

Muslims And Zimmis (Non-muslims) In The Ottoman Province Of Cyprus (1750 - 1800)

*Osmanlı Kıbrısı'nda Müslümanlar Ve Zimmîler
(1750 - 1800)*

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Özet

Bu makalede, 1750-1800 döneminde belgelerin yansıttığı kadarıyla, Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kıbrıs Eyâleti'nde toplumun en önemli iki unsuru olan Müslümanlar ve Zimmîler yani Gayrimüslimler arasında meydana gelmiş olan birlikte yaşam tecrübeleri ele alınacaktır. Bu çalışma iki kısımdan oluşmaktadır. Birincisinde, Miladi 1750 öncesi ve sonrasında adada var olan idarî ve içtimaî yapılar üzerinde durulacaktır. İkinci kısımda ise, cemaâtlar arası ilişkiler tartışma konusu olacaktır. Bu bölümde, idarî elit sınıf mensupları arasında şahit olunanlardan ziyade, özellikle eyâlet toplumunun en kalabalık tabakasını oluşturan sıradan tebaa arasında yaşanmış olan münasebetlere vurgu yapılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kıbrıs Müslümanları ve Gayrimüslimleri, Birlikte Yaşam Tecrübeleri, CKıbrıs Eyâleti, Osmanlı Devleti, Osmanlı Tarihi, On Sekizinci Yüzyıl, Toplum, Askeriye, İdarî Sınıf.

A. Existing Administrative and Social Order in the Province

In the later part of the sixteenth century, under the pressure of many political, military and economic factors, the island of Cyprus was captured by the Turks by risking a great loss of souls and materials. At that time Cyprus was under the feudal rule of the Republic of Venice¹. Along with the conquest, Cyprus was turned into a separate province (*beylerbeyilik*) and then, in the October 9, 1571 the districts of Alaiye from province of

Abstract

*This article investigates different aspects of the co-existing experiences of Muslims and Zimmis (non-Muslims), the two main elements of the society of the Ottoman Province of Cyprus, during the period of 1750-1800 A.D. This work includes two parts. In the first one, we discuss administrative and social structures of the island existed before 1750 A.D. and in the second half of the eighteenth century. The subject matter of the second part is intercommunal relations. In this section, especially the social relations enjoyed by the general subjects, the most crowded class of the provincial society, are going to be emphasized more than those witnessed among the ruling elite.***

Keywords

Muslims and Zimmis of Cyprus, Co-existing Experiences, Province of Cyprus, Ottoman State, Ottoman History, Eighteenth Century, Society, Military, Ruling Class.

Anadolu, İç-il from Karaman, Sis from Zülkadir and Tarsus from Halep were attached to this newly established province.² Lefkoşa was made capital of the province (*Pasha sancağı*) and the sub-districts (*kazas*) of Mağusa, Girne and Baf were transformed into greater units; that is, districts (*sancaks*). These reforms were simultaneously followed by the formation of other administrative, military, fiscal, legal and security institutions in the province.³

The status of the Province of Cyprus as an independ-

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ent province lasted until 1670⁴. It's however recorded that in 1760 the island was attached as a district (*sancak*) to the Cezâir-i Bahr-i Sefid Beylerbeyliği (Province of the Islands of the Mediterranean Sea) which was under the dispose of Kaptan Pasha (Admiral of the Ottoman Fleet).⁵ And then, Cyprus was to be given to Grandvezir as a fief (*hass*) beginning from 1703.⁶ As a result of this reform, administration of the island would pass to the hands of an official titled as *muhassıl* who was to purchase his office (*Kıbrıs hassı*) from Grandvezir. In spite of the fact that whole of the administrative works and collecting process of all taxes had been undertaken by different officials in the past, all of these authorities were given to only one person. Having starting by this way, government of *muhassıls* would continue until 1785 and even Tanzimat period except for a short term between 1745-1748 when, as an independent province, the island was ruled by vezirs.⁷

In 1785 an another administrative reform was realized after dismissal of the despot governor of the time, "*Muhassıl-ı emvâl*" El-hac Abdalbaki Ağa and banishment of him to Yafa to be a custom official, as a result of complaints of the Turks and especially the representatives of the non-Muslim subjects (*Zimmis*), namely Archbishop, his three suffragans and Dragoman (*Sarây tercümânı*), who had gained so far an important power through administrative and economic privileges granted by the then Turkish governments to themselves.⁸

According to some documents related to this reform⁹ it's clear that Cyprus was a Grandvezir fief (*hass*) and registered to "*Defterhâne-i 'âmirede muhassıllar kalemi*". And then, this position of Cyprus had been ceased by an imperial paper (*hatt-ı hümayûn*). Hereafter, it had become a tradition for the Imperial Court (*Divân-ı hümayûn*) to issue written official order for those who would take possession of "*Kıbrıs muhassıllığı*". In the same way, an official order was issued for the adjudication of Cyprus to another person for a period of ¹¹ Zi'l-ka'de 1199 A.H. - 1201 A.H. (6 September 1785 - 1787 A.D.).

Additionally it's quite possible to learn from the same documents that now to the account of the year of 1201 the administration of "*Kıbrıs hassı mukâta'ası*" by way of a kind of fief (*ber-vech-i eshâm*) was adjudicated to the Admiral of the Ottoman Fleet and also Vezir Gazi Hasan Pasha. Hasan Pasha was also to refer it to the Vice-Admiral Hüseyin Pasha of Sakaz as deputy of himself. To sum up, although the Province of Cyprus seemed to have had a status of a province thereafter, it would

not be administered by an independent governor, but by an official called as *muhassıl* who had enjoyed more or less the same rights with him. *Muhassıl* was to be responsible to the Admiral of the Ottoman Fleet, who was also governor of the Province of the Islands of the Mediterranean Sea, for the general administration of the island. *Muhassıl* would also be under supervision of the Imperial Court for fiscal and similar matters.

Between 1750-1800 the capital of the province (*eyalet*) was the sub-district (*kaza*) of Lefkoşa. The island consisted of 16 kazas:¹⁰ Lefkoşa (with two big nâhiyes: Dağ and Değirmenlik), Mesariya, Mağusa, Karpas, Baf, Hrisofi, Kukla, Evdim, Tuzla, Leymosun, Piskobi, Gilan, Gerine, Lefke, Omorfa and Pendaye.

Having shortly handled the administrative body of the island existed before and during the period under examine, it may be useful to halt a bit on the social order of the same period established by the then Ottoman government.

Because of the oppressive regime of the Venetians and the war of 1570-1571 the population of the island had reduced fairly¹¹. This situation had caused very large cultivatable lands to be abandoned and disused.¹² For, according to the *tahrir defteri* (written survey of a province) prepared just after the end of the war; that is, in 1572, only in the regions of Mesarya and Mazoto where mostly the agricultural population lived, 76 villages were found completely abandoned.¹³ In order to realize the coming back of the native people who had left the island or scattered due to the war, an open invitation was made by announcing the fact that if they returned to their lands, all of their rights would be given back and guaranteed and for this aim necessary preparations had been completed. Since the native people did not come back, the abandoned lands could not be inhabited entirely. Knowing the fact that continuation of the Turkish rule that would be installed in this newly seized territory, in safety and stability, was bound to the existence of a sufficient number of Turkish population there, in September 22, 1572 (13 Cemâziye'l-evvel 980 A.H.) a deportation firman (*sürgün hükmü*),¹⁴ written to the Kadis of Anadolu, Karaman, Rum (Sivas, Tokat and Amasya) and Zülkadriye, was issued.

Within the framework of the deportation firman, under the presidency of a special official (*mübâşir*) Kadi of Meğri Hüseyin Çavuş and *müvellâ* (an official) of Ilgın Ali bin (son of) Mehmed and *müvellâ* of Aksaray Nu-rul-

lah bin Ali a deportation defter¹⁵ was made ready and a second copy of the defter was submitted to Istanbul in November 1572. It can be understood from the defter that from Beyşehir, Seydişehir,¹⁶ Aksaray, Anduğu (of Niğde), Develikarahisar, Ürküp, Koçhisar, Niğde, Bor, Ilgın, Ishaklı (of Sultandağı) and Akşehir, people had been chosen to be deported. Later some people had been deported from Akdağ and Bozok, too.¹⁷ Thus, an important number of Muslim Turkish elements was exported from certain regions of Anatolia and settled suitably in Cyprus to make it a prosperous and inhabited place just as Sultan Selim desired.¹⁸

Since the farmers constituted the majority of the people deported from Anatolia in 1572 and onward, they were settled in the villages in the regions of Meserya, Mazoto and the like. And most of the artisans, tradismen and merchants had been inhabited in big localities like Lefkoşa and Mağusa. In these places, along with the Greek and Armenian quarters new Turkish ones had come into existence. According to the court registers (*ser' iye sicil*) of 1698-1726,¹⁹ Arap Ahmed Pasha, Kale Ardı, Çatalhurma, Abdi çavuş, Ömeriye, Tahte'l-kal'a, Tophane and Kızılkule were some of the quarters established by the Turks who held the majority of population in them. In short, as a result of the settling policy pursued in Cyprus dating from 1572, foundations of the Turkish Cypriot community which continued its existence on the island up to this time, had been laid.

During the process of population reorganization in Cyprus there was not observed any difference between Muslims and non-Muslims or at least any intentional movement in such direction did not occur.²⁰ On the contrary, the then Turkish authorities had tried to merge and integrate the two main elements of the Cypriot society especially in big cities like Lefkoşa and the others. Nevertheless, since it was seemed dangerous (*muhâtarah*) for security, the Christians living in the castles of Lefkoşa and Mağusa, except for the artisans of them, were taken out of the strongholds by being forced to sell their houses to their values to the Muslims and they were settled in the suburbs (*varoş*).²¹

In all of the quarters of Lefkoşa more or less a Greco-Turkish mixture took place. However, in some of them the Turks, in some of them the Greeks and in some of them the Armenians held the majority. For example, in the quarters of Ermeni and Karamanîzâde the Armenians had enjoyed the best part encircling an Armenian church.²² In general the names of the quarters in which

the Turks had largely populated were Turkish.²³

As for the reorganization of the rural population, it could be seen that just after the conquest of 1570- 1571 along with the newly established Turkish villages like Paşaköy, Topçuköy, Murat Ağa, Hamitköy and Dizdarköy, some villages where the Turks and the Greeks settled in mixture came into existence. In certain villages also the Greeks were in greater number than the others.²⁴ For instance, in keeping with the court registers of the early eighteenth century there were 71 villages including Christian inhabitants. In fact, in most of the other regions where Greco-Turkish mixture existed, the Greeks held the majority.²⁵

The population of the island in the second half of the eighteenth century was numbered by the Turks, the Greeks, the Jews,²⁶ The Venetians,²⁷ the Christian Arabs,²⁸ the Frenchmen,²⁹ the Gypsies (*Kıbtîs*) and the reayahs of Zanta.³⁰ It's necessary to mention here the black male and female (*Zencîyi'l-asî*) and Georgian (*Gürçî*) slaves brought from Egybt³¹ and Caucasia³² and marketed in the island.

Although Jennings³³ states that he had come across a few not much detailed entries in the court registers of the Ottoman Cyprus about the Maronites, in the period under examine it couldn't be possible. But this can not necessarily mean that they had not existed. What is known exactly is that the Maronites had failed to constitute an important portion in the total population. Without any doubt, the Jews had also lived in the province. As it is known, in spite of the fact that the Ottoman State did not apply any restriction policy,³⁴ the Jewish subjects existed as dispersed all over the island. For these reasons, it does not seem possible to determine accurately and separately the shares enjoyed by the Jews or the other non-Muslim elements in the entire population of Cyprus.

With the fact that it is impossible to get detailed information about the numbers of minorities in the society, one can easily obtain considerably abundant and illuminating data from the archival documents of the period about the total population that the Province of Cyprus possessed during the period of 1750-1800. For the year of 1777 the primary source is Cyprianos who was a contemporary Cypriot historian and at the same time, a Christian man of religion.³⁵ According to him, in this year the Christians were 37000 souls and the Muslims were 47000. The total was 84000. Commensurate with a

work³⁶ including calculations about the island's population of the period depending on documents, in 1790 the Muslims were 67000, the non-Muslims were 48724 and the total was 115724; in 1793 the formers were 67000, the latter were 47616 and the total was 114616 and in 1800 the result was like this: 67000 + 30524 = 97524.

As to the distribution of the total Cypriot population over the island, some findings were obtained at the end of the investigations:³⁷ The non-Muslims had densely populated the kazas of Mağusa, Mesariye, Leymosun, Piskobi, Baf, Kukla, and with a lesser density dwelled in Lefkoşa, Gerine, Tuzla, Hırsofi, Gilan, Evdım and Değirmenlik (nâhiye -a smaller unit- of the sub-district of Lefkoşa) where the Turks had constituted the bulk of the population. The region heavily populated by the Zimmis (non-Muslims) was Mesariye and the district included the least number of Zimmis was Lefkoşa; in another words, Lefkoşa, the capital of the island, and its surroundings were the places thickly inhabited by the Turks. And it may be for this reason, most of the entries, related to the Turkish subjects, in the court registers were belong to the district of Lefkoşa. This situation is also being supported by another fact that 10 of total 12 divorce incidents, occurred between the Turkish couples and entered into the court registers of the period, were seen in the quarters of Lefkoşa and whole of 11 entries about the slaves, who were under dispose of the Muslims, were related to Lefkoşa. As an interesting detail, on the ground of the fact that 2 of the total 12 entries about divorced Turkish couples were of central quarters of Mağusa and Tuzla, it may be possible to claim that as a rule the Turks had resided in the district centres; that is, inner parts of the castles of these kazas.

It is an established fact that in general the Ottoman State did not apply any policy towards discrimination during the reorganization process of urban and rural population. On the contrary, it is also understood that from the beginning the State had wanted to realize a balanced settlement of the Ottoman subjects to build an auto-control system. It's probably for this reason, according to the documents, there could not be possible to find any district or village which had completely Turkish or Greek inhabitants. If the State had such a policy, that would not be much difficult to apply it. In other words, the then Ottoman governments had enough power to settle the people in any way they want. For example, after the conquest, compulsory removal of the Christians, except for the artisans (*ehl-i san'at*), from the

inner parts of the castles of Lefkoşa and Mağusa to the suburbs for security purposes³⁸ proves this.

One can learn from documents of the period that in some of the quarters in district and sub-district centres in the province one of the societies and in some of the rest another society holds majority.³⁹ It was also established that in 9 of 25 quarters⁴⁰ of Lefkoşa-Çatalhurma, Manastır, Aya Kaşano, Aya Sava, Baş, Çakmaklı, Ermeni, Aya Luka and Kafesli Kenisa- the non-Muslim elements enjoyed domination of population. As it is seen in other parts of the Empire⁴¹, every community circled its own church, mosque or mesjid in the quarters of Lefkoşa, too. In spite of this, the members of the two main communities -Muslims and non-Muslims- were able to possess farms which were side by side by side in same villages and shops or workshops close to each other in market-places and caravanserais situated in town and district centres. Without any doubt, this condition had transferred the frequently established inter-communal relations almost into a necessary process. Hereafter inter-communal relations examined in various fields are to be handled.

B. Inter-communal Relations

It is possible to examine the relations, occurred between the Muslim and the non-Muslim reayah who constituted two main groups of the Cypriot society in the later part of the 18th century, in three fields: Agriculture, trade and society. Here it should be exactly stated that in all of these subjects, quite often and close affairs between the two communities could have been enjoyed. But, as a result of this, certain negativenesses, which may inevitably be countered in any society, came to exist and generally these contradictory occurrences were to be reflected in the court registers and petitions of complaint, sent to the Sublime Porte, which have great importance as a source especially for the social history of the period. It's also logically possible to grasp the fact through investigations of the documents of the period that many troubles emerged between the two groups or individuals, and this was exactly an outcome of experienced interactions. For if there was any definite division or separation between the groups, it could not be practicable for so much social affairs, which are going to be mentioned below, to come into existence.

As much as depicted in the documents, since the Cypriot people generally lived as farmers the closest and the most frequent affairs between the Muslims and the

Zimmis were to appear in the agricultural sector. In this field, the Zimmis' relations, but negative in nature, with the members of the ruling elite like timar-holders (*sâhib-i 'arz*), muhassıls, voyvodas, câbis and so on, were densier than those experienced with the Muslim villagers. They mostly complained about the malpractices and abuses of members of this class who had tried to raise the levels of their taxes or impose new illegal ones. There are many examples illuminating the case. For instance, the farmer reayah of Akaça village of Lefkoşa sent a petition to the Sublime Porte⁴² in 1785 (1199 A.H.), in which they urged that although they had paid their obligatory taxes (*aş'âr ve rûsûm*) in due time to the timariot sipahis of their village, besides having not been content with the legal taxes, the latter had forced them to pay more than prescribed and oppressed them by coming untime-ly with their horsed men to the village and forcing them to give themselves food and beverage and fodder for their horses without making any payment (*müft ü meccânen*).

In another case, in 1784 (1198 A.H.) some of the reayah of Isu village of the sub-district of Hrisofî, submitted a petition to Istanbul⁴³ according to which although the villagers paid regularly the taxes of the vinegar they produced with a rate of 1/5 as prescribed in the *kanun* and *defter*, sipahis of the village demanded more than officially fixed and the villagers requested from the Ottoman authorities to stop such kind of oppressions.

Again in a different instance, in 1764 (1178 A.H.) the reayah of four vakaf villages: Trikomo, Kumukebir, Aftikomo and Dipkarpaz attached to the kaza of Karpas wrote in a petition to the capital that Ali Ağa, who had bought the right of collecting taxes of the region by way of auction (*iltizâm*) for six years from Abdullah Ağa, Ket-hûda of Harem, who was the trustee of a pious foundation including those four villages, had oppressed them about their lives, properties and honours and therefore it would be kind of the rulers to avoid such actions by replacing him with a new, but just, pious and beneficent official. Another example of this kind is that the reayah of a vakaf village presented a petition to the Sublime Porte in 1785 (1199 A.H.) by which the villagers complained about the vakaf voyvoda (a kind of administrator) of his mal-practices like demanding more cotton and silk and asked for an imperial order to end the voyvoda's illegal applications.

The non-Muslims were able to have also relations with the ordinary Muslim subjects. In 1785 (1199 A.H.) a

number of reayah from Lefkoşa in a petition to Istanbul were accusing Mugannî oğlu Hüseyin and Sarı oğlu Benli İsmail of always calumniating them to kadıs, naibs, voyvodas, subaşıs and other members of ruling class about untrue matters and thereby causing them to be disturbed and their akçes (money) to be illegally taken by the rulers.⁴⁴ There are many examples of this sort petitions written personally or as a group in the same form by the Cypriot reayah about illegalities of a certain number of Turks like Mühürdar oğlu Ahmed of Lefkoşa,⁴⁵ Cüvan (?) Mehmed and Buçuk Sâdik of Lefkoşa,⁴⁶ Kapuser Ahmed and Göbekli Mehmed of Lefkoşa,⁴⁷ Mûzî Mustafa of Lefkoşa,⁴⁸ Kara oğlu Mehmed,⁴⁹ Hacı Mustafa of Lefkoşa who was accused of taking 240 grushes of Girami from Gerine by force (*cebren ve kahren*)⁵⁰ and Süleyman Efendi from village of Ayamola of Gerine who was also charged with unjustly getting 120 grushes of the same zimmî Girami.⁵¹ All of these and other kind of petitions of the Zimmis were to be treated by the highest Turkish authorities in the Sublime Porte. It is possible to see this on every document referred to in this work.

The most crucial problems occurred between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the agricultural sector were about water. For not only their houses, but also their farms were side by side. There existed running waters which flowed in four seasons by passing through their villages and agricultural lands. Generally villagers of a same village or neighbour villages were using the water in turn according to a time-table fixed under the presidency of local authorities. Sometimes some of the peasants or one of the villages did not want to be content with their or its own share and tried to use the water excessively. Of course this situation normally was to cause certain quarrels among the Cypriot farmers to emerge. For example, as a result of a such kind of issue, a group of Muslims from village of Fake of Lefke district⁵² in 1770 (1185 A.H.) brought a suit of law against some of Zimmis of the same village by urging that they extremely used the water of valley of Maranase and thereby they did injustice to them. The non-Muslims won the case by the testimony of Muslim witnesses.

The Cypriot farmers did not only use running waters for watering. They were also making use of wells. The Muslims and the Zimmis had come to disagree on this subject, too. As it was in the case of Acı Yorgaki, the Tercüman (Dragoman) of Cyprus and Perestoronahı oğlu Yusuf Ağa, who had owned farms which were left to them by way of *iltizam* and close to each other in village

of Aydımed of Lefkoşa.⁵³ In the year of 1799 (1204 A.H.), when Acı Yorgaki wanted to dig a well at a place in his farm close to the farm of his neighbour, Yusuf Ağa wanted to hinder him to do it by supposing that the water of Acı Yorgaki's well would draw the water of his. In spite of Acı Yorgaki's *fetwa*, issued by Şeyhülislâm Hamdizâde Mustafa Efendi⁵⁴ and included order that nobody could prevent him to dig a well in his farm, Yusuf Ağa continued to disturb him. Thereafter, Acı Yorgaki took the case to Istanbul from where a *firmân*⁵⁵ was to be sent to local authorities ordering that the issue should be solved according to the mentioned *fetwa*.

The Muslims and the non-Muslims did not always get into troubles about water. Its reverse was also often true. That is, bilateral assistance had come to appear. The water of Ayasofya mosque of Lefkoşa was coming from the wells dug outside of the castle by way of canals. There was also a house in the quarter of Karamânizâde, belonged to the vakıf of the mosque and leased to Serkiz who was probably an Armenian. In 1796 (1210 A.H.) Serkiz had additional 6 wells dug near to the old ones and wanted to donate most of them to the vakıf on the condition that a small part of the water should be made flow to his leased house. The vakıf administration also would accept this in return for an annual payment of 3 grushes to the vakıf under the name of "*hakk-ı mecrâ*".⁵⁶

It could be possible for the two main groups of the society of Cyprus to come closer to each other and act for their common advantages. Es-seyyid Abdülaziz bin (son of) Mehmed, Çorbacı İsmail and Es-seyyid Ali bin Mehmed with Papaz (priest) Efonderyo, Nikola, Felibo, Hilaraci Andoni and Maskoyakomi from village of Labta of Gerine district petitioned to Istanbul that Archbishop and his three suffragans, who were the reayah representatives with some Turkish authorities, had oppressed themselves by taking their 80 grushes per head under the name of "*şartlama*" and therefore they wanted to be judged with them according to the Islamic law (*şer'î şerîf*) in order to be able to take their rights back.⁵⁷ In another case, some of the Muslims of Lefkoşa with a number of Zimmis had complained Muhassıl (governor) Abdülbaki Ağa to Istanbul by claiming that he had stopped the running of the water into Lefkoşa and made flow it into his own farm and thereby caused *hamams* (public baths) and fountains to remain waterless and ruined.⁵⁸

Close relations had also come to appear between the two communities in cities. For subjects from two sides

could be able to possess houses and workshops attached to each other.⁵⁹ So they had to face many difficulties stemmed from their experiences of closely living together. In 1790 (1205 A.H.) two Armenian brothers, Serkiz and Artin were accused by El-hâc Hasan, El-hâc Mehmed and others of constructing buildings in a way religiously harmful to some of the Muslims' houses depending on their financial powers and certain circles. According to the accusations, they also caused some of greedy state officials (*ehl-i őrî*) to seize illegally certain Muslims' moneys and properties of more than 1000 grushes by force.⁶⁰

One way of the most frequently seen relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims was property transfer. El-hâc sâbık (former) Alaybeyi Ali Ağa ibn-i El-hâc Osman Ağa of Lefkoşa had sold his house in the same district to Armenian Kőrükçü Bogos veled-i (son of) Bedros at a price of 570 grushes.⁶¹ Mehmed bin Mustafa from the quarter of Debbâğhâne of Lefkoşa was to sell his own shop, situated among two shops of the Muslims, a workshop of zimmî Basmacı Turzo and a public road, to Kazgancı Acı Gavriyel v. (veled-i) Savva in return for 800 grushes.⁶² El-hâc Ali Çorbacı had abdicated with free consent from the field of 16 dönüms (about 1/4 acre), which had been under his possession, including olive trees of 90 roots and various trees in favour of Bolayidero, the Court Interpreter,⁶³ with the permission of timar-holder (*sâhib-i 'arz*). And then, the sipahi had also given a receipt to Bolayidero.⁶⁴ To multiply the examples of this kind of property transfer is quite possible.⁶⁵ An interesting point in these transfer processes was the fact that sellers were generally Muslim.

It was also witnessed in this period that very oftenly exchange of money in the form of lending or credit had come to occur between the two groups of the Cypriot society. Emine Hatun from the quarter of Ömeriyye of Lefkoşa had lended without interest 36 grushes to a zimmî called Yorgi from the quarter of Tahte'l-kal'a and the latter had needlessly delayed to repay it.⁶⁶ It's probably for this reason that in this period bills (*temessük*) acknowledging debts were widely used between subjects. When Kethüdâyeri Çorbacı Hüseyin Ağa from the quarter of Ayasofya died, it was seen that a Christian woman, Franzo Varşoli had owed to him 670 pare (16.75 grushes) and a Christian man, Bağcı Anzoli had owed to him 2000 pare.⁶⁷ Before deceasing, Kassab oğlu Mehmed from Kazafane village of Gerine had lended 1120 pare to Losiyo nasrâniyye (Christian woman), 1000 pare to Ris-

toğlo zimmî and 360 pare to Çoban Yorgi.⁶⁸ A farmer zimmî (his name was not given in the document) had owed Ince Hüseyin bin Mustafa from the quarter of Mahmud Pasha of Lefkoşa 4000 pare before his death.⁶⁹ There are many examples of these, too.⁷⁰

It seems that in the period some of the Muslims, probably, were the big-gest creditors of the island. One of them was El-hâc Hüseyin Ağa bin Mehemmed from Filaso village of the district of Lefke.⁷¹ Before his death, Çoban Cirkako of Tefkalo village 470 pare, Bilakano of Faliye village 40 kilos tobacco, Yanni from the same village 65 kilos olive oil, Hristine bint-i (daughter of) Anzoli nas-râniyye of Filaso village 240 pare, Şefka zimmî 320 pare, Mariye Evraşmi of Filaso village 670 pare, Nikola Halebo of Lino village 2000 pare and two kilos silk and Yorgi and his wife 2080 pare and two kilos silk had owed to him. Here the appealing point is that Hüseyin Ağa had lended his money or goods in return for a bill (*temessük*) and added for credit of 1000 pare one kilo silk and for 1000-2000 pare two kilos silk.

Probably the second big creditor of the period was Abdülaziz bin Mehmed from the quarter of Debbâğ-hâne.⁷² Except for the Muslims, only 15 zimmîs had owed to him 7045 pare before he died. He himself had generally borrowed from the Muslims. If one likes to make an evaluation it is possible to say that in general the creditors were mostly Muslim in the period. There are exceptions in the case, but they do not constitute an important number. Only as an example, Aci Arsin of Lefkoşa had lended the late Kahveci Ahmed Ağa ibn-i Abdullah 45400 pare before he departed.⁷³

One of the dimensions of the inter-communal relations was constituted by taking witness to the court which was an important process frequently resorted in the Islamic law system. For, as it was in previous periods,⁷⁴ in this era also, apart from those emerged about many subjects among themselves, for their troubles with the Muslims, *Zimmîs* did not hesitate to recourse to the Ottoman Kadi for justice. There was no any administrative or legal obstacle to put them under restrain about that application. If the issue came to appear between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, it was seen that all of witnesses were muslim.⁷⁵ But, while defending himself in a suit brought against himself, taking an oath in a Christian way could be sufficient for a zimmî to win the case.⁷⁶ On the other hand, in another suit against a Muslim, it is understood that the same *right* had not been given to an another Zimmî.⁷⁷ In this example the

man who brought the suit against the Muslim was a *Zimmî*.

It could also be possible that for many suits brought against the Muslims zimmîs took Muslim witnesses.⁷⁸ And it was not a rare thing for Zimmîs to use Muslim witnesses for suits brought to each other.⁷⁹ In a suit of heritage two Armenian zimmîs chose a Muslim as a "vâzî-i'l-yed"; that is, according to the law a man who would be responsible for the things constitute the mentioned heritage until the end of the suit.⁸⁰ It is quite interesting that once a Muslim was chosen as a trustee for a Christian child who had lost his parents in Lefkoşa.⁸¹

As a different example of inter-communal affairs in urban life, that of the Greek and the Turkish bakers can be given, who had come together at the court of Lefkoşa and reached at an agreement about price of bread by engaging with each other to keep the price⁸² as fixed.

In this period important violent incidents between the Muslims and the non-Muslims could not be come across very much. Only three events were seen: In one of them, during the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, an Ottoman province started in 1798, some of the Muslims who were touched assaulted and disturbed a certain number of Greeks. After the situation had been informed to Istanbul, a firman was sent to the Turkish Kadi and Governor ordering them to avoid such kind of assaults against the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman State who were paying their prescribed taxes (*cizye*) and showing obedience to the State and stating that the reverse could be never accepted. Although being under the pressure of facing a great war, by way of a calmly and timely intervention, the Istanbul government succeeded in controlling the situation.⁸³

The second remarkable event threatening the public peace was that of Salbeci (?) Mustafa bin Mahmud from Balıkesre village of Değirmenlik sub-district, who had cut one of the hands of a Christian woman, Kirovazo bint-i Yorgi from the same village and deserted the island⁸⁴. When the situation was noted to the Governor and the Kadi, the villagers were completely brought to the capital. For, they had committed a crime by letting Mustafa flight. Mustafa's house was pulled down and his properties were sold by auction. And 67 grushes obtained by that way was given to Kirovazo in 1799 (1214 A.H.). At the same time, the villagers were forced to vow 2500 grushes (nezr) to the Governor's court and the Ka-

di's court if they have such an incident repeatedly occurred in their village and make possible for Mustafa to enter the village or do not capture and surrender him to the Court of Lefkoşa (*Dîvân-ı Lefkoşa*).

The third serious happening that necessitated the interference of the state was about murder of a zimmi called Bedri from the village of Killiro of Dağ sub-district, by Osman bin Ali with a knife in the village of Alatrko attached to the district of Tuzla.⁸⁵ When it was informed by the Muslim villagers collectively to the Kadi's court, the murderer was brought into the presence of the court where he confessed his crime. Thereupon the mentioned killer (*kâtil-i mezbûr*) was sent to Istanbul. It is possible to find a fetwa registered on the related document,⁸⁶ which notifies that it is appropriate to retaliate a Muslim slayer.

In spite of all of these occurrences disturbed the social peace to a certain extent and the culpables of which were arrested and trialed, communal and inter-communal relations seem to have continued in a natural way. Even closer ones could be established. As an example for these closer affairs inter-marriages can be given. It seems difficult or probably impossible to determine the frequency of the mixed-espousals in this period. For, according to the Islamic law applied in Cyprus, too, in order to get married, there was no any necessity to come to the court⁸⁷. After having been realized first, a marriage was used to continue everlastingly unless it was interrupted with a divorce. Every divorce incident had not been brought to the court. For there was not any obligatory rule for this in case couples did fulfil the conditions bilaterally established during the process of marriage without creating any difficulty to each other. On the contrary, certain problems were to appear and then recouring to a judge (*kadi*) was seen to be necessary.

To sum up, inter-communal marriages had been done in this period, too. It is likely to see this from an event of divorce, registered in a document.⁸⁸ The divorce was realized between Çulha Mehmed Âli bin Bekir from Korkud Efendi quarter of Lefkoşa and an Armenian woman, Altun bint-i Davud. Previously divorced couple had come to a reconciliation about alimony of the child left to the mother's side and the dowry (*mehr-i müecce*) of the divorced wife.

An additional indicator of the fact that many fluctuations of the period shaken the social and administrative order seriously, but could not avoid very close rela-

tions between groups belonging to the bottom of the society to occur, is the conversion movements. According to the court registers of Cyprus of vol. 20, 21 and 22 between 1183-1214 A.H. / 1769-1800 A.D., in 31 years 67 non-Muslims converted into Islam.⁸⁹

On the conversions in 1183-1214 A.H. / 1769- 1800 A.D., then I discovered additional findings through further investigations in two new sources of the Ottoman Cyprus of the period: One of them is the defter of court register dated 1170-1198 A.H. / 1756- 1784 A.D. with a volume number of 18 and preserved in the the Archive of General Directorate of Vakafs (Lefkoşa) and the other one is a fragment of a court register existing in National Archive (Girne) of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; that is, the File of Defters of Religious Court Register (*Mahkeme-i Şer'îye Defterleri*, 12 varak): 10/1. In the first source registration of 49 converts and in the second one, notes about 5 converts were found. So the newly found materials provide us with a total convert number of 54. If it's added to the other 67, one obtains a total number of 121. This shows that in 31 years 121 non-Muslims converted into Islam.

This result indicates that $121/31 = 3.9$ persons converted in the Ottoman Cyprus per year. On the other hand, in whole of the Turkish period, about 309 years, approximately 400 non-Muslims became Muslim.⁹⁰ Therefore, for the whole of the Turkish period the proportion is 1.29 (400/309). The proportion of the converts in the period under examine is considerably higher than that of the whole Turkish period. So it seems quite reasonable to reach such a conclusion that to be able to understand many important aspects of the inter-communal relations witnessed in the province, is likely bound to be acquainted with political and social history of Cyprus in the period of 1183-1214 A.H. / 1769-1800 A.D.

As an established fact that the Ottoman State had not pursued a policy of Islamization or applied any oppression towards achieving such a goal.⁹¹ For, that could have meant a reduction in the revenue of cizye which was one of the important sources of income of the state. On the other hand, if the state had desired such an end or conversion into Islam had been a quite profitable action, the number of converts would not have been only 121 in 31 years and about 400 in 309 years. So it must have other reasons. It seems that without any doubt the most meaningful cause was the close inter-communal relations. As a great authority in the Cypriot studies, Jennings⁹² reminds us that as it was in the early

periods of the Ottoman history, sheikhes and dervishes of tekke (lodge) and zâviye (recluse) may have had important effects in the incidents of conversions. Like the first part of the 17th century, a notable part of the converts was constituted by married women in this period, too. As it was also emphasized by Jennings,⁹³ the thesis put forward by someones that the most important factor in the conversion events was to get out of the capitation tax does not seem to have reliable bases. For, women who constituted almost 50 per cent of the total Cypriot converts of the period, were excused from cizye. Hence, it's obvious that economic considerations can not have any note-worthy influence in the case. In general conversion occasions are considered to be a subject that continues to be examined generally within the framework of relations between social groups.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Muslim and non-Muslim elements had been settled in Cyprus in a balanced way according to the traditional Ottoman deportation policy, and as it was in every period, this balance had been tried to be preserved in this era of 1750-1800 A.H., too. As a natural consequence of this approach also, in villages, towns, districts, vineyard and orchards; in short in every part of the island and in every aspect of life very close relationships between the two main elements of the island society could be established. The factor which led them to have bravely such adjoining affairs among themselves giving rise to a, with Jennings' words "pax- Ottomanica"⁹⁵ in spite of all cultural differences like religion and language, was the independent Ottoman legal system and its two representatives or corner-stones, kadis and naibs who were to have their effects felt and give justice by reaching even the remotest points of the island. Certainly, it's also true that sometimes personal abuses of the court staff had been witnessed in the system, which had caused some of the Muslims and the non-Muslims to be oppressed.

DİPNOTLAR

- ** For a study mainly discusses inter-class and inter-communal relationships and interactions, and interferences of the central government of İstanbul in local affairs see Nuri Çevikel, "Turkish provincial administration, church and Muslim – non-Muslim reayah in the late 18th century- Ottoman Cyprus" presented at CIEPO-15 / International Committee of Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies 15th Symposium, 8-12 July 2002, The London School of Economics Department of Economic History, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, U.K.
- 1 For a detailed analysis of the political, legal and social aspects of the Turkish conquest of Cyprus consult Nuri Çevikel, "1570-71 Türk fethi ile Kıbrıs'ta meydana gelen toplumsal değişim hakkında bir tahlil denemesi", *Journal for Cypriot Studies*, 3 (1), (1997), pp. 39-68; "Osmanlı Türkleri'nin Kıbrıs'ı fethinin (1570-71) meşruiyeti meselesi", (inclusive of an English summary at the end), *Journal for Cypriot Studies*, 3 (4), (1997), pp. 357-399.
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 - 5 Harry Luke, *Cyprus under the Turks, (1571-1878)*, London 1969, p. 31; Ahmet Gazioğlu, *Kıbrıs'ta Türkler (1570-1878)*, Lefkoşa 1994, p. 327.
 - 6 Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75; Luke, *Cyprus*, p. 36. Luke here starts this process from 1702.
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 - 8 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archive of Prime Ministry), A. DVN. KBŞ. (Bâb-ı âsâfî Divân-ı Hümâyûn Kıbrıs Şikâyeti Kalemi) (hereafter cited as KBŞ); Dosya/Belge No: 1/12, 1197 A.H.
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- 15 This defter, preserved in the Ottoman Archive of Prime-ministry, Kamil Kepeci Tasnifi, no 2551, had been examined by Orhonlu (op. cit.).
- 16 For detailed information about families deported from the kazas of Beyşehir and Seydişehir see Mehmet Akif Erdoğan "Beyşehir ve Seydişehir kazalarından Kıbrıs adasına sürülmüş aileler", *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, XI, (1996), pp. 9-65.
- 17 Orhonlu, op. cit., p. 94.
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- 19 Çiçek, op. cit., p. 228.
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- 21 MD 17: 277/129, dated 17 Şevval 979 A.H.; MD 21: 135/54, dated 24 Ramazan 980 A.H.; 374/152, dated 8 Zi'l-ka'de 980 A.H.).
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- 43 KBŞ, 1/36.
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- 49 KBŞ, 1/50.
- 50 KBŞ, 1/38.
- 51 KBŞ, 1/37.
- 52 KŞS: 20, 48/2.
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- 66 KŞS: 21, 194/3.
- 67 KŞS: 20, 69/1.
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