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POPULATION OF THE OTTOMAN EUROPE IN THE 16TH CENTURY: CHALLENGING THE BRAUDELIAN ENTHUSIASM

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to put emphasis on the relatively limited participation of the core lands of Ottoman Balkans in the economy of Europe. Unlike much of Central and Eastern Europe where export-oriented production of foodstuffs became dominant, the very nature of the Ottoman system prevented such a development. In particular, the principle of professionalism, followed by (pseudo) fiscalism and traditionalism was hostile toward exportation, while favoring imports. The areas under Ottoman control that played important role in supplying German and partly Italian towns with livestock were not subject to the direct rule of the sultan (the case of the Danubian principalities). Even Central Hungary, where this was the case, cannot be ranked among typical Ottoman provinces. In such conditions, it is hard to expect "the unity of the Mediterranean" to manifest itself in the economic and demographic trends in the Balkans and Anatolia.

Then, the oscillations of the population size in the Early Modern Ages show an absence of strong upward or downward tendencies. The rather widespread belief in a "population pressure" in the earlier period as well as in "heavy population losses" thereafter, which might suggest that the Balkans belonged to the common pattern of development like the lands in the Western Mediterranean world, is anchored in misinterpretation of the Ottoman tax records. The basic, somewhat naive idea that more tax units with more diversity of taxation items mean more humans cannot stand critical examination. Thus, the basic precondition for transformations in the economy similar to those in the Western Mediterranean and/or Central Europe was nearly completely lacking.

Introduction

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ticular the principle of provisionalism, followed by (pseudo) fiscalism and traditionalism was hostile toward exportation, while favouring imports. The areas under Ottoman control that played important role in supplying German and partly Italian towns with livestock were not subject to the direct rule of the sultan (the case of the Danubian principalities). Even Central Hungary, where this was the case, cannot be ranked among typical Ottoman provinces. In such conditions it is hard to expect "the unity of the Mediterranean" to manifest itself in the economic and demographic trends in the Balkans and Anatolia. Then, the oscillations of the population size in the Early Modern Ages show absence of strong upward or downward tendencies. The rather widespread belief in a "population pressure" in the earlier period as well as in "heavy population losses" thereafter, which might suggest that the Balkans belonged to the common pattern of development like the lands in the Western Mediterranean world, is anchored in misinterpretation of the Ottoman tax records. The basic, somewhat naïve idea that more tax units with more diversity of taxation items means more humans cannot stand critical examination. Thus, the basic precondition for transformations in economy similar to those in the Western Mediterranean and/or Central Europe was nearly completely lacking.

General Outlook

The participation of the core lands of Ottoman Balkans in the economy of Early Modern Europe was relatively limited. Unlike much of Central and Eastern Europe where export-oriented production of foodstuffs became dominant, here the very nature of the Ottoman socio-political system prevented such a development. As Virginia Aksan has put it aptly, "Ottoman Empire, an agrarian society similar to its neighbour, Russia, pursued inherently 'econocidal' policies". The Ottoman "economic mind" was defined as a fiscalism (or pseudo-fiscalism) whose nature was quite different of the Western mercantilism and modern capitalism. Yet it seems that this general dictum is the only point where the consensus is firm. In most of the important questions about the nature of the exchange between the Ottoman world and the West, there are no generally accepted theories. Thus, the conviction persists that in the 16th and 17th centuries the Ottoman lands were substantially participating in supplying "the other side" with raw materials.

The areas under Ottoman control that played important role in supplying German and partly Italian towns with oxen, were autonomous or in a way atypical (the case of the Danubian principalities and Central Hungary).[1] This fact only accords with otherwise well founded views, that Ottoman conquest did not cause any deep break of commercial links with the Levant. Thus, what was proved for the long-distance trade in Oriental commodities can equally be applied to the phenomenon of continuing supply in basic stuffs from the Danubian lands. The same is partially true for Balkan goods, which were exported via Dubrovnik, but also via Dalmatian towns in Venetian hands.[2] This trade was rather a kind of activity, which had started long ago

[1] More about cattle export from the Rumanian principalities in: B. Murgescu, "Der Anteil der rumänischen Fürstentümer am europäischen Viehhandel vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert. Regelmäßigkeiten und konjunkturelle Schwankungen", *Scripta Mercaturae*, 33/2, (1999), pp. 61-91.

[2] Seid M. Traljić, "Trgovina Bosne i Hercegovine s lukama Dalmacije I Dubrovnika u XVII i XVIII stoljeću", *Pomorski zbornik*, 1, (1962), pp. 341-371.

in the Middle Ages, now very much expanded. The Ottomans never wanted to severe the well-established connections, but to control them and to profit of that control. Perhaps it would be better to ask how many Ottoman subjects were engaged in that business, and what their social position was.

At the same time the idea of a demographic evolution parallel and similar to that in the West, is still unchallenged. This idea was strongly influenced by F. Braudel's belief in the unity of the Mediterranean world, and his acceptance of figures and some calculations offered by Ö. L. Barkan nearly sixty years ago.[3] On the other hand, those dealing with the Ottoman realm "from inside" are less enthusiastic about this set of hypotheses, while allowing for some exceptions, like the export of Ottoman silk and cotton, and support, though with some reluctance and indecision, the idea of a 16th century "spectacular" population growth in the Ottoman Empire.

All these controversies are centred on a question of periodization, that is, whether the Empire became a periphery of the capitalist world system already in the late 16th century, or around 1750 and later. The mainstream theory acknowledges serious criticism on the alleged economic dependency from the West in the early period, while allowing for a kind of "preparatory stage" or "first steps" in the early period.

In 1980, Immanuel Wallerstein has put forward some questions about the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world-economy.[4] He asked why it did not happen from the outset, "like Poland or Sicily", then when did it happen (including questions about the respective processes leading to that, within and without the Empire, about time to enter the emerging division of labour for different regions, and about the political consequences of incorporation), and, finally, why the result was a kind of plain peripheralization? We shall first discuss several relevant topics at length and then try to answer these questions according to our newest findings.

At the same time, that is, from ca. 1490 to ca. 1590, it seems that the state, which was very strong in the 16th century, was also increasing its demands in kind in form of prebends for the provincial cavalry. In that way, dictated more by fiscal needs than by actual increase of population and/or production figures, more people and more product had entered the surveys.

This fact alone, coupled with the thin density of settlement, remoteness from sea or river ports and the relatively poor quality of the soil in areas from where the transport was easy (Greece), could largely explain the random and irregular character of grain exports (mainly to Venice). [5]

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[3] F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, I, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1995, pp. 402-419. Although he has some reserves toward Barkan's optimistic estimates, he nevertheless allows for a substantial increase in the Ottoman realm. He relies on Ernst Wagemann's rule that "any large population increase must occur simultaneously throughout entire humanity". This sentence comes under the subtitle *"A population increase of 100 per cent?"*. We shall see that this percentage is more than questionable at least for the Balkans in the 16th century.

[4] I. Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire and the Capitalist World-Economy: Some Questions for Research", *Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071 – 1920)*, eds. Osman Okyar, Halil *İnalcık*, Ankara, 1980, pp. 117-122.

[5] M. Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce de blé pendant la seconde moitié du XVI*e *siècle*, Paris, 1966. Here we must leave aside the subject of smuggling.

The Demography

The basic precondition for transformations in the realm of economy similar to those in the rest of Europe was nearly completely lacking. The rather widespread belief in a "population pressure" in the earlier period as well as in "heavy population losses" thereafter, which might suggest that the Balkans belonged to the common pattern of development like the lands in the Western Mediterranean world, is anchored in taking the data of the Ottoman tax records at face value. It seems that some researchers did actually reach the point where the hypothesis of the general great population increase looks untenable, but then they had suddenly stopped, as if they were forgetting the simple fact that the only reason of Ottoman tax surveys was identification and allocation of revenues, and never an interest in true population figures or statistics. In much of the writings of Ottomanists the idea of the "population pressure" is either maintained, or tacitly circumvented, or only partially criticized. The final step toward rejecting the myth of spectacular ups and downs has not been done as yet.[6]

We have already mentioned the alleged great increase in population figures in the long period 1490-1590. But, what population? It was taxpayers, better to say tax units, and certainly not simply humans. According to the poll-tax registers from 1489 and 1491, published by Todorov and Velkov (1988), Ottoman Europe had about 3.5 millions of taxpaying people (without large towns). In 1525-1535 the number was five millions (irregular tax records, Barkan), while in 1570-1580 the total was estimated at eight millions (Barkan; this guessing was borrowed by Braudel, Cippola and others). It is very incredible that such a rise was a consequence of natural growth, requiring nearly 1% of yearly growth, only possible if we accept an uninterrupted upward trend with no setbacks, the rate of mortality remaining firmly at the lowest edge of 30 ‰. Now, I cannot but to agree with Justin McCarthy,[7] who claims that in pre-modern and pre-industrial Turkey the annual rate of natural growth of population cannot exceed the 0.5% limit. The more so if we recall the 0.17% rate for Europe in 1500-1700. Since around 1580 Ottoman records show the highest numbers of taxpaying units, as well as the most differentiated picture and the highest level of agricultural output, it is relatively safe to take figures from this time as a point of reference. Using the McCarthy caveat and counting back to 1490, we arrive at 4.9 millions under exceptionally favourable conditions, while well over five millions seems more realistic, even if we take account of the advantages of the "Pax Ottomanica". Then around 1530 there should be six or 6.2 millions. Some researchers who deal with Ottoman Anatolia explain the gap between official figures and the supposed real level of growth by the difficulties in the registration of nomads. Yet the same phenomenon is discernible in the Balkans, also in regions with ordinary *reaya* population. In my opinion we should not be too sceptical regarding the ability of Ottoman registrars to carry out their duty satisfactorily.

This makes us more attentive to the possibility that the record-making was substantially influenced by the growing needs of funding the troops. The increase in the

[6] Ö. Lutfi Barkan, "Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'empire Ottoman aux XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 1/1, (1957), pp. 9-36.

[7] J. McCarthy, *Moslems and Minorities. The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*, New York, 1983. See also N. Göyünç, W. D. Hütteroth, *Land an der Grenze, Osmanische Verwaltung im heutigen türkisch-syrisch-irakischen Grenzgebiet im 16. Jahrhundert*, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 124-126.

numbers of prebend-holders may cause more taxation items to enter the survey, and, consequently, to show more taxpayers on the list than it was previously. Given the almost incredible elasticity of the concept of "household" (*hane*), there is no wonder that this basic registrar's device might have been used like the accordion.

Other historians thought to have spotted a discomforting fact that food production did not keep pace with the growing population, even if the growth was due to immigration and/or sedentarization of nomads. Then those who stress the "stagnant" nature of Ottoman rural economy were accused of neo-Malthusianism and a model created by E. Boserup which underlines the peasant's capacity to develop successful responses to "population pressure" (i.e., the intensification of agrarian production) was applied to Ottoman realities in north-eastern Anatolia.[8]

The creative response of the peasants is by no means excluded, indeed it seems to be quite logical. The solution proposed by H. İslamoğlu-İnan had some advantages, but it does not seem to lay on solid ground, at least for the area analysed. First, the great increase of tax units occurred in terms of the category of bachelors or landless people (*mücerret* and *caba*). According to legal prescriptions, a "bachelor" is an adult male living with his father, which makes the supposition of immigration less credible. M. A. Cook, who was dealing with more or less the same area, has already raised the question, whether the "increase" could be ascribed to changes in the way of registration.[9] Secondly, the belief that in the mentioned region peasants were burdened with a kind of double taxation in kind, that is "two tithes" or 20% of the product does not reflect well historical realities, which were far more intricate.[10] And finally, I do not think that production of leguminoses started only after the shadow of subsistence crisis was cast over the village economy. In Ottoman cadastral surveys there was always less taxation items in the early phase, and more and more as the time went on. Products of gardens and orchards worth mentioning often appear in later phases, but well before the supposed "overpopulation". The rest of the argumentation, like shortening of the fallow period and fertilization, although theoretically possible, cannot be proved.[11]

If we turn our attention to the development in the later period, that is, from ca. 1590 to ca. 1650, we shall be confronted once again with apparently strong evidence that this time the demographic pendulum had moved to the very opposite end. Now we have an enormous number of records which show figures of taxpayers that are much smaller if compared with the "1580" point of reference, by one third or more. Again western experience is sought to explain this "catastrophe". Thirty-six years ago, in 1981, Bruce McGowan left the door ajar when he stated that it was difficult to decide whether the heavy drop in the seventeenth century *avarız-hane* figures as compared with the data from the sixteenth century records might be explained by demographic changes or by financial problems. However, in a book published the same year, he

[8] H. İslamoğlu-İnan, "State and Peasants in the Ottoman Empire: a Study of Peasant Economy in North-central Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century", *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, ed. H. İslamoğlu-İnan, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 101-159. E. Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: the Economics of Agrarian Change and Population Pressure*, Chicago, 1965.

[9] M. A. Cook, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia 1450-1600*, London-New York-Toronto, 1972, pp. 26-27, 64-65.

[10] Inter alia, a manuscript housed at the Archive of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, signed OZHA, Turcica 142, pp. 106b-107a, suggests that there was only one tithe, but consisting of two parts. It is impossible to discuss here other important aspects of the very complex problem of the "two tithes".

[11] H. İslamoğlu-İnan, "State and Peasants", pp. 116-117.

suggested that the early eighteenth century poll-tax (*cizye-hane*) figures, much lower than those found in the old cadastral surveys, might point toward a demographic catastrophe during the seventeenth century.[12] Although he did not really advocate this latter thesis, the mere possibility of such a development influenced other scholars considerably, the more so because of an apparent link with all-European trends. After all, for social historians of the seventeenth century, heavy demographic losses in many areas, the abandoning of marginal lands, late marriages, plagues, the "Little Ice Age", and the like were very much on the scholarly agenda at this time.

Contrary to that, it is possible to detect a change in the registration practice of the Ottoman finance department. With the help of non-Ottoman sources it eventually became clear that the full-sized farm was taken as the new tax unit, which was expressed in a certain amount of money (from one to three gold coins). Let me offer only one striking example: in the last *tapu tahrir* for the borderland in the sancak of Klis (compiled in ca. 1595), out of the very large Vlach population, only the minority did enter the record, because there had been quite a limited number of plots of the land to cultivate and consequently nobody but the *tapu* holders appear in the register. Thus two thirds of the actual population are missing, as attested by a contemporaneous Habsburg spy record (1600/1624). Further examination has shown that, at least when grand totals are concerned, one has to neglect large cities, because most of their inhabitants were exempted. For estimations of the rural population, high accuracy is not possible, yet there is one important circumstance that offers great help. Many of the latest cadastral surveys from around 1580 or 1590 were copied in the twenties and thirties of the 17th century. From the marginal notes they contain it is obvious that they were used for quite a long time, sometimes down to the mid-eighteenth century! If in the provinces they were composed for a tremendous depopulation occurred, this work would be totally useless. Only in case of the relatively stable number of full-sized (and inhabited) farms those copies would be apt to form a basis for the new poll-tax and *avarız* defters. Moreover, according to narrative sources, there is enough reason to believe that the towns grew bigger. Therefore, a possibility of an "overflow" must be taken into account. Of course, I think that a moderate decrease did occur, perhaps less in the Balkans than in Anatolia.

One last remark about the so-called tax reform from 1691. The real concern of the reform-makers was much more money than adult males. Thus, the key for understanding what had happened can be found in the prescription, which had settled the amount of the *cizye* for the lower class (*edna*). Instead of one gold coin per *hane*, now they had to pay three *guruş*es, or slightly less, which means practically the same. In other words, the amount incumbent on the head of the household was increased by two hypothetical adult male coresidents, regardless of their actual presence, while for the higher classes (*evsat* and *aʿla*) the respective amounts were increased according to the principles of the şeriat. At least in relatively peaceful times, this was meaning more money although the number of units might look smaller, the true population size remaining hard to discover.

This much can be said from the purely demographic angle: until the beginning of

[12] B. McGowan, "Osmanlı avarız – nüzül teşekkülü 1600-1830", *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, II. Cilt*, Ankara, 1981, p. 1329; *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe*, Cambridge, 1981, p. 83.

the transition at the end of the 18th century mortality has been the most instable variance, with key influence on the dynamics of the population growth. Natality has been rather stable on the level of about 40‰. Before the 19th century neither natality nor mortality fell under 30‰. When the mortality level is below that of natality, there is increase in population, while in the opposite case there is decrease. Therefore, we may assume that in the 17th century Ottoman Europe too natality was stable at 40‰, but that mortality was unstable, although hardly below 30‰. The only explanation for a decrease from eight to five millions in the Balkans 1580-1650 could be found in the increased mortality, provided it did exist. Deliberate lessening of the family size was not typical for the areas east of the St. Petersburg-Trieste line. In addition, this process should have been uninterrupted. There were no great wars, epidemics, periods of exceptional hunger or undernourishment. Thus, the whole population in the early 17th century might have sunken to seven millions, provided the mortality had caused birth rates to fall to 3.5 ‰. Then in the next generation the possible reaction could be maintaining of the new level of four births per nuclear family. A new drop could diminish the total by another million, finally stopping at six (the worst case, or 25% less). On the other hand, the birth rate could be more than four after every decrease, making up for the losses, without sharp decrease in the whole period of seventy years. Finally, both scenarios (four and more than four) are possible, which would mean a loss of 10 to 15%.[13]

The Economy

Now we have to discuss the consequences of population development to the economy, and the degree of appropriateness of comparing the East and the West in this field.

One more indicator of relatively moderate oscillations in the population size was the fact that foodstuffs were quite cheap in comparison with the West. Although the state was always trying hard to hold prices on the market at a low level, not without success, it would not be able to do this had the demographic increase been "spectacular". Sharply rising prices and shortages of supply appeared in 1585, only to worsen in the first half of the 17th century, despite stagnating or slightly decreasing population figures. This was partly due to disorders in transition from the classic system of collection and distribution of revenues and to the chaotic state in financial and monetary realms, with exorbitant rates of inflation. Yet there might have been even deeper reasons.

In 1980 Osman Okyar has presented a brief account on the subject of the possible Ottoman economic growth during the 16th century, mainly in accord with S. Kuznets' hypothesis (1966) and Braudel's hints and guesses.[14] In our case, economic growth becomes a meaningful concept if we link population movements over long-run periods with an evaluation of changes in the average standard of living of the population over the same period, as expressed in changing rates of annual increase in both the population and prices. To put it simply: a long-term increase in "household" figures running faster than the increase in prices would attest for economic growth.

[13] N. Moačanin, *Town and Country on the Middle Danube 1526-1690*, Leiden-Boston, 2006, pp. 230-232.

[14] O. Okyar, "Ottoman Economic Growth during the 16th Century", *Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071 – 1920)*, pp. 112-116. S. Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth*, Yale University, 1966.

But if a standard of a rising population falls, or if there is an *absolute decline* of population figures over time, then we have an economic decline. Price changes during the 16th century as established by Barkan show the following picture:

Years	Index	Average yearly rate of change
1489	100	
		0,05 %
1555	142	
		0,08 %
1585	182	
		0,60 %
1600	460	

In the period between 1460 and 1560 the free-market prices have increased only moderately (except for meat). Okyar concludes, though with some reserve, that since the annual growth rate of population was markedly higher than that of prices, there must have been an increase in supplies to meet "the steady pressure of population increase", at a slightly higher rate than the rate of population. Therefore, "a parallelism can be established between the Western Mediterranean area, which was also going through a period of increased prosperity at the same time, and overall economic change in the Eastern Mediterranean, dominated by the Ottoman economy".[15]

To the contrary, our investigation shows that things were not going that easy. Until the mid-sixteenth century prices were increasing slightly, but still more than the population did. The great reversal began exactly at the time of the first deficit, and then the gap started to widen substantially. Thus, we can hardly speak of any "economic growth". Of course, in the conditions after 1585 with slightly diminishing rural population and rocketing prices, the idea of an "economic decline" is also questionable.[16] If such a growth had ever existed, it should be relegated well back, to the time of Mehmet the Conqueror perhaps, but we do not know. Actually, the difference between price and population movements was affecting the rural world but little. The peasants needed salt or some metal wares, but not much more than that. Thus, the obvious similarities between the Western and the eastern Mediterranean world in terms of population and price movements do not testify of the "unity" of that part of the world beside the mere basic biological developments, which were very little affected by political, social or economic systems.

Soon after by the end of the 16th century the Ottoman government made the crucial decision to stop interfering much into matters of funding the partly obsolete provincial cavalry,[17] while giving more free hand to governors (*beylerbeyi*s), it started

[15] O. Okyar, "Ottoman Economic Growth", p. 114.

[16] Less people entail more food for those remaining in the villages. Yet we must remember that many ways for escape the subsistence crisis in the peasant world did exist. İslamoğlu might have some right in her speculations, while the importance of cattle-breeding and waged labour might also help. There are some hints pointing to this possibility in the cadastral surveys for Bosnia: when the total grain product was below the subsistence minimum, there is often a markedly high amount of fines, dependable on the possession of movable property (mostly cattle).

[17] These troops were still needed on the battlefields in Eastern Europe. Cf. D. Kołodziejczyk, "Az oszmán "katonai lemaradás" problémája és a kelet-európai hadszíntér", *Aetas*, 4, (1999), pp. 142-148.

to explore means how to extract much more cash from its peasant subjects.[18] With rising inflation and social insecurity, this might have been an ideal setting for the process of peripheralization; yet it did not happen at that time. This has not been explained satisfactorily in the historiography. Wallerstein himself has put forward a fruitful comparison with Russia, whose fate was "more honourable", that is, to become a semi-periphery, underlining important differences, such as Russia's on-going expansion, greater military strength, large areas more difficult to penetrate, and "no phenomenon comparable to the janissaries".[19] This is all well founded, but not enough. One must not forget that for the successful penetration of Western entrepreneurs a class of locally based partners is needed. Such a class could not develop overnight, the more so because a transformation of the land regime was far from being completed. The time was too short, for first came the Köprülü reforms, which partly succeeded in restoring the "good old days", and then great wars until 1718. Beside the janissaries, another formidable obstacle to any "modernization" was the almost omnipotent *ulema* class, which did not only prevent adoption of Western science and other influences, but also changes in the legal system, which was in turn affecting economy as well. The role of Muslim traders was waning, but for non-Muslims the time has not yet come to take the upper hand. Last but not least, the peasants themselves were mainly looking for other means than increasing grain production to come to terms with rising demands for cash. The *malikane*-holders, or lifelong lessees, which appeared later, could not alone trigger the deep change. Although the process of turning peasant holdings into *çiftlik*s was expanding, it was lacking legal sanction. Since many peasants were willingly accepting the change of position toward their old/new masters, which not infrequently did offer them a kind of "protection" against the heavy taxation by the state, the holders of the *çiftlik*s, themselves low or medium-ranking military and officials, were mostly pleased with the advantage of some improving of their standard, without taking the risk of squeezing much larger quantities of raw agricultural product from their protégés. Therefore, share tenancy or *métayage* without specialization was prevailing.

In both cases (expansion and depression) the expected effects did not occur. To explain this strange phenomenon, the role of the state as well as the cleverness of the peasants was overemphasized. Probably it is going too far to see the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "as a *transitional* stage in the articulation of the Ottoman system with the world-economy".[20] Yet we have seen that no important steps toward peripheralization were done at that time. In my opinion this period still belongs to the epoch of traditional setting. Here and there a loophole in the system was open, but that was far from a semi-substantial change. This may help us to redraft the picture of the Empire as a "world empire". In a way it was a "world empire" and had a touch of a "world economy", inheriting multiple state structures; of course, it was not capitalist.[21] Most broadly speaking, it was self-sufficient, resembling more to large Communist state systems of the 20th century, than to creations of the Habsburg, Valois or Tudor. We may say that with the onset of peripheralization in the 18th century the label "world-empire" becomes functionless.

[18] P. Fodor, *The Last Major Taxation Surveys of the Empire – Farewell to the* Tahrir-*System* (2005). The text under this title is one chapter of a manuscript, which the author has kindly sent me in exchange of information.

[19] I. Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire", p. 121.

[20] *Ibidem*. The cited article was written by H. İslamoğlu-İnan, Ç. Keyder, "Agenda for Ottoman History", *Review*, I/1, (1977), p. 53.

[21] I. Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire", p. 118.

Thus, in the Balkans nothing similar to the "second serfdom" connected with demands not only of foreign markets, but of domestic ones as well, ever developed.[22] It simply could not develop because of the demographic setup, being not exclusively due to the character of the Ottoman state. The low population density itself was a formidable obstacle to the intensifying of labour. Otherwise the state was responsible that there existed booming cities (Istanbul) in need for food supply in large quantities from remote areas (Egypt). Besides, the gigantic proportions of the military machine have created urgent needs for its maintenance precisely by the means of deliveries of large quantities of foodstuffs along with the engagement of thousands of peasants as workers bound to a kind of corvée to the benefit of the state/army. As long as we can speak of the Ottoman state as of a world empire, and most would agree that this holds for until at least 1700, the nature of exchange of goods with the western world-economy remains *per definitionem* outside the scope of the relation centre-periphery. The trade was tending to be equal, whereas internally it was unequal.

Paradoxically, some features of the Ottoman regime allow for at least a degree of comparison with the processes in the West, if only in terms of a reversed picture. From the very beginning, the peasant subjects (*reaya*) were burdened with taxes consisting predominantly of dues in cash, their share even increasing toward the mid-seventeenth century. Imports were encouraged, which had in the long run disastrous consequences for many domestic crafts.

A map of the presence of large, (almost) privately owned and potentially export-oriented plots of land or estates in Ottoman Europe from the 17th till the mid-18th centuries, produced by Bruce McGowan (1981) sufficiently depicts this fact. It is obvious that they have developed exactly in areas of assembly points for the Istanbul grain supply system. No export-oriented production of monocultures appeared earlier than the late 18th century. On the other hand, the emergence of thousands of new, but pretty small çiftliks in Bosnia, or even in Macedonia, points toward a kind of belated feudalization, having little or nothing to do with commercialization.

To meet their heavy cash obligations, many peasants engaged more in cattle breeding than in agriculture, but another important outlet was also found in waged labour. The towns, predominantly agglomerations of Muslim soldiers and guild members were rapidly growing, attracting peasants to work as masons or carpenters. What is especially important, many peasants stayed in their villages or moved to other small settlements to engage in house crafts. Regulations which speak about indemnity for prebend-holders and the state when peasants "neglect" their fields point in this direction, sometimes with clear indication that the reason for that was occupation with house crafts (and not simply flight). They did bring their products to the market, at least on the level of a region, while not being embarrassed by the limitations of the guild regulations. It is not impossible that their success had contributed to a

[22] Braudel thought that the "new serfdom" arose in Ottoman lands after 1609-1610 (F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, II, pp. 724-725). But "the government was not simply the instrument of a landholding class and had nothing to gain, as a corporation, from the degradation of the peasantry". B. McGowan, "Osmanlı avarız", pp. 72-73. McGowan continues quoting A. Spiesz who sees "the social and legal status of the peasants as a base the feudal lords built their farms on" as the decisive factor in establishing of the second serfdom. Precisely this was lacking on the Ottoman side.

certain extent to the thriving of the Balkan fairs in the 17th century.[23] We even cannot exclude the possibility that here and there some outsets of the *Verlag* system had appeared, but there is no positive evidence as yet.

Of course, there was no interest on the side of the politically powerful to support them, nor there were any technical innovations that might have stimulated the entrepreneur/capitalist spirit among them.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, we may summarize the answers on Wallerstein's questions quoted above, according to the result of our investigation.

1. The Ottoman world was not incorporated into the new division of labour as a periphery right from the outset because of too many factors, the most prominent being internal impossibility for land-holders to force considerable groups of producers to large-scale coercive labour before the late 18th century. This circumstance was more important than the political and military strength of the Ottoman state.[24] I agree with Wallerstein and other authors, that the incorporation was not a single event, developing gradually (the Balkans, Egypt and Syria, Anatolia). The peripheralization was assisted to a large extent by the rise of the regional semi-independent power-holders, the *ayan*, and the strong development of the *malikane* and commercial *çiftliks*, again from the late 18th century on. Great military and political defeats did the rest. As for the political consequences, they amounted to nothing less than to disintegration of the Empire. [25]

2. The Ottoman Empire could not be incorporated as a semi-periphery because of reasons stated above, which agree with Wallerstein's suppositions (factors like geography and relative military weakness) but take into account other factors like the role of the *ulema* class, and the rise of non-Muslim or non-Turkish traders in the European part which eventually became promoters of proto-nationalistic ideas, unwilling to support the recovery and modernization of the Empire.[26]

There is a lot of discussion in the last three decades about the nature of the Ottoman Empire in every respect, from religion, politics and culture to economics. Now it looks almost like any other European state, now it is totally different. The Braudelian enthusiasm for next-to-same is still vigorous. Of course, this state was "sitting" on very old structures, certainly many of them not unlike those on the "Christian" side. Also we have to take account of geography, the climate and manifold mutual

[23] Internal trade within the Empire borders has not yet been sufficiently explored. For Balkan fairs see S. Faroqhi, "The Early History of the Balkan Fairs", *Südost-Forschungen*, 37, (1978), pp. 50-68.

[24] In answering the first question Wallerstein underlines the difference between the external and intra-systemic trade (luxuries vs. basic foodstuffs) and the "ambiguous" nature of the trade with Venice, which was "a declining pole of Europe" at that time (we may say that much of this trade was a continuation from the Byzantine times, with no revolutionary consequences). He then stresses the Ottoman "resistance". I. Wallerstein, "The Ottoman Empire", pp. 119-120.

[25] In answering his second question Wallerstein quotes several authors (Bernard Lewis, Stanford Shaw, İlkay Sunar and İslamoğlu-İnan and Keyder). They set the time when the real integration had begun at various points between late 16th and the early 19th century. *Ibid*., pp. 120-121. In the light of the findings of the present article, I would not wholly endorse the opinions of Lewis and Shaw, particularly not for the 17th century ("cyclical decline", "shattering impact of the closing of the frontier", "price rises of Europe leading to a demand for wheat, wool copper, and precious metals such that they were sucked out of the Ottoman Empire" because of the relatively low prices). *Ibid*., pp. 120-121.

[26] Here Wallerstein's explanation calls again for the political and military weakness of the Ottomans. *Ibid*., p. 121.

influences. Yet sometimes the discussion seems to a dog trying to catch its own tail. If, for example, relatively high level of "justice" is stressed as if it were announcing "democratic" procedures like in the West, one comes quite close to non-Western ideals, that is, to the legacy of the Islam. Thus, it becomes not very fruitful to look for a single pan-European origin of the population movements in the Eastern Mediterranean. Often the same or similar phenomena occur in quite different settings.

Finally, we have found that demographic trends in the 16th and the 17th century had a great impact on the Empire's economy. The demographic curve was slightly rising, then also slightly falling, yet always slower that the ever-rising curve of prices; in 1600-1650 the gap became dramatic. Such a condition did not offer best opportunities to integration into the capitalistic world-economy in the way it was done with of Poland or Sicily. This could only be effectuated by the means of colonial conquest, in any case not possible at that time.

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