockbreeding but made a living by providing non-pastoral products and services. The most populous peripatetic population along the Mediterranean coasts of Anatolia were the mobile lumberjacks. The Taurus Mountain range was a richly forested region where lumbering was an important craft. Communities employed by the Ottoman administration for the provision of forest products were identified as tahtacı, "woodsman," denoting the economic activity in which they were involved. When registering these groups, the Ottoman officials used some further expressions referring to their occupation, such as *bıçkıcı* (sawyer) and *baltacı* (axeman).[19] Occasionally cultivating and stockbreeding, these peripatetic groups specialized in lumbering, which necessitated a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life.[20]

In the end of the sixteenth century the Mediterranean lost its primary role in global trade. The region was among the ones influenced by the cooler climate conditions of the Little Ice Age, which caused a decline in agricultural productivity and diminishing of forest products. Furthermore, the European

17 For a recent contribution on the adaptation strategies of the hill people in the Eastern Mediterranean with a focus on ecology, see Christopher Gratien, "The Mountains Are Ours: Ecology and Settlement in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Cilicia, 1856-1956" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2015).

18 McNeill, 113.

19 Other expressions used by the Ottomans for forest workers were Ağaççı, Ağaççıyan, Baltacı, Baltalı, Bıçkıcı, Biçen, Biçer, Dalkıran, Dalkıranlı, Evci, Marangozlar, Nacarlar, Oduncular, Tahtacıyan, and Tatevci (Ali Aksüt, "Tahtacı Tarihi." Unpublished Work)

20 People whose ancestors were Tahtacı still mostly identify and are identified by others as Tahtacı, even though their means of subsistence is no longer based on nomadic lumbering. There are laborers, agriculturalists, public servants, and entrepreneurs among them.

maritime revolution and the advantage of Western European countries with respect to access to coal negatively impacted Mediterranean trade.[21] Parallel to these ecological and economic conditions, the agricultural and commercial center of Anatolia shifted from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Aegean and Black Sea, and the populations living along the Mediterranean moved from the lowlands to higher altitudes.[22] Since the Mediterranean mountains and valleys run perpendicular to the coast, it was difficult to control the fluvial activity that increased during the Little Ice Age; thus, unlike along the Aegean coasts, advancing marshlands provided no opportunity to cultivate aquatic or summer crops along the southern Mediterranean coasts.[23]

These conditions had a deep impact on the subsistence strategies of the settled and nomadic populations living along the southern coasts of Anatolia. Until the late nineteenth century the plains remained thinly populated. To a large extent, the rural population occupied the middle and high altitudes of the Taurus Mountains. Transhumance at high altitudes became the most widespread subsistence strategy in the Taurus Mountains, especially in the eastern and middle ranges. As a result of the decline in agricultural production, permanent settlement diminished.[24] Reports on the population of eastern Mediterranean Anatolia prepared by the British consulate confirm this trend. According to a report dated 1881, most tribes in the Adana region were purely nomadic until the mid-1860s.[25] According to another report on the human geography of the Adana Plains, in the middle of the century, "without recognizing the government," the Turkmen tribes in this region lived a nomadic way of life. Wandering with their flocks and herds, they spent five to six

21 Edmund Burke III, "Toward a Comparative History of the Modern Mediterranean, 1750–1919," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 4 (2013): 914-919.

22 Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870," 157.

23 Faruk Tabak, "Economic and Ecological Change in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 1550–1850," in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day*, ed. Biray Kolluoğlu; Meltem Toksöz (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 35.

24 McNeill maintains that there were no villages in the western half of Antalya Plain in the mid-nineteenth century. Ibid.

25 TNA, FO, 424/132, 1881.

months in the plain and the remainder of the year in the mountains.[26] In Western Anatolia, despite the fact that sedentariness was relatively more widespread among both the Yörüks and Tahtacıs due to the earlier commercialization of agriculture, most were still highly mobile. According to the report of the British consulate dated 1881, there were a few Tahtacı settlements in the Aydın region and most Yörüks were nomadic. This population was concentrated between Aydın, Muğla, Milas, and the mouth of the Menderes (Maeander), as well as in the districts of Ödemiş, Tire, Bayındır, Sivrihisar, and Bornova. The consulate argued that, compared to the nomads further east, these caused less damage, paid pasture taxes, and were wealthier.[27]

Whether nomadic communities constituted a threat to the sedentary population is controversial. Toksöz argues that the fact that brigandage is imputed to nomadic groups is incorrect.[28] Until the nineteenth century, the economic activity of pastoral and peripatetic nomads constituted an indispensable part of rural life. Needs were fulfilled via the barter of goods and services among the sedentary-pastoral, nomadic-pastoral, and peripatetic groups. Pastoral nomads contributed to the rural economy by providing animal products, weaving felts and carpets, and providing transport services.[29] Being deprived of agricultural land and herds, most peripatetic groups depended on the agricultural and animal products of sedentary and nomadic pastoral groups, whereas pastoral communities needed the products and services of nomadic smiths, tinkers, sieve makers, woodsmen, basket makers, musicians, and folk healers. On the other hand, it is not exceptional that this peaceful, symbiotic interaction gave way to more conflictual relations between the peripatetics and pastoral nomads in favor of the latter.[30]

Nomadic communities were also important for the government. They constituted a vital labor reserve for military and administrative purposes. For

26 TNA, FO, 222/8/3, 1882.

27 TNA, FO, 424/122, 1881.

28 Toksöz, 39.

29 İnalcık, 469.

30 See, for example, Barth, *Nomads of South Persia: The Basseri Tribe of the Khamsey Confederacy*, 92; Rao, "The Concept of Peripatetics: An Introduction," 21.

example, Yörüks were employed in public works in transportation and construction, such as the repair and protection of mines, bridges, and mountain passes. The Ottoman administration did not prefer to employ sedentary peasants for such work as it would reduce agricultural production and thereby tax revenues.[31] However, in the second half of the seventeenth century, when the central authority lost control over some of these groups, it made some attempts to settle nomadic communities. Due to the desire for more predictable tax revenues and to prevent potential social disorder, the administration tried to settle local, influential nomadic groups or to restrict their mobility.[32] Some nomadic groups were settled in those places where they were employed for the construction and repair of buildings, roads, and bridges.[33]

Early efforts to bring powerful nomadic groups under control ended in failure, and nomadism grew at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[34] The sedentarization of nomads again became a major issue after the promulgation of the Tanzimat reforms. Nomads along the southern coasts of Anatolia constituted a focal point for the administration. The movement of the nomads in this area was restricted in various ways. One was the establishment of *Fırka-ı Islâhiye* troops whose main concern was to bring the Turkmen and Kurdish nomads under control of the administration by settling them in either their summer pastures or their winter quarters. With the involvement of *Fırka-i Islâhiye* in the sedentarization efforts, many villages and towns were established where various nomadic groups were settled.[35] The military operations of the Ottoman government showed results only in the mid-nineteenth century when these forced attempts were combined with the intensification of the

31 See İnalcık, 484-485; Çetintürk, 112.

32 See Gould.

33 Those who resisted sedentarization policies were exiled. For example, the Yörüks wandering around İçil and Alâiye began to be taken to Cyprus starting in 1712 for being involved in such resistance. See Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Aşiretlerin İskanı* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1987), 109-111.

34 Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*, 86.

35 Orhonlu, 115; Nuri Yavuz, "Kuva-yı Islahiye'nin Musul ve Kerkük'teki Faaliyetleri," *Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 27, no. 1 (2007): 237-248.

market economy and the commercialization of agriculture - especially with the Land Code of 1858 -, the rise of landowners, and the reclamation of land.[36]

In the context of the late nineteenth century Ottoman countryside, sedentariness emerged not just as a norm imposed by the administration, but also as an adaptation strategy developed by nomadic communities. Since port cities and croplands in the plains gained importance, the rural population tended to leave the highlands and pursue a less mobile life in the valleys. Especially from the 1860s nomads were settled not only by force but also by choice due to increasing agricultural development in the lowlands.[37] With the help of the high land-to-labor ratio and the availability of forests for clearing, many nomadic groups obtained land by sharecropping, outright purchase, and intermarriage with sedentary families.[38]

Global ecological changes and the intensification of market relations in the Ottoman Empire led to a dramatic transformation in the composition of the population, the use of space, and subsistence strategies in the Taurus Mountains.[39] In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Mediterranean reemerged as a prominent commercial center. In order to meet the demand of the British military posts in the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Egyptian government - first for the projects of Mehmed Ali Paşa and then the construction of the Suez Canal -, Greek merchants formed new trade networks in Anatolia, Egypt, and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea.[40] Owing to the escalation of demand for cotton and wheat with the Pax Britannica, the drainage of lowlands, and the end of the Little Ice Age in 1870s, Mediterranean plains were

36 Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870," 19; Toksöz, 14.

37 Toksöz, 36.

38 For example, in Alasu, incoming pastoral nomads gradually settled in the late nineteenth century by developing social relationships with pre-existing residents. They settled in Alasu not as a result of the settlement and land distribution policy of the state, but mainly by way of intermarriage with the semi-sedentary pastoralist and sedentary agriculturalist families as well as by purchasing land and sharecropping. See Neyzi.

39 See also Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

40 McNeill, 158.

reopened for cultivation, and pastures, forests, and wastelands began to be converted into cropland.[41] With the spread of permanent settlement and the extension of arable land, cereal production increased.[42]

The aforementioned factors, together with population policies and wars in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, radically altered the human geography of the Taurus region. However, these developments neither compelled the communities to immediately settle nor did they immediately homogenize subsistence strategies in the Mediterranean Anatolia. With the introduction of large-scale farming, the area of cultivation in the western plain was extended, but no serious attempt was undertaken in the eastern plain until the end of the nineteenth century.[43] According to a report dated 1918, in Adana, where this transformation was most deeply experienced, there were still separate spaces for cultivating, lumbering, and shepherding from the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea up to the peaks of the Taurus Mountains. Most of the land situated lower than 1,400 meters was occupied by settled agriculturalists, whereas plateaus higher than 2,000 meters constituted the pastures of the Yörüks. Finally, the woodland between these croplands and pasturelands was the space of lumbering.[44] This area was mostly populated by the Tahtacı communities who were struggling in this age of globalization, deforestation, and modern administration.

41 See Beckert.

42 From 1840 to 1890 the percentage of the nomadic population declined by 26 percent. See Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*, 116. See also Tabak, "Economic and Ecological Change in the Eastern Mediterranean, c. 1550–1850," 37.

43 TNA, FO, 222/8/3, 1882.

44 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

§ 2.2 The Ecological Niche and the Population Distribution of Tahtacı Communities

The first known official records mentioning the Tahtacıs in the Ottoman Archives date to 1430s. A study by Telci[45] shows that in exchange for tax exemptions, twenty-seven Tahtacı families in Aydın Eskihisar were obliged to produce 300 wooden planks to be used in Ayasuluğ Castle. According to Telci, this community had lived in this area since at least the 1390s. Since then, "tahtacı" persisted in official and daily language as a common term to identify the communities that trod the forest-covered highlands and the outskirts of Mediterranean Anatolia in order to provide wood, timber, charcoal, bark, and other forest products to be used by the state, to be sold to the local population, or to be exported to other regions by timber merchants.

During the period on which this study focuses, the overwhelming majority of the nomadic Tahtacı communities involved in forest work lived along the southern coasts of Anatolia. In the Adana and Konya provinces, the subsistence of almost all Tahtacıs was based on peripatetic strategies. Teke in the province of Konya as well as Mersin in the province of Adana were regions where a large number of nomadic forest laborers lived and where a massive amount of a wide-ranging forest products were processed and exported. According to research on Tahtacıs in Lycia conducted by Luschan in 1890,[46] the community inhabited the altitudes from 1,000 to 1,500 meters. They only built fixed houses in exceptional cases. In winter and summer, these Tahtacı families lived in tents made of branches and covered with felt sheets. They built houses - similar to their tents but a bit bigger, with a floor area of about four square meters - only when they moved up to higher altitudes and had to stay longer in one place. The Tahtacıs visited the villages and towns only to sell or exchange timber.[47]

45 Cahit Telci, "'Cemaat-i Tahtacıyan': Aydın Sancağı'nda Vergiden Muaf Tahtacı Topluluğu (XV-XIX. Yüzyıllar)," *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 13 (2016): 5-34.

46 At this time, this region was under the administration of the Antalya subprovince of Konya province.

47 von Luschan, 33.

About thirty years after the survey of Luschan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs charged Niyazi Bey with investigating the Tahtacı groups living in Adana province. Similarly, he witnessed Tahtacı families following a semi-nomadic lifestyle, moving to the high plateaus and forests from spring to winter. On the other hand, by 1918 the Tahtacı groups were living a less mobile way of life, still based on seasonal migration and a work cycle shaped by the demands of the timber market but over a narrower expanse and at lower altitudes. In winter they lived in their villages down in the valleys. Shortly before spring, they left their villages to inhabit the forests in the highlands until the next winter. They built temporary sheds in a few days from materials they collected from the forests. Almost all Tahtacı houses were made of wood. At the beginning of winter, these houses were deconstructed and the materials were sold on the market. At that time, the maximum altitude at which the Tahtacı villages were built was 800-900 meters. The winter villages of the Tahtacıs functioned as storage for the timber they had cut and processed during spring and summer.[48]

On the other hand, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, *Temettuat* (income) registers indicate that some groups that were called Tahtacı lived in the northern Aegean region, in Hüdâvendigâr and Aydın provinces, and earned their living with agriculture.[49] As a result of the commercialization of agriculture along the Aegean coasts of Anatolia, the trend of sedentarization and involvement in agriculture among Tahtacıs in this region increased relatively earlier. Even though nomadic forest work continued at high altitudes in Western Anatolia up until the 1950s, many families called Tahtacı in early nineteenth century had already abandoned forest work. Even though their subsistence was not based on lumbering anymore, they were still called Tahtacı. In the late Ottoman and early Republican period, the level and form

48 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

49 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 9251, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845]; BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2552, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845]; BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2606, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845]; BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2240, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845]; Tahsin Yeşil, "9930 Numaralı Temettuat Defterine Göre XIX. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Eğirdir'in Köylerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı" (MA diss., Süleyman Demirel University, 2006).

of involvement in agricultural production among Tahtacıs varied depending on economic, climatic, and geographical conditions. Some depended on crops produced by villagers, some practiced subsistence farming, others worked as sharecroppers or wage-laborers, and a minority cultivated for commercial purposes. This differentiation indicated a major transformation in labor relations.[50]

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of people who were identified as Tahtacı.[51] While adding an annotation indicating that there had been a considerable change in the population and distribution of Tahtacı groups during the First World War, Niyazi Bey estimated in his official report of 1918 that the total number of Tahtacıs throughout the empire was approximately 150,000. According to the report by Niyazi Bey, from the northernmost Aegean region of Anatolia to the Binboğa plateau in Maraş, Tahtacı communities were scattered throughout the chains of valleys and forests of Hüdâvendigâr, Aydın, Konya, and Adana provinces. Most of the population was concentrated in the Isparta, Antalya, İçil, and Mersin subprovinces. There were also Tahtacı villages in Narlıdere, Kızılcayer, Kavacık, Naldöğen, Nif, Menemen, Bayındır, Tire, Milas, Muğla, Ödemiş, Söke, Kazdağı, Burdur, Alâiye, Fenike, and Adana.[52]

Furthermore, there are a number of estimations at the local level. According to the census conducted by the administration in 1831, there were 430 nomadic Tahtacı households in Teke earning a living with woodwork.[53] According to research made by Petersen and Luschan at the end of the nineteenth century in western Lycia, which overlapped with the Teke region, there were 1,000 families or approximately 5,000 people calling themselves Tahtacı who

50 On different forms of labor relations, see Leo Lucassen, "Working Together: New Directions in Global Labour History," *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 1 (2016): 66-87.

51 For a detailed literature review on the Tahtacı population, see İsmail Engin, "XIX. Yüzyıldan Günümüze Tahtacı Nüfusu Üzerine Veriler I," *Cem* 7, no. 72 (1997): 44-47; İsmail Engin, "XIX. Yüzyıldan Günümüze Tahtacı Nüfusu Üzerine Veriler II," *Cem* 8, no. 73 (1998): 50-52; ibid.

52 See BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

53 Mehmet Ak, "Teke Sancağında 1831 Sayımına Göre Nüfus ve Yerleşme," *History Studies: International Journal of History* 6, no. 3 (2014): 19.

lived in the mountains and were engaged in timber production.[54] In 1920, in addition to the valleys of the Gediz River (Hermus) and Büyük Menderes River, Teke was still an important region for the Tahtacıs of the western Taurus.[55]

Adana was another region where a considerable Tahtacı population lived. According to the report by Niyazi Bey, the Tahtacı community lived in the villages of Karahızırlı, Sandal, Kuzucubelen, and Düğdüören in Mersin; the villages of Dalakderesi, Belenkeşlik, and Kaburgediği in Tarsus; Kadelli and the villages of Çamalanı, Hacıkırı, Karaçalı, Pamukalanı, and Cingöz in Karaisalı; Durhasandede village in Ayas; and Kabaklar and İdilli in Islahiye. Sorkun and the headwaters of Gelendire stream, the Beşgöz district in Fındıkpınarı, and Karaçoban, Ayvagediği, Tanzıt, Elmalı, Haçin Dağı, Tekir, Kızıldağ, Kurdak, and Koçak were the plateaus where Tahtacı communities were living.[56]

§ 2.3 Concluding Remarks

In this introductory chapter I provided a long-term view of ecological niches in the Taurus Mountains. Instead of asserting a single historical point in which the Tahtacı community emerged, this chapter defined the various factors, namely the physical geography, climate, market, and administrative practices, that shaped the culture of the Tahtacıs. By locating the history of the Tahtacıs in the overall evolution of subsistence strategies in Mediterranean Anatolia, this chapter demonstrated that the Tahtacıs were neither isolated nor unchanging, but adaptive and flexible communities.

Since at least the beginning of the fifteenth century, communities that were employed to harvest forest products were called "tahtacı." In the course of

54 Petersen and von Luschan; von Luschan, 32; von Luschan, 230.

55 Hasluck, 328.

56 Census records of Adana indicate that there were 116 Tahtacı in Sandal, 309 in Kuzucubelen, 70 in Döğdüören, 186 in Dalakderesi, 100 in Belenkeşlek, 240 Kaburgediği, 52 in Çukurbağ, 303 in Kadelli, 97 in Cingöz, 86 in Pamukalanı, 212 in Durhasandede, 377 in Kabaklar, 479 in İdilli, 100 in Bekirhacılı, and 100 in Sırkıntı. BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

time, this word came to denote the nomadic forest laborers of the Taurus Mountains, an area known for its rich forests and strategic importance due to its proximity to trade routes and networks. During the nineteenth century, Tahtacı families in certain regions gradually became involved in cultivation due to the intensification of the commercialization of agriculture as a result of the end of the Little Ice Age as well as increasing demand for Ottoman goods. This was also a period when the subsistence practices of Tahtacı families became highly diversified.

The descent of the population, including the Tahtacıs, to lower altitudes increased population density in the lowlands. Not only the increase of the population but also deforestation, the new forest regime, continuous wars, and settling policies increased competition among local communities over forest sources. This tendency deepened conflicts in the countryside and caused disputes over the possession and control of woodlands and non-forested lands alike. I discuss the new subsistence strategies of Tahtacıs given these conditions in Chapter 6.

3

Struggles over Forest Lands and Products Before the Bureaucratization of Forest Management

Presenting a brief history of forest management and the trade of forest products in the Mediterranean context, this chapter reveals the contribution of the Tahtacıs to the imperial and regional economy and the power relations in Ottoman forests before the introduction of scientific forestry.

In the early modern Ottoman Empire, the production and transportation of forest products necessary to satisfy the vital needs of towns, cities, and armies required the involvement of various actors that constituted an imperial trade network. The most rational option was for the Ottoman administration to involve local populations in natural resource management for the supply of forest products. With their centuries-old experience, the Tahtacıs constituted the main source of forest labor in Southwestern Anatolia. Lumbering was a challenging occupation that required a specialized labor force and geographically localized knowledge. Tahtacı communities had gained this expertise throughout the centuries. For at least six hundred years, as the main labor source for timber harvesting, they had felled cedar and pine trees in the Taurus Mountains for export via the ports of Mediterranean Anatolia.[1] In the golden age of trade in timber and charcoal, their knowledge of tree species, cutting

1 McNeill, 93,122.

seasons, and which trees were the best for special purposes[2] as well as their sophisticated conservation systems were more vital than ever. That was why the Tahtacıs moved to lower altitudes and had continuous contact with lowland communities both via trade networks and their products, which reached distant lands.

I begin the chapter by offering a brief overview of the legal status of forested lands and describing forest utilization and the trade in forest products before the introduction of the Forest Regulation of 1870, which was the first attempt of Ottoman bureaucrats to fully standardize the forest regime. The early restrictions, rights, and management before the attempts at bureaucratization explain the mentality behind the modern reforms and discourses of the scientific foresters of the late Ottoman Empire. The second part of the chapter deals with the intensification of commercial forestry starting in the mid-nineteenth century. Parallel to the trend of purchasing forest products from traders instead of *ocaklık*s and provinces, the reemergence of the Mediterranean region as a commercial center and the increase of the local and regional demand for timber due to large-scale construction projects led to the formation of a new merchant class that enjoyed these opportunities.

§ 3.1 The Utilization of Forests

3.1.1 *Forms of Property*

Although the property regime pertaining to land was not codified and standardized until the Land Code of 1858, forests in the Ottoman Empire were divided in practice into three main categories based on the legal status of the land on which they were located: *Mülk* (private), *vakıf* (waqf/foundation), and *mirî* (state). Approximately ninety percent of the forests in the Ottoman Empire were *mirî*.[3]

Mülk forests were the property of private persons. Title owners had the right to dispose trees and other products of the forest and transfer them to

2 Dursun, 41; Yaşar Baş, "Kocaeli'den İstanbul'a Kereste Nakli ve Kullanımı" (paper presented at the Uluslararası Kara Mürsel Alp ve Kocaeli Tarihi Sempozyumu II, Kocaeli, 2016), 1083.

3 Çağlar, 71.

their successors. Private property in forestlands emerged in various ways. First, war veterans were awarded forested land in certain circumstances. Second, private persons who contributed to the afforestation of barren, non-arable land were given the lands they had reclaimed. Afforestation of agricultural land was another way forests could become private property. Finally, those who worked to grow trees on lands other than agricultural and *metruk* (communal or public) lands were awarded those lands.[4]

Vakıf foundations held large areas of agricultural and urban lands, as well as forests and woodlands.[5] These forests could only be used for the purpose for which the *vakıf* was founded.[6] The former status of these lands could be either *mirî* or *mülk*.[7]

Mirî, the most common type of land ownership in the Ottoman Empire, were state-owned lands. Usufruct rights of arable *mirî* lands could be granted to private persons as long as they cultivated the land and paid the tithe. According to the forest regime that preceded the introduction of the Forest Regulation in 1870, forests located on *mirî* lands were classified into three categories in terms of the users to which they were assigned[8]:

1 *Cibâl-i mübâha:* Forest lands that could not be owned by any private person and were used by local groups for their vital needs without paying any taxes.
2 *Baltalık:* Coppices reserved by a deed of assignment for the vital needs of the residents of villages and towns and closed to use by other people.[9] These two categories can be considered as public forests designated for the vital needs of local communities.

4 Etfal Şükrü Batmaz, Bekir Koç, and İsmail Çetinkaya, *Osmanlı Ormancılığı İle İlgili Belgeler*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Orman Bakanlığı 1999), iii-iv.

5 For a critical view on the literature on *vakıf*s, see Nadir Özbek, "Vakıf Tarihi Çalışmaları Üzerine Notlar," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 187 (1999): 60-62.

6 Çağlar, 52.

7 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası*, no. 3 (30 Eylül 1305 [12 October 1889]): 88.

8 ibid., 86.

9 Koç, 239.

3 *Tersâne-i Âmire* (Imperial Arsenal): Forests assigned for the needs of the military and administrated by arsenal.

Koç adds three additional *mirî* forest categories[10]:

- *Istabl-ı Âmire* (Imperial Stables): Forests used as shelter for animals kept by the state, sultan, or members of the dynasty.
- *Hâssa şikâr-gâhı* (Imperial Hunt): Forests designated for the hunting activities of the sultan and members of the dynasty.
- Woods and coppices assigned to *tekâyâ* (lodges) and *zevâyâ* (monasteries).

Until the nineteenth century, there was no specific law defining the property regime, rights, penalties, privileges, and management and conservation techniques for forests. The protection measures and surveillance techniques implemented by the Ottoman government were limited to certain forested zones reserved for military and administrative needs. In order to meet the demand of the army and the inhabitants of Istanbul for wood, the Ottoman government developed some surveillance techniques and imposed restrictions on the exploitation of *mirî* forests, especially those located along the Anatolian coasts. Timber provisioned from different parts of the countryside was transported to the imperial stores in Istanbul.[11]

Satisfying the needs of the constantly increasing population of Istanbul was always a vital issue for the Ottoman administration. The timber sent to Istanbul was exempted from taxation until a special regulation in 1871 that imposed a forest tax to the merchants before transporting timber, firewood, and charcoal to Istanbul.[12] The government monitored both the local communities and the officials to prevent unrest or riots in the capital city due to the lack of food or fuel.[13]

10 ibid., 238-239.

11 Alan Mikhail, "Anatolian Timber and Egyptian Grain: Things that Made the Ottoman Empire," in *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2013), 278.

12 Dursun, 274-275.

13 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, iv-v.

A further aim of early restrictions was to protect the forests and certain tree species used by the Imperial Shipyard and the Imperial Arsenal.[14] Forests that provided proper timber for shipbuilding had been taken under preservation in the sixteenth century.[15] As a part of this agenda, the administration interfered in forests in Bolu and Sinop, and on Ahi Mountain, Sündiken Mountain, and the Kaz Mountains by closing them to the public. According to Yiğitoğlu, these were first examples of "state forests" in the Ottoman Empire.[16]

On the other hand, the central government had a limited capacity to supervise even those forests designated for the demands of state institutions. Local governments were responsible for the management of these forests. It was not officials directly bound to the central authority but rather forest guards who mediated between the government and provincial administrations.[17]

Until the introduction of the Forest Regulation, there was no attempt to register the forests known as *cibâl-i mübâha*,[18] so the boundaries of forests in this category were unclear. All forests that were neither reserved for the state nor belonged to any individuals, *vakıf*, or village were perceived as *cibâl-i mübâha*.[19] Unlike forests utilized to meet the demand of the Shipyard, Arsenal, Palace, and urban populations, there was almost no control, when it came to "public" forests.[20] These vast lands, usually located on mountain chains far

14 "Ormanlarımız," *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası*, no. 1 (1884): 18; "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 89. See BOA, C.İ, 560, 1225 [1810] in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 136-137. BOA, A.MKT.UM, 120/46, 1269 [1854]; BOA, A.MKT.UM, 122/44, 1269 [1854] in Nurullah İşler and Yusuf Gök, *Osmanlı Ormancılığı İle İlgili Belgeler*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Orman Bakanlığı, 2003), 52-57.

15 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, iv-v.

16 Ali Kemal Yiğitoğlu, *Türkiye Ormancılığının Temelleri, Şartları, Kuruluşu* (Ankara: Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü, 1936), 8.

17 Dursun, 64.

18 Koç, 240.

19 Dursun, 67.

20 Mazhar Diker, *Türkiye'de Ormancılık: Dün-Bugün-Yarın* (Ankara: Akın Matbaası, 1947), 21; Louis Adolphe Ambroise Bricogne, *Türkiye'de Ormancılık Heyeti*, trans. Fahri Bük (Ankara: Recep Ulusoğlu Basımevi, 1940), 12.

from villages, towns,[21] dockyards, and ports,[22] served peasants and nomadic groups for centuries by providing timber, fuel wood, and other forest products for basic needs. This right was also recognized in *Mecelle,* the Ottoman civil code based on *shari'a* law, that remained in effect between 1877 and 1926. *Mecelle* defined the usage rights in *cibâl-i mübâha* forests within the framework of *şirket-i ibâha,* a practice based on collective ownership of certain goods. Accordingly, it was *mübâh* (permitted) for all to benefit from *cibâl-i mübâha* without paying a tithe as, like "water, grass, or fire,"[23] their assets could not be owned by anyone but were used jointly by the public[24] for *havâyic-i zarûrîye* (vital needs).[25] The literature on Ottoman forestry in the republican era is almost exclusively based on criticism of this practice.[26]

These forests played an important role in the lives of local people, not only by supplying wood for heating and housing and suitable pasturage for livestock,[27] but also for small-scale commercial timber production[28] that provided additional income to pastoral groups and constituted the main means of livelihood for certain peripatetic groups like the Tahtacıs. In theory, those who extracted wood and timber for commercial purposes were to be taxed.[29] How-

21 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 86.

22 Bekir Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, no. 10 (1999): 143.

23 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 89.

24 Üstüner Birben, "Cibal-i Mübaha" (paper presented at the SDÜ II. Ormancılıkta Sosyo-Ekonomik Sorunlar Kongresi, Isparta, 2009), 398.

25 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 143.

26 See Şeref Nuri İlkmen, "Orman İşletmeciliğinde Devletçilik Problemi ve Ormancılık Politikamızın Ana Davaları," in *Orman Davamızın Çeşitli Yönlerine Dair İlmi Görüşler* (Ankara: Türkiye Ormancılar Cemiyeti, 1951), 22; Ali Armağan, *Türk Tarım Toplumu: Orman ve Dağ Köylerinin Kalkınması Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (Istanbul: Dede Korkut Yayınları, 1977), 25.

27 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 86.

28 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 143.

29 Çağlar, 53.

ever, in practice, as long as the demands of the army and Istanbul were satisfied, the administration did not manage the extensive, commercial forms of utilizing *cibâl-i mübâha* forests. Even if certain commercial uses were taxed, there were no limits in terms of the modes of cutting in or volume of timber extracted from *cibâl-i mübâha* forests. Moreover, clearing forests for agricultural purposes was encouraged since it increased tax revenues for the treasury.[30]

3.1.2 *Resource Management*

Istanbul was not only the main store and distribution point of forest products but also the top priority for resource management, as it was the capital city. Meeting the demand of the inhabitants of Istanbul and residents of the Palace for firewood was high on the agenda of Ottoman bureaucrats. As one of the most basic needs, a lack of wood could cause social unrest.[31] The demand of Istanbul for firewood was met under the supervision of the *İstanbul Ağası,* the general officer of Istanbul. This was such a vital duty that, according to an archival record dated 1801, *İstanbul Ağası* Mehmed was exiled to Cyprus for leaving the inhabitants of Istanbul and residents of the Palace without firewood. He was replaced with Salih Ağa.[32]

Along with its importance for the urban and rural population, timber was a strategic resource for the military, as well - especially for the navy, as it was the main material for shipbuilding. Its accessibility to timber resources constituted a crucial factor that contributed to the development of the Ottoman navy and artilleries.[33] From the fifteenth century onwards, the navy played a prominent role in the increasing military power of the Ottoman Empire, and it required the exploitation of a wider forested area. In the sixteenth century, due to the need for new ships, the government made an effort to explore the

30 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 240-241.

31 BOA, HH, 51447/1229, 1814 in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 64-67.

32 BOA, HH, 15920/1215, 1800-1801 in ibid., 62-63.

33 Palmira Johnson Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 8-9, 96.

imperial forests in order to harvest more trees.[34] During the sixteenth century, forest products needed for shipbuilding were provisioned by the *tımar*s (fiefs). In certain cases, the expenses of construction materials were covered by *cizye* (poll tax) revenues.[35] From the end of the sixteenth century onwards, the demand of the Shipyard and Arsenal as well as the inhabitants of Istanbul for forest products was mostly provisioned by *ocaklık*s.

Under the *ocaklık* system, certain forested lands were reserved for the needs of the navy and Istanbul. The administration not only forbade local communities from using these trees for their own needs but also subjected them to forced labor for the purpose of the provision and transportation of timber for the Shipyard and Arsenal.[36] In the early modern period these communities were worked every three to four years for an entire season.[37]

In *ocaklık*s, sedentary peasants and nomads employed by the administration as temporary laborers cut trees and transported them to the coasts.[38] The laborers were either paid by the Imperial Treasury or exempted from certain local taxes.[39] For example, the peasants of the Kocaeli subprovince were held liable for providing a certain amount of timber for the Imperial Arsenal in return for an exemption from the *avârız,* an annual tax paid by Ottoman peasants in extraordinary situations such as war. Similarly, during the seventeenth century, peasants in the Biga and Karesi subprovinces supplied and transported a certain amount and type of timber instead of paying the *avârız* tax.[40] The obligation to provide timber could not be substituted by payment in cash. However, starting in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, both due to

34 Dursun, 50.

35 Eyüp Özveren and Onur Yıldırım, "An Outline of Ottoman Maritime History " in *New Directions in Mediterranean Maritime History*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis and Carmel Vassalo (Newfoundland: St. John's, 2004), 165.

36 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 89.

37 Mikhail, 278.

38 Dursun, 52.

39 Baş, 1084.

40 İdris Bostan, *Osmanlı Bahriye Teşkilatı: XVII. Yüzyılda Tersane-i Amire* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 113.

the need of the administration for cash and deepening deforestation,[41] cash payments were accepted.

The tax obligation of the peasants and nomads was defined in monetary terms. The amount paid by the government to peasants and nomads was five times less than the market price of timber. The remaining four-fifths was deducted from the *avârız* tax liability of the *ocaklık* laborers.[42] The capacity of the government to manage these forests was limited. Local people developed several strategies to escape the *ocaklık* obligations. It was a widespread tradition for local groups doing compulsorily work to cut firewood for their own needs from these so-called "confined" lands.[43] Furthermore, since officials did no systematic studies before the cutting process about how much and what type of forest products were needed, thousands of cut and processed trees were left in the forests and at the ports.[44] In certain cases, gangs of poor peasants interrupted the logging from *ocaklık*s or peasants doing compulsory work left their villages, which caused trouble for the provision of timber.[45] They illegally extracted timber from *ocaklık* forests and sold it to merchants or used it for their own needs.[46]

Another method of obtaining forest products for the needs of the Shipyard, Arsenal, Palace, and residents of Istanbul was *derya mübaya'ası.* Wood and charcoal that merchants bought from producers and brought to Istanbul were forcibly purchased by officers at the entry point to the Bosphorus at a lower than market price.[47] The final method was the purchase *(iştira)* of forest products from the provinces,[48] especially from Bolu and the coasts of Black

41 Özveren and Yıldırım, 165-166.

42 Bostan, 107.

43 "Ormanlarımız," 18.

44 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 241-242.

45 Baş, 1084.

46 Bostan, 109; Dursun, 54-55.

47 Muharrem Öztel, "Tanzimat Dönemi ve Sonrasında İstanbul'un Temel İhtiyaçlarından Odun ve Kömürün (Mahrukat) Üretim Sürecinde ve Arz Piyasasında Yaşanan Problemler," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6, no. 24 (2013): 288.

48 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, v-vi.

Sea, namely the Anatolian coast as far as Samsun and the Rumelian coast as far as Varna.[49] In the eighteenth century, problems related to the provision of forest products from the provinces led the administration to buy materials from merchants at market prices.[50]

Timber needed for shipbuilding in the Imperial Shipyard was produced from oak, pine, elm, chestnut, walnut, boxwood, linden, and plane trees growing in the İznikmid, Yalakâbâd, Sarıçayır, Pazarköyü, Âb-ı Sâfî, Akhisar, Geyve, Akyazı, Sabanca, Kaymas, Kandıra, Akâbâd, Ağaçlı, Gençli, Şeyhli, Taşköprü, and Karamürsel *ocaklık*s.[51] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mostly forests in the Kocaeli subprovince were utilized.[52] In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Ottomans discovered rich forested lands close to the Gulf of İzmit full of trees appropriate for oar production.[53] Biga, Çan, and Kala-i Sultâniye constituted a further region that provided timber for shipbuilding.[54] Since nearby timber sources were dramatically reduced by the end of the seventeenth century, the forests around Bolu began to be exploited for the needs of the Shipyard.[55] During this period, distant forests such as those in Albania and on the Carpathian and Taurus Mountains became vital for specialized products such as masts.[56]

Felling of trees, processing of them into logs, and transportation of logs from forests necessitated the mobilization of large numbers of human and animal resources.[57] The *kereste emini* (timber official) was the individual responsible at the local level. He was liable for the supervision of felling, processing, transporting, and shipping of timber from the forests.[58] The *mübaşir*, who was

49 Bostan, 115-116.

50 Özveren and Yıldırım, 166.

51 Bostan, 102.

52 ibid.; Özveren and Yıldırım, 164.

53 Baş, 1087.

54 Bostan, 112-115.

55 ibid., 117; Özveren and Yıldırım, 163.

56 Özveren and Yıldırım, 164.

57 Dursun, 59.

58 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 241; Baş, 1084.

appointed by the central government,[59] and the *kereste emini* were responsible for paying the peasants and nomads for cutting and transporting forest products.[60] *Kadı*s (judges) were charged with the supervision of the process.[61] Under the *iltizam* (tax farming) system, which became widespread in the seventeenth century, *mültezim*s (tax farmers) began to collect timber and charcoal from the local people in return for their tax liabilities. Under this system, the tax burden of the rural population substantially increased. *Mültezim*s bought the products from producers at much less than market price.[62]

Auxiliary troops called *yaya, müsellem, yörük,* and *canbaz* were laborers working in shipbuilding and on the transportation of forest goods. These were then processed by various craftsmen. When the number of craftsmen working for the Shipyard was insufficient, the administration applied to local artisans specialized in these areas.[63] *Bıçkıcılar* (lumberjacks) responsible for cutting trees from the mountains and producing timber according to measures determined by the administration were day laborers and constituted the largest segment among the craftsmen.[64] The Imperial Shipyard employed 370 *bıçkıcı*s in 1622, 704 in 1645, 1,468 in 1652, and 3,158 in 1661. The daily wage of a *bıçkıcı* was eight to twelve *akçe*[65] in 1642.[66] From 1792 to 1802, officers responsible for the provision of forest products to the Imperial Shipyard obtained 3,430 *kıt'a* of lath and 7,584 *kıt'a* of pine timber from the Kaz Mountains. The price and wage for cutting and transporting totaled 6,1930 *kuruş*.[67] According to a document dated 1819, three boatmen were employed for the transportation of the

59 Baş, 1085.

60 Bostan, 102-118; Dursun, 54-55.

61 Dursun, 53.

62 Öztel, 289-290.

63 Bostan, 66-81.

64 Ali İhsan Gencer, *Bahriye'de Yapılan Islahat Hareketleri ve Bahriye Nezareti'nin Kuruluşu (1789-1867)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001), 297.

65 The relationship between the Ottoman monetary units was as follows: 1 *lira* = 100 *kuruş* = 4000 *para* = 12000 *akça*

66 Bostan, 75.

67 BOA, C.BH, 79/3763, 10 Cemaziyelâhir 1218 [27 September 1803].

timber needed for shallop building in Antalya port. 300 *kuruş* was paid to each.[68]

The Ottoman Empire built this complicated organization in forested lands neighboring Istanbul, such as along the western shores of the Sea of Marmara and along the coasts of the Black Sea. This region was relatively reachable with the technology of the time. However, at that time, the Taurus Mountains were almost unreachable for the administration. On the other hand, wood provided from the forests of the Taurus Mountains constituted an important resource to satisfy the heating and housing needs of locals and the demand of the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. Even in the early modern period, when the Mediterranean had lost its commercial importance, timber trade was profitable. The Ottoman administration developed some surveillance techniques and tried to monopolize the timber trade in order to get a share of this profit.

§ 3.2 Intensification of Commercial Forestry in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

With their wide, rich forests and relatively easy access to the sea, the Taurus Mountains have supplied the Mediterranean people with forest products for centuries. An American geographer wrote in 1919 that with its abundant forests, the western Taurus range had been always vital for the Mediterranean people: These mountains are drained by the Eurymedon (Köprüçay) and Melas (Manavgat) rivers, which were used to floating logs down to the coast. In Side, located between the mouths of these rivers, was a shipyard used by Cilician pirates. With their fine cedars, the Cilician and Lycian Taurus were other regions that were vital for shipbuilding.[69] In 1882, Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson noted in his report that from time "immemorial," timber needed in Syria, Egypt, and on some Greek islands had been provided by the forests on the slopes of the Taurus Mountains.[70]

68 BOA, C.BH, 206/9641, 14 Receb 1234 [9 May 1819].

69 Ellen Churchill Semple, "Climatic and Geographic Influences on Ancient Mediterranean Forests and the Lumber Trade," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 9, no. 1 (1919): 21-22.

70 TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882.

There is little information about the composition of the labor force employed in timber production in Mediterranean Anatolia in earlier times. According to some scholars, forester Turkmens had lived in the forests of Anatolia since even earlier than the eleventh century. Based on some studies of Byzantine history, Yalçın, for example, argues that some Turkmen tribes had inhabited the forests of Anatolia since the mid-seventh century when they first arrived in Anatolia and were welcomed by local communities due to their contribution to timber production.[71] Long before Yalçın's study, Yerasimos provided information on the significant role of some Turkmen communities in producing timber to be exported to Egypt via the ports of Antalya and Alâiye.[72] Similarly, when delineating the subsistence strategies of Turkmen communities that inhabited Anatolia in the Seljuk era, Cahen mentions Turkmen foresters and woodcutters who were neither involved in agriculture nor stockbreeding and lived in the vast forests that covered the Taurus.[73]

İnalcık underlines that, in the end of the thirteenth century when the supply of commodities was cut following a blockade of Eastern Mediterranean lands ordered by the pope, frontier Turkmens in Anatolia, who depended on the export of timber and slaves to Egypt, established closer relationships with the Mamluks who needed arms, timber and iron of Anatolia.[74] Additionally, wheat, cotton, and forest products such as valonia, gallnut, and madder were supplied by the Turkmens and Yörüks and were exported to Europe via certain ports in Western Anatolia.[75]

During the early modern era, lumbering was still an important economic activity of the Turkmens living in the Taurus Mountains. The timber provided

71 Alemdar Yalçın, "Anadolu Aleviliğinin Gelişim Evreleri III: Anadolu'da Yerleşim," *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2010): 20.

72 Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az Gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye, Bizans'tan Tanzimat'a*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1974), 190.

73 Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History, c.1071-1330* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1968), 46.

74 Halil İnalcık, "The Rise of the Turcoman Maritime Principalities in Anatolia, Byzantium, and the Crusades," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 9 (1985): 309.

75 İnalcık, "The Yörüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," 482.

by the Tahtacı communities was shipped mostly to Syria and Egypt from Antalya, Alâiye, Finike, and other Mediterranean ports. The government bought timber from laborers and sold it at a higher price. Relying on Ottoman financial records, İnalcık shows the intensity of the trade in the fifteenth century via the ports of Antalya and its dependencies. According to these sources, the annual revenue from the export of forest products from these ports was 177,531 *akça* (about 4,000 Venetian ducats) over sixteen months and twenty-five days in 1476 and 1477.[76]

Given its commercial potential, Egypt was one of the regions to which a large amount of Anatolian timber was exported. Brummett demonstrates that this trade was mutually beneficial to both the Ottomans and Mamluks. For construction and naval projects, the Mamluk state was dependent on Ottoman timber and brought significant customs revenues to the treasury. Additionally, in exchange for timber, Ottomans imported Egyptian spices controlled by the Mamluk state monopoly.[77]

Timber export from Anatolia to Egypt continued after the establishment of Ottoman rule in Egypt in 1517. As Mikhail puts forth, "wood – and for that matter food as well - entered into an imperial chain of demand, need, and availability in which the deficiencies of one region were met by the excesses of others."[78] The timber-supply capacity of the Taurus Mountains and the grain-producing potential of Egypt linked Tahtacı communities to Egyptian peasants for centuries. The timber extracted by the Tahtacıs from the forests of the Taurus Mountains followed a complicated and challenging path. With the involvement of several local actors mentioned before, such as laborers, craftsmen, and sailors, it was transported to Egypt on merchant ships rented by the state.[79]

Even though southern ports lost their importance in the early sixteenth century once the sea route from the Black Sea to Egypt was secured,[80] the southern Anatolian forests continued supplying a large amount of wood to the

76 İnalcık, "The Yörüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," 483.

77 Brummett, 144.

78 Mikhail, 277.

79 ibid., 277-278.

80 McNeill, 93.

Mediterranean economy since it was one of the few regions that could meet the demand for the timber of the whole country. Before the nineteenth century, a large amount of the timber provided from Mediterranean Anatolia was first transported to Istanbul, which, according to Mikhail, was an attempt by the state to monopolize control over this strategic source. Referring to orders in the early eighteenth century, Mikhail shows that most trees stored in Istanbul were coming from Southwestern Anatolia,[81] where a large number of Tahtacı communities lived. Even though this region was not along the main trade routes of the time, there was already a trade network built up there by local merchants. In the early eighteenth century, the products of local people were also exported via small ports along the coast from İçil to Antalya from where they were transported to Cyprus, Egypt, and Syria.[82]

What revived direct shipping from the southern ports of Anatolia was the intensification of overall trade in Mediterranean Anatolia. Following the formation of independent Greece in 1830, Greek merchants built a commerce network that linked Russia, the Balkans, Anatolia, and Egypt.[83] One of the products that entered this network was timber. Forest products provided from the Taurus as well as the Rhosus and Amanos Mountains were floated or carried down to the river mouths, then exported to Cyprus, Beirut, Alexandria, Syria, and the Greek Islands.[84] Since most of this trade was illegal, there is no reliable quantitative data to show the quantities of the exported products. An English orientalist wrote that in the time of Ibrahim Paşa, 10,000 magnificent trees were cut and sent to Alexandria every year. Smaller trees and wooden boards of various sizes and thickness were sent to Syria.[85]

81 Mikhail, 278.

82 Ensar Köse, "18. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında İçel ve Antalya Sahilleri'nde Ticaret," *Cedrus*, no. 1 (2013): 302-303.

83 McNeill, 246.

84 TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882.

85 William Burckhardt Barker, *Cilicia: Its Former History and Present State* (London: R. Griffin, 1862), 121.

There are numerous documents in the Ottoman Archives showing the Mediterranean character of the network of trade in forest products. For example, in 1822, Hasköylü Haçador, an Ottoman timber merchant, submitted a petition asking permission to use a ship belonging to Banista Atarita, a subject of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies *(Sicilyateyn),* in order to transport timber to Mihail Surur, his business partner in Egypt.[86] A Swedish sea captain asked the Ottoman administration in 1823 for permission to transport timber bought in Anatolia to be sold to Seyyid Abdi Ağa in Alexandria. El-Hac Ahmed Ağa, an Egyptian merchant residing in Asmaaltı, became his guarantor.[87] Francisco Costa, an Austrian merchant, requested permission to transport 1,683 units of timber from Istanbul to Mehmed Ali Paşa, the governor of Egypt.[88]

The reason for the rising demand in Egypt for forest products in this period was the increasing construction activity commissioned by the provincial government. Public investments, intensified in the beginning of the nineteenth century, necessitated a constant supply of cedar, fir, and pine. Timber played an especially prominent role in shipbuilding and the construction of irrigation networks as it was the main construction material at the time. In 1812, the governor of Egypt demanded 8,000 *kıta* of timber from the Antalya, Alâiye, and Tarsus subprovinces and the Island of Thasos *(Taşöz Cezires)* for the construction of two large bridges over the Nile. He requested in his letter that this timber be provisioned by the end of March in order to secure the construction of these bridges within the current year. The Supreme Council *(Meclis-i Vâlâ)* charged Nâzım Efendi, the officer of public works *(îmâr memûru)* of the Konya Administrative Council, in Antalya and Alâiye and İbrahim Efendi, the purchasing officer at the Imperial Mint *(Darphâne-i Âmire mübâya'at kâtibi),* in Tarsus with accelerating the process on the condition that their expenses be covered by the governor.[89]

86 BOA, C.HR, 73/3638, 9 Cemaziyelahir 1237 [4 March 1822].

87 BOA, C.İKTS, 16/761, 15 Şaban 1238 [27 April 1823].

88 BOA, C.İKTS, 15/749, 23 Zilkade 1240 [9 July 1825].

89 BOA, C.NF, 46/2299, 16 Rebiulevvel 1227 [30 March 1812].

The attempt of Mehmed Ali Paşa to build a strong navy in Alexandria was the main factor behind the increasing demand for Anatolian wood. He requested the *iltizam*, the right to collect taxes, of Meis Island, which was strategically important for its timber resources, shipbuilding industry, and proximity to Anatolia for further trade of wood and timber,[90] even though this island was "small, devastated and profitless,"[91] in terms of its *iltizam* revenues according to Ottoman bureaucrats.

The desire of Mehmed Ali Paşa for the cedar of the Taurus Mountains was one of the factors that prompted his invasion of Adana in the 1830s.[92] The hardness and durability of pine obtained from the Taurus forests generated great demand.[93] The vast forests of southern slopes of the Taurus met the demand of Egypt,[94] where the urban population and the construction of buildings, irrigation systems, and ships rapidly increased in the nineteenth century but domestic timber was unavailable.[95]

Anatolian timber reached Egypt in various ways. In March 1838, Ömer Kaptan, a ship captain from Alexandria, shared information with the local government about the secret intentions of Egypt related to timber resources in Anatolia. He stated that Mehmed Ali Paşa had hired sailors from merchant ships in order to transport Anatolian timber to Egypt.[96]

Eight years after this intelligence, the Teke subprovince received a request for permission from the governor of Egypt for lumbering in the Antalya region. The government accepted this request. Zenairoğlu, who was a carpenter and timber merchant, won the tender and started to provide timber from the forests of Antalya. Since this project depended on a constant supply of timber, Egypt renewed the request in February 1847.[97]

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90 BOA, HAT, 540/26719, 29 Zilhicce 1240 [14 August 1825].

91 BOA, HAT, 666/32404, 29 Zilkade 1243 [12 June 1828].

92 McNeill, 248; Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 161, 167.

93 Edwin John Davis, *Anatolica; or, The Journal of a Visit to Some of the Ancient Ruined Cities of Caria, Phrygia, Lycia, and, Pisidia* (London: Grant & Co., 1874), 215.

94 McNeill, 246.

95 See Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*.

96 BOA, HAT, 380/20540, 27 Zilhicce 1253 [24 March 1838].

97 BOA, İ.MTZ, 12/332, 8 Rebiülevvel 1263 [24 February 1847].

However, because thirty-four units of timber were processed from unpermitted trees and the remaining 4,391 units were made from trees designated for the use of the Imperial Shipyard, Zenairoğlu could not transfer this timber to Egypt. Timber was such a crucial resource that a top administrator, the governor of the province of Egypt, requested permission to export timber. According to the initial decision of the local government, thirty-four units of unpermitted timber were to be seized and the revenue from the sale was to be transferred to the treasury. The rest of the timber would be kept in the country. The sales license would remain valid only on the condition that this timber be sold within the country. However, in the end, due to pressure from the governor of Egypt, the Teke subprovince decided not to seize this timber. Zenairoğlu was granted the necessary license to transport this illegally obtained timber to Egypt.[98]



Figure 3.1 Illustration of Antalya Pier, 1808[99]

During the construction of the Suez Canal by the French Suez Canal Company from 1859 to 1869, the demand for timber increased. Egypt needed large amounts of timber for this project, which was the second largest of its time in history after the Great Wall of China. The closest available source of forest products was the Taurus Mountains. Therefore, the company satisfied its need for timber from the forests of the Taurus Mountains and other Mediterranean

98 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 278/42, 13 Rebiülâhir 1280 [27 September 1863]; BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 280/37, 29 Rebiülâhir 1280 [13 October 1863].

99 TNA, ADM, 344/791, 1808.

forests via timber merchants. In this period, traffic in the Mediterranean Sea as well as ship production substantially increased,[100] which created an additional demand for timber and other forest products.

As a result of the growing demand for the timber of Anatolia at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the lumberjacks of the Taurus Mountains had to provide more than ever before for export from the ports of Mediterranean Anatolia to Egypt, where demand for forest products dramatically increased. In McNeill's words, "the tahtaci of the Taurus had never been busier than in the 1860's."[101]

Some pastoral groups also contributed to the provision of forest products. In Narlıdere, Izmir, where the first Tahtacı settlement began in the mid-nineteenth century, for example, it was the Bayats, an Alevi community earning their living through animal husbandry, who managed to transport forest products from the mountains as the mules of the Tahtacıs remained incapable of carrying the heavy trees demanded by timber merchants. Given the need and demand of the Tahtacıs, the Bayats left Kızıldağ, a forested region at higher altitudes, and moved to Narlıdere. After that, the Tahtacıs and the Bayats created a division of labor. Trees cut and pruned by the Tahtacıs in the mountains were carried out by the camels of the Bayats to Urla Road. Due to

100 İsa H. Bingöl, *Ülkemiz Ormanları ve Ormancılığı* (Ankara: Baran Ofset, 2005), 116.

101 McNeill, 246. Experiences during this period are rooted in the collective memory of the Tahtacıs. Community elders of Köprübaşı, a Tahtacı village in contemporary Mersin, for example, say that their ancestors pursued a nomadic life based on husbandry before they began to log in Silifke. An inhabitant of Köprübaşı, whose grandfather was one of four inhabitants of the village, tells that his grandfather's grandfather and his friends left herding and began to cut and produce wood in Kahtama Plateau because there was a huge need for timber to construct and repair the Suez Canal. He also says that this timber was transferred to the port of Silifke via Göksu and sold to timber merchants there to be taken to Egypt. (F. B. (74), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 13 August 2015). Even though there is no empirical data to support the argument that some pastoral nomads in Mediterranean Anatolia shifted to peripatetic strategies in this period, this narrative is consistent with the claim that this region was the main provider of timber needed in Egypt.

this division of labor, huge units of timber from high altitudes could be transported and sold to merchants in Izmir.[102] The mutual dependence of pastoral nomads and Tahtacıs created a partnership between them.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, timber export from the ports of Southern Anatolia to Egypt continued.[103] According to McNeill, due to new technologies, strong demand from Europe and European colonies in North Africa and due to scarcity of forest regulations, the period from 1850 to 1914 was a golden age for the timber merchants of the Mediterranean.[104] During this period, wood was widely exported via the ports of Alâiye, Antalya, and İçil to Damietta and Alexandria.[105]

Palestine was another region that, until the beginning of the twentieth century, imported a considerable amount of timber from Southern Anatolia to be used in construction projects.[106] Since its forests were few and far between in Palestine, stone, brick, and mud had traditionally been the most widely-used materials for building dwellings, which were usually small and narrow due to the absence of tall, straight trees suitable for roofing. In the second half of nineteenth century, when deep social and political transformations led to significant changes in the architectural landscape, which began to be dominated by large constructions, Palestine was forced to import wood from abroad because of the shortage of local would suitable for construction.[107]

By using historical and botanical methods to analyze timber export to Palestine in the nineteenth century and to date the buildings, Biger and Liphschitz trace the origin of the timber used in these buildings. Examining the tree species and their habitat, they concluded that about a third of all the wood used in construction in Palestine in this period originated from the Northeastern Mediterranean, and the only region where all the northeastern

102 Rıza Yetişen, *Tahtacı Aşiretleri: Adet, Gelenek ve Görenekleri* (Izmir: Memleket Gazetecilik ve Matbaacılık, 1986), 35-36.

103 McNeill, 247.

104 ibid.

105 BOA, A.MKT.MVL, 141/90, 23 Şaban 1278 [23 February 1862].

106 McNeill, 248.

107 ibid.

Mediterranean tree species they found[108] grew together was the Taurus Mountains. In addition to this, considering the stories of old carpenters and builders still living in Palestine's traditional villages and cities coupled with the fact that the forests of Lebanon, another region that had possessed rich forests, remained thin and poor due to exploitation in the nineteenth century, Biger and Liphschitz maintain that the forests of the Taurus Mountains constituted the main source of northeastern Mediterranean timber.[109]

In the 1860s, the Ottoman Empire decided to open its forests to global markets and abandon its traditional trade policy based on restrictions and prohibitions imposed on the export of forest products.[110] The commercial treaties of 1861 and 1862 with European countries and the United States were signed in this atmosphere. The regulations of the 1860s allowed the government to collect a fifteen percent tax on firewood and charcoal and a twenty-five percent tax on timber, but these new treaties made it impossible for Ottoman bureaucrats to collect internal duties on forest products. These treaties prohibited extra dues from being taken on exported goods, fixed export and import duties at a maximum rate of eight percent, and determined that tariffs would be reduced by one percent each year until it reached one percent. In order not to lose too much revenue, Ottoman bureaucrats developed some strategies such as collecting an *aşar* (tithe) to substitute for internal duties.[111]

Since the Ottoman government could neither efficiently exploit the forests with its own means, especially due to financial problems largely caused by the Crimean War, nor increase tax revenues from the export of forest products,[112] granting forest concessions to private companies became the primary way to generate income from the forests. During this period when the Ottoman government attempted to benefit more from the forests through tight control over

108 *Cedrus libani* (Cedar of Lebanon), *Pinus brutia* (Calabrian pine), *Pinus nigra* (black pine) and *Abies cilicica* (Cilician fir).

109 Gideon Biger and Nili Liphschitz, "Foreign Tree Species as Construction Timber in Nineteenth-Century Palestine," *Journal of Historical Geography* 3 (1995): 262-263.

110 Dursun, 82-83.

111 ibid., 92-93.

112 Dursun underlines that another reason the Ottoman government's revenues did not increase much was that Europe lost interest in forests of the Ottoman Empire after colonizing Africa and Asia. Ibid., 114.

customary rights, the exploitation of the forests by the private sector substantially increased.

During the nineteenth century forest products became crucial not only in Egypt and industrialized European countries but throughout the Ottoman Empire. The shipbuilding, mining, and construction industries as well as the development of public works, especially investments in communications and transportation facilities, created an additional demand for timber and non-timber products, increasing the commercial utilization of forests.

Timber needed in Istanbul and for the Shipyard came mostly from the Kocaeli region. Since the increasing number of construction projects and the enlargement of the navy generated greater demand for forest products, the administration tried to also utilize forest resources in the Taurus Mountains. However, when the administration attempted to obtain timber from these mountains, they found that penetrating this region was not as easy as expected. According to an official document dated 1815, unlike the peasants in the Kocaeli and Hüdâvendigâr districts, where timber had long been obtained, the "Turks" in Teke and Alâiye objected to paying taxes since they were not accustomed to it.[113] In short, in the first phase of timber exportation from Mediterranean Anatolia, the Taurus Mountains were "illegible" for the Ottoman administration. As a result of the development of transportation facilities in ensuing decades, the percentage of the timber sent to Istanbul from the southern forests increased.[114]

As with forestry, most investments made in railways and mines were based on concessions granted to private companies. Some of these concessions provided contractors the right to extract natural resources both above and under the ground near the railways and mines, including those of the forests.[115] Since

113 BOA, HAT, 278/16430, 29 Zilhicce 1230 [2 December 1815].

114 In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Tahtacıs of Adana came to Karaisalı every year to work in the forests. They produced timber of uniform dimensions. Different names were given to each dimension, such as *çifte etek, salma, ikilik, üçlük, dörtlük,* and *beşlik*. See BOA, DH.MKT, 1214/29, 25 Şevval 1325 [1 December 1907].

115 For the history of railways in the Ottoman Empire, see Yaqub N. Karkar, *Railway Development in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1914* (New York: Vantage Press, 1972); Murat Özyüksel, *The Hejaz Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Modernity, Industrialisation and Ottoman Decline* (London:

most railroad ties were made of wood the forests were crucial for the railway construction.

Railroad construction was one of the foremost sectors in which the Tahtacıs worked compulsorily. For example, members of the Tahtacı community in Aydın were worked by the timber merchants to provide the timber needed for the construction of the Izmir-Aydın railroad. In Pozantı, one of the most challenging stages of the construction of the Baghdad Railway, the German Philipp Holzmann Company that was responsible for the construction of the rails through the Taurus Mountains also employed the Tahtacıs of Karapınar village, then known as Belemedik.[116] Inhabitants of Tahtacı neighborhoods in Çine and Yılmazköy, known as the village of İmam Tahtacı before 1948, and Tahtacıs of Mersin have many stories to tell about the poor working conditions of their ancestors in Pozantı and Aydın.[117]

The posts needed for coal mines were also made of wood, and as with railway concessions, mining concessions included allowances for the provision of such wood from nearby forests.[118] Forest products were vital for mining activities. In 1895, the Zonguldak mines required 330,000 supports, and the annual demand for mine supports reached 1.5 million by 1915.[119]

The construction and restoration of telegraph lines also necessitated a supply of wooden poles. In 1897, an auction was conducted for the provision of 640 oak poles for the İzmid-Sapanca, Adapazarı, and Sapanca-Geyve lines.[120]

I. B. Tauris, 2014); Murat Özyüksel, *The Berlin-Baghdad Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Industrialization, Imperial Germany and the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Peter H. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railways: Art, Empire, and Infrastructure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

116 Gunter Hartnagel, "Belemedik, German city," https://www.flickr.com/photos/39631091@N03/6932590563 [17.11.2017].

117 K. K. (1960), İ. Ş. (1940), 11.05.2016, Çine; M. M. (1959), F. E. (1924) 13.05.2016, Yılmazköy; D. A. (1950), M. Ç. (1952), Dalakderesi/Mersin, 11.08.2015; T.Ö. (1958), F. B. (1942), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 12-13.08.2015.

118 Bingöl, 116.

119 Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 26.

120 BOA, İ.DH, 1053/82661, 18 Cemâziyelâhir 1304 [14 March 1887].

In the same year, the administration bought 2,000 oak poles for the restoration of some telegraph lines.[121]

In 1863, a British company was granted the right to the construct the Varna-Ruse Railway. According to the contract with the railway company, the wooden ties needed for the construction of the rail lines would be obtained from *mirî* and private forests to the east of Ruse. Before cutting the trees in the forests of the local people, the company was responsible for convincing them. The company needed 300,000 wooden ties, a maximum of two thirds of which could be obtained from *mirî* forests. For every 1,000 ties, the company paid 500 *kuruş*.[122]

The report of Niyazi Bey also mentions forest concessions delivered in the Adana region. The Sorkun and Hacıalanı forests, for instance, were under the control of the Nadirli, a Christian Arab community. Canderesi forest was controlled by the Belemedik Railway Company and Seyid Seyid, a Christian Arab acting on the behalf of French Mork Company. Finally, the Posdağı forests were partially controlled by an English company. The Tahtacıs travelling in this region paid tribute to these traders.[123] Similarly, during the construction of the Hejaz and Berlin-Baghdad Railways, the Ottoman state provided the contracted companies with some privileges. The railway concessions granted companies the rights to utilize the minerals and forests up to a distance of twenty kilometers on either sides of the railway line.[124]

§ 3.3 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I addressed key questions of why the Ottoman government strove to exert more direct control over the forested lands and products in the mid-nineteenth century and why the knowledge of the Tahtacıs was of vital importance in this process. In order to clarify these two issues, I presented an overview of the changing forms of forest management in the empire. This

121 BOA, ŞD, 2524/14, 5 Safer 1305 [23 October 1887].

122 BOA, A.DVN.MKL, 5/4, 6 Zilhicce 1280 [13 May 1864].

123 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

124 Özyüksel, *The Hejaz Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Modernity, Industrialisation and Ottoman Decline*, 24; Çağlar, 63-65; Yiğitoğlu, 11.

framework provides the background for the legal and institutional developments depicted in Chapter 4 and for the discussion of the changing means of subsistence of the Tahtacıs in the nineteenth century in Chapter 6.

First, I showed that until the Ottoman government attempted to bureaucratize forestry, there was limited administrative control over the management of forests. The main purpose of early regulations was to restrict the utilization of certain *mirî* forests that served the army and the imperial capital. During this period, local communities had more direct control over forest resources. Customary rights allowed them to use these resources for their vital needs and for small-scale trade. There was no distinct forest law that specifically defined the boundaries of rights and duties.

With the increase in the commercial value of forest products in the nineteenth century, especially as a result of the significant increase in infrastructure investments, forests in Mediterranean Anatolia began to be exploited more deeply than ever before. In this period, local and foreign merchants established new trade networks to deliver wood, timber, and charcoal produced by the forest laborers more efficiently. In the 1850s and 1860s, in the first phase of the commodification of forests, local and international merchants were the main beneficiaries of the trade in forest products. In this period, the Ottoman government was facing financial difficulties due to political turmoil and constant wars. To increase its revenue from forest products, it was necessary to simultaneously assert direct control over the forests, break the power of mediators, and open its forests to global comers. In other words, the key concern of the Ottoman government in its attempts to establish scientific forestry was the financial pressures with which it was confronted.

As I illustrated, Tahtacıs, the largest peripatetic population along the southern coasts of Anatolia, remained one of the main providers of forest products to the local people and the rest of the Mediterranean region in this process. Contrary to the assumption that the Tahtacıs were disconnected from society, I demonstrated that they continuously interacted with other communities via loose, flexible trade networks. Their localized knowledge, which was based on centuries-old experiences with forest work under challenging conditions, was essential for utilizing the forests more efficiently.

To sum up, nineteenth-century forest practices were marked by both ruptures and continuities. As I show more thoroughly in the next chapter, the new forestry differed from earlier practices as it was based on centralized natural resource management. On the other hand, it could not completely replace earlier practices as forest experts were deprived of local knowledge of the forests. Unlike the Tahtacıs, neither entrepreneurs nor forest officials were vested with the ability to adapt to nature. It was this rare ability of the Tahtacıs that made them indispensable for continued resource extraction.

4

Scientification of Forestry: Laws, Institutions, and Discourse

> *Forest reclamation is a crucial matter to us… Anatolia is an infinite treasure in that respect. To date, however, it has not been possible to attain the desired benefits from this treasure due to the shortcomings of existing laws... With the emergence of the opportunity to manage our forests in a proper manner... our money that is going out would remain within our country - a treasure of trees.*[1]

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, after two decades had passed since the 1870 Forest Regulation codifying forestry rules according to scientific principles came into force, the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture *(Orman ve Maâdin ve Ziraat Nezâreti)* and the Ministry of Finance *(Mâliye Nezareti)* were regularly informed of illegal tree cutting in the western Taurus Mountains. According to a petition dispatched by Ezanzâde Mustafa in 1892, the treasury lost a significant amount of money because of widespread felling of trees in *mirî* forests in Hamidâbad, Teke, and Burdur

1 From an interview with the Minister of Trade and Agriculture. See C.S., "Ticâret ve Zirâat Nâzırıyla Mülâkat," *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 1 (8 Şubat 1331 [21 February 1916]): 8-9.

without official permission.[2] This complaint started a long process of investigation that significantly influenced timber merchants and forest workers, including Tahtacı groups.[3] According to a report submitted by the Teke subprovince to Konya province in February 1893, 25,000 "trespassers" in Teke who subsisted on the cutting, production, and transportation of timber experienced deep economic hardships and were faced with "severe poverty" due to prohibitions imposed during the course of the investigation.[4]

Yet some years earlier, it was common practice for local people to cut trees from these forests without a license. The use of the forest for essential needs was almost free. This practice was based on centuries-old rights recognized by the state. *Cibâl-i mübâha* was the most widespread category that insured these rights.

Toward the turn of the century, by removing the category of *cibâl-i mübâha* from the forest regime, promulgating mandatory procedures for tree cutting and transport, and creating new crimes and penalties, the Ottoman administration restricted free access to state forests. The general logic of this new period can be captured in the widespread examples of criminalization, as characterized by the terms "thief" and "trespasser," in the aforementioned statement that refer to "unauthorized users" according to newly created legal norms.

In this period, the struggle among the government, local officials, contractors, merchants, peasants, and nomadic groups over forests and forest products deepened and extended over a wider area. The 1870 Forest Regulation was introduced in this context. It was an attempt to gain stricter, more centralized control over forests. At least in theory, the Forest Administration became responsible for forest management, traditional privileges were diminished, and local actors as well as the Imperial Shipyard lost their influence. The Forest Regulation and the codes that followed brought about a new classification of forested areas, new definitions of forest crimes, and new forms of punishment

2 BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

3 The details of this investigation are discussed in Chapter 5.

4 BOA, İ.HUS, 9/15, 3 Şaban 1310 [20 February 1893]; BOA, İ.HUS, 9/18, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893].

- thereby creating new "trespassers." On the other hand, due to limits on the technical capacity of the government, certain types of free access continued.

In order to gain control over natural resources and the people who used them, all modern states have divided territories into political and economic zones and determined how and by whom these could be used by defining certain rules.[5] This chapter presents a legal and institutional framework to describe the path the Ottomans followed. Within this scope, I first describe initial attempts at "rational" forestry, the impact of the 1858 Land Code and 1861 Forest Bill on the forestry regime, and the efforts to institutionalize the forestry system. Then I discuss the main articles of the Forest Regulation with a special focus on the abolishment of *cibâl-i mübâha,* new procedures to obtain tree cutting licenses, penalties for forest crimes, and the forms of free appropriation of forest products.

§ 4.1 Initial Attempts Toward a "Rational" Forestry: Bureaucratization of Forest Management

The nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire witnessed a gradual change in the forestry regime. The capability of the administration to regulate *mirî* forests was enhanced in the Tanzimat era (1839-1876) and thereafter, mainly through legal and institutional reforms made in the second half of the century. Until this period, forest income had not been considered an important source of revenue. The annual tax revenue from forests never exceeded 25,000 liras.[6] For the first time, forests came to be seen as an important source of national wealth *(menba-i servet).* Increasing demand from Europe[7] and the Ottoman provinces[8] for timber and the need for additional income for economic recovery

5 Vandergeest and Peluso, 385-387.

6 "Ormanlarımız," 18; "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 88.

7 Dursun, 96.

8 Mikhail, "Anatolian Timber and Egyptian Grain: Things that Made the Ottoman Empire," 278.

necessitated by wars and reforms led to the commercialization of forest products. In response to the increasing local and global struggle over forest resources, the Ottoman administration developed monitoring techniques to control the provision and transportation of forest products. With the employment of European experts in the imperial forest bureaucracy and visits of Ottoman foresters to France,[9] the Ottomans clarified the principles of *fennî ormancılık* (scientific forestry): Direct and increased state control, systematized knowledge of land, products, and labor, rational exploitation of human and natural resources, and the provision of a sustainable yield for the state treasury.

Early attempts to rationalize Ottoman forestry sought to increase the revenue of the government. Economic concerns were more overarching than ideas of conservation.[10] As a reflection of this general mentality, one of the first steps that the Tanzimat government took to organize forestry was to issue a decree in 1841 imposing taxes on firewood, coal, and timber provided from *mirî* forests. According to this law, which remained in force until the mid-1850s, the tax rate on timber provided from *mirî* forests for domestic consumption was ten or twenty percent, depending on the diameter of the lumber. If timber was obtained for the purpose of export, the tax burden for firewood and wood charcoal rose to fifteen percent and reached twenty-five percent for the export of timber. It was still forbidden to cut trees from forests reserved for the needs of the Shipyard.[11]

Another turning point related to the tax regime was the attempt of the government to abolish the *iltizâm* and adopt a *muhassıllık* system based on the collection of taxes by *muhassıl*s, salaried officials appointed by the central government, instead of private individuals.[12] The new system remained in force

9 Diker, 25.

10 Hande Özkan, "Cultivating the Nation in Nature: Forestry and Nation-Building in Turkey" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013), 5.

11 Çağlar, 55-56.

12 For the tax collection practices in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and their broader social implications, see Halil İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler," in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Toplum ve Ekonomi* (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993); Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-

only about a year. According to this system, *koru muhassılları* were responsible for collecting forest taxes on behalf of the government. Directors and officers were additionally assigned to certain regions where forest products were vitally important. These public servants were informed by the central government about the level of taxes to be collected on the types of tree felling other than those for the purpose of meeting the vital needs of villagers. Forest officials were tasked with locating wooded areas that had the potential to provide the proper types of timber for the needs of the Arsenal and Shipyard, with confiscating and selling illegally-supplied forest products via tenders, and inspecting timber merchants who were willing to obtain and sell timber and firewood to domestic and foreign customers.[13]

The first year of the Tanzimat saw the foundation and abolishment of the *Orman Müdürlüğü* (Forest Directorate), a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade. The main concern of this institution to establish an efficient taxation system for forestry. It had no agenda pertaining to conservation.[14] Forest directors were responsible for maximizing revenues from provincial forests. Most were sent to the coast, which constituted the main imperial trade centers from which a vast amount of timber and firewood was exported.[15]

Even though revenues from forests increased after the establishment of the Forest Directorate, this institution only survived for about a year. It is usually argued in the literature that the discontent of the people with new taxes collected on timber, firewood, and charcoal wood obtained from *cibâl-i mübâha* forests was the primary reason that the Directorate was so short-lived.[16] It was

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1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012); Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı'da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1838-1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2015). For a recent contribution to the debates on the making of modern fiscal states as well as tax farming in the late Ottoman Empire, see Nadir Özbek, "Tax Farming in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Institutional Backwardness or the Emergence of Modern Public Finance?," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49, no. 2 (2018): 219-245.

13 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, vi-vii.

14 ibid.

15 Çağlar, 54.

16 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 234.

abolished in 1841, the *muhassılık* system was abrogated in 1842,[17] and *iltizâm* system was restored. The practice of assigning *cibâl-i mübâha* forests to *mültezim*s continued.[18]

During the 1850s, Ottoman bureaucrats took new steps to control forested areas and maximize forest revenues. Official documents demonstrate that it was widespread practice among peasants to set forests on fire to clear *cibâl-i mübâha* lands and turn them into their private property. An edict dated 1853 forbade cultivators from removing trees without permission or damaging *mirî* forests and turning them into private real estate. To prevent the disruption of the work of the Imperial Arsenal, those who wanted to clear land for cultivation, were to obtain a license according to the relevant codes *(kânûnnâme)* and instructions *(tâlimatnâme). Cibâl-i mübâha,* pastures, evkaf lands, and the forests adjacent villages and towns could not be cleared. Those who harmed or burned forests and trees needed by the Imperial Arsenal would be punished according to the Penal Code.[19] Offenders who insisted on cutting trees from these forests could be punished with penal servitude, a punishment to which those who committed crimes like attempted murder, theft, fraud, slander, and imposture were subjected.[20] It was more likely, however, that the administration would just appropriate their products. For example, in 1868 the permission of two timber merchants was revoked and their timber was seized because they interrupted the construction activities of the Imperial Shipyard by felling trees from Kaz Mountain forests outside areas specified by their contracts.[21] Another document submitted to the governor of the subprovince of Kocaeli in 1879 instructed that Hacı Paşa was to be prevented from felling trees and producing timber in the town of Saray situated in İzmit subprovince as this area was assigned to the Shipyard.[22]

17 ibid.

18 Yiğitoğlu, 11.

19 BOA, A.MKT.UM, 121/86, 1269 [1853], in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 172-173.

20 ibid., iv-v.

21 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 422/21, 12 Cemâziyelâhir 1285 [30 September 1868].

22 BOA, CB, 2909, 1296 [1879], in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 152-153.

As a result of considerable losses to the Ottoman treasury during the Crimean War, natural resources became even more important as a source of revenue. Forests were one of the most important resources, and the first condition for managing this potential boon for the treasury efficiently was to establish a forest bureaucracy supported by "scientific" knowledge. According to a memorandum from 1856, the collection of taxes depended on the employment of officers who knew forestry science *(koru fenni)*. After discussions in the High Council of the Tanzimat, all embassies were informed about this need. Finally in 1856, the Ottoman state invited two French commissioners: Louis Tassy and Alexandre Sthème.[23] These experts were employed to teach forest preservation methods and revenue maximization to the scientific foresters of the future.[24]

The first tasks Tassy and Sthème carried out were to inspect and measure forests in Istanbul and Sinop[25] and to help establish the *Orman Mektebi* (Forestry School) in 1857.[26] Since the primary condition to be accepted to the program run by these experts was the ability to speak French, the first generation of Ottoman foresters were chosen among the students of the *Mekteb-i Harbiye* (Military School) and *Hendesehâne-i Berriye* (Naval Engineering School) and the officers of the *Erkân-ı Harbiye* (General Staff College). In other words, those who would be the first to be taught "forestry science" in the Ottoman Empire were soldiers who had graduated from these schools.[27]

According to the memorandum concerning the establishment, admissions, curriculum, and disciplinary rules of the Forestry School, its aim was to train officers in forestry science. The period of study was two years and the quota for each class was twenty students. The courses were on forestry science, the demarcation and mapping of forests, the establishment of guard buildings and transport vehicles, animals of prey, pest insects, and the utilization and

23 BOA, İ.MVL, 16327, 1273 [1857]; BOA, A.AMD, 78/28, 1273 [1857]; in ibid., 154-159, 174-175; Bricogne, 3.

24 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, vii.

25 BOA, İ.MVL, 16518, 1273 [1857], in ibid., 160-165; Bricogne, 6.

26 Yücel Çağlar, *Türkiye Ormanları ve Ormancılık* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1992): 57.

27 BOA, İ.MVL, 16327, 1273 [1857]; BOA, A.AMD, 78/28, 1273 [1857]; in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 154-159, 174-175.

administration of forests.[28] The first task of the graduates of the Forestry School was to explore and investigate certain *mirî* forests in Rumelia and Anatolia with Tassy.[29] The Forestry School was united with the Halkalı *Yüksek Zirâat Mektebi* (Agricultural College) and then separated from it in 1909.[30] In addition to the Forestry School, the Forest Gendarmerie School *(Orman Jandarma Mektebi)* and the Forest Operations School *(Orman Ameliyat Mektebi)* were established in 1915.[31]

During the following years, groups of French experts continued to visit the Ottoman Empire. According to Çağlar, these foresters, except for Tassy, focused on measuring exportable forest products. Bricogne investigated the Gavurdağı forest and the forests of Konya and Edirne, whereas Simon measured the Bosna-Saray forests. Chervau was interested in forests of the province of Thessaloniki, and Godchaux investigated the Kazdağı forests. They were involved in technical and administrative processes related to the auctioning of these forests.[32]

Another prominent undertaking of the French foresters was the mapping of imperial forests. Yiğitoğlu assumes that the work of these foresters was based on information gathered from two sources: The map prepared by the geographer Heinrich Kiepert in 1844 and the French experts' reports and estimations on the forests of Ottoman Empire. In 1890, the Ministry of Finance attempted to produce statistics on forests. Additional statistical data on the forests was published in 1897 by the Ministry of Trade and Public Works.[33] A further statistical study on the forests of the Ottoman Empire was prepared in 1907, which was an updated version of the French experts' study with the inclusion of additional information provided by local foresters.[34] These statistics were published in 1910.[35] According to these statistics, the extent of forests in

28 BOA, İ.OM, 1201/650, 1327 [1909] in ibid., 222-231.

29 ibid., ix.

30 Yiğitoğlu, 12.

31 Çağlar, 70-71.

32 ibid., 60.

33 Dursun, 291.

34 Yiğitoğlu, 40.

35 Dursun, 291; Çağlar, 71.

the empire was 8,803,765 hectares, which meant that forested lands constituted 9,66 percent of the total surface area of the empire.[36] Ottoman forest officials also did cadastral surveys and mapped contested lands at various times in order to demarcate disputed forest tracts.[37]

French and English experts who worked in the Ottoman Empire also founded a forestry commission. The commission was active between 1856 and 1876. They advocated for the investigation of forest assets, establishment of a forestry school, and adoption of a forestry code.[38] The duties of the commission were to examine the financial condition of the empire, remodel laws pertaining to taxes and financial administration, and restore order and regularity in the state bureaucracy. They proposed budgets, regulated their employment, and strongly urged that the acts of the administration be publicized. According to a report of the commission, the natural wealth and resources of the country were not exploited to its best advantage: The forests of the Ottoman Empire produced 150,000 francs, or not more than £5000, per annum, whereas in Greece, which was scarcely one-fifth the size of the European part of the empire, forests yielded annually 270,000 francs, or £10,800.[39] According to the European experts, in order to increase the timber yield, the Ottomans should encourage private enterprise.[40]

In 1861, to realize this and protect the interests of the administration, the government prepared forest specifications that consisted of articles defining

36 Dursun, 291. According to an article published in 1884 in *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası,* the first official journal on agriculture and forestry in the empire, the estimated area of Ottoman state forests was 80 million *dönüm.* ("Ormanlarımız," 18.) Five years later, another article was published in the journal. According to it, the forested area of the empire was 85,955,192 old *dönüm* or 34,382,080 new *dönüm*. "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 86. Old *dönüm* was approximately equivalent to 919 square meters. New *dönüm* was equal to 2,500 square meters.

37 In 1907, forest inspector Karabet Efendi conducted a field survey of the forests of Giresun, Sinop, and Adapazarı, exploring and mapping these forests located in Northern Anatolia. His trip began on May 25 and ended on December 20. BOA, ŞD, 540/4, 6 Cemâziyelevvel 1327 [26 May 1909].

38 Yiğitoğlu, 11-12.

39 TNA, FO, 424/19, 1861.

40 TNA, FO, 424/24, 1861.

the conditions of forest concessions and contracts. These specifications included terms such as the obligations and privileges of applicant persons or companies.[41]

One attempt by the Ottoman administration to increase the level of utilization and the tax revenue from the land was the issuance of the Land Code. The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 was a regulation to increase the productivity of land and maximize tax revenue by codifying land law. It required landowners to register their land and obtain an official deed. The code gave registered deed holders the right to bequeath and sell land. Some researchers claim that this reform encouraged private possession of land, though that was not the main intent of the Ottoman administration.[42] This code also included articles related to the property regime in forests. Most of these were inherited from previous laws and practices. According to Articles 30, 91, 92, 104 and 106, for example, title owners had the right of disposition of trees on their lands. Products obtained from *cibâl-i mübâha* forests and coppices *(baltalık)* that were reserved for the vital needs of the residents of villages and towns could not be taxed or privatized.[43] These provisions exemplify continuity before and after the bureaucratization of forestry.

Article 19, in particular, had a significant impact on the utilization of forest products. According to the regulation, those who privately held property with forested land were allowed to convert it into cropland. However, in practice, not only privately-registered lands but also those reserved for the Shipyard and Arsenal, pastures, *vakıf* lands, and wastelands were transformed into cropland. Furthermore, not only title-owners but also users not possessing

41 Dursun, 451-456.

42 For discussions on the Ottoman Land Code of 1858, see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi," in *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi* (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1980), 291-375; Çağlar Keyder, "Giriş: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Büyük Ölçekli Ticari Tarım Var Mıydı?," in *Osmanlı'da Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Ticari Tarım*, ed. Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998); Huri İslamoğlu, "Property as a Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858," in *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, ed. Roger Owen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

43 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, viii.

deeds justified the clearing and burning of forests with reference to this article. This was one of the reasons for deforestation throughout the empire in the second half of the nineteenth century.[44]

§ 4.2 Codification of Forest Laws: New Forms of Taxation, Crime, and Punishment

Three years after the issue of the Land Code, the Forest Bill, written and proposed by Tassy, signaled a new period of governance and created the basis for the Forest Regulation of 1870. According to this bill, *mirî* forests would be managed by the *Meclis-i Me'âbir* (Council of Public Works), a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade headed by Tassy at the time.[45] The Forest Bill of 1861 was also one of the first attempts in the Ottoman Empire to restrict customary rights over *mirî* forest resources. It prohibited cutting trees in *mirî* forests except in extraordinary circumstances or when there was a proof of a special endowment granted by the sultan. According to the bill, apart from the *mültezim*s, people who wished to cut trees from *mirî* forests were to pay a price equivalent to half of the value of the tree in the nearest market after subtracting the cost of cutting, processing, and transferring and other fees.[46] Furthermore, forests were placed under the supervision of inspectors who had graduated from the Forestry School and under the control of a forest cavalry and guards. Inspectors were responsible for keeping records of the labeling, cutting, transportation, and sale of trees as well as prosecutions and penalties. Village headmen were to inform the administration about the number and kinds of animals villagers graze; and inspectors determine the duration and the location of their pasture. The bill imposed penalties and prison sentences for forest crimes.[47]

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44 ibid., iix.

45 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 157.

46 Dursun, 242-243.

47 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 235.

The Forest Bill of 1861 also regulated licensing of the rights for individuals to extract forest products from *mirî* forests. Accordingly, these people were to prepare a petition addressed to the head official, which included information on the species, quantity, and approximate volume of timber that was to be cut and proved that the applicants were able to pay the price of these trees. When a forest inspector received such a petition from the head official, he could grant permission for contracts of up to 1,000 *kuruş.* The head official was allowed to grant licenses for contracts between 1,001 and 5,000 *kuruş,* and the Ministry of Trade for contracts up to 100,000 *kuruş.* The government could give permission for larger contracts.[48]

Licenses for cutting included the name, title, and address of the person. Logging and removing timber from *mirî* forests without a license or outside the boundaries stipulated by the license was fined. Forest inspectors tagged trees with a special mark before their removal. The Bill of 1861 and the Regulation of 1870 also included regulations on the methods of determining the trees suitable for cutting and removal from the forests.[49] After forest inspectors prepared receipts of the species and quantity of trees that they had marked for protection or for felling, they presented it to the contractors. The contractors were to retain the written approval of the forest guard to fell trees and pay attention to the receipt prepared by the inspector. Forest inspectors had to register the number and species of the trees felled and send the receipts to the district governor for the imposition of taxes and dues to be paid before the timber or charcoal was removed from the forest.[50] The administration's purpose in establishing a relatively complicated procedure was to eliminate the local actors and gain direct control over forests by bureaucratizing the process of resource extraction.

In 1862, Tassy proposed another bill specifying the procedures for the removal of trees from *mirî* forests according to methods of tax farming *(iltizâm),*

48 Dursun, 256-257.

49 ibid., 251. See also M.N., "Orman Islâhâtı," *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 12 (5 Mayıs 1332 [18 May 1916]): 5.

50 Dursun, 256.

contracting *(taahhüd),* and concessions *(imtiyâz).*[51] This bill regulated the liabilities of contractors, the taxes, and the cutting, transportation, and sales procedures for forest products. The area from Kuşadası to İskenderun and Varna province were chosen as pilot areas.[52]

The main purposes of Tassy's bills were to increase tax revenue and preserve forests from uncontrolled exploitation. It is not clear how local actors reacted to these precautions, but bureaucrats themselves approached these procedures cautiously. The opposition of the chief of the navy to the expansion of the regulation proposed by Tassy throughout the empire based on his concern that the provision of timber needed for shipbuilding would become more difficult exemplifies this tension.[53] Ottoman bureaucrats placed particular importance on strategies oriented towards the maximization of productivity and tax revenues instead of those that promoted forest conservation.[54] This was the same for the forest reformers. The focal point of *Orman Umûm Müdürlüğü* (General Directorate of Forestry), the first institution charged with regulating forests formed after the abolishment of the Directorate of Forestry, was the monopolization of revenue collection from forests on behalf of the central administration.[55]

This fiscal approach was best reflected in the Forest Regulation of 1870, one of first undertakings of the General Directorate of Forestry. This code is usually considered a turning point in the history of forestry in modern Turkey due to its impact on the management of forests during the following decades. In 1936, some sixty-five years after the enactment of the regulation, Yiğitoğlu defined it as the starting point of Turkish forest legislation.[56] The regulation and the instructions issued afterwards were significant attempts to establish a

51 Çağlar, 57.

52 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 158.

53 Çağlar, 58.

54 Franz Heske, *Türkiye'de Orman ve Ormancılık* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Coğrafya Enstitüsü, 1952), 29.

55 See İnalcık, "The Yörüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," 343-345.

56 Yiğitoğlu, 46.

formal forest management system by defining the conditions for the utilization and commercialization of products obtained from *mirî* forests. The introduction of this regulation reflected the concern of the government and the Forest Administration to maintain a uniform body of legal rules to be applied throughout the empire.[57]

The articles of the regulation[58] can be briefly categorized into four thematic groups: The demarcation of forests, tree removal rules, the preservation of forests, and penalties for forest crimes.

The first article classified forests into four categories: State-owned forests, *vakıf*-owned forests, private forests, and communal coppices assigned to towns and villages. Since the Land Code of 1858 had determined the status of private forests, the Forest Regulation included no provisions on them. With the Forest Regulation of 1870, "*mirî* forest" was replaced by "state forest," and the terminology of *cibâl-i mübâha* forests and forests reserved for the Shipyard and Arsenal were dissolved within this category.[59] Removal of the *cibâl-i mübâha* category from the forest regime had a deep impact on rural life in the Ottoman Empire. Cutting from state forests was prohibited except under certain circumstances specified by the provisions of the Regulation.[60] People who benefitted from state forests were obliged to pay tax.[61]

The second article of the regulation concerned the detection and demarcation of *mirî* forests. Measuring and recording forests was crucial because the first condition for implementing the provisions defined on paper was to clarify the blurred boundaries among territories and to precisely define the legal status of each. Bricogne, a French expert employed in the Ottoman Empire, once complained that forests in the Ottoman Empire were not yet demarcated and

57 Dursun, 16.

58 See Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 242-247.

59 Yiğitoğlu, 9.

60 Dursun, 251.

61 ibid., 282-283.

classified.[62] It was therefore not possible to properly investigate these undocumented, unplanned, and unmapped - or in the terms of James Scott, "illegible" - forests.

According to Article 4 of the regulation and an additional protocol to the regulation, forest products obtained from state, *vakıf,* and private forests for the needs of the Arsenal and Shipyard would be managed by the Forest Administration. The administration was responsible for the provision, transport, and sale of these products. As mentioned before, not all members of the bureaucracy approached this positively. The military bureaucrats were cautious about the increasing authority of the Forest Administration over natural resources since they lost their rights to forests that had been reserved for the needs of the navy and army.

Another important provision was a tender and guarantee system mentioned in Articles 11 and 12. These rules were particularly related to tree removal for commercial use. Products obtained to be sold in local markets or to be exported were to be contracted with open tenders. Only trees that were investigated and marked could be contracted. The regulation produced a system based on systematic felling under the immediate supervision of inspectors assisted by a regular staff of clerks whose duties were to regulate the quantity of trees felled for export and local consumption and to supervise the operations of charcoal burners.[63]

Despite the general trend of commodifying forests, certain free grants of timber were still recognized by the regulation. For example, the traditional right of tree removal from coppices assigned by the state for the vital, non-commercial needs of each village continued. These coppices could not be converted into private property and could be used for commercial purposes only on the condition that permission was obtained and certain fee was paid.

Articles 5 to 9 as well as 17 and 18 regulated the utilization of state forest products by local people. Article 5 divided tree removal from state forests into three categories. The first was the removal of forest products for basic activities

62 Bricogne, 7.

63 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

such as housing, agriculture, and heating. According to the regulation and ensuing instructions, villages that did not have a coppice were allowed to cut trees in *mirî* forests for construction, manufacturing, and farming implements, for their own subsistence, and for burning into charcoal. The regulation allowed villagers to cut trees from state forests for these vital needs for free provided that they obtained a license from forest officials. The second type of tree removal from state forests was the provision of large-scale forest products for commercial use. The article levied a tax on these forms of utilization. The third type was the free provision of forest products removed from a state forest to be sold in the market. Villagers were allowed to sell wood and charcoal at the local market on the condition that they used their own means of transportation. However, if they attempted to sell wood and charcoal at another market to use someone else's means for their transferring, they were obliged to pay a fee and conform to the other provisions specified for merchants.[64] It was still legal to collect fallen trees, though collecting stone or soil or mining without a license were considered crimes.

An instruction issued on 18 May 1871 defined further conditions for the free grant of timber, wood, and charcoal to peasants, for whom forest products constituted a supplementary resource, and to forest peasants, whose subsistence depended on forestry. According to the instruction, the council of each village without a coppice was to petition forest officials each year before March. A voucher indicating the amount of timber, wood, and charcoal that villagers needed was to be attached to the petition. The officials would then determine the boundaries of the land and the time period for logging and charcoal burning and would mark trees according to "scientific principles and methods." Before felling began, peasants needed the permission of the forest guard who would supervise the cutting of trees. When the felling of trees was complete, the village council had to sign the voucher and present it to the forest guard who would then give it to the inspector. At the end of the year, the inspector was to inform the chief inspector *(sermüfettiş)* of the province about the total volume of felling.[65]

64 Dursun, 243.

65 ibid., 246.

Like peasants, forest-villagers who lacked a coppice or grove were only allowed to sell the forest goods they produced at local markets using their own means of transportation. Similarly, they had to position the local government annually concerning their population, the amount and species of trees they wished to cut from *mirî* forests, in which markets they planned to sell them, and what means they would use for transportation. The result of an investigation of the subprovincial council overseen by the forest inspector would then be evaluated by the governor, who, in line with the opinion of the chief inspector, would accept or decline the application. If accepted, the forest official would mark trees suitable for cutting and supervise their felling, charcoal burning, and their transport. At the end of each year, the forest official sent registers of the species and numbers of felled trees to the chief inspector who then sent them to the central forest administration. Free grants mentioned in the instruction applied to timber and charcoal for the needs of village inhabitants, not to forest products that were to be transferred to towns, cities, and ports and then sold to merchants or sawmills.[66]

Continuing communal rights of villagers to free grants of wood from *mirî* forests constituted an exception in the process of the commodification of forest products. Due to the importance of tax revenues obtained from rural production, this practice was regulated instead of prohibited. The free grants of wood from *mirî* forests were only legal under certain conditions.

The continuity of some such rights can also be interpreted as a way to outmaneuver the possible resistance of local people to the implementation of the regulation. Due to increased taxation and stricter conscription, discontent in the countryside deepened. In these conditions, the abolishment of centuries-old rights over natural resources was even more radical; it could upset the "moral economy"[67] of the villagers. The administration was careful not to

66 ibid., 247-248.

67 "Moral economy" is a term widely used by various eighteenth century writers. See Norbert Götz, "'Moral Economy': Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects," *Journal of Global Ethics* 11, no. 2 (2015): 148-151. This term became popular after E. P. Thompson's 1971 article on food riots in eighteenth-century England. Thompson's "moral economy" refers to a series of traditional customary rights within a subsistence economy including the right to resist against

abandon all forms of free appropriation.[68] On the other hand, the regulation restricted the unlimited usage of forests in two ways. First, it imposed a tax on tree removal for commercial purposes. Second, it allowed peasants and forest workers to remove only those trees that were approved by the "scientific" foresters. The administration pursued this strategy to solve the dilemmas of controlling the reaction of the rural population and maximizing revenues.

The second half of the regulation listed forest crimes and penalties. Those who peeled the bark from a tree, obtained firewood or stone from a *mirî* forest without a license, or cut more trees than their licenses permitted were to pay a fine or be imprisoned. The amount of the fine depended on the volume and species of the trees. Grazing in prohibited areas in *mirî* forests without a license was also prohibited. Those who committed this crime were to pay a fine. Their logging equipment and animals could be seized in certain circumstances. Setting a fire was considered a serious crime that could be punished by a lifetime penal servitude.

The forest instructions of 1874 and 1876 regulated the taxation of timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from all types of forests and the procedures for obtaining a license. Accordingly, there were two kinds of forest taxes. The first was the *orman hakkı* (forest right) - collected on timber, firewood, and charcoal sourced from state and *vakıf* forests. A certain amount was taken from the price of such trees sold in auctions. However, the inhabitants of villages located close to forests were to pay both the *orman hakkı* and a *pul resmi*

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unjust prices. In reaction to increasing prices in this period, English peasants resisted landlords and other market forces. It was the shared norms of a "moral economy" that brought the peasants together. See. E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, no. 50 (1971). About five years after the publication of this article, James C. Scott used the term to explain peasant behavior in the riots in Vietnam and Burma in the 1930s. According to Scott, the central theme of the collective peasant protests in this period was "subsistence ethics" or "moral economy," a set of norms that stemmed from the concern for livelihood in the peasant economy and that assigned certain duties to elites to secure economic justice. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

68 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 242; Diker, 25.

(stamp tax) for the trade-oriented timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from state and *vakıf* forests.[69] The tax usually depended on the distance between the forest and the market to which the timber was transported.[70] Inhabitants of forest villages were exempt from taxes on products they removed from state and *vakıf* forests for their households, for necessary construction, and for any agricultural implements. The forest administration issued a mandatory transportation certificate *(mürûr tezkeresi)* for timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from state and *vakıf* forests.[71] The second type of forest tax was on products extracted from private forests and coppices reserved for villages and towns. This tax was divided into two categories: The *öşr* (tithe), which was ten percent of the price collected on any kind of timber, and a *pul resmi*, twenty or forty *para* on firewood and charcoal extracted from private forests and coppices. A tithe certificate *(öşr tezkeresi)* was provided for the timber sourced from private forests and village coppices.[72] Forest officials *(orman memurları)* were granted with the authority to seize forest products that were obtained without a license or in violation of the license. Tax officials *(rüsûmât memurları)* and local municipal police *(zâbıta)* were in charge in the absence of forest officials.[73]

§ 4.3 Forestry Reforms in the Context of a Nationalizing Economy

The Young Turk era (1908-1918) was characterized by strong nationalism, both cultural and economic, that gradually shifted from an Ottomanist to a Turkist, Islamic emphasis - especially by dramatic events such as the loss of Salonica

69 Dursun, 274-276.

70 See TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

71 Dursun, 276-278.

72 ibid., 278.

73 ibid., 274-278.

in 1912 in the Balkan Wars as well as the First World War, which made it possible to abolish the capitulations, establish new customs tariffs, and almost completely eliminate non-Muslim from the economy.[74]

Given the condition of a closed, nationalizing economy, forests became even more important in terms of their economic benefit. They began to be seen as a driving force behind the formation and development of the national economy. This agenda necessitated major legal and institutional reforms. The legislative efforts enacted during the Second Constitutional Period to regulate the forestry and insure centralized control over forests laid the foundation for the reforms, discourses, and practices related to forestry in the early republic.[75]

One of first bills proposed in the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies *(Meclis-i Mebusan)* after the 1908 Young Turk revolution was the Forest and Pasture Law.[76] The main purpose of this regulation was again to increase revenues from forests for the administration. According to the first version of the 1870 Forestry Law, all trees to be extracted were to be marked and recorded by foresters. This regulation invited greater government control over *mirî* forests; however, it remained in force for a relatively short time and was changed in 1895. The provisional instruction bound to the Forest and Pasture Law revived this regulation. It also limited free grants of forest products. Each family of a forest village was assigned ten *dönüm* of land and allowed to remove no more

74 Zafer Toprak, "Nationalism and Economics in the Young Turk Era (1908-1918)," in *Industrialisation, Communication et Rapports Sociaux en Turquie et en Mediterranee Orientale*, ed. Jacques Thobie and Salgur Kançal (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 259-262.

75 In this period, forests not only became crucially important, but were also loaded with a "depoliticized" representation that would crystallize in the early Republican era. In her dissertation on forestry in modern Turkey, Özkan reveals that "forestry has been considered a technical issue, thereby delineating ecology as detached from politics" and "the depoliticization of forestry has functioned as a governmental tool in the high-modemist project of nationalism." See Özkan, 9. For a similar discussion, see Sezai Ozan Zeybek, "Fennî Ormancılığın Keçiler ve Köylülerle İmtihanı: Sömürge İmparatorluklarından Ulus Devletlere Orman Koruma," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 137 (2016): 146.

76 Diker, 23.

than five to ten trees and fifty to hundred *kantar*[77] of firewood under the supervision of the administration.[78] In the same year, as a complementary measure, the Forest Administration issued a warning addressed to the inhabitants of villages and towns. It brought about restrictions on the utilization of state forests and coppices that had been reserved for villages and towns, and it expanded the scope of the authority of foresters.[79]

During this period, as a result of the increasing cultural and economic influence of Germany especially during World War I, German and Austrian experts were invited to the empire.[80] In 1914, Hermann Veith, an engineer from Austria, was employed as consultant. His task was to introduce Austrian forestry methods and apply them to the Ottoman Empire.[81] Together with German and Austrian-Hungarian experts, he formed a forestry management committee.[82] The first management plan was prepared by this committee in Adapazarı/Hendek in 1916 and 1917.[83] In 1917, Veith proposed a draft that obliged that all state forests be run according to scientific management plans.[84] The provisions proposed in this draft came into force that same year in a law entitled "Procedures for the Scientific Management of Forests."[85]

77 The relationship of the units of measurements used in the late Ottoman era was as follows: 1 *çeki* = 4 *kantar* = 176 *kıyye* = 225,789 *kilograms*

78 Bingöl, 117.

79 Çağlar, 67.

80 Yiğitoğlu, 13; Çağlar, 66.

81 Niyazi Acun, *Ormanlarımız ve Cumhuriyet Hükümeti'nin Orman Davası* (Ankara: Recep Ulusoğlu Basımevi, 1945): 16.

82 Diker, 24. See also C.S., 9.

83 Çağlar, 71.

84 İsmail Eraslan, "Türkiye'de Orman Amenajmanının 128 Yıllık Tarihsel Gelişimi," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Orman Fakültesi Dergisi* 35, no. 1 (1985): 16.

85 Niyazi Acun, *Ormanlarımız ve Cumhuriyet Hükümeti'nin Orman Davası* (Ankara: Recep Ulusoğlu Basımevi, 1945), 16.

§ 4.4 Deforestation as a Founding Narrative of the Struggle Against "Zones of Anomaly"

Modern governments were interested in forests for various reasons. First, they contain rich natural resources, the constant supply of which became even more vital with industrialization. By making large areas of land available for settlement, forested lands also played a significant role in regions where the land-to-labor ratio favors the latter. In addition to these economic concerns, control over forests was of capital importance since these remote lands were home to poor populations that were often seen as a threat to order.[86] Forests are difficult to monitor and govern, so they constitute "zones of anomaly," that is, as a combination of local people and the forest landscape, a less "legible" space compared to others surrounding it.[87]

The Ottoman government enacted several legal regulations to incorporate these remote areas and control their products and inhabitants. The main strategies of the Ottoman government were to prohibit or limit the usage of forests by local communities and impose new duties on the extraction of forest products. Officials and experts legitimized these policies by developing a "science discourse" that excluded local practices. The narrative of "deforestation by local communities" was one of the assertions of this discourse. This rhetoric functioned as the ideological basis for government intervention in forests and masked the role of the intensification of commercial lumbering in the destruction of forests.

One of the common themes in the official reports and the literature on Ottoman forest policy favoring state intervention in forests for the sake of scientific management was "the destruction of forests by local communities." Such narratives of deforestation operated as the justification for the relatively radical policies of the government - foremost among which were the abolishment of customary rights and the removal of nomadic groups from the forests.

86 Nicholas K. Menzies, "Strategic Space: Exclusion and Inclusion in Wildland Policies in Late Imperial China," *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992): 719.

87 K. Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests: Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 65.

The image of devastated forests at the hands of unregistered nomadic groups[88] served to justify the surveillance and domination of forested lands and forest products by Ottoman bureaucrats. Highlanders, the inhabitants of the "zones of anomaly," needed to be subjected to the discipline of the administration because they were considered responsible for the destruction of natural resources counter to the interests of the national treasury.[89]

In this discourse, Tahtacı communities constituted a primary threat to the ideal of fiscal and scientific forestry. According to scientific foresters, the Tahtacıs used forest sources in a "parasitic," and "inefficient" way. A report sent by the General Assembly of Adana Province to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 21 January 1918 claims that "incompetent" forest management had caused the unrecoverable destruction of young cedar and pine trees. The report held three local populations responsible for deforestation in the province: Tribes pasturing their sheep and goats in and nearby forests, Tahtacı groups lumbering illegally, and villagers setting fires to clear land. The report also claimed that Adana, a province where forest revenues were one of the most important sources of income, would be deprived of forests if no precautions were taken against the irreversible damage and disaster being brought by the herders and Tahtacıs. It also underlined that the scarcity of forests would cause low rainfall, which would negatively affect agricultural productivity. According to the General Assembly of Adana Province, in order to solve this problem, herders and the Tahtacıs needed to be removed from the forests. The General

88 See Davis, 133, 304, 359; Fayet, "Orman Islahatı," *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 7 (28 Mart 1332 [10 April 1916]): 4; Diker, 21; Bricogne, 8-9, 100-101. See also TNA, FO, 424/122, 1880.

89 Similar discourses were simultaneously used in other countries. As Tamara L. Whited depicts, a fear of deforestation occupied the collective imagination of officials in nineteenth-century France. They justified their position in the struggle between peasants and the state by claiming that the state's intervention in the forests was the only way to prevent natural catastrophes and maintain the "public's" interests. See Tamara L. Whited, *Forests and Peasant Politics in Modern France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 2.

Directorate of Forestry proposed the same in its letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 17 June 1918: The *mirî* forests of Adana needed to be purged of the Tahtacı communities.[90]

However, contrary to the discourse of the administration and the experts that the main reason for deforestation was the customary rights of local, mainly nomadic populations, the clearance of trees for agricultural purposes, monotype lumbering for military purposes,[91] the tax farming system,[92] the commodification of forests, and the settlement of nomadic groups and *muhacir*s were the main causes of deforestation in Anatolia. Linking deforestation to the allegedly destructive influence of nomadic groups was related to the new ideological construction of property. This discourse legitimized the removal of nomads from centuries-old homes and the functionalization of their labor.

As described in Chapter 2, transhumance and nomadic wood artisanship was an integral part of socioeconomic life in the Taurus Mountains. The proposed expulsion of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations from the forests by the General Assembly of Adana Province, which remained a plan, would have meant a radical change to social organizations and cultural adaptations at the local level that had evolved for centuries, shaped by physical, biological environment and local power relations. The transition from the conception of

90 BOA, DH.İ.UM.EK, 111/38, 15 Ramazan 1336 [24 June 1918]. Some contemporary studies also regard the Tahtacıs as responsible for deforestation. According to Wagstaff, the activities of specialist groups living in the forests, like the Tahtacıs, were one of the reasons for the depletion and destruction of forests in Asia Minor. See John Malcolm Wagstaff, *The Evolution of Middle Eastern Landscapes: An Outline to A.D. 1840* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1985), 69.

91 Yiğitoğlu, 11. Because their transportation was easier, forest products needed by the Imperial Shipyard and the Imperial Arsenal were always obtained from forests located along the coasts. And along these coasts, only certain types and sizes of trees were removed. Moreover, a large number of felled trees were left in to rot in the forests since more trees were cut than needed. Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 241-242.

92 Dursun, 45.

the forest as a habitat to the new perception of the forest as a source of commercial wood was a vital transformation for local people.[93] Since scientific forestry defined the forest as "a closed system" and "relegate[d] non-commercial timber species, animals and human inhabitants as external to the production process"[94] - and since the development of modern fiscal forestry was related to concern for making land taxable -, temporary and permanent inhabitants of the forests and their inherited forms of utilization were not seen as integral parts of local society. They were irrelevant factors to be eliminated. Stray lands, which were important resources for peasants and nomads in rural districts, had to be restricted or evacuated to guarantee the "efficient" and "rational" use of forest. Communities living in forests or using forest resources as a part of their subsistence strategy were barrier to the "ideal forest."

A further possible consequence of the expulsion of local communities from forested lands was to lose experimented methods for forest preservation. High modernist planning therefore made forests more vulnerable to "natural" disasters.[95] The existing cutting practices of local forest people were not simply concerned with extracting the maximum amount of forest products; woodcutting groups who lived in the mountains also applied sophisticated methods to conserve the forests, which were their means of living after all.[96] According to the Tahtacıs and other nomadic and semi-nomadic communities, the forest was simply a space where they lived and earned a living. Their flexible, centuries-old conservation systems were more complex than often thought. These preservation techniques usually took a religious form. They, for example, never cut the "mighty" trees - the oldest and largest - which were considered

93 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 13.

94 Lanz, 100.

95 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 19-22.

96 Daniel James Klooster, "Toward Adaptive Community Forest Management: Integrating Local Forest Knowledge with Scientific Forestry," *Economic Geography* 78, no. 1 (January 2002): 52-53.

to be holy. They just pruned them. They prayed and sometimes sacrificed animals to the "mighty" trees. Indeed, self-imposed restrictions on tree cutting constituted an important element of the religious practices of the Tahtacıs.[97]

From the viewpoint of the administration, on the other hand, the function of forests was related to a superior goal: The interests of the empire. Conservation was equated with the elimination of obstacles - non-taxable humans, animals, and vegetation - with modern techniques that did not take local practices under consideration. Despite some articles in the Forest Regulation of 1870 and later instructions related to forest protection and afforestation,[98] almost all provisions made by the administration to conserve forests involved prohibiting and limiting utilization by local people.

However, in practice, the forest policy of the Ottoman government was not simply based on the establishment of control over forest resources by excluding local populations from forested areas. The labor of the Tahtacıs was beneficial, and their centuries-old experience in the timber crafts was needed. In other words, they were needed for the commercial exploitation of the forest since there were no technologies that could replace the labor, skills, and expertise of the Tahtacıs. The Ottoman government sought to restrict resource extraction by local communities as a strategy of exclusion, but they also employed this valuable, cheap source of labor. In certain circumstances they allowed the Tahtacıs and other nomadic and semi-nomadic groups to settle in and around forests but linked them to the central authority by making them more visible and controllable. The officials and experts of the Ottoman Empire were aware that controlling labor to extract products from the forest was as vital as fiscalizing forestry.[99]

The approach to forest labor of Fayet, an Austrian expert employed as a consultant in the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture, exemplifies this position. Undergirded by examples from Germany and Austria-Hungary, he argued in

97 McNeill, 93.

98 See Çağlar, 65, 72.

99 According to Peluso, the control of access to forests has three components: control of land, control of species, and control of labor. Nancy Lee Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 17.

one of his articles that appeared in *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası,* a journal published during the last two years of World War I to propagandize statist economic policies, that woodmen living in forests who had for centuries earned their livelihood from the wood arts were of vital importance and needed to be kept within the boundaries of the forest in order to guarantee its efficient exploitation.[100]

Due to increasing population pressure toward the turn of the century, it was not always possible for the Tahtacıs to stay in the forests. One of the factors that created this pressure was the flow of *muhacir*s to the empire. Despite the resistance of the Forest Administration, many *muhacir*s who migrated to the Ottoman Empire from Russia in the years following the Russia-Ottoman War (1877-1878) and from the Balkans after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) were settled in or near forested lands.[101] Timber needed by the *muhacir*s for the construction and heating was exempt from forestry taxes. There are several documents in the Ottoman archives about this practice. For example, 12,000 pine girders used to build houses in Antalya for *muhacir*s from Crete were exempted from taxation in 1900. Likewise, it was decided not to collect any taxes on timber from the forests of Eskişehir for the construction of houses in Ankara where *muhacir*s were to be settled. Another document dated 1901 also concerns tax exemptions on the provision of timber for the construction of houses for *muhacir*s to be settled in Ankara.[102] The policy of settling *muhacir*s in or near forests caused such a high degree of deforestation[103] that the government began to resettle these groups in other places more suitable for agriculture in order to prevent the destruction.[104]

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100 Fayet, 3.

101 See Dursun, 339-343.

102 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 508/13, 29 Şaban 1317 [2 January 1900]; BOA, İ.OM, 591/341, 1319 [1901] in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 204-205.

103 Yiğitoğlu, 9, 13; Acun, 17.

104 Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 96. For a general warning from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, see BOA, DH.HMŞ, 13/22, 1327 [1909] in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 98-99. For another document related to the resettlement of the *muhacir*s that had damaged *mirî* forests of

As a government policy implemented long before the arrival of the *muhacir*s, forest clearance to provide farmland was usually tolerated. As areas for cultivation expanded, tax revenues rose.[105] Deforestation was primarily caused neither by pastoral nomads nor Tahtacı communities but by communities that settled upon the encouragement of the central government. There were many wandering communities in Anatolia involved in the lumbering craft for centuries but such an extensive destruction was never observed in the Taurus forests until the late nineteenth century. Deforestation and upland erosion on the southern coasts of Anatolia had been modest until that time.[106] What intensified the human pressure on the Taurus were not the "arbitrary" activities of nomads but their gradual settlement.[107] In this period, forests declined in quantity and quality, and the most important reason for this situation was the expansion of cropland.[108] In short, ecological problems arose in the late nineteenth century when pastoral nomads and Tahtacı communities had to abandon their traditional occupations and began to adopt new subsistence strategies. It was not nomadism but the permanent settlement of pastoral nomads and peripatetics and expansion of cultivation that caused deforestation.[109] The clearing of forests for new grasslands by big dairy farmers and the utilization of forest products for shipbuilding and the mining industry were further factors that caused rapid deforestation.[110]

One reason for the devastation of forests was the damage caused by tree peeling for commercial purposes.[111] Even though the Forest Bill of 1861 and

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Hüdâvendigâr province to more suitable locations, see BOA, A.MKT.UM, 326/55, 1275 [1858] in ibid., 176-177.

105 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 240-241.

106 McNeill, 94.

107 ibid., 287.

108 J. R. McNeill, *Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (London: Alan Lane The Penguin Press, 2000), 229.

109 McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, 288, 344.

110 Dursun, 33, 339; Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920*, 26.

111 BOA, DH.MKT, 1712/48, 8 Şaban 1307 [30 March 1890].

the Forest Regulation of 1870 enforced certain restrictions on peeling tree bark, practices at the local level were inconsistent. According to a document dated 1863, officials collected taxes on pine barks that was obtained from the mountain forests of Izmir and exported abroad.[112] Archival records also include correspondence among administrative units that discuss the scope of the prohibition on tree bark peeling.[113] These official records express the confusion of the administration and bureaucrats about this practice as well as indicate how valuable tree barks was commercially. Even though many applications for tree peeling were rejected,[114] a vast amount of pine bark was illegally exported from the southern coasts every year.[115]

The most important reason for the growing human imprint on forests was massive commercial lumbering. As shown in Chapter 3, given the growing demand for timber in the Middle East - especially during the construction of the Suez Canal - and in the rest of the world, Mediterranean Anatolia became a trading hub for timber due to its vast forests and numerous ports. This development heightened pressure on the Taurus forests.[116] Commodification of forests starting in the mid-nineteenth century encouraged local notables to build sawmills on *cibâl-i mübâha* land.[117] Though commercial use was forbidden, the administration liberalized the forestry regime due to its urgent need for

112 BOA, MVL, 643/93, 11 Receb 1279 [2 January 1863]; BOA, İ..MVL., 485/21961, 28 Zilkade 1279 [17 May 1863].

113 Some examples are as follows: BOA, DH.MKT, 1734/121, 4 Zilkade 1307 [22 June 1890]; BOA, DH.İ.UM, 93.1/1.47, 10 Receb 1333 [24 May 1915].

114 Andonaki applied for the provision of 10,000 *kantar* of tree bark from Silifke forests. The Administrative Council of Adana Province rejected his application on the grounds that it would damage the forests. BOA, DH.MKT, 318/26, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1312 [14 December 1894].

115 In 1881, 65,000 *kantar* of bark were illegally exported from the Antalya coast. See TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882. Ottoman officers discovered 532 *kıyye* of pine bark in a Greek ship that approached the Manavgat coast. BOA, DH.MKT, 1354/114, 9 Şevval 1303 [11 July 1886]. In 1892, officials accosted several ships full of pine bark along the Anamur and Kızılkilise coasts. BOA, DH.MKT, 2034/82, 4 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [24 December 1892]; BOA.DH.MKT, 2027/6, 13 Cemaziyelevvel 1310 [3 December 1892].

116 McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, 2, 287.

117 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 87.

financial resources.[118] During the Tanzimat period, *mültezim*s grew considerable wealth from forests.[119] They contributed to deforestation by overexploiting *mirî* forests.[120] It was also a general trend in certain regions that *cibâl-i mübâha* lands were assigned to local rich people.[121]

§ 4.5 Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this chapter was to depict the major legal and institutional changes that Ottoman forestry underwent from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

The new legal framework projected by bureaucrats and experts stemmed from severe financial problems that the Ottoman government faced during the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result of an increasing need for new revenues, forests came to be seen as vital sources of income. The purpose of introducing a series of institutions and uniform procedures was to eliminate local actors and bring forests under the control of the government.

This chapter revealed that there was hesitation and disagreement about the new procedures at the central level. Ottoman bureaucrats were cautious about the proposals put forward by foreign forestry experts who had been invited to the empire. The main reason for the conflict was concern that regulations oriented toward preservation would prevent the utilization of forests. Moreover, bureaucrats deliberated on how to limit customary rights without causing social disorder and without diminishing tax revenues. Instead of abolishing all forms of free use of the forests, Ottoman bureaucrats preferred to maintain some old practices.

This chapter also demonstrated that the "deforestation threat" was a rhetorical device that emerged in the nineteenth century to legitimate the curtailing of the rights to use forests for small-scale trade and the vital needs of local communities. The abolishment of centuries-old rights such as *cibâl-i mübâha,*

118 Diker, 22.

119 Çağlar, 51.

120 Diker, 25.

121 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 87; "Ormanlarımız," 18.

however, did not prevent deforestation; on the contrary, forests were destroyed more after the introduction of the Forest Regulation. Contrary to the "deforestation by nomads" discourse, the main factors that led to the deepening destruction of the forests were the settlement of pastoral nomads, peripatetics, and *muhacir*s in or near forests as well as the intensification of commercial lumbering. The clearing of forests for the purposes of both settlement and cultivation and the massive removal of trees for industrial purposes created increasing pressure on the forests.

5

The Ambivalence of "Public Order": The Ottoman Forestry Regime in Practice, 1870-1918

> *I told the [timber] contractors that in return for our help in speeding up their business, it would be appropriate for them to subsidize [the Forest Administration] for the construction of a forest administration building in Finike. They immediately and willingly accepted our offer.*[1]

This excerpt comes from the memoires of Hüseyin Fehmi, the chief forest inspector of Konya province in 1894. As head of the provincial forest administration, he openly and proudly explains how he "encouraged" timber merchants in his region, convincing them to provide financial support for the ministry. "In return for some conveniences," he explains, the merchants made remarkable donations that enabled the forest administration to open local offices in the district of Finike as well as in the ports of Kalkan and Demre and in the district of Alaiya.

In 1878, a British consul in the Ottoman Empire interpreted the close relations between officials and merchants differently. He noted in his report that

1 Kerim Yund, *Seçkin Türk Ormancısı Hüseyin Fehmi İmer: Hayatı - Hatıraları (1871-1960)* (Istanbul: Baha, 1973), 34.

a significant part of forest revenues did not end up in the treasury of the imperial government, but were "swallowed up" by corrupt officials and traders.[2] At the beginning of the 1880s, the military-consul general of the British Empire in Anatolia similarly observed that it was common to receive permission to cut 1,000 trees and to then fell five times as many trees in Ottoman forests. As a result of widespread smuggling, the government derived meager profits from the trade of forest products.[3]

Three decades later, smuggling was still a profitable business. The governor of Konya province stated in a telegram to the Ministry of Internal Affairs that rowers specialized in the illegal transportation of forest products were performing a kind of "art." In exchange for salt and tobacco, smugglers transported pine bark from the ports of the Antalya subprovince to various locations in the Mediterranean region. The Forest Administration, the Tobacco Régie, the Tax Department, and the Düyûn-ı Umûmiye (Public Debt Administration) were all financially harmed because of the widespread smuggling of forest products. The coastline was so long that officers and guards, who were few in number, were incapable of controlling the intense trade traffic in the region. Even though additional guards were recruited, smuggling could not be curtailed. Eventually, in 1913, these four departments bought a ship collectively and assigned the duty of guarding the coasts to forest inspector Ömer Hulusi and documentation inspector Bekir.[4] Of course, one ship was not enough to monitor the long coastline and bring trade traffic under the control of these administrative units.

Numerous other records show the intense smuggling along the coasts of the Mediterranean Anatolia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most trees illegally cut from southern forests were exported to Syria and Egypt,[5] which had a huge demand for valuable trees from the Taurus Mountains, such as cedar, fir, and pine.[6] Vast amounts of illegal forest products were exported

2 TNA, FO, 78/3070, 1878.

3 TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882.

4 BOA, DH.İD, 94/34, 20 Receb 1331 [25 June 1913].

5 BOA, BEO, 337/25233, 5 Teşrin-i Evvel 1309 [17 October 1893]; BOA, ŞD, 515/27, 25 Ağustos 1309 [6 September 1893]; BOA, BEO, 314/23519, 8 Rebiülevvel 1311 [19 September 1893].

6 Yund, 22.

with no serious obstacle. As a result, tax revenues increased much less than experts expected.

Instances of smuggling that the government detected indicate that these criminal acts were the result of alliances between merchants and officials at the local level. These officials negotiated with the timber merchants and other local interest groups in order to profit from the intensification of commercial forestry. These partnerships, which were seen as the main reason for the serious loss of tax revenues, were actually necessary for the operation of the resource extraction mechanism. Networks and relations based on the mutual interests of officials and traders enabled the administration to monitor the forests to any extent. For example, contrary to the aforementioned arguments of British representatives in the empire, the chief inspector of Konya province states that as a result of the "conveniences and encouragements" he provided to timber traders, forest revenues from the province considerably increased in short span of time.[7] He regarded this interaction as a necessary ingredient for the blossoming forest industry.

Since bureaucracy in a Weberian sense is considered an organization that consists of regular, salaried officers adhering to standardized procedures, it might seem at the first glance that the bureaucratization and revenue-increasing attempts of the Ottoman Empire failed as a result of the irrationality of the system and corruptness of officials. The assumption that autonomy is the condition for a properly-functioning bureaucracy, however, ignores the fact that alliances and conflicts between members of the bureaucracy and other segments of society were an essential part of the system. The members of the bureaucracy were not an autonomous entity - detached from the politics and social conflicts - but an interest group that increased its authority over natural resources by creating and supporting the entrepreneur class. In this chapter, I reveal that these patronage relations were key to the politics around natural resources. I maintain that the high modernist project of the foresters was undermined from the beginning by two basic factors. To start, the number of forest officials as well as their communication and transportation facilities were inadequate to deal with unpredictable climate conditions, geographical

7 ibid., 34-35.

obstacles, and disease. The lack of standardized units of measurement, continuing border conflicts, and disputes over property ownership were additional barriers to applying a top-down blueprint. The main factor that severely weakened the high modernist ideal of "scientific forestry," however, was the bureaucratic apparatus of the modernists themselves. In order to maximize both national and their own revenues, officials partnered with local interest groups and violated the norms of scientific forestry. Without this close collaboration, it would not have been possible for these stakeholders to build trade networks and overcome bureaucratic procedures. In his book *Seeing Like a State,* James C. Scott emphasizes on the common interests of entrepreneurs and state officials by stressing that high modernism not only served the capitalist interests of entrepreneurs but also the political interests of officials.[8] However, as this chapter shows, high modernist perspective can also constitute an obstacle to fully utilizing resources and benefiting from new commercial opportunities.

In the first part of the chapter, I briefly discuss the main difficulties that the central administration encountered in its attempt to monitor and control the forests and increase its revenues. After discussing how the mutual interests of the forest officers and contractors were established, I focus on a lawsuit related to forest crimes committed in the Teke region in order to make visible the power struggles among concrete actors at the local level. I demonstrate that involving in local networks was the primary condition to benefit from the market opportunities. These networks consisted of both officials and local interest groups. The case of the Teke forests shows that instead of a binary, top-down relationship between the center and the local, there was a complicated interaction among officials at the center, those in the provinces, local interest groups, and laborers. These realms were not integrated but highly fragmented. Merchants had widely-diverging interests, which are reflected in the smuggling lawsuits. Furthermore, there was a power struggle between the government and the army in terms of forestry methods. The government attempted to impose direct rule over forest products via salaried officials, whereas the General Staff advocated the continuity of previous practices. Moreover, the

8 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 4-5.

priorities of ministries differed from each other. Officials appointed by the Ministry of Forests were components of the trade networks and did not want to harm their relations with timber merchants. However, the Ministry of Finance was more uncompromising in its attitude towards local interest groups.

§ 5.1 Limited Technical Capacity of the Government

According to many forest experts and observers, the results of the attempts at scientific forestry by the Ottoman government were disappointing. An Austrian forestry consultant employed in the Ottoman Ministry of Trade and Agriculture, for instance, was of the opinion that efforts at forest reclamation, which began following the invitation of French forest experts to the empire and the issuance of the Forest Regulation, did not prevent damage to the forest caused by unlawful extraction and trade of forest products. The impunity of widespread, unlawful tree cutting was the main reason for the increase in the destruction of forests and loss of revenue for the treasury.[9] According to British Consul General Cumberbatch, who prepared a report on forest administration in the district of Izmir in 1902, the new Ottoman forest law was theoretically desirable but made no appreciable contribution to the development of forestry in practice.[10] Confirming these observations, various records in the Ottoman Archives on the smuggling of forest products indicate that the central government encountered many problems in its attempts both to preserve forests and to maximize its revenues from forests.

Adana province was a prominent center for timber trade given its vast forests and geographical connections to the outside world. Following an investigation into the destruction and exploitation of the Anamur and Gülnar forests located in İçil subprovince, forest officers seized a substantial amount of illegally cut timber that was priced at more than 7,000 lira in the market.[11] That same year, officials found a number of ships full of illegal pine bark off the coast of Adana with the help of the royal ship Hayrettin.[12] As soon as this ship

9 Fayet, 3-4.

10 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

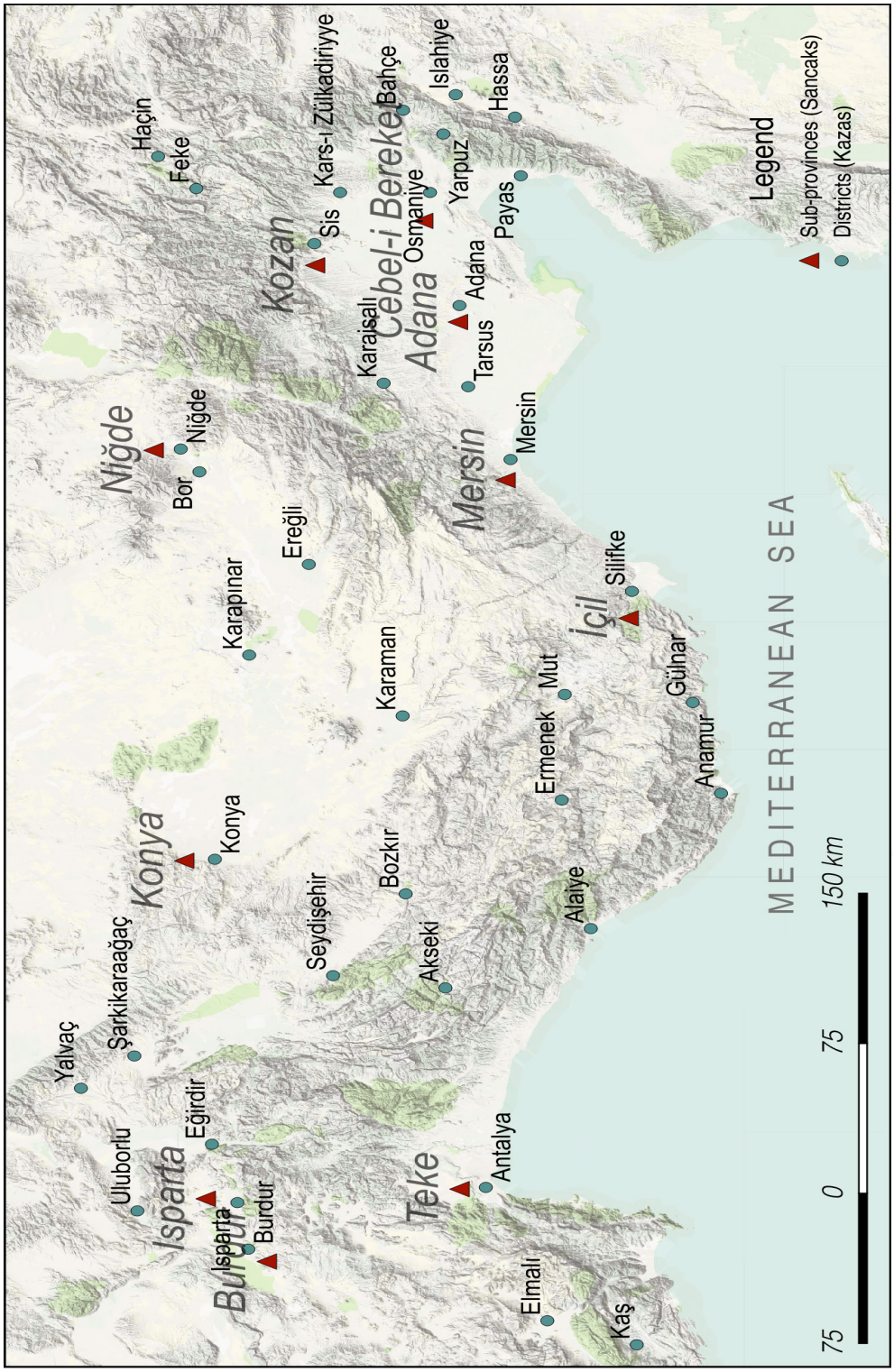
11 BOA, BEO, 241/18023, 5 Muharrem 1311 [19 July 1893].

12 BOA, DH.MKT, 2034/82, 4 Cemâziyelâhir 1310 [24 November 1892].

was sent away to Meis Island on another mission, the local government received numerous telegrams from officers about the illegal export of timber from the coast of İçil. "Professional" smugglers once stole tax vouchers from a forest officer on Aksaz Pier located in Anamur so that, without paying any taxes, they would be able to issue tax invoices in their own names.[13] Worst of all was that smugglers stole the remaining small sailboats used to guard the coasts of Anamur and Gülnar. The governor of the subprovince of İçil and then the provincial governor of Adana therefore requested a ship from the Naval Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, their request was rejected.[14]

13 "Taht-ı İnzıbata Alınan Ormanların Mikdarını Mebnî Defter İrsâline Orman ve Maâdin İdâre-i Umûmiyesinden Orman Müfettişlerine Tebligat," 353-354.

14 BOA, DH.MKT, 50/27, 25 Rebiülevvel 1311 [6 October 1893].



Map 5.1 Major Administrative Units in the Taurus Region (Made with QGIS).

In the province of Konya, especially in the Antalya region, the smuggling of forest products was rampant. An example of a smuggling case came to light when Hüseyin Fehmi, the chief forest inspector of Konya, detected a large amount of illegal acorns in Kaş ready for export, amounting to sixty percent more than the number stated in the official records.[15] The forest products used in the construction of ships on Kaşot (Kasos) Island were illegally imported from the mountains of Antalya and Menteşe.[16] According to a report by Kemal, an accountant charged by the Ministry of Finance with investigating forest crimes in the Teke region in 1893, most illegally cut timber from this region was exported to Alexandria.[17] In the same year a notification sent to the Council of State *(Şûrâ-yı Devlet)* by the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture also specified that a considerable part of the illegal wood and timber from the *mirî* forests of Konya and Adana provinces was transported via the Anatolian coast to Alexandria, Damietta, and other Egyptian port towns.[18] Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, the representative of the Ottoman Empire in Egypt known as the Extraordinary Commissar *(Mısır Fevkalâde Komiseri)*, indicated in one report that in a single case, the value of the timber that was illegally cut in Teke and Isparta and exported to Alexandria was about 25,000 lira.[19] Another document dated 1899 estimated that the loss of earnings from the illegal export of timber, wood, and coal from the districts of Antalya, Elmalı, and Kaş to Egypt was 32,310 *kuruş*.[20]

Among many factors, the insufficient number of forest inspectors was usually seen as the main reason for widespread smuggling.[21] As mentioned in the

15 Yund, 24.

16 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 144/23, 22 Rebiülevvel 1275 [30 October 1858].

17 BOA, BEO, 178/13335, 12 Ramazan 1310 [30 March 1893].

18 BOA, BEO, 314/23519, 10 Cemâziyelevvel 1311 [19 November 1893].

19 BOA, İ.HUS, 17/127, 29 Rebiülâhir 1311 [9 November 1893].

20 Antalya's estimated revenue was 9,248 *kuruş* (timber: 3,532 *kuruş* / wood: 2,258 *kuruş* / coal: 3,458 *kuruş*) whereas Elmalı's was 10,691 (timber: 3,814 *kuruş* / wood: 3,054 *kuruş* / coal: 3,823 *kuruş*) and Kaş's 12,404 (timber: 2,658 *kuruş* / wood: 254 *kuruş* / c,oal: 9491 *kuruş*). BOA, ŞD, 1736/4, 23 Şevvâl 1316 [6 March 1899].

21 See TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882; BOA, İ.OM, 830/156, 1314 [1896].

previous chapter, the primary aim of the Ottoman forestry reforms was to increase revenues by establishing a more efficient tax collection system, and this goal necessitated the formation of a modern bureaucratic apparatus consisting of officials to implement laws concerning the forests. In an interview in 1915, the Minister of Trade and Agriculture indicated that 500 inspectors and 1,000 technical officers were needed to supervise and inspect the Ottoman forests. However, only forty inspectors and 200 technical officers were employed, most of whom were not specialized in forestry. The minister also stated that the capacity of the forest school was inadequate. Only twenty students graduated from the school annually, and its program needed to be reformed.[22]

Due to the inadequate number of foresters, each officer was held responsible for guarding far larger forest tracts that they were able to control. The wide, rich forests of Karaisalı district, located in Cebel-i Bereket in Adana province, for example, was almost "illegible" to the administration due to the lack of sufficient foresters. Illegal tree removal and smuggling were therefore common in these forested lands. According to a document issued by the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture in 1895, the forests of Karaisalı were so large that it was difficult to control them effectively with only two guards. Ramiz, the documentation inspector for the ministry, determined that ninety percent of the forest products exported from Cebel-i Bereket to the villages and towns of Haleb province were transferred illegally.[23]

Even though the ministry appointed additional forest officers, the forests of Karaisalı remained impenetrable for two more decades. In 1914, the Ministry of Forests charged the forest inspector Mahmud Nuri with investigating the forests of Karaisalı. His report indicated that there were only ten officers responsible for supervising the forests of Karaisalı: A wood measurement officer *(mesâha-i eşcâr memuru)*, a technical officer *(fen memuru)*, two head guards, and six guards. Kızıldağ fell under the responsibility of the wood measurement officer, Ali Rıza. The technical officer, Fuat, was responsible for the forests in Pozantı.

22 CS, "Ticaret ve Ziraat Nazırıyla Mülakat.", 9.

23 BOA, BEO, 393/29401, 22 Şevval 1311 [28 April 1894].

Hacılı was one of the forests in Karaisalı district. Even though the duty of the head guard of this forest was to measure the trees before they were taken out, he was employed in the port, five to six hours away from the forest, since there was no official who could do this job. According to the report of Mahmud Nuri, the head guard did not even know the names and locations of the forested zones. The inspector found 5,000-6,000 pieces of timber without notes regarding their diameter in just one port.[24]

Due to a lack of forest officials, forest and provincial administrations tried to find alternative ways to increase their control over the forests. Employing local villagers in the forests was usually the only feasible way, which obviously contradicted the principles of both "scientific" forestry and modern bureaucracy. In the district of Mut, for example, most forest guards were engaged in farming. Public service was just a side income. In 1910, in his statement to the investigating officer about widespread illegal tree removal in the district, forest guard Ahmed Hamdi defended himself saying that he could not surveil the criminals properly due to his agricultural work.[25] Likewise, for Mehmed, the guard of the Cingöz forests located in Karaisalı, supervising the forest was just a side job. He made his living mainly from agriculture and spent most of his time working his fields, not in the forest. Mahmud Nuri pointed out in his report that this situation was one reason that forests were not properly supervised.[26] However, there was no option for the administration other than to employ local people to observe the forests. About three years after Mahmud Nuri's investigation, the General Assembly of Adana Province published a protocol proposing that - in order to prevent fires and other damage to the forests - in addition to increasing number of forest guards and their salaries, a certain sum from the special budget should be set aside for the peasants living

24 BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/71, 17 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1330 [30 January 1915]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/77, 18 Şubat 1330 [3 March 1915].

25 BOA, BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/21, 17 Mayıs 1326 [30 May 1910].

26 BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/71, 17 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1330 [30 January 1915]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/77, 18 Şubat 1330 [3 March 1915].

near these forests. They would be obliged to protect the trees and stave off afforestation by planting new trees.[27]

Not only the forests but also the ports which forest products were shipped were far from being under the control of officials. Despite extra preventive measures taken at departure points as well as harbors and roads, smuggling was widespread especially along the coasts of Anatolia due to the inadequate number of officers.[28] Most products extracted from the forests of Konya and Adana provinces were illegally exported to Egypt.[29] The Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture demanded that Ottoman officers in Alexandria and Damietta be assigned the task of checking cutting and transportation certificates in order to prevent the illegal trade of wood and timber from *mirî* forests in Anatolia. However, this request was turned down due to financial difficulties.[30]

Insufficient means of communication and transport made their duties more difficult for officials to fulfill. Despite legal and institutional reforms made by the Ottoman government, most forested areas remained impenetrable, which rendered them untaxable. Since telegraph lines were not widespread, the provincial governments could not always be informed adequately of incidents of smuggling.[31] The absence of roads was an additional factor that caused the new Ottoman forest law to not work well in practice.[32] The Otto-

27 BOA, DH.İ.UM.EK, 111/38, 21 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1334 [21 January 1918].

28 BOA, ŞD, 515/27, 25 Ağustos 1309 [6 September 1893].

29 BOA, BEO, 314/23519, 8 Rebiülevvel 1311 [19 September 1893]. Haleb and Lebanon were other Middle Eastern regions that benefitted from Anatolian timber. According to a document dated 1890, the timber consumed in Haleb province was mostly provided from the *mirî* forests of the Hâssa and Islâhiye districts of Cebel-i Bereket, Adana. See BOA, ŞD, 2123/21, 27 Rebiülevvel 1308 [10 November 1890]. 40,000 units of timber were also exported from Mersin port to Lebanon for the construction and repair of Deyrül Kamer and to meet the heating demand of the town's inhabitants. BOA, A.MKT.UM, 519/38, 21 Cemâziyelevvel 1278 [24 November 1861].

30 BOA, MV, 77/46, 3 Cemâziyelevvel 1311 [12 November 1893].

31 BOA, DH.ŞFR, 192/1, 7 Mayıs 1312 [19 May 1896].

32 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

man Archives are full of examples. In 1910, for example, during an investigation in the districts of Mut and Eğirdir to check for forest crimes, members of the investigation commission noted that it was not possible for forest officers to properly count and measure trees and logs in these vast, steep forests.[33]

Ottoman forest reformers, however, were optimistic and believed that they could bring nature under control and maximize revenues by applying certain scientific management strategies. Procedures that reduced trees into numbers - calculating, measuring, and marking them - were meant to make forests more "legible" and enable the administration to predict the amount of the products and tax revenues. Denying the complexity, diversity, and irregularity of nature, forest experts supposed that they could predict the yield generated from forests. However, they faced unexpected events and situations, such as climatic disasters and disease. In 1907, when the Istanbul Municipality demanded information from firewood merchants about problems in the provision of forest products, the latter described bad weather conditions and animal diseases as two prominent reasons for the decrease in the supply of firewood.[34]

In autumn that same year, due to heavy rainfall and floods, ships that landed at the ports of İzmit subprovince and loaded with firewood to be transported to Istanbul had to return empty.[35] On 4 April 1909, Jules Richerol, a French timber merchant, purchased 150,000 cubic meters of oak in forests located in the subprovince of Kala-i Sultâniye. Because his draught animals caught a disease, he could not remove and transport the trees. The contract was cancelled and the merchant was sued by the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture for not paying for delay.[36] Similarly, on 20 May 1909, Marko obtained permission to extract 534 cubic meters of timber from the district of Burdur. However, he could remove only 265 cubic meters, because the forest was so destroyed that no useable trees remained.[37]

33 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/21, 16 Mayıs 1326 [29 May 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/47, 28 Teşrin-i Evvel 1326 [10 November 1910].

34 Öztel, 286.

35 BOA, DH.MKT, 1214/29, 25 Şevvâl 1325 [1 December 1907].

36 BOA, T.OMİ, 1702/69, 1 Teşrin-i Sânî 1329 [14 November 1913].

37 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/1, 12 Ağustos 1325 [25 August 1909].

As masters of lumbering for centuries, Tahtacı communities had comprehensive knowledge of forests of the Taurus Mountains, which made them adaptive to changing natural and geographic obstacles. However, unlike the Tahtacıs and other experienced, forest-dependent local communities, it was usually difficult for officers to control the forests due to their location, the land structure, and the vast area they were supposed to surveil and investigate. For example, the Kravga forests were located on a steep slope and the area where smuggling was widespread was so vast that it took longitudinally three to four hours and latitudinally two to three hours to cross by foot; it was therefore challenging for forest guards to inspect this area.[38] Another forested area in the province of Konya where smuggling was a common practice was the Eğirdir district. According to a report prepared after an investigation mapped the forest crimes committed in this area, it was practically impossible for just two officers to protect these wide, steep forests.[39]

The lawsuit brought against Hacı Paşa in 1909 and the investigations by forest officers into his case[40] show the limited capacity of the government to implement forest regulations and modern methods of forest management. Hacı Paşa was a timber merchant residing in Silifke. He applied for a number of tenders between 1906 and 1909 and obtained permission to extract about 5,000 cubic meters of timber from the forests of the Mut district. In the summer of 1909, forest cavalryman Şevki and forest guard Ahmed Hamdi inspected the storage places of the timber cut from these forests by the Tahtacı tribes for Hacı Paşa. Şevki detected a large quantity of illegal timber, finding 26,871 pieces equivalent to 1,358 cubic meters. Soon afterwards, Ahmed Hamdi noted in his report that Hacı Paşa's workers had illegally extracted about 16,000 pieces of timber from Kravga forests and transported them to these storage places.

Hacı Paşa was sued for removing trees without a cutting permit. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Forests decided that the timber was to be confiscated

38 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/21, 16 Mayıs 1326 [29 May 1910].

39 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/47, 28 Teşrin-i evvel 1326 [10 November 1910].

40 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/21, 16 Mayıs 1326 [29 May 1910].

and kept until the conclusion of the lawsuit. However, before this decision was implemented, it was swept away in a flood of the Göksu River. It cost 500 *kuruş* to carry the timber to the coast. In the meantime, the Göksu River flooded again and much more timber was damaged. An additional 650 *kuruş* was needed to transport the remainder to the coast. Because the Forest Administration did not send this money to the local forestry office, villagers and Tahtacı tribes carried it without pay. The damage was so severe that 585 units of timber, equivalent to 37,888 cubic meters, were destroyed.

In the meantime, due to the statute of limitations, the case was dismissed. Hacı Paşa was not punished, but the ministry dismissed some forest officers for their negligence. Forest guard Ahmed Hamdi was displaced for having delayed in informing of the ministry, and forest inspector Kâzım was dismissed for incorrectly measuring trees and hiding crimes. The highest ranking bureaucrat among the dismissed was Cemal, the chief forest inspector of Adana province. He was discharged for informing the ministry contrary to fact, negligence with respect to illegal tree removal from *mirî* forests, damage to the treasury, and allowing the statute of limitations to lapse. Cemal defended himself by claiming that in Silifke, every timber merchant was granted more timber than the amount specified in their contract. "It has become fashionable," in his words, to grant the extra timber to the merchant. Cemal stated that the main reason for this situation was that Kravga was a "virgin" forest from which it was difficult to extract timber. Since there was no road, transportation was along the Göksu River. It was dangerous to send officers to these deserted forests, especially due to social unrest in Adana. In order to protect the interests of the treasury in these conditions, Cemal argued, the marking process was "accelerated." It is evident from the statement of the chief inspector that it was common to skip marking procedures with the consent of forest officers and remove more trees than felling licenses allowed.

One result of the lack of modern infrastructure facilities was problems with the demarcation and definition of legal property boundaries, which was necessary to make nature more "legible," to manage the forests, and to maximize the forest revenues. Cadastral surveys were limited and the existing ones

were unreliable.[41] In practice, *mirî, vakıf*, communal, and private forests were intertwined. Lack of clarity about the legal status of some forested lands caused disputes regarding forest utilization and a slowdown in infrastructural investments. One type of local dispute was conflict over village coppices. Border disputes over the coppices of neighboring villages were an ordinary part of the daily life of peasants. Due to deforestation inflicted after widespread settlement of nomads in the second half of the nineteenth century, the struggle over forested areas intensified. In this period, many disagreements among peasants about the utilization of the forest were brought to trial. By defining certain zones of influence and interest, court orders laid the foundations for forest villages.[42] Like border disagreements that arose in other Mediterranean hills throughout the nineteenth century,[43] disputes in the mountains of Anatolia gave the administration the opportunity to claim authority over forested areas in order to maintain "order."

The property status of most forests in Menteşe was unclear. The Ministry of Forests ordered authorities in the province of Aydın to prohibit the transportation of timber and pine bark from the disputed forests of the Menteşe district. The province responded that farmers around these forests sold timber and pine bark to merchants according to their contracts. According to the province, both the province and the state would suffer a huge loss unless they gave them permission. According to the ministry, however, these farmers were destroying *mirî* forests by cutting trees in violation of forest science and regulations. They were also peeling large amounts of bark from the trees even this was prohibited. Allowing these people to continue to fell and peel trees in the region would cause the forests to the destroyed. The ministry instructed the governor of the province to implement a prohibition on bark peeling and nonscientific lumbering and to levy a forest tax on lumbering and bark peeling as

41 See Dursun, 296-301.

42 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 88; Yiğitoğlu, 9.

43 Simon, Clément, and Pech, 346.

a guarantee until the status of these disputed forests was clarified. The transportation of timber and pine bark would be allowed only once the necessary forest tax was collected and the cutting was along the lines of forest science.[44]

The farmers close to these forests declared that they were suffering from regulations that did not allow them to enter the forests anymore, although they had previously enjoyed the right to use them. Now they needed to ask permission to cut and transport trees and, moreover, had to pay compensation fees if harm to the forest was proven. Another telegram sent by Tahir from parish of Köyceğiz reported that these farmers were living in extreme poverty after the ministry prohibited timber production in the forests of Yangı and Okçular farms.[45]

The situation along the eastern coasts was more complicated. This area was less "legible" in the middle of the century. Hayrullah, a member of the Supreme Council, which was the court of appeal and highest advisory council, put in a request to the administration to grant permission to utilize the forests located between the Silifke district and the Mersin port. In his application he stated that he wanted to run these unexploited forests and pay all the necessary taxes. Thereupon, officials started an investigation into these forests, which were thought to have *mirî* status, in order to establish whether they were designated for the needs of the Shipyard. However, after an investigation of the land registers, it became clear that these vast forested lands had never been registered. The government asked local authorities to provide information about the status of these forested lands, whether they were *mirî* or private, and whether they were designated for the needs of the Imperial Shipyard or the local people. Furthermore, the government wanted to know the value of these forests and whether there were legal obstacles to selling the trees in these forests by tender.[46]

44 BOA, BEO, 493/36943, 11 Rebiülâhir 1312 [12 October 1894]; BOA, BEO, 569/ 42614, 14 Şaban 1312 [10 February 1895]; BOA, BEO, 587/43992, 21 Ramazan 1312 [18 March 1895].

45 BOA, ŞD, 1392/33, 16 Muharrem 1313 [9 July 1895].

46 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 321/84, 2 Şaban 1281 [31 December 1864].

Another problem was that units of measurement were not standardized. Old and new units were used simultaneously.[47] As mentioned before, a group of firewood merchants prepared a report in 1907 on problems they faced in the provision of firewood and charcoal. One of the factors merchants mentioned was the constantly changing weight unit. One *çeki* initially equaled 179 *kıyye*, fell to 156 *kıyye* soon after, and eventually rose to 250 kilograms.[48] On the other hand, the standardization of measures did not always provide total control over forest resources. Merchants found various ways of manipulating numbers, weights, and volumes. In February 1914, when a ship named Refîhe, belonging to the merchant Ahmed Beyazıd, navigated by the Captain Mahmud Nuri, and full of charcoal and firewood extracted from the Sâkıt forests, arrived Alexandria, it was discovered upon unloading the products that thirty-six *kantar* of charcoal was missing. After the interrogation of forest officer İsmail, the council decided that there had been no official misconduct but rather an old, widespread trick had taken place. This traditional method was to make charcoal heavier by sprinkling water on it before officers counted and measured it. It was difficult for officials to cope with this problem.[49]

These cases demonstrate that despite legal and institutional developments designed to bureaucratize the management of the forests, it remained difficult to bring forests under the control of the central government. The Ottoman administration was incapable of completing basic tasks such as measuring trees, mapping and supervising the forests, and handling natural disasters. These forests had been home to many communities, but they were impenetrable to officials. Without negotiating with local interest groups and becoming involved in partnerships with them, it was impossible for the government to benefit from the forests.

47 BOA, ŞD, 518/4, 2 Rebiülâhir 1312 [3 October 1894]; BOA, ŞD, 520/16, 25 Zilhicce 1312 [19 June 1895]; "Muharrerât-ı Umûmiyye," *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası* 3, no. 5 (Temmuz 1312 [July 1896]): 136-137.

48 Öztel, 286.

49 BOA, T.OMİ, 1706/1, 19 Mart 1331 [1 April 1915].

§ 5.2 Relations Between the Timber Merchants and the Forest Officials

As depicted in the previous chapter, Ottoman government sought to increase tax revenues from export activities by bureaucratizing forestry. However, due to financial problems it became impossible to make necessary investments in infrastructure and establish an effective forest bureaucracy. Instead, the Ottoman Empire began to import more and more forest products in the ever-worsening political and financial situation. Toward the turn of the century, the value of imported timber was higher than that of exported timber. The difference was about 300,000 pounds in 1894-1895.[50]

Since the government was unable to maintain direct control over forest management, granting concessions to private entrepreneurs under the supervision of the Forest Administration became the main strategy to increase forest revenues. Not all members of the government and bureaucracy were convinced of this method, however. In the early 1860s there were disagreements among them about granting concessions to the private sector.

As Dursun explained in detail in his dissertation, the *Seraskerate*, the General Staff, differed from the government on the method of providing the needs of the army. In 1861, the government issued a decree that determined that only forest officials would deal with the demand of military institutions for forest products. However, since officials were unable to cater to the needs of the army in a timely fashion, the *Seraskerate* continued to grant concessions to contractors. This caused struggles among forest officials, military officials, and merchants.[51]

Despite the opposition, the last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a considerable increase in the number of forest concessions based on contracts or auctions that granted private companies the rights to use certain *mirî* forest tracts. The revenue granted by forest concessions to contractors was about 500,000 *kuruş* in 1868-1869, whereas this amount reached 22,610,618 *kuruş* in 1900 and 32,203,960 *kuruş* in 1906.[52] According to official

50 Dursun, 115.

51 ibid., 307-308.

52 Çağlar, 64.

statistics, the total revenue of the empire from forests was 21,504,292 *kuruş* in 1897 (see Table 5.1).

There are also some statistics at the local level. The value of the Forest Administration's tenders over the span of three months in spring 1895 in Biga, Ayvacık, Ezine, and Edremit for the forests of the Kaz Mountains amounted to 600,000 *kuruş*.[53] In 1894 and 1895, the average amount of timber sold annually from the Menteşe forests was about 15,000 cubic meters. In the same period, 19,500 *kantar* of charcoal and 25,000 *kantar* of pine bark were sold. The total revenue of the subprovince increased by 3,570 lira.[54]

In the late nineteenth century, there were two other types of commercial forest utilization that generated tax revenue for the government. First were permits given to local people on the condition that they sell their forest products only at the local market. The retail sale of trees for transport to ports for export constituted the second method. Local, sedentary peasants and the Tahtacıs who were involved in commercial forestry obtained these two kinds of permission. The main difference from forest concessions granted to merchants was that these forest concessions allowed the utilization of a wider area for a longer period. The conditions of sale, which included several details such as the species and the time frame for the removal of the product were regulated by a contract. Concessionaires paid a deposit and in some cases had to present solvent guarantor *(kefil-i mûteber)*.[55] They were allowed to extract only those trees that were marked by forest officials.

53 BOA, İ.OM, 3/8, 16 Safer 1313 [8 August 1895].

54 "Menteşe Sancağı Ormanlarının Ahval-i Umumiyesi," *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası*, no. 5 (Temmuz 1312): 143.

55 Dursun, 257.

Table 5.1 Forest area, amount of timber obtained from the forests, forest revenues, and expenditures on provincial basis in 1897[56]

Administrative Unit	Area (hectares)	Timber (m^3)	Revenues *(kuruş)*	Expenditures *(kuruş)*
Kastamonu	1,505,000	156,075	4,499,650	409,550
Hüdâvendigâr	1,379,454	13,952	773,442	212,800
Aydın	1,672,000	23,538	2,311,012	305,750
Konya	754,645	44,924	3,122,102	356,300
Adana	337,500	19,218	1,871,871	206,750
Thessaloniki	1,422,520	23,122	1,176,333	253,950
Edirne	200,824	10,876	1,452,712	288,000
Kosova	245,000	14,356	312,073	110,150
Manastır	225,400	7,051	426,265	141,700
Biga - Karesi	367,100	28,900	1,595,543	331,300
İzmit	397,600	5,803	1,390,883	246,200
Trabzon	282,500	14,040	711,877	176,900
Sivas	165,800	5,821	317,495	48,200
Haleb	64,600	4,923	232,383	51,900
Ankara	62,400	1,163	194,930	69,500
Shkodra	83,000	1,421	287,232	78,250
Aegean Islands	95,000	22	48,732	42,350
Janina	58,000			
Erzurum	75,000		119,676	49,250
Çatalca	23,000	57	358,769	143,700
Syria and Beirut	36,000	415	301,312	94,750
Mamuretulaziz	25,000			
Zor	15,000			
Jerusalem	8,500			
Totals	9,500,843	375,677	21,504,292	3,617,250

The main purpose of the government in creating certain procedures was to eliminate middlemen, and more actively intervene in local politics by bureau-

56 Tevfik Güran, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlk İstatistik Yıllığı 1897* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1997), 177-178, 181.

cratizing the process, and exert stricter control over resources in the countryside. Contractors resisted these procedures as much as they could. The central government sought to extract the maximum revenue by creating a competitive environment via forest auctions. Contractors, however, were unwilling to participate in these auctions.[57] Since their partners in the local level administration benefitted from dealing with them, efforts by the central government to exert more direct control over concessions were also perceived as a threat by these officials. Due to the unofficial partnership between local officials and merchants, the attempts of the government to create a competitive environment and thus increase central authority over forest revenues conflicted with their interests.[58]

A large segment of the Ottoman forest bureaucracy was involved in actions that were criminal offences. One reason was that, even two decades after the foundation of the Forest Administration, a considerable number of forest officers were still working on an unsalaried basis even though, since the beginning of the Tanzimat, tax collection by salaried public servants representing the central government was considered the best way to assure direct, efficient control over resources. In order to earn a livelihood, low-level forest officers had to create various sources of income. As mentioned before, the first strategy was taking up other jobs, mostly farming, which caused the negligence of their public work.

Exaggerating the measurements of forest products was another strategy to generate income. In order to encourage forest officials to investigate illegal trade in forest products, the forest administration paid an informer fee to officers that informed the administration of theft in the forests or at the ports. Some timber merchants in Kaş complained in 1896 about officials who exaggerated the amount of their timber at the ports in order to receive an informer fee.[59] In addition to such fees, the possibility of promotion was another source of motivation for them. Reflecting the fact that revenue maximization, rather than protection of the forests was to be the priority for Ottoman forest bureaucrats, the advancement of forest officers depended on their performance with

57 Dursun, 312.

58 ibid., 163-172.

59 "Muharrerât-ı Umûmiyye," 135-136.

respect to revenue collection. According to a memorandum sent to the provinces in 1895, for example, the three foresters who collected the highest amount of tax would be awarded with an achievement certificate once every six months and those who received this certificate more than once would be promoted.[60]

The most widespread criminal act in which forest officers were involved to increase their income was bribery. Low-level forest officers, such as *tezkere muharrirleri,* and *ondalık memurları* who were appointed to grant licenses at ports, cities, and towns received a share of the revenue collected from the applicants, instead of a fixed salary paid by the administration. Hüseyin Fehmi implies in his memoires that the main source of income for these officers was bribes.[61] On account of the bribery mechanism, it became normal for traders to appropriate more forest products than their contracts allowed.

Another action defined as a crime but widely committed by members of the forest bureaucracy was not following tree removal procedures. According to British Consul General Cumberbatch, in many places, owing to the negligence of the authorities, the system of marking trees was ignored and production of a permit was not always insisted upon.[62] The report on the forest crimes committed in the Karaisalı district prepared by inspector Mahmud Nuri on 16 July 1914 exemplifies the situation described by the consul.

Karaisalı was a wide, rich forest located along the eastern side of Mediterranean Anatolia. Illegal tree removal was widespread in this forest. Issues mentioned by forest inspector Mahmud Nuri in his report included negligence and the failure of forest officers to count, measure, and mark the trees. According to forest regulations, license holders were only allowed to cut the trees marked by the forest officers. Additionally, forest officers had to count and measure trees and prepare notes on their diameters *(çap pusulası)* before the products were removed from the forests. Illegal tree felling could thus be prevented since forest guards had to constantly supervise forests in order to prepare these notes. Nevertheless, officers in Karaisalı never checked whether

60 Çağlar, 64.

61 Yund, 29.

62 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

the trees were marked. The report of Mahmud Nuri indicates that in the interest of both merchants and officers, it became commonplace to prepare these notes after the trees were removed from forests. The inspector argued that this situation led both to the waste of trees and to considerable losses for the imperial treasury. He found thousands of units of timber without diameter notes near the forests, villages, and ports. Since they were unrecorded, it was impossible to find out who had cut these trees.[63]

The inspector revealed a remarkable amount of trees cut without being marked or measured in Kızıldağ and Pozantı. For example, six licenses dated 1914 allowed applicants to cut 500 trees, corresponding to 592,918 cubic meters, from the forests of Kızıldağ, but 893,010 cubic meters of trees were cut from these forests. According to Mahmud Nuri, the main reason for this theft was that wood measurement officer Ali Rıza gave permission to timber merchants to cut trees without having measured them, which was obviously not an exceptional practice in the district. Mahmud Nuri found many trees in the forests of Pozantı cut without having been measured or marked, which was the duty of Fuat. Also, forest officer Yahya did not collect taxes from merchants for the timber from Kızıldağ and allowed a legal case to be dropped due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.[64]

Moreover, despite a law against the involvement of officials in the timber business, some high-level officers took advantage of new opportunities in the trade of forest products. For example, officials of the Shipyard and the Arsenal and local administrators benefitted from forest product abandoned in the forests.[65] A strategy that officers developed to circumvent restrictive legal regulations was to be involved in trade in the names of other people. Avlonyalı İsmail Kemal, the governor of the subprovince of Bolu, for instance, established a timber factory on the Filyos delta and, in the name of his son Mehmed, obtained permission from the Ministry of Forest and Mining to remove 120,000

63 BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/71, 17 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1330 [30 January 1915]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/77, 18 Şubat 1330 [3 March 1915].

64 BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/71, 17 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1330 [30 January 1915].

65 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 241-242.

cubic meters of timber from the Safranbolu forests to be sold to the Tobacco Régie.[66]

An example of a "convenience" provided by forest officials to timber merchants was giving them access to credit. Vouching for the timber merchants in his network, Hüseyin Fehmi convinced the Ottoman Bank to issue a large amount of cheap credit, which made it possible to sell a considerable volume of trees from the *mirî* forests in a short span of time. Hüseyin Fehmi was summoned by the Ministry of Forests to give a statement and was warned by Filibeli Hüseyin, the deputy minister and inspector of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, to not be involved in "such things" without the authorization of the ministry.[67] Another common way local forest officials "encouraged" merchants was by awarding state tenders at a high price. For example, in 1907, a timber merchant was awarded the tender to provide 3,000 *kantar* of pine bark from Bozöyük forests for sixteen *kuruş,* even though another bidder had proposed to do the same job for thirteen *kuruş* and five *para.*[68]

Obtaining cutting permits and the recruitment of cheap labor were two vital issues for timber merchants to maximize their profit. Abusing the villagers' right to freely utilize forest products - with the support of forest officers - provided merchants several advantages. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in certain circumstances, the administration accorded peasants the right to obtain a tree removal license for agricultural purposes and their vital needs for free. However, it was a widespread practice that peasants illegally cut trees for their "vital needs" in the scope of these pre-cutting licenses, but they then sold merchants the timber they produced.[69] Furthermore, the tax burden of peasants for tree removal for commercial purposes was much lower. This practice opened up new possibilities for the peasants, as well.

Villagers who earned their livelihood by lumbering could also obtain permission without paying fees if they transported this timber using their own carts and if they sold in the local market. According to Mahmud Nuri, local

66 Yund, 21.

67 ibid., 31-32.

68 BOA, BEO, 2318/173818, 8 Safer 1322 [24 April 1904]; BOA, MV, 115/5, 4 Muharrem 1325 [17 February 1907]; BOA, BEO, 2998/224845, 8 Muharrem 1325 [21 February 1907].

69 Birben, 401-402.

forest administrations did not investigate those who applied to take the advantage of this right by consulting with village headmen or administrative councils to determine whether they were really lumberers. Even the applicants who earned a living not by lumbering but by cultivating were granted authorization for free provision of timber. They illegally hired forest workers or made agreements with timber merchants who would then employ Tahtacı communities for this work. For example, the inhabitants of Akmeşe village who obtained a cutting and production license were actually not involved in lumbering. They employed the lumberers of Şeyhli, a village in Tarsus, to produce threshing boards to be transferred to Konya province. Another example is tree removal made on the basis of licenses given to Köse Ahmed oğlu Dede and his friends, inhabitants of Çukur Çömlek village, to produce timber for a six-month period. 208 unmarked trees were discovered in the area allocated to license holders among the Çukur Çömlek villagers. In the course of the trial against the villagers, it became clearer that these people had never requested any licenses; it was Kıbrıslı Refet, a timber merchant from Adana, who applied for and received a license in their name, and those who produced the timber were Tahtacı forest workers hired by Refet. Even though the forest officers were aware of this situation, Refet joined the investigation and signed the final report.[70]

Due to their influence in local politics, certain merchants enjoyed more opportunities than others. Administrative councils were of vital importance in terms of their authority with respect to the sale of trees from *mirî* forests. Hüseyin Fehmi described how contractors visited members of administrative councils one by one and had their contracts signed by "coaxing" them.[71]

A lawsuit and complaints brought against Hacı Ali Rıza, who, as a timber merchant and a member of the administrative council of Antalya subprovince, was at the intersection of the provincial administration and the local entrepreneur community, reveal the interdependence of administration and market. In 1895, Hacı Ali Rıza and Açıkbaş Yordan, another timber merchant from Antalya, were sued for having obtained 188 cubic meters of pine trees from the

70 BOA, T.OMİ, 1705/71, 17 Kânûn-ı Sânî 1330 [30 January 1915].

71 Yund, 26, 42.

Antalya forests without any license. According to the court decision, these trees were to be sold, and the revenue from the sale would be given to the treasury. Furthermore, they were to pay a penalty of eighty-five lira in addition to a fifteen lira fee for the attorney.[72] However, a petition submitted by Ahmed, the *mufti* of Antalya, on 18 September 1897, shows that Hacı Ali Rıza was still influential in local politics and had used the judicial mechanism to his favor. He was able to pressure the council to issue decisions for his own benefit. Ahmed also stated that, by threatening nomadic tribes that had deserted from military service that he would enroll them in the army or jail them in barns in violation of the law, Hacı Ali Rıza collected arbitrary fees and seized their products.[73] Even though Ahmed described the threats of Hacı Ali Rıza as an example of individual corruption, his petition reveals how administrative practices such as tax collection and military conscription of nomadic groups were forcibly applied with the involvement of local actors. Apparently, the government needed influential local figures to collect taxes from nomadic tribes and conscript them into military service. The dependence of central authorities on local interest groups for vital issues such as taxation and conscription of mobile populations increased the latter's room to maneuver.

Not all merchants were so influential politically, and occasionally they were punished for criminal acts. However, although some cases resulted in the conviction of merchants, the result was a form of conciliation in which illegally-gotten products were returned to merchants under the condition that they pay a certain compensation fee. A lawsuit filed against Ahmed Besim is a good example. He was sued for cutting trees from the forests of Antalya in violation of the forest law. He appropriated 1,500 unmarked trees and 500 cubic meters of timber produced from 700 cubic meters of trees, which were cut without a felling certificate. The fine Ahmed Besim needed to pay according to the Forest Regulation was 4,000 liras. At the end of the case, however, the court decided to lower this to 600 lira.[74]

72 BOA, BEO, 582/43595, 8 Ramazan 1312 [5 March 1895]; BOA, ŞD, 518/25, 5 Teşrîn-i Sânî 1310 [17 November 1894]. BOA, MV, 83/121, 29 Şaban 1312 [25 February 1895].

73 BOA, ŞD, 2984/31, 8 Cemâziyelâhir 1315 [4 November 1897].

74 BOA, İ.OM, 2/4, 22 Haziran 1310 [4 July 1894].

Another case is related to Arapzâde Şükrü, who was a timber merchant and chairman of the municipal council, and therefore politically more influential. In July 1910, Hacı Ali oğlu Mehmed reported on Şükrü to the forest administration about his smuggling of timber from the Çandır forests with the support of forest officers.[75] The investigation by Hakkı, the director of the forest administration, and Niyazi, the forest inspector of Aydın province, disclosed that Şükrü and Nâdir, another merchant and a member of the council of elders, had obtained 500 cubic meters of timber made from 2600 unmarked trees from *mirî* forests. It was also understood that forest officers issued a transportation license without having inspected the forest.[76]

Despite the report against Şükrü and Nâdir, Bekir Sâdık, the chief forest inspector of Konya province allowed these trees to be thrown into the river and transported to the port of Aksu. Moreover, even though the law prescribed the confiscation of illegally cut trees, the court decided that the timber in Aksu port would be sold and loaded onto merchant ships considering the possible "trading loss" that would result from floods. The court allowed it to be sold on the condition that the defendants provide collateral that would guarantee the transfer of the money to the court in the case that they were found guilty.[77] Mehmed Mehmedü'l-Belîdî, another merchant from Antalya, gave that reassurance, and the timber was shipped. Meanwhile, the lawsuit was discontinued due to a statute of limitations of three months.[78]

Şükrü and Nâdir were not punished, but Bekir Sâdık was dismissed by the ministry for disregarding the report on lumbering against the law in Çandır forests, allowing the extraction of 500 cubic meters of timber produced from unmarked trees, and allowing the discontinuation of the lawsuit.[79] With respect to his dismissal, Bekir claimed that Eşref, a member of the Chambers of

75 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/47, 27 Haziran 1326 [10 July 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/12, 21 Teşrin-i Evvel 1326 [3 November 1910].

76 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/47, 21 Teşrin-i evvel 1326 [3 November 1910].

77 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/47, 27 Haziran 1326 [10 July 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/56, 13 Kânûn-i Evvel 1326 [26 December 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910].

78 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/61, 9 Kânûn-1 Evvel 1326 [22 December 1910].

79 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/17, 12 Teşrîn-i Sânî 1326 [25 November 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1700/22, 4 Kânûn-1 Sânî 1326 [17 January 1911].

Deputies, threatened the members of the court through governors and also compelled the court to discharge him by wielding his influence at the Minister of Forestry. Meanwhile, Şükrü and Nâdir, as well as some local representatives, such as mukhtars and religious leaders, submitted a number of petitions defending Bekir.[80] Given these petitions and the status of the people involved, this case transcends the simple issue of the illegal cutting of 500 cubic meters of timber. It reveals the conflicts and alliances between notables and members of bureaucracy and also demonstrates that the trade of forest products was of capital importance. Many actors at the local and imperial level were involved in the power struggle for control over forest resources and networks.

§ 5.3 The Teke Forests Case: An Example of Struggle for Natural Resources at the Local Level

In 1892, Ezanzâde Mustafa, an inhabitant of the Hamidâbad subprovince, penned a petition of complaint to the Ministry of Finance. In his petition, Mustafa claimed that vast numbers of trees were being illegally cut from *mirî* forests in Hamidâbad, Teke, and Burdur.[81] Upon receiving this letter, the Ministry of Finance charged Kemal, the accountant of the Jerusalem subprovince, and Ali, the deputy director of the School of Forestry and Mining *(Orman ve Maâdin Mektebi),* to inquire into unauthorized felling in these subprovinces "in order to maintain the interests of the national treasury."[82] Before the investigation, the Ministry of Finance estimated that 2,717 cubic meters of wood was illegally cut in Teke.[83]

A telegram sent to Konya province by the governor of the subprovince of Teke indicates that the investigation carried out by Kemal and Ali had a significant impact on the Tahtacıs employed by Hacı Ali, the main defendant

80 BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/55, 19 Teşrîn-i Sânî 1326 [2 December 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1699/60, 7 Kânûn-ı Evvel 1326 [20 December 1910].

81 BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

82 BOA, İ.ML, 1/11, 9 Muharrem 1310 [3 August 1892]; BOA, BEO, 53/3969, 27 Muharrem 1310 [21 August 1892]; BOA, DH.ŞFR, 156/32, 25 Eylül 1308 [7 October 1892].

83 BOA, İ.ML, 1/11, 9 Muharrem 1310 [3 August 1892].

merchant who was prosecuted in this case. The governor stated that, because tree removal from Teke forests was banned over the course of the investigation, 25,000 "trespassers," who relied on the cutting, production, and transportation of timber for their subsistence were experiencing deep economic hardship and severe poverty.[84]

In fact, those "trespassers" were already poor and under pressure before the investigation. As mentioned before, being a member of the local administrative council made Hacı Ali an influential figure in local politics. He was renown for his unlawful acts against nomadic tribes, such as jailing them, forcing them to sell their animals at low prices, seizing their products, and collecting arbitrary fees from them. Ahmed, the mufti of Antalya, claimed in his petition that Hacı Ali captured 5,000-6,000 nomads who had deserted from military service by force and then released them after extorting a large amount of money from them. However, according to Ahmed, due to his political influence and his contribution to the recruitment of nomads, the government ignored such actions of Hacı Ali.[85]

The report prepared by Kemal and Ali confirmed that the forests of Teke were substantially pillaged and that the state treasury had suffered considerable losses due to illegal logging by timber merchants and mismanagement by forest inspectors and officers. Following this investigation, the responsible forest inspectors and officers were dismissed and the extraction of timber produced from the trees of Teke forests was banned. Related to this decision, Hacı Ali and ten fellow merchants and timber workers employed by him, sent a telegram to the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture stating that they had incurred huge losses over the previous two months because they had not been allowed to transport the trees they cut from the Teke forests even though

84 BOA, İ.HUS, 9/15, 20 February 1893], 3 Şaban 1310; BOA, İ.HUS, 9/18, 20 February 1893], 3 Şaban 1310; BOA, BEO, 159/11925, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11929, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11926, 5 Şaban 1310 [22 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11930, 5 Şaban 1310 [22 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11939, 7 Şaban 1310 [24 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 173/12918, 29 Şaban 1310 [18 March 1893]; BOA, BEO, 177/13204, 7 Ramazan 1310 [25 March 1893]; BOA, DH.MKT, 32/12, 21 Şevvâl 1310 [8 May 1893].

85 BOA, ŞD, 2984/31, 8 Cemaziyelâhir 1315 [4 November 1897].

they had obtained an official felling and transport license. Hacı Ali requested that the disputed timber be measured by the administration and asked for permission to transport the timber to the ports of Antalya and sell them after paying a certain guarantee. He claimed that the report of Kemal was not based on reality.[86]

Since logging in the Teke district was banned over the course of the investigation, people working in the forests of the districts of Hamidâbad, Teke, and Burdur remained unemployed.[87] Complaints about Kemal gradually grew. Relying on this unrest, a group of merchants sent the central government several letters in 1893 complaining about "the cruelty of Kemal and his accomplices." According to the merchants, the investigation by Kemal contained contradictory claims and false testimonies that made the lives of timber merchants and workers miserable. Their commercial affairs were harmed because they could not fulfill their commitments due to bans resulting from the investigation. Although they held official contracts that allowed them to produce and transport timber, their work was interrupted and merchant ships could not be loaded for six months.[88]

Upon receiving the complaints about these losses, the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture sent a letter to the Ministry of Finance and required it to compensate for the loss of the timber merchants.[89] However, referring to the report of Kemal and Ali, the Ministry of Finance was of the opinion that the practices of these merchants violated the Forest Regulation and went beyond the scope of their contracts. The treasury lost at least 10,000 lira because of illegal tree removal from *mirî* forests by these people in just the Teke district.[90] This case reveals the contradictory positions within the Ottoman bureaucracy with regard to the utilization of forest products. Considering it to be an issue of taxation, the Ministry of Finance adopted an uncompromising attitude against the timber merchants, whereas the Ministry of Forests, Mines,

86 BOA, BEO, 177/13204, 7 Ramazan 1310 [25 March 1893]; BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

87 BOA, BEO, 147/10997, 13 Receb 1310 [31 January 1893].

88 BOA, BEO, 177/13204, 7 Ramazan 1310 [25 March 1893].

89 BOA, BEO, 53/3969, 27 Muharrem 1310 [21 August 1892].

90 BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

and Agriculture approached the case more flexibly due to the organic relationship of forest officers and timber merchants. As demonstrated before, due to the limited technical capacity of the administration and at the expense of the principles of scientific forestry, local officials negotiated with traders and other interest groups in order to maintain their political influence and benefit from the newly emerging opportunities. The bottom-up reactions of these local officials shaped the policy of the Ministry of Forests in this case.

Eventually, the request of the timber merchants was approved. According to a temporary decision of the court in Isparta, the timber that was kept near the rivers during the investigation was to be transported to the ports. The wood that had been already transported to the ports, whether legally cut or not, was allowed to be shipped. In the case that it was proved that this wood was obtained in compliance with the contract and the Forest Regulation, it could be sold without applying any extra procedures. If cut or transported in contravention of the contract or the regulation, the timber merchants would still be granted a license to sell them on the conditions that the trees were registered and a certain bail was paid.

This case shows that timber merchants were the major beneficiaries of the exploitation of forest products. Official documents indicate that illegal removal and overexploitation of the forests were the result of alliances between timber merchants and forest officials in collusion with local governments.[91] The owners of the ships that docked along the coasts of Teke and carried illegal goods were closely allied with forest officials.[92] This is illustrated by the case of mayor Ömer who was put on trial and charged with timber smuggling. Hacı Ali attempted to transfer the jurisdiction of Ömer's case by using his relationships with members of the bureaucracy in Istanbul. According to the Ministry of Finance, timber merchants and workers knew they would lose the case in

91 BOA, İ.ML, 1/11, 9 Muharrem 1310 [3 August 1892]; BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894].

92 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894].

Isparta.[93] Court decisions could therefore change according to local power relations.[94]

Meanwhile, the authorities of Konya province informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the poor living conditions of timber workers. It was stated that the displacement of these people from the forests was unjust. The ministry requested that forest officers be sent to the region and precautions be taken immediately so that these people could take up their work again. Following the complaint and request of the local government, a decree was published that stated that the unemployment of such a huge number of people was inappropriate. Drawing attention to the principles of scientific forestry, this decree demanded an investigation into the misconduct of forest officers and immediate precautions to fulfill the needs of timber merchants and producers.[95]

In February 1893, the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture sent several telegrams to the central government, the province, and the forest inspector of Konya. This correspondence reflects the concern of the forest administration to bring local reactions to the investigation under control. Referring to the telegram of the governor of Teke subprovince about the unemployment of 25,000 forest workers, the ministry emphasized that it was not the Ministry of Forests that stopped the tenders and prohibited the production and trade

93 BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892]. The explanations of Hacı Ali and the forest workers differed. The workers requested the case be tried in Konya because the court in Isparta was 80 hours from their villages. BOA, BEO, 177/13204, 7 Ramazan 1310 [25 March 1893]. In the end, forest cases related to Teke district were transferred to Izmir. BOA, BEO, 296/22135, 7 Rebiülâhir 1311 [18 October 1893].

94 Şerif Alizâde, another timber merchant doing business in the same region, had recently won a court case regarding unauthorized tree cutting, but the court of appeal in the district center decided that he had to pay a 6,885 lira penalty and that all timber would be seized. If sold, Şerif Alizâde would pay the cost. See BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

95 BOA, İ.HUS, 9/15, 20 February 1893], 3 Şaban 1310; BOA, İ..HUS., 9/18, 20 February 1893], 3 Şaban 1310.BOA, BEO, 159/11925, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11929, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11926, 5 Şaban 1310 [22 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11930, 5 Şaban 1310 [22 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 160/11939, 7 Şaban 1310 [24 February 1893]; BOA, BEO, 173/12918, 29 Şaban 1310 [18 March 1893]; BOA, BEO, 177/13204, 7 Ramazan 1310 [25 March 1893]; BOA, DH.MKT., 32/12, 21 Şevvâl 1310 [8 May 1893].

of timber. The Ministry of Forests was of the opinion that the investigation of Kemal should be immediately concluded. The ministry charged Abdüllatif, the chief secretary of the ministry, with stopping the complaints and investigating the administration of the forests as well as the situation of mines. Hüseyin Fehmi states in his memoires that Abdüllatif, who worked in the Public Debt Administration before being appointed to the ministry, was "one of the men" of Selim, the Minister of Forests, Mines and Agriculture.[96] Selim pointed out that there was "no longer any need to complain and request help" since the local people were allowed to cut trees from *mirî* forests if they paid the necessary fee and merchants would be awarded contracts "without exception."[97]

In the meantime, based on the enquiries made by five inspectors on forest smuggling in the region,[98] Kemal prepared a report both to defend himself and to provide information about the situation in the Teke forests. Referring to the "destruction" and "abuse" of resources, the report emphasized that the investigation and proceedings sought to protect the interests of the treasury. According to the report, 21,000 cubic meters of timber was sold to merchants in 1890, 22,000 in 1891, and 18,000 in 1892. Kemal states that the amount of unmarked trees cut in 1892 was much higher than in previous years. The report indicates that 12,000 pieces of unlicensed timber were provided from Teke forests and brought to the Aksu port. 4,000 of these were marked by Ömer Lütfi and 8,000 by Mustafa Sabri. Most unlicensed wood brought to the coast was subsequently transferred to Alexandria or Damietta. Kemal also notes that timber produced outside the time periods specified in the cutting licenses amounted to more than 7,000 cubic meters. The marking procedure was only

96 Yund, 23.

97 BOA, BEO, 162/12093, 11 Şaban 1310 [28 February 1893]. At the end of the winter of 1893, the forest administration announced several tenders for the forests of Teke district. First, selected trees were marked for timber production, which created a means of subsistence for local woodcutter communities comprised of six tribes that had remained unemployed because of the investigation. Additionally, the administration sold trees equivalent to 20,200 *kantar* of firewood, 3,000 *kantar* of charcoal, and 50,000 *kıyye* of coal tar. Moreover, the tender of 12,000 *kantar* of firewood, 500 *kantar* of charcoal, and 25,000 wooden piles, and 1,254 cubic meters of timber was about to be completed. See BOA, YA.HUS, 270/73, 12 Şaban 1310 [1 March 1893].

98 Yund, 23.

done on paper. Timber producers cut much more timber than their certificates allowed and were not limited to the period specified in those certificates. Kemal was of the opinion that the fines that should be collected for illegal trees exceeded the wealth of the timber merchants. He also stated that, in order to expedite the investigation as well as to issue more cutting permission certificates and maintain order in the forests, more forest officers were needed in Teke. The prohibition of cutting trees from *mirî* forests should continue until the end of the investigation, otherwise the "opposition" to the Tahtacı community, in Kemal's expression, would be ineffective.[99] Even though merchants were the main beneficiaries of the timber business, Kemal preferred to target forest laborers. This targeting of the Tahtacı community reveals that disciplining labor was a greater priority for officials in practice than optimizing revenue.

Kemal's position generally opposed the interests of timber merchants in the Teke region, but merchants and bureaucrats in Egypt, who closely followed the trial, were of the opinion that the unlicensed timber should not be transferred to Egypt. Ahmed Muhtar, the Extraordinary Commissar in Egypt sent a telegram in 1893 that included a note on firewood and timber that were imported illegally from Anatolia to Egypt.[100] He stated that the timber that was illegally cut in Teke and Isparta should have been seized by the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture were continued to be sold in Alexandria. The value of this timber was around 25,000 lira. Ahmed Muhtar was of the opinion that the sale of this unlicensed wood infringed upon the commercial interests of "highly regarded" imperial merchants in Alexandria and should be stopped until a final judgment was reached.[101]

Meanwhile in official correspondence between the Teke district and Konya province related to this case, Mustafa Zihni, the governor of the subprovince of Teke, warned the province about the vulnerability of the coasts of Teke to, in his words, Armenian "sedition," reflecting a widespread negative attitude

99 BOA, BEO, 178/13335, 12 Ramazan 1310 [30 March 1893].

100 BOA, ŞD, 515/27, 30 Rebiülevvel 1311 [11 October 1893].

101 BOA, İ.HUS, 17/127, 29 Rebiülâhir 1311 [9 November 1893]; BOA, MV, 77.49/1.2, 3 Cemâziyelvvel 1311 [12 November 1893].

of Ottoman officials toward non-Muslims in this period.[102] Mustafa Zihni used this discourse to strengthen his position in the power struggle over forest products and to convince the Islamist central government to allocate more resources for the Teke region. He asserted that to prevent the harmful commercial affairs of Armenians and maintain order, further security precautions should be taken. These long coasts were deprived of means of communication and security. Since there were no inhabitants or piers in certain areas, especially along rocky parts of the coast, it was difficult to maintain security. Illegal weapons were carried by ship to Cyprus and Meis, the people of which were in the "habit of smuggling,"[103] and then to the mountainous coasts of Anamur, Antalya, and Ermenek. The safety of the Teke district, according to Mustafa Zihni depended on the permanent presence of a sailing ship that would be responsible for the surveillance of the coasts and on the construction, where necessary, of police stations and telegraph offices along the coast.[104] He also proposed the temporary employment of forest inspectors, clerks, cavalries, infantry, and guards to be stationed in coastal towns to prevent the import of harmful goods and weapons.[105]

According to the governor of Teke, the fact chief inspector Karabet, deputy inspector *(orman muâvini)* Artin, and the forest guard of Antalya were Armenians constituted a threat because they were open to bribes from the captains of merchant ships from Alexandria and Damietta intending to buy timber.[106] He proposed two secret mobile forest officers be charged with preventing smuggling on the coast. One would be responsible for the prevention of the

102 This attitude became more apparent with the Armenian massacres of 1894-1897. For a recent contribution to the field, see. Mehmet Polatel, "Armenians and the Land Question in the Ottoman Empire 1870-1914" (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2017).

103 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894].

104 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894]; BOA, BEO, 370/27689, 29 Şaban 1311 [7 March 1894]. BOA, DH.MKT, 36/9, 14 Rebiülâhir 1312 [15 October 1894].

105 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894]; BOA, DH.MKT, 36/9, 14 Rebiülâhir 1312 [15 October 1894].

106 BOA, BEO, 316/23652, 14 Cemâziyelevvel 1311 [23 November 1893]; BOA, BEO, 334/24988, 23 Teşrin-i Sânî 1309; BOA, BEO, 355/26559, 29 Receb 1311 [5 February 1894]. BOA, DH.MKT, 36/9, 14 Rebiülâhir 1312 [15 October 1894].

import of harmful goods between Meis and Antalya, while the second one would be charged with the coast between the Antalya and Adana provinces.[107] According to the governors, these Armenian officials should be suspended from their duties in Teke since they were so bold and influential that one dared to threaten Rıza, "a very creditable timber merchant," to prohibit him from trading. The Ministry of the Navy, however, stated that there were not enough ships and it would be expensive to surveil the coasts with a continually sailing ship. The Ministry of Forests did not find the proposal applicable either because it was in need of more forest officers. Since the number of the employees was insufficient to monitor the forests of the Antalya district, whose importance was obvious in terms of forestry, even vital harbors were beyond the control of the administration. Moreover, the budget of the ministry was not sufficient to employ two additional officers with salaries of 2,000 *kuruş* each.[108]

The concerns about Karabet were widely heard at the local level. Tevfik, Sadık, Vehbi, Abdullah, Şevki, Yusuf, Hacı Hüsrev, Tevfik, and Mehmed, "the most respected timber merchants in Alâiye" in the words of the Ministry of Forests, Mines and Agriculture, sent the Ministry of Forests a telegraph to defend him. Contrary to the governor of Teke subprovince and the governor of Konya province, these merchants were pleased with the chief forest inspector: Even though they were forced to pay 200 lira more in a recent auction due to the competition, they were grateful to him for showing his loyalty, helping the merchants, and protecting the state interests.[109]

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107 BOA, BEO, 334/24988, 26 Şubat 1309 [10 Mart 1894]. BOA, DH.MKT, 36/9, 14 Rebiülâhir 1312 [15 October 1894]. BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894]; BOA, BEO, 370/27689, 29 Şaban 1311 [7 March 1894]. In the same period, Ali Kemalî Paşa, the governor of Konya province, conducted a sixteen-day investigation along the coast from the Gulf of Fethiye to Selinti Cape in order to determine the ideal locations for the construction of blockhouses for the surveillance of the coast of Konya province. Yund, 32-33.

108 BOA, BEO, 355/26559, 29 Receb 1311 [5 February 1894]; BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894]; BOA, BEO, 334/24988, 18 Cemaziyelâhir 1311 [27 December 1893]; BOA, DH.MKT, 36/9, 14 Rebiülâhir 1312 [15 October 1894]; BOA, BEO, 355/26559, 29 Receb 1311 [5 February 1894]; BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894].

109 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894].

Karabet was nevertheless dismissed from his position in Antalya. According to Selim, the local government suspended Karabet because Mustafa Zihni had close relationships with timber merchants involved in timber smuggling.[110] Despite the anti-Armenian sentiment, through the efforts of Selim in Istanbul, Karabet was reinstated and charged with the administration of the Kastamonu forests. Furthermore, the governor of the province of Konya and the governor of the subprovince of Antalya were temporarily dismissed.[111]

Hattatzâde Mustafa Safvet, another timber merchant from the same region, was similarly sued for illegally cutting 75,000 units of timber. These trees were cut and processed in Teke and Hamidâbad, unloaded in Aksu, and stockpiled in Isparta. The Court of First Instance *(bidâyet mahkemesi)* in Hamidâbad decided that these trees would be confiscated by the national treasury and that the merchant would pay a 10,000 lira penalty.[112] In the meantime, Safvet filed a complaint about "the grudges of officers" and claimed that people were deprived of trade opportunities and their means of subsistence due to unjust confiscation of their timber by investigating officers:[113]

> They seized our timber. They do not issue cutting licenses. Our cases have been adjourned. Court officers are afraid. They are afraid of doing justice. We are devastated and miserable *(mahv [ü] perişan)*.

Safvet requested the measurement and protection of the confiscated timber until the end of the trial, including that part that had already been transferred to Alexandria. He stated that he would pay twice the auction value if any illegal felling was proven.[114] After receiving Safvet's telegram, the Ministry of Forests started a new investigation. The report of the ministry confirmed that the timber merchants were involved in unlicensed lumbering. The report also stated that timber tenders and cutting in the region that year were more than ever

110 BOA, BEO, 383/28707, 6 Şaban 1311 [12 February 1894].

111 Yund, 24.

112 BOA, DH.MKT, 80/20, 22 Zilhicce 1310 [7 July 1893]; BOA, BEO, 337/25233, 25 Cemaziyelâhir 1311 [3 January 1894].

113 BOA, DH.MKT, 80/20, 22 Zilhicce 1310 [7 July 1893].

114 BOA, BEO, 337/25233, 25 Cemaziyelâhir 1311 [3 January 1894].

before, so the claims of Safvet were false.[115] Following the investigation of Karabet and the measurement of the timber, the ministry and the merchants agreed on a compromise. Since the timber could neither be sold in Isparta nor Antalya,[116] it was sent to Alexandria. The merchants paid around 14,000 lira as a compensation fee and penalty.[117]

Timber merchants who were not involved in the network of local officials and administrators agreed with the viewpoints of neither the Ministry of Forests nor the aforementioned timber merchants, including Safvet and those who sent the ministry a telegram to defend Karabet. Antalyalı Veli, a merchant involved in timber trade in this area, was one of these outsider merchants. The picture he depicts differs vastly from the above. In his telegram to the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the misconduct of Ömer, Karabet, and Sıvacıyan Karabet,[118] he asserted that in order to further personal interests they maintained close relationships with "forest thieves." According to Veli, even though Safvet and Sabri were the primary criminals among merchants, they made other helpless merchants pay most of the penalty. Veli argued that owing to their alliance with Karabet, the chief forest inspector, and Sıvacıyan Karabet, the director of the Bank-ı Osmânî, the "major, influential thieves" in this case paid little considering the crime they committed, whereas "minor thieves" paid more. Furthermore, Mayor Ömer included 300 cubic meters of illegal timber from Köprü in the agreement although the compromise was made for forest thefts committed in Aksu and Isparta. Veli was surprised as he expected that the municipality would be rid of "such a great and brave thief," but Ömer was reemployed as mayor by the province.[119] According to some claims, the former governor and the governor of the subprovince protected him.[120] Antalyalı Veli

115 BOA, BEO, 289/21603, 25 Rebiülevvel 1311 [6 October 1893]; BOA, BEO, 293/21937, 2 Rebiülâhir 1311 [13 October 1893].

116 BOA, BEO, 337/25233, 5 Teşrin-i Evvel 1309 [3 January 1894].

117 BOA, BEO, 385/28811, 9 Şevvâl 1311 [15 April 1894]; BOA, MV, 78/26, 29 Cemaziyelâhir 1311 [7 January 1894].

118 BOA, BEO, 384 28753, 6 Şevvâl 1311 [12 April 1894].

119 BOA, DH.MKT, 226/44, 13 Şevvâl 1311 [19 April 1894].

120 BOA, DH.MKT, 80/20, 22 Zilhicce 1310 [7 July 1893].

remarked that the employment of this person, who had confessed to being a thief by paying a compromise fee, in public service hurt people deeply.[121]

The conditions of the agreement made among eight timber merchants involved in the smuggling 6,500 cubic meters of timber from the Isparta and Aksu forests, the administration, and banking officials show that forest officials were indeed highly influential in local politics and legal cases. According to the calculations, the penalty fine for this crime was between at least 17,500 lira and 43,800 lira. In one of his reports, Abdüllatif, the chief secretary of the Ministry of Forests, stated that the merchants could not afford to pay such a high penalty. With the help of this report and the mediation of the Bank-ı Osmâni, the court compromised at 12,930 lira by dividing the lowest fine by three and adding the value of illegally obtained timber that was not confiscated but left to the merchants.[122] On the condition that the merchants paid this amount, the lawsuit would be withdrawn and the smuggled timber would be left to them. This was obviously a favorable result for the merchants.

According to the court's decision in August 1894, the workers of Hacı Ali had provided 115 cubic meters of timber from the forests of the province without a contract and Nazifzâde had transported this illegal timber after the expiration of his contract. It was proposed that the illegal timber be given back to Hacı Ali on the condition that he pay a 180 lira fee. The value of this timber on the market was 180 lira, so this proposal was found reasonable in view of the interests of the national treasury.[123]

About a year after this proposal, the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture prepared a decree that indicated that the amount of illegal timber was much more than mentioned above. It was a total of 223 cubic meters, of which 90 cubic meters had been transferred to Alexandretta before the investigation so that only 130 cubic meters of illegal timber remained. The court in Konya decided that the merchant was free of liability. The case was then transferred

121 BOA, DH.MKT, 226/44, 13 Şevvâl 1311 [19 April 1894].

122 BOA, DH.MKT, 80/20, 1 Haziran 1309 [13 June 1893]; BOA, BEO, 337/25233, 25 Cemaziyelâhir 1311 [3 January 1894].

123 BOA, ŞD, 520/17, 15 Muharrem 1313 [8 July 1895]; BOA, İ.OM, 3/9, 27 Safer 1313 [19 August 1895]; BOA, BEO, 673/50402, 27 Safer 1313 [19 August 1895].

to the Council of State, with the argument that the value of the 130 cubic meters of timber remaining in the forest was about 90 lira and would increase to 130 lira when the cost of transportation was added. So it was in the treasury's interest to cut a deal with the timber merchant in return for a certain compensation fee.[124]

According to Article 47 of the Forestry Regulation, timber left in the forests in the course of an investigation would be seized and its revenue would be left to the treasury.[125] The final conditions of the agreement accepted by Hacı Ali and found appropriate for the interests of the state by the court show that final decisions could be quite different in practice: Hacı Ali was to pay a low fine of sixty-five lira plus a three lira fee for the attorney for 223 cubic meters of illegally produced timber.[126]

Several conclusions can be drawn from the Teke forests case. First, the Ottoman administration was highly fragmented in terms of its interests in for-

124 BOA, İ.OM, 3/3, 4 Safer 1313 [27 July 1895]. The discourse of "the benefit of the treasury" was so widespread and commonplace that even local and foreign merchants made frequent use of it. In 1908, after the administration rejected his application to extract oak trees from the Ahudağ *mirî* forests located in the Biga district of Kala-i Sultâniye province because the pine trees of this forest tract had already been sold to Mehmed Şükrü, another timber merchant, an Austrian timber merchant indicated in his petition that he did not want to buy the pine trees but the oak trees. He suggested that it would be against the benefit of the treasury to leave this vast area inactive for such a long time. BOA, T.OMİ, 1695/43, 25 Şaban 1326 [22 September 1908].

125 BOA, İ.OM, 3/3, 4 Safer 1313 [27 July 1895]. In the Ottoman Archives there are various complaint petitions submitted by timber merchants who were discontented by this practice. In 1892, a group of merchants from Antalya, for example, complained that for about three months their timber had been seized in the ports or near the rivers. They claimed that this timber was not illegal but was provided according to official contracts, and they demanded this timber be loaded onto the ships. See BOA, İ.HUS, 4/117, 5 Teşrin-i Evvel 1308 [17 October 1892]. Another petition submitted in 1909 by Ahmed Lülü, another timber merchant from Antalya, complained about a similar situation. He claimed that he had significant losses because the timber he obtained and transported to Aksu and Finike ports in accordance with the procedure was seized in the course of an investigation into him. See BOA, BEO, 3547/266008, 22 Rebiülevvel 1327 [13 April 1909].

126 BOA, ŞD, 520/18, 16 Muharrem 1313 [9 July 1895]; BOA, BEO, 662/49583, 7 Safer 1313 [30 July 1895].

estry. This situation provided timber traders with various advantages in tenders as well as with many conveniences and exemptions concerning legal procedures. This case also illustrates that officials were an indispensable part of trade networks. Their close relationships with traders not only opened new market opportunities but made them highly influential in forest politics. Local forest officials played a key role in the resource extraction mechanism by mediating between their associates at the central level and local interest groups.

§ 5.4 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I discussed how local actors in the Taurus region perceived attempts at scientific forestry. Based on administrative investigations and legal cases regarding forest utilization and focused on the concrete practices of officials and local notables, I examined the power struggles over forest products at the local level.

One outcome of this chapter is a vivid picture of the actual routines of forest officials, which reveals that the state is an amalgam of complicated relations and contradictory practices rather than an autonomous, coherent, top-down structure. From this point of view, this chapter not only demonstrated struggles in the local context but also fragmented interests at the central level. Due to the limited technical and financial capacity of the government and clashing interests at the central and local levels, officials were forced to negotiate with local interest groups and weakening the ideal of "scientific forestry" as an example of high modernism. Contradictory positions within the government and the forest administration enabled timber merchants to access a broad range of opportunities. On the other hand, conflicts among the timber traders provided an advantage to officials who acted in an uncompromising manner toward merchants.

This chapter also illustrated the influence of low level officials in forest policy. These officials and their associates at the central level expanded their authority by bending the law, which increased the level of commercial lumbering and strengthened trade networks. Not only traders but also bureaucrats, by putting the principles of scientific forestry aside, developed strategies with the purpose of benefitting from the new market opportunities that emerged with

the growing global demand for forest products. In order to increase tax revenues as well as their own benefits, they engaged in partnerships with local notables, obviously violating the law they had created. Representatives of the public authority, the primary definers of crimes, became the main perpetrators of those crimes.

6

Being a Forest Laborer in Late Ottoman Mediterranean Anatolia

This chapter examines the subsistence practices of the Tahtacıs in the rapidly changing ecological, economic, and political environment of late Ottoman Mediterranean Anatolia, which became warmer, less forested, and more integrated with regional and global markets over a short period of time. As the previous chapters have illustrated, the intensification of commercial agriculture and forestry in the nineteenth century made the region an arena of power struggles over natural resources. The wide range of diverse, flexible strategies of the Tahtacıs allowed them to cope with increasing commercialization in forestry and the penetration of the modern state.

As a background to the changing subsistence practices of Tahtacıs, the first part of the chapter sketches the nature of their work: Lumbering. This reveals the challenges and opportunities the Tahtacıs had from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Timber harvesting was a labor-intensive job that could not be replaced by any contemporaneous technology, and it required specialized, local knowledge of the trees and forests that scientific foresters were lacking. The expertise and labor of the Tahtacıs was therefore of vital importance for both timber merchants and forest officials.

As the second part of the chapter demonstrates, in the mid-century, as a result of the increasing demand for mass production in forestry and the gradual expansion of market relations, the Tahtacıs became more impoverished

and dependent on timber merchants. Due to their debt burden, they were trapped in a monopolistic relation with local notables who had the political and economic influence to win tenders, hire large ships, and bypass bureaucratic procedures. In this process, the Tahtacı communities not only had to cope with chronic debt but also new liabilities imposed by an administration that was implementing more aggressive policies in order to increase its control over natural and human resources. The bonded labor and specialized expertise of the Tahtacı communities made the nineteenth century the golden age for timber trade in the Mediterranean region.

The third part of the chapter deals with the question of how Tahtacı communities responded to the demands of the central authority and the pressures of the expanding market. For the Tahtacıs one of the most concrete reflections of the modern state in their daily life was compulsory military service. Especially from the second half of the nineteenth century, military conscription practices were volatile and context-dependent, which provided room for the Tahtacı communities to maneuver.[1] As an experienced hill society, they developed complicated strategies to avoid military duty. In peace times, when the demand for forest products as well as forest labor increased, the strategy was not to move deeper into the mountains, since their clients were at low altitudes. Instead some claimed exemption from military service by manipulating the vague boundaries of conscription practices. Only in times of war, when work opportunities in lowlands diminished and military obligations increased, did they resort to outlawed strategies such as taking to the hills and banditry.

1 For detailed information on the conscription policies of the Ottoman Empire and popular reactions, see Erik J. Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System In Theory And Practice, 1844-1918," in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999); Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Mehmet Beşikçi, "Mobilizing Military Labor in the Age of Total War: Ottoman Conscription before and during the Great War," in *Fighting For a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour, 1500-2000*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014); Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok: Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum (1826-1839)* (Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2009).

Contrary to the generally accepted perception that the Tahtacıs were isolated communities detached from the rest of the society, the Tahtacıs intentionally adopted a less mobile life at lower altitudes - closer to sedentary peasants and the administration - despite increasing administrative and economic pressures. Due to their vital importance for forestry, the administration made no serious efforts to settle them.[2] The Tahtacıs gradually left peripatetic strategies over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some became involved in pastoral strategies while others became wage laborers. Unlike pastoral nomadic groups who used the opportunity to obtain land by intermarriage with agricultural groups, the Tahtacıs as an endogamic community, had no such an opportunity.[3] However, unlike many other peripatetic groups, they obtained land by purchasing it from local settled communities. Lands made available when rural populations descended to much lower altitudes also made it possible for the Tahtacıs to realize permanent settlement.

§ 6.1 Lumbering as a Labor-Intensive Work

In late Ottoman Anatolia, processing and transportation of wood was more challenging than it is today. The first sawmills were established as late as 1892.[4] According to a report of the English consul dated 1902,[5] there were several steam sawmills working nonstop in Izmir. However, the use of sawmills was not widespread in Anatolia, and those that existed were insufficient in terms of their technological capabilities. Forest laborers and peasants used axes and handsaws to cut and split the trees.[6]

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2 Forced sedentism was not a widespread phenomenon in the story of the sedentarization of Tahtacı groups. As a rare example, in 1887 a group of nomadic Tahtacıs was sedentarized in Savcılar, Simav. Since then, the tribe was occupied with agriculture. See BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 58/8, 14 Zilkade 1336 [21 August 1918].

3 See Neyzi; Naci Kum-Atabeyli, "Türkmen Yürük ve Tahtacılar Arasında Tetkikler Görüşler: Tahtacı Türklerinde Manevi Kültür," *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları* 1, no. 11 (1950): 175.

4 Küçük, 39.

5 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

6 Dursun, 306. The British report mentioned above states that even though hydraulic saw mills were introduced, trees continued to be felled by axes and sawed by hand on the spot. Saw mills

The report of Niyazi Bey, dated 1918,[7] provides a vivid depiction of this labor-intensive work. The first task of the laborers, he wrote, was to find proper trees, of which the Tahtacıs mostly processed pine, cedar, and sometimes fir. The second task was to cut of the useless top part of the tree and chop the wood into logs. The length of the logs ranged from 2 to 5 meters. Since trees were taller on the hilltops, logs from higher altitudes could reach up to 6 meters in length. The bodies of trees were cleaned of branches and knolls and processed. Since it was difficult to transport the trees, processing took place in the forest. Approximately 20 planks with lengths of 2-3 meters, widths of 20-30 centimeters, and thicknesses of 1.5-2.5 centimeters were made from each log. A large tree could render 300 *salma,* thin planks used in roof construction, of 4-4.5 meters each. Processing wood necessitated specialized knowledge and years of experience. Niyazi Bey admiringly describes the Tahtacı communities' way of swinging their axes that weighted a couple of kilos and their ability to direct thirty meter tall trees to fall wherever they wanted them to, taking into account the wind and nearby saplings.

The hardest part of the job was transportation. The value per cubic meter of timber was about seventy-three *kuruş* in 1895, including the cost of cutting and processing, which was thirty *kuruş*. Transferring timber from mountains to ports was such challenging work that the value of the timber reached about one hundred *kuruş* once the cost of transportation was included.[8] In other words, the wage for cutting, processing, and transferring timber was approximately sixty *kuruş* per cubic meter in challenging cases. Men and sometimes boys were responsible for transporting the planks to the rivers, usually with donkeys and mules, which were appropriate draft animals in rough terrain.

Carrying timber over rough, bumpy paths with the help of mules was challenging, as Niyazi Bey states, and was much more expensive in the Taurus Mountains than in much of Europe. One important reason was that sledges

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were of native construction and worked with manpower. The best saw mill could turn out 200 planks in 24 hours. See TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

7 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

8 BOA, İ.OM, 3/3, 4 Safer 1313 [27 July 1895].

used for the transportation of timber in mountains across Europe were inapplicable in the geographical conditions of Taurus Mountains, so trees had to be cut into pieces before being transported. Timber had to be carried on the lumberjacks' shoulders from where they were cut and processed to places where donkeys and mules could reach.[9]

Transportation over water was the most widespread way of getting forest products from high altitudes to the ports. The Tahtacıs relied on experience, transferred from generation to generation pertaining to the use of waterways to transport timber to the coast. The Tahtacıs in Mersin can still explain in detail how their grandfathers and grandmothers used the Göksu River to carry tons of timber from the plateaus of Bucakkışla, Aladağ, and Kahtama[10] to Silifke. In the Antalya region, the Akçay Stream was used to carry logs to Finike.[11] In Aydın the Akçay river enabled timber to be taken to railways at the center of the province.[12]

Lumbering necessitated the mobilization of a large number of skilled laborers with local knowledge of trees, forests, paths, and waterways. Since it required specialized expertise that could not be supplied by scientific foresters or replaced by any technological alternatives of the time, timber merchants and administrators were dependent on the Tahtacıs. Tahtacı communities gained this expertise by accumulating experience over generations. For at least six hundred years, they had wandered and earned their living in the Mediterranean mountains. In challenging conditions, they harvested timber and firewood for local communities. With the intensification of commercial forestry due to the increasing need for forest products, their labor and artisanship became more crucial than ever before. Their labor and expertise were indispensable for the continued provision and transportation of large amounts of forest products.

The nature of the work created two outcomes in terms of the subsistence of the Tahtacı communities. First, unlike other peripatetic groups, Tahtacıs

9 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

10 D. A. (1950), Dalakderesi/Mersin, 11.08.2015; S. K. (1958), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 12.08.2015; F. B. (1942), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 13.08.2015.

11 V. A. (1951), Akçainiş/Antalya, 20.04.2016.

12 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

adapted their craft to new conditions and carried on their traditional occupation for a longer time. On the other hand, the commodification of forests transformed them into bonded laborers due to their increasing dependence on traders.

§ 6.2 The Impact of the New Forestry on Forest-Dependent Communities

6.2.1 *Debt Bondage and Migration*

Until the last quarter of the century, when the first concrete, modern forestry methods were introduced, merchants were the main beneficiaries of forest resources. The utilization of forest products was based on agreements made between merchants and forest laborers. The conditions of these agreements were the main reason forest laborers were driven into debt. Merchants bargained with sedentary peasants and peripatetic communities for the production and transportation of certain amounts of timber to be delivered by given dates. The merchants usually provided the animals used for the transportation of the timber as an advance payment on the condition that, after finishing their job, the laborers pay for the animals with interest. The merchants usually overcharged for these animals, which constituted an additional source of income for the merchants. For their basic needs, laborers could also be paid in advance, which was a further opportunity for merchants to charge interest. After the products were transported to the ports, the cost of the animals and other provisions, advance payments, interest, and taxes were deducted from the market price of the timber. This calculation always ended with the laborer becoming indebted to the merchant.[13] Some merchants intentionally manipulated the weight of the timber to their advantage.[14]

A decree of the Supreme Council dated 1857[15] referred to contracts signed among peripatetic Tahtacı tribes and local notables in Menteşe. The terms of these contracts reveal the working conditions of Tahtacı groups as well as their

13 Bricogne, 10.

14 Öztel, 297.

15 BOA, İ.MVL, 375/16468, 17 Zilhicce 1273 [8 August 1857].

relations with timber merchants. Each contract was signed between a group of Tahtacıs consisting of fifteen to twenty people and an agha, who was a local notable or merchant. These contracts were valid for three years. There was an exclusive relationship between the Tahtacıs and the aghas, which meant that their timber could be sold to no one else except the agha for whom they were currently working. The food and animals provided by aghas were valued at higher market prices, whereas the timber processed by the Tahtacıs was valued at much lower than the market rate for timber. For instance, four *kuruş* of timber could be valued at two *kuruş*. In this way, an agha could earn an income of 80,000-100,000 *kuruş* plus a twenty percent *güzeşte zammı* (interest collected on debt). Since expenditures increased annually, it was impossible for Tahtacı families to repay their debts. In some cases, debt-ridden people were obliged to give away their products for free unless they could find another agha willing to pay their debts. Thus, the Tahtacıs became "prisoners of a few people, with an increasing debt day by day." "In order to provide prosperity and order," according to the Supreme Council, an ordinance was enacted. Accordingly, exorbitant prices were to be amended and the accounting was to be just. Moreover, the income of the Tahtacıs was to be paid in appropriate installments calculated according to the estimated amount they would produce. Finally, in order for the Tahtacıs to be able to pay their installments, they would be allowed to sell their timber to whomever they wished. So, in the early period of the commodification of forests from the beginning of the 1850s to the early 1870s, in certain circumstances, the administration intervened in local conflicts in favor of laborers.

A petition submitted by a group of Tahtacıs some fifteen years after this case describes a similar situation. According to their complaint, they had migrated from Alâiye to Mersin to work in timber production. The petitioners complained that the timber merchant Nikola overcharged them for provisions he supplied during their work and bought their products for less than its value on the market. Nikola claimed 33,435 *kuruş* from the laborers, whereas they stated that he forced them to pay for timber that was lost or destroyed after they had delivered it to the merchant. An investigation committee was established following this complaint. The committee, presided by Abdulkadir, prepared a chart of accounts including the debts between the timber merchant

and the community - four households consisting of some fifty people in total. The committee decided that the merchant had to pay two thirds of the price of the damaged timber. Accordingly, the debt of the community decreased to 4,182 *kuruş* through the intervention of the administration after the petition of the Tahtacıs.[16]

Another story of the arbitrary practices of local notables towards the Tahtacıs came from Biga. According to a record dated 1865, the timber merchant Ahmed mistreated a group of Tahtacıs who worked for him. This community had been living in the Kala-i Sultâniye and Ayvacık districts since 1845. Demanding 4,000 *kuruş* from the community, he not only seized the money of Kara Ali, Koca Mustafaoğlu Mahmud, Mehmed Ali, and Kadiroğlu Mustafa by force but also turned them into his debtors by preparing a debt certificate for 26,000 *kuruş*. Thereafter, he brought them to Karesi in chains and sold their mules, obtaining 7,500 *kuruş* from the sale. Moreover, he beat one with his rifle and released them only after they accepted an additional debt certificate for another 2,000 *kuruş*. The man tortured by Ahmed died three days later.[17]

In this period, it was common among Tahtacı families to move to neighboring regions to escape deepening debt and pressure from local notables. The migration routes Tahtacı groups followed were shaped by the accessibility of forest resources and local power relations. There were two trends in the Teke region during the 1850s and 60s. The first was to move from the western to the eastern Taurus, where, due to increasing demand from Egypt for Anatolian timber to be used in the construction of the Suez Canal, there was a huge need for labor in the forests. The second tendency was to migrate to the Aegean region, where commercial agriculture was widespread. Several petitions in the Ottoman Archives were submitted by local notables during the 1850s and 1860s demanding the return of Tahtacı communities that had migrated due to their unpaid debts.

A petition dated 1854, for example, indicates that a group of Tahtacıs in Teke had moved to İçil and Adana without paying their debts. The claimants

16 BOA, ŞD, 2117/1, 7 Nisan 1288 [19 April 1872].

17 BOA, MVL, 704/3, 6 Muharrem 1282 [1 June 1865]

from the Zenâiroğlu family thereupon demanded that the administration collect the debt from the community members who had stayed in Teke.[18] According to another document, dated 1858, a group of Tahtacıs moved from Antalya to Adana, where there was a larger demand for timber workers. A group of merchants in Antalya sued them claiming that they had left the province without paying their debts. Thereupon, the community submitted a petition to defend themselves in which they stated that they had no occupation other than timber harvesting and had to migrate to Adana to work in the forests.[19] A similar migration from Teke was mentioned in a document issued in 1866. Some members of the Tahtacı community in Teke moved to Menteşe without paying their taxes.[20]

According to a document dated 1862, merchants from the Zenâiroğlu family submitted an additional petition claiming that a group of Tahtacıs, consisting of 21 households that had pursued a mobile way of life within the boundaries of the Teke district, migrated to the Menteşe subprovince without paying a debt of 90,515 *kuruş*. The merchants demanded their return to Teke and claimed that the new customers of the Tahtacıs were not allowing their return to the Teke district. They were worried that Tahtacıs who had stayed in Teke would escape, too, so long as the local government refused to interfere in the matter.[21] In 1868, contrary to the claim that it declined to intervene, the government of Teke demanded the repatriation of Tahtacıs who had moved to Menteşe subprovince to escape their debts to locals. The Aydın district governor corresponded, however, that it was not possible to return the Tahtacıs. It

18 BOA, A.MKT.DV, 80/9, 24 Safer 1271 [16 November 1854].

19 BOA, A.MKT.UM, 345.87, 4 Safer 1275, [13 September 1858]

20 BOA, MVL, 722/20, 8 Rebiülevvel 1283 [21 July 1866]. Yılgür refers to an official decree dated 1866 that indicates that despite all the efforts of the Ottoman administration, it faced difficulties collecting taxes from the communities called *Kıbtî* due to their highly mobile way of life. As a result, a considerable debt of unpaid taxes accumulated in this period. Egemen Yılgür, "Son Dönem Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve "Çingeneler": Vergi, Askerlik ve Adlandırma Meseleleri," *MSGSÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 2, no. 18 (2018): 279.

21 BOA, A.MKT.DV, 219/49, 7 Ramazan 1278 [8 March 1862].

had been about twenty years since they arrived in Aydın, and they were generally pursuing a sedentary way of life.[22]

The monopoly of the notables over the labor and products of the Tahtacıs as well as the perpetuation of community-based taxation practices caused many conflicts at the local level. For example, in the aforementioned case, other members of the Tahtacı community in Teke began paying the share of the taxes of Tahtacı families that had moved to Menteşe, which amounted to 15,420 *kuruş*.[23] Another document dated 1857 mentions seventy-six Tahtacı and Abdal families that "slipped away" from the Teke district to the regions of İçil, Adana, and Konya without paying debts to merchants and their taxes for the years 1854, 1855, and 1856. The tax burden for just 1855 was 28,000 *kuruş*. Moreover, twenty-three nomadic Tahtacı families in the Tarsus district had debts amounting to 200,000 *kuruş* to Tarsus merchants.[24]

The demands of petitioners were usually not accepted. Allowing the migration of Tahtacıs to regions where timber production was widespread was actually compatible with the interests of some timber merchants as well as the administration. Since the Tahtacıs were skilled workers whose labor was cheap, it was contrary to the interests of timber merchants to allow Tahtacı communities to leave productions area and resettle in their previous places. Furthermore, authorities noticed that overburdening the Tahtacıs and limiting their mobility from one district to another caused deeper problems. The conflicting positions among officials and notables created room for the Tahtacıs to maneuver. Notwithstanding the growing pressure of local merchants and indebtedness, many Tahtacı groups escaped taxes and obligations related to their deepening debt by moving elsewhere.

6.2.2 *Tax Liabilities and Compulsory Work*

Communities that depended on felling and transporting wood and timber were most affected by the new forest regulations.[25] The revocation of usufruct

22 BOA, ŞD, 1375/1, 17 Nisan 1284 [29 April 1868].

23 BOA, A.MKT.DV, 219/49, 7 Ramazan 1278 [8 March 1862].

24 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 128 89, 7 Safer 1274 [27 September 1857].

25 Dursun, "Forest and the State: History of Forestry and Forest Administration in the Ottoman Empire," 242.

rights to forests that villagers had held since "time immemorial" led to a considerable increase in their tax burden related to the production and selling of timber, firewood, and charcoal.

A relatively early document dispatched by the Teke subprovince in 1858 mentions a dispute about a newly emerged tax liability. The people of the Finike, İğdir, and Kardıç subdistricts had bought grains from people in Antalya who had bought timber from them for decades. Because the roads were difficult, they had transported the timber and grains on boats. Since the promulgation of the Tanzimat regime in 1838, which abolished the arbitrary fees collected by local officials and establish a standardized, centralized system of taxation - at least in theory -, they had been exempt from paying any customs for this trade. Recognizing the customary trade of vital products between local communities, the administration outlawed tax collection on the trade between these people. However, in 1858, Cezzar Mustafa, the customs collector *(gümrük mültezimi)* in Antalya, imposed a customs duty on his own initiative. He did not allow the people to transfer their products unless they paid the tax. The people of Finike, İğdir, and Kardıç refused to pay.[26] According to Cezzar Mustafa, in order to be exempt from taxes, profiteers made their commodities look like vital needs. He also argued that this custom was valid only for products transported overland not by water. Despite local resistance, the practice of collecting a 12 percent customs tax was approved by the central government given that the regulations and tender agreement that authorized Cezzar Mustafa did not contain any reference to this custom.[27]

The change of the status of forests from "communal" ones utilized by local populations to "state" forests under the Forest Regulation of 1870 meant additional tax liabilities and fines in cases when the regulation was violated, which caused prevalent social unrest and sometimes a reaction to the administration at the local level. One example was a group of woodsmen from the Alâiye district who, in 1887, sent a petition to the Ministry of Internal Affairs asking to

26 BOA, MVL, 568/35, 7 Şaban 1274 [23 March 1858]; BOA, A.MKT.NZD, 231/12, 8 Zilhicce 1273 [30 July 1857].

27 BOA, A.MKT.UM, 379/80, 23 Rebiülâhir 1276 [19 November 1859].

allow the free production of timber and firewood as in the past. The petitioners complained that they had suffered famine "since the forests were policed by being assessed as cubic meters."[28] This statement clearly manifests the connection between the needs to quantify the forest and to discipline its residents. Similar to the pattern in other countries, the Ottoman Empire's attempts at the scientification of forestry and maintenance of "public order" in forests dramatically altered the means of subsistence of populations that earned their livelihood by producing timber and charcoal. As the woodsmen incisively described in their petition, counting and measuring *(ta'dâd ve müsahâ)* was the first step towards the confiscation and appropriation *(zabt ve kabz)* of products.

In 1912, villagers who made their living producing timber in the forests of Bolu also submitted a number of petitions protesting the abolishment of their rights to free use of coppices and their rising tax burden. They expressed their complaints about the new forestry regime that had been brought into effect in their district three years earlier. Since the mountains around their villages began to be considered state property, their tax burden rose substantially.[29] When production costs were added to this, "nothing was left in their hands except troubles" due to the bad working conditions.[30] In their petitions villagers accused the administration of violating the law and asked officials to end their suffering by reverting to the old common law until the people approved the new one.[31] As the demand of the villagers indicated, "what the state defines as criminal often differs substantially from the peasant definition of crime."[32]

According to the new law, those caught cutting trees without permission or beyond the boundaries of their certificates had to pay twice as much for the right to use the forest for their livelihood, in addition to a punitive stamp tax

28 *"… ormanların metre ve mik'ab olmasına vaz' olunarak taht-ı inzibâta alınması hasebiyle…"* See BOA, DH.MKT, 1460/32, 16 Safer 1305 [3 November 1887].

29 BOA, T.OMİ, 1701/36, 5 Nisan 1328 [18 April 1912].

30 BOA, T.OMİ, 1701/36, 22 Nisan 1328 [5 May 1912].

31 BOA, T.OMİ, 1701/32, 24 Nisan 1328 [7 May 1912].

32 Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java*, 14.

and tithe. Seventy percent of the tithe was paid to the informant who denounced the "illegal" cutting and thirty percent to the forest officer. Furthermore, illegally cut trees were confiscated. In accordance with this rule, Tahtacıs living in the Tarsus district had to pay twice as much tax in 1906 due to illegal tree removal from the Kırgediği *mirî* forests of Adana province. The additional costs ran up to over 4,000 *kuruş*.[33] Similarly, upon an investigation carried out by Ahmed Muhtar, the chief forest inspector in Belgrad, and by Galib, a clerk from the Forestry Ministry in the Tarsus forests, the Tahtacıs in this area paid 8,747 *kuruş* logging outside the boundaries defined in their authorization certificate.[34]

In addition to formal taxes, the rural population was also forced to pay extra fees and fines and perform compulsory work. For example, it was widespread practice for forest officers to collect arbitrary fees called *dağ hakkı* (mountain duty) and *kum hakkı* (sand duty).[35] Similarly, according to a petition written by Musa and Mustafa, two Tahtacıs from Aydın province, the governor of Bayındır District, Tevfik, unjustly collected 4,750 *kuruş* from the community as a penalty; moreover, he put them in prison.[36] Another Tahtacı community that inhabited the Torbalı district complained about the commander of the Aydın province who forced them to cut timber from the forest of their villages and transport it to Izmir with their own animals for free to build his house.[37] There is no record indicating that the administration opened formal investigations into these complaints.

Another example of forced forest labor was a group of villagers in Kandıra district who earned a living by chopping wood, who were forced to work by the administration for the construction of the Kandıra Road. Because they could not do their own jobs in the course of this compulsory work, firewood that would have been sent to Istanbul could not be produced. Its provision,

33 BOA, ŞD, 537/14, 29 Şevval 1324 [16 December 1906]; BOA, BEO, 3101/232557, 5 Cemaziyelâhir 1325 [16 June 1907].

34 BOA, BEO, 3021/226564, 14 Safer 1325 [28 March 1907].

35 Çağlar, 55.

36 BOA, DH.MKT, 1438/23, 19 Zilkade 1304 [9 August 1887]; BOA, DH.MKT, 1449/108, 04 Muharrem 1305 [22 September 1887].

37 BOA, DH.MKT, 1655/48, 13 Muharrem 1317 [24 May 1899].

which was necessary to meet the needs of the population of Istanbul, was so critical that an inspector was sent to Kandıra to solve the problem. The inhabitants of two villages of Kandıra were obliged to cut 3,000 *çeki* of firewood, and the price determined by the administration for this job was much lower than its value on the market. Some villagers, who could not provide the firewood that the inspector demanded of them, had to buy firewood from merchants for 8 *kuruş* to sell to forest officers for 5 *kuruş*. Moreover, each household was forced to pay a 42-*kuruş* transportation fee. The inspector and two additional officers delivered the money to the firewood merchant Ahmed. This money transfer and infractions related to the mismeasurement of firewood produced by the villagers then became the subject of a separate investigation.[38] The final conclusion is not stated in the archival records.

Officials were concerned about the reaction of the rural population who had benefitted from the right to freely use the forests for hundreds of years and were then forced to pay extra taxes.[39] Due to the dissatisfaction of large segments of society with the new taxes, the Ottoman administration faced difficulties in enforcing the new forest regime. Based on his observation from Istanbul, Davis described the reactions to the new forest law as follows:[40]

> A great disturbance even had been caused in various places on the north coast of Anatolia by an attempt to prevent the villagers from exercising their right of "foresting," a privilege they had enjoyed from time immemorial.

In order to prevent social disorder, the forest administration continued to recognize certain rights to the free grants of wood. One was the right of villagers who subsisted by lumbering to provide and sell timber and charcoal at the local market without paying taxes on the condition that they transfer these products using their own vehicles and animals. The regulation also allowed peasants to obtain cutting licenses without paying any taxes to supply timber and firewood for their vital needs from nearby forests.

38 BOA, DH.MKT, 1214/29, 25 Şevval 1325 [1 December 1907]; BOA, DH.MKT, 2732/62, 16 Muharrem 1327 [7 February 1909].

39 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, vi-vii.

40 Davis, 132.

The basic aim of these allowances was to support agricultural production. Therefore, the Tahtacıs did not fully benefit from the continuance of the customary rights recognized by the administration. These rights were granted to peasants involved in agriculture under certain conditions and also to mostly sedentary lumbermen who were able to transport their products by using their own carts to be sold at the local market. Most Tahtacı groups were deprived of these opportunities.

With the expansion of market relations in forestry, the dependency of the Tahtacıs on timber merchants dramatically increased. Since forests were transformed into commodities and forestry came to be considered a vital source of revenue, the Forest Administration was inclined to grant tenders for the massive removal of trees. Even though Tahtacı families could obtain cutting licenses that allowed them to fell trees for their own use, these licenses were issued for retail not wholesale basis (see, for example, Table 6.1).[41] The scale of the work in which merchants were involved was substantially larger, whereas the licenses the Tahtacıs received allowed them to extract only small amounts of timber. Forest officers, who were insufficient in number, were unwilling to grant permission or to implement other procedures for such small-scale business that were a waste of time and profited neither the administration nor themselves personally.

The interrogation of Topal Hüseyin, a member of the Tahtacı community from Keçeçınar village in Balıkesir, exemplifies the reluctance of forest officials to carry out the cutting procedures. Hüseyin was accused of lumbering beyond his authorization certificate. According to records of his interrogation, dated 1909, two families applied for cutting certificates from the Forest Administration and received authorization from the officer, Mahmud, to cut 8 cubic meters of timber from the dry forest around Kurtulmuş. Topal Hüseyin claimed in his statement that Mahmud neither provided the authorization document nor marked the trees, even though they paid the necessary fees and

41 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910]; BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/21, 16 Mayıs 1326 [29 May 1910].

asked him to come to the forest and implement the procedures. Hüseyin thereupon claimed that this was regular practice.[42]

One of the main differences from previous centuries in terms of the working environment of the Tahtacıs was that they rarely confronted their clients. The most common practice of earning a livelihood for Tahtacı communities in the late Ottoman era, especially given the increasing commercialization of forest products in the middle of the century, was to provide forest products to merchants who were involved in regional trade networks and capable of leasing *mirî* forests for long-term use owing their relations with officials.[43] These merchants could obtain permission for mass cutting and find customers whose demand never ended.

42 Chris Gratien, "Interview with a Woodsman," http://www.docblog.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2013/07/forest-tahtaci-ottoman-empire.html [14.02.2018 / 13:58].

43 The contracts about tree cutting from *mirî* forests signed between the Forest Administration and the merchants regulated rules about the laborers, among other things. Accordingly, laborers employed by a contractor had to be Ottoman subjects living in the forest area who derived their means of livelihood from the forests. Even though most of the profit belonged to the merchant and laborers were underpaid, responsibility and punishment were collective. According to the contracts signed between the administration and merchants, both the merchants and the laborers would be regarded as guilty in cases of cutting unmarked trees. See BOA, T.OMİ, 1695/43, 11 Mart 1324 [24 March 1908].

Table 6.1 List of felling licenses obtained by a group of Tahtacıs in Mut on 30 May 1909[44]

Name of the holder	Name of forest	Species	Unit	m^3	d^3
Aydınlı Tahtacılarından Âşık İsmail Hakkı	Kurudere	Black pine	80	52	254
Tahtacı Ali Kahya	Süzek	Black pine	120	26	140
Tahtacı Çıkık Hasan	Sazlıpınar	Black pine	112	26	294
Tahtacı Halit'in Hasan	Körkuyu	Black pine	100	25	896
Tahtacı Hasan Kahya	Yadmalı	Black pine	105	25	579
Tahtacı Abidin Kahya	Karataş	Black pine	115	24	818
Tahtacı İbrahim	Körpınar	Black pine	124	30	138
Totals			757	184	119

Deprived of the financial and political power to purchase trees in tenders or hire ships, the Tahtacıs were contracted by merchants who could win such tenders and how could skip procedures such as counting, measuring, and marking trees due to their organic relation with bureaucrats.[45] Despite local resistance and setbacks, the new forestry regime was implemented more systematically in the course of time. Forest utilization by rural populations, both

44 BOA, T.OMİ, 1698/10, 23 Mart 1326 [5 April 1910].

45 BOA, ŞD, 517/10, 7 Zilkade 1311 [12 May 1894]. For "ordinary" people, it was not so easy to skip the cutting procedures. On behalf of Çukurbağ village in Tarsus, the imam and mukhtar of the village submitted a petition to the local administration. The petitioners requested permission to produce 1,060 pieces of timber over one year from *mirî* forests located 15 km from their village and to sell them after paying the necessary forest taxes. The district governor and town administrator accepted this request, and the local people began to cut trees from the mentioned forests. However, Ramiz, the documentation inspector charged with the investigation of forests in this region, prepared a report that indicated that this practice was contrary to procedures since, according to the rules, regardless of the purpose of the applicants – whether to meet the urgent needs of local people or to trade on the market - they could only cut trees that had been marked by forest inspectors and forest officers. Ramiz stated that since local governments were not allowed to provide certificates to people without the inspection by the forest inspectors and officers, the district governor and town administrator needed to be interrogated for illegally granting cutting permits to the habitants of Çukurbağ and other villages. BOA, ŞD, 517/10, 7 Zilkade 1311 [12 May 1894].

sedentary peasants and nomadic craftsmen, was gradually restricted. By transforming the inhabitants and users of the forests into "trespassers," forest officials and contractors in their network monopolized the utilization of the forests.

§ 6.3 Beyond Resistance and Compliance: New Adaptation Strategies of the Tahtacıs

6.3.1 *Tahtacıs at the Intersection of Iranian, Gypsy, and Turkmen Identities*

The level and focal points of struggles between ordinary people and officials on military practices in the Ottoman Empire were volatile depending on the economic function of the community, local power struggles, and whether it was a time of war or peace. At times when economic activities diminished at lower altitudes, banditry became a strategy pursued more widely by communities in the Taurus region. Especially in the early seventeenth and the late eighteenth centuries, this was a common phenomenon in the Taurus Mountains.[46] Even though brigandage was weakened as a result of the decline of nomadism throughout the nineteenth century, many mountain forests remained secure shelters for communities resisting taxation and conscription policies, as they were for the Zomian people of Southeast Asia.[47]

During World War I banditry became a major issue for the government. Difficulties caused by the war created an environment for brigandage. Due to the conscription of young men and mules, the rise in the price of grains,[48] the recession in construction, and the end to timber exports to Lebanon and

46 McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, 228-229.

47 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*.

48 For the war economics in the Ottoman Empire during the World War I, see Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik, 1914-1918* (Istanbul: Homer, 2003).

Egypt in this period, Tahtacı communities faced severe poverty.[49] Despite the fact that desertion from the military was not uncommon among the Tahtacıs, banditry among Tahtacı deserters was not widespread. As a rare example, some small-scale, armed fights occurred between Ottoman soldiers and Tahtacı groups in Aydın in March 1918.[50] The main tendency among the Tahtacıs, however, was to continue to work in timber harvesting.

This was a period when cheap wage-labor in lumbering expanded. Tahtacı children constituted an important segment involved in low wage employment. Some Tahtacı groups had to take up side-jobs such as roofer, construction

49 In this period many timber merchants could not fulfill the obligations stated in their contracts. Before the war, the Anglo-Oriental Trading Company Limited in Izmir won a contract to benefit from 2,000 *kantar* of dry, barked pine trees from the forests of Bayındır district, Aydın. However, due to war conditions, it became difficult to find workers and vehicles, so the company could not import 300 *kantar* of bark. The director of the company demanded the extension of the contract. Both the administrative councils in the district and in the province rejected this request (BOA, BEO, 4325/324303, 10 Muharrem 1333 [28 November 1914]). Similarly, according to a contract dated 26 May 1907, timber merchant Vasil Vasiliadi was allowed to obtain 25,000 *kantar* of firewood, 15,000 *kantar* of charcoal, and 15,000 wooden poles from a forest located in Teke, Konya province. In his petition, Vasiliadi says that due to a scarcity of forest labor and transportation facilities under the extraordinary conditions of war, it was not possible to extract these products in time. His first application demanding the extension of the contract was accepted. Due to continuing bad conditions, at the end of two additional years, on 14 May 1918, he demanded six extra months. This demand was not accepted. BOA, ŞD, 3136/68, 5 Receb 1334 [8 May 1916]. İbrahim Halil also demanded the extension of his cutting certificate that had allowed him the extraction of 7,000 *kantar* of bark from pine trees in the Bozburun *mirî* forests situated in Köyceğiz for four years. He could not extract the products as he could not procure the necessary forest workers and vehicles due to continuous war. The Subdistrict Administrative Council accepted his request, whereas the District Administrative Council rejected his application upon the report of the Forest Office in Köyceğiz. BOA, BEO, 4449/333603, 13 Rebiülevvel 1335 [7 January 1917].

50 An armed fight took place in a forest in Bozdoğan in March 1918 between a Tahtacı militia and Ottoman soldiers charged with pursuing the group. After a one hour clash, four were killed and their leader was seriously wounded but eventually escaped. Moreover, two women and one child of their family were killed. About two weeks later, the governor of the Aydın province informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the "well-known" Tahtacı Mestan militia had finally been captured. See BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb 34/2, 16 Cemaziyelâhir 1336 [29 March 1918]; BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 35/32,5 Receb 1336 [16 April 1918].

worker, or porter.[51] Crafts related to their centuries-old occupation, such as carpentry and burning lime were also prominent among the Tahtacıs.[52] Coal mining was another job that Tahtacıs undertook in this period.[53] Some were recruited into the army for their experience in woodwork. During World War I, many Tahtacı groups were employed for lath production as a military service. According to the report of Niyazi Bey, a group of Tahtacıs living in Gülek and Karaisalı worked in construction as a military service. Some Tahtacı groups living around Mersin began to work in timber transportation for the army.[54]

Since male laborers of draft age were vital due to their contribution to timber production, the conscription of these laborers interrupted production. For this reason, timber merchants helped deserters by using their influence in local politics. According to a report prepared by the *Harbiye Nezâreti* (Ministry of War), for instance, a group of timber merchants and their allies in the local government protected Tahtacı deserters in Anamur. In order to enlist the Tahtacıs, according to the Ministry, these merchants had to be brought under control.[55] Niyazi Bey asserts a similar claim in his report on the Tahtacıs. He alleges that non-Muslim timber merchants in the Mersin region helped Tahtacıs escape military service.[56]

Especially from the mid-nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth century, when military practices were volatile and far from standardized, more complicated avoidance strategies were prominent among the Tahtacıs.

51 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

52 In the early republican period, with increasing control over the administration of forests, lime burning and carrying emerged as an alternative work for the Tahtacı groups of Izmir who lost their jobs. See Rıza Yetişen, "Naldöken Tahtacıları: Coğrafî Durum-Köyün Adı-Köyün Eskiliği-Köydeki Eserler-Geçim Vaziyeti-Köy Halkının Menşei," *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları* I, no. 17 (1950): 264; Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, *Kızılbaşlar/Aleviler* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 2012), 68.

53 In Çivril, 12 households subsisted on coal mining and lumbering. BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 58/8, 14 Zilkade 1336 [21 August 1918].

54 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

55 BOA, DH.MUİ, 77 -1 20, 11 Rebiülevvel 1328 [23 March 1910].

56 BOA, DH.EUM.6.Şb, 54/34, n.d.

They adopted sophisticated techniques to not join the army, which made compulsory military service the main contested issue between the Tahtacıs and the Ottoman administration from the late nineteenth century onwards. For example, Tahtacı communities registered as *Kıbtî* (Gypsy) by the administration objected to their own recruitment by referring to a centuries-old policy that excluded these communities from military service. Until the mid-nineteenth century, population groups labeled as *Kıbtî,* even if they identified as Muslim, paid *cizye*,[57] a poll tax that was annually collected from non-Muslim subjects.[58] Some were recruited as auxiliary troops and served the army as craftsmen;[59] however, they were never included in the military class. Ginio's study provides convincing evidence of practices to exclude the *Kıbtî*s from military practices.[60]

Tanzimat reformers, who promised equal citizenship to all subjects, abolished the *cizye* in 1856, at least on paper. However, in the following decades - due to Muslim and non-Muslim opposition to the recruitment of non-Muslims as well as due to the preference of the government that non-Muslims pay an exemption tax instead of joining the army[61] - this tax was replaced first with the *iane-i askerî* (military assistance) and then with the *bedel-i askerî* (military

57 Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), 36, 70-72; Eyal Ginio, "Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: The Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies* 14 (2004): 117-144.

58 For detailed information on *cizye,* see Claude Cahen, Halil İnalcık, and Peter Hardy, "Djizya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 559-567. For military practices among the Gypsy-called communities in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, see Ceyda Yüksel, "Buçuk Millet: The Ottoman Gypsies in the Reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909)" (PhD diss, Boğaziçi University, 2009), 102-116. For a recent rich discussion on the changing military and taxation policies toward the peripatetics in the empire, see Yılgür, "Son Dönem Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Devlet ve "Çingeneler": Vergi, Askerlik ve Adlandırma Meseleleri."

59 Emine Dingeç, "XVI. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ordusunda Çingeneler," *SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 20 (2009): 33-46; Marushiakova and Popov, 35.

60 Ginio, 135-137.

61 As Zürcher accentuates, this preference stemmed from the fact that the *cizye* was the second most important source of tax revenue after the *aşar* (tithe). Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System In Theory And Practice, 1844-1918," 88-89.

payment-in-lieu), taxes that substituted of military service for non-Muslim subjects.[62] In other words, the practice of *cizye* continued in the name *bedel-i askerî* for a couple more decades. In this period, both Muslim and non-Muslim *Kıbtî*s continued to pay this tax[63] until the government prepared a decree at the end of 1873, which was delivered to the provinces in early 1874, that imposed the obligation of military service on Muslim *Kıbtî*s.[64] The exemption of non-Muslims from military service was abolished in practice only after 1909.[65]

Just before this decree was prepared, at the beginning of 1873, a group of Abdals and Tahtacıs in Antalya complained in a petition that the commander of a reserve division *(redif binbaşısı)* persistently pressured them to enroll them in the army even though "they had been *Kıbtî* since time immemorial *(mine'l-kadîm)*." The petitioners claimed that men were being imprisoned while their children and wives suffered in the forests.[66]

The next year, right after the aforementioned announcement on the inclusion of Muslim *Kıbtî*s in compulsory military service, a Tahtacı community from Antalya nevertheless claimed exemption from military duty on the grounds of being registered as *Kıbtî.*[67] The petitioners based their demand on prior practices that provided *Kıbtî*-registered communities exemption from military service. The final decision concerning the request of these Tahtacıs was that Muslim *Kıbtî*s were to be conscripted without distinguishing them from other citizens. The justification for this decision was that it was contrary

62 See Ufuk Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa: Osmanlı'nın Gayrimüslim Askerleri* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 81-110.

63 See Ömer Ulusoy, "Tanzimat Sonrası Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri Temelinde Balkanlarda Çingene/Roman Algısı" (paper presented at the Bulgaria and Turkey at the Intercultural Crossroads: Language, History and Literature, Plovdiv, 2011).

64 For the transliteration of this document, see Yüksel, 340-341.

65 Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System In Theory And Practice, 1844-1918," 86.

66 BOA, ŞD, 609/40, 28 Kânûn-ı Sâni 1288 [9 February 1873].

67 Some members of the Tahtacı community today confirm that the Ottoman state registered their ancestors as *Kıbtî* in the sense of "irreligious" and "barbarian". A Tahtacı from Kaşdişlen village claims that his grandfather was registered as *Kıbtî.* See Selçuk, 33. Similarly, a Tahtacı from Antalya relates that the Ottomans registered his Köyceğiz-born father as *Kıbtî.* İ. Ç. (1946), Akçainiş/Antalya, 20.04.2016.

to the general principles of the Ottoman state to exempt Muslim *Kıbtî*s from military service since they were Ottoman citizens. It was also decided that the Muslim Gypsies' share of the military exemption tax be written off.[68]

In 1906, nearly three decades after the aforementioned claim by these Tahtacıs, compulsory military service for Muslim Gypsies was determined not only in the regulations but also put into practice. Some Tahtacı groups then claimed the furtherance of their exemption from military duty asserting Iranian citizenship based on passports they obtained from Iranian consuls in the empire. According to an official record dated 1906, a group of Tahtacıs in the Burdur subprovince were not enrolled in military service on account of their Iranian citizenship.[69] Yörükan also says that about 350 Tahtacı households in Anamur and Silifke, which are two districts in current-day Mersin province, "pretended to be Iranians" by obtaining Iranian passports.[70] Contradicting this claim, Ali Rıza, the Iranian official at the time, asserted that they did not publish new passports but just renewed the documents of Tahtacıs who already held Iranian passports.[71]

Even today, some Tahtacı groups still call themselves *Acem,* Iranian, and mention avoiding military service as the prominent reason given by the members of the community since the Ottoman era. Some think that holding an Iranian passport signifies Iranian origins. Others are of the opinion that these documents were given to their ancestors by the Iranian Consulate in order to provide them with these exemptions.[72]

An eighty-three-year-old woman from Mersin defines her ancestors as "*Acem* Tahtacıs" and explains the meaning of this identity without reference to any ethnic group: "Being *Acem* means hiding in the mountains and deserting the army." Because the children were starving in the mountains, she says,

68 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 472/52, 23 Zilkade 1290 [12 January 1874].

69 BOA, DH.MKT, 2066/76, 19 Teşrin-i Sâni 1322 [2 December 1906]

70 Yörükan, 145.

71 ibid., 180.

72 M. Ç. (1952), Dalakderesi/Mersin, 11.08.2015; T. Ö. (1958), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 12.08.2015; K. K. (1960), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016.

fathers and mothers decided to settle, register, and abandoned the *Acem tayfası,* the Iranian community.[73]

A case in the Ottoman records affirms the description of the Tahtacı woman. Battal Kahya, a member of a nomadic Tahtacı community in Dinar, obtained passports from the Iranian Consulate in Konya first for himself and his family of eight people and then for about seventy people from his community. According to the report of the Konya Governorate, Battal Kahya ("İrânî Battal" or "Acem oğlu Hüseyin" as he called himself in his petitions) helped thousands of Tahtacıs in Isparta obtain Iranian passports for exemption from military duty and taxes. The Iranian Consul Kavas Habib granted Iranian citizenship to these Tahtacıs. The governorate also stated that more than fifty years had passed since Battal Kahya became an Ottoman subject and began paying taxes on the basis of this identity. The administration decided not to recognize the Iranian passports and to treat these people as Ottoman citizens.[74]

Another group of Tahtacıs in the Isparta subprovince, who were referred as *Kıbtî* Tahtacı in official records, demanded the continuation of their exemption from military duty asserting their Iranian citizenship.[75] Nüzhet Bey, the Erkân-ı Harbiye Kaymakamı (Chief of the General Staff) at the time who was appointed to inspect the Karahisar Redif Fırkası (Reserve Infantry Division), stated in his report that thirteen households of the *Kıbtî* Tahtacıs in Sandıklı holding Iranian passports were not registered in the last census. Upon investigation, it was understood that this nomadic community, which earned a living through lumbering, had long been living in the villages of Aşağı Gökdere and Yukarı Gökdere in Eğridir but "escaped the attention of officials." Their existence was proved only with the testimony of the imams and the mukhtars. According to Nüzhet Bey, extant records about the local population were not trustworthy. He also added that the claim of being Iranian by *Kıbtî* Tahtacı communities in the Isparta subprovince and by the Gypsies in the western part

73 D. Ö. (1933), Akçainiş/Antalya, 20.04.2016.

74 BOA, ŞD, 1759/26, 7 Muharrem 1324 [3 March 1906]; BOA, ŞD, 2761/16, 23 Şaban 1326 [20 September 1908].

75 BOA, DH.MKT, 1222 /1, 27 Zilkade 1325 [1 January 1908].

of the country in general was unreasonable since Iranian tribes lived along the Iranian boundaries.[76]

Not surprisingly, Iranian consuls who provided citizenship and passports to itinerant groups known as Tahtacı and Gypsy were considered a threat to public order. The southern part of Hüdâvendigâr province and the western part of Konya province, which today are Kütahya, Afyon, Isparta, and Burdur provinces, was the region where Iranian consuls worked to deliver passports to the local populations. Kavas Habib and Ali Rıza Efendi were two Iranian consuls dismissed by the Ottoman administration for doing this.[77] The Iranian Embassy stated that the Ottoman gendarmerie and police approached the tents of nomadic Tahtacıs who were Iranian citizens on Akdağ plateau located in the Sandıklı district and attempted to seize their animals for the army. The governor of Hüdâvendigâr province claimed that the people were not Iranian but nomadic *Kıbtî* thieves.[78]

Despite these dismissals, there were many Tahtacıs that held Iranian identity papers, and not only from the aforementioned region. In 1918, Niyazi Bey mentions thirty settled and 200 nomadic Tahtacı communities in Sandıklı and Eğridir as well as some families in Kaburgediği in the province of Adana who obtained Iranian citizenship to be exempt from military duty.[79] A report on the Tahtacı and Çepni communities in Kütahya, prepared by local officials in 1918, also mentions some "mobile *Kıbtî*s whose physical appearance resembled the Tahtacıs." These *Kıbtî*s, a total of twenty-five households, were making their living by lumbering. The members of this community held Iranian passports and demanded exemptions from military service. The report stated that this community had been living in this region for about two centuries, so it was not possible for them to be from Hamedan in Iran.[80]

It is controversial exactly when and how the Tahtacıs came to be identified and registered as *Kıbtî*. The general tendency in academic and popular writing

76 BOA, DH.MKT, 1222 /1, 27 Zilkade 1325 [1 January 1908].

77 BOA, ŞD, 2761/16, 23 Şaban 1326 [20 September 1908].

78 BOA, DH.MTV, 8/7, 15 Temmuz 1329 [28 July 1913].

79 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

80 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 58/8, 8 Ağustos 1334 [8 Ağustos 1918].

on the Tahtacıs is to assume that after compulsory military service emerged in the Ottoman Empire the Tahtacıs began to introduce themselves as *Kıbtîs* or Iranians to the officials for the purpose of not being enrolled in the army. For example, Yörükan and Çağatay argue that, hoping not being recruited, 150 Tahtacı households in the Tefennî district were registered as *Kıbtî.*[81]

Population registers, however, indicate that in 1831, long before the introduction of compulsory military service, the administration registered Tahtacı groups in Teke and İçil regions under the general category of "*Kıbtî*s, Abdals, and Tahtacıs."[82] Like the Abdals, another peripatetic community in the region, the Tahtacıs were excluded from military service.[83] Some 90 years later, as mentioned above, an official appointed to prepare a report on the Tahtacı communities in Kütahya described them as groups of wood-producing, nomadic Gypsies.[84] Such categorizations indicate, contrary to the assumptions of nationalist authors of the Republic, that these group names were not discrete categories in the eyes of Ottoman officials. Considering these descriptions, the assumption that the Gypsy identity was concocted by the Tahtacıs in the 1870s is weak. It is more likely that the Tahtacıs opposed the new military obligations of the modern state and that, in this struggle, they – like other *Kıbtî*-called communities - attempted to use the *Kıbtî* label, which was attributed to them from outsiders, to their advantage. The main question at this point is why the Tahtacıs preferred to identify themselves in this category in the 1850s but neither in the previous nor following decades. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, they not only gradually descended to lower elevations, coming nearer and nearer to the valley societies, but also faced a more demanding administration whose agents were classifying subjects into monolithic identities. This process of making the society more "legible", to use James Scott's term, forced them to "define" themselves. In the 1870s, it was the Gypsy label

81 Yörükan, 146; Neşet Çağatay, "Tahtacılar," in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1979), 670.

82 Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*, 3 ed. (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, 2010), 116, 122.

83 Ak, 18.

84 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 58/8, 8 Ağustos 1334 [8 Ağustos 1918].

that had already been attributed to them by others helped them avoid the obligations being imposed by the modern state. Three decades after, when this identity was no longer unhelpful, they claimed to be Iranian, which was also not an unfamiliar identification for them. They intentionally moved down to the lowlands but found new ways to avoid administrative practices. In addition to showing the inability and incompetence of the administration to surveil certain segments of the population, the aforementioned cases reveal that the Tahtacıs were so experienced and skillful at hiding from officials that they became involved in daily life in local communities but still escaped the attention of officials. What enabled them to develop such a strategy was their fluid identities and the specialized local knowledge that they had accumulated over the centuries.

A statement by Hasan Mümtaz, a Tahtacı with whom Yörükan conducted an interview in the mid-1920s, on Iranian passport-holding Tahtacı communities is helpful for visualizing this strategy. He declares that these people were living in the Isparta forests, situated at the crossroads of the Konya, Izmir, and Bursa provinces. If a local governor did not recognize their passports, they could easily run to another province, a tactic that was common among the Gypsies in Europe in the previous centuries.[85] Until local governors communicated with each other, realized the issue, and compromise on a solution, they could do whatever they wanted.[86] Similarly, Ali Rıza, an Iranian official consul who was dismissed by the Ottomans for illegally providing passports to the Tahtacıs, stated that these Tahtacı groups were so mobile that it was impossible to follow them. His statement also indicates that Iranian Consulate was also not comfortable providing Iranian passports to these Gypsies:[87]

> They are exceptionally crafty and tricky people. They commit an offense and then run away. Because they are raised in the mountains, they can't stand towns… You see a couple of families; the next day you can't find any of them at the same place. They lie about their addresses

85 Leo Lucassen, *Zigeuner: Die Geschichte Eines Polizeilichen Ordnungsbegriffes in Deutschland, 1700-1945* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1996).

86 Yörükan, 181.

87 ibid., 180-181.

> and each of them has several names… They are inferior. I suppose they are from the Kıbtî community. Most of them hold Kıbtî population certificates. According to necessity, they become either Kıbtî or Iranian subjects or anything else. If necessary, they completely disappear without leaving any trace.

Despite the fact that the government faced serious difficulties in recruiting the Tahtacıs, the attempts of Tahtacıs to maintain their exemptions failed. They eventually became soldiers of the modern state just like other citizens, but interestingly, the word *Kıbtî,* which was used by the administration to denote groups externally known as Gypsy, and functioned as a tool for exclusion, was transformed into a tool for a counter strategy developed by the community in a specific context.[88] Offering bribes to officials[89] was a common way for ordinary people to avoid military service, but the Tahtacıs developed a more sophisticated strategy based on an effort to stay within the legal boundaries defined by the central authority by manipulating the law.

6.3.2 *Two Waves of Sedentarization among the Tahtacı Communities*

Despite their objection to the new demands of the modern state, the Tahtacıs gradually became members of lowland society. As a general trend, their level of mobility lessened over the last two centuries. The variety of adaptation patterns that emerged among the community notwithstanding, I divide the complex, nonlinear sedentarization experience of the Tahtacıs into two for the sake

88 Okely states that communities labeled Egyptian or Gypsy by outsiders accepted these labels for certain practical purposes: "… there was no advantage in dropping the assumed title merely in order to escape the authorities. Moreover, money could be earned from the 'simple people', as well as from royalty, by presenting an exotic identity as fortune teller and dancer. The term 'Egyptian' or later 'Gypsy' could have been useful as a means of self-identification and it was not likely to be just a stigmatic label imposed by persecuting outsiders." Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

89 For example, to exempt them from military duty, the governor of Köyceğiz district, a register officer and a correspondence officer accepted bribes from Tahtacıs who had recently settled in Köyceğiz/Menteşe. See BOA, DH.MKT, 2520/31, 22 Rebiülâhir 1319 [8 August 1901].

of efficiency. Each overlaps with major processes and ruptures in socioeconomic life in the Anatolian countryside.

6.3.2.1 Emergence of Export-Oriented Agriculture

The Aegean coasts of Anatolia were among the first areas in the Ottoman Empire that shifted to commercial agriculture.[90] In the first half of the nineteenth century, a vast area along the Aegean coasts was opened up to export-oriented cultivation, whereas the Mediterranean coasts in Southern Anatolia experienced this process a few decades later. In response to this difference, two forms of mobility emerged along the coasts of Mediterranean Anatolia. During the nineteenth century, the overall mobility level of the rural population along the Aegean coasts was much lower than that in the south.

Parallel with this general trend, almost all Tahtacı groups along the Mediterranean coasts on the eastern side of the Antalya district were highly mobile, notwithstanding the fact that there were many Tahtacı villages in the Aegean region. Due to the increasing demand for agricultural products in this region, many Tahtacı groups in the west abandoned itinerant lumbering earlier than those in the east. Timber production for cross-continental trade shifted to forests located along the southern coast of Anatolia, which was the main reason that almost all Tahtacı groups in the east were highly mobile. The Ottoman *temettuat* (income) registers reflect this geographical differentiation. The data show that most Tahtacı villages established before the middle of the nineteenth century were located in Aydın and Hüdâvendigâr provinces, where the mobility level of the community was relatively low. Many Tahtacı groups in this region were settled or pursued a semi-nomadic way of life in a narrower area. Türkali,[91] Narlıdere, Göğdelen (also known as Alurca or Doğançay), Tolaz (also known as Uladı or Yakapınar), Cumaovası Karakuyu, Bademler, and Uzundere[92] were some Tahtacı villages established before the middle of

90 Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*, 2 ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133.

91 Ayten Kaplan, "Balıkesir Tahtacı Köyleri Kongurca ve Türkali'de Halk Bilimi Açısından Müzik Yapısının Araştırılması" (MA diss., Ankara University, 1998), 28.

92 Yetişen, *Tahtacı Aşiretleri: Adet, Gelenek ve Görenekleri*, 10-14.

the nineteenth century. These villages and those mentioned in this section were all located in the west of the Antalya Plain.

The *temettuat* registers of Eğirdir show that in Tahtacı, Karağı, Kâtip, Karacahisar, Yaka, Yakaafşar, Terziler, Mirahur, Bucak (Kafirviran), Yenice (Aksu), Baklan, Kiçibağlı (Bağıllı), Kösireli (Kösreli), Yazır (Koçulu?), and Çukur villages, 158 households earned their living by lumbering. The largest lumbering population lived in Kâtip and Yakaafşar villages, located in the forests at higher altitudes.[93] A village named "Tahtacı," located in the Simav district of Kütahya subprovince of Hüdâvendigar eyâlet, accommodated eighteen households. None was occupied with lumbering. Most were engaged in agriculture and cultivated wheat, barley, and chickpeas on their own land, each parcel of which was ten to twenty *dönüm* on average, or on the land of Aşık Paşa Waqf. The villagers earned an average of 500-600 *kuruş* annually. Each household had some twenty to thirty goats and ten sheep.[94] In Yarangüme village, located in Menteşe, Aydın Eyâlet, there were six settled Tahtacı households that had lived and paid taxes in Manisa the year before moving to this region. They earned their living by stockbreeding and lumbering. The average income was about 1,000 *kuruş* (see Table 6.2).[95]

There were fifty-five households in another village named "Tahtacı" in Sobuca, Aydın. None of them were lumberman, cultivators, or stockbreeders. There was an *imam,* a miller, a shoemaker, and one household that earned a livelihood by renting out land. The rest of the men in the village were weavers. Almost all households had one to two *dönüm* of vineyards and kept bees. The income of each household varied from 500 to 2,590 *kuruş*. The income of three inhabitants was much lower. They survived with the support of other members of the village.[96] Another village named "Tahtacı" located in the Köyceğiz district in Menteşe, Aydın province, consisted of fifty-six households. All were peasants who cultivated wheat, barley, and millet on ten to fifty *dönüm* of land. They were also engaged in subsistence husbandry. The income of the villagers

93 Yeşil, 48-49.

94 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 9251, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845].

95 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2606, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845].

96 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2552, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845].

varied from 125 to 1,500 *kuruş*. The richest household, which earned 3,525 *kuruş* per annum, was engaged in trade and possessed sixty goats, five mares, five cows, a mill, and seventy-five *dönüm* of land that they rented out to others.[97]

There was a clear differentiation and social stratification in these two Tahtacı villages that distinguished them from traditional Tahtacı communities that could only survive by adopting certain communal practices. The establishment of these villages constituted the first wave of the sedentarization of Tahtacı communities. Another remarkable difference was that lumbering was no longer an occupation in which all members of a certain community or village were engaged, let alone that they mass produced timber to meet the demands of distant populations via timber merchants involved in cross-continental trade. Timber produced by the Tahtacıs in Eğirdir, for example, was mostly for the local population and used as a construction material. These families constituted only fourteen percent of the total population of the villages in which they lived.[98]

97 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2240, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845].

98 Yeşil, 46-49.

Table 6.2 *Temettuat* registers of the Tahtacı community settled in Yarangüme village in Tavas, Menteşe in the province of Aydın[99]

		Afyoncu Ali	Deli Kahya oğlu İsa	Deli Kahya oğlu Musa	Kafdanlı Hüseyin	Ali oğlu Hasan Kahya	Ali oğlu Hasan Kahya	Total
The amount of the annual tax paid in previous year (*kuruş*)		110	180	180	180	120	180	950
The amount of the tax on winter pasture paid in previous year (*kuruş*)		20	40	40	50	15		
Milch goat	Number				100		30	
	Annual Income				1000		300	
Yean	Number				42		10	
Horse	Number	1	1	1		1	10	
Mule	Number		3	3	3	1	3	
Timberwork	Annual Income	550	750	750	750	750	1500	
Estimated annual income		550	750	750	1750	750	1800	6320

99 BOA, ML.VRD.TMT.d, 2606, 29 Zilhicce 1261 [29 December 1845].

6.3.2.2 The End of the Little Ice Age

As described in Chapter 2, as a result of general warming after the Little Ice Age, agricultural productivity along the southern coasts of Mediterranean Anatolia, which were inhabited by a large Tahtacı population, increased. This region reemerged as a prominent commercial center. The plains of this region were reopened to cultivation. In this process, both nomadic and settled groups gradually moved to the plains close to the coasts. Paralleling this general trend, many Tahtacı families descended to lower altitudes of the Taurus Mountains.[100] The level of the mobility of the Tahtacıs lessened and new villages were established, signifying a second wave of sedentarization among the Tahtacıs.

The main advantage for the Tahtacıs following from the flow of the rural population to villages and towns at lower altitudes was new opportunities to acquire land due to a higher land-to-labor ratio at higher altitudes. Güzeltepe, formerly Asıtepe, was a Tahtacı village located in Aydın province that exemplified this development. According to the inhabitants of Güzeltepe, in 1870s, due to Sunni villagers who moved to the lowlands leaving their fields vacant, "it was easier there to earn their bread,"[101] and Tahtacıs in the higher hills found opportunities to settle. From that time forward, they had a fixed winter quarter lower than their previous habitats and higher than the new villages of the agriculturalists. The labor needed for commercial agriculture was obtained from the highlands, which affected the subsistence practices of the Tahtacıs as well. During the following decades, as demand for labor increased, the Tahtacıs began to work for large landowners, too.[102]

The establishment of most Tahtacı villages in the last decades of the nineteenth century was the result of the availability of empty land and forests to clear. The inhabitants of Çamalan and Kaburgediği, which are two current-day Tahtacı villages in Mersin province, say that their villages were established

100 Tabak, "The Ottoman Countryside in the Age of the Autumn of the Mediterranean, c. 1560-1870," 322.

101 K. K. (1960), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016.

102 A. K. (1958), A. L. (1954), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016.

in the 1860s on empty fields at altitudes above 700 meters in the Tarsus.[103] Some Tahtacıs of Tarsus migrated west in the 1870s and established the village of Dalakderesi by clearing a forest. A further factor that contributed to the process of settlement in this area was sharecropping. The pioneers of Dalakderesi village developed a livelihood model based on a mix of peripatetic and pastoral strategies, mainly sharecropping. They continued lumbering but also worked the land of large landowners.[104]

Köprübaşı village, located in the current province of Mersin, was established around 1910 according to its Tahtacı inhabitants. Five to six Tahtacı families initially used this region as their winter quarters. The temporary settlement gradually transformed into a village. Before that, for about ten years, they had lived in a forest located at a higher altitude. In this period, due to the intensification of commercial agriculture and the high land-to-labor ratio in the region, large landowners needed more employees to work their lands. Kravgas, a notable, influential family in this region, encouraged the Tahtacı communities to settle here, which is how the Tahtacıs began to cultivate the land of this family. The Tahtacıs received no monetary payment but received a share of the crops. Meanwhile, during the summers, they continued to work in the forests. In ensuing years, with money earned from lumbering, they purchased land from the Kravga Beys.[105] Community elders in Köprübaşı in particular describe the settlement process and the involvement of the Tahtacıs in agriculture as a crucial rupture in their history. Earlier Tahtacı generations called settled Sunni farmers "Turk," a label associated more with state power than with a certain ethnic group. According to the Tahtacıs, their ancestors began to change and became "Turk" in this period. Engagement in farming not only meant a transition from one livelihood strategy to another, but also a

103 C. T. (1926), H. Ç. (1950), Ş. Ç. (1951), Çamalan/Mersin, 15.08.2015; E. G. (1952), A. E. (1953), K. Y. (1960), Kaburgediği, 16.08.2015.

104 K. K. (1946), M. Ç. (1952), Dalakderesi/Mersin, 11.08.2015.

105 T.Ö. (1958), D. A. (1950), S. K. (1958), M. S. (1950), F. B. (1942), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 11-12.08.2015.

radical change in their position in the social stratification. Thus, this experience is deeply embedded in the collective memory. A member of the Tahtacı community in Köprübaşı depicts this process as follows:

> Our ancestors stayed here in these mountains and then settled. They knew nothing about farming. After settling in, they worked for landowners and learned how to cultivate cotton. "You learned how to cultivate: Now you've become a Turk" they told each other.[106]

Referring to stories he heard from his grandfather about the establishment of their village, another Tahtacı describes this experience from a similar point of view:

> They had never cultivated land before coming here. Once they arrived here, someone spread some seeds on the ground. "Sow something, be a Turk, be a Sunni" one of them said.[107]

In this period, Tahtacıs who adopted a less mobile life based on nomadism between fixed winter quarters at lower altitudes and changeable forested lands close to their winter quarters developed complex subsistence practices - a mix of peripatetic and pastoral strategies. The Tahtacıs of Dalakderesi, Kuzucubelen, Kaburgediği, and Çamalan were some of first examples of this trend in Adana province. The 1918 report of Niyazi Bey states that the Tahtacı villages at the highest altitude in the province of Adana were at 800-900 meters.[108] They spent their summers in forests that were located much closer to their winter quarters compared to the forests they had inhabited in previous decades. For instance, the Tahtacı communities in Dalakderesi began to spend summers in Ayvagediği, which was four hours from their village. As of 1908, the Tahtacıs in Kaburgediği were climbing to Kalecik, which was three hours from their village. Before that, they used to spend their summers at higher elevations in the Tanzıt region. Just like the Tahtacıs of Belenkişlek, with the

106 F.B. (1942), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 13.08.2015.

107 T.Ö. (1958), Köprübaşı/Mersin, 12.08.2015.

108 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

exception of five to ten families, they were involved in agriculture and living at lower altitudes.[109]

The increasing commercialization of forestry brought also about social differentiation among the Tahtacıs. For example, some members of the community found the opportunity to mediate between timber merchants and forest workers. This practice was especially common in the early republican period. Haydar Ahmad, nicknamed "Kemik," who was one of the founders of Yeniköy, a Tahtacı village located in the foothills of Madran Mountain in Aydın, was one of these middlemen.[110] "Göğ" Hüseyin was another Tahtacı who bought forest products from the Tahtacı communities and sold them to richer merchants.[111] İbrahim, known as "İbi," from Karatepe, a Tahtacı village in Antalya province, worked for the timber merchants Osman and "Damat." His duty was to find forest workers from his village, oversee their work, and deliver the products to the merchants.[112] Finally, İbrahim, "Çatal," "Çalık," and Bektaş were well-known Tahtacı "aghas," who mediated between merchants and the Tahtacıs of Çamalan, a village in Mersin.[113] On account of this mediation mechanism, Tahtacıs became involved in a sub-sector of forest products. Some Tahtacıs describe the Ottoman era as a period when their ancestors worked for timber merchants without following any rules regarding cutting. Some members of Tahtacı communities in Aydın call this period the "time of smuggling,"[114] which implies that there were restrictions but that people somehow avoided them. Some also say that even though in the course of time smuggling unpermitted trees became more and more difficult, smuggling was always a part of the job: "Sometimes you have to collaborate and share with officers and other times with the merchants."[115] The Tahtacıs sold trees they

109 BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

110 İ. T. (1958), K. K. (1960), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016.

111 İ. Ş. (1940), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016.

112 D. K. (1935), M. K. (1941), Ş. Ç. (1940), Karatepe/Antalya, 19.04.2016.

113 H. A. (1932), A. B. (1939), Çamalan/Mersin, 15.08.2015.

114 İ. T. (1958), K. K. (1960), Çine/Aydın, 11.05.2016; H. Ş. (1933), Yeniköy/Aydın, 15.05.2016; A. S. (1945), Ş. L. (1934), Alamut/Aydın, 12.05.2016.

115 S. Ö. (1938), Yenimahalle/Antalya, 17.04.2016.

cut without permission to local villagers,[116] "Turks who were good at cultivating but bad at cutting."[117]

The general trend of living at lower altitudes brought about not only new opportunities but also new challenges. It caused disputes at the local level. For example, according to one archival record, the locals of Ortakçı village of Aydın sued the Tahtacı communities that were settled by the government on their plateau in 1886.[118] The current inhabitants of Kızılcapınar village also say that before their ancestors arrived in Kızılcapınar, they had settled elsewhere, but the local population sued them and claimed that the newcomers heavily damaged them.[119] It is possible that these two cases are the same. The inhabitants of Dalakderesi, a Tahtacı neighborhood in Mersin, also tell that their ancestors lived first in Evci and then in the region known as Değirmengediği, where they were harassed and accused of stealing animals from local villagers.[120]

Logging in forests that were closer to towns and villages increased competition between the Tahtacıs and villagers to use the land. An example is the complaint of a number of villagers from Antalya dated 1909. Their petition indicates that a timber merchant named Lülüzade Ömer Efendi hired a group of Tahtacıs to harvest timber. The villagers asserted that, by allowing the animals of the Tahtacıs onto their land, Lülüzade Ömer Efendi and the Tahtacıs prevented them from cultivating and caused the destruction of olive groves. Due to the destruction to the land and trees, the villagers produced less, which resulted in a decline of tithe revenues. The amount of the loss to the government was 40,000-50,000 *kuruş*.[121] Since taxes collected from sedentary agriculturalists constituted a vital source of revenue for the Ottoman Empire, any factor that diminished agricultural productivity was seen as a threat to the treasury by the administration. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was therefore

116 A. S. (1945), Alamut/Aydın, 12.05.2016.

117 D. G. (1944), Akçainiş/Antalya, 20.04.2016.

118 BOA, DH.MKT, 1359/75, 10 Zilkade 1303 [10 August 1886].

119 H. E. (1950), Kızılcapınar/Aydın, 10.05.2016.

120 M. Ç. (1952), Dalakderesi/Mersin, 11.08.2015.

121 BOA, DH.MKT, 2767/58, 1327 Safer 22 [15 Mart 1909].

interested in the case, at least initially. The final result of this dispute is not recorded in the archives.

The settlement process of the Tahtacı communities constituted an important topic in the report of Niyazi Bey. According to him, there were two alternatives for the Tahtacıs. They either engaged in farming or carried on with their traditional craft and died out. Niyazi Bey divided the Tahtacıs into two according to their position on this juncture. The first consisted of those who were "prudent and kept up with the time"; and the second group was composed of Tahtacıs who were "imprudent and traditional." He states that Tahtacı communities involved in agriculture were from the "upper classes." On the other hand, according to him, all members of the community had been deprived of resources in recent years. Farmers could survive, whereas the others lived a miserable life.[122] Niyazi Bey describes the increasing tendency toward sedentarization among the Tahtacıs not as the outcome of a series of socioeconomic developments but as a voluntary choice. However, his association of sedentariness and engagement in agriculture with a rise in the socioeconomic status was correct. Tahtacı communities that abandoned peripatetic strategies and adopted a pastoral life in a permanent settlement gained the opportunity to become involved in agriculture. This was also a period in which socioeconomic differentiations emerged both between and within Tahtacı groups.

122 Niyazi Bey mentions two Tahtacı groups: the Çaylaks and Aydınlıs/Üsküdarlıs. Their villages, religious leaders, and practices differed. Niyazi Bey says that the Aydınlılar were richer, cleaner, healthier, more proper, and more hardworking. The Üsküdarlıs criticizes the Çaylaks and defined them as "Abdal." According to a myth, the Çaylaks were called Yanyatır because they were sitting, when Hz. Ali delivered *kısmet* (luck, chance). It is a yet unanswered question whether landowner Tahtacı communities overlapped with those "richer, cleaner, healthier, more proper, and more hardworking" Üsküdarlı communities or whether the Çaylak communities were those Tahtacı groups who were perceived as Gypsy or *Kıbtî* and described as "imprudent" and miserable by Niyazi Bey. BOA, DH.EUM.2.Şb, 67/54, 20 Haziran 1334 [20 June 1918].

§ 6.4 Concluding Remarks

The two main questions I discussed in this chapter are how Tahtacı communities were affected by the bureaucratized, commercial forestry and what strategies they developed to adapt to their changing ecological, economic, and political environment.

This chapter first displayed the political rationality behind the new forestry. Despite widespread smuggling, low tax revenues, and exemptions provided to local interest groups, bureaucrats managed to create significant changes in forest utilization. Due to their alliances with local interest groups, they abolished the immemorial rights of local communities. These rights were considered to interfere with the development of market relations. Forest-dependent communities, including the Tahtacıs, became more impoverished and dependent on local notables who were involved in large-scale trade in forest products as a result of their political influence. This was a period when the Tahtacıs faced chronic debt due to pressure from timber and charcoal merchants as well as new tax liabilities, military conscription, and compulsory work imposed by the administration. It was this bonded labor that enabled mass production in forestry.

This chapter also demonstrated that in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Little Ice Age ended and the commercialization of agriculture and forestry took off, Tahtacıs intentionally descended to lower altitudes to take the advantages of the newly emerging market opportunities. This was also a period when the temporary settlements they used as winter quarters gradually evolved into permanent villages and Tahtacı communities came more closely in touch with other segments of society. At the same time, they adopted highly flexible strategies that allowed them to avoid certain administrative practices, especially forced military conscription. The diversity and complexity of these strategies reveals not only the vague boundaries between resistance and compliance but also between "state" and "non-state" spaces.

7

Conclusion

This dissertation analyzed the politics of forestry in the context of late Ottoman Mediterranean Anatolia. I not only examined the dynamics behind the commodification of forests and the modern techniques of natural resource extraction that the Ottoman government attempted to develop but also depicted how officials and local interest groups in the Taurus region perceived these efforts. Another question I addressed in this study is how those at the other end of the spectrum, the Tahtacı communities, dealt with the modern administrative practices and the intensification of commercial forestry. By visualizing the power struggles among forest officials at central and regional levels, timber traders, and forest laborers, I discussed broader issues related to state formation, commodification, nomadism, and marginality.

As I illustrated, the period from the 1870s onwards witnessed dramatic environmental, economic, and political changes that had a significant impact on the subsistence strategies of rural Mediterranean populations. Given the end of the Little Ice Age and an increasing global demand for agricultural products, the Mediterranean reemerged as a prominent provider of cotton and grain. In this process, hill societies gradually descended to lower altitudes and overall mobility decreased. As a result, permanent settlement at lower altitudes expanded. This was also a period of increasing penetration by the administration entailing new taxation, military, and social engineering policies

due to increasing concern for securing more predictable revenues under worsening financial conditions caused by a global economic crisis and continuous wars.

One outcome of this period of new opportunities and challenges was the intensification of commercial forestry. In the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the enlargement of the construction industry, especially due to public works initiated in Egypt, the demand for forest products rose remarkably. More and more forest products entered the revived trade networks of the Mediterranean. In the first phase of the golden age of timber trade, only the merchants profited from these new opportunities.

As a result of the transformation of forests into a commodity, timber came to be seen as a vital source of revenue in the beginning of the Tanzimat period, but it was not until the 1870s that the government introduced extensive legal and institutional arrangements in forestry. In order to manage forests more efficiently and increase its share in the burgeoning market for forest products, the Ottoman government took steps toward a bureaucratized forestry, which resulted in the intensification of struggles over forestlands and products. The codification of a forest law, training of forest experts, mapping of certain *mirî* forests, and cadastral surveys of contested lands were some attempts of the central government to exert direct authority over forests. Before that time, as long as the needs of the army and urban centers for forest products were fulfilled, the surveillance of people living in or around forests was lacking and their utilization was left to local actors. Local groups and mediators had been the backbone of forest management for centuries. Customary rights over forests that allowed the local population to engage in small-scale trade as well as meet their own vital needs such as housing, heating, and pasturing were an important element of rural life. Restriction of these centuries-old rights as well as the emergence of a forest bureaucracy, the enforcement of new monitoring techniques, such as cutting procedures based on scientific principles, and the invention of new forest crimes and penalties were designed to eliminate local elements and establish strict, direct administrative control over forests. On the other hand, since the officials wanted to forestall potential reactions of the local people, they approached the issue cautiously.

As the aforementioned cases revealed, forest bureaucrats encountered various problems such as limited resources, an insufficient number of forest officials, and a lack of communication and transport facilities. Not only the government's eagerness to benefit from new trade opportunities but also their limited technical capacity forced bureaucrats to negotiate with local interest groups. It was unexceptional for officials to partner with traders, ignore their smuggling activities, or allow unauthorized tree removals by these traders. As mediators between associates at the central level and timber merchants, local forest officials played a key role in the construction of the timber market and the expansion of commercial lumbering. Traders who had the opportunity to become involved in this network benefitted from a variety of conveniences and exemptions that made the expansion of the market possible, but on the other hand, these alliances also allowed the administration to transform local power relations and manage somewhat to penetrate this growing market. In other words, the administration increased its control over natural resources by supporting the market participants. There was a symbiotic relationship between the local interest groups and the administration.

Increasing deforestation and the dependence of forest workers on the merchant class are two effects of modern forestry addressed in this study. Contrary to the general assumption that utilization of forests by local rural populations caused rapid deforestation, I underlined the role of the intensification of commercial lumbering, charcoal burning, and bark peeling in the destruction of forests. Overexploitation of trees and labor were highly correlated byproducts of the new form of forestry. Due to the need for immediate cash, commercial utilization became the highest priority of the government. Labor discipline and the limitation of customary rights were vital conditions for commercialization and profit maximization. This study thus attempted to contribute to debates on the commodification of nature and labor by demonstrating the relationship between deforestation and deepening social inequality - in other words, the interrelatedness of the ecological impact of commercial forestry and the transformation of labor relations in forests.

In this period, the increasing dependency of the Tahtacı communities was associated with their debt bondage to timber merchants. Due to the burden of their debt, they were trapped in a monopolistic relation with local notables. It

was this bonded labor that made these decades the golden age of timber trade. Without the labor of the Tahtacıs, it would have been impossible to build ships for the navy and to realize public investments such as railroads, canals, and bridges. Lumbering necessitated specialized skills based on centuries-old experience and local knowledge of trees and forests. It was a labor-intensive job that could not be replaced by any technology at the time.

In order to cope with the intensification of commercial forestry as well as the new administrative practices in conscription and taxation, the Tahtacı communities developed a diverse range of adaptation strategies. Local power balances, geographical conditions, and the varying levels of the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world system created a differentiation among the Tahtacıs. Along the Aegean coasts commercial agriculture emerged earlier than along the southern coasts. Increasing export-oriented agriculture created an opportunity for some Tahtacı families to obtain land from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, while others worked as agricultural wage-laborers or sharecroppers, signaling an important shift in labor relations. The subsistence strategies of the Tahtacıs on the southern coasts, on the other hand, substantially changed in the 1870s, once the Little Ice Age had ended and commercial agriculture began expanding. For many Tahtacı groups, spatial mobility remained the main component of their livelihood strategies, but over a narrower area and occasionally based on both peripatetic lumbering and sharecropping. A high land-to-labor ratio and available forests for clear-cutting allowed them to obtain land or to work for the large-landowners.

Furthermore, the contested conscription practices and insufficient monitoring techniques of the administration provided the Tahtacıs with an opportunity to desert from military service. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the administration attempted to recruit all Ottoman citizens. For certain societal groups, including the Tahtacıs, this new policy meant the abolishment of their exemption from military service. Tahtacıs claimed that their exemption should continue since they were *Kıbtî*. In ensuing decades, once Muslim *Kıbtî*s were also subjected to compulsory military service, the Tahtacı communities developed a novel strategy. On account of their relationship with Iranian consuls, a group of Tahtacı families obtained Iranian citizenship and claimed military exemption thusly.

Instead of pursuing the ethnic "origin" of the Tahtacıs or a single historical point at which the Tahtacıs "emerged," which is the main problematic of the current literature, this study emphasized the dynamism of the formation process of "Tahtacı-ness." Benefitting from the ecological anthropology literature on non-pastoral mobile groups, it discussed the climate, political tensions and opportunities, and the demands of the market as a variety of factors that shaped this process. This approach allowed to put the ecological niche of the Tahtacıs in its specific historical context, which is neglected in the literature of both the Tahtacıs and peripatetic groups. Such a representation contributes to the scholarship on the Tahtacıs, which focuses predominately on topics related to linguistics and ethnicity and tends to ignore socioeconomic and environmental issues, and to the contextualization of the peripatetic niche, which is mainly treated as a timeless and space-less concept. Thus this study not only uncovered their concrete roles in society but also historicized the peripatetic niche by placing it in the larger setting of modern administrative practices and intense commodification in late-nineteenth-century Mediterranean Anatolia.

The Tahtacı case also allowed to problematize the Scottian dichotomy of "state-spaces" and "non-state spaces." By analyzing the hybrid and flexible adaptation practices of these supposedly "powerless" communities, this dissertation revealed the interactions between hill and valley societies. As I demonstrated, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, despite the growing threat of an expanding market and the demands of the modern state, these hill communities gradually, deliberately adopted a less mobile life at lower altitudes where they engaged in closer interaction with sedentary communities. On the other hand, in these lowlands, which are thought to be "state-spaces," they developed sophisticated strategies that allowed them to manipulate administrative practices in their favor. These strategies of living blur the distinction not only between hill and valley societies but also among acts of subordination, resistance, and compliance.

Focusing on power struggles over nature at the local context of the Taurus region and the concrete practices of officials, this research also questioned the state-society duality, which is a commonality in state-centered approaches and the subaltern paradigm. The research revealed that there were complicated interactions between and within the fragmented center and the periphery. As I

showed, due to opposing interests at the central and local levels, the agendas and actual routines of representatives of the bureaucracy and administration were diverse. Both due to these clashing interests as well as inadequate technical capacity of the government, they negotiated with local notables with the purpose of extracting natural sources from these remote areas. It was commonplace for officials to violate the norms of scientific forestry in the circumstance that these norms clashed with the interests of these networks. In other words, it was the bureaucratic apparatus of the modernists themselves that undermined "scientific forestry" as a high modernist ideal. I also emphasized that as the discourse of "deforestation by local communities" legitimized pressure put on local communities and the abolishment of the immemorial rights of sedentary and nomadic rural populations, the "corruption" discourse masks the key role that these networks play in the mechanism of resource extraction and reproduces the image of the state as an autonomous structure. Instead of describing the partnerships of state officials and local interest groups and their violations of the law as exceptional examples of individual immorality or deviations from the ideal of the state, I considered them as an integral component of the politics over natural resources. By problematizing the perception of the state as a top-down, coherent mechanism, this assessment made it possible to reveal the actual actors and their concrete, diverse practices.

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Cevdet Bahriye (C.BH): 206/9641, 79/3763

Cevdet Hariciye (C.HR): 73/3638

Cevdet İktisad (C.İKTS): 15/749, 16/76

Cevdet Nafia (C.NF): 46/2299

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Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Altıncı Şube (DH.EUM.6.Şb): 34/2, 35/32, 54/34

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Hatt-ı Hümayun (HAT): 278/16430, 380/20540, 540/26719, 666/32404

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İrade Hususi (İ.HUS): 17/127, 4/117, 9/15, 9/18

İrade Meclis-i Vala (İ.MVL): 485/21961

İrade Dahiliye (İ.DH): 1053/82661

İrade Maliye (İ.ML): 1/11

İrade Meclis-i Vala (İ.MVL): 16327/1273, 16518/1273, 375/16468

İrade Orman ve Maadin (İ.OM): 1201/650, 2/4, 3/3, 3/8, 3/9, 591/341, 830/156

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Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları (MV): 115/5, 77.49/1.2, 77/46, 78/26, 83/121

Meclis-i Vala Evrakı (MVL): 568/35, 643/93, 704/3, 722/20

Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı (ŞD): 1205/14, 1375/1, 1392/33, 1759/26, 2117/1, 2524/14, 2761/16, 2984/31, 3136/68, 515/27, 517/10, 518/25, 520/16, 520/17, 520/18, 537/14, 540/4, 609/40

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