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PROBLEMS OF LAND-OWNING AND POPULATION IN THE AREA  
OF GAZI EVRENOS BEY'S WAKF\*

Of the many problems concerning the life of the peoples living in the Balkan peninsula during Ottoman times, one which has not been fully investigated, is that of the creation, development, function and decline of the *wakf* system. Equally unexamined are: the influence of that institution upon the inhabitants of the various villages and *çiftlik*s belonging to the numerous and extensive wakfs, their economy, changes in their population, and immigration and shifts of the peasantry from place to place.

The reason is, of course, not so much the lack of sufficient documents, as negligence in examining and publishing the existing material.

In this paper I wish to review some of the problems in the light of the examination of the documents relating to just one wakf, that of Gazi Hacı Evrenos Bey.

Gazi Evrenos Bey's wakf is certainly one of the oldest and most extensive wakfs of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Its foundation was obscured by myths and apocryphal documents already during Ottoman times. It consisted of great estates in towns and country areas conquered by the indefatigable warrior and leader of the early *gazis* and by his descendants. Fields, vineyards, pastures, fisheries, as well as villages and whole quarters of towns in the areas of Gümülcine (today Komotini), Zihna, Serres, Yeni Şehir (today Larissa) and Volos belonged to that wakf. But the main body of the wakf was a large area west of Thessaloniki. It extended from the mouth of the river Aliakmon (in Turkish Kara-Su), up to the lake of Yenice-i Vardar (today Yanitsa) and as far as the lower part of the river Axios (also known as Vardar) and its mouth, a vast area of about 1000 to 1200 square kilometers, embracing about 90 villages and chiftlik.

I do not intend today to speak about the process and the date of the foundation of the wakf, which was in existence before November 17, 1417, the date of the death of Gazi Evrenos Bey<sup>1</sup>, or about its later fate. The problems I am

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1. V. Demetriades, The Tomb of Ghazi Evrenos Bey at Yenitsa and its inscription, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXXIX, Part 2, 1976, p. 328-332.

about to investigate are the transformation of many of its villages to chiftliks, that is great estates belonging to an owner and cultivated by landless peasants, and alterations in the number and nationality of their population.

The material used for this study is taken mainly from the Turkish archives kept in the Historical Archives of Macedonia, in Thessaloniki. There are about one hundred defters dated from 1842 to 1912, where small or large pieces of arable land belonging to the wakf are recorded with the names of their owners, or rather their cultivators. Apart from these, a great mass of material comes from examining more than 350 registers (*sicills*) of the "*kadis*" in Thessaloniki, dated from 1695 up to 1912. Among them there are a few containing the statements of accounts for the annual revenues and expenses of most of the wakfs in Central Macedonia and especially those in Thessaloniki. In one of them<sup>2</sup> there were recorded similar statements for Gazi Evrenos Bey's wakf in the area of Yenice-i Vardar during the years 1702-1704 (1113-1115). The *sicills* of Thessaloniki also present a very large number of documents giving the annual distribution of various taxes among the villages of the *kaza* of Thessaloniki, in which the villages and the chiftliks of the wakf are recorded.

In these accounts for the years 1702-1704, sixty names of villages and chiftliks are mentioned; 29 of them are defined as "villages", four as "chiftliks" and two as "cultivated areas" (*mezra'a*); the remaining 25 names are without any definition. Ten years later, in a defter of tax-farming for the year 1711 (1123-1124), 13 of these 25 names are now defined as villages, one is recorded as a village with a chiftlik in its area, another one is recorded as a chiftlik and nine still have no definition. Therefore we can deduce that at the beginning of the 18th century the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey in the area of the *nahiyes* of Small and Great Vardar and of Langada consisted of 43 villages, six chiftliks, two cultivated areas and ten non-defined localities, of which we can say that they were probably villages rather than chiftliks. This means that only about 10% of the arable land of the wakf belonged to chiftliks at that time.

Later on, in the various defters of tax-collection we can follow the long process of the turning of villages into chiftliks. In certain cases part of the arable land of a village became a chiftlik and the villagers worked as hired labourers on what had been their property; in other cases the whole area of a village together with its houses and other buildings, changed into one vast chiftlik.

Of the 45 villages and chiftliks of the wakf which paid for tax a fixed

2. Sicil, No. 13, p. 100-104.

amount per year (*maktu'*) in 1750 seven were chiftliks; in 1762 ten of them were chiftliks; in 1772 they had become twelve, in 1782 fourteen, in 1795 fifteen and in 1796 sixteen. According to the distribution list for the "*avariz*" taxation in 1790 (1204), eight villages of the wakf had to pay "*avariz*" for previous years because part of their population had fled to other areas<sup>3</sup>. Only one of them, inhabited by Turks, was still a village at the end of the 19th century.

From the lists of those places which paid "*avariz*" and "*bedel-i nuzul*" we see further that in 1792 three villages of the wakf became that year chiftliks and a village whose arable land belonged to a chiftlik was annexed to it. By the year 1797 eleven more villages had become chiftliks, six villages' arable land had been turned into chiftliks, four villages had been annexed to the chiftliks nearby, and one new chiftlik had been founded.

In the defters of the wakf at the end of the 19th century we find that there were recorded 92 villages and chiftliks belonging to the wakf. That means that during these two centuries new villages and chiftliks had been developed. Of those 92, 48 were chiftliks, 37 were villages or small settlements (*mahalle*) and six were villages with chiftliks. Therefore, at least 60% of the wakf's arable and pasture land, or even more, had become chiftlik-owned land. The whole chiftlik-owned area amounted to about half a million *dönüms* (stremmata in Greek; each *dönüm* is roughly one third of an acre).

The percentage of the chiftlik land in the Gazi Evrenos Bey wakf is much higher than the average existing in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, which has been estimated at 15 to 20% of the whole arable land<sup>4</sup>. That was due to certain special conditions which we intend to discuss later. Nevertheless the chiftlik system makes its appearance in the area at the end of the 17th century, expands during the 18th, and reaches its peak in the next century, thus following the same course as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

Another problem which arises is whether the population in the area of the wakf consisted of Christians or Moslems, Greeks or Bulgars, and whether it remained the same or changed during the centuries. In the various documents distinctions on the nationality of the villagers are not always clear; we can see only whether the inhabitants were *reaya* (which in many cases means both Moslems and Christians) ~~or~~ *Yürüks*, usually called *Evlâd-i Fâtîhân* (that is "Children of the Conquerors"). Thus when the inhabitants of a

3. Sicil of Thessaloniki, No. 157, p. 21.

4. K. Vergopoulos, *Tò áγροτικό ζήτημα στὴν Ἑλλάδα* (The agrarian problem in Greece), Athens 1975, p. 41.

village are indicated as "*reaya*", we cannot be sure whether they were Moslems or Christians. Only when the population was mixed Muslims and Christians were recorded separately.

On the other hand, to consider only the non-muslim element in the population, we do know the number of the *hanes* for the *cizye*, the poll-tax, paid by each *kaza* or *nahiye* of Thessaloniki in the years 1488-1491 (893-896)<sup>5</sup>. We also have similar lists of *cizye* paid in the year 1834 (1250)<sup>6</sup> for the same area, but the numbers are by tax-receipts and not by *hanes*. In the first list, the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey is separately mentioned as paying for 199 *hanes* in 1488 and for 219 *hanes* in 1490-1491. Therefore, theno n-muslim population of the wakf at that time was no more than 1000 to 1100 persons.

Although all the *nahiyes* and *kazas* are not exactly the same in the lists of the 15th and of the 19th centuries, comparison of those which are mentioned in both permits the deduction that at the beginning of the 19th century the population had almost doubled.

To be more precise, the town of Thessaloniki paid in 1488 for 1838 *hane* and in 1834 for 5982 receipts, an increase of 225%. The *nahiye* of Kelemerye paid in 1488 for 1187 *hane*, in 1490 for 1275 *hane*, but in 1834 for only 1259 receipts, a slight decrease, certainly caused by the dreadful massacres of the Christians in the area during the Greek revolution of 1821. The *kaza* of Avret Hisar (today Kilkis) paid in 1488 for 3183 *hanes*, in 1490 for 3483 *hanes* and in 1834 for 5601 receipts, an increase of 61%. The *nahiye* of Sidrekapısı, known in Greek as Μαντεμοχώρια, paid in 1488 for 606 *hane*, in 1490 for 680 *hane* and in 1834 for 1172 receipts, an increase of 72%. The *nahiye* of Yenice-i Vardar paid in 1488 for 1405 *hane*, in 1490 for 1428 *hane* and in 1834 for 3569 receipts, an increase of almost 150%. The average increase in these areas was 83,5%, a very small one over a period of three and a half centuries.

We can be sure that the number of the *hanes* recorded in 1488 represented the number of the existing families. This conclusion arises from the comparison of this list with another for Thessaloniki, dating from the first half of the 16th century, which is preserved in the Bulgarian National Library at Sofia<sup>7</sup>.

5. Ö. Barkan, 894 (1488/1489) yılı cizyesinin tahsilâtına ait muhasebe bilançoları, Belgeler I (1964), p. 18.

6. I. Vasdravellis, 'Ιστορικά Ἀρχεῖα τῆς Μακεδονίας (Historical Archives of Macedonia), Vol. I, Archives of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1955, p. 526.

7. *Fondes Turcici Historiae Bulgariae*, III. Edidit et comentarium fecit Bistra A. Čvetkova, Redactores B. Čvetkova-A. Razboynikov. Serdicae MCMLXII, p. 375-411. See also V. Demetriades, 'Ο *Kanunnâme* καὶ οἱ χριστιανοὶ κάτοικοι τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης γύρω στὰ 1525 (The Kunname and the Christian inhabitants of Thessaloniki around 1525), *Μακεδονικά* 19 (1979), p. 328-395.

Unfortunately a few pages at the end are missing and the number for the Jewish population of the town is not complete. All the same, each male, married Christian and Jew recorded counts as one *hane*. These *hanes* together with their non-married (*mücerred*) males and widows amounted to 2394. The final number must have been greater but not by very much. We know that a great number of Jews from Spain found shelter in Thessaloniki at the end of the 15th century. Hence we can conclude that the number of 1838 *hane* and widows in 1488, which is smaller than the number of the *hanes* of the 16th century only by 556, represents the number of families existing at that time.

Taking now into consideration the fact that the number of *hanes* in the Gazi Evrenos Bey's wakf was 199 in 1488 and 219 in 1490, we may come to the conclusion that the non-muslim population of the wakf at that time was no more than 1000 to 1100 persons, as already mentioned.

We turn now to examine whether during the following centuries the population in the wakf area increased as much as the population in the *nahiyes* and the *kazas* of Thessaloniki, which we have previously noticed. Not possessing a similar list for the poll-tax for the area of the wakf, we are obliged to look for other sources.

Among the various taxes paid by the Christian villagers to the wakf during the years 1701-1703 "*ispence*" is recorded. It is known that this was an annual tax paid in money to the timariot by all the Christian male and adult *reaya* of a *timar*. In the *defter* the total amount paid for *ispence* is recorded in *akçe* but the figure is not the same for every year, because the taxed areas do not exactly correspond each year. In 1701 the wakf collected 36.600 *akçes* for *ispence*, in 1702 51.000 *akçes* and in 1703 35.150 *akçes*. The average amount paid for each of these years is 40.950 *akçes*. If each male and adult *reaya* paid 25 *akçes*, which was the usual rate for *ispence* and is indicated in the almost contemporary *kanunnâme* of Mora<sup>8</sup>, then the average number of Christian men in the wakf was 1638. If now we assume that men constitute roughly one third of the whole population, then we come to the conclusion that the population of the wakf at the beginning of the 18th century was about 5.000 persons, a 500% increase from the end of 15th century.

This conclusion can hardly be correct. Either the number of the *hanes* in 1488 was not so small, or the number of the persons paying *ispence* in 1701-1703 was not so great.

All the same, even if we do accept that these numbers are correct, the area

8. Ö. L. Barkan, *XV ve XVI'ncı asırlarda Osmanlı imparatorluğunda zirai ekonominin hukuki ve mali esasları*, Kanunlar, İstanbul 1943, p. 347.

was still very sparsely populated. The average number of inhabitants for each village was 83 persons, that is 16 families per village, or one person per 200 square meters!

In fact, travellers who passed through the region wrote that the area was almost devoid of inhabitants. For instance Paul Lucas writes in 1714 that the area was thinly populated. The inhabitants of the villages of Thessaloniki avoided cultivating the land and preferred to live in honorable poverty. They knew that if their income increased, the taxes would also increase and exploitation by the Turks would begin<sup>9</sup>.

Another source which we can use for establishing the number of the inhabitants in the wakf area is the annual lists for the taxes "*avariz*" and "*bedel-i nuzul*" during the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries. These lists indicate the number of the tax-paying *hanes* in each village or chiftlik in the *nahiyes* of Small and Great Vardar and Langada, where the largest part of the wakf was found. The information given is detailed but still inconclusive, because there were also other categories of taxes paid by the same villages, which must be taken into consideration. I am already engaged in such an investigation, but because of the vast number of the documents it will need a few more years of research, before we can come to any clear conclusion.

This much, however, is clear. In the lists of "*avariz*" and "*bedel-i nuzul*" we see that in 1695 (1107) 37 of the wakf villages paid for 62,5 *hanes*. One third of the villages paid for half a *hane* only. In 1707 (1119) the total number of the *hanes* had risen sharply to 459, but the total amount of *akçes* paid remained almost as before. It seems that the Ottoman government increased the number of the *hanes* to ensure a better distribution of the taxation. In the following years the number of the *hanes* decreased progressively, until 1771 (1185), when, for the same reason, a new arrangement in the number of the *hanes* took place. The total number of the *hanes* was then 280, but it decreased again in the following years.

To be more precise, in 1695 (1107) 37 villages and chiftliks of the wakf paid 193.125 *akçes* for 62,5 *hanes*; in 1707 (1119) 41 villages paid 203.342 *akçes* for 459 *hanes*; in 1760 (1174) 25 villages paid 233.580 *akçes* for 127.5 *hanes*, and in 1771 (1185) 26 villages paid 290.220 *akçes* for 280 *hanes*. We should not forget also that the value of the *akçe* decreased considerably during the 18th century.

9. *Voyage de Sieur Paul Lucas fait en MDCCXIV (1714). Par ordre du Louis XIV dans la Turquie, l'Asie, Sourie, Palestine, Haute et Basse Egypt etc.*, Amsterdam 1720, p. 30.

As an example, let us examine what happened in one single village. In 1695 the village Remil paid "avariz" for two *hanes*. In 1701 the number of the *hanes* decreased to one and a half. In 1707 the number of the *hanes* became 20, in 1710 it was 15, next year 14; in 1718 it increased to 16 and in 1738 to 18; in 1748 it was 17. In 1751 it fell to 8 and in 1760 to 4. In 1771 it increased again to 20 and remained there until 1814, when it fell to 17 *hanes* until 1835.

This much, however is clear, that although we cannot as yet establish the exact number of the population in the area of the wakf, we can at least be sure that it declined continuously during the 18th and into the beginning of the 19th century.

This depopulation occurred for many reasons. The peasants had to pay many and onerous taxes not only to the wakf, which in many cases applied the "iltizam" (tax-farming) system, but also to the tax-collectors for the expenses of the pashas of Thessaloniki, for the "sekban", the local militia, for the making of *barud* for the "avariz" and "bedel-i nuzul", for the "aded-i aḡnam", and many others. As we have already mentioned, the books of the *kadi* of Thessaloniki are full of lists of these taxes. The villagers had also to endure forced labour, and to give their animals and their carts for the army. Many a time the inhabitants of a village had to pay the taxes for the inhabitants of nearby villages who had abandoned their properties and scattered to other *kazas*. We read in a *firman* of 1705 sent to Thessaloniki that the tax-collectors levied on the inhabitants of the town for the poll-tax a lump sum of money, more than they ought to, without giving them the relevant receipts. Receipts were forced upon the people of the nearby villages to receive, paying the tax for a second time. For that reason the condition of those villagers became desperate, because they were not able to pay, and consequently they scattered and found shelter in other *kazas*<sup>10</sup>.

In order to pay their taxes the villagers had to borrow money at a very high interest, and, being unable to pay back, both the interest and the capital, they abandoned their villages. A similar case is recorded in a *firman* of 1723 (1135) for some villages belonging to the wakf of Mihrūmah Sultan, where we can see the whole process of abandoned villages turned into chiftliks by usurers<sup>11</sup>. In 1728 (1141) a similar order was issued for all the villages and wakfs whose revenues were farmed<sup>12</sup>. Usually these money-dealers were influential and rich Turks from Thessaloniki.

10. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 57-59.

11. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 113-134.

12. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 139-141.

Plundering also was frequent, by passing Turkish armies or by various bands of brigands. Especially at the beginning of the 18th century the Turko-Venetian wars resulted in pillaging and murdering the poor villagers by great numbers of rebellious brigands.

The small number of 199 or 219 *hanes* of the wakf at the end of the 15th century leads to another deduction: however few the Christians may have been, it is impossible that the area was inhabited only by two hundred Christian families. For if we accept that, it would mean that in each of the fifty or so villages there were about four families and no more. Therefore we have to assume the existence of a Turkish population as well.

It is well known that Turks had settled in the area of Yenice-i Vardar already from the end of the 14th century, following their leader, Gazi Evrenos Bey. A settlement of Turks is also recorded during the reign of Sultan Murad I (1362-1390), who forced a Turkish population to emigrate from the area of Karasu, at the north-west end of Asia Minor, to the newly conquered areas of Serres and Thessaloniki<sup>13</sup>. Another immigration must have taken place during the time of Semseddin Ahmed Bey, son of 'Ali Bey and grandson of Gazi Evrenos Bey, who died in 1498, under the spiritual leadership of the famous *Şeyh İläht*, founder of the town Naoussa (in Turkish *Ağustos*) near Veria (in Turkish *Kara-Ferye*)<sup>14</sup>. These Turks were usually *Yürüks* under the name of *Evlâd-i Fâtihân*. They inhabited a large number of villages, around the banks of the river Vardar and mainly on the semi-mountainous zone east of the Vardar river and as far as Chalkidiki.

As is well known, they were organized as an auxiliary militia, but they were also subject to several kinds of taxes. There are documents indicating that sometimes they paid certain taxes from which the Christians were exempted. As a result of that taxation and of the continuous recruiting, their numbers were continuously diminishing.

Already at the end of the 17th century, according to a firman dated from 1682 (1093), their number had decreased considerably either because they had been recruited to other corps, or because they had perished from the plague (plague was a continuous threat during the 17th and 18th centuries in Thessaloniki and its area, and thousands of people perished almost every year because of it), or because they had fled to other places<sup>15</sup>. As a result,

13. M. T. Gökbilgin, *Rumeli'de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlâd-i Fatihan*, İstanbul 1957, p. 13-14.

14. V. Demetriades, *Ἡ Κεντρικὴ καὶ Δυτικὴ Μακεδονία κατὰ τὸν Ἑβραϊστὴν Τσελεμπή* (The Central and Western Macedonia according to Evliya Çelebi), Θεσσαλονίκη 1973, p. 216-217.

15. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 80-81.



according to the enrolment of 1682, there were only seven *Yürük* villages in the *nahiye* of Small Vardar and one in the *nahiye* of Great Vardar. In 1710 (1122) another firman was issued reducing their *hanes* for the "*avariz*" and the "*aded-i ağnam*" (sheep-tax), because they had been impoverished and scattered<sup>16</sup>. In 1782 (1196) two villages of *Evlâd-i Fâtiḥân* from the *kaza* of Yenice-i Vardar asked for a reduction of their taxes because they could not endure the oppressions of the tax-collectors<sup>17</sup>. They preferred to be removed from the lists of their military organization and to be enregistered as *reaya* of the Gazi Evrenos Bey wakf<sup>18</sup>. In the area of Chalkidiki many *Yürük* villages were abandoned and their agricultural lands were given to the inhabitants of the neighbouring Christian villages for cultivation. According to the lists published by M. Gökbilgin<sup>19</sup>, in the *kaza* of Thessaloniki in 1691 there were 1966 foot-soldiers (*piyade*), in 1716 there were only 1274. In the *nahiye* of Kelemerye in 1691 there were 693 *piyade*, in 1716 414 and in 1812 235. In the *nahiye* of Pazargâh in 1691 there were 375 foot-soldiers, in 1716 245 and in 1822 183. The same decline had certainly occurred in the other *nahiyes* of the area of Thessaloniki. This decrease continued until the *Yürük* system was abolished in 1846<sup>20</sup>.

Another reason to be mentioned for the decline of the population in the area of the wakf was certainly the high death-rate caused by malaria, because of the extensive marshes around the lake of Yenice-i Vardar and in the lower course of the river Vardar. This river, like the other great rivers flowing to the Thermaïkos Gulf, was continuously changing its bed; it often over-flowed to cover large areas and make vast swamps. Right up to the great work of draining completed a few decades ago, malaria was the greatest cause of death in the area.

For all those reasons, the villages belonging to the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey declined considerably in population during the 16th, 17th and the 18th centuries.

The main concern of the two "*mütevelli*", the directors of the wakf, who traditionally always came from the two branches of the Gazi Evrenos family, was to maintain the revenues of the wakf at a high level. Thus they would let the arable land of the wakf, as well as the abandoned houses of the villages, to whoever would pay the highest price for the land, for the expenses of the

16. Sicil of Thessaloniki, No. 16, p. 279.

17. Sicil of Thessaloniki, No. 143, p. 45.

18. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 81.

19. Gökbilgin, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

20. Gökbilgin, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

transaction, and for the issue of new title-deeds (*tapu resmi*) and would render every year the taxes due. It was also more convenient to the *mütevellîs* to receive the taxes, maybe in advance, from a single notable of their own religion, rather than to pursue the villagers in order to collect an uncertain revenue each time.

In this manner most of the villages in the plain of Thessaloniki gradually became chiftliks. Other villages disappeared and their arable land turned into one or more chiftliks under new names.

The situation which resulted was not always pleasant for the Ottoman government; the state issued many firmans forbidding the foundation of new chiftliks and ordering the *reaya* to return to their old villages. The shift of the population, was causing a confusion to the status-quo. Besides, not only was the development of large estates, in the continuous possession of individuals, contrary to the land-owning system of the empire, but also the accumulation of great wealth was leading to the increase of the influence of the great estate-owners and to the danger of their becoming more independent and diminishing the power of the central government. Nevertheless the measures taken bore no results and villages continued to turn into chiftliks in every part of the Ottoman empire.

This procedure took many forms. Timars became family-owned estates and in fact, if not in name, they were chiftliks. In 1833-1834 (1249) in the *kaza* of Thessaloniki there were 56 *timars* owned by retired timariots or their children under age<sup>21</sup>. In 1822 (1237) there were in the *kaza* of Kara-Ferye 25 chiftliks characterized as "imperial estates" (*emlâk-i hümayûn*)<sup>22</sup>. It was even easier for wakf lands to become chiftliks. State owned land ("*erazi-i emiriye*") turned into chiftliks to a great extent only after the abolition of the timar system in 1831<sup>23</sup>.

The new chiftliks were usually the property of influential and rich Turkish families, who lived mainly in Thessaloniki, but also in Yenice-i Vardar or in Kara-Ferye leaving the management of the affairs of the chiftlik to their representatives, the *kâhyas* or *subaşıs*, who were mostly Turks as well. These families had accumulated vast amounts of money, usually by tax-farming or usury. They wished to invest their profits putting them into a safe investment, taking into consideration the continuous decline of the official monetary unit, the *akçe*, and land-owning seemed to be the best outlet. The "chiftlik" was

21. Sicil of Thessaloniki, No. 229, p. 63-66.

22. Sicil of Thessaloniki, No. 210, p. 121.

23. B. Lewis, *The emergence of Modern Turkey*, London 1968, p. 384.

in fact, as has already been indicated by many scholars, an early form of the capitalistic system<sup>24</sup>.

We should also accept, I think, the opinion expressed by several scholars that the development of the chiftlik system is connected with the semi-colonial condition in which the Ottoman Empire found itself after the end of the 17th century. The chiftlik was an agrarian unit, suitable for commercial exploitation<sup>25</sup>. That means that the chiftlik was adapted both to the needs of interior markets as well as to the export of the surplus of its products to Western countries. Part of the production of cereals had to be sent to Istanbul for the needs of the state, according to the annual lists of the villages and chiftliks in the *sicills* of Thessaloniki. Nevertheless, although we do not possess sufficient data for the verification of that opinion, I think that Professor Stavrianos is right in identifying the geographical distribution of the chiftliks in the Balkans with that of cotton and corn cultivation<sup>26</sup>. The soil in the area of the Gazi Evrenos Bey wakf was extremely suitable for cultivating cotton and the famous Yenice tobacco. There are enough documents for us to follow the extent of the production and the prices of cotton almost from year to year during a long period in the 18th century and its exportation to various countries. A large market for cotton was also the Danube countries, where many Greek merchants were buying from Thessaloniki great quantities of raw cotton. Many western countries also kept consuls in Thessaloniki, whose main concern was to report to their countries the situation of the cotton and wheat markets there<sup>27</sup>. These commodities were produced in the plains of Thessaloniki and Serres, where the conditions were similar, thanks to the rivers Vardar and Yenice-i Kara Su (in Greek Strymon).

Anyway, it seems that the chiftlik-owners were not also the exporters of their products. That was the business of foreign, but mainly of Greek and Jewish, merchants. At the end of the 19th century these last started to buy their own chiftliks from their Turkish owners, thus becoming both producers and exporters.

Let us turn back now to the chiftliks. From the moment that a village or

24. This opinion has been discussed by Ö. L. Barkan and the Bulgarian scholars V. Mutafchieva, B. Čvetkova and S. Dimitroff.

25. B. Kremmydas, *Εἰσαγωγή στήν Ἱστορία τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς Κοινωνίας (1700-1821)* (Introduction to the History of Neohellenic Society), Ἀθήνα 1976, p. 47-62.

26. L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, New York, 1958, p. 142.

27. Félix-Beaujour, *Tableau du Commerce de la Grèce*, tome premier, Paris 1980, p. 109, 119; N. G. Svoronos, *Salonique et Cavalla; 1686-1792*, Paris 1951 (Inventaire des Correspondances des Consuls de France au Levant, conservées aux Archives Nationales, 1).

its area turned into a chiftlik, the conditions for the peasants became quite different. The new chiftlik-owner had every reason not merely to keep the remaining inhabitants from fleeing, but also to attract new population to his chiftlik. He had in his possession thousands of acres, which needed to be cultivated intensively and systematically. For this reason he was in need of as many more labouring hands as possible, and the chronic shortage of them in the agrarian areas of the Ottoman Empire is a well known fact.

Therefore the first concern of a chiftlik-owner was to persuade or even to force the fugitive villagers to return to their homes. There are many firms by which the local authorities are ordered to offer every possible assistance to the land-owners in this endeavour<sup>28</sup>.

Although the peasants were no longer independent cultivators, their condition seems to have been better than before. The chiftlik-owner protected them from the oppressions and violations of various state officials. Already from the end of the 17th century we find peasants taking refuge with the great land-owners<sup>29</sup>. The taxes for the agricultural products were paid by them, and the peasants of any chiftlik were free from forced labour or from billeting passing troops or tax-collectors, and from anything else that might make their life unbearable and impel them to go away again.

From the land registers of the 19th century we see that a chiftlik consisted usually of fields, vineyards, kitchen- and fruit-gardens, meadows and pastures. During the last period of the Ottoman occupation there were in the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey 21 chiftliks covering from 500 to 5.000 *dönüms*, 14 chiftliks from 5.000 to 10.000 *dönüms*, 10 from 10.000 to 20.000 *dönüms*, two from 20.000 to 30.000 *dönüms*, one of 51.000 and one of 82.000 *dönüms*.

Apart from the land in a chiftlik, there was also an inhabited area, either newly built by the land-owner, or consisting of the houses of the old village. There was also the mansion of the landowner (*beylik konağı*), usually separated in sections for men and women (*selamlık and haremlık*). In certain cases there was a second *konak* for the representative of the land-owner.

In every chiftlik there were also one or more store-houses and granaries (*anbar*), straw-barns (*samanlık*), hay-barns (*otluk*), stables (*ahır*), and threshing-floors (*harman*). In many chiftliks there were also smithies (*timurci hanesi*), which were used also for horse-shoeing, places where carpets and woven textures were beaten (*tokat*), mills and other useful buildings. All these, like the houses of the peasants, belonged to the chiftlik-owner.

28. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, p. 347-348.

29. Vasdravellis, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

The cultivators in a chiftlik were either permanent inhabitants or labourers who came from other places and worked only for a certain period. The first category of the peasants were the "*yarıcı*", in Greek "*μισακάρηδες*", who divided the crop with the land-owner, each taking one half of it. The second category, the "*aylakçı*", were paid by the land-owner for the time they worked in the chiftlik, during summer time, and they might come for that purpose even from distant places. There is evidence that labourers used to come to the plain of Thessaloniki from as far as the Pindus Mountains. There is no doubt that a large number of those seasonal labourers settled down on the chiftlik in the end.

The great demand for labouring hands in the chiftliks caused a re-distribution of the peasant population of the Ottoman Empire, as has already been observed by other scholars, like İnalcık, Stojanovich and Braudel. The study of the defters of Gazi Evrenos Bey's wakf confirms this opinion. The previously almost deserted area was towards the end of the 19th century full of hard-working people. For instance Davudça, first a village and later a chiftlik, in 1790 paid "*avariz*" for 17 *hanes*; in 1861 there were 27 Turkish houses in it, and at the end of the 19th century it was inhabited by 250 Christians and 200 Moslems. Balat (today Platy) had in 1861 59 Christian houses; fifty years later it had 220 houses. Another chiftlik, Çinar Furunu, paid "*avariz*" for 8 *hanes* in 1790; it had 27 Christian houses in 1861 and at the end of the same century 95 Christian and 35 Moslem houses. The same change of population is to be observed in every village or chiftlik in the plain of Thessaloniki. It is obvious that this increase could not be caused only by birth, but came principally as a result of massive immigration. Where did that population come from?

The defters are not clear on this point. Nevertheless it is well known that at the beginning of the 20th century a great number of villages and chiftliks of the area were inhabited by Bulgarian speakers. During the struggle at the same time between Greek and Bulgarian armed bands in Macedonia, Bulgarian bandits found shelter among the inhabitants of many villages and chiftliks situated around the lake of Yenice.

One might be inclined to suggest that the villages were inhabited by Bulgarians even before the end of the 17th century, but the examination of the names of the villages at that time proves that this could not be so. We see that the village names were either of Turkish or of Greek origin; 15 of them referred to some Turkish personage like Davudlu, Davudça, Durmuslu, Mustafaca, Rahmanlı; one of them, Menteşeli, indicated place of origin; 16 names indicated professions, occupations or peculiarities, like Suya Bakıcı

(water-watcher), Çulhalar (weavers), Yağcılar (oil-makers), Doğançı (falconer); 29 indicated natural characteristics, like Çalı (bushes), Kavaklı (place with poplars), Kayalı (place of rocks), Kara Bınar (Black Spring), Orman (forest), Söyüdlü Kale (tower with willows) Bağlıca (place of vineyards), Sarı Göl (yellow lake), etc. Some Turkish names are translations or corruptions of Greek place names, like Burgaz (Pyrgos, Tower), Akçe Klisa (White Church), Balat (Palati, Palace); 14 place names are clearly Greek, like Furnos, Klidi, Nihor, Palyohor, Stefania, Trikala, Vrasta. 23 place names are of dubious origin: some of these are Köleke, Laniver, Nares, Volovot, Dirmil, Gurnes, Güvezna, Zatfor, but even these do not seem to be of Slavonic origin. In the late 19th century there are a few villages and chiftliks bearing two different names at the same time, one of Turkish or Greek origin and a second one of Bulgarian origin. This is another indication that the sparse Greek or Turkish population in the area diminished considerably, making room for immigrants from the Bulgarian-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire. The hard working Bulgarian peasants must have been in great demand by the Turkish land-owners. The same phenomenon has been observed in the area of Strymon river in the plain of Serres; there, also, great chiftliks were founded, cotton was cultivated and great numbers of Bulgarians had immigrated. We should mention here that in the same area five chiftliks and two villages with a total agricultural area of more than 20.000 *dönüm*, together with a large part of the town of Serres, belonged to the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey.

The new population of the chiftliks in the plain of Thessaloniki was not of course exclusively of Bulgarian origin. Greeks and Vlachs had also settled there. We find also that in many chiftliks there were numerous Gypsies working as permanent labourers. Even Turks from countries lost to the Ottomans during the 19th century were settled in certain places, as is indicated in the defters. A few chiftliks were bought by the Turkish state for that purpose.

During the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, we observe another development in the institution of the chiftliks; the peasants working in some of them have come to be in a position to buy from the chiftlik-owners the land they cultivated or part of it, either each one separately or all of them in common, afterwards distributing the land among themselves. In certain cases peasants from two or more chiftliks bought land from one or more chiftlik-owners and formed a new village. It seems that the Turkish families who owned the chiftliks no longer felt safe in the Balkans and preferred to carry their wealth to the safer region of Asia Minor, before they were forced to abandon everything they possessed. On the other hand, this phenomenon indicates clearly the flourishing condition of the peasants at that time;

they earned enough to live fairly comfortably and even more they had a sufficient surplus of money to be able to buy the land they cultivated from its owner and thus become again independent cultivators.

From the Tapu and Kadastro defters of Thessaloniki we can also observe another development: At the beginning of the 20th century a lot of chiftliks changed ownership, passing from hand to hand several times in a period of a few years. Some of the new owners were rich Greeks, but mostly they were Jews from Thessaloniki. Among these a few names are found very frequently, like those of Yako Saul Modiano and Carlo Allatini. They and their families had founded big companies buying and selling land continuously not only in the town of Thessaloniki but in every part of Central Macedonia as well. These families, several foreign-owned banks, and not a few individuals, had also started a mad exploitation of the land whose price was increasing rapidly from day to day. In these land-transactions the chiftliks were in great request.

This procedure was interrupted in 1912 by the Balkan Wars and the loss of Macedonia to the Ottoman Empire. The further investigation of the chiftliks does not concern this study, nor is our intention to discuss the change in the composition of the population in the area brought about after the Balkan wars and the First World War and by the immigration of Greeks from Asia Minor after the Treaty of Lausanne.

The conclusion to be drawn from the present study is that in the area of the wakf of Gazi Evrenos Bey at the plain of Thessaloniki conditions were suitable for the foundation and the development of the institution of the chiftlik from the end of the 17th century until the end of the 19th century. Owing to certain conditions during these centuries the number of the chiftliks increased by a much greater percentage than has been observed in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, as a result of this development the population in the area changed considerably in number and composition at the expense of the earlier Greek and Turkish population, whose place was taken by new immigrants, to a great extent of Bulgarian origin. This last observation needs to be examined more closely, in order to establish from which parts of the Ottoman Empire and especially of Bulgaria they had come, and what were the reasons for their leaving their homes for the plain of Thessaloniki. The question also arises whether the same process took place in other parts of the Balkans.