

The Early History of the Balkan Fairs

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Toward the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, European observers of the Ottoman Empire frequently mentioned the importance of the Balkan fairs¹). During those years, the fairs were mainly connected with import trade. Merchants distributed goods introduced by way of Salonika through Thessaly, Macedonia and southern Bulgaria. At the same time linkage with Vienna and the Leipzig fairs was provided by way of Bosnia and Herzegovina²).

As the early stages in the development of the Balkan fairs have attracted less attention from European merchants, scholars have also tended to ignore them. However, Ottoman archival sources permit us to partly fill the gap. In the present study, an attempt will be made to establish some of the major fairs active in the Balkans before about 1650. While so many sources remain unknown or accessible only with difficulty, it is always possible that some have been overlooked; but at least the list established so far will constitute a starting point for further research. Moreover, what we can learn about the organization of fairs, about the goods traded, about the origin and activities of the merchants attending them will obviously help us clarify the as yet little-known history of Ottoman internal trade. As so much of Ottoman commerce was directly connected with the supply problems of Istanbul, it is easy to ignore other types of internal commercial exchange, which developed routes and forms of organization that we are only beginning to discover³). Equally, the connection between urbanization

¹) Compare N. Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIII^e siècle*. Paris 1956, p. 209—212, 395—397 and the sources mentioned on these pages. See also: Robert Brunshwig, *Coup d'œil sur l'histoire des foires à travers de l'Islam*. In: *La foire*, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin, vol. V, Brussels 1953, p. 43—75. For developments in Roumania compare: Georgeta Penelea, *Les foires de la Valachie pendant la période 1774—1848* (Bibliotheca Historiae Romaniae 44, Section de l'histoire économique), Bucarest 1973.

²) Virginia Paskaleva, *Osmanlı Balkan Eyaletlerinin Avrupalı Devletlerle Ticaretleri Tarihine Katkı (1700—1850)*. [Contribution to the History of Trade between the Ottoman Balkan Provinces and the States of Europe]. In: *I. Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 27, 1—2 (1967—1968), p. 47ff., 72 (from now on this journal will be abbreviated: *IFM*). For a French reference to the Balkan fairs about 1600, see Brunshwig, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³) For literature on the Istanbul supply problem compare: Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle* (Bibliothèque archéologique et

and commercialization has so far been researched only in part⁴). Under these circumstances, fairs are particularly interesting as institutions, since they represent commercialization in an area where urbanization was limited. Given these basic facts, it is the aim of this paper to sketch the role of the larger fairs within the development of Ottoman commercialization.

Among Ottoman archival sources, a number of imperial orders (*ferman*) constitutes a starting-point for our study. So far, the oldest one located was made out in the year 991/1583⁵). Between about 1608 and 1630, such documents are fairly common. Then, an abrupt silence seems to have descended upon the fairs. Until about 1680, only one further document of this type has been found, dated 1056/1646⁶).

Most of the more than twenty-five rescripts located so far are addressed to the judge (*kadı*) of the area in which the fair was held. In a few cases we also find a provincial governor (*sancak beği*) among the addressees. Instructions usually concern the safety of visitors to the fair, or else the dues paid by merchants attending it. Thus we learn not only the names of the fairs in question, but also their geographical location, and in certain cases information is provided on the way in which they were administered.

A different type of documentation is provided by the Ottoman tax registers (*tahrir*) and the complementary lists describing pious foundations (*vakıf*)⁷). Most of them were compiled in the sixteenth century. In fact, for only a few areas do we have tax registers relating to the period from 1600—1646. Since the registers were assembled to facilitate tax collection, they contain data on the different kinds of dues, including store rents, that the central government or the administrators of a pious foundation could hope to collect. Consequently one would expect sources of income such as fair dues to be documented in the yearly accounts of pious foundations; however, so far we only know of a few instances where this was in fact the case⁸).

historique de l'Institut français d'archéologie d'Istanbul), Paris 1962 and the article 'Istanbul' in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. by Halil Inalcık.

⁴) See particularly Halil Inalcık's work on Bursa; compare article 'Bursa' in *EI*² and also Ronald Jennings: Loans and Credit in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records, the Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri. In: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient (JESHO)* XVI, 2—3 (1973), p. 168—216.

⁵) Mühimme defterleri, Başvekâlet Arşivi, İstanbul (MD), vol. 52, p. 82.

⁶) MD 91, p. 81.

⁷) On the tax registers as a historical source compare Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'Empire Ottoman aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles. In: *JESHO*, I (1957—58), p. 9—36. On the *vakıf* registers see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler [Pious Foundations and Private Landholdings as Means of Colonization in the Ottoman Empire]. In: *Vakıflar Dergisi*, 2 (1942), p. 279—386.

⁸) For information contained in the yearly accounts of pious foundations compare Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Şehirlerin Teşekkül ve İnkişafı Tarihi Bakımından Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İmaret Sitelerinin Kuruluş ve İşleyiş Tarzına ait Araştırmalar [Research on the Foundation and Functioning of Imaret Complexes, in Connection with the Establishment and Development of Cities]. In: *IFM*, 23, 1—2 (1962—63),

From this material, it is possible to establish the existence of the following fairs: In the sub-province (*sancak*) of Köstendil in modern Macedonia we find the fair of Dolyan in the administrative district (*kaza*) of Ustrumca⁹), while the sub-province of Tırhala (modern Trikkala) contained the fair of Maşkolur (Maskoluri) in the administrative district of Fener (Fanarion)¹⁰) and a second one in the town of Alasonya (Elasson) itself¹¹). Within the same area, another fair was held in or near the town of Çatalca (Farsala), known as the *Göl panayırı* or Lake Fair¹²).

In the so-called Paşa livası, which comprised the sub-province governed from Edirne (Adrianopol) we find a fair known as the Fair of Onions (*Soğan panayırı*), which met in or around Zihne¹³). Near the Macedonian town of Hurpişte, located in the same sub-province, there was a well-known fair in the settlement of Doğın¹⁴). In the sub-province of Selanik (Salonika), a number of fairs was mentioned for the area of Karaferye (Veroia). One of them met in the town itself, another was known as St. Catherine's Fair (*Katarina panayırı*) and must therefore have convened either on the saint's day or else in the settlement named Katarini¹⁵). Moreover, there was a fair close to a salt mine, in a place known as *Çitroz* or *Kitros*¹⁶).

p. 239—269. For documentation on a fair in the accounts of Seyyid Gazi compare: Istanbul Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi D 493.

⁹) For the location of Ottoman towns in Rumeli see Tayyip Gökbilgin, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman devri başlarında Rumeli Eyaleti livaları, şehir ve kasabaları [Provinces, Cities and Towns of Rumeli during the Early Reign of Kanunî Süleyman]. In: *Belleten*, XX, 78 (1956), p. 247—285. (Spelling of Turkish place names follows the spellings given in this article). In addition, the following maps have been used: Heinrich Kiepert, Generalkarte von der europäischen Türkei. Berlin 1870 and idem, Carte de l'Épire et de la Thessalie. Die griechisch-türkischen Grenzgebiete mit Angabe der griechischen Sprachgrenze. Berlin, after 1897. The outline of the map was taken from: The Times Atlas of the World, ed. John Bartholomew, vol. IV: Southern Europe and Africa. London 1956, plate 83. Thanks are due to Mr. Rauf Onay for drawing the map. For Dolyan see Tapu Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara (TK) 89, p. 419a, 424b; TK 90, p. 176b; MD 76, p. 48; MD 78, p. 229, 310, 314, 383, 510; MD 81, p. 135; MD 82, p. 95; MD 85, p. 10, 112, 121, 265; MD 91, p. 81. Compare Svoronos, op. cit., p. 210—211 and p. 395.

¹⁰) On Maşkolur compare: Tapu Tahrir Başvekâlet Arşivi (TT) 105, p. 501—503; TK 60, p. 212bff.; MD 78, p. 382, 439, 511; MD 80, p. 559, MD 85, p. 265. See Svoronos, op. cit., p. 210 and 395.

¹¹) On the fair of Alasonya (Elasson) TT 105, p. 656; TK 60, p. 146b—149a; MD 76, p. 48; MD 78, p. 229; MD 79, p. 100; MD 80, p. 439, see also Svoronos, op. cit., p. 210, 395.

¹²) Compare MD 76, p. 48; MD 78, p. 383, 510; MD 85, p. 263. Since the map shows no lake in this area, the name might equally well be *Gül panayırı* or Rose Fair.

¹³) MD 85, p. 174, 263.

¹⁴) TT 70, p. 243; MD 76, p. 48; MD 78, p. 383, 510; MD 80, p. 33; MD 85, p. 174.

¹⁵) MD 85, p. 174. A town by the name of Katarini still exists in modern Thessaly. For a settlement by the name of Aya Katarina, guard station (*derbend*) on the road to Selanik compare TK 60, p. 234b—235b, but the place had no registered market taxes.

¹⁶) For *Çitroz* (Kidros) see TT 70, p. 12, TK 191, p. 267a. The place was not credited with a *panayır* in the tax registers, but it had a large market. Market dues amounted to 3500 *akçe* as early as 925/1519, and may in fact have been collected from a fair

The Early History of the Balkan Fairs

In the sub-province of Ohri (Ohrid in present-day Yugoslavia), the town of Usturuga possessed a fair¹⁷), and we can also document the existence of such an institution in the little town of Olofea in Bosnia¹⁸). Milaševa, a fortified village located near Prepolje in the sub-province of Hersek (Herzegovina) was also the scene of a fair, which convened on the grounds or else in the vicinity of the famous monastery dedicated to Saint Sava¹⁹). Another fair seems to have been held on a summer-pasture not far from the little town of Taşlıca (Plevlje) also in the administrative district of Prepolje²⁰). Moreover, a fair was also held in the district of Preboj, located in the same subprovince.

For Bulgaria, Todorov has shown the existence of a fair near Filibe (Philipopol) active around 1550, that specialized in the sale of rough woollen fabrics (*aba*) which the craftsmen of this area produced in great quantities down into the nineteenth century. In 933/1585 an imperial order referred to a yearly fair held in a village near Varna. However, the fair of Uzuncaabad-Hasköy (Khaskovo), which had a considerable reputation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is not mentioned in imperial edicts between 1600 and 1650²¹).

rather than from a weekly market. There must have been considerable commercial activity in the whole area of Karaferye, judging from the fact that a tax register compiled during the reign of *Selim II* (1566—1574) contained a separate set of regulations on the market taxes to be collected in this area: TK 191, p. 264a.

In addition, both *mühimme* and tax registers mention a village probably identical with modern Kolindros, which was also the scene of some commercial activity, even though no fair is mentioned: TT 70, p. 12; MD 85, p. 174; TK 191, p. 276a.

¹⁷) TK 25, p. 15a; MD 80, p. 33. Usturuga (Struga) in 991/1583, when the register was composed, was a small town with fewer than 300 taxpayers. Nor can the fair have been of more than local significance, for market taxes amounted to only 1200 *akçe*.

¹⁸) TK 5, p. 228b, MD 78, p. 78.

¹⁹) MD 78, p. 408. Compare TK 7, p. 246a, 250b, compiled in the year 993/1585. This seems to have been a very minor local gathering, for market and wine taxes taken together produced an income of only 100 *akçe* for an officer of the garrison from the fortress of Milaševa. The monks of St. Sava petitioned to have the fair abolished as they did not want to be held responsible for the disorders perpetrated at such an occasion. Their petition was granted when they offered to reimburse the garrison out of their own income.

For the monastery of St. Sava in Milaševa, founded by the royal Serbian dynasty, compare: Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500—1453*. Bungay, Suff. 1971, p. 242, 301, 349—350, which also points out the importance of this monastery in the history of medieval Balkan art.

According to the tax register, the monks of St. Sava appear to have possessed considerable property in fields, gardens, vineyards, meadows and mills, on which they paid a fixed tax of 500 *akçe* per year.

²⁰) MD 78, p. 459, MD 52, p. 82.

²¹) MD 55, p. 148. Compare Arno Mehlan, *Die großen Balkanmessen in der Türkenzeit*. In: *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XXXI/1 (1938), p. 10—49.

Nikolay Todorov, *19cu Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Bulgaristan Esnaf Teşkilâtında Bazı Karakter Değişmeleri* [Some Changes in Character and Organization of Bulgarian Craftsmen During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century]. In: *IFM*, 27, 1—2 (1967—1968), p. 2. Aside from the fairs enumerated so far, the following should be mentioned: a fair referred to in MD 85, p. 193 (1040/1630—31); unfortunately the

In Anatolia, fairs appear to have been much rarer. For the sixteenth century, we have information on such gatherings in Seyyidgazi, Nazilli, and probably Alaşehir. When the Ottoman traveller *Evliya Çelebi* visited Nazilli in the sixteen-seventies, the place had apparently developed into a major weekly market. *Evliya* even claimed that the volume of business transacted there every market day was as high as at the great fairs of Rumeli, although they met once a year rather than every seven days²²). The fair of Seyyidgazi is known to have existed around 1600 and at that time appeared to be reasonably prosperous; but so far, no information on its further development has been found. A complex of stores and marketing space near Alaşehir, which was totally rebuilt in the first half of the sixteenth century, appears too big for a simple market-place and is more likely to have been a fair of some kind. It was still impressive enough for *Evliya* to take note of its existence in the sixteen-seventies.

From the Ottoman sources alone, it is often difficult to distinguish between markets and fairs, because the word '*pazar*' may stand for both. A separate word for the latter does however exist (*panayır*) and can be used to identify fairs. Moreover, the specific description 'weekly market' (*haftalık pazar*) sometimes allows us to weed out places that were definitely not fairs. The basic difference lay in the frequency of the gathering: while a fair might meet once, twice, or three times a year and last for an unspecified time between a day and a few weeks, a market usually met once a week and lasted for a few hours, or at most a day²³).

In his study of the Balkan fairs, Mehlan has pointed out the existence of two types²⁴). The first was more local in character. Here consumers purchased their basic supplies of cloth, shoes, pottery and similar goods, which were often meant to last throughout the following year. In the second, retailers met wholesalers.

name of the administrative district could not be deciphered. TK 60, p. 228a/b refers to the *bac-ı pazar* of St. Constantine, probably a local event, producing the modest revenue of 1200 *akçe*. For an earlier period, namely the first half of the fifteenth century, Halil İnalcık mentions the fair of Şin Marya in Albania: Hicri 835 Tarihli Sûret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid [A Copy of the Register of the Province of Albania dated H. 835.]. In: *Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından XIV Seri-No. 1*, Tahrir defterleri. Ankara 1954, p. 89.

For the existence of fairs in the area of Sofya, Leskofça (Leskova) and Dubnice compare MD 78, p. 320. — Further examples of this type can surely be found.

²²) *Evliya Çelebi*, *Seyahatnamesi* [Account of his Travels]. Istanbul 1895—96/1938, vol. IX, p. 186. According to *Evliya*, the famous fairs of Rumeli were: Maşkolur, Dolyan, Alasonya in Thessaly, Debre in Macedonia, Yanya in Epirus and Üsseg (Esseg) in modern Yugoslavia, just beyond the Hungarian border. He also mentions the fairs of Midilli-Lesbos (vol. IX, p. 265) and of İstanköy-Kos (vol. IX, p. 216). However, it has not been possible to find documentation on the former fair in the tax register of Midilli (TT 264). For *Evliya*'s description of Nazilli, see vol. IX, p. 186—187, also TK 144, p. 207bff. for documentation on the fair, which seems to have met twice a year. For Alaşehir see *Evliya Çelebi* vol. IX, p. 54 and TK 571, p. 163a/b.

²³) Compare Gilbert Rozman, *Urban Networks in Russia 1750—1800 and Pre-modern Periodization*. Princeton 1976, p. 119—121 for a description of the function of fairs in eighteenth-century Russia.

²⁴) Mehlan, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

The Early History of the Balkan Fairs

The former supplied themselves with goods for resale to consumers, while the latter bought up foodstuffs and raw materials. In practice of course, the two functions were never clearly separated. Moreover, a fair usually constituted the major social event in the area where it was held and was visited by many people who had no obvious business there. For the sixteenth century, very little is known about the differentiation of functions between various fairs.

In early modern Europe, yet another type of fair was even more famous. Certain gatherings, such as the fairs of Medina del Campo or Besançon (which really met in northern Italy) were mainly institutions to facilitate the settling of accounts between merchants and bankers of different countries²⁵). However, such *foires d'échange* do not seem to have existed in the Ottoman Empire, even though traders were often granted a certain amount of credit.

Given our information on Ottoman foreign trade in the sixteenth century, it is unlikely that the Balkan fairs were mainly concerned with imported goods²⁶). The present paper assumes that during this earlier period the fairs largely served internal trade on all levels, interregional, intercity and local. In addition, they may to some extent have acted as a funnel for the channeling of exports.

It has often been stated that fairs concerned with the direct marketing of goods usually flourished in regions where the overall level of urbanization was low²⁷). Once cities and trade had grown to certain proportions, the principal merchants preferred to remain sedentary, and handle their contacts with business partners in other cities through employees or even professional intermediaries²⁸). On the other hand, fairs were particularly well adapted to the 'caravan trade' as described by Niels Steensgaard²⁹). A 'caravan merchant' had limited storage facilities, limited advance information about the market and usually there was a time limit to the period which he could spend in one place. For him, a fair had the advantage that it equalized the risk, largely obliterating the advantages, which other things being equal, a local merchant could claim for himself. Since business had to be concluded during the limited time the fair was meeting, nobody could wait longer than his neighbour, and nobody could profit much from the possession of storage facilities in such a place. Even in terms of market information the fair should have equalized chances, by making such knowledge more generally available.

²⁵) See Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Paris 1966, vol. I, p. 347—348.

²⁶) Mehlan, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²⁷) Traian Stoianovich, *The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant*. In: *Journal of Economic History*, XX (1960), p. 261.

²⁸) For a discussion of changing business practices in the European middle ages see Jacques Bernard, *Trade and Finance in the Middle Ages*. In: *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, ed. Carlo Cipolla. Glasgow 1972, p. 307—309.

²⁹) Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century. The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*. Chicago, London 1974, p. 22ff.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that fairs rarely developed into cities, and that not all important towns maintained fairs. Quite to the contrary, fairs were sometimes established outside the areas dominated by major cities. This allowed the attending merchants to evade the pressures that the demands of such places might otherwise have exercised upon them. Thus some of the most important fairs of eighteenth-century Russia were located in settlements which for the remainder of the year were villages, or at the very most, sleepy little country towns³⁰). Some of the most important Balkan fairs were located in similar places.

If fairs were to serve long-distance commerce within the confines of a major area such as the Russian, Chinese, or Ottoman Empire, there had to be a certain amount of coordination between them. A large number of routes were open only seasonally: many ships avoided the Mediterranean or the Black Sea in winter, and snow made certain routes impassable, particularly in the mountains³¹). Goods arriving at the confines of a major trading area therefore had to be relayed from one fair to the next. Thereby merchandise that had remained unsold at one fair could be offered for sale at the next, and distribution from wholesaler to retailer could also be achieved by channeling the goods through a succession of fairs³²). In the case of exports, the inverse is obviously true. Rozman has shown how such a system of fairs operated in eighteenth-century Russia, while Svoronos and Stoianovich have sketched an outline for the Balkans during the same period³³).

In the case of Russia, it is possible to distinguish between different categories of fairs according to their turnover: the largest presumably served the needs of international and interregional commerce, while the medium-sized gatherings were devoted largely to inter-city trade³⁴). Small fairs should by the same token have served local needs. For the Ottoman Empire, however, few figures survive that allow us to estimate turnover and thereby gauge the relative importance of individual fairs. Very approximate guesses can be made from the length and frequency with which certain fairs are mentioned in our sources and from the revenue they brought. By that criterium the fairs at Maşkolur and Dolyan in Thessaly should have been the most important ones. However, these criteria must not be pressed too hard: Ottoman sources were strongly concerned with the vexed question of policing the fairs and those mentioned most often may simply have been located in areas where insecurity was endemic.

Maşkolur in the administrative district of Fener (Fenarion) was a sizeable village; according to the tax register of 977/1569 it contained 228 families, 38 un-

³⁰) Rozman, *op. cit.*, p. 194—195 and elsewhere.

³¹) For a discussion of sixteenth century communications see Braudel, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 326—346.

³²) Rozman, *op. cit.*, p. 127—129.

³³) Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 210, 395, Stoianovich, *loc. cit.*, p. 280. See also Traian Stoianovich, *Model and Mirror of the Premodern Balkan City. La ville balkanique XV^e—XIX^e ss.* In: *Studia Balcanica* 3, Sofia 1970, p. 109—110.

³⁴) Rozman, *op. cit.*, p. 121—122.

married males and 37 widows who were heads of households³⁵). According to the multiplier used, this may have corresponded to a population between 800 and 1300 persons. Agricultural production consisted mainly of wheat and barley, supplemented by small amounts of millet, rye, lentils and flax. The two Moslem families of the village owned 12 *dönüm* of gardens and vineyards; the Christian population owned 245 *dönüm*, and paid an extra tax on the wine it produced. Pigs and sheep were kept in modest numbers, and the place had a weekly market of its own. Altogether, a Balkan village similar enough to the settlements described by Bruce McGowan³⁶). Including village lands worked by peasants from neighbouring places, the settlement was expected to produce a little less than 25,000 *akçe* a year.

Commercial activity at the fair of Maşkolur is documented in two brief accounts. The older of the two was compiled in 928/1521—22, apparently before the Grand Vizier *Ibrahim Paşa*, favourite of *Süleyman the Lawgiver* (1520—1566), took over the land and reorganized the fair. Later on, *Ibrahim Paşa* turned it over to one of his pious foundations³⁷). Total income derived by the Treasury amounted to about 19,000 *akçe*. In the absence of direct data on commercial turnover, this amount can serve as a measure of the activity of the fair. Horse trading was an important part of the business conducted; this section of the market alone produced 2882 *akçe* (15.8%)³⁸). Unfortunately, fair dues, market tax, payment to the overseer of the market (*muhtesib*) and to his helpers acting as minor police officials (*resm-i asesan*) are given as a lump sum of 15,000 *akçe*. Therefore we have no information about other goods traded. Only revenue from wine sales is mentioned separately; but the amount involved was so small (400 *akçe*) that it can practically be ignored³⁹).

The second account was compiled in 1569; by that time yearly revenue from the fair had quintupled, amounting to 95,160 *akçe*. Even if allowance is made for

³⁵) Comparison with the tax register of 1521—22 (TT 105, p. 501—503) shows that the growth of the fair did not lead to significant expansion of the permanent settlement. In 1521—22 the village had consisted of 2 Moslem and 202 Christian families, with 14 unmarried men and 37 widows as heads of households.

³⁶) Bruce McGowan, *Food Supply and Taxation on the Middle Danube* (1568 to 1579). In: *Archivum Ottomanicum*, I (1969), p. 139—196.

³⁷) Compare the article on 'Ibrahim Paşa' by Tayyip Gökbilgin in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (IA). For the Grand Vizier's holdings, see also the same author's book: XV—XVI Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası, Vakıflar, Mülkler, Mukataalar [Edirne and the Paşa Sancak During the XV and XVI Centuries — Pious Foundations, Private Property, and Tax Farms]. Istanbul 1952, p. 75.

³⁸) On the importance of the cattle trade for the prosperity of the fairs even during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries compare Mehlan, *op. cit.*, p. 34. For a comparable situation in Roumania, see Penelea, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

³⁹) Sale of wine was organized as a so-called *monopolye*, that is the person to whom the wine tax had been assigned was given the exclusive right to sell wine for a given period, so that he could get rid of the taxes collected in kind. Compare Ömer Lütfi Barkan, XV ve XVI Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları [The Judicial and Financial Foundations of the Ottoman Agricultural Economy in the XV and XVI Centuries]. Istanbul 1943, p. 99.

depreciation of the currency and price increases for other reasons, this figure still indicates very substantial growth. For the price index between 1489—1490 and 1573 only showed an increase from 100 to 179.97 points where prices in current coin were concerned. Thus the price rise should have been even less for the period between 1522 and 1569, and the increase in real commercial turnover correspondingly greater⁴⁰).

Among the items of revenue collected at the fair of Maşkolur, rent paid for shops as well as for 'inner' and 'outer' rooms accounted for 20%. Next in importance was the tax known as *bac-ı siyah* (literally 'black tax'). Probably this name was derived from a play on words: in plain Turkish, as opposed to the Ottoman literary language, *bac-ı siyah* stands for *kara gümrük*, meaning duties to be collected from goods arriving by land (*kara*) rather than by sea. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the meaning of this term was apparently no longer well understood by the average Ottoman bureaucrat: for a note was appended to the description of the port of Rodoscuk (Tekirdağ), clarifying the meaning of *bac-ı siyah* or *kara gümrük*⁴¹). These dues were to be levied on foodstuffs, raw materials, fabrics and animals on the hoof, so that we may regard them as a kind of internal customs dues. In Maşkolur, this tax produced 15,500 *akçe* or 16% of the total income generated by the fair.

Sales of oxen and cows also formed an important part of the business done at Maşkolur (15,000 *akçe*: 16%). In fact, sales of cattle and horses taken together constituted almost a quarter of the total proceeds from the fair. Slaves, however, were only a minor item; dues from the sale of human beings amounted to 3200 *akçe*, or 3.4%. For Christians and Jews at least, the gathering apparently brought an opportunity to drink wine and make merry; the relevant taxes amounted to 7900 *akçe*, or 8.3% of all revenue produced by the fair. The remainder consisted mainly of dues payable to the overseer of the market-place, brokers and other intermediaries, and of fines in the case of certain misdeeds⁴²).

A short document concerning the sales taxes levied in Maşkolur informs us about the rates at which goods entering the fair grounds were taxed. It is of the *kanunname* type and has parallels in certain other documents published by Ömer Lütfi Barkan⁴³). Ottoman regulations concerning a particular market are of interest, since quite often they do not simply repeat a standard list of goods, but mention the merchandise most frequently handled at the place in question.

⁴⁰) TK 60, p. 210b—212a. For the depreciation of the *akçe* and the subsequent rise in prices see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, XVI. Asrın İkinci Yarısında Türkiye'de Fiyat Hareketleri [Price Movements in Turkey During the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century]. In: *Belleten*, XXXIV, 136 (1970), particularly the table on p. 569.

⁴¹) TK 572, p. 13b.

⁴²) On the organization of brokerage in Istanbul, compare Mantran, op. cit., p. 473f. It would be interesting to know something about the background of the people who acted as overseers of the market place (*muhtesib*) at the fair, but no such information is forthcoming in the sources.

⁴³) Compare Barkan, Kanunlar, op. cit., p. 302/303, 319 and elsewhere.

Even though many of the regulations applied in Maşkolur are not specific enough to permit an evaluation of the number of sales and of the value of the goods handled, they do allow such estimates for certain important items. Since the duty upon the sale of a horse, a cow, or an ox amounted to 5 *akçe*, the administration seems to have expected an average sale of 1460 horses and 3000 oxen and cows at one single meeting of the fair. If a horse generally sold at 300—1000 *akçe* and cattle at 70—150 *akçe* per head, the value of the animals traded should have amounted to about 1,300,000 *akçe*, arbitrarily assuming an average price of 650 *akçe* for a horse and 110 *akçe* for a cow or ox⁴⁴).

As to fabrics, probably mostly cotton, the sales tax was fixed at 2.5% for wholesalers (sale by the horseload) and 5% for sale by retailers (sale by the *arşın*, or ell). If we assume that all the sellers paid the higher rates, the value of the fabric sold should have amounted to at least 204,000 *akçe*. But since it is likely that a fair amount of the fabric involved changed hands under wholesale conditions, 300,000 *akçe* and higher is probably a more realistic estimate.

On slaves, the duty was 16 *akçe* per sale, of which one half officially was to be borne by the buyer and the other half by the seller. This implies that the number of slaves sold at every fair should have amounted to 200 persons. If, again somewhat arbitrarily, we assume an average price of 2,000 *akçe* per slave, turnover in this section should have amounted to 400,000 *akçe*. By this token, total turnover at the fair must have amounted to at least two million *akçe* and was probably much higher⁴⁵).

Among the items remaining unspecified in value and quantity, there were many products derived from sheep and cattle. Thus, the regulations deal with woolen fabrics (*çuha*), felt of various standard sizes, as well as with tanned and untanned leather. The latter might be derived from buffaloes, cattle, sheep, goats, or lambs⁴⁶). Among agricultural products, cotton, cotton thread, olives, and olive oil are mentioned, and grain also occurs. But considering that the

⁴⁴) Values of slaves and animals are given in the estate inventories published by Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Edirne Askerî Kassamı'na Âit Tereke Defterleri (1545—1659)* [Estate Registers Compiled by the Official in Charge of Dividing up Askerî Property in Edirne (1545—1659)]. In: *Belgeler*, III, 5—6 (1966), p. 127, 138, 147. While these documents reflect official valuations and not current market prices, they can probably serve for a rough estimate of turnover.

⁴⁵) Cotton production in Thessaly was a thriving activity; the cotton fabric issued to the Janissaries was produced there: See for instance MD 81, p. 174. 2 million *akçe* should have corresponded to 33,333 Ottoman gold pieces or 50,000 *guruş*, according to the official equivalents decreed in 1582. Compare Ibrahim and Cevriye Artuk, *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Teşhirdeki İslamî Sikkeler Kataloğu* [Catalogue of the Islamic Coins on Display in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul]. In: *Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları*, III, 7, vol. II, p. 555—556.

⁴⁶) That the leather trade was thriving even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is apparent from Mehlan, *op. cit.*, p. 12 and Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 267. In the sixteenth century the export of leather was forbidden (compare for instance MD 77, p. 1, dated 1014/1605—06), but the prohibition was probably not always very strictly observed.

regulations deal with this vital commodity in one brief sentence, wheat, barley, and millet were probably not major items of trade in Maşkolur. Timber was also sold at the fair; it arrived by the waggonload and was often already cut up into planks. All these homely items must have been produced in the surrounding area.

The only goods arriving from afar seem to have come from Anatolia. We hear of dried figs and raisins being sold by the cartload. Now Thessaly obviously had vineyards of its own, and it is unlikely that the local peasants should have wanted these items, even if they had been able to pay for them. Neither is it likely that these goods were meant to go to Istanbul. Possibly we have here the beginnings of an export trade, as the little port of Platamona was not too far away and Salonika was also a possible outlet⁴⁷). Moreover, since Venice made an appreciable profit exporting currants from Zante, there is no reason why merchants from other places should not have tried to share in the opportunity. Trade in dried fruit may have appeared all the more attractive as this was a merchandise for which there was a brisk demand.

Even more tantalizing is the presence of rugs and kilims from Anatolia. They were apparently sold in large quantities, as the regulations mention only cartloads, camel-loads and horse-loads. If the officials framing this document were at all realistic, we can assume that even in this early period there was a commercial demand for such pieces. Thereby the rugs which are known to have reached Europe were not the fruit of occasional purchases or diplomatic gifts, but part of a more or less continuous trade. Still, rugs and kilims were certainly sold more often to Ottoman than to foreign customers. It is possible that the upper income groups of places like Yenişehir (Larissa) had their carpets sent from Anatolia. One might also imagine that higher-ranking officers of the Ottoman army campaigning in the Balkans used rugs in their tents, and ordered them from afar when they were stationed in places like Hungary where such articles could not be purchased locally⁴⁸). But even so, it is not improbable that export trade accounted for part of the turnover at Maşkolur.

⁴⁷) Frederick Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic*. Baltimore 1973, p. 305. However it is hard to say who the buyers might have been. A. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*. London 1964, p. 70 mentions English imports of currants from Morea but there is no reference to either Thessaly or Anatolia. — For imports of dried fruit from Rhodes to Italy in the early sixteenth century, see Lionel Butler, *The Port of Rhodes*. In: *Les grandes escales. Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions*, vol. XXXII. Brussels 1974, p. 344. On the export of grapes from Morea to England see MD 73, p. 113 (1003/1594–95). Grapes from the Aegean coast of Anatolia were generally reserved for the needs of Istanbul. — On Platamona, freehold property of *Mihrimah Sultan*, daughter of *Süleyman the Lawgiver*, compare TK 553, p. 110a/b.

⁴⁸) For the demand generated by Ottoman officials stationed in Hungary compare Lajos Fekete, *Osmanlı Türkleri ve Macarlar, 1366—1699* [The Ottoman Turks and the Hungarians, 1366—1699]. In: *Bellesten*, XIII, 52 (1949), particularly p. 700—705. For the level of consumption in a well-to-do Ottoman family see also the same author's: *XVI Yüzyılda Taşralı bir Türk Efendisinin Evi* [The House of a Turkish Provincial Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century]. In: *Bellesten*, XXIX, 116 (1965), p. 615—638.

The Early History of the Balkan Fairs

If the accounts given in the tax register are at all reliable, the fair at Dolyan should toward the end of the sixteenth century have been a much more modest and local affair than was Maşkolur⁴⁹). Of the 40,000 *akçe*'s worth of revenue that the fair was supposed to produce, almost one half consisted of rent and dues for the shops and stands available on the fair grounds. About one third of the total revenue came from dues known as *bac-ı pay* ('sales tax on feet') which points to the sale of animals. The remaining amount consisted of dues collected from sales in general (*ih̄tisab*: 3000 *akçe*) payable to the supervisor of the market. About the trade in other goods there is no information. Obviously sales in stores must have been more significant than the modest returns from the general sales tax seem to indicate; for otherwise merchants would not have gone to the expense of renting such places.

Even less is known about the fair of Alasonya (Elasson), although we again possess two accounts of the revenue it generated. In the year 928/1521—22, regular market fees, a number of other taxes and fair dues amounted to 6500 *akçe*⁵⁰). In addition, wine sales produced another 500 *akçe* of revenue for a local administrative official. The latter was entitled to sell the wine accruing to him as part of the taxes he collected. Contrary to the regulations of Maşkolur, however, this practice did not exclude wine from other sources.

Between 1522 and 1569, commerce at Alasonya seems to have expanded at an even faster rate than on the foundation holdings of *Ibrahim Paşa*. At the later date, revenue from the fair in this still semi-rural little town amounted to over 40,000 *akçe*⁵¹). This again included market dues (*mahsul-ı pazar*), payments to the supervisor of the market, and shop rents; however no figure is given on the number of merchants attending. Thus it was probably the prosperous condition of the fair which caused *Sultan Ahmed I* (1603—1617) to donate its proceeds to his well-known mosque in Istanbul. In this case, there is no record of any building activity or other improvements occasioned by the transfer.

About the outward appearance of the fairs but little is known. From an imperial rescript addressed to the *kadı* of Yenişehir (Larissa), we hear that *Ibrahim Paşa* had a wall built around the complex in Maşkolur and that about one thousand shops were constructed upon his orders⁵²). That this is a reasonable figure is borne out by an entry in the tax registers concerning the fair at Dolyan, which puts the number of stores in this latter place at seven hundred⁵³). Most probably, the wall was meant to facilitate the collection of dues and taxes, which were payable both upon entering and upon leaving the fair grounds.

Aside from Anatolian rugs, the regulations of Maşkolur mention carpets from Rumeli, which seem to have been brought to the fair on the backs of porters.

⁴⁹) TK 89, p. 424b; TK 90, p. 176b.

⁵⁰) TT 105, p. 656.

⁵¹) TK 60, p. 146b—149a. A marginal note documents donation to the mosque complex of *Sultan Ahmed I*, but in several extant revenue accounts of the foundation no record of revenue received from the fair could be found.

⁵²) MD 80, p. 559.

⁵³) TK 89, p. 424b.

In general, the fees levied upon entry into the compound were twice as high as those due upon leaving. Probably the reasoning behind this regulation, which was also applied at Dolyan, was to divide the dues between buyer and seller. In practice, the entire amount must often have been borne by the buyer in the shape of higher prices. Merchants, on the other hand, found ways and means to evade payment. At Dolyan, traders opened up their bales and smuggled in their goods piecemeal, a practice also common in other places⁵⁴). Possibly the regulations at Maşkolur, which penalized purchases of small quantities as opposed to wholesale buying and selling, were designed to prevent just this kind of fraud. Opening the bales outside the fair grounds could be the source of yet another dispute. For while the village of Maşkolur belonged to the same foundation as did the fair, this was not necessarily the case in other places. Thus the official receiving the taxes of the surrounding area might claim the merchants' dues, thereby prejudicing the interests of the person or institution to whose finances the fairground duties were supposed to contribute.

Quite remarkable is the close connection of some of the more important fairs with pious and charitable establishments. Aside from the fact that Maşkolur and Alasonya formed part of the foundations of *Ibrahim Paşa* and *Ahmed I* respectively, the fair of Dolyan helped to finance a mosque constructed by the famous architect *Sinan. Rüstem Paşa*, Grand Vizier and husband to *Süleyman the Law-giver's* daughter, had founded this complex in Rodoscuk (Tekirdağ⁵⁵). The fairs of Usturuga and Doçin both supported the foundations of a certain *Ahmed Paşa*⁵⁶). In Anatolia, the fair of Seyyid Gazi was connected with the foundation known by the same name. It was apparently visited by many people that combined attendance at the fair with participation in religious ceremonies performed by the heterodox dervishes who had made this locality famous⁵⁷). Equally the complex

⁵⁴) MD 85, p. 112. A similar practice was also current among merchants bound for Bursa and Istanbul after trading in Iran: MD 89, p. 23.

⁵⁵) The fair had produced the meagre revenue of 934 *akçe* before passing into the hands of *Rüstem Paşa*. In 963/1555—56 he was granted freehold property of the fair grounds. The *Rüstem Paşa* mosque of Tekirdağ was the most prominent public building in the town; compare *IA*, article 'Tekirdağ'.

⁵⁶) It has not been possible to establish the identity of this person. However, the fair of Doçin is mentioned in TT 70, a *tımar* register from the year 925/1518—19 concerning the Paşa sancağı of Rumeli as well as the surrounding area (p. 243). Here the dues normally payable to the supervisor of the market (*ih̄tisab*) were given out as a *tımar*. The fair took place during two months of the year. Most business was apparently undertaken during the month of July (Temmuz), while a much smaller share was transacted in the month Azar. This term in Arabic corresponds to March and in Persian to November-December of the solar year, Julian style. Compare Wüstenfeld-Mahlersche Vergleichungstabellen . . ., ed. J. Mayr, B. Spuler. Wiesbaden 1961, p. 85. — As no reference is made in the tax register to *Ahmed Paşa's* foundation, we must assume that either it was not yet in existence or else that the *ih̄tisab* taxes did not form part of it.

⁵⁷) MD 73, p. 302, Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi D 493.

of 400—500 shops near Alaşehir contributed a respectable sum to the upkeep of the Atik Ali Paşa Mosque in Istanbul⁵⁸).

In certain cases, the founders of pious and charitable institutions were particularly concerned about developing the commercial potential of the land in their possession. Our sources recount how *Rüstem Paşa* moved a small village fair to an empty place located on his own freehold property, where he had the necessary buildings erected. What we hear about the business centre in Alaşehir forms part of the same pattern: *Ali Paşa* also acquired a small marketing establishment and moved it to new and more spacious quarters located upon his freehold property. Thereby, in both cases, the viziers in question levied commercial taxes not directly because of their official position, but acted as property-holders offering business premises for rent. Indirectly, of course, their position in the Ottoman power structure was not unrelated to the matter: for they would scarcely have been able to assemble such extensive properties had it not been for their official standing.

Traders, however, seem to have possessed fairly permanent rights to the shops they tenanted⁵⁹). At the Dolyan fair, at least, some of the merchants could claim to have acquired their shops with their own money or even to have built them. In the former case, it is possible that no actual purchase had taken place, but that the merchants had gained possession through permanent leases of the type favoured by many pious foundations⁶⁰). Under such a contract, the lessee paid most of his rent as an entry fine. Thereby he acquired the right to pass the lease on to his children, who in turn owed a sum of money upon entering into their inheritance. That this was probably the situation can be concluded from the merchants' complaint that if they failed to attend the fair for a few years, the foundation administrator would turn the store over to someone else. He could scarcely have done so if the shops had been the merchants' freehold property.

On rents owed by traders, we have some information both from Dolyan and from Maşkolur. In the latter place, if around one thousand stores yielded a revenue of 19,500 *akçe*, the average rent should have been about 20 *akçe*. In Dolyan, there were three categories of stores, large, medium and small. For the largest, rent amounted to 40 *akçe*, while the smaller ones brought the foundation 30 and 25 *akçe* apiece. These were fairly large sums, considering that in a lively port town like Tekirdağ, shops could be rented for the duration of a whole year against payment of 10—30 *akçe*⁶¹). Fairs, on the other hand, seem to have lasted only for about ten to fifteen days. It is of course risky to conclude that most merchants could do as much business in such a place as they would do within a year in a provincial port

⁵⁸) Apart from TK 571, p. 163a/b compare Ömer Lütfi Barkan—Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Istanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* [A Register of Istanbul Pious Foundations, Dated 953/1546]. Istanbul 1970, p. 69

⁵⁹) MD 78, p. 310, 314.

⁶⁰) Compare Barkan, *Askeri Kassam*, op. cit., p. 56—57.

⁶¹) TK 572, p. 11af. A room in one of the big business buildings (*han*) in Istanbul could be rented for 100 *akçe* a year, compare *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, article 'Istanbul' by Halil İnalcık, p. 236.

town. But individual profits must have been high enough for the expenditure on rent and transportation to appear worthwhile.

Pious foundations could administer their holdings either directly or through an intermediary. Just as the state was often induced to farm out taxes in order to obtain ready cash, similar necessities prompted foundation administrators to do likewise. In such a case merchants had to pay additional sums of money to the tax farmer. Traders in Dolyan once tried to escape from this situation by complaining directly to the central administration. They received an imperial edict prohibiting the surcharges, but which did not forbid the foundation administrators to farm out their dues⁶²).

Security at the fairs was the responsibility of the provincial governor. However, the central administration also intervened directly by sending a janissary officer (*yayabaşı*). On the other hand, it is difficult to say whether this officer was actually present at the fair in person. Often he was burdened with other, totally unrelated responsibilities as well, such as the confiscation of the estates of deceased janissaries⁶³). Sometimes merchants were accompanied by janissaries on their way to and from the fair. However, this precaution did not necessarily protect them from attack, as becomes apparent from an investigation conducted in 1026/1617. In fact, it was established that many of the robbers were important men (*ekâbir*), holders of military tax assignments (*sipahi*) and people associated with the janissary corps⁶⁴). To make matters even more complicated, robbers could often count on finding a safe refuge in the so-called *serbest tımar*, areas whose taxes had been assigned en bloc to certain high administrative functionaries and could therefore not easily be entered by ordinary state officials⁶⁵).

Other documents explain that the robbers were frequently irregular soldiers (*levend*) who wore the characteristic garb of the janissaries, namely raincoat, collared robe and lining (*astar*). They were armed with warknives (*kürde, varsak*) and even with guns⁶⁶). In practice, it was probably impossible to distinguish between robbers posing as janissaries and janissaries turned robbers. Not only merchants complained about this situation, but the administrators of pious foundations that had been assigned fair dues also raised their voice in protest. In 1024/1615 the administrator of Maşkölur procured a *ferman*, which stated that more than a hundred janissaries had invaded the fair grounds and carried off almost 150,000 *akçe*⁶⁷). Moreover, the foundation had to fend off attempts at dues collection on

⁶²) MD 78, p. 310.

⁶³) MD 76, p. 48.

⁶⁴) MD 82, p. 95.

⁶⁵) See for instance MD 5, p. 446; MD 6, p. 195.

⁶⁶) MD 76, p. 48.

⁶⁷) MD 80, p. 559, (1. document) This constituted a considerable sum even though by this time the *akçe* had been devalued and the price index risen from 179.97 in 1573 to 630.66 in 1605—06 and 593.43 in 1623—25. See Barkan, *Fiyat Hareketleri*, op. cit., p. 569. For an earlier complaint of the same type concerning Dolya, see MD 73, p. 15 (1003/1594—95).

the part of other officials hungry for revenue: even an imperial rescript probably had only limited value in such cases⁶⁸).

As far as the central administration was concerned, an attempt was made to remedy the situation: several rescripts promulgated in 1615 deposed the janissary guards (*yasakci*). Judges were ordered to refrain from employing them in any capacity in or around the fairs, even if they could produce documents ordering their reinstatement⁶⁹). However, since no effective alternative was provided for the protection of merchants, this measure cannot have solved the security problem. In later years other expedients were attempted as well: we hear of certain fairs that were moved from the open country into the district centre⁷⁰). Merchants travelled in armed caravans⁷¹). Foreign traders, particularly the French, avoided visiting the fairs altogether and conducted their business either within Salonika itself or through the offices of local middlemen⁷²). Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that foundation administrators complained of declining receipts.

In several cases, the local population took drastic steps to protect itself. In the first half of the seventeenth century, villagers, monks, or other interested parties quite frequently petitioned for the abolition of a market or fair in the area where they lived. Arguments put forward in such cases were more or less standardized: often the fair was an occasion for drunken brawls. These molested the inhabitants not only directly but indirectly as well, because of the demands from local administrators who invariably tried to make a profit out of their police duties. Or else the gathering itself attracted robbers, among whom the Albanians seem to have had a particularly bad reputation. In all cases, the central administration gave in to these demands and abolished the market or fair in question, thereby tacitly acknowledging that it was impossible to protect the gathering⁷³).

Perhaps we can even connect the scarcity of Ottoman documentation on the Balkan fairs after about 1650 with a temporary eclipse due to lack of security. Thereby, the following general picture emerges: Some of the more important Thessalian fairs started out as small-scale local gatherings (Alasonya, Dolyan) or as at best a regional fair (Maşkolur). Protection accorded by pious foundations, such as were instituted by the Sultans themselves or by powerful personages of the court, seems to have played an important role in promoting certain gatherings

⁶⁸) For a document protecting the fair at Maşkolur against intervention of this kind compare MD 80, p. 559 (2. document).

⁶⁹) MD 80, p. 439, MD 81, p. 135. For a similar measure in 18th century Walachia compare Penelea, op. cit., p. 36.

⁷⁰) Svoronos, op. cit., p. 210.

⁷¹) Mehlan, op. cit., p. 39.

⁷²) Svoronos, op. cit., p. 211—212.

⁷³) Compare MD 78, p. 408, 459; MD 85, p. 193; for a similar case concerning a market see MD 78, p. 65. — For a parallel case in Walachia see Penelea, op. cit., p. 36—37. At times the administration also acted upon its own initiative, for instance when a fair in the administration district of Preboj (Hersek) was closed down in 991/1583 (MD 52, p. 82).

to the rank of regional and even interregional fairs. At least until insecurity became rampant in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and possibly even beyond this date, the influence of such foundations may have kept robbers and soldiers under some degree of control. In addition, founders provided enlarged and possibly improved installations for the conduct of business.

This state of affairs again demonstrates the dependance of merchants upon the central administration. At the same time, it is obvious that during the sixteenth century the protection of trade was part and parcel of Ottoman government policy⁷⁴). Only when the central administration lost control over many of its soldiers and officials, the tide turned against the merchants. It is perhaps too early to claim that an incipient tendency toward commercialization was stymied by the revenue crisis which the Ottoman government underwent toward the end of the sixteenth century. But certain indicators do point in this direction.

In the last quarter of the sixteenth century the closing of the frontier, population increase without commensurate growth in agriculture and the impact of the European price revolution all combined to confront the Treasury with demands it could not meet⁷⁵). As a result, local administrators, particularly in Anatolia, began to surround themselves with private armies that plundered peasants and small towns. In the Balkans conditions on the whole appear to have been somewhat less disturbed, but the basic situation was not all too different.

Even so, commercial development was not altogether cut off. In fact, at the same time we can observe a tendency to the contrary, since the spread of tax-farming brought more goods into the market, tax-farmers being responsible for cash payments at certain set dates. In the same manner, the spread of commercial agriculture, particularly in areas within easy reach of Istanbul, must have increased the scope of market operations. Since the central administration needed the tax farmers to collect revenue, the financial operations of these people became very difficult to control.

This situation accounted for the preponderant role of tax farmers, state officials, and former state officials in commerce. They were in a position to profit from European demand for grain, if necessary by smuggling. Under these circumstances, merchants never constituted themselves as a corporate group vis à vis the central administration. Whatever centrifugal tendencies there were appeared in the political rather than in the economic sphere. Local notables concentrated on the acquisition of estates and the political power necessary to retain them. Marketing was left to merchants who depended more or less upon the estate-holders whose men-of-business they were. By the same token, merchants who were subjects of the Ottoman Empire were not in a position to gain political power as long as the

⁷⁴) Halil İnalcık, *Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire*. In: *Journal of Economic History*, XXIX (1969), p. 102.

⁷⁵) For a study of this problem compare Mustafa Akdağ, *Celâli İsyanları, (1550 to 1603) [The Celâli Uprisings, 1550—1603]*. Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları No. 144. Ankara 1963. For a recent summary: Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, The Classical Age 1300—1600*. London 1973, p. 47.

The Early History of the Balkan Fairs

region in which they lived and traded was part of the Empire. Increased activity by European merchants served only to perpetuate the situation.

These factors explain why European demand led to a gradual reorientation of Ottoman commerce. Internal trade which had been developing vigorously in many parts of the Empire during the sixteenth century, gradually declined at least in relative importance. Import—export trade exercised a more and more profound influence upon the economic structure of the more accessible parts of the Ottoman Empire, and the Balkan fairs were largely transformed into a mechanism for the distribution of European imported goods⁷⁶).

⁷⁶) Comparison of the map published by Stoianovich, loc. cit., p. 280 and the one appended to the present article shows that individual fairs rose and declined, but that the grouping along two major routes remained unchanged. It has not been possible to include the fairs of Preboj and Varna in the map on p. 155, since they were only located after this article had gone to press.

Concerning the Balkan fairs in the mid-nineteenth century compare most recently Rifat Önsöy, *Balkanmessen und ihre Bedeutung im Handel des Osmanischen Reiches mit den mitteleuropäischen Staaten*, to be published among the proceedings of the VIII. Congress of the Türk Tarin Kurumu, Ankara.

