CHAPTER 04

The Ottoman Period, 1571-1878

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Conquest and integration: the background and aftermath of the War of Cyprus

Aims

This unit examines the situation in the Ottoman Empire and Cyprus on the eve of the conquest of the island by the Ottomans, the events of the War of Cyprus, as well as the policies adopted by the new rulers of the island.

After studying this unit, students will be in a position to

•   Understand the historical background which led to the Ottoman conquest

•   Understand the ways, in which the Ottomans attempted to integrate the island into the Empire

Keywords

•   Serfs

•   *Francomati*

•   Conquest

•   Incorporation

•   Survey (*tahrir*)

•   Colonization (*sürgün*)

•   Pious Foundations (*vakıf*)

•   *Devşirme*

•   Islamizations

•   Church of Cyprus

Introductory Comments

This unit consists of three sections:

•   The *first* analyzes the conditions prevailing in the Ottoman Empire and Cyprus in the 16th century

•   The *second* relates the events of the War of Cyprus

•   The *third* studies the policies adoped by the Ottomans in Cyprus after the conquest

The Ottoman Empire and Cyprus in the 16th century

• The Ottoman Empire at the time of the War of Cyprus

Towards the middle of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire had reached t**he limits of its territorial expansion** and the first signs of a transformation in its classical institutions started to become visible.

From the **economic point of view**, this period is characterized by **decline of commerce** due to the discovery of new trade routes, permitting the Europeans to circumvent the Middle East. Moreover, in the last decades of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire suffered a serious **financial and monetary crisis**, which caused inflation, rise in prices and devaluation of the Ottoman silver coin, the *akçe*.

Also, in this period, the Ottomans were involved in **long and costly wars on various fronts**, with the *Habsburgs* in Europe, the *Safavids* of Iran in the East, as well as the *Venetians* in the Mediterranean. As a result, **military successes became much more rare** and **Ottoman expansion**, which had hitherto been continuous, **virtually stopped**.

A result of economic crisis and military failure was the gradual **loosening of the central government's control over the provinces**. Moreover, fundamental institutions, which were considered an integral part of the Ottoman system, like the *timariot system*, the *Janissaries*, and even the character of the office of the *Sultan*, **were distorted and eroded**, creating a sense of malaise in Ottoman society.

• Cyprus under Venetian Rule

Before the Ottoman conquest, Cyprus was part of the **Venetian dominions**. At that time, *Venice* faced economic problems, especially due to the decline of Mediterranean trade, caused by the discovery of new sea routes. **Economic necessity** forced the Venetians to attempt to **financially exploit the island to the limit.**

In this period, the agrarian society of Cyprus was organized under a f**eudal regime:** Around 40% of the inhabitants of the island were *serfs*; they were regarded as part of the property of the *feudal lord* and were obliged to work for him. Another category were the *francomati*, who had to pay heavy taxes to the feudal lord, in order to preserve their liberty, while they had to perform public service on specific days each year.

Social discontent was aggravated by the **religious subjugation** of the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the island. The highest administrative offices were occupied by Catholics, while the authorities attempted to impose the Latin dogma and culture, suppressing the *Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus*.

Foreseeing the imminent Ottoman operation in Cyprus, the Venetians tried to **organize the defences of the island.** Their most important action in this respect was the **rebuilding of the fortifications of Nicosia,** which involved the demolition of the medieval walls and the construction of new ones,

adapted to the military technology of the times.

The War of Cyprus (1570-1571)

The Ottoman forces landed at *Larnaca* in July 1570. The town had been left undefended, since the Venetians chose **to focus the defence of the island on two heavily fortified cities**, *Nicosia and Famagusta.*

• The Siege of Nicosia

The Ottomans chose to strike first at **Nicosia**, due to its **strategic position** at the centre of the island, and expecting that, as the capital, its fall would have significant **psychological repercussions**.

Lala Mustafa Pasha

In the end of July 1570, the Ottoman army, under General *Lala Mustafa Pasha*, arrived at Nicosia and was positioned along the southern and southeastern side of the city walls. With constant **raids and bombardments,** the Ottomans succeeded in **eroding the morale of the defenders**, already suffering from disease, ill-discipline and **discontent**, due to the refusal of the authorities to distribute provisions.

The final assault came on September 9, 1570 and resulted in the **conquest of Nicosia.** According to Ottoman practice, after the conquest, the city was subjected to **three-day looting** and enslavement of its inhabitants.

• The Siege of Famagusta

After the fall of Nicosia, the Ottoman forces turned their attention **to Famagusta.** The defenders of the city were **less numerous** than those of Nicosia, however they were **better organized,** with **higher morale**, and with **able and popular leaders.**

Thus, they managed to resist the Ottoman assaults for **almost one year.** In the summer of 1571, however, they started to suffer from **lack of supplies**, which led to the **decision to surrender.** The surrender agreement guaranteed the safety and free passage of the defenders, however, it was not observed and the leaders were executed, while the city was subjected to the customary **three-day looting.**

With the peace treaty of 1573, Venice paid **indemnity** to the Ottomans and **forfeited any claim to Cyprus.**

Ottoman Policy after the Conquest

As they were interested in **incorporating Cyprus into the Empire as a thriving province,** the Ottomans, with their long experience from previous conquests, knew that it would be necessary to **revitalize the economy and agriculture** of the island and to achieve the **return to normality** as soon as possible.

• Cyprus after the end of the War

War had brought **disaster** to Cyprus. During the hostilities, more than half of the population of the island **had been killed, taken prisoner or had emigrated.** From the ca. **200.000** inhabitants, who were living there on the eve of the War, the census of 1572 showed that only around **60.000-70.000** remained.

But even those who had remained lived in **miserable conditions**, since, due to the hostilities, **agriculture had been abandoned** and the **economy had been destroyed**, while the island suffered from **epidemics**.

• The First Ottoman survey

The taking of a *survey* or *tahrir* was the first step for the return of a conquered territory to **normality** and for its **incorporation** into the Empire. Through the survey, the Ottomans became **acquainted with the resources** of a new province, located the problems, and could plan the measures needed for the revitalization of its economy.

The first Ottoman survey in Cyprus was initiated immediately after the conquest of Famagusta and was completed a year later. The result shows that, from the remaining inhabitants, o**nly a small part lived in cities**, not only because of **the agrarian character** of local society, but also a**s a result of the military operations**, while certain villages were more populous than most cities.

Example 1:Number of taxpayers in selected cities and villages of Cyprus, according to the first Ottoman survey (1572):	
Nicosia	235
Famagusta	1741
Larnaca	63
Limassol	177
Paphos	274
Kyrenia	198
Kilani	523
Episkopi	482
Chrysochou	340
Rizokarpaso	399
Source: Jennings (1993, pp. 200-201)	

• Measures to achieve prosperity

A fundamental component of Ottoman imperialism was the attempt **to win over the inhabitants** of a conquered province with **mild and just administration,** aiming to achieve **economic prosperity** and **smooth incorporation** into the Empire.

As the Ottomans were aware of the **adverse economic consequences** inflicted by the War on the island, they freed captives and gave incentives to those who had emigrated to return, aiming at **revitalizing the island's economy**. That is, they tried **to win over the natives by improving their economic and social conditions** and by establishing **a mild administration**, with strict control over the Governors.

> **Example 2**
>
> Firman, May 6, 1572, issued by Sultan Selim II towards the Ottoman officials of Cyprus: "The island of *Cyprus has been captured by force; therefore the situation of the **reaya** somewhat deteriorated. So no violence should be done to them; they should be treated with **justice**. It is important both in the **enforcement of the decisions of the sharia (religious law)** and in the **levying of state taxes**, to regard and protect them, so that the country may thus revert to its former prosperous state"*. Source: İnalcık (1973, p. 121)

In contrast to the Venetian period, the Ottomans, through a land tenure system which f**avoured the small cultivator,** enabled the peasants **to appropriate the land they cultivated** and to pass it on to their children. (see 2.2)

At the same time, they applied **a milder taxation system**, reducing the *tithe* and other heavy taxes, and **abolishing forced labour.** In return, however, they imposed on the Greek Orthodox Christians of the island the *cizye*, **a head-tax paid by the Christian and Jewish** subjects of the Sultan.

• Policy towards the Greek Orthodox Church

In the framework of their attempt to win over the Christian inhabitants, the Ottomans followed their **regular policy of incorporating the Orthodox Church into the Ottoman order.**

The reasons which imposed this policy were, initially, **religious ones**, as **Islamic Law** required **the protection of the *zimmi***, that is, Christians and Jews, who had the right to **keep their faith and practice it**, under certain conditions (see 2.3.2).

There were also **political reasons,** since, by strengthening the Greek Orthodox Church, the Ottomans attempted **to exploit the conflict between Orthodox and Catholic** by aggravating their differences, in order to minimize the possibility of a reconquest of the island by Western forces with local help.

However, **administrative reasons** were probably the most important, as the Ottomans aimed at using the Church in order to facilitate **internal administration and the preservation of order.** The mechanism of the Orthodox Church functioned for centuries in Cyprus and **preserved a network**

extending to the smallest village of the island. Thus, the Ottomans attempted to exploit the institution of the Church, in order **to facilitate administration and tax-collection**, and **to ensure the loyalty of the Greek Orthodox population of the island.**

• Colonization

The survey of 1572 revealed the dire **demographic effects** of the War, particularly in the cities, indicating to the Ottomans that, if they desired to turn the island into a profitable province, they had to take measures for **the increase of its population.** A fundamental tool of Ottoman social and economic policy in order to deal with this problem was *colonization* or *sürgün* —t**he forced transfer of population** from other areas of the Empire.

The reason for applying the policy of colonization was, firstly, the desire of the Ottomans **to increase the population**, in the hope that this would lead **to economic development.** The **transfer of artisans** to Cyprus was an indication of their desire to revitalize the economy. A secondary objective was **the introduction to the island of a Muslim element**, which was expected to be more loyal, in order to **facilitate control** of the locals. A third motive was the desire to alleviate **the problem of overpopulation in Anatolia,** which, in the late 16th century, had led to protracted periods of unrest and instability in the area.

Example 3

Firman of Sultan Selim II to the *kadıs* of provinces of Anatolia (September 21, 1572): "As a consequence of the invasion by a great number of soldiers, many parts of the island of Cyprus were destroyed, and those places which were affected were places **suitable for agriculture** and the setting up of gardens and vineyards, and the cultivation of sugar canes … The island's towns and villages and other lands and gardents **should once more be inhabited and tended and developed** … As an incentive, those who arrive at the said island shall be **exempted from tithes and other duties for two years and also be pardoned of their offences** … The following people will be sent to the said island: people **living in barren, rocky, steep places**; people who are **in need of more land**; those who are known for their **bad character and unlawful activities**; those who are **not registered in the local register,** those who are **newcomers** to a place; those who are staying in places by **paying rents** and those people who **have had land disputes** among themselves for ages; people who **emigrated to towns** from rural areas and are living there, and **those who are idle** and without definite employment and **guilty of threatening behaviour.** To these should be added the **following craftsmen and traders** on the basis of **one family out of ten** from each town and city: Shoe-makers, boot-makers, tailors, skull-cap makers, weavers, sack weavers, wool carders, silk dyers and manufacturers, cooks, soup-makers, candlestick-makers, saddlers, farriers, grocers, tanners, carpenters, master builders, stone cutters, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, and other people of crafts and trades. I order that to these, able-bodied men shall be added and all these people shall, with proper clothes upon them and **accompanied by their flocks of sheep and goats and farming equipment**, be transported to the said island **before the winter comes**". Source: Gazioğlu (1990, pp. 297-299)

• Islamizations

Islamizations were a basic characteristic of this period, although we do not possess adequate statistical information or the manner in which they were performed.

In certain cases, in the early years, it seems that the practice of *devşirme*, the **forced recruitment**

of young boys from Christian peasant families, may have been applied, to some extent, in Cyprus. However, islamizations were **never a permanent policy** of the Ottomans in the island and, at the time of the conquest, the practice of *devşirme* had already started to decline.

Most islamizations in Cyprus appear **to have been voluntary,** aiming at **relief from the *cizye* tax,** which was paid only by the Christians. In general, islamization was an option, which **enabled someone to preserve his property and social influence**, ensuring tax exemptions and opportunities of upward mobility in an Islamic state.

A piece of evidence, pointing to the frequencey of islamizations in the first years after the conquest, is the great number of Muslims, who bear the surname "***bin Abdullah***" ("*son of Abdullah*"), which was characteristic **of those, whose father was a non-Muslim**. Data from the 1590s indicate that, at this time, **more than a third of the Muslims living in the island were islamized Christians.**

A local group which was prone to islamization were **the nobles and feudal lords of the Venetian period,** who received land and offices, **thus continuing to form part of the ruling class** of the island also under the new regime.

• Pious Foundations (Vakıf)

Another way utilized by the Ottomans in order to revitalize the social and economic life of a conquered province was the ***vakıf*** (pl. ***evkaf*** = pious foundations). The ***vakıf*** was **a permanent grant of personal property for the creation and maintenance of charitable institutions.** The foundation's income was earmarked for the construction, staffing, provisioning or repair of a **charitable institution**, like a mosque, a hospital, a soup-kitchen, a school, an aqueduct, a bridge, etc.

The source of income for the ***vakıf*** mainly came from **the dedication of urban or rural real property,** while in later years it could also come from **interest from capital**, although this was considered irregular, as Islamic Law prohibited usury.

Through the ***vakıf***, **centres** were created, which functioned **as nuclei for the development of a city's quarters,** therefore, the *vakıf* was **the fundamental way of economic and social development of cities in the Ottoman Empire.**

The Latin Cathedral of Haghia Sophia which was turned into a mosque ca. 1570

The contribution of the pious foundations to the development of a city was multi-faceted. From a **religious point of view,** through this institution mosques and schools were founded. The ***vakıf*** also established the most important **social centres** of a city, like baths, hospitals and soup-kitchens for the poor. Finally, the **economic infrastructure** of a city was supported through the pious foundations, with the creation of inns, hostels and markets.

Some of the most important pious foundations in Cyprus were the Latin cathedral of **Hagia Sophia**

in Nicosia, which was turned into a mosque and a ***vakıf*** by Sultan Selim II, the foundation of the conqueror of Nicosia ***Lala Mustafa Pasha***, which was named ***Ömeriye***, in honour of the Caliph Umar, as well as ***the aqueduct of Bekir Pasha*** in Larnaca.

SUMMARY

"The Ottoman Empire and Cyprus" gives a general presentation of the situation in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, on the eve of the conquest of Cyprus. At this time, the Empire had reached the limits of its territorial expansion and confronted a serious economic crisis, while its fundamental institutions were being transformed, leading to the weakening of central authority.

At the same time, in Cyprus, under Venetian rule, a feudal regime was applied and a large part of the inhabitants were serfs. The discontent of the locals was aggravated by the subjugation of the Greek Orthodox to the Catholic Church.

"The War of Cyprus (1570-1571) gives a brief presentation of the events of the War of Cyprus (1570-1571), with particular focus on the sieges of Nicosia and Famagusta.

"Ottoman Policy after the Conquest" analyzes the various policies adopted by the Ottomans in Cyprus after the conquest, in view of their attempts to bring prosperity back to the island, after the destruction of the War.

Among the policies they adoped, was a survey, which familiarized them with the demographic and economic situation of the island, and, initially, mild administration. The incorporation of the Greek Orthodox Church into the administrative mechanism also helped in this direction. Colonization was used in order to increase the population, as well as for the creation of a nucleus of a Muslim community, while there were also islamizations, which were usually voluntary. Finally, the institution of the *vakıf* provided the foundation for the economic and social development of cities.

The Ottoman system in Cyprus in the first century after the conquest, 1571-1670

Aims

This unit examines the application of the classical Ottoman system in Cyprus, in administration, land-tenure, categories of population, as well as the position of the Church, in the first century after the conquest. It also examines the adverse conditions of life and their effects on the island's population.

After finishing this unit, the student will be in a position to

•   Understand the basic Ottoman institutions, which were applied to Cyprus after the conquest

•   Understand the position and ideology of the Greek Orthodox Church in the period

•   Evaluate the conditions of life of the Cypriots and their demographic effects

Keywords

• *Beylerbeylik*	• *Beylerbeyi*
• *Divan*	• *Kaza*
• *Kadı*	• Timariot System
• *Timar*	• *Sipahi*
• Tithe	• *Askeri*
• *Reaya*	• *Zimmi*
• *Cizye*	• *Berat*
• *Locust*	• *Drought*
• *Malaria*	• *Plague*

Introductory Comments

This unit consists of five sections:

- The *first* is a survey of the administration of Cyprus

- The *second* describes the land-tenure system and its functioning

- The *third* describes the categories of population recognized by the Ottomans

- The *fourth* analyzes the position of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman system and the activity and ideology of the prelates

- The *fifth* describes the conditions of life and their demographic effects

Ottoman administration

After the Ottoman conquest, Cyprus became **a province** (*beylerbeylik*) under the administration of a *Beylerbeyi*, an official who was appointed by the central authorities and came to the island as its political and military Governor, with Nicosia as his seat.

The central administrative organ of the province was the *Divan*, the **administrative council,** presided by the *Beylerbeyi* and consisting of various high Ottoman officials, like the *Defterdar*, who was responsible for the economy, the *Müfti* **of Nicosia**, the highest legal officer, issuing **legal opinions based on Islamic Law,** and the *Ağa of the Janissaries,* the Commander of the island's Janissary force.

Main administrative districts of the island were the *kaza*, under the jurisdiction of a *kadı*, a **judge adjudicating based on the Islamic Law.** The capital of a *kaza* and seat of a *kadı* was usually a city or a large village, like Kythrea, Kilani or Lefka.

The Land-tenure system

• The Timariot system

In the classical Ottoman period land-tenure was based on the *timariot system*. According to this system, after a conquest, **all of the cultivable land came under the ownership of the Sultan,** and was named *miri*.

The Sultan, in turn, divided *miri* land into *timars*, that is *fiefs or military estates,* and distributed them to the *sipahi*, who enjoyed the right of *usufruct* over the land, that is, the **right to use and exploit its resources, without ownership**. The *timar* was a source of income for the *sipahi*, who, in return, had **to perform certain services to the state.**

According to the classical Ottoman system, the *sipahi* constituted the **cavalry of the Ottoman army,** being under the obligation to participate in the Sultan's campaigns, together with a number of soldiers, according to the income accrued by their *timar*. The *sipahi*, together with the *Janissaries*, formed the basis of the Ottoman army. Moreover, they were obliged to reside in the province, in which their *timar* was situated and were **responsible for the enforcement of order in it.**

The *timar* was granted to the *sipahi* through a *berat* from the Sultan, and was considered as a **personal grant to him**. The most fertile areas, like Messaoria, Lefka or Kythrea, were reserved as *sultanic hass,* that is, their income went directly to the **Imperial Treasury.**

• Sipahi and peasants

The *sipahi* granted the land to **peasants, who cultivated it**, in return for a tax *(tapu resmi).* The farmer who received the land in this way, **had the right of cultivation, but not ownership** of the

land. He could transfer the right of cultivation to another farmer **only with the consent of the *sipahi* and the payment of a new tax to him,** while he could directly bequeath the land **only to his male offspring.**

After receiving the right of cultivation, the peasant was committed *vis-à-vis* the ***sipahi***. He could not leave the land **uncultivated for three consecutive years**, while he was obliged to give to the ***sipahi*** the *tithe*, that is, **a percentage of the total production, in kind.**

The ***sipahi***, who formed one of the **basic pillars of the Ottoman army,** did not receive a salary, and **lived exclusively off the taxes** and obligations the peasants owed to them. For this reason, the law wanted **the peasant to be tied to the land.** Thus, the ***sipahi*** could **bring back** someone who had left the ***timar***, up to 20 years later or **to impose a fine** (***çift-bozan***), for abandoning his fields.

This was the classic land-tenure system in the Ottoman Empire, which maintained the largest part of the army **without the payment of salaries.** Thus, the land-tenure system **was closely related to the military organization** of the Empire.

From the agricultural point of view, this system **favoured small cultivators**, who cultivated cereals, vegetables, legumes or other products and had as their main aim **subsistence** or **their retail sale** in cities or fairs.

Categories of population

• Class: Askeri and Reaya

In the Ottoman Empire, the population was divided into two classes, depending on whether a person belonged to the taxpayers or to the ruling class.

The ***askeri*** were the **ruling or military class**. Besides the **highest military officers,** this class included all **state officials,** the members of the Ottoman bureaucracy, the religious representatives, the members of the legal profession, etc. The ***askeri*** were considered as providing services to the state and **did not pay taxes**, while they consisted, for the most part, of Muslims. The ***askeri*** class also included **the family and servants** of these people.

The second class were the ***reaya***, the "**flock**", made up of **all taxpaying subjects of the Sultan regardless of religion,** that is, the large majority of the population. The Sultan considered that God had entrusted the ***reaya*** to him and that it was **his duty to protect them**, ensuring the reign of justice in his domains. Only towards the end of the Ottoman period did the term "***reaya***" come to mean the Sultan's Christian subjects.

The distinction between ***askeri*** and ***reaya*** was **very strict**, and it was difficult for someone to change status.

- ## Religion: Muslim and Zimmi

The subjects of the Sultan were divided into two categories, depending on their religion: the Muslims and the *Zimmi*.

The *Zimmi* were for the Muslims the "**people of the Book**", that is, Christians or Jews who, according to Islam, possessed a part of true religious revelation and, for that reason, enjoyed **the right to preserve their religion** and to perform their religious duties in an Islamic state under certain **conditions and limitations.**

A basic condition for the maintenance of the rights of the *zimmi* was the **paying of the *cizye* tax**, also known as "**head-tax**", which was paid to the state by adult male non-Muslims, who could support themselves.

The Greek Orthodox Church in the 16th and 17th century

- ## Berat

The Ottomans **did not recognize corporate bodies, but only persons,** who were subjects of the Sultan. Thus, the position of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman regime was **not defined by an agreement among institutions,** but was expressed by the **personal granting of a *berat*** to a bishop. In order for a cleric to occupy a bishop's throne, he needed to obtain **the consent of the Sultan**, through the issuing in his name of a *berat*, which was an **appointment document, enumerating the holder's rights and obligations.**

A basic condition for the issuing of the *berat* was the **payment to the Imperial Treasury of the *peşkeş*,** an **institutionalized gift** to the Sultan, the sum of which corresponded to the income to be accrued by the office. Thus, there were fixed sums for specific bishoprics, according to the wealth of the province.

Other appointments of administrative officials were also made through the *berat*. Therefore, it seems that the Sultan regarded the Greek Orthodox prelates **as imperial officials,** granting them an office and receiving recompense, as he did with other members of the Ottoman bureaucracy.

In the text of the *berat* we may discern the interest of the Ottomans in immediately filling a vacant See, so that "**the collection of the government dues would not be interrupted**".

According to the text, the obligations of the *berat's* holder were to be **loyal**, to **"supervise the *reaya*",** that is, to ensure the docility of his flock, to pay the *peşkeş*, and to **regularly deliver the yearly dues, named *miri*, to the Sultan.**

The various articles of the *berat* define the **territorial jurisdiction of the Bishop,** his **economic**

privileges, his **hierarchical and disciplinary authority over the clergy,** his **jurisdiction over** his **flock and** his **rights vis-à-vis the Ottoman officials.**

• Orthodoxy and Catholicism

It appears that, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the position of the main representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus **was ambivalent between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.**

The most likely reason for this was **the hope of reconquest of the island** by a Christian force, which could only come from the West. This situation was also the result a) of the inability of the Church leaders to realize that the Ottoman conquest would be permanent and not merely a period of transition, b) of **the remnants of the long Latin domination of the island,** that is, of the **already existing relations between the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the Pope,** as well as c) of the **Latin propaganda**, through the *College of St. Athanasius* in Rome or agents sent to the Eastern Mediterranean.

• Cypriot bishops and scholars of the 16th and 17th centuries

After the Ottoman conquest, the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus was **on the verge of dissolution due to the War** and **the centuries of subjugation** to the Catholic Church. Due to the lack of sources, we know very little about its condition during the first years after the conquest.

The first canonical Archbishop of the island after the conquest was a certain *Timotheos* (1572-1587), who was enthroned by a Patriarchal Synod in Istanbul and came to Cyprus bearing a Patriarchal Letter and a *berat*. For the better part of the 17th century, two Archbishops held the Throne of Cyprus, *Christodoulos I* (1606-1641) and *Nikephoros I* (1641-1674). Later writers characterized these Archbishops as "*amphibious*", considering that they remained **ambivalent between Orthodoxy and Catholicism**, while it seems that they signed **a confession of faith to the Pope**.

In spite of the close relations with the West, during this period **the Patriarchate of Constantinople intervened** in several instances in the affairs of the Church of Cyprus, deposing clerics or bishops and arranging the ecclesiastical hierarchy, since, as Cyprus was a province of the Ottoman Empire, **the Patriarch played a leading role in the internal affairs of the local Greek Orthodox Church**.

An important Archbishop of this period was *Hilarion Kigalas* (1674-1678), a scholar from Nicosia, who studied in Rome and Padova and taught in several schools in the West, as well as in Istanbul. His tenure of the archiepiscopal see of Cyprus was brief, since **he lived the largest part of his life away from his homeland.**

The case of Hilarion Kigalas provides a characteristic example of the **political and cultural ties with the West,** as almost all scholars of the island **studied in Italy or other western countries**, most **never to return to Cyprus.** Besides the desire for education, another motive for this was the **liberation of the island** by a western power, which was also the basic reason for their **pro-catholic ideas.**

In the 16th and 17th centuries we witness the attempts of Cypriots to involve western princes **in an operation of reconquest,** albeit without any tangible results. The protagonist in these endeavours was *Charles Emmanuel I* (1580-1630), Duke of Savoy, who had **dynastic claims** on Cyprus.

Example 4

Letter of the Cypriot scholar Neophytos Rodinos (1579-1659), supporting the union of the Churches for the liberation of Cyprus: «*See, then, … for **what a trifle** our compatriots insist, for so many years, in being **enemies of the peace and concord of the Churches**, and are content not to be friends with such a great, noble and prosperous race …, with so many Christian kings, cities and princes, from whom … after all, **we expect our freedom**, rather than **from oracles and useless prophecies**, as some fantasize*". Source: Z. Tsirpanlis, 1999. Μορφές Επικοινωνίας του Κυπριακού Μοναχισμού με την Καθολική Δύση (17ος αι.). *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Μελετών Ιεράς Μονής Κύκκου*, 4. Nicosia: Kykkos Monastery Research Centre, 229-230.

Life in Cyprus

•   The demographic development of the population of Cyprus

In order to follow the demographic development of the population of Cyprus in the first century after the Ottoman conquest, we have to study a variety of sources, which are not always reliable. An important source in this respect is **the first Ottoman population survey**, which registered 23.000 Cypriot taxpayers, with only 25 Muslims in the entire island. This information must be complemented by the **periodic Ottoman registers of *cizye*-paying non-Muslims.**

According to estimations, based on the survey and the *cizye* registers, we have the following summary table, depicting the development of the population of non-Muslims in Cyprus:

1572	23.000 *hane*
1606	30.000 *hane*
1631	20.000 *hane*
1656	12.000 *hane*
Source: Jennings (1993, pp. 200-201)	

The **initial rise of population** is probably indicative of the attempt of the Ottomans to improve living conditions in the island right after the conquest.

In 1606, the population of Cyprus **was at its zenith**, with 30.000 tax-paying *zimmis*. Half a century

later, however, we observe a **sharp drop,** with fewer than half non-Muslim inhabitants remaining.

This decline was probably due to various factors, like **natural disasters** (droughts, locust attacks, epidemics and disease) and **social or political disturbances**, on which we have very little information. These factors probably caused the **death, emigration or islamization** of many inhabitants. An additional factor was **bad administration and heavy taxation,** as the attempts of the Ottomans for improving the conditions of the island (see 1.3.3) do not seem to have continued beyond the first decades after the conquest.

The demographic data we possess concern **exclusively the *zimmi*.** Estimating the Muslim population, on the other hand, is particularly difficult, as we possess **no reliable sources**. Based on the testimonies of travellers and other writers, we may estimate the percentage of Muslims in the island to around 18% of the total population ca. 1600, and to around 32% ca. 1640.

> **Example 5**
>
> Ottoman document of 1647, which refers to the taxation of Cyprus and the condition of the tax-payers: "*Formerly they were 20.000 payers of head-tax, but on account of the abundance of taxes and the weight of oppression a few thousand taxpayers fled and abandoned the country. Although only 16.500 head-tax payers remain in their places, those who are charged with collecting the head tax say that 20.000 hane is written in the new register. The collectors of the head tax are oppressive to the 16.500 head-tax payers concerning the 3.500 missing ones*". Source: Jennings (1993, 202-203).

• Natural disasters: drought and locust attacks

The basic reasons for the population decrease were the continuous **locust attacks, the epidemics, the drought, and the consequent famine**, in the first century of the Ottoman period, which continued into the following century. These factors led to **death and emigration**, while many Christians **were islamized**, in order to avoid the *cizye* tax.

One of the greatest scourges of Cyprus were the **locust attacks**, which d**estroyed agricultural production**, causing rise in prises and crises of famine. The inability of the inhabitants to deal with the problem led to the belief that this was **an evil sent from God** and could only be solved by **miraculous means**, with prayers and litanies.

The Ottoman administration tried to combat this scourge with ordinances to the inhabitants **to collect locust eggs** and hand them over to the authorities. However, this method did not produce any results, and the problem of the locusts was not solved until the last decades of the 19th century.

> **Example 6**
>
> The Dutch traveller Van Bruyn (1683) writes on locust in Cyprus: "*In the year 1668 throughout the island, but especially in the country round Famagusta, there was such a vast quantity of locusts that when they were on the wing **they were like a dark cloud through which the sun's rays could scarcely pierce** … I saw myself in the neighbourhood of Nicosia a great quantity of these insects, and remarked **that the fields they had cropped were burnt as though by fire**; my horse too at every step **crushed ten or twelve***". Source: Cobham (1908, 241-242).

Another important problem facing the Cypriot farmers was *drought*, which, like the locusts, **destroyed agricultural production,** causing famine. In this case too there was **no rational way** of tackling the problem, and the only refuge was religion, with litanies, particularly of the **Holy Icon of the Virgin of Kykkos**, which was considered miraculous against drought.

Drought, combined with locust, inflicted enormous damage on production, causing **high prices, poverty** and **famine**, while forcing many of the inhabitants **to emigrate**.

> **Example 7**
>
> The 18th century historian Archimandrite Kyprianos describes a crisis of famine: «*In 1757 great dearth in the island by r**eason of the drought and the locusts,** so that the people **were cooking wild colocasia, a noxious root, and eating them, with other wild herbs**. A great number **fled from the island to Syria and Asia Minor***». Source: Cobham (1908, 355).

Disease, epidemics and life expectancy

Among the permanent residents of Cyprus **life expectancy was quite low,** particularly among the poorer classes. A man over forty was considered of fairly advanced age, while **child mortality** was particularly high.

In the course of the year various diseases dominated the land, according to the season. The most common was *malaria*, which was **endemic in Cyprus** because of the climate and the morphology of the soil, particularly in the swamp areas of Larnaca and Famagusta. Malaria had grave **repercussions on the health and life-expectancy** of the locals, and even graver on foreigners, who were not used to the local climate.

Besides endemic malaria, the island was **sporadically attacked by epidemics,** with *plague* being the most prominent until the beginning of the 19th century, to be succeeded by *cholera* in the last decades of the Ottoman period.

A great plague epidemic burst in 1692, when it is said that **two thirds of the population of Cyprus**

Traditional 19th c. costumes of (from right to left) a Christian resident of Magossa (Famagusta, Cyprus), a Christian woman of Magossa, and a Greek monk of the Monastery of Tchiko, near Lefke (Lefka, Cyprus).

died, while in 1760 another epidemic erupted, which, according to the Archimandrite Kyprianos, **killed off a third of the inhabitants** and "*left whole villages desolate*". This latter epidemic was transmitted to Cyprus by sailors, who were saved from a wreck outside of Paphos and were transferred to Nicosia, **without the necessary precautions.**

This case highlights the **absence of a quarantine station** in Cyprus, as well as the lack of the necessary precautions taken by authorities in Western Europe for centuries. The first *quarantine station (lazaretto)* in Larnaca was founded in 1835. Sailors and passengers arriving from areas infected by epidemic remained in *quarantine* there for a period of time, in order to **ascertain their good health** before allowing them to circulate in Cyprus.

SUMMARY

"**Ottoman Administration**" is a general survey of the administrative status of Cyprus in the first century after the Ottoman conquest: the island became an independent province under the administration of a *beylerbeyi*.

"**The Land-tenure System**" describes the basic land-tenure system of the Ottoman Empire, the *timariot system*. Cultivable land was owned by the Sultan, who divided it into *timars* and distributed it to *sipahi*, aiming at the maintenance of part of the Ottoman army. The *sipahi*, in turn, distributed the land to cultivators, who were obliged to cultivate it and pay the tithe, in a system that favoured subsistence cultivators.

"**Categories of Population**" describes the categories of population recognized by the Ottomans. Socially, the subjects were divided into the *askeri* —the public servants, who did not pay taxes, and the *reaya* —the taxpayers. There was also division based on religion into Muslims and non-Muslims or *zimmi*. The latter were Christians and Jews, who retained their religious rights under certain conditions, like the payment of the *cizye* tax.

"**The Greek Orthodox Church in the 16th and 17th century**" analyzes the position of the Church in the first century after the conquest. Special attention is given to the *berat*, the appointment documents, which enumerated the rights and obligations of the bishops and defined their position within the Ottoman system. There is also mention of the relations of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus with Catholicism in the 17th century, which were based, to a great extent, on the hope of liberation.

"**Life in Cyprus**" describes the initial rise and later decline of the population of Cyprus in the decades that followed the Ottoman conquest. The explanations for this phenomenon, as well as for the low life-expectancy, may be found in the adverse conditions, due to locust attacks and drought, as well as in the bad sanitation, which contributed to the spread of disease and epidemics.

Cyprus in the age of Ottoman decentralization: the long 18th century

Aims

This unit examines the history of Cyprus in the age of Ottoman decentralization, covering the period between 1670-1830. It studies the changes in the administration, the political and social situation, as well as in the local institutions of authority in the island. It also examines the changes in classical Ottoman institutions, like the land-tenure system, with the creation of the *çiftliks*, and the consequences of the rise of commerce. Finally, it analyzes the causes and repercussions of the events of 1821 in Cyprus.

After finishing this unit, the student will be in a position to

- Know the developments in the administrative status of Cyprus;

- Understand the political and social situation in Cyprus;

- Understand the role of institutions, like the Church and the Dragoman;

- Understand the reasons and consequences of the development of the *çiftliks*;

- Understand the consequences of the rise of commerce;

- Understand the causes and repercussions of the events of 1821 in Cyprus.

Keywords

- Decline
- *Musellim*
- Church of Cyprus
- Education
- *Çiftlik*

- Decentralization
- *Muhassıl*
- Self-consciousness
- Dragoman of the Porte
- Commercialization

- *İltizam system*
- *Mukataa*
- *Sarraf*
- Colonial Economy
- Capitulations
- Protégés
- Bourgeoisie

- *Mültezim*
- Monetization
- Coastal Shipping
- Mercantilism
- Consulate
- Ionians

Introductory Comments

This unit consists of eight sections.

- The *first* section is a survey of the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire;

- The *second* section analyzes the administrative changes in Cyprus, as a result of the broader changes in the Ottoman Empire;

- The *third* section describes the social and political situation in Cyprus;

- The *fourth* section analyzes the administrative and cultural role of the Church;

- The *fifth* section studies the role of the Dragoman of the Porte;

- The *sixth* section analyzes the changes in the classical *timariot* system, the iltizam system and the creation of the *çiftliks*;

- The *seventh* section describes the social and economic changes, as a result of the capitulations and the rise of commerce;

- The *eighth* section analyzes the causes of the events of the 1821 in Cyprus, as well as their short- and long-term consequences.

Ottoman decentralization

By the 16th-17th century, among many officials and scholars there was **a growing sense that the Ottoman state had started to decline.** The main reason for this was **the gradual transformation of many of the basic institutions**, which were considered as having contributed to the founding and expansion of the Empire, like the *Janissary corps*, the *timariot system*, etc.

Influenced by the point of view of Ottoman authors, later historians considered that, from the end of the 16th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire **entered a period of decline**. Historians today tend to rather see this period as one of **gradual transformation and adaptation of Ottoman institutions,** dictated by new conditions in technology, external relations or the weakness of the central authorities.

Important elements of the idea of "decline" were **the cessation of the conquests** and the **beginning of territorial loss,** which started from the end of the 17th century. The impression of "decline" intensified during the 18th century, **with the increasing inability of the central authorities to control the periphery.** The 18th century was a period of decentralization, a fact also **reflected in the administration of Cyprus,** which was controlled by private *muhassıls*, local officials like the Dragoman, or the Church.

Administration

A century after the conquest, **around 1670,** after the completion of the conquest of Crete (1669), the Ottomans proceeded to an **administrative change** on the island: Cyprus, until then an independent province, passed under the jurisdiction of the *Kapudan Pasha, the Admiral of the Ottoman fleet.* As he was a high state official, he did not govern personally, but **administered through a representative, renting the yearly income of the island to the highest bidder,** who came to the island as a *Müsellim*, in order to administer and collect the taxes.

Soon, other administrative changes followed: **in 1703,** Cyprus was transferred to the jurisdiction of the *Grand Vezir,* **the highest official of the Ottoman bureaucracy**, who continued the practice of **farming out the taxes** of the island to a private individual. The latter paid a sum, and then went to Cyprus as *Muhassıl* **(tax-collector)**, who was, at the same time, **a political and military governor.** This administrative system naturally resulted in **the oppression of the inhabitants through heavy taxation,** since the *Muhassıl* was only interested in **personal gain.**

This regime was preserved in the island with minor differentiations **until the Ottoman reforms of the 1830s,** with a brief but important **interval** in the **period 1745-1750,** when Cyprus was transferred to the administration of *an independent Pasha.* The best known Governor of this period was *Ebu Bekir Pasha* (1746-1748), who constructed the *Larnaca Aqueduct* (1748-1750), probably the single most important development project of the entire Ottoman period.

Political and social conditions in the 18th century

• The condition of the Cypriots in the 18th century

According to the **Chronological History** of the **Archimandrite Kyprianos** (1788) (see 3.4.2), around the middle of the 18th century, Cyprus was **in a miserable condition,** with **high mortality rates** and **emigration** causing a **drastic reduction in the numbers of the** *reaya.*

The situation was aggravated by the policies of the administration, whose only aim was **to accumulate profits through taxation.** According to a British observer of the late 18th century, "*the income of the Governor is undefined, he can amass just **as much as his conscience allows"** (Cobham, 1908, 369). A result of this system was that *"in all the Turkish dominions there is probably no place **where the dues paid by their subjects are heavier"*** (Mariti, 1895, 6-8).

In order to deal with these phenomena, the Cypriot bishops organized an embassy to Istanbul, in 1754, which succeeded **in stabilizing taxation** at 21,5 *piastres* per capita, for 10.066 taxpayers. This development **was hailed as a great success**, which would provide relief from arbitrary taxation. Soon, however, it became clear that **this arrangement was harmful,** as the population of the island **was steadily dwindling** in the second half of the 18th century.

> **Example 8**
>
> The Archimandrite Kyprianos describes the situation in the island in the 1760s: *"**Death had been rife, emigration frequent,** men were driven from their homes **by the exactions** and **the harvest was small.** All these causes had reduced the number of rayahs liable to the payment of the twenty-one and a half piastres to hardly 7.500, without counting 1.500 cripples, blind people, old people, paupers and children of eleven years and under. The 10.066 warrants were **exacted inexorably,** while the extra payments extorted by the muhassils on behalf of the Vezir **increased year by year** ... The harversts were scanty, commerce insignificant, distress evident everywhere."*. Source: Cobham (1908, 356).

• Political events

One of the best known events of this period was the uprising against **Muhassıl Cil Osman Ağa,** who arrived in Cyprus in 1764, having incurred great debts **in order to obtain his appointment to that office.** Consequently, he imposed **extra taxation** on the Cypriots, in order to meet his debts and to earn *"as much as he imagined".* His behaviour caused **an uprising in Nicosia,** and later, indirectly, **led to a revolt,** which lasted for at least two years and had **dire consequences for the island's economy.**

A political crisis was also caused by the administration of the Cypriot **Muhassıl Haci Baki Ağa** (1777-1783), who managed to become Governor of the island through intrigue. While initially he behaved

with justice, Haci Baki later became **tyrannical**, leading the inhabitants **to seek and obtain his removal.**

Even a cursory glance at the catalogue of the Governors of Cyprus reveals that Haci Baki Ağa's governorship, lasting for about six years, **was the longest of this period,** while most other Governors usually remained in the island for one or two years. A logical consequence of **the brief sojourn of the Ottoman Governors was their limited authority** to the benefit of other institutions, which were permanently established on the island.

The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus in the 18th century

• The Administrative role of the Church

Although in the early years after the conquest the bishops were the leaders of the Greek Orthodox of the island, they **did not play a central role in administration.** According to the Archimandrite Kyprianos, around the 1660s, **the character of the island's administration changed and the role of the prelates was upgraded.** This development seems **to be related to the administrative reform of 1670** (see 3.2).

In order to control the *Müsellims* and *Muhassıls*, the Porte chose **to use the bishops as a counterweight to their absolute authority.** Thus, the prelates were appointed **as representatives of the Greek Orthodox of Cyprus,** with the right to **denounce to the central authorities in Istanbul the actions of the local administration** or **to transmit** any petitions of their flock. In this development can be **traced the origins of the social, economic and political power** of the Church.

A turning-point was **the embassy of the prelates to Istanbul in 1754**, in which the Sublime Porte officially **confirmed their role as representatives of the Greek Orthodox subjects to the central authorities.** This development contributed to **the enhancement of the political and administrative role of the bishops** in local affairs, while giving them **political authority independent of that of the local Governor,** whom they could circumvent.

This increased political authority of the Church, which allowed it to often function as **a second pole of authority,** provoked, in some instances, **conflict with the local Ottoman Governors.** Archbishop and Muhassıl tried to impose their authority, using **personal ties** to high officials in Istanbul, and one such example was the removal of Muhassıl Haci Baki Ağa, through the activity of the bishops.

• Education and culture

The political and economic power of the Church also gave rise to a period of **cultural blooming,** expressed by **the founding of schools** and the **funding of publications.**

The **first schools** in Cyprus in the Ottoman period were founded around the middle of the 18th

century: in 1733, *Ioannikios III, Bishop of Kition,* founded a school in Larnaca, which functioned for a few years **with funding by the Bishopric of Kition.** In 1741, *Archbishop Philotheos* (1734-1759), a scholar in his own right, founded a **school in Nicosia**, bringing to Cyprus as its Director the important scholar *Ephraim the Athenian.*

The **cultural renaissance** of the Church of Cyprus, which was at **the zenith of its power,** began at the time of Philotheos. This was period of **self-consciousness** for the Church, exemplified by its attempts to **highlight its history,** thus increasing its prestige and stressing its role as the head of the Greek Orthodox community.

An example of this self-consciousness was the interest displayed by Archbishop Philotheos in the **authocephalous** character of the Church of Cyprus and in its **imperial privileges,** expressed in an essay he wrote on that topic, as well as through the **iconography** of the frescos of the **cathedral of St. John of Nicosia.** The same ideology found its expression in the **renovation of the Monastery of St. Barnabas,** the founder of the Church of Cyprus, as well as in the publication of his Service, with funding and editing by Archbishop Philotheos himself. A clear indication of the **new self-consciousness** of the Church was the creation of the *Grand Codex of the Archbishopric,* registering documents and proceedings, **so that the decisions of the Church would be preserved in writing.**

In the years that followed, Cypriot prelates, and particularly *Archbishop Chrysanthos* (1767-1810), **funded the publication of books in Europe**, mainly of church interest, or aided **Cypriot authors**, as subscribers.

Probably the most important Cypriot author of the 18th century was the *Archimandrite Kyprianos,* who published his book *Chronological History of the Island of Cyprus* in Venice in 1788. In this book, Kyprianos gave an abundance of information on the history of the island, aiming at **familiarizing the Cypriots with their historical** past in order to enhance their **self-consciousness.** Besides its value as **an expression of the cultural production of this period,** the history of Kyprianos is particularly important for the **information that it provides on the later 18th century,** a period on which sources are scant.

• Archbishop Kyprianos (1810-1821)

Rising to the throne of Cyprus in 1810, *Archbishop Kyprianos* (1810-1821) aspired to realize an ambitious plan for **the cultural renaissance of Cyprus.** The **Danubian Principalities**, where he had been educated, and which were administered by **Phanariots**, with particular **interest in Greek letters, the founding of schools and the promotion of culture,** served as **his model.**

In 1812, barely two years after his accession, Kyprianos founded a **Greek School** in Nicosia, in the **founding document** of which he presented his **cultural programme.**

> **Example 9**
>
> Founding document of the Greek School of Archbishop Kyprianos (January 1st, 1812): The basic reasons for his decision to found the School was his notion that education was lacking from Cyprus and that *"even the smallest islands and the smallest towns have founded common schools, and in the famed Cyprus,* ***they are not capable of founding even an elementary school, so that the island's children may be able to study, and improve their barbaric dialect;*** *but you go and* ***see a lack of knowledge*** *generally in everyone, and in the clerics, and in the laymen, and certain* ***habits almost unbearable".***
> Source: L. Philippou (1930). Τα Ελληνικά Γράμματα εν Κύπρω κατά την Περίοδον της Τουρκοκρατίας (1571-1878). Nicosia, 95).

Even more revealing of the ideology of Kyprianos was the iconography deocrating his **ink-well**, which presented a considerable number of **symbols of the temporal and spiritual authority of the Archbishop of Cyprus,** including a depiction of Kyprianos himself **raising a fallen woman, symbolizing Cyprus.** The ink-well aimed at elevating and praising the Archbishop as **saviour and redeemer of Cyprus,** and may be interpreted **within the framwork of the self-consciousness of the Church,** which had began around the mid-18th century.

With Kyprianos in power, the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus reached **the zenith of its power** and the Archbishop appeared to **overshadow the local Ottoman Governor.** Contemporary observers, like the British traveller **William Turner** (1815), wrote that *"Cyprus, though nominally under the authority of a Bey appointed by the Qapudan Pasha,* ***is in fact governed by the Greek Archbishop and his subordinate clergy"*** (Cobham, 1908, 447).

The Dragomans of the Porte

The *Dragoman of the Saray* or *of the Porte* constituted a **third source of authority** in Cyprus in the second half of the 18th century. The *Dragoman* was an **official of the state and a part of Ottoman administration.**

• The Dragomans of the Porte in Istanbul

The title *Dragoman* comes from the Ottoman word *tercüman*, which means **translator**. While the *Dragomans* were initially simple translators, they later assumed various responsibilities, the most important one being to **help the Ottomans in the administration of Christian populations**, with their knowledge of the place, the language and local conditions. Another important responsibility of the *Dragomans* was **contact with Christian states** as, since the 17th century, the office of the *Grand Dragoman of the Porte* was the equivalent of the **Foreign Minister of the Empire.**

The *Dragomans* enjoyed **special privileges:** they were **exempt from taxation**, they wore an official uniform, and could appear in front of the Sultan, even in private. They were considered a part of state bureaucracy and, consequently, they **belonged to the *askeri* class**, as they were servants of the state.

From the end of the 17th century, the office of the Grand Dragoman of the Porte **was monopolized by *Phanariot* families**. These were **Greek Orthodox aristocratic families of Istanbul** in the entourage of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the best known being those of Mavrokordatos, Ypsilantis, Karatzas, Soutsos, etc.

Parallel with the Grand Dragoman of the Porte, there was also, in some provinces of the Empire, the institution of the *local Dragoman*, who was the **intermediary between local administration and the Christian subjects.**

• Dragomans in Cyprus

The office of the Dragoman in Cyprus was similar to that in Istanbul. The earliest references to the existence of a Dragoman in Cyprus date to the beginning of the 17th century, but there is no information on the role of the office in administration.

The Dragoman was **appointed by the Porte** and his salary came from the imperial treasury, as he was regarded as **an administrative official.**

It appears that this institution developed through the years. The fact that the names of Dragomans before the middle of the 18th century are not known indicates that this office did not have the significance it acquired later. The authority of the Dragoman was possibly e**xtended in conjunction with the increasing autonomy of the provinces** during the period of Ottoman decentralization.

At the end of the 18th century, the Dragoman acted as an intermediary between the administration and local society, while he seemes to have had certain fiscal duties. As a member of the askeri, the Dragoman, together with his family and servants, **was exempt from taxation**.

The Dragomans exploited the opportunities provided by this office to become **economically and politically powerful,** through *çiftliks*, **tax-farming, trade,** connections with high officials, etc.

Some of the best known Cypriot Dragomans of the 18th century were *Christofakis*, who was assassinated by Haci Baki Ağa in 1750, and *Hadji Iossif,* whom the Archimandrite Kyprianos characterized as a "*monarch*" among the Christians, due to his wealth. None of them, however, possessed the financial and political power of Dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios.

• Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios

The most famous and powerful Dragoman of this period, and also the most important personality in Cyprus towards the end of the 18th century, was the *Dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios.*

Hadjigeorgakis became a Dragoman around 1779, obtaining his office through **personal connections that he maintained with influential persons in Istanbul.** Besides these, Hadjigeorgakis also forged **close ties with the Church of Cyprus**, marrying a niece of Archbishop Chrysanthos.

Due to **his personality, his connections,** and as a result of the political situation in Cyprus, with **Ottoman decentralization and a *de facto* power vacuum in the Church**, with an extremely old

Archbishop, Hadjigeorgakis found **the opportunity to expand his authority**. Thus, by the beginning of the 19th century, he had become by far the most powerful, influential and wealthy man in Cyprus.

The **wealth of Hadjigeorgakis** was proverbial and constituted a basic **prop to his political authority. Tax farming** was one of the basic activities in which he engaged, and he had at his disposal his own private network of tax-collectors, while he also earned money through **lending activities.** From a manuscript, which registers the property of Hadjigeorgakis, we learn that it included **real estate** in all the towns of Cyprus, fields, gardens, *çiftliks*, olive groves, water-mills, even **ships**. The opulence of his **residence**, which still stands in Nicosia, is indicative of his great wealth.

The Dragoman also donated part of his wealth to churches and monasteries, as well as for the creation of charitable institutions, like schools, a leper-farm and an aqueduct in Nicosia.

His contemporaries were in awe of his authority and influence: the Spanish traveller **Ali Bey** wrote in 1806 that the Dragoman was **the most important political authority in the island,** while two years later, the French Consul characterized him as "*a **tyrant of his country,** and the cause of all unrest*".

This last observation is indicative of the fact that Hadjigeorgakis' great power had also earned him several **enemies**, one whom was the French Consul, due to the Dragoman's **pro-Russian** stance.

The **events of 1804** marked the beginning of the end for Hadjigeorgakis. An uprising of Ottoman soldiers and Muslims of Nicosia, which included an assault on his residence, was provoked by his great power and expressed the more general **discontent of local Muslims for the power accumulated by Christians.**

A testimony written on the back of an icon by the Cretan painter **Ioannis Kornaros**, who lived in Cyprus at the time of **the events, attributes the riots to the envy of the Muslims for the "glory" and "prosperity" of the Christians** who, based on the power of Hadjigeorgakis, **provoked the Muslims with their luxurious cloths and residences.** According to Kornaros, the worst of all provocations had been **a scandal**, in which the Dragoman and his close entourage **bought cereals cheaply from the peasants and sold them abroad at double the price**, making enormous profit, at a time when the island suffered from **famine** and the local authorities had to import grain, in order to cover local needs.

The **fall of Hadjigeorgakis** came a few years later, in 1809, as a result of the **political crisis,** erupting in Istanbul after the revolt, which overthrew **Sultan Selim III** (1789-1807) and of the **accusations** from the part of the **Muhassıl and the French Consul**, and resulted in **his execution** in March 1809.

Example 10

Extract from a folk song, which describes the power of Dragoman Hadjigeorgakis and the causes the revolt of 1804: *"… he was Dragoman for thirty years, / the Sultan had given him great power. / The Turks were afraid of him / because he had a hatt-i hümayûn from the state. / The Turks were jealous and held a meeting, / and thought a cunning plan …".* Source: Th. Papadopoullos, 1975. *Δημώδη Κυπριακά Άσματα εξ Ανεκδότων Συλλογών του ΙΘ΄ Αιώνος.* Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 133.

The İltizam system and the creation of the Çiftliks

The 18th century was **a period of transition for the society and economy of Cyprus.** One of the most important changes of the period was **the transformation of the land-holding system,** as we observe the gradual **abandonment of the *timariot system***, which favoured subsistence agriculture, in favour of a new kind of farm, the *çiftlik*, reflecting a series of important **social and economic changes.**

• The Çiftlik

Çiftlik initially denoted **a field which may be cultivated by a pair (*çift*) of oxen with a plough**. Despite the original meaning of the term, however, **in the later Ottoman period,** the *çiftliks* were **large farms, which needed many hands, and whose produce aimed to supply commerce and not the subsistence of the farmer.**

The creation of the *çiftliks* was a **fundamental change** in the Ottoman land-tenure regime and indicates the introduction of a new kind of agriculture, which focussed on the **commercial exploitation of agricultural production.**

• Reasons for the creation of Çiftliks

The creation of *çiftliks* in Cyprus, particularly in the 18th century, was the result of a combination of causes.

The **development of commerce** in the Eastern Mediterranean (see 3.7.1), as well as the increased **prominence of capital**, resulted in the **commercialization of agricultural production.** That is, a large part of agricultural production did not aim simply at the **subsistence of the producers** or at its **retail sale**, but at **its wholesale commercial exploitation** by large merchants.

This development fundamentally influenced the character of Cypriot agricultural production, as emphasis was given **to products catering to export trade**, like **cotton**. This change created the need for **larger farms**, which would be in a position to perform **mass cultivation,** in order to supply commerce, something which could not be met by small-time cultivators.

Another reason for the creation of the *çiftliks* was the rise of **specialized professions** and the **development of manufacture,** resulting in **the increase of city-dwellers and the decrease of farmers. Increased demand for agricultural products in the cities** was a factor which contributed to the creation of the *çiftliks*. This created an **interdependence between agriculture and the economy of the city,** with sectors **like commerce and manufacture**.

A final factor, contributing to the creation of the *çiftliks*, was **Ottoman decentralization,** which gave the opportunity to individuals **to gradually appropriate public lands,** thus causing **the decline of the *timariot system.***

- ## The İltizam system and lending activities

The *iltizam system*, **the farming out of public taxes by auction to private individuals** called *mültezim*, provided one of the two main ways of creating çiftliks. This system arose from **the need of the state for cash,** which was necessary for the payment of the salaries of an increasing bureaucracy, in conjunction with **its inability to collect the taxes,** due to Ottoman decentralization. The *mültezim* paid the Porte a sum and a**ssumed the task of collecting taxes from a defined area**, called *mukataa*. This was an older system, which was expanded during the 18th century.

A result of the *iltizam* was the **increase of the economic and political influence of the *mültezims***, many of whom managed to **develop into large landowners.** Thus, the land of the *timars* gradually started to **be concentrated in the hands of an élite**, while **many farmers lost their land.** This created new work relationships, as **the landless peasants started to become labourers in the *çiftliks***. The creation of the *çiftliks* marks the **return to a kind of semi-feudal régime,** in which landless farmers were working, **almost like serfs**, for a large landowner.

The basic reason, which led many peasants to lose their land, was **the monetization of the economy.** While earlier economic transactions, as well as the collection of taxes, were done **in kind**, in this period, **tax-collectors demanded to be paid in cash,** which the peasants could only obtain from the *sarrafs* or *money-changers,* who were lending at a **very high interest.**

Since this period, **usury** became a great scourge of Cypriot agrarian society, since peasants made loans, **putting as guarantee their produce and land**. When they could not pay, the *sarraf* would take their land and incorporate it into his, thus creating the **nucleus of a *çiftlik***. Even if they did not lose their land, farmers often lost **their production**, which was **appropriated by the lender**, who used it to **supply commerce.** Thus the **problem of peasant debts** came into existence, which persisted, to a large extent, until the early decades of the 20th century.

> **Example 11**
>
> The French Consul in Thessaloniki, Félix de Beaujour, in his *Tableau du Commerce de la Grèce* (1800) described the consequences of the commercialization of production: *"Seeing this mass of exports, someone would be tempted to judge favourably **the condition of the cultivators;** but he would be mistaken. This **over-abundance of production** does not prove anything about their happiness, because it is **not at all the excess** of what is necessary ... Exports are never in exact proportion to abundance. **Thousands of individuals work in order to produce for a very small number.** The **little tyrants** collect the volume of the work of a whole area, in order to devour it alone: they do not leave to the poor cultivator even the bare necessities, and they sell whatever they cannot devour, in order to satisfy their fancies ...".* Source: F. de Beaujour, 1800. *Tableau du Commerce de la Grèce,* t. I. Paris, 131-132.

Trade and capitulations

• The commerce of Cyprus

The 18th century saw the **revival of shipping and trade** in the Eastern Mediterranean, which was caused by the adoption of *coastal shipping,* according to which **ships made several stops in various ports,** carrying travellers and goods, thus unifying the Mediterranean into **an integral and interdependent body.**

This development affected Cyprus, which became a commercial centre, aided by its **rich variety of products** and its **favourable geographic position,** near the great port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The rise of commerce produced a profound change in the character of the agricultural production of Cyprus, **from subsistence to commercialization**. Cotton, silk, wool, wine and textiles became the island's most important exportable products.

In this period, Cyprus, like the rest of the territories of the Ottoman Empire, constituted a case of *colonial economy,* mainly **exporting cheap raw materials** and **importing from Europe more expensive processed products.**

The reason for this **imbalance** was the **contrast in economic philosophies.** While, since the 16th century, the Europeans adopted *mercantilism*, **discouraging imports and encouraging exports, aiming at the accumulation of capital**, the Ottoman philosophy was based on the **old Islamic notion of commerce,** focussing on **the immediate income from customs dues.** Thus, they **discouraged not only exports,** which they considered as draining the wealth of the state, **but also local manufactures,** in order not to lose income from customs or threaten existing interests.

A result of this philosophy was **loss of competitiveness for local manufacture**, due to competition from imported goods. In Cyprus this led to the destruction of local institutions, like the thriving **textile manufacture of Nicosia.**

Thus, the Ottomans **lost their competitive advantage** over Western Europe, a development foreshadowing their **economic and political sugjugation in the 19th century.** The diametrically **opposed economic philosophies** gradually turned **Ottoman economy into a colonial one**, which **exported raw materials and imported manufactured goods,** thus incorporating the Empire into the developing *world economic system* as a *peripheral area*, simply acting as a supplier of raw materials to the centre. The *Capitulations* were instrumental in bringing about this development.

• Capitulations

The *Capitulations* were **agreements** of the Sultan with European states, which **regulated the rights and privileges of the subjects of those states in the Ottoman Empire**. The Capitulations were essentially **unilateral**, since the European powers did not grant to the Ottomans similar privileges.

The Ottoman Empire initially contracted such agreements in the 15th century with Italian city-states, like **Venice, Genoa** and **Florence.** From the 16th century onwards, similar agreements were also concluded with other European powers, like **France** (1535), **Britain** (1580) and *the Netherlands* (1609).

Some of the basic articles of the capitulations provided for

• **freedom of movement, supply and trade** of ships and merchants of the European state within the Empire,

• **reduced tariffs** compared to the subjects of the Sultan, as well as **exemption from various taxes and dues,** like the *cizye*,

• the **right of appointing Consuls** in the ports of the Empire,

• **arbitrating differences among Europeans by the Consul** and not by local courts,

• the right of Consuls to **place subjects of the Sultan under their protection,** enjoying the same pivileges as European subjects.

Contrary to the impression created, by agreeing to the Capitulations, the Sultan was not forced to forfeit his rights of sovereignty. Instead, the agreements were a **conscious choice**, aiming at the **development of diplomatic relations** and **the promotion of commerce**, at a time when the trade routes passing through the Ottoman lands were in decline, due to the discoveries.

The Capitulations gave the subjects of the European states and their protégés the opportunity to function **with a certain degree of autonomy** within the Empire, and contributed to the **establishment of European communities** in the port cities of the Sultan's dominions. Thus, in the long run, they paved the way to the **economic and political penetration** of the Ottoman Empire by the European powers.

• Consuls and foreign merchants

The establishment of Consuls in ports and other vital areas of the Ottoman Empire was among the provisions of the Capitulations. European Consuls were established for the first time in Cyprus only a few years after the Ottoman conquest, with the **Venetians** (1588) coming first, and later the **British** (1636) and the **French** (1675). By the middle of the 18th century, various European countries, like *Britain, France, Venice, Ragusa, Naples, Tuscany, the Netherlands, Sweden,* etc., had established consulates **in Larnaca,** which was **the centre of commercial activity** in the island, while some of them maintained branches in Limassol.

In the 17th and the 18th centuries, the activity of the Consuls was focussed **on commerce** and their role was to protect the subjects of their country, acting as **intermediaries with the Ottoman authorities for the facilitation of trade**. That is, the Consuls were **not diplomats and public servants,** but were selected from the ranks of the merchants settled in Larnaca. The **political role of the Consuls** emerged later, **in the 19th century,** with the **Eastern Question.**

The main occupation of foreign merchants living in Cyprus was **trade**, as well as **lending and usurious activities.** They commanded **the respect of the inhabitants** because, in the **absence of banks,** they were the **main source of credit in the island** and the locals **depended on them** for the **funding of agricultural production.**

As they were indispensable, lenders put **high interest on loans,** which they often demanded in kind, **thus supplying their own commercial activities**. Therefore, a network of lenders and usurers, who were often foreign subjects, came **to control local production**, increasing their property.

As was mentioned above, the accumulation of wealth through trade and lending activities was one of the causes of the creation of the ***çiftliks*** (see 3.6.3).

Example 12

Letter of Cypriot peasant to the Consul of Ragusa, April 30, 1737: "*I dearly and immeasurably greet your Excellency and I kiss your hand, praying to God for your health and for anything that you may desire. On the 18th of the present month I received your honest letter and I was very glad to hear about your health, may God maintain it always. And I received the money that I had asked and I give many thanks to your Lordship. The reason I did not send you the cottons up to now is that I have the cotton-harvester harvesting. I was hoping that today I would have sent you four sacks, but the rains and the clouds delayed me and I did not finish, but I hope next Tuesday or Wednesday, at the latest, we will send them to you … I remain you slave and at your command. From the village of Pyla, on the last day of April 1737. PS. I am sending a calf and four pigeons and I beg you to accept them. Your lordship's slave, Paltezaris Atzoulis".* (Source: Kitromilides, P. M. (1992). *Κοινωνικές Σχέσεις και Νοοτροπίες στην Κύπρο του Δεκάτου Ογδόου Αιώνα.* Nicosia: Laiki Bank Cultural Centre, 13-14.)

• Protégés

At the same time, Ottoman Muslim subjects focussed on new opportunities provided by the **creation of the *çiftliks*** and the *iltizam* **system**, not showing particular interest in commercial activities. This **left the field open to the Christians of Cyprus** to engage in commerce, under **the aegis and protection of the European Consuls.** The office of the ***Dragoman*** of a Consulate, and through it, **the protection of a European power,** was one of the few routes open to Christian subjects for economic and social advancement.

The ***dragomans*** were essentially the **Consulate's translators** and functioned as **intermediaries with local Ottoman administration**. The prerequisites an Ottoman subject had to fulfill in order to receive the office of ***dragoman*** were the knowledge of languages, as well as familiarity with the conditions of the local market. Therefore, the ***dragomans*** were usually **successful local merchants,** who obtained protection **through their influence and economic power.**

Their privileges were confirmed by a ***berat*** issued by the Porte, through the mediation of the Consul. With this document, **they ceased to be subjected to the jurisdiction of the Sultan,** while **similar privileges were enjoyed by their family,** which would revert to the status of ***reaya*** after their death.

By that time, however, the protégés usually acquired enough economic and social power to **pass on the *berat*** and the association with the Consulate to **their descendants**, thus **maintaining the**

privileges within the family.

As the office of the ***dragoman*** brought important privileges, like **exemption from taxes,** including the cizye, as well as **privileged treatment in the payment of customs and dues,** it can be said that, essentially, the protégés were taken away from the jurisdiction of the Sultan, **acquiring the same privileges enjoyed by foreign subjects through the Capitulations.**

The tax exemptions and privileges granted to the protégés and their entourage, as well as the maintenance of the ***berat*** for a long period of time, led to the **accumulation of wealth** and the emergence **of families with important economic and social power.**

Example 13

Berat of Yakob Artinian, Dragoman of the Consulate of the Netherlands in Larnaca (1797): "*The Consul of the Netherlands has sent an application that Artin, son of Avak, who, by virtue of a sultanic berat, was dragoman of the Consul of the Netherlands, residing in the island of Cyprus, has died, and in his place his son, Yakob, was appointed … The person who serves as dragoman, his children and two of his servants, to whom separate royal ordinances are given, should not be bothered with the demand for land tax, special taxes, slaughtering taxes and other taxes or customary dues … ".* Source: I. Theocharides (1986). *Σύμμεικτα Δραγομανικά της Κύπρου.* Ioannina: University of Ioannina School of Philosophy, 84-86.

• The Ionians and the creation of a local bourgeoisie

Despite the Porte's ordinances forbidding foreign subjects living in the Empire to marry with subjects of the Sultan, many of them **married local Christian women** and their descendants gradually **assimilated with the island's inhabitants.**

Around the middle of the 18th century, a **wave of immigration of Ionian Venetian subjects** started to arrive in Cyprus, particularly from **Cephalonia**. These were, for the most part, **merchants**, who found in the island favourable conditions for commerce due to the Capitulations, exploiting their Venetian citizenship.

While other European merchants did not fully integrate into local society, the Ionians, because of the shared **religion and language**, came into **closer contact with the local Christians,** through **commercial transactions, social interaction and marriages.** Thus, some of them married in the island and **fully integrated into local society,** creating great bourgeois families, like those of Peristianis, Pierides, Valsamakis, Vondiziano, Caridi, etc.

The economic and social interaction of local Christians with Ionians and other European subjects resulted in **cultural exchanges,** which brought certain Cypriots into contact with **western ideological currents**. Thus, in the 18th century, liberal ideas from the West, and particularly **the idea of national liberation,** spread to a **small but critical section of the local population.** In this way, in the second half of the 18th century, there emerged **the nucleus of a Cypriot bourgeoisie**, which was also **a carrier of the national ideology.**

The events of 1821 and their consequences

• The events and their causes

Starting from the middle of the 18th century, the Church of Cyprus developed into a **crucial component of the administration of the island** (see 3.4.1). The outbreak of the **Greek Revolution** gave *Muhassıl* **Küçük Mehmed** a pretext **to control the rising power of the Archbishop** and to reimpose the authority of the Governor over the island.

From certain sources, it seems that **Archbishop Kyprianos** had received representatives of the secret society **Philiki Hetaireia** and had promised financial aid, albeit **avoiding to involve Cyprus in revolutionary plans.** As the members of the Philiki Hetaireia noted, besides material help, they only expected the Archbishop *"to think how to protect his flock from the enemies resident there".* The main reason for this was **the geographic position of the island**, located away from the epicentre of the Revolution and close to Anatolia and Syria, where there was large concentration of troops.

Despite the Archbishop's loyalist stance, the Ottoman Governor, exploiting the fears of the central authorities for the spread of the Revolution, sought and obtained from the Porte an **order for the disarmament of the Christians of Cyprus.** At a later stage, Küçük Mehmed elicited the **dispatch of troops** to the island and, finally, obtained the permission to **execute bishops and notables** in order to intimidate the local population. Among his deeper motives, however, was the i**mposition of his authority over that of the prelates,** as well as **enrichment, resulting from the confiscation of properties.**

Thus, in the Summer of 1821, the local Ottoman authorities proceeded to **executions** of local personalities, including **Archbishop Kyprianos**, the **Metropolitans of Paphos, Kition and Kyrenia**, ecclesiastical officials and notables.

• The consequences of the events

Although the events of 1821 temporarily **weakened the Church of Cyprus,** the prelates **continued to be considered as representatives of the Greek Orthodox** of the island and to **maintain their institutional role** in the Ottoman system, as it appears from **the immediate reconstitution of the hierarchy** after the events. This is explained by the fact that the Ottomans considered **the maintenance of ecclesiastical** hierarchy as essential for the smooth functioning of the state (see 3.4.1).

An immediate consequence of the events of 1821 was the **economic destruction of the island** due to the **abandonment of production**, aggravated by an ensuing **two-year drought**. In 1826, the Archbishop mentioned in a letter that, because of these developments, *"one sees horses, animals, even people dying every day from hunger ...".* The situation was further aggravated by t**he activity of the Greek revolutionary navy in the area**, which resulted in the transfer of **Ottoman troops** to the island from Egypt **in order to preserve order.**

The events of 1821 and the turbulent years that followed **destroyed the economy of the island** and led many inhabitants to destitution. Thus, many Cypriots were **forced to emigrate** in order to seek elsewhere "*the safety of life and a loaf of bread, which they are not allowed to earn in their homeland anymore*". According to calculations of the French Consul, in the five years between 1825-1829, around 20.000-25.000 Cypriots left the island.

A few years after the events, the Ottoman authorities started taking measures, including the **official acquittal** of the proscribed, executed and fugitives, aiming at **improving the conditions of life** and **encouraging the fugitives to return.**

More lasting and serious was perhaps the **psychological effect** of the events on the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the island, for some of whom the activities of the Ottoman authorities in 1821 signalled the **delegitimization** of the Sultan's authority. While previously the idea of national liberation affected only a fraction of Cypriot society, after the events of 1821, this demand started **to gradually extend to all classes** of the Christians. Another contributing factor was the establishment of **the Greek state, functioning as a pole of attraction** for the Greek Orthodox inhabitants.

> **Example 14**
>
> Statement issued by Cypriot fugitives in Europe (December 1821): "*Since the tyrannical administration of the Turks has been* **completely transformed into robbery** *… we think, in front of God and men, that we have every right* **not to recognize** *anymore these* **blood-thirsty thieves** *as our government, but together with the rest of our Greek brothers, we will try to achieve the* **liberation** *of the formerly happy, but now most miserable island of Cyprus".* Source: I. Theocharides, 2003. Όψεις της Ιστορίας του Ελληνισμού της Κύπρου. *Επετηρίδα του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, 29. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 167.

The peak of the period of turbulence, which followed the events of 1821, were three **revolts**, which broke out almost simultaneously **in 1833**. The first one occurred **in Larnaca**, in reaction to an order of the Governor for the collection of extra taxation, and its leader was **Nikolaos Theseus**, a nephew of Archbishop Kyprianos. The second one erupted in Paphos, led by the wealthy Muslim landowner Gâvur İmam, while the third one took place in the Carpass peninsula and was instigated by a **monk named Ioannikios.** The first revolt was ultimately successful, while the other two were suppressed and their leaders executed.

Example 15

Letter of the **French Consul**, on the revolt of **Nikolaos Theseus** in Larnaca (1833): "*All the inhabitants came to the Bishop and demanded from him to forward a petition to Nicosia, **threatening to demolish the Bishopric** if he did not act with zeal ... [The Archbishop] **was forced to flee to the Governor's palace**, where he was followed by the people, who filed **a complaint against him to the Governor** ... In all villages there was **intense resistance,** and **Government tax-collectors were refused entry** ... The general excitation could have had serious repercussions. Mr. Nikolaos Theseus ... decided to support the claims of his compatriots and **to lead them, in order to avoid any excesses.** At the head of 400 men, Greeks and Turks, he visited the Consulates, the Bishopric and the courthouse ... On the next day, we received from the Governor the news that, with these representations, he had ordered the cancelling of the tax ... Mr. Theseus, whom the 1.000-1.500 persons who were there declared as their leader, replied that this simple order would not make the inhabitants return to their homes, as long as they received no guarantees for their saftey ... The activity of Mr. Theseus in this case **is worthy of every praise**. The island **owes much to him, because the movement, which erupted in the entire island, ... could have taken a disturbing turn**".* Source: N. Kyriazis, 1930. Στιγμαί Αγωνίας εκ Στάσεων. Κυπριακά Χρονικά, 7, 214-216.

Example 16

Letter of **Panaretos, Archbishop of Cyprus,** to the **Oecumenical Patriarch,** on the revolt of **Nikolaos Theseus** in Larnaca (1833): "*T*e*n days ago, a new taxation was imposed on both Turks and Christians, which all the inhabitants of the island **started paying without complaining.** And Nikolaos Theseus gathered the people; **he deceived**, I do not know with what lies, certain **rascals, both Turks and Christians, as well as Europeans, while with threats and violence he forced all the villagers he found there to follow him** ... And he gathered all these, who were **around three hundred,** in the Monastery of St. George Kontos, and sought **to organize an apostasy in the island.** And of course, **if the people had agreed with his evil intent, ... he could have inflicted —this patriot— a great disaster on the island,** believing that, in this way, he would serve his homeland.*" Source: N. Kyriazis, 1935. Ν. Θησεύς και η Στάσις του 1833. Κυπριακά Χρονικά, 11, 163-165.

SUMMARY

"Ottoman Decentralization" describes the idea of Ottoman decline, which was created by the transformation or abandonment of many of the classical institutions of the Empire. This impression was caused by the adaptation of Ottoman institutions in order to face new challenges, resulting in the increasing inability of the Government to control the periphery.

"Administration" analyzes the administrative changes in Cyprus from the end of the 17th and during the 18th century. As a result of Ottoman decentralization, the island passed to the jurisdiction of high state officials, who farmed out its taxes to private individuals. The new system facilitated the oppression of the taxpayers, as the Governor was only interested in his own financial benefits.

"Political and Social Conditions in the 18th century" describes the social situation in Cyprus in the 18th century, mentioning the demographic decline and the increasing fiscal demands of the Governors. It also describes certain political events, highlighting the political and social situation.

"The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus in the 18th century" analyzes the increasingly prominent administrative role of the Church of Cyprus, as the position of the bishops was upgraded, in order to function as a counter-weight to the authority of the Governors. This development was linked to a cultural renaissance, which was expressed with the founding of schools and the funding of publications. The power of the Church was at its peak at the time of Archbishop Kyprianos, who desired to establish in the island an enlightened despotism, modelled on the Danubian Principalities.

"The Dragomans of the Porte" describes the office of the Dragoman of the Porte, who was an intermediary between the Ottoman administration and local society, and in the late 18th century acquired increasing responsibilities. The most important holder of this office was Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, who, towards the end of the 18th century, was the most powerful person in Cyprus. His great authority and wealth provoked an uprising of Muslims in Nicosia in 1804, and led to his execution in Istanbul in 1809.

"The İltizam System and the Creation of the Çiftliks" analyzes the creation of a new kind of farm, the çiftlik, which replaced the timariot system. The main reason for its creation was increased trade and the commercialization of agricultural production in the 18th century. Ottoman decentralization contributed to the creation of the çiftliks, mainly through tax-farming, while another important contributing factor was the monetization of the economy, which gave rise to usury.

"Trade and Capitulations" describes the rise of the commerce of Cyprus in the 18th century and its consequences. The basis of its development was provided by the Capitulations, agreements through which the Sultan granted privileges to foreign subjects who lived and traded in the Empire. The Capitulations allowed the creation of European communities and the establishment of Consulates in ports of the Empire and through trade and lending, foreign subjects managed to control agricultural production. The development of commerce led to the creation of a class of Ottoman subjects distinguished by economic and social power, thus creating the nucleus of a bourgeoisie in Cyprus.

"The Events of 1821 and their Consequences" briefly describes the events of 1821 and analyzes their causes, which mainly had to do with the local Governor's desire to impose his authority over the Church and to gain wealth. This section also analyzes the consequences of the events, which led to economic catastrophe and emigration, while in the long run, they contributed to the Sultan's loss of legitimacy for a section of the population.

Cyprus in the age of Ottoman reforms, 1830-1878

Aims

This unit follows the history of Cyprus in the period of Ottoman reforms, describing how the Ottomans attempted to apply the reforms to the island, the degree of their success, as well as the reaction of the local population. It finally examines the role of Cyprus in the Eastern Question and the British Occupation of 1878.

After finishing this unit, the student will be in a position to

• Understand the ways in which Ottoman reforms affected Cyprus

• Understand the difficulties encountered by the reformers

• Understand the conditions which led to the termination of Ottoman rule

Keywords

• Reforms	• General Assembly
• Tanzimat	• *Hatt-i Şerif*
• *Büyük Meclisi*	• *Küçük Meclisi*
• Crimean War	• *Hatt-i Hümayûn*
• Patriarchate	• Kingdom of Greece
• Eastern Question	• British Occupation

Introductory Comments

This unit consists of two section:

• The *first* one examines chronologically the application of Ottoman reforms to Cyprus, based on important historical milestones of the period, from the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II to the *Hatt-i Şerif* and the *Hatt-i Hümayûn.*

• The *second* one examins the role of Cyprus in the Eastern Question and the termination of Ottoman rule in 1878.

Cyprus and Ottoman reforms

• The early reforms (1789-1839)

The reforms had their roots in the **notion of the decline of Ottoman institutions** and the need of the central government to **reimpose its authority on the periphery**, stemming from **the impact of western civilization.** The reformers attempted to study the civilization and education of western states and to apply to the Empire the appropriate measures, feeling the need for **a more centralized state**. Another factor, which made reforms seem imperative, were the successive **defeats on the battlefield**, which created the sense that **military reform**, on the European model, would be a prerequisite for the revival of the Empire.

Selim III (1789-1807) was the first Ottoman Sultan to attempt reforms. He **focussed on the army,** in an effort to create a **new military corps**, under the guidance of Western instructors and based on the European model. These reforms provoked **the reaction of groups whose interests were threatened,** namely the *Janissaries*. In 1807, a *Janissary* uprising led to the **deposition and execution** of Selim III. However, these initial attempts **laid the basis for more decisive reforms, opening ways of communication with the West.**

Modern reforms actually started with the reign of **Sultan Mahmud II** (1808-1839), who, after Selim III's precedent, initially proceeded **with caution**, preparing for major and extensive reforms **in all sectors of administration and society** towards the end of his reign. In 1826, Mahmud II **abolished the *Janissary* corps**, which had provided the strongest reaction to the reforms, while he tried to **reimpose the control of the central authorities on the provinces** and to introduce a more just fiscal system, with the **substitution of *mültezims* with salaried public official**s.

• Mahmud II's reforms in Cyprus

Within the framework of the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II and the attempt of the Porte to improve conditions in Cyprus after the events of 1821, **1830s** witnessed changes in the administration of the island, aiming at **curtailing the authority of local centres of power.**

Thus, in 1830, with the initiative of the Sublime Porte, *Archbishop Panaretos* (1827-1840) called a *General Assembly,* which laid **the administration of the Christians of the island on a new basis**, creating new institutions. The *General Assembly* introduced a kind of **representative system,** with the establishment of an administrative body in the capital and the provinces, which would **co-operate with the bishops in the administration of the affairs of the Christians of the island**.

In order to curb the authority of the prelates, the Ottomans **introduced laymen in the administration of the affairs of the Orthodox community**, thus circumventing the **exclusive authority** of the the bishops. On the other hand, the prelates retained their authority, to a large extent, as it was they who **organized the *General Assemblies,*** influencing the election of representatives and taking decisions together with them.

With the reforms of 1830, **the administration of the Greek Orthodox community** was **shared between the prelates and elected lay representatives.** These changes reflect **the development of a local bourgeoisie,** which demanded **a role in the administration** of the **economic and political affairs** of the community. Wealthy laymen now had the opportunity to exert influence on the community and some of them were regularly elected as representatives. In this way, there emerged a kind of **lay leadership** of the Greek Orthodox of Cyprus.

A few years later, in 1838, the administrative status of Cyprus was changed. The island was not to be governed by a *Muhassıl*, but by a **Governor** who would be a **salaried appointed official.** This development marked the **beginning of better administration.**

• The Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane (1839-1856) and the Tanzimat

On November 3, 1839, Mahmud II's successor, **Sultan Abdul-Mecid I** (1839-1861), issued an imperial rescript, a *hatt-i şerif,* which **was proclaimed formally** in the presence of foreign Ambassadors and representatives of the religious communities. This rescript became known as *the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane* and signified the **adoption of more radical measures, aiming at the modernization** of the entire society on western models. The proclamation initiated a period of Ottoman history which was named *Tanzimat* (reordering).

The *Hatt-i Şerif* was not an analytical reform program, but rather a **general announcement** of the Sultan's intent to restore the Empire to its old glory, with the **introduction of new institutions**. The *Hatt-i Şerif* guaranteed the **safety, honour and property of the Sultan's subjects, regardless of religion,** defined **a regular system of recruitement and taxation**, with the abolition of the *iltizam* system, and introduced measures to reduce **corruption in administration.** The *Hatt-i Şerif* was **the first official attempt at abolishing the distinctions imposed by the Ottoman system among religious communities.**

A few days after the pronouncement of the *Hatt-i Şerif,* the Patriarch of Constantinople sent a translation to the Archbishop of Cyprus, with the order to **officially proclaim it** to his flock. This was indicative of the importance attributed to the ordinance by ecclesiastical leaders, as well as **of the role of the Church as an intermediary** between the central authorities and the Greek Orthodox of the island.

In the *Tanzimat* period **new basic institutions** were created, like the *Grand Council (Büyük Meclisi)* and the corresponding *Provincial Councils (Küçük Meclisi),* consisting of both Muslims and Christians. The Archbishop or the local Bishop, together with Ottoman officials, were **ex-officio members,** while a **limited number of members were elected.** The *Council* undertook **the general administration of the island**, particularly in fiscal matters, just like the older *Divan*.

Through these institutions, the Sublime Porte expected **to exert greater control** over the local Governors. Moreover, through their participation in the administration of the affairs of the island, Greek Orthodox Christians were expected to become **loyal subjects** of the Sultan.

The reforms met with the **reaction** of various groups and individuals, who felt that their **interests were threatened**, like the **notables**, the **religious leaders**, etc. Despite the Porte's efforts, these groups, exploiting the power they already possessed, **continued to exercise their authority through the new institutions.**

Moreover, the **frequent changes of Governors** hindered the application of the reforms, since they allowed local groups and individuals, whose interest lay in **stopping the reforms,** to maintain their authority. A further restraining factor were the conflicts among the peoples of the Empire, due to the **rising wave of nationalism.**

• The Crimean War

The greater crisis in Cyprus in this period happened during the *Crimean War* (1853-1856). Tensions between the Czar and the Sultan escalated into armed conflict, when Britain and France interevened in order to **protect the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.** The main theatre of the war was the Crimean Peninsula, and particularly the siege of the naval base of Sebastopol, in an attempt of the Allies to destroy the Russian fleet. The War ended in March 1856 with the *Treaty of Paris,* in which guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

In the framework of this War, there were **tensions** in Cyprus, as well as in the whole of the Empire, between Orthodox Christians and Muslims. In 1854, the Sultan severed diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Greece and **deported all Greek Consuls and subjects** residing in his domains. This created a problem in Cyprus, as many natives had acquired **Greek citizenship** and had to either renounce it or leave.

Further problems were created by the **open support of certain Cypriots to the Czar,** particularly in Larnaca, where Greeks celebrated the early successes of the Russians. The crisis peaked with the circulation of **revolutionary pamphlets** in the island, a number of which was found in the Archbihopric, in the apartment of the Director of the Greek School, *Epameinondas Frangoudis*, a protégé of *Archbishop Kyrillos I* (1849-1854). Thus, a **crisis between the two communities** was provoked, which was defused by the intervention of the Ottoman Governor.

• Hatt-i Hümayûn (1856)

Closely related to the events of the *Crimean War* was the proclamation, in February 1856, of a new Sultanic ordinance, the *Hatt-i Hümayûn*, in an attempt to **revitalize the reforms** and to **expand the** *Hatt-i Şerif.*

The *Hatt-i Hümayûn* focussed mainly on the **non-Muslim subjects** of the Empire, giving **firm guarantees for religious freedom** and promising to abolish all **religious, linguistic or national distinctions.** With the *Hatt-i Hümayûn*, members of all religions could theoretically **be employed in the public service** and study in **military schools**, sectors which had hitherto belonged exclusively to the Muslims.

Moreover, the *Hatt-i Hümayûn* reiterated the declaration of the *Hatt-i Şerif* for **the abolition of the**

iltizam system and the imposition of taxation directly from the state, while it promised **modernization of infrastructure,** with the founding of banks, and the development of communications and public works.

An important role in the proclamation of the ***Hatt-i Hümayûn*** was played by the **pressure exerted by the Great Powers,** which had supported the Sultan against Russia, aiming, in part, to undermine Russia's claim to be the protector of the Orthodox Christian populations of the Empire.

The role of the Great Powers and the equality granted by the ***Hatt-i Hümayûn*** to the non-Muslims, provoked **reaction and discontent in the ranks of the Muslim subjects,** who considered that they were losing their rights and their dominant position in the Empire, leading to **tension and serious clashes** in the provinces.

Similar tensions also prevailed in Cyprus, after the official proclamation of the ***Hatt-i Hümayûn.*** A letter of the **French Consul** (April 1856) describes the atmosphere at the time, saying that the Muslims **were upset by the privileges granted to the Christians,** and some *ulema* stated that they would have to start **arming themselves,** in order to prevent the violation of the Koran. On the other hand, the Christians **avoided any celebrations** in order not to provoke the Muslims.

In his letter, the **French Consul** contrasted **Nicosia**, which was "*a Turkish city with medieval ideas"*, to **Larnaca**, where the **Christians lived more freely.** For that reason, he suggested that **the capital should be moved to Larnaca**, in order to facilitate the application of the reforms.

Example 17

Letter of the French Consul regarding the official proclamation of the ***Hatt-i Hümayûn*** in Nicosia in April 1856: "D*uring the proclamation of the **Hatt-i Hümayûn,** the Greek Archbishop, **ignorant and cowardly**, was standing behind the Turks of the Bazaar, and despite the Pasha's invitations, did not go towards him, and in the hall of the Council he did not dare to stand on the left of the Governor, as had happened in Smyrna. To the reproofs of his flock he answered that **'we should not excite the Turks**' ... Will these Greeks change with the new **Hatt***? It is not possible. **Slavery has created slaves, and they will never dare to express their opinion,** *when they realize that it is contrary to that of the Turks".* (Source: N. Kyriazis (1929). Χατζιχομαγιούν του 1856. *Κυπριακά Χρονικά,* 6, 236-251)

• The last Ottoman Governors of Cyprus (1856-1878)

In the years that followed the proclamation of the ***Hatt-i Hümayûn,*** Ottoman Governors attempted, not always successfully, to **initiate modernizing projects.** As had happened in previous decades, the **frequent changes of administrators hindered the application of the reforms,** leaving a free rein to **local groups and individuals** to protect their vested interests. However, a few changes were achieved, mainly due to the efforts of certain officials.

The governorship of **Mehmed Said Pasha** (1868-1871) witnessed the **most successful attempt at the modernization** of the island, its most important achievement being the **successful eradication of the locusts.** In an extended **period of drought**, Mehmed Said made efforts to **relieve the inhabitants**, leading the British Consul to **positively compare** his conduct to that of his counterpart

in a similar crisis in 1835. The Consul noted that *"the beams of the peasants' houses were then torn down and sold to satisfy the inexorable claims of Government",* concluding that **"the Government is now the hope of the peasant; it was then his despair"** (Papadopoullos, 1980, 127-128).

Mehmed Said Pasha's administration undertook several **development projects,** which aimed at **the improvement of the conditions of life,** like repairs to the aqueducts, telegraphic connection to Syria, as well as the completion of the Nicosia – Larnaca road. In the same period, **regular steamship connection** of Cyprus with the neighbouring ports was introduced, ensuring that the island **was not cut off from the rest of the world anymore.**

In the framework of their reform experiments, the Ottomans made frequent **changes to the administrative régime** of Cyprus, alternating periods of **aministrative dependence** on other provinces with periods of independent administration. The latter was a constant demand of the inhabitants, as dependence on distant centres of authority presented **significant disadvantages.** A fundamental factor for the improvement of the administration of the island was the influence exerted in Istanbul by the Cypriot Grand Vezir **Kıbrıslı Mehmed Pasha.** However, the **regular administrative changes undermined the attempts at reform.**

Generally, in the last decades of the Ottoman period, there was **improvement in the conditions of life.** As mentioned by contemporary authors, in the *Tanzimat* period, Cyprus, with revitalized **commerce**, improved **sanitary conditions** and **milder administration,** started to develop and to **grow demographically,** doubling in population in twenty years (1840-1862).

Example 18

George S. Frangoudis on the administration of Cyprus in the last decades of Ottoman rule: "*Since this time, Cyprus has become* **the best administered province** *of Turkey and the entire island starts* **to recover and develop.** *The population rises, commerce moves the cities and steamships connect the island with the rest of the world. Turkish administration becomes* **milder***, and the mutasarrıf and the kaymakams show greater respect towards the inhabitants, and particularly towards the Greeks".* Source: G. S. Frangoudis, 1890. Κύπρις. Athens: Alexandros Papageorgiou, 358-359.

• Church and education during the Ottoman reforms

In the *Tanzimat* period, **councils consisting of laymen** took over the administration of the economic activities of the Church, placing the bishops and their entourage under control. In spite of this, the Church continued to be considered as **the official authority of the Greek Orthodox community**. Through their participation in the Councils, the prelates **retained their role in administration**, which would continue even after the British Occupation.

However, in the 19th century, the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus focussed mainly on **education**, recognizing its importance in the formation of ideology and consciousness.

After the General Assembly of 1830, schools were founded in the most important cities of the island, mainly **with the initiative and funding of the Church**. In this respect, the most important figure was

Archbishop Makarios I (1854-1865), who founded the first **School for Girls** in Cyprus (1859) and reorganized and expanded the **Greek School of Nicosia**, while he granted **scholarships** to clerics for university education outside of the island.

• ## Ideological orientations

In the second half of the 19th century, the Church, as well as the entire Greek Orthodox community of Cyprus, were engaged in an **ideological struggle** between the Kingdom of Greece and the Patriarchate of Constantinople: On the one hand, the **newly founded Greek state**, characterized by **irredentism**, attempted to **become the "national centre"**, in an effort to include all Greeks in a **unified state**. The **Patriarchate of Constantinople**, on the other hand, struggled to maintain its role as the **representative of all Orthodox Christians, regardless of nationality**. In contrast to nationalist ideology, the Patriarchate emphasized **religious identity,** in the way in which the Ottomans defined "nationalities".

In Cyprus, the progressive part of Church and society, represented by the **bourgeoisie of Larnaca and the entourage of the Bishopric of Kition,** adopted the **"nationalist" ideology.** On the other end, the more conservative part, represented by the **entourage of the Archbishopric and the notables of Nicosia,** who had closer ties to Ottoman administration, remained faithful to the **"oecumenical" ideology.**

The eventual clash of the two world-views in the beginning of the 20th century ended with the **final victory of the "nationalist" ideology,** which became a definining element of the subsequent development of Cypriot society.

The end of Ottoman rule

• ## Cyprus and the Eastern Question

The *Eastern Question* arose as a result of **the economic and military decline of the Ottoman Empire**, and the inability of the central authorities **to control the centrifugal forces,** which threatened to fragment the Sultan's dominions. This situation gave rise to attempts by the Great Powers **to exploit the weakness of the Empire,** characterized as "*the Sick Man of Europe*", in order to expand their influence there. This was one of the fundamental issues of international relations in the 19th century, and lasted from the late 18th century until the partition of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

Within the framework of the *Eastern Question* there were several attempts and plans **for the occupation of Cyprus by a European power.** Consuls and travellers were **studying the island**, expecting that, at some point, it would revert to one of the European powers. Thus, **consular reports** of the 19th century attempted to describe in detail the island, its inhabitants, its climate and production.

One of the European leaders who desired to acquire Cyprus was Emperor **Napoleon III** (1848-1870) of France, an ambitious prince, who involved his country in adventures around the globe. In order to achieve his aims, Napoleon III commissioned to historian **Louis de Mas Latrie** to write the history of Cyprus under the medieval Lusignan kings. Mas Latrie's three-volume work (1852-1861) constitutes an exemplary case of the use of the island's "French" past in order to justify its future occupation. However, Cyprus was to end up in the hands of another European power.

• The British occupation of Cyprus (1878)

A phase of the *Eastern Question* was the *Turco-Russian War of 1877-1878,* in the course of which the Russians captured Edirne, arriving **at the gates of the Ottoman capital,** before being stopped by British intervention.

The War ended with the *Congress of Berlin* (June 1878), before the opening of which, **Britain**, exerting pressure, concluded a secret "**treaty of defensive alliance**" with the Ottoman Empire. According to this treaty, the British would undertake to support the Empire at the *Congress* and to **defend it in case of a Russian attack,** receiving in exchange **the administration of Cyprus;** the island's sovereignty, however, would **remain under the Sultan.**

In July 1878, the **British landed in Cyprus** and assumed its administration, terminating three centuries of Ottoman rule. When the two powers were found in opposing camps, in 1914, during the World War I, Britain **took the opportunity to annex the island,** while in 1925, every remnant of sultanic sovereignty was definitively terminated, as the island was declared **a Crown Colony.**

SUMMARY

"Cyprus and Ottoman Reforms" describes the Ottoman reforms and their application to Cyprus. The sense of decline pointed to the Ottomans the need for reforms, which would modernize the state. After the unsuccessful efforts of Sultan Selim III, Mahmud II proceeded to more extensive reforms, which affected all sectors of society. With the General Assembly of 1830, these refoms also came to Cyprus, introducing new institutions. In 1838, a state official was appointed as Governor, replacing the Muhassıl who was a tax-farmer.

The *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane of 1839 guaranteed the safety of life, honour and property of the subjects of the Sultan, regardless of religion, and paved the way for the introduction to the island of new representative institutions, like the Grand Council, which included elected members. However, local interests and the frequent changes of Governors hindered the application of the reforms.

After the Crimean War, which aggravated national passions in Cyprus and other provinces, in February 1856, the Sultan issued the *Hatt-i Hümayûn*, extending the reforms and granting equality of Christians and Muslims. This declaration created tensions in Cyprus. However, Ottoman Governors of the next two decades made efforts for improvement and modernization in certain areas, so that, around the middle of the 19th century, the population of the island increased for the first time after two centuries.

Although, during the period of Ottoman reforms, the Church of Cyprus lost part of its autonomy, its authority was actually increased, as its participation in the administrative affairs of the Greek Orthodox was officially recognized. In this period, the Church showed interest in education, with the founding of schools and the granting of scholarships.

At this time there arose an ideological struggle within the Orthodox community between the supporters of the ecumenical ideology of the Patriarchate, which emphasized religious identity, and the nationalist ideology of the Greek state, which identified the nation with the state. In Cyprus, the conflict was resolved in the beginning of the 20th century in favour of the latter.

"The End of Ottoman Rule" describes the position of Cyprus in the Eastern Question, namely the attempts of the European powers to extend their influence to territories of the crumbliing Ottoman Empire. Finally, the island came under the administration of Great Britain, in 1878, after a secret agreement of the British with the Sultan.

Theocharis Stavrides

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