

*BUÇUK MİLLET*: THE OTTOMAN GYPSIES  
IN THE REIGN OF SULTAN ABDÜLHAMİD II (1876-1909)

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*BUÇUK MİLLET:*  
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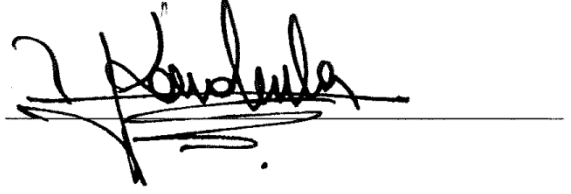
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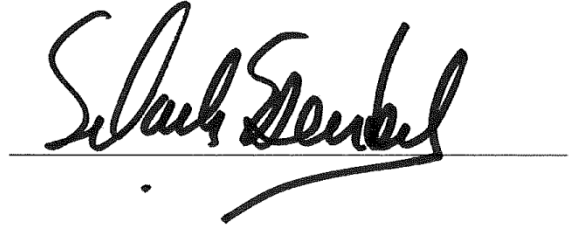
*Buuk Millet: The Ottoman Gypsies in the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)*

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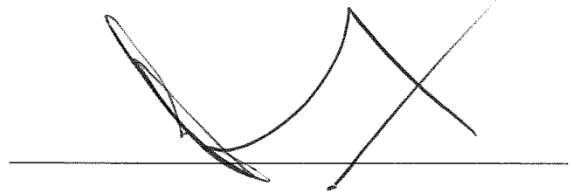
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## Thesis Abstract

“*Buçuk Millet*: The Ottoman Gypsies in the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)”

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This thesis, in general, aimed to examine Gypsies who were the most neglected ethnic group of the Ottoman history. Until this time, it is witnessed that so many research and studies were done about various ethnic communities living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Assyrians... etc. Unfortunately, researches as already done about the ethnic group, nominated as Gypsy, are so under-developed quantitatively and qualitatively compared to studies about above-mentioned ethnic groups. Against the approach which almost ignored Gypsies, in this study, Gypsies were placed on the main axis of the thesis, and the clause of *Buçuk Millet*, which is typically used to describe Gypsies, was designated as the thesis title in reaction to current situation.

This master thesis, specifically, touches on the place of the Ottoman Gypsies in state and societal system of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II within the political, socio-economic and cultural context as well as it concerns itself with the problematique that how lives of the Ottoman Gypsies were affected in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), one of the most critical periods of the Ottoman history; what kinds of changes they had experienced or what kinds of things remained as unchanged in their lives. In the name of adding new, profound and realistic dimension to ‘Gypsy’ phenomenon, the issue was handled without showing Gypsies as passive elements, so the relation of Gypsy-state and Gypsy-society tried to be scrutinized with doubled-sided approach. Besides, the reality, which Gypsies were fractionated as Muslim Gypsies and non-Muslim Gypsies in the eyes of the Ottoman State and between each other, and different perceptions in Gypsy groups caused by differentiation were exemplified. In order to underline ideally changes and stabilities in that period, primary materials were used predominantly in the thesis. In other words, the present thesis is largely based upon archival materials which were the most powerful testimonies of the reign, so the objective reality and reliability attempted to be provided by these documents. Next to archival materials, regarding secondary sources, literature survey was done and obtained sources related to the subject such as books, articles, thesis, novels, stories, monographs, traveller accounts, folkloric studies were adapted to the thesis. By dint of informations acquired through secondary sources, a chance has been grasped to investigate the matter from different aspects and profound standpoint of the thesis was reinforced.



## Tez Özeti

“Buçuk Millet: Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Çingeneleri (1876-1909)”

Ceyda Yüksel

Bu tez temel olarak Osmanlı tarihinin en göz ardı edilmiş topluluğu olan Çingeneleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu zamana kadar Osmanlı İmparatorluğu sınırları içinde yaşayan Ermeniler, Rumlar, Yahudiler, Süryaniler gibi çeşitli etnik topluluklar hakkında yapılan onlarca araştırmalara şahit olunmuştur. Ne yazık ki, Çingene olarak adlandırılan etnik toplulukla ilgili hali hazırda yapılan araştırmalar nicelik ve nitelik açısından diğer topluluklarla ilgili çalışmalarla kıyaslanamayacak kadar geri durumdadır. Çingeneleri neredeyse yok sayan bu yaklaşıma karşı bu çalışmada, Çingeneler tezin ana eksenine oturtulmuş ve Çingeneleri tanımlamak için sıklıkla kullanılan “Buçuk Millet” tabiri, mevcut duruma bir tepki olarak tezin başlığına konulmuştur.

Bu Master Tezi, özelde, II. Abdülhamid döneminde Osmanlı Çingenelerinin politik, sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel bağlamda devlet ve toplum sistemi içerisindeki yerlerine değinmekte ve Osmanlı tarihinin en kritik dönemlerinden biri olan Abdülhamid Döneminde (1876-1909) onların hayatlarının nasıl etkilendiği, hayatlarında nelerin değiştiği ve de nelerin aynı şekilde kaldığı sorunsalı üzerine eğilmektedir. “Osmanlı Çingenesi” fenomenine yeni, derin ve gerçekçi bir boyut kazandırmak adına, konu Çingeneleri edilgen bir unsur olarak göstermeksizin ele alınmış ve Çingene-yönetim ve Çingene-toplum ilişkisi çift taraflı bir yaklaşımla irdelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca, Çingenelerin kendi aralarında ve Osmanlı Devletinin gözünde Müslüman ve Hıristiyan ayırımına uğradığı gerçeği ve bu ayırımın Çingene topluluklarında farklı algılamalara yol açması örneklerle betimlenmektedir. Belirtilen dönemdeki değişimlerin ve süregelen durumların altını en iyi şekilde çizmek amacıyla tezde ağırlıklı olarak birinci el kaynaklardan yararlanılmıştır. Bir başka deyişle tez, o dönemin en güçlü kanıtı niteliğinde olan arşiv belgelerinden gücünü almakta ve gerçekçilik bu belgeler yoluyla sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Arşiv belgelerinin yanı sıra, ikinci el kaynaklara ilişkin literatür taraması da yapılmış olup, konuya dair elde edilen kitaplar, makaleler, tezler, romanlar, monograflar, seyyahların notları ve folklorik çalışmalar teze adapte edilmiştir. İkinci el kaynaklar yoluyla elde edilen bilgiler sayesinde konuyu farklı yönlerden inceleme imkânı elde edilmiş ve tezin derin bakış açısı pekiştirilmiştir.

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I am thankful to staff of “Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi,” “İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi,” “Taksim Atatürk Kitaplığı,” “Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi,” “Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı,” and Boğaziçi University Library for their help in providing sources for the thesis.

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To my beloved sister,  
Esra Yüksel

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Significance of the Topic.....	1
Methodology and Sources.....	11
The Origin of Gypsies / <i>Roma</i> / <i>Romanis</i> .....	18
Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire from its foundation to the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.....	46
CHAPTER 2: THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN STATE AND GYPSIES IN THE REIGN OF SULTAN ABDÜLHAMİD II (1876-1909): THE PROBLEM OF MAKING DO WITH THE STATE OR COPING WITH THE STATE.....	88
Problem of Denomination.....	91
Military Service.....	102
Taxation.....	116
The Melioration Process.....	130
Demography and Settlement.....	146
Inter-state Gypsies.....	171
CHAPTER 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STRUCTURE OF THE OTTOMAN GYPSIES.....	189
Inter-communal Relations.....	189
Religion.....	205
Occupations.....	213
Family Life: Women and Children.....	233
Costumes and Appearance.....	248
The Festival of <i>Kakava</i> .....	252
“Crime and Punishment”.....	255
New Leaders of Performing Arts and Music: Gypsies!.....	268
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION.....	316
APPENDICES.....	331
A. Samples from the Referred Documents and Their Modern Turkish Transcriptions.....	331
REFERENCES.....	360

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Topic

‘Gypsy,’ which is a common name given to people of a wandering race of Hindu origin, is a subject, about which we presume to be clear, but actually we are substantially misguided. In general tendency, people trust their habits and routines and like to play it safe. So from that perspective, Gypsies are naturally perceived as strange, out of type and contrary to the habits; and people hesitate to be in contact with them or be nearby. Most of the time, they are even very careful to avoid them. Briefly, Gypsies appear like distant islands seen from the opposite shore. A silhouette is visible, but nobody dares to get close to it. In that case, instead of using question marks and making it completely clear, people choose to draw a picture with what little they see and based on that vision, they attempt to make judgements or put the silhouette in a context whose borders are defined again by the onlookers.

This kind of tendency lets people have blind confidence in the created judgments and biases. Admittedly, most of the general perception about Gypsies is the result of the knowledge or the lack thereof which is constituted without investigating something under the surface. For a long time, we did not have a suspicion about the true identity of the people with whom we are supposed to be acquainted. The most obvious evidence of this situation is the nominations. Throughout history, societies and states attempted to call them in different ways. First, based on the occupational (magic and fortune-telling) and phonetical similarities between the unreligious sect of *Athinganoi* or *Atsingani* in the Byzantine Empire and those people, first type of nominations appeared probably as *Çingene* in Turkish, *Zigeuner* in Germany,

*Tsiganes* in French, *Zingari* in Italian language, and *Cigányok* and *Cigany* in Hungarian, *Tsigani* in Croatian, *Tigan* in Rumanian, *Zigenare* in Sweden, *Zigeuner* in Flemenk, *Cigano* in Portugal, *Cingarus* in Latin, *Cigani* in Slovak, *Cygan* in Polish, *Atsinganos* in Greek, *Acigan* in Bulgarian, and *Цыган* in Bulgarian and Russian,<sup>1</sup> *Ciganin* in Bulgarian, *Ciganu* in Romanian, *Çinkan* in Czech, and *Cingano* in Venetian.<sup>2</sup>

Second, on the suspicion of Egyptian origin, they are called Gypsy in English, *Agypciano* in old Spanish language, *Gitano* in today's Spanish, *Gitane* in French, *Kıbtî* or *Kıptî* in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Third, French people also called Gypsies *Bohemian*, because they presumed that these people are coming from Bohemia. Dutch people first called them *Ungern* on account of Gypsies' arrival from Hungary, and then *Tatern* or *Tötern* on the suspicion of the Tatar origin of Gypsies. Lastly, they called Gypsies *Heidenen* in order to indicate their paganism.<sup>4</sup>

Besides, they are called *Mustalöinen* (dark) in Finland; as *Faraonepe* (the tribe of Pharaoh or the sons of Pharaoh) in Hungary; *Zapari* in Greece; as *Boşa* or *Poşa* in Armenia,<sup>5</sup> *Luri* in Baluchistan, *Luli* in Iraq, *Karaki* and *Zangi* in Persian, *Kauli* in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in Turkey; they are nominated *Romen*, *Mıtrıp*, *Mutrib*, *Güyende*, *Güvende*, *Karaçi*, *Kareçi*, *Mutruf*, *Bala*, *Poşa*, *Elekçi*, *Gurbet*, *Kurbat*,

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene* (Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2002), 1-3; and, Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, trans. İlkin İnanç (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2005), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Çingeneler," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420–426.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 420-426.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 420-426.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 420-426.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Paul Clebert, *Gypsies*, trans. Charles Duff (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1963), p. 27.

*Gurbat, Çingit, Çingâne, Cingan, Cingân, Cingit, Abdal, Esmer Vatandaş, Kara Kuvvetleri, Dom, Kıptî, Roman, Mango, Romni, Rumlı, Cono, Davulcu, Sepetçi, Pırpır, Arabacı, Köçer, and Karaoğlan.* In Macedonia, for Turkish speaking-Muslim Gypsies, the term *Cenkeri* is used.<sup>7</sup>

These are the names which are mostly found appropriate enough for Gypsies by non-Gypsies (*Gadje*). These people never needed or wanted to call themselves so many names, because most of these titles have derogatory and pejorative meanings. Also, these are fabricated as a result of misinformation and imperfect knowledge. In contrast, Gypsies just call themselves *Kala* or *Kalo* (Dark, Black) *Rom* (meaning man, human), *Romni* (women), *Romani* (the language), because they wanted the surrounding states and societies to see them just as humans nothing more, nothing less. Nevertheless, titles also verify that until now, we have been just exposed to the views or the approaches presented by a group of people who named these people with diverse titles. They mostly constituted their own approach and nearly created different identities. On the other hand, people who make an effort to get away from Gypsies generated their own Gypsy image. This situation leads to different Gypsy images and characters. On the one hand, we have the perception and fabrication of the surrounding societies and states, briefly the Gypsy image of the *Gadje*, and on the other hand, there is the Gypsy identity of Gypsies. Likewise, Ian Hancock states; “everybody knows the ‘Gypsies,’ far fewer really know the *Romanies*, so here are a people with two identities: their own actual *Romani* identity and the one that is familiar to most non-*Romanies* and which is reflected by those many other names.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler* (İstanbul: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2005), pp. 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, p. XVII.

However, lately, both in Europe and Turkey, we see some research and efforts to discover the true identity of Gypsies or *Romanis*. Again, as Donald Kenrick points out,<sup>9</sup> if we consider that subject as a great jigsaw puzzle, we still have missing pieces. Working with that idea, this thesis is written to illuminate one piece of the puzzle or to add one small missing piece about their history in the Ottoman Empire. To our regret, in spite of so much existing research on the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Ottoman Empire, it is surprising to note, there are not many studies on the Ottoman Gypsies. The questions need to be asked: how they were treated by the empire; what made it possible to keep so many states and ethnic identities under control, and what made its presence felt in strategic lands for centuries, which are not answered properly.

As it is stated above, in a general sense, this thesis is written to put one piece into the puzzle box pertaining to the Ottoman Gypsies, but in particular, it is written with the aim of scrutinizing the changing and unchanging political, socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the Ottoman Gypsies in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). As the period of the thesis aims to constitute one ‘piece’ of the history of the Ottoman Gypsies, I decided to discuss the whole issue in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), because this reign indicated that some things can change, but some things never do. This period was especially full of examples which indicated the changing dynamics. However, in spite of the existence of shifting factors, the point here is not just to emphasize the alteration about the lives of Gypsies, but also to reveal what is stable in the same reign. Briefly, I attempted to melt these two in the same pot, because as everybody knows, the value of the unstable or alternative factors is appreciated by citing the stable factors at the same

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<sup>9</sup> Donald Kenrick, *From India to the Mediterranean: The Migration of Gypsies* (Toulouse: Gypsy Research Centre CRDP Midi Pyrénées, 1993), p. 10.



time. On the other hand, I tried to have a comprehensive approach which destroys one-sided judgement. And also, by focusing on the Ottoman Gypsies in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), I intend to bring a new and highly real basis to the ‘Ottoman Gypsy’ phenomenon.

About the history of the Ottoman Gypsies, the general perception is that they were expelled, segregated, stigmatized, tortured, enslaved, discriminated, marginalized by the states and the communities. In that perspective, the treatment of the Ottoman Empire toward them was mostly regarded better than the other states. For example, for Angus Fraser, Gypsies were not exposed to systematic and oppressive laws as happened in the European continent. Also, he continues, the Turks did not make any discrimination regarding race and skin; and so long as they paid their taxes, they were left quite free.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, according to Zoltan Barany’s argument, “though their social position was decidedly subordinate and marginal to other groups, most Gypsies fared considerably better in the Ottoman Empire than in other regions. The *Roma* occupied the lowest tier of the social scale with other people with no visible permanent professional affiliation, but they had a definite place in society.”<sup>11</sup> So, in comparison with the west, they were treated even better, but seemingly, the comparison is done from a different standpoint. The action to be taken should be to handle the issue within the scope of the empire itself. Meaning, apart from comparing them with the practice in other states, we should also compare Gypsies with another community which received different treatment within the empire, so that we can reach more accurate results.

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<sup>10</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, trans. İlkin İnanç (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2005), p. 78, and p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 85.

As a matter of fact, in their study focusing on the Ottoman Gypsies in the Balkans, the second homeland of Gypsies, two Bulgarian ethnologists and historians Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, at first, accepted the accuracy of the aforementioned perception. And they claimed that the civil status of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire were much better than their counterparts in Western Europe where Gypsies experienced mass persecution. For them, that situation could even explain the high number of Gypsies in the Balkans at the present time. However, apart from Fraser and Barany, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov tried to evaluate the situation of Gypsies within the borders of the empire and they claim that Gypsies had a peculiar place in the social and administrative structure of the empire, because in spite of the existence of two main categories; Muslims and non-Muslims, Gypsies were neither placed in the category of Muslims, nor in the category of non-Muslims. Besides, as a result of their religious practices, they were treated in accordance with their ethnicity; and in the perception of Marushiakova and Popov; it was an exceptional situation taking cognizance of the Ottoman law. Therefore, apart from some privileges for the Muslim Gypsies and for individuals serving in the army, there were not so many differences between Muslim Gypsies and non-Muslim Gypsies in terms of taxation and social status. According to researchers, the motive of that attitude lays in the general feeling for them. They state, “many sources reveal the evident contempt felt towards them by the rest of the population, Ottoman and local population alike, who considered them to be a lesser category of people who did not merit any attention, a longstanding social stereotype, which has survived in the Balkans to this day.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans*, trans. Olga Apostolova, ed. Donald Kenrick (Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), pp. 46-47.

According to the argument of İsmail Altınöz, who wrote a dissertation titled *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingenerler*, there was not any systematic contempt toward Gypsies.<sup>13</sup> The problem is that meanwhile other communities were systematized orderly; Gypsies could not be integrated into the system due to their nomadic tendency. He argues that their non-integration was derived from the central administration and social structure of Gypsies. They were obliged to pay the poll-tax and were exempted from military service, but benefited from the auxiliary services. In case they created trouble, they were punished. Agriculture policy was encouraged among them, but resulted in failure. However, in spite of this, the state never put pressure on them; in contrast, they were left in peace. If there were people who tortured them, it was somehow prevented. Thereby, they were never able to gain the status of *millet*; neither as Muslim nor as non-Muslims. “They were the guests kept waiting in the hall.”<sup>14</sup>

As it was seen, these two studies mainly argued about the different approaches towards them under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Actually, as looking at their examples, their evaluation of the treatment toward Gypsies was valid for specific centuries or periods of the Ottoman Empire. The problem is not what they pointed out in their studies, but how they evaluated the Ottoman Gypsies. That is to say, if we look at their studies, we can see that they tried to evaluate the status of Gypsies by looking into the whole timeline (particularly 624 years) of the Ottoman Empire. I suppose it is too difficult and unfair to make a uniform judgement for the entire

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<sup>13</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingenerler* (İstanbul: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2005), p. 263.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 263-264. Besides his thesis, he published some articles written on the Ottoman Gypsies. The articles are mostly attributing to the information in his thesis, meaning a kind of summary of the chapters of the dissertation.

See: İsmail Altınöz, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Çingenerler,” in: *Yeryüzünün Yabancıları: Çingenerler*, comp. Suat Kolukırık (İstanbul: Simurg, 2007), pp. 13-31; İsmail Altınöz, “Osmanlı Toplum Yapısı İçinde Çingenerler,” *Türkler* (Ankara), X (2002), pp. 422-432; and, İsmail Altınöz, “Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingenerler,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII / 137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 22-29.

duration of the Ottoman Empire, because a study prepared with that kind of approach might be far from sufficiently reflecting the periodical and administrative variations. For example, about Gypsies of the late Ottoman period, we cannot mention any poll-tax, because in the nineteenth century, there emerged some changes as to both the title and the scope of the tax. That is to say, I believe the status of Gypsies in the empire changed more likely according to the periods and reigns and also to the general discourses of the period within the context of the state and the society.

As for not reflecting the periodical differences enough, Marushiakova and Popov, in their book, claim that the denial of the Gypsies serving in the military is realized by the government with the report, dated 21 January 1874. In the same report, it was written that Gypsies never served in the military, but in the future, their services would be benefited in the army; and the exemption tax of *Bedel-i Askerî* would be abolished, too. The authors commented on the matter that this reform proposal remained on paper; it was never implemented and so their status did not change at all. However, we will see that after a certain period of time, the Muslim Gypsies began to serve in the army, and the non-Muslims were obliged to pay the exemption tax. Actually, the problem in that misinterpretation was rooted in the unevaluated Ottoman sources. Generally, even if there was not any footnote in the book, the bibliography at the back of the book indicated that the authors tended to constitute their perspective by looking into the sources on the Bulgarian history, Turkish sources on the history of Macedonian people, foreign traveller accounts written on the Balkans, and so on. As archival sources, the materials came more from the archives of Rumelia, and not of the Başbakanlık Ottoman Archives of Turkey.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingenerler*, trans. Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2006), p. 68.

Pertaining to the status of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, in the thesis titled *Gypsies (Roma) in the Orbit of Islam: The Ottoman Experience (1450-1600)*, Faika Çelik goes beyond the perception of Altınöz, Marushiakova and Popov; and she concerns herself with the problem of marginalization of Gypsies by the state during the classical age of the empire. Using *Mühimme* registers of the second half of the sixteenth century and four *kanûnnâmes* issued in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, she grounds her argument on the tenet Gypsies were administratively and socially marginalized (the constitution of *livâ-yı Çingâne*, the usage of the term *Kıptî* in population registers, taxation, separate residence) due to their lack of religion, professions, and so on. Interestingly, in one of the articles that she published after her master's thesis, one of her claims seems to change. In her two articles and thesis, she showed the *livâ-yı Çingâne* as the proof of the administrative segregation of Gypsies.<sup>16</sup> Then, in her third article, she began to perceive that *livâ* as their accommodation within the system rather than their administrative marginalization; and for her, it was a sign of the extra-*millet* status for Gypsies.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, in his article “Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” Eyal Ginio also uses the concept of marginality to describe the distinct status of the Ottoman Gypsies. Specifically, by depicting in the *sicil* (1694-1765), the records of the *şeriat* court of the eighteenth century Selanik, he argues the place of Gypsies in Ottoman Empire. According to his argument, Gypsies, particularly the Balkan Gypsies were marginalized by dint of the ways like

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<sup>16</sup> Faika Çelik, “Exploring Marginality in the Ottoman Empire: Gypsies or People of Malice (*Ehl-i Fesâd*) as Viewed by the Ottomans,” *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Working Papers*, EUI RSC No. 2004/39 (December 2004), pp. 161-182; and, Faika Çelik, “The Limits of Tolerance: The Status of Gypsies (*Roma*) in the Ottoman Empire,” *Studies in Contemporary Islam* 5, 1–2 (2003), pp. 161–182.

<sup>17</sup> Faika Çelik, “Probing the Margins: Gypsies (*Roma*) in the Ottoman Society 1450–1600,” in: *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 173-199.

stigmatization, segregation, exclusion, and punishment. Besides, he specifically claims that Gypsies were segregated from the rest of the local populations of Selanik on the administrative basis. As the most important evidence of the Gypsy marginalization by the authorities, he shows “their segregation from the total community of Muslims or Christians, and their categorization as a distinct group that had to pay a special tax;” poll-tax. Furthermore, he continues, “the sole criterion for categorizing as part of this group was by birth and unlike other inferior groups that lived in the Ottoman state, one could not leave this category by way of conversion, education, settlement or manumission.”<sup>18</sup>

I think he is too preoccupied with the marginalization issue, so it led him to underestimate the probable effects of the conversion, education, settlement that could emerge when these were applied properly by the authorities. Besides, by describing the status of Gypsies of the whole Ottoman period as everlasting marginality, in one sense, he also took part in the marginalization of Gypsies and the Ottoman Gypsy issue, historiographically speaking. In spite of this, the challenging part of his argument is that the author also includes the voices or counter-acts of Gypsies as in taxational issues, because in mentioning the interrelations between the state, the society and Gypsies, we should not just focus on the administrative perspective toward Gypsies. In contrast, there should be more research on Gypsies’ perspective toward the state and the society.

Unlike the others, Adrian Marsh, who devoted one chapter of his dissertation, titled *‘No Promised Land’: History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, to the Ottoman Gypsies, attempts to make a periodical differentiation about the status of the Ottoman Gypsies. According to his argument, in economic and social sense, the

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<sup>18</sup> Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies* 5, vol. 4, no. 2 (2004), pp. 7–44.

situation of Gypsies was worsened through the end of the century as a result of increasing European influence and emergence of the new type of Ottoman Empire, which was culturally and ethnically homogenous and territorially compact. Their nomadism showed an increase to take advantage of the limited economic opportunities. With national consciousness of ethnic identities, they were perceived as alien; and carriers of disease.<sup>19</sup> However, changing trends did not always mean increasing pressures or intolerance toward Gypsies. To my mind, there could be some positive changes in the lives of the Ottoman Gypsies. Nationalism and emergence of new nation states in the Balkans might mean their expulsion (particularly Muslim Gypsies) especially from the Balkans, but also it meant the accumulation of the Ottoman Muslim Gypsies in the remaining territory which brought on the necessity of a strict control over the increasing Gypsy groups. In short, the author seems well-informed about the ‘causes,’ but he is a little bit less informed about the ‘effects.’

#### Methodology and Sources

Gypsies, especially the Ottoman Gypsies, are a topic which gained importance only lately; and in parallel with this, it is a topic with so many obscure parts or blanks that need the attention of researchers. This rawness brings along the problem of finding sources and also defining the path to be followed in the sense of literature. Initially about the problem of sources, as everybody knows, that group of people have a non-literate tradition, constantly; they had an oral tradition, so this makes it impossible to find any documents or any source constituted by them. The researcher who is aware of this tends towards the sources written by the perspective of non-

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<sup>19</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies* (London: Ph.D. Dissertation, Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Humanities, University of Greenwich, 2008), pp. 180-195.

Gypsies. At this stage, you come across another obstacle: you cannot trust every source written about Gypsies, or every source which includes information about them. Even if it is academic work, regarding Gypsies, some people are disposed to fill their pages with *clichés*, stereotyping and superficial information. Also, they can reflect their personal biases on their work. In order to save you from all these, the researcher should be selective and perceptive. They should know how to scrape from the stated points and should search for something useful under the narrow-minded approaches.

Looking from that perspective, in the first stage, I paid attention to use primary sources; published or unpublished archival documents, stories, etc. The advantage of these sources is the pureness and the intactness, because there is plenty of information and it is up to you to shape it, but for this, you need to read the document or you need to perceive the document. It is not just about knowing the Ottoman language, but also knowing the language of the document. If you cannot comprehend the language of the document, it will not tell you anything. In order to achieve this, I tried so hard and tried to do my best, and also I was obliged to read so many documents. In using documents, I made some kind of categorization among them: according to the number of the document about the subjects, headings and subheadings which I wished to write on. Plenty of documents gave me the inspiration to constitute the headings which did not occur to me.

Nevertheless, there are some disadvantageous situations about the archival documents. Initially, even though my purpose is to include both Gypsies in Anatolia and Rumelia, the abundance in the documents about the Rumelian Gypsies and scantiness in the documents about the Anatolian Gypsies did not allow an equal treatment. Therefore, overall, most of the references are given to Gypsies of



Rumelia. Second, some of the documents include detailed and well-established information about Gypsies, specifically the interrelations between the state and Gypsies. Nevertheless, for the subjects, which lie outside the scope of this thesis, such as socio-economic structure of Gypsies of that reign, information in the documents is not so elaborate, but concise. In that respect, some inferences can only be made with the collection of some undetailed and superficial information within the documents.

As it is seen above, the documents do not include information on every possible subject which I plan to include or explain in my thesis. Therefore, I needed to use secondary sources such as monographs, books, articles, theses, and dissertations about the Ottoman Gypsies and I made a selection among them for two reasons. First, searching for the sources, it is seen that some of them contain information pertaining to Gypsies of the contemporary period, Gypsies of Turkey; and there is nearly nothing about their historical background. Second, as I stated above, I did not want to be subjected to *clichés*, stereotyping and superficial information given by the authors of some sources.

As a monograph, I made use of the work of Alexandre Paspati, the eminent Byzantine antiquary and specialist in Gypsies. His monograph, titled *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohemiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, is the earliest source about Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, and also one of the best works on the *Romani* language.<sup>20</sup> Even if the general intention of the book is the language of Gypsies, the book also includes information about the nomadic and sedentary Gypsies, their settlement or wandering places, the interrelations between the nomads and settled

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<sup>20</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohemiens de l'Empire Ottoman* (Constantinople: Antoine Koromela, 1870).

Gypsies, their religion, their songs and stories,<sup>21</sup> and their names. As an area, he mainly focused on the Balkan and İstanbul Gypsies, but he also included the Anatolian Gypsies in his account.<sup>22</sup>

Other than these, I especially made use of the book, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, written by Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov. I also benefited from the article of M. Tayyip Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” which is a basic source for researchers who are inquisitive about the Ottoman Gypsies; the article of Enver M. Şerifgil, “XVI. Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler;” and the article of Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State.”<sup>23</sup> Besides, I also benefited from articles written by foreign researchers such as the article of Margaret Hasluck who talks about Gypsies in the Western Balkans within the perspective of the *fermân* of 1604-1605, and the article of W. R. Halliday, “Gypsies of Turkey.”<sup>24</sup> As a thesis and dissertation, apart from the aforementioned studies on the Ottoman Gypsies such as the dissertation of İsmail Altınöz: *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*; the dissertation of Adrian Marsh: *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*; the master thesis of Faika Çelik:

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<sup>21</sup> Four of Paspati's Turkish-Gypsy stories such as “The Dead Man's Gratitude,” “Baldpate,” “The Riddle,” and “Story of the Bridge,” were published by Francis Hinds Groome. See: Francis Hinds Groome, *Gypsy Folk Tales* (London: Adamant Media Corporation, 2005), pp. 1-13. Another story of him was also published in Turkish with the title of “Çingenelerin Keloğlan Masalı,” in the article of Necdet Sakaoğlu. See: Necdet Sakaoğlu, “Kırklareli'nde Gelenek Bolluğu: Kakava Bayramı,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII/ 137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 34-37.

<sup>22</sup> Outside of the book, there are two articles of the author written on the subject. See: Alexandre. G. Paspati, “Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 7 (1860-1863), pp. 143- 270; and, Alexandre G. Paspati, “Turkish Gypsies,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Old Series, 1 (1888), pp. 1-3.

<sup>23</sup> M. Tayyip Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420-426; Enver M. Şerifgil, “Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI. Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler,” *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* (1-157 Sayılar), 15 (1981), pp. 117-144.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Hasluck, “Firman of A. H. 1013-14 (A.D. 1604-5) Regarding Gypsies in the Western Balkans,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, third Series, XXVII/1-2 (January-April 1948), pp. 1-12; and, William Reginald Halliday, “Gypsies of Turkey,” in: *Folklore Studies, Ancient and Modern* (London: Methuen, 1924).

*Gypsies (Roma) in the Orbit of Islam: The Ottoman Experience (1450-1600)*, I utilized the dissertation of Sonia Tamar Seeman, entitled '*You're Roman!*' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*.<sup>25</sup>

As the sources which concentrate completely and solely on Gypsies and which perceive the issue from different angles are missing, I was obliged to search and to benefit from the sources based on specific concepts or matters that contained fragmented information about the history of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, I made use of the accounts of Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, Abdülaziz Bey, Sermet Muhtar Alus, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, and Mehmet Halit Bayrı. For an analysis on 'Gypsy perception' in the Ottoman popular culture, such as *Çengi*, *Köçek*, *Kukla*, *Karagöz*, *Ortaoyunu*, *Kanto*, I benefited from the study of Metin And, Cevdet Kudret, Refik Ahmet Sevengil, and Ergun Hiçyılmaz. Also, in order to help visualize foreigners' image of the Gypsies, I endeavoured to find foreign traveller accounts which focused on the territory of the late Ottoman period. Also, to help visualize the Gypsy image in the eyes of Ottoman non-Gypsies, the idioms, proverbs, sayings, legends, folkloric studies, stories, and novels are utilized in the thesis. Apart from the written materials, I also made use of visual materials, mainly postcards and photos to facilitate the idea of the Ottoman Gypsy. As postcards, I found the chance to utilize the Gypsy postcard collection of Yavuz Selim Karakışla and also I benefited from the postcard collection of Atatürk Kitaplığı in Taksim.

Whether about the primary sources or secondary sources, the problem I faced during the thesis process is the terminology or the abundance of terms used to describe these people. Especially when we search them on the Internet, we have to search also with titles like *Gipsy*, *Gypsy*, *Gipcian*, *Gypcian*, *Romani*, *Rommany*,

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<sup>25</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, '*You're Roman!*' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, (Los Angeles: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology, 2002).

*Romany, Rom, and Rromani*. These words are widened when different languages are included. Every language has its own word to name Gypsies. By using archival material, we also encountered different words such as *Kıbtî, Kıptî, Kıptîyân, Kıbtîyân, Kıbtîler, Kıptîler, Kıptîye, Kıbtîye, Kıbtî or Kıptî Taifesi, Çingene, Çingâne, Cingene, Çingeniyân*. If we use all these words on catalogue search of the Ottoman state archives, we can get a wide range of sources; but if we do not, we just get limited sources about these people. Beside that problem, there was also trouble with the contents of the sources. Even though I made an effort to touch upon various issues concerning the Ottoman Gypsies of that reign, lack of information in the sources led me to touch briefly on some subjects such as inter-family affairs.

Coming to the content analysis, in the thesis, I designed the first part of my study as an introduction in which the Ottoman Gypsies began to be handled from the problem of their origins to the beginning of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. In other words, the introduction consisted of two parts. The first part is devoted to explain the pre-Ottoman period, meaning from the investigation of the homeland issue to the foundation of the empire. At the beginning of issuing their origin, I included myths, legends, eccentric predictions and theories used to respond to the problematique of homeland and identity. As the next step, I tried to discover the situation of Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire, the Balkans and European continent. In the second part, I made an effort to draw a picture that disclosed the situation of Gypsies in pre-Abdülhamid Ottoman Empire, which helps us to have a comparative perspective to Gypsies of the reign of the Sultan Abdülhamid II.

In the second part, I studied the inter-communal relations between the Ottoman Empire and Gypsies. By using the apparatus of denomination, military service, taxation, the melioration process (in terms of religion, sedentarization, and

education), demography and settlement, and interstate Gypsies, I concerned myself with the problematique whether Gypsies made do with the state or coped with the state.

In the third chapter, with the purpose of drawing the portrait of the Ottoman Gypsies in that reign, within the bounds of sources, I concentrated on socio-economic and cultural structure of Gypsies. To serve the purpose, I attempted to analyse the theme by looking at it from different aspects like inter-communal relations, religion, occupations, family life, costumes, appearance, festival, crimes, punishments, music, dancers, puppeteers, the Gypsy motifs in the Ottoman popular culture (*Karagöz*, *Ortaoyunu*, and *Kanto*). In the process of informing about them, the information was not constituted with some stereotypes. In that respect, the first-hand data intervened, so I paid attention to give the information in a parlance far from commonplace words and undiscernible sentences.

The last part is left to the conclusion: the general summary and analysis of the whole matter. Eventually, in the appendix part, there can be founded samples from the documents which I found valuable for my argument and their transcriptions in Modern Turkish language.

## The Origin of Gypsies / *Roma / Romanis*

We are, after all, a people who have never started a war and who have never tried to take over a foreign government and who have never been an economic or political threat to anyone. In fact, if anything typifies us a people, it is our desire to keep to ourselves.<sup>26</sup>

IAN HANCOCK

### Legends & Eccentric Predictions

One can see Gypsies everywhere, in every street or in every corner. They are always in sight. Well then, are we acquainted with the people whom we set eyes on? The response should be: No! This reminds us of a saying that sometimes people cannot really recognize the people they always see. With Gypsies, we have the same kind of situation. Over centuries, it was difficult to get information about them or to put them in any historical context. In that kind of situation, we always applied the same method, which is called “legends.” When people could not solve the mystery of something, they created legends. And, when they could not find the origins of Gypsies, they tried to explain or to combine them with a place or a people. This is how legends about Gypsies came about.

The most well-known one is the legend of “forged nails” by Gypsies. It was said that the nails used in the crucifixion of the Christ were forged by Gypsies. They forged four nails, but just three of them were used. The fourth nail, the unused one became the executioner of them and always followed the descendants of Gypsies everywhere. They never get rid of it, or were never able to cool it. This legend is a very common one, so many versions were created. The Kalderas Gypsies in France

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<sup>26</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene* (Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2002), p. 32.

had a similar legend about the crucifixion. Furthermore, some Gypsies in Serbia thought that they were condemned to wander seven years or seven centuries because of stealing the fourth nail from the cross. Other religious based legends were as follows: Gypsy guards of Christ were drunk and they could not defend him, or Gypsies refused to shelter the virgin and her child in their flight from Egypt, and finally they were punished.<sup>27</sup> Also, they were obliged to live as nomads because of not letting the Sacred Family go to Bethlehem.<sup>28</sup> Another one tells that at the birth of Jesus, the diapers of baby Jesus were stolen by Gypsies, so they were cursed.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this, it was believed that they refused to give water to child Jesus, so they were damned.<sup>30</sup> Beyond no doubt, the most illustrious one after the story of “forged nails” was “the punishment of the Pope.” According to that legend, with the order of the Pope, Gypsies who renegaded from the Christian faith were obliged to have seven years of penance.<sup>31</sup> The interesting point is the core material in the legends. The most complicated point about these people was their wandering. Therefore, most of the legends were created to account for it.

The examples above denunciate the Gypsy wandering with religious based stories, but there were also some explanations which did not include a religious background. For example, they were wandering, because the road was closed to them and unless they serve the penalty in full, they could not go back to their home. After

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<sup>27</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), pp. 18–19.

<sup>28</sup> Nicole Martinez, *Çingenerler*, trans. Şehsuvar Aktaş. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, Cep Üniversitesi Serisi, 1992), p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Mine Haksal, “‘Makuşma me de Rom Sinom’ Çingenerlerin Macerası,” *Popüler Tarih*, no. 41 (2004), pp. 32–39.

<sup>30</sup> Ingmar Karlsson, *Avrupa'nın Üvey Evlatları*, trans. Turhan Kayaoğlu (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2006), p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> John Hoyland, *A Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits & Present State of Gypsies* (London: Hargrove, Gawthorp, & Cobb, Herald Office, York, 1816), p. 18.

their wandering, the most cliff-hanging subject was the place of origin or their ancestor. One of the legends took the origin of Gypsies back to Adam, “the first human.” They were supposed to be the descendants of Adam and a first woman created before Eve. That is why, they were born without original sin and they do not have to work or are not condemned to other punishments. Similarly, another legend attributed the Egyptian origin to Gypsies. When pharaoh’s army was stuck in the Red-Sea, one man and one woman broke away from the waters and these run aways were Adam and Eve of Gypsies.<sup>32</sup> The more interesting legends about their ancestors are as follows: they were supposed to descend from a prehistoric race of horsemen, coming from the moon, originated from inside the hollow earth.<sup>33</sup> Other legends of descent told that they descended from Ham (the son of Noah), or Kabil, or the priests of Isis, or the survivors of the sunken kingdom of Atlantis, or the assassins of Bethlehem’s children.<sup>34</sup> Besides, there were people who claimed that because of similar affairs, Gypsies’ ancestors were Tuval-Kayin and his brother-in-law (just like in the Book of Genesis). Today, most of the devout Christians believe that Gypsies descended from the children of Abraham and his second wife Ketura. Ketura gave birth to six sons of Abraham: Zimran, Yokşan, Medan, Midyan, Yişbak, and Şuah. And it was thought that people who descended from that race would accompany Israelites. The curiosity about Gypsies made people take legends further and they dared to claim that Gypsies descended from the Jewish race that was mixed with

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<sup>32</sup> Jean Pierre Liegois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History*, pp. 18–22.

<sup>33</sup> Ian Hancock, “Our Need for International Diplomatic Skills,” in: *Roma Diplomacy*, eds. Valeriu Nicolae and Hannah Slavik (New York: International Debate Education Association; Malta: DiploFoundation; Bucharest: Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities, 2007), pp. 49-55.

<sup>34</sup> Donald Kenrick, *From India to the Mediterranean: The Migration of Gypsies* (Toulouse: Gypsy Research Centre CRDP Midi Pyrénées, 1993), p. 7.



vagabond Christians.<sup>35</sup> Not believing in a “pure and separate origin” as well as perceiving Gypsies as the combination of groups of people or individuals also exist in Turkey. It was considered that the first Gypsy came to the world with the combination of a brother and a sister, named “Chen” and “Guin”:

When Gypsies driven out of their own country arrived at Mekran, a wonderful machine was made, the wheel of which refused to turn until an evil spirit disguised as a sage, informed the chief of Gypsies, who was named Chen, that it would do so only if he married his own sister Guin. This advice was followed and the wheel turned, but from this incestuous marriage the people earned not only the name of Chenguin, but also the curse, which was put upon them by the Moslem saints, that they should be wanderers excluded from among the races of mankind.<sup>36</sup>

Another version of the famous legend was explained like this:

When the Prophet Abraham went against the Nemrud, Nemrud wanted to burn him with the fire and he ordered to all his tribe to bring some woods from the mountain. All the people of the tribe, even the eldest and the most impotent ones, brought some woods and brushwood in order to acquire the merit. By that way, a heap of woods were set up in the middle of the city. Then, Nemrud ordered the fire of those woods. Immediately, everybody got to work, but it became impossible to ignite the woods. Under these circumstances, while Nemrud got furious and people were astonished, one of the oracles made an offer. He said that the fire was extinguished by the angels, so it was necessary to frighten away them for the fire. Thereupon, Nemrud thought and conferred on the oracle’s right and he declared that one man and one woman among the society should engage in a sexual intercourse in the glare of publicity in order to light a fire and

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<sup>35</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj’dan Thames’e*, trans. Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2006), p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> William Reginald Halliday, “Some Notes on Gypsies of Turkey,” *Journal of Gypsy Lore Society* 1 (1922), pp. 163–189. For the Turkish translation, see: Lucy M. J. Garnett, “Çingene Kadınları: Aile Hayatları ve İnançları,” *Dans Müzik Kültürü*, no. 64 (2002), pp. 163–167.

he stated that if somebody accepted to do this, they would be awarded. The criers shouted for hours and informed to carry out the orders of Nemrud. However, no one dared to do this; even people with brazen-faced and profane spirits were ashamed of this. In the meantime, a brother and a sister named as *Çin* and *Gen* came out and carried out the orders of Nemrud freely. At the time, the woods took the fire and that fire was not extinguished for a long time. Here, people who were descended from these two miserable creatures; *Çen* and *Gen*, were called as *Çingen* (the Gypsy). Thenceforth, they began to spread around and never hesitated to do evil or harmful things.<sup>37</sup>

The legends were not limited to those and much more were created. Gypsies were supposed to have their homeland in Tartary and Scythia, or descended from the race who deified fire or the ten Jewish tribes who were carried away captives by Salamanassar, king of Assyria.<sup>38</sup> People even believed that to become the most powerful group Gypsies waged war against others. In a war period, they tried to pass the Porsaida (the salt-sea) and with the appeal of their leader, the sea parted and engulfed them. Just a little group managed to survive and they were damned to wander.<sup>39</sup>

People did not only explain their origin, but also they attempted to add meaning to their unconvincing religion or inexistent Holy Scripture. The legend says when God distributed religions to people, Gypsies wrote their religion upon the cabbage leaves and soon after those leaves became the dinner of the donkeys. Actually, it was perceived that the leaves which included the sacred texts were eaten by a Muslim

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<sup>37</sup> Mehmet Halit Bayrı, *Halk Adet ve İnanmaları* (İstanbul: Burhanettin Basımevi, 1939), pp. 163-164. According to Charles Godfrey Leland, the story was actually the legend of Chon and Kan or Kam, the Moon and the Sun. "The sun, because he once violated or still seeks to seduce his sister, the Moon, continually follows her, being destined to wander forever." See: Charles Godfrey Leland, *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling* (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1962), p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> Angus Fraser, "'The Turkish Spy' on Gypsies," *Journal of Gypsy Lore Society*, XLV (1966), pp. 133-142.

<sup>39</sup> Jean Pierre Liegois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History*, p. 22.

donkey.<sup>40</sup> Another religious story told in Romania was that Gypsies made their church of stone, and Romanians made it of bacon. Then, they offered Romanians to interchange them and upon receiving the church, they ate it right then and there. A similar story was told in Serbia, but in this one, the church was made of cheese.<sup>41</sup> Lastly, in Europe, there is this kind of hearsay:

In Sicily, in the position of religious leadership of City of Akrakanta, there was a patriarch and the community became two sides of. The leader of one side was a person named Spinos who wished to be patriarch and he had the apprentice named Kereskintos. They laid a trap for the Patriarch by hiding a woman under his bed and in the morning, they suddenly attacked to the house and took out the woman. The patriarch who was in a piteous position cursed the individuals responsible of this. People's faces who behaved viciously turned into dark and woman's mouth got wormy. People with blackened faces escaped to the forest and began to live there. No animal approached to them, but donkeys befriended with them. Aftermath, they were constrained to stay away from the centre and managed to survive with making griddle and basket. Nevertheless, because of the shame to sell their products by themselves, they sent their wives to the cities, so Gypsies were descended from those people.<sup>42</sup>

Legends had never been the only way of solving the problem of origin. Sometimes, researchers or people who were inquisitive about Gypsies put forward their own hypotheses; and some of them are really more attention-grabbing than legends. The initial guesses came from Europeans. The time which Gypsies set foot on Europe was also crucial for the Ottomans, because they were increasing the

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<sup>40</sup> Lucy M. J. Garnett, "Çingene Kadınları: Aile Hayatları ve İnançları," *Dans Müzik Kültürü*, pp. 163-167.

<sup>41</sup> Isabel Fonseca, *Beni Ayakta Gömün: Çingeneler ve Yolculukları*, trans. Özlem İlyas (İstanbul: Ayrıntı, 2002), pp. 103-104.

<sup>42</sup> Esat Uras, "Poşalar: Elekçi Çingeneler Hakkında Etnografik ve Sosyolojik Bir Etüd," *Çığır*, no. 176-177 (Temmuz-Ağustos 1947): pp. 99-102, and pp. 115-117.

suppression over the Byzantine Empire as the days went on. Ascending political dominance of the Ottoman Empire as well as increasing number of Gypsies at the same time set Europeans thinking that Gypsies were Turks. With this idea, Gypsies were called *Saracen or Heiden* (Heathens) in Dutch.<sup>43</sup> There were even people who believed that Gypsies were not an ethnic society; they were just ordinary people who blackened their skin with walnut and other vegetable substances. Even Cajanus the archbishop ordered people to publish a circular letter about Gypsies for not painting their skins black.<sup>44</sup>

In 1841, Predari insisted that Gypsies were descendants of pre-historic people and that geological or political catastrophe pushed them to nomadic life-style. In 1844, Bataillard put forward the idea that Gypsies were blacksmiths in the Bronze Age. Franz de Ville believed they were the very people who brought bronze into Europe. About their living place or where they came from, people suggested places like Caucasus, Camargue, borders of Turkey and Hungary, Iberian Peninsula, Walachia, Nubia, Pyrenees, Ethiopia, Mauretania, Zeugitana, Phoenicia and Babylon. As their ancestors, Jews, Andalusian Moors, the sect of Gitanismo and Guanches of the Canary Islands were mentioned. Some people even asserted that they invented the Gospel and became pioneers of civilizations like Egypt, Greece, Italy, Rome, Babylon, Judaea, and the Gauls.<sup>45</sup> Robert Moreau put forward a strange theory that Gypsies emerged as a mixture of various tribes who were kept slaves in a concentration camp by Tamerlane near Semerkand.<sup>46</sup> And also, they were assumed to

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<sup>43</sup> Henriette Asséo, *Çingeneler: Bir Avrupa Yazgısı*, trans. Orçun Türkay (İstanbul: YKY, 2004), pp. 63-64.

<sup>44</sup> Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: Sussex University Press, 1972), p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Jean Pierre Liegois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>46</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj'dan Thames'e*, p. 21.

be fugitives banished by the infidel Julian from the town of Singara of Mesopotamia; or they were people positioned at the mountain of Caucasus and called *Zoçori*; or they were descendants of *Ziçe* living in Paulus Maeotis. They were sometimes described as descendants of the Huns of Attila, or Avars who were defeated by Charles the Great, and sometimes they were presented as descendants of Pechenegs.<sup>47</sup> Even when an original theory was not put forward, they were supposed to be a fiddling community without any fatherland.

#### The First Wide-Spread Theory about the Origin of Gypsies: The Egyptian Theory

Until the investigation of Indian origin, Gypsies were given diverse titles, sometimes degrading sometimes contemptuous like barbarian, savage, heathen, Saracens, Greeks, Turks, Jews, Jats, Atsingani, Romiti, Bohemians, Greek Bohemians, men of pharaoh, Egyptian, Luri, Zingari, Zigeuner, Zotts, and so on. Nevertheless, the most popular and well-accepted hypothesis ever made about Gypsies was the Egyptian Theory. Most of the researchers believed that Gypsies were originated in Egypt. Even after the foundation of some Indian words in the language of Gypsies, they insisted on the validity of this theory. There were of course outcomes of this theory. They called themselves Egyptians and the Gypsy leaders introduced themselves as the counts or the lords of ‘little Egypt.’ It was even said that Gypsies had to leave with Joseph and Mary in the flight from Egypt. It was stated that Gypsies had gotten their magical talents from a country like Egypt, which was famous for these kinds of skills.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Isabel Fonseca, *Beni Ayakta Gömün: Çingeneler ve Yolculukları*, p. 102.

<sup>48</sup> Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3.

According to Ian Hancock, there could be several underlying reasons of this. First, people thought that Gypsies lived in the area called 'Little Egypt' on the Adriatic Coast. Second, in those days, Mediaeval Europeans preferred to call different foreign populations "Egyptian." Third, Hancock claimed that these people were forced to go to Egypt from the Balkans by the Ottomans; and when they came back to Europe, they probably said that they came from Egypt. Lastly, he states that the name "Egyptian" was already used in the Byzantine Empire before their entrance to Europe. Maybe, that is how the word entered Europe. That is why, in Hungary, Romania, and Russia, they were called the pharaoh's people. Whatever the reason is, for quite a while, these people were called names implying "their delusionary Egyptian ethnic" like *Gitanos*, *Gypsy*, *Egipcian*, *Egypcian*, *Gipcian*, *Gypcian*, *Egyptiers* and *Gyptenaers*, *Evgjit*, *Yiftos*, *Sipsiwn*, *Ijito*, *Gjupci*, *Gitan* and *Kıbti* or *Kıpti*.<sup>49</sup>

#### The General Truth: The Indian Theory

The Indian Hypothesis appeared as a result of the long-term research on the Gypsy language. However, this reality that Gypsies had originated from India was found out accidentally by Stephan Vályi (or Istvan Vályi), a Hungarian clergy and student at the University of Leiden in 1760. He compared the language of three students who came from Malabar Coast (in south-west India) and the language of Gypsies in his hometown Győr and based on this comparison, he drew up a vocabulary list. Hancock explained that accident as follows:

It happened in 1760, in Holland. There, a theology student from western Hungary named Vályi Stefán was sitting one

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<sup>49</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, pp. 1-2.

day in the common room at the University of Leiden with three exchange students from Malabar in India, who were discussing the ancient Indian language, Sanskrit. Vályi's family owned a large estate in the town of Győr, where many Romanies were employed as labourers. Vályi had befriended some of them and had learnt a few words and phrases of our language. When he heard the Indian students using Sanskrit words, he recognised some similarities with *Romani*. He was not a language specialist and was not sure what to do with this new-found information, but he mentioned it to an acquaintance -a printer named Nemeth Istvan- who, three years later, related the story to someone else, an army captain named Szekely von Doba who in turn told the story to yet another person, the scholar Georg Pray. Sixteen years after the event, and now at third-hand, Pray published an account of it in the Vienna Gazette in 1776. From that point on, different specialists such as Bryant (1776), Rüdiger (1782), Grellmann (1783), Marsden (1785) and others began to investigate further.<sup>50</sup>

The studies of Grellmann, Rudiger in Germany, and Jacob Bryant in Britain shed light on some points. The other scientists such as Marsden, Richardson, Hervas y Panduro, Ludolf, Hidalgo, Baudrimont, Predari, Kalina, Borrow, Campuzano, Jimenez, Mayo, Cruzillo, Kogalniceanu, Ascoli, Paspatis, Artout, Wislocki, Paulion de San Bartolomé, Mikloisch, Pott,<sup>51</sup> Paul Bataillard, Anton Iaroslav Puchmayer, Sylvain Lévi, Julés Bloch, Meillet and Vendryes took the investigations a step further.<sup>52</sup>

After that, research and new methods were put into the field; and it became possible to trace the country of origin of this language through India. The Gypsy dialects were studied and nearly in every Gypsy dialect, the words that were from Indian origin were found. For researchers, the next step would be to find the place or

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<sup>50</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>52</sup> Henriette Asséo, *Çingeneler: Bir Avrupa Yazgısı*, pp. 64–65.

the region that Gypsies originally came out of. Considering the life-styles of these people such as being poor, having menial jobs and becoming entertainers, a group Shudra caste, the lowest social level in India with similar life-style was detected.<sup>53</sup> This was proposed by Heinrich Grellmann in his work *‘Die Zigeuner’* in 1783. By using linguistic palaeontology, he carried on the work on their language and dismissed the arguments.<sup>54</sup> John S. Harriott, who was the colonel of the East-India Company Army c. 1830, was a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and as part of the transactions for that year he submitted his treatise, *Observations on the Oriental Origins of the Romanichal*<sup>55</sup> to the society. In his treatise, he also published a part of Firdausi’s story which was in the *Book of Kings*. Then, the story was recorded repeatedly by other writers. The work of the Persian poet Firdausi was recorded by himself in the eleventh century.<sup>56</sup> In his Shahnameh (The Book of Kings), King Bahram Gur wished to make his people happy and asked what they wanted. They told that they wanted music and entertainment. Then, the king sent a messenger to the king of India, Shankal whose daughter he had married. He wanted him to send ten thousand luri men and women who were experts in lute-playing. They performed their music and in return, the king gave them oxen, asses, and some corn. Luri left and they ate the oxen and corn and came back a year later. King told them that “you

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<sup>53</sup> In caste system, there were *Brahmans* (holy men or priests), *Kshatriyas* (rulers), *Vaisyas* (free peasants or traders) and *Shudras* (slaves, labourers or artisans). See: Burjor Avari, *India: The Ancient Past: A History of the Indian-Subcontinent from 7000 BC to AD 1200* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 74.

<sup>54</sup> According to Isabel Fonseca, beside his efficacious studies, Heinrich Grellmann contributed some *clichés* about Gypsies by saying that there are Gypsies who ate the corps, hussies and Gypsies who feel pleasure of cannibalism. See: Isabel Fonseca, *Beni Ayakta Gömün: Çingeneler ve Yolculukları*, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> John S. Harriott, “Observations on the Oriental Origins of the Romanichal,” *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2 (1830), pp. 518-558. Quoted in: *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities*, eds. Adrian Marsh and Elin Strand (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute in İstanbul, 2006), pp. 39-58.

<sup>56</sup> Adrian Marsh, “...the strumming of their silken bows:” The Firdawsi Legend of Bahram Gur & Narratives of Origin in Romani Histories,” in: *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities*, eds. Adrian Marsh and Elin Strand (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute in İstanbul, 2006), pp. 39-58.



should not have wasted the seed, the corn and the harvest, you still have your donkeys: load them up with your possessions, prepare your musical instruments, and put strings of silk upon them.” And even today, “the Luri roam the world following the king’s just words, seeking their livelihood, sharing dens with dogs and wolves, and thieving night and day as they go.”<sup>57</sup>

The second document comes from the Arab historian Hamza of Isfahan. He, in the 940s, recorded a similar story, but the name of people was a little bit different. The name was Zott and their numbers were twelve thousand.<sup>58</sup> There was also a third version of the story in a Persian history book:

Bahram Gur felt that the finances of his Empire were such that he could reduce taxes and tell his people to spend less time working and more time in recreation; one evening while returning from the place where he hunted, he passed by a group of his subjects who were sitting on the grass drinking as the sun went down. He took them to task for not having any music, for music charms the spirits. They said: Oh King, we looked for a musician for 100 dirhams but there wasn’t one to be found. So Bahram said: we will find you one and he ordered a scribe to write to Shankalat the Indian to sent four thousand of the most able musicians and the finest singers to his court. When Shankalat had done this, Bahram spread them through his kingdom, ordering the people to employ them and be amused by them and pay them their just due. And from their descendants come the dark Luri who are experts in playing the flute and lute.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois, *Gypsies: An Illustrated History*, pp. 28–30.

<sup>58</sup> The date was 950 in Donald Kenrick’s book and the story was written as: “full of solicitude for his subjects Bahram wanted them to devote half of each day to rest, feasts, drinking, and amusement. One day he was astonished to see some of his subjects drinking but without music. They explained that there were few musicians in the empire and that the piece of their services had increased in an exorbitant way. The good Shah wrote to the king of India who sent him twelve thousand Zott musicians and Bahram Gur distributed them in the towns of his empire.” See: Donald Kenrick, *From India to the Mediterranean: the Migration of Gypsies*, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

These three different stories may be true, or maybe not. Moreover, a group of people whose characteristics and lifestyles resembled that of Gypsies' might be seen or accepted as the true ancestors of Gypsies. Actually, if we look at the terminology, we will see that titles like *Zotti* (pl. *Zott*), *Luli* or *Luri* are still used to call Gypsies in today's Iran. In Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, *Luri* is a little changed as *Nuri* (pl. *Nawar*). As for meaning, the term *Zott* is the Arabian version of *Jatt*, the name of an Indian tribe. There are even people who insist that Gypsies descended from this *Jatt* tribe. For Angus Fraser, the story of *Zott* can be true and there are many documents to prove the reality of the events about this tribe, but the only problem in this story was, at this time, the title *Zott* was used at random. Nearly, everyone came from India, whether Gypsy or not, was called *Zott*. Besides, having fewer loaned words from the Arabic language in the Gypsy language refuted the argument.<sup>60</sup>

In the 1840s, Augustus Pott (1844) published his work on the language. A copy of the letter written by Brockhaus was in it where it was suggested that they called themselves *Roma* (Rom; "Man").<sup>61</sup> The title was changed according to the country. Probably, as a result of the lexical change, there appeared different titles for Gypsies. *Dom* (among Persian and Syrian Christian *Romani*), *Rom* (among European *Romani*) and *Lom* (among the Armenian *Romani*) were perceived as Gypsies. All these three titles have phonetical similarities with the words *dōmba* (meaning unification of communities somehow) in Sanskrit, and *dom* or *dum* in modern Indian. In Sanskrit, the word means men of lower caste who subsist with songs; and music and in modern Indian dialects, there are similar meanings like "wandering musician caste"

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<sup>60</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, trans. İlkin İnanç (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2005), p. 39.

<sup>61</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, p. 5.

(*Sindhi*), “servant” (*Lahnda*), “strolling musicians” (*Pencabi*) and “low caste black-skinned fellow” (*West Pahari*).<sup>62</sup>

In 1923, John Sampson, British romanologist published an extended version of this. He claimed that after passing through Persia, Gypsies were separated into three groups; *Dom* in Near East, *Lom* in Armenia and *Rom* continued through Europe. He believed that in Persia, there occurred some phonetical changes in the languages of these three groups. According to those changes, he also constituted one more classification. With the usage of the word “sister,” he separated these three groups into the groups of *Ben* (*Domari*) and *Phen* (*European Romani* and *Lomavren*). In the dialects of *Ben*, there were not basic Persian words and it could be the sign of early separation from Persia. Nevertheless, there was no information about their reach to Syria and Egypt. Abundance of Persian effects in the dialects of *European Romani* proved the long-term existence in Persia.<sup>63</sup> He was also interested in relations between *Romani* and the languages of India and he found the connection between the language spoken in the north-west, such as *Sindhi* or *Multani* and *Romani* language. His ideas became really effective and dominant. Nevertheless, his *ecole* was challenged by Sir Ralph Turner who was the former chairman of the Eastern Countries and African Studies in London University. Turner stated that *Romani* was similar to central Indian languages, such as Hindi or Panjabi (*Racastan* and *Gucarat*). However, because of carrying the features of the North-West Languages, Turner explained this with a possible migration from the Central to the North-West.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, p. 31.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

<sup>64</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, p. 5.

About the departure date, nearly all the scholars had compromised over the tenth and eleventh centuries. Nevertheless, there are still scientists who insisted on the fifth century or eighth century. However, about the Gypsy departure of India, Ian Hancock underlined some basic points. Up to him, researchers searched the language of *Rom* “Romani,” the language of *Doms* “Domari” and the language of *Loms* “Lomavren” and they based their hypotheses on the idea that these groups were part of one basic migration, so they probably descended from one language. Actually, it had to be kept in mind that there were several migration groups and all these migrated at different times and periods. Moreover, it was understood that the *Doms* had a separate origin in India than *Romani*. Its grammar and vocabulary were not the same. The more important thing is that the words which these *Romani* and *Doms* had taken from Persian should be the same, but they are not. Besides this, from the fifth century until 1000 AD, the languages of India had three grammatical genders for their nouns: masculine, feminine, and neuter. About 1000 AD, it started to lose the third one and retained only two. *Domari* had three of them, but *Romani* had only two. In that case, Hancock claims that *Domari* probably left India before the Indian languages lost the third gender.<sup>65</sup>

So, why did they move into Persian lands? What is their excuse to leave the fatherland?<sup>66</sup> As a basic reason for the departure, the general approach was toward the hegemony of the Ghaznavid Empire. By the leadership of the Sultan Mahmud,

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<sup>65</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>66</sup> About the process of migration, there are many theories put by the researchers. Firstly, it was thought that in fifth and sixth centuries, White Huns (*Eftalit*) had invasions from the Central-Asia over the India and those invasions caused the cities break up, down of downgrade of agriculture, famine and epidemics. Then, in seventh and eighth centuries, India was invaded by the Arabs and mass influxes eventuated. With the effect of this, social and economical crisis showed increase. Besides, the campaigns of Mahmud of Ghazne in eleventh century and Mohammed Guri in twelfth century and even Tamerlane in fifteenth century were also showed as the sources of Gypsy’ migrations. See: Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Çingeneler*, trans. Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2006), p. 14.

Ghaznavids exerted dominance over those lands. Then, from several accounts, it is possible to learn that the Seljuks defeated the Ghaznavid people and brought captives into the Byzantine Empire. Briefly, the Seljuk and the Muslim expansion seemed to be the initial reasons why they moved through Europe. So, until Europe, which route did they follow? In this case, the language could be helpful to trace their route. As they moved, new words were added to their language. Persian and Kurdish words showed that they lived and passed through Persia, Armenia; and Greek words indicated that Turkey was the next stop for them. Especially the *Phen* group, after leaving Persia, was supposed to go to Armenia. However, there were fewer words taken from Armenian in the dialect of European *Romani*. It could be proof that separation of the European *Romani* from Armenia (probably with the effect of agitation, Byzantine-Arab rivalry, then the Seljuk invasion of Anatolia) occurred before the deep effect of the Armenian language. Apart from this, *lomavren* continued to be affected by the language of Armenia.<sup>67</sup>

Lastly, Slavic and Romanian words showed that then they were in the Balkans. Briefly, it could be said that when Gypsies reached over north Mesopotamia and the east borders of Byzantine Empire at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century, they were separated into three groups: the *Doms* who speak the dialect of *Ben* followed the southern direction and stayed in the Middle-East. The other two groups who speak the dialect of *Phen*, meaning *Lom* followed the northern direction, and *Roms* followed the western direction. The first Gypsy group went south-west and in time settled in Syria and Palestine. Some of them passed to north Africa and Egypt. There may even be Gypsies who followed north African direction and reached over Spain. And it could be possible to mix with the Gypsy group who

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<sup>67</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 43-44.

came from northern Europe. The second Gypsy group was directed to Caucasia and they settled in the south of it, meaning, Armenia and Georgia. The third and biggest group was directed to Asia Minor and the Balkans. Existence of more than 250 Greek words and Greek originated grammar were the proof of the long-term relationship of the *Romanies* with the Byzantine Empire such as the words about metalwork are of Greek origin, so blacksmith did not come from Indian. This profession probably was valid in Greece and the Byzantine Empire.<sup>68</sup> In time, they went to Mid and Western Europe.

### Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans

The first account about Gypsies of that period was a Georgian biography, titled *Life of St George the Athonite* written at Monastery of Iberon on Mount Athos in 1068. When the Emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042-1055) was in trouble with the wild animals that had invaded the imperial park of Philopation and that killed the game animals in 1050, the emperor wished the service of a group of people who were called *Adsincani* and who were descendants of the magician Simon and who were famous for their magical ability and sorcery. Those people left some magical meat at the park, the wild animals died instantly. The emperor who was affected by the “magical ability” of those people invited them to the Palace and wished them to apply the same magic over the dogs, but when St. Georgian blessed the poisoned meats, the lives of the dogs were saved and so *Atsinganis* were fired.<sup>69</sup> However, we know that there were sources to imply their aids to the emperor before. They supposedly assisted the emperor and in return, *Atsinganis* were given food.

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<sup>68</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>69</sup> George. C. Soulis, “Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the late Middle Ages,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 15 (Washington, 1961), pp. 143-165.

Another account was from the twelfth century about Gypsies who dealt with animals for entertainment and magical purposes. With the law numbered LXI (692), Theodore Balsamon cited Gypsy bear-trainers, snake-charmers, sooth-sayers, oracles, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, astrologers and warders off the evil-eye. The penalty was six years of excommunication for anyone who had a show with animals like bears and snakes; and who exploited and deceived people by fortune-telling. Approximately one century later, Constantinopolitan Patriarch, Athanasius I (or Anastasios) sent a letter to all the priests in order to advise not to associate with anyone who teaches devilish things to people like magic, fortune-telling, bear-training and not to allow those people into their houses.<sup>70</sup> In general perspective, training animals like monkeys, bears and snakes was one of the important sectors. Besides this, there were acrobats, jugglers, dancers, sieve-makers, who were generally Gypsies. Here is a point; *Athinganoi* or *Atsingani* was a non-Rom heretical sect. The word *Adsincani* was the Georgian version of the Greek word *Athinganoi* or *Atzinganoi*, *Atsinganos*. From the later-dated sources, it was understood that the name of *Atsingani* in twelfth and thirteenth centuries was used to imply the ancestors of Gypsies. This sect was under suspicion because of their heterodoxy. They followed the Jewish Sabbath and avoided circumcision, baptism; and they prophesied about the stars and used divination, charms, and magic. They were accused of practicing dissimulation by observing the Sabbath when among Jews and shunning baptism and circumcision when among Christians. Furthermore, they practiced ritual purification and avoided all physical contact with outsiders. When Roma appeared in those lands, the same name began to be used also for them because of having similar

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<sup>70</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, 'You're Roman!' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, (Los Angeles: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology, 2002), p. 111.

kinds of jobs such as fortune telling.<sup>71</sup> In short, the general idea was not good for them. The public liked all the things they engaged in such as magic, fortune-telling and dances with the animals, but the administrators were strict in that point. They tried to stop all these by enforcing harsh laws. Moreover, they saw Gypsies as the cause of Byzantine's moral and political decline. In other words, they were scapegoats in demand. Despite everything, there was a fact that some of Gypsies converted to Christianity and retained its practices even afterwards.<sup>72</sup>

Constantinople would never be a final destination for them. Against all odds, they advanced through Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, and the Aegean islands, and the lands that, in the future, constituted Romania and Yugoslavia. As history entails, it was a condition to ask the impulses of such migrations. As an explanation, Donald Kenrick put forward three reasons. The first one was "Black Death" (plague) that reached Constantinople in 1347; and the second one was the victory of Turks over Greeks in Asia in 1390. The last reason was the war of "Aleppo." Whilst the Mongols under the leadership of Tamerlane had a victory, they began to advance and that could be a reason why Gypsies passed to the European part.<sup>73</sup> Together with all these, the advance of the Ottoman Empire through the Balkans was within the bounds of possibility because that situation made everything easy for Gypsies. The most visible effect of their advance was surely the differentiation in their language. When they went out of Greek borders, the language of *Romani* showed signs of separation. And the result was the appearance of more than one dialect. This was because Gypsy groups passed over different parts of the Balkans and the Europe; the

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<sup>71</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, 'You're Roman!' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, pp. 103-105.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>73</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj'dan Thames'e*, p. 46.



groups were under the impact of the languages which were spoken in that region. About where they lived, the sources showed that they lived in Mora, Island of Crete (1323), Ionia Islands, Zante (1518), Corfu (1346), Nauplion, Modon, Sicily (1399), Siberia, Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, Thrace, Walachia (1370) and Moldavia. The port of Modon was one of the favourite places on the routes of pilgrims. There, Gypsies were in a close-relationship with those pilgrims, and later on their relations and what they learned from the pilgrims would make it easy to travel around Europe.<sup>74</sup>

They had various experiences in the Balkans, but the worst they experienced was in the Danubian Principalities. The records dating from the 1380s demonstrated that in Danubian Principalities, they were used as slaves. Walachian Prince Vladislas granted forty Gypsy families to St. Anthony Monastery at Vodita.<sup>75</sup> In 1480, Moldavian Vaivode, Great Stefan bought three Gypsy families from a man named Petru Braescul in return for 50 Tatar *zloty*. About Gypsies reaching over those lands, supposedly they came from Byzantine lands in Anatolia. At first, they were workers and travelling craftsmen; but because of their debts, they had to settle in a definite place as serfs of a landowner. As a race, they were lower than serfs and were seen as slaves. The laws that applied to them were worse than the ones applied to serfs. The princes of Walachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania simply gave them to “nobles” and religious men.” It was possible for them to be given back, to be sold, or to be exchanged. Moreover, strict measures were taken on behalf of their owner in order to control their movements. If nomadic Gypsy craftsmen that were classified as slaves of princes paid annual taxes, it was possible to be free. In general, the nobles treated

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<sup>74</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 49–52.

<sup>75</sup> George C. Soulis, “Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the late Middle Ages,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, pp. 143-165.

them harshly.<sup>76</sup> There were so many different slaves in use such as field slaves (of *boyars* and small landowners), house slaves, the slaves of the Crown (for example; slaves of noblemen, slaves of the court and householders) and the slaves of the church. The slaves of the crown had three basic jobs like gold-washing (miners; *Rudari* and gold-washers and goldsmiths; *Aurari*), bear-training (bear-trainers; *Ursari*) and spoon-making (spoon-makers; *Lingurari*).<sup>77</sup> Gypsies were mostly *vatrashi* or “home slaves” in the hands of nobles and monks. They were used as land workers, musicians, servants in houses. One group was “palace slaves,” *laileshi*. In return for a yearly payment, they were allowed to live as nomads or to continue their traditional work.<sup>78</sup> They became farriers, white-washers, sieve-makers, blacksmiths, and coppersmiths; manufactured wooden commodities; combed window bars; and did seasonal work. The Church slaves were grooms, cooks and coachmen. Generally, slaves were under the control of a *vatrav* or overseer. The general punishments of slaves were “flogging,” “*falague*” (*falaka*; shredding the soles of the feet with a whip), “cutting of the lips,” “burning with lye,” “being thrown naked into the snow,” “hanging over smoking fires, and wearing a three-cornered spiked iron collar called a *cangue*.”<sup>79</sup> There were contradictions about the status of Gypsies. On the one hand, they were sold and abused, devoid of civil rights, punished with a heavy hand and exposed to mass execution. On the other hand, the slaves, especially Rumanian villagers benefited from the rights that were not valid for other local groups.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj'dan Thames'e*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>77</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, pp. 18-20; Also see: Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 192-195.

<sup>78</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 99.

<sup>79</sup> Ian Hancock, *We are the Romani People: Ame sam e Rromane Džene*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>80</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 99.

With the Walachia Constitution in 1831, and Moldavia Nationality Law in 1833, the policy of enfranchisement for the slaves was embraced. They were first recognized as individuals. If a slave was killed, the perpetrator would be punished. Despite this fact, Gypsies were offered for sale. It was forbidden for them to marry free people; otherwise their children would be treated as slaves. With the Paris Peace Agreement that ended the Crimean War, the two principalities were obliged to abolish slavery; and in 1856, with a law appearing in Walachia, slaves bought by the state were set free. Nearly at the same time, there was also another law enacted in Moldova. In spite of the laws that ended slavery, many Gypsies did not want to be free, because they thought paying only one tax was better than paying many taxes like free people did. According to Marushiakova and Popov, slavery was totally abolished by the time that Walachia and Moldova were united and constituted Romania. In that period, most Gypsies went to Transylvania and Banat and with other groups; they went to Western Europe and joined other Gypsy groups already living there. However, the abolition of slavery was not the only reason for this. They needed to find a new kind of job and not to limit the borders that they lived as nomads. At the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, they immigrated mostly to other parts. *Kalderari*, *Lovari* groups, *Beash* and *Rudari* (*Ludari*) immigrated, too. By following different paths and by using modern transportation, they spread to the world and settled everywhere in the world.<sup>81</sup>

### Gypsies in the European Continent

From 1417 onwards, Gypsies began to be seen in the western parts of the Balkans and throughout Europe. They arrived in Crete (1322), Corfu (1347), Walachia

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<sup>81</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 99; and, pp. 101–102.

(1370), Serbia (1348), Bulgaria (1378), Hungary (1383), Romania (1385), Greece (1322), Czech (1399), Germany (1407), Switzerland (1418), Belgium (1419), France (1419), Holland (1420), Italy (1422), Spain (1425), Russia (1501), Scotland and Denmark (1505), Poland (1509), Sweden (1512), Britain (1514), Norway (1540) and Finland (1584).<sup>82</sup>

From these dates onwards, Gypsies were not invisible anymore. On the contrary, they especially tried to draw attention to themselves. They proceeded as organized groups and with leaders who had effective titles, they went forward purposely. For Angus Fraser, this was a kind of a strategy to live in a *Gadze* world. At that time, pilgrims had to be respected by both the emperor and the public; and Gypsies tried to benefit from the air surrounding pilgrims. They at first got the letter from Sigismund and his officers at Lindau, Constanza Lake. Then, they found a way to copy influential letters for the pass. The letters became effective for easy-pass, but that never guaranteed the respect and the good treatment of the people. They had black skins and in some places, they were famous for being “thievish.” They entered into cities like Baltic, Hanseat, Frankfurt am Main, Zurich, Basle, Solothurn, and Bern. Besides being black, they owned the titles of “count” and “duke”. They also claimed that they came from “Little Egypt.” Probably they claimed that they were relegated by the Turks and they had to live in poverty for seven years to absolve their sins.<sup>83</sup>

According to some sayings, the Pope had condemned them to travel the world for seven years without “sleeping on a bed.”<sup>84</sup> Changing religion, freezing the nails and separation from the pure doctrines of Christianity were the reasons put forward in

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<sup>82</sup> İsmail Altınöz, “Osmanlı Toplum Yapısı İçinde Çingeneler,” *Türkler* (Ankara), X (2002), pp. 422–432; and, Ali Arayıcı, “Dünyanın Dört Bir Yanına Dağılmış Ülkesiz Bir Halk: Çingeneler,” *Öğretmen Dünyası* (Ankara) XIX/ 221 (Mayıs 1998), pp. 6–10.

<sup>83</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 66–69.

<sup>84</sup> John Hoyland, *A Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits & Present State of Gypsies*, p. 18.

order to explain why they traveled or made pilgrimage. Based on all these reasons, they wished the help of the community. With regard to the impressions they made, Europeans preferred to call them some exotic titles as *Bohemian*, *Saracen*, *Egyptians*, *Egipcians*, *Egitissians*, *Egissians*, and *Ethiopians*.

In 1418, they left Switzerland and in 1419, they were in France, Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. In 1427, they were already in Paris and Amiens, in 1429, Douai, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Nijmegen, Arnhem, in 1430, Italy, Middleburg, Zutphen, Leiden, Metz, Köstence, in 1431, Tournai, in 1434, Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main, and in 1434-5, Burges. Briefly, in their journey, they came to countries like Switzerland, today's Benelux countries, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, but there was no exact evidence about their going north. They generally travelled in different groups with the leadership of a person. The leaders were sometimes Gypsies, but sometimes people who married Gypsy girls. They were arbiters between effective people and Gypsies. Gypsies mostly behaved according to Christian doctrines when they went to a funeral or "baptism." Their appearance was poor, but they gave good tips and they had gold and silver jewelleryes. They dealt with magic, fortune-telling, and acrobatics.<sup>85</sup> At first, they got or showed the documents of emperors, some authorities and the documents gotten from the Pope. When seven years passed, they tried to find a way to "protract" the time. Therefore, they got letters from Duke of Bourgogne, the King of France, and Pope Martin V.<sup>86</sup> Sometimes some Gypsies left the group and became "citizens" of a region. For example, in 1446, a craftsman called Heinz got the right to be a citizen of Frankfurt am Main.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 66-69 ; and, pp. 78-83.

<sup>86</sup> Nicole Martinez, *Çingeneler*, p. 14.

<sup>87</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj'dan Thames'e*, p. 78.

In time, somehow, the treatment towards Gypsies became harsher. People who were attracted by the mystery of those people began to suspect them and later began to perceive them as “louses,” “hellions,” “impostors,” and “dissuaders.” They suspected their ways. They were not interesting anymore; in contrast, they were dreadful: they were responsible for everything evil; plague, poisoned borehole, provocateurs, agents, etc. They symbolized everything which is not good. They were unreligious, without country or nationality, dangerous nomads, magicians, thieves, and beggars.<sup>88</sup> The most wicked and outdated prejudice about Gypsies was the accusation of ‘spy.’ As Isabel Fonseca stated, their language, black skin, unknown origin, resistance to adapt to the local traditions, no desire to form a state and no feeling of loyalty made them to blame. Germans were wrapped up in the theory that was mentioned first in the diaries of a Bavarian Priest. The imperial edicts taken out by Maximilian I in 1497, 1498 and 1500 asserted Gypsies’ spying for the Ottomans.<sup>89</sup>

The first immense reaction to the Gypsy existence came from Germany. Some places in Germany continued to give gifts or “alms to Gypsies, but in some places, the gifts were given with the condition of not entering into their city. They were even given money and the strict laws were issued. In 1497, the “Legislative Assembly” of the “Holy Roman Empire” accused Gypsies of “spying” and the following year, they were expelled. From that date onward, it was not a crime to torture Gypsies in German lands. In 1551, all documents Gypsies carried were prohibited and rendered invalid.<sup>90</sup> The same practice was followed in Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal,

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<sup>88</sup> Nicole Martinez, *Çingeneler*, p. 17.

<sup>89</sup> Isabel Fonseca, *Beni Ayakta Gömün: Çingeneler ve Yolculukları*, p. 256.

<sup>90</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 78–83.

Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Italy, Hungary, Transylvania, Poland, Britain, Scotland, Denmark and Sweden. The laws were issued and they were expelled. Most of the time, the laws did not work and Gypsies were able to walk around because generally, the security was not good enough. Also “bribery” was widespread. The dates may be different, but at the end, the rulers of all countries started to be angry with Gypsies’ magical talents and thievery. Especially in the eighteenth century, fortune-telling was prevented by kingdoms, principalities and the church. Religious men were uncomfortable with the dancers and their stimulative movements. Additionally, beggary was also another point that bothered people and authorities. At first, they were affected by their clothes, lifestyles and talents, but when these continued, the governor and local authorities began to be afraid and bothered by them and attempted to save themselves from them. Briefly, the story lost its effect. Their lifestyle, in European eyes was against all the rules that Europe believed in and accepted, and therefore, they had to be fixed. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, all European authorities showed a “reaction” towards Gypsies.<sup>91</sup> Between 1471 and 1637, Europe, mainly Luzern, Brandenburg, Spain, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Britain, Denmark, France, Flanders, Scotland, Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania and Sweden reacted against Gypsies. Denmark decided to apply death-penalty to Gypsy leaders; Sweden made a decision to hang all Gypsy males; Britain hanged and expelled Gypsies; France cauterized and shaved their heads; Moravia cut their left-ears; and Bohemia cut the right-ears.<sup>92</sup>

Gypsies were not abused all the time, sometimes they were used for good purposes. For example, in 1545, François I, the king of France employed 4.000

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<sup>91</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 116–117.

<sup>92</sup> Isabel Fonseca, *Beni Ayakta Gömün: Çingeneler ve Yolculukları*, p. 258.

Gypsies as mercenaries in order to fight against Britain. Against the Ottomans and against Islam, Gypsies were also used as soldiers by Europeans.<sup>93</sup>

From the fifteenth century on, in Germany and Holland, Gypsies started to settle. Despite laws, they continued to perform fortune-telling. In addition to this, the traditional clothes of Bohemians were prevented by the law. In Habsburg and Spain, they tried to apply a new way and treated them “more reasonably, not more humanely.”<sup>94</sup> In France, with the 1670 Regulations and the 1682 Proclamation, Bohemians were punished with hard labour without any questioning. Women, in that case, were imprisoned in dormitories. And children would be raised as Christians. Beside France, in countries where people generally speak German, it was possible to recognize a lot of practices on Gypsies. *Zigeuners* were punished with most severe punishments: beating, dismemberment, the gallows, beheadings and exile. In England and Italy, they faced death-penalties. In Germany and Holland, there were panels on which some Gypsies were suspended, and some were whipped. The most humiliating punishments were shaving the guilty’s beard and hair, whipping, and cutting of ears.<sup>95</sup>

All countries except the Ottoman Empire, (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, South Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia) went through the same way. They tried to deport and oblige them to have a settled life. They applied ways and methods to push them to that point. However, Portugal was the first country that sent them by ships for deportation to the colonies. Portugal sent Gypsies to Africa, Brasilia and Indian colonies. Then, the system was applied by Spain, too. In France, Gypsies were

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<sup>93</sup> Mine Haksal, “‘Makuşma me de Rom Sinom’ Çingenelerin Macerası,” *Popüler Tarih*, pp. 32–39.

<sup>94</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>95</sup> Henriette Asséo, *Çingeneler: Bir Avrupa Yazgısı*, pp. 36–37.



not forced to go, but after the alleviation of the penal servitude, some Gypsies went to French colonies in America, such as Martinique, and Louisiana. Britain also sent some of them to the colonies.<sup>96</sup> The countries seldom attempted to convert them to Christianity or applied Christian faith over them. Some even tried to be their “sponsor”. The sponsorship of Gypsies, until the seventeenth century, was seen as a tradition in Germany, France, Poland, and Russia.<sup>97</sup> In France of 1810, carrying a circulation card was compulsory. And from 1912, carrying an anthropologic card was obligatory, too.<sup>98</sup>

In the eighteenth century, there were some decisions tried to be made about certain subjects such as the emergence of “nation thought,” protection of the “faith” and to get liberated from the dominance of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, there appeared certain types of border. On one side, we saw the Europeans, and on the other side, there was the Ottoman Empire, and of course the Muslim faith. Gypsies stood on both sides. Europeans thought that they served the Turks as “spies,” and the Ottoman statesmen believed that they were the agents of Vienna. Having policies of economic and legal changes, Austria, Russia, Hungary and Germany applied “harsh habitation policy” over them, and their children were sent to orphanage. In 1782, the most horrible and effective accusation emerged. In a case, Gypsies were accused of being “cannibals.” The Austrian and German journals wrote that they killed 28 people, and they even dried them. Then the number increased to

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<sup>96</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 150–151.

<sup>97</sup> Henriette Asséo, *Çingeneler: Bir Avrupa Yazgısı*, p. 42.

<sup>98</sup> Mine, Haksal, “‘Makuşma me de Rom Sinom’ Çingenelerin Macerası,” *Popüler Tarih*, pp. 32–39.

84 people. They were caught and tortured and one of the Gypsies, being intolerant of torture, confessed: “we ate them.” Then the accusations continued for a long time.<sup>99</sup>

As a result, the pressure over Gypsies of Europe brought about change in their lives; and especially the pressure pushed them to “accommodate” the conditions in order to stay alive. For the sake of food and protection, they were initiated to find and to benefit from the loopholes in the system. Some of them began to live in infertile lands and forests; and some of them settled in frontier areas; and they learnt to manipulate the legal loopholes. What is more, they became “experts” in creation of fake documents and passports. Besides, for security, they broke up and started to travel in small groups. Sometimes, to get sympathy as well as to acquire privileges, they accepted to serve as soldiers under certain units. In spite of this, at any rate, their area to travel was limited. In some countries, they chose a settled lifestyle. They began to get in touch with the local community; and also with the purpose of sending their children to school, they attributed value to the selection of specific quarters as their living places. In contrast to the changing policy of the European people and authorities, the church was always harsh towards them, and they never actually believed that they can be really trustworthy or religious.<sup>100</sup>

#### Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire from its Foundation to the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II

The Ottoman Empire or *Devlet-i Âliye-i Osmâniyye* which lasted from 1299 to 1923, and which spanned three continents in its height bore atypical continuum for the history of Gypsies. Aspects of the empire would change some major points in their life and would bring a new understanding. With the territorial expansion and the

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<sup>99</sup> Henriette Asséo, *Çingeneler: Bir Avrupa Yazgısı*, pp. 46–50.

<sup>100</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 157–163.

conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmed II, some Gypsies in Anatolia came to İstanbul and the Balkans. Gypsies had jobs like craftsmen; or served in the army; or some of them came with the groups as a result of the conquests. Some of them who rejected to live under the domination of an Islamic state carried on the path to Europe. However, for the people who preferred to be the dominated group of the Ottoman Empire, a disparate period would begin.

### Status of the Ottoman Gypsies

In the Ottoman Empire, the sultan was an absolute ruler and below the sultan, it is certainly possible to divide the society into two groups which were the *askerî*, the military-administrative class and the *reâyâ*, the subject class. Also, the *reâyâ* was divided into two different groups; the Muslims and non-Muslims. As seen from this statement, in the Ottoman Empire, social identities were determined according to religious affiliations. On the other hand, religious affiliations remained at the forefront rather than ethnic and linguistic solidarity. Even if the main subject of the Ottoman Empire was Muslims, the religion of Islam stipulated conditions to the Islamic state in order to protect other religious communities such as *ehl-i kitâb*. However, as for Gypsies, it was confronted with an exceptional situation. The administration of Gypsies was based on ethnicity rather than religion. The instance of this was 'the poll-tax,' paid by non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman Empire. The poll-tax was a kind of tax which was taken from all non-Muslims in return for the exemption from the military service. Women, children, elders, blind people, bed-ridden individuals and monks were not obliged to pay that tax.<sup>101</sup> As the tax was peculiar to non-Muslims, under normal circumstances, Muslim Gypsies should not

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<sup>101</sup> Ziya Karamursal, *Osmanlı Mali Tarihi Hakkında Tetkikler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), p. 171.

have paid that tax. Nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire made all Gypsies, regardless of being Muslims or non-Muslims fall under the obligation of ‘the poll-tax.’ Just the amount was differentiated.<sup>102</sup> The Muslim Gypsies paid yearly 22 *akçes*, non-Muslim Gypsies paid 25 *akçes* and the widows were obliged to pay 6 *akçes*.<sup>103</sup> This case demonstrated that even if the Ottoman Empire divided all Gypsies into two separate groups, as Muslim Gypsies and non-Muslim Gypsies, it somehow equated those two groups.

Evliya Çelebi explained the story of the ‘additional tax’ imposed on Muslim Gypsies like this:

As for Gypsies of Anatolia, their original home is the town of Balat in the *sancak* of Menteşe. Even now Balat is the name of the quarter where Gypsies settled when Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror transferred them from Balat to İstanbul. To be sure, Sultan Mehmed also transferred to İstanbul some Gypsies from this Gümülcine. But the Anatolian and Rumelian Gypsies did not get along well. The Rumelian Gypsies celebrated Easter with the Christians, the Festival of Sacrifice with the Muslims, and Passover with the Jews. They did not accept any one religion, and therefore our *imams* refused to conduct funeral services for them but gave them a special cemetery outside Eğrikapı. It is because they are such renegades that they were ordered to pay an additional *harāc* (tax for non-Muslims). That is why a double *harāc* is exacted from Gypsies. In fact, according to Sultan

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<sup>102</sup> Eyal Ginio stated that in Ottoman Selanik, while Christian Gypsies were paying an annual tax of 730 *akçes*, the Muslim ones were paying 660 *akçes*. Moreover, as looking into the *sicil* records of early seventeenth century Sofia, Peter Sugar explained that Christian Gypsies were paying 250 *akçes* and the Muslim Gypsies were paying 180 *akçes* as an annual tax. It was interesting that in both amounts given by two different scholars, the difference in price was 70 *akçes*. Peter Sugar commented as “all these figures could mean is that while Gypsies were considered such low people that even Muslims could be taxed illegally, their religion was still worth a 70 *akçes* tax discount.” For Eyal Ginio, it could be explained that “the scribes named the tax imposed upon the Muslim Gypsies as *bedel-i maktu*, that is to say, the equivalent of the fixed tax.” In other words, he meant that *bedel-i maktu* was just a cover used in order to legitimize illegal collection of the poll-tax from the Muslim Gypsies. Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies* 5, vol. 4, no. 2 (2004), pp. 7–44; and, Peter Sugar, *South-Eastern Europe under Ottoman Rule (1354-1804)* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977), p. 103.

<sup>103</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, (İstanbul: Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2005), p. 63.

Mehmed's census stipulation (*tahrîr*), *harâc* is even exacted from the dead souls of Gypsies, until live ones are found to replace them.<sup>104</sup>

The illegal approach of the Ottoman Empire was also discussed in the article of Dimitri Cantemir in an interesting way. He stated that:

The Sultan Suleiman, the first Ottoman emperor with this name (named also The Law Maker), when he had elaborated and enhanced his political canons and other regulations adequate to administration, wanted to enforce a law also for Gypsies and, in this respect, he commanded that all the older Gypsies get together, no matter if they were Christians (because many of them walk around in the name of Jesus, linked by the Greek or by the Armenian church), or Muslims. And he asked everyone about his family and what religion he had. Some of them confessed they believed in Christ, but others in the Prophet Muhammad. Then, the Sultan fixed for the ones believing in Muhammad a place to stay in Constantinople's outskirts (where there was the old church of Blacherne). He gave to them *imams* and hodjas to teach the old people and the children the Mohammedan Law (*Şeriat*) and other arrangements and Muslim ceremonies, then to teach them to frequent the mosque, to veil their women and to make marriages according to the religious Law. But six months passed after this event and the *imams* saw no Gypsies coming to the mosque. They heard that they had celebrated marriages without *imam*'s presence. It was this reason whereby the Sultan understood the bad situation they [Gypsies] lived in. Hearing this, the Sultan decreed that every Gypsy person had the liberty to choose their religion, adding also the favour to exempt from any tax the ones who confessed the Mohammedan religion. Making this decision public, he asked the tax collectors to record the number of the Gypsy people and those who said they were Christians received the *haraç* – the payment order and began to pay the taxes. After six months, the tax collectors found that none admitted to being a Christian Gypsy. Then, the Sultan commanded that the Christian Gypsies had to pay the *haraç* together with other Christians in the Empire and the Muslim Gypsies must pay double. This decree is still in power [1722] and this is the reason why all Gypsies who believe in

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<sup>104</sup> Victor Friedman and Robert Dankoff, "The Earliest Known Text in Balkan (Rumelian) Romani: A Passage from Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*," *Journal of Gypsy Lore Society*, I (1991), pp. 1-21.

Muhammad (and there are a great number of them) pay double taxes. If the Christian Gypsy will pay five talents, the Muslim Gypsy is forced to pay ten. The conclusion is that, as in the past Gypsies were not obliged to have any religion nor comply with any law; nowadays we see our Gypsies everywhere in the same situation.<sup>105</sup>

Another unusual application about Gypsies appeared in the *devşirme* system. As it was known, the system of *kul* (*gulâm*) was bringing up youths from among the slaves in order to use in the palace and the state services was one of the basic institutions in the Ottoman state administration. Thereby, the *devşirme* was an important improvement of that system. Mainly, it was the practice that was based on the conscription of Christian boys taken from their families with consent. Then, they were converted into Islam and they were raised as janissaries in the army units that were depended upon the sultan. In general literature, they were called *devşirme oğlanı*.<sup>106</sup> Due to the law, it was prohibited to collect boys like the son and heir, the married, the sons of village chamberlain, herdsmen, cowmen, boys without beards, bald ones, circumcised by birth, boys who knew the Turkish language, artisans, the tallest or shortest boys, Christians of Trabzon, Russians, Persians, and boys who come and go to İstanbul. Gypsies were definitely among the groups not included in it,<sup>107</sup> because they were not thought to be worthy of being raised as janissaries.

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<sup>105</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, "The System or the Structure of the Muhammedan Religion," written in 1722 at Sankt Petersburg and published in *Opere complete*, vol. VIII, tom II (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei, 1987), quoted in: Ana Oprisan, "An Overview of the *Romanlar* in Turkey," in: *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities*, eds. Adrian Marsh and Elin Strand (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute in İstanbul, 2006), pp. 163-169.

<sup>106</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Klasik Çağ (1300-1600)*, trans. Ruşen Sezer (İstanbul: YKY, 2008), p. 83.

<sup>107</sup> Ahmet Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Gayri Müslimlerin Yönetimi: Paxottoman* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2008), p. 102.

The basic explanation for this could be their extraordinary lifestyle, nomadic nature, substandard occupations, odd appearances and their unfavourable ways of subsistence such as murder, beggary, robbery, prostitution, etc. Anyhow, it would be wrong to ignore people who lived in the life standards constituted by the state and the public. In other words, the existence of the exceptions was inevitable, but especially regarding Gypsies, almost surely, the innocent suffered along with the guilty. So, this caused them to be classified as a distinct group in population records as *Kıbtî*.

### Administrative and Legal Regulations

In spite of being discriminatory, the state did not leave them to their own devices, but also tried to make some regulations and arrangements about them. The biggest arrangement was unarguably the administrative unit called *Livâ-yı Çingâne*. To regulate the legal, financial and military affairs of Gypsies inhabiting in Rumelia, a region comprising Eski Hisar-ı Sağra, Hayrabolu, Malkara, Döğence-Eli, İncügez, Gümülcine, Yanbolu, Pınarhisar, Pravadi, Dimetoka, Ferecik, İpsala, Keşan, and Çorlu which was centred in Kırkkilise (Kırklareli) was accepted as *Livâ-yı Çingâne* or *Çingene Sancağı* (the *Sancak* of the Gypsy). This administrative unit was combined to the Rumelia province and Gypsies who inhabited in İstanbul and Rumelia were attached here in 1520. The leader of the *sancak* was called *Çingene Beyi*, *Çingene Sancağı Beyi* or *Mir-i Kibtîyân* (the man of the *sancak*). The man who was elected among *sipahis* (cavalrymen) and *silahdars* (weapon holders) was actually in charge of collecting the poll-tax, *ispençe* and all canon and customary taxes. Additionally, he also organized the relations with the government and

collection and sending of the *müsellems* when it was needed. There was not exact information whether the leader of that unit was appointed among Gypsies or not.<sup>108</sup>

Gypsies of the *sancak* was separated into two: Muslims and non-Muslims. The Muslims were paying yearly 22 *akçes* per household. In the same vein, the married and unmarried sons in a house whose class was called *mücerred* were obliged to pay 22 *akçes*. The amount for the non-Muslim Gypsies was counted as 25 *akçes*. Apart from this, they were also paying taxes called *tekâlif-i örfiyye* such as *gerdek resmi* or *resm-i arusiye*, *cürüm* and *cinâyet* in the same amount with the other *reâyâ*. To guarantee the gathering of the taxes, a person *emin kişi* was appointed for Gypsies. The places where nomads could wander were determined and nobody should dare to leave his or her community. If they did, they would be caught and turned over to their tribes. Tribes to which Gypsies ordered to be returned under essential circumstances was called *katuna* and the chief was titled *katuna başı*. Within the borders of the unit, it was prohibited to intermingle, to intermarry and to migrate with the non-Muslims. As long as Muslims intermingled or intermarried with non-Muslims, they would be compelled to pay the same amount of tax with non-Muslims.<sup>109</sup> The points mentioned above demonstrated that this unit was constituted to take Gypsies under control and to make them reliable tax-payers. Nevertheless, after the *Tanzîmât Fermânı* (the Reform Edict), this administrative unit accomplished its mission and it was attached to *mukataa*.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> İsmail Altınöz, "Osmanlı Toplum Yapısı İçinde Çingenerler," *Türkler*, pp. 422–432.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 422–432.

<sup>110</sup> About the subject of *mukataa*, particularly the incomes of Gypsy poll-tax, there were diverse archival sources. One of the document indicates that the incomes of Gypsy poll-tax were circulated to Mehmed Ağa who was the *subaşı* of Eyüp. See: BOA, HAT. 530/26165, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilhicce 1252 [6 Nisan 1837].



There was one more unit, mainly an auxiliary troop managed for Gypsies; and it was called *Livâ-yı Müsellemân-ı Çingâne*. Generally, *müsellem* was the term used to indicate a certain group who was exempted from some of the taxes and who paid some of their taxes in lower rates in return for the military services. Nevertheless, they were not properly in the military class and there was not any type of salary given from the state treasury. They just earned their living by the cultivation of the lands which was granted to them by the state. Each group of 25 or 30 households (the number was open to change) were recorded as a unit (*ocak*) and five of them were perceived as ‘campaigners.’ Each man was going on campaign in turns. The campaigner was covering his expenses by taking money, amount of which changed between 20 and 60 *akçes* (50 *akçes* in *Livâ-yı Müsellemân-ı Çingâne*) from *yamak* (assistant) and from campaigners who did not go on campaigns in the designated year.<sup>111</sup>

*Müsellems* were staying in seventeen sub-districts or localities of Rumelia. Those were not sub-districts which actually constituted the Gypsy *sancak*, but were some sub-districts of the *livâs* of Vize, Çirmen and Silistre. That is, *Livâ-yı Müsellemân-ı Çingâne* was not an administrative unit whose borders were crossed and which constituted the Rumelian province. It was just a community of attendants. It was called *livâ* because in the leading position, there was a *mirlivâ*.<sup>112</sup> Besides the *mirlivâ*, there were also three or four *müsellems* (literally exempt) and nine or twelve *yamaks* (assistant). For an income, they collected a tax called *resm-i haymâne* or

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<sup>111</sup> Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 91.

<sup>112</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, “Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler,” *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* (1–157 Sayılar) 15 (1981), pp. 117–144.

*göçebe resmi*.<sup>113</sup> In *Livâ-yı Müsellemân-ı Çingâne*, Gypsies were performing auxiliary services such as casting cannon balls, carrying and repairing guns, building roads, purveyance to the soldiers, clarifying and opening roads, repairing fortresses, construction of bridges, service in shipyards and mines.<sup>114</sup> Dating from the reign of Sultan Murad III, this unit began to lose its function. Gypsy *müsellems* who were sent to Bender during the war with Persia in 1579 could not do their duties, because *yamaks* did not pay their *harçlık* (allowance). Then, the orders were submitted to the judges of Kırkkilise, Hayrabolu and Babaeski in order to discipline the *müsellems*. On the other hand, as a result of the corruption of the high officials of the state and the palace, the *timars* of *sipahi* and even, *zeâmet*s were granted to Gypsies. Finally, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were abolished and combined to *mukataas*. Even afterwards, *müsellems* retained their special positions; and they were exempted from taxes like *avârız-ı divâniye*. In return for this, as a *maktu'*, Muslims were paying yearly 655 *akçes* and non-Muslims were paying yearly 730 *akçes*, but the poll-tax was not demanded of them.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to this, Gypsies performed some auxiliary services in Rumelia or the Balkans for certain periods. For example, an Ottoman decree of 1566 was about “calling up extra forces in Macedonia for a military campaign.” At that point, the Muslim Gypsies (presumably sedentary Gypsies) were categorized as *yörüks*. In 1737, the report written by a Serbian Monk to the Austrian commander told us that the defence of Kosova and southern Serbia was left in the hands of Gypsies. Then, in

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<sup>113</sup> Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, vol. 6 (İstanbul: Fey Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), p. 511.

<sup>114</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III/ 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1947), pp. 285-286.

<sup>115</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420-426.

1788, the Bosnian Gypsies had an important role in the Ottoman defence against the Austrian invasion.<sup>116</sup> In spite of serving the army with auxiliary services, they could not succeed in becoming a part of either the ruling class (*askerî*) or the subject class. In that sense, the claim of İsmail Altınöz fits well here. According to him, Gypsies were never granted the status of *millet* or were never affiliated with Muslim or Christian community. “They were just guests who waited in the hall.”<sup>117</sup>

Whether about the administrative or military units mentioned above or about the attitude of all Gypsies living within the borders of the empire, there were many legal arrangements issued before the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Clearly, the state had issued some essential laws about Gypsies by designating their living place as *Kıbtîyân-ı Vilâyet-i Rum İli*. All the Major Laws issued for Gypsies could be cited as *Rumeli Etrâkiniün Koyun Adeti* (The Decree on the Number of the Sheep of Rumelia) during the reign of the Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481); *Kanûn-ı Cizye-i Cingânehân* (The Law of the Poll Tax for Gypsies) of 1497 during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512); *Kanûnnâme-i Kıbtîyân-ı Vilâyet-i Rumeli* (the law of Gypsies of Rumelia) (1530) during the reign of the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent; *Kanûn-ı Seraskerân-ı Livâ-yı Çingâne* and *Kanûn-ı Müsellemân-ı Livâ-yı Mezbûre* (1541) during the reign of the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent; and *Cingâne Yazmak İçün Ta'yîn Olunan Emine ve Kâtibine Hüküm* (1537) (An Order to the Steward and his Scribe Appointed to Inscribe Gypsies) during the reign of the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566).<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Kosova: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 207.

<sup>117</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, p. 27.

<sup>118</sup> Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, 8 vols.

The first legal arrangement about Gypsies was made during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481); and it took place in the legal code titled *Rumeli Etrakinun Koyun Adeti Hükmi* (Decree on the Number of the Sheep of Rumelian Turks). In that legal arrangement, it was stated that every Gypsy whether Muslim or non-Muslim had to pay 42 *akçes* as *harâç*, no more than that amount. If individuals who were in charge of forging had the order of the sultan or the letter of *beyberbeyi* (governor), they did not have to pay *harâç*. To receive taxes properly, the judge of every region would assign an *emin kişi* and those individuals would walk with Gypsies and would collect their taxes. After getting their taxes, the tax-collectors would give *hüccet* (script). The walking of the tax-collector with Gypsies demonstrated the dominance of the nomadic lifestyle among Gypsies. Also, it proved that those nomadic Gypsies were wandering as a huge crowd. In addition to taxational provisions, the legal code also included matters about religious differences. Enunciatively, it was perceived as forbidden for the Muslim Gypsies to intermingle with and inhabit among non-Muslim Gypsies. The Ottoman Empire found this matter inadequate, so it was decreed that Muslim Gypsies were obliged not to wander or travel with the non-Muslims. In case of breaking any of those rules, the Muslim Gypsies would be forced to pay higher taxes.<sup>119</sup>

The law which was issued during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) was titled *Kanunnâme-i Cizye-i Cingenehân* (The Law of the Poll Tax for Gypsies). The law dated 1498 was perceived as the first private law and was mostly about the ways of collecting taxes. According to the sealed *defters*, the tax of *harâç* would be

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<sup>119</sup> Robert Anhegger and Halil İnalçık, eds. *Kanunname-i Sultani ber Muceb-i Örf-i Osmanî, II. Mehmed ve II. Bayezid Devirlerine Ait Yasakname ve Kanunnameler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956), pp. 39-40.

The law was also given place in one article with its original format. See: Onur Oral, "Çingeneleler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII/137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 16-21.

collected by judges, and after that, *defters* of *harâç* would be delivered to İstanbul. Certain authorities of the region should help the tax-collector if necessary. Every administrative officer was responsible for the collection of taxes from Gypsies who were in his jurisdiction; and if there refused to pay, they should be notified and warned because in that situation, there was no place for negligence. When the tax-collector collected the taxes properly and wrote it down in the *defters*, he should bring it to İstanbul. However, in the *defters*, there should be *nişân-ı hümayûn* and the date of the aforementioned year. If there was any doubt about the information such as the name or his tax, the governors and judges of the province should work on the *defters*. In case of Gypsy desertion from *katuna* (the tribe or community), tax collectors could oblige the *katuna başı* to find the run-away Gypsies, and they could order to community leaders and chamberlain to find the location of those Gypsies. If the run-away Gypsies could not be found, the taxes should be collected from the leaders of the community. To find their location, the law also proposed that the leader of Gypsy *sancak* should send some of his useful and trusted men in search of them. About the amount of the poll-tax, it was written that the amount recorded in the *defters* should be collected, no exorbitant sum. If Gypsies who were recorded as dead were alive, their poll-taxes must be recorded. If there were Gypsies (*gezende* and *gâibâne* Gypsies) who did not pay their taxes and who left their community without paying, their taxes would be registered into the *defters* by means of judges. Their names and accounts had to be recorded in a separate register. After collecting all taxes from each household, tax-collectors would take two *akçes* as a registration fee. They kept their share and the rest belonged to the state.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, vol. 2, pp. 383-385.

Another legal arrangement was made during the reign of the Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) in 1530 titled *Kanûnnâme-i Kıbtîyân-ı Vilâyet-i Rumeli* (The Law of Gypsies of Rumelia). This law also contained matters about taxation. For example, Muslim Gypsies of İstanbul, Edirne and other places of Rumelia paid 22 *akçes* per household and unmarried men and non-Muslims paid 25 *akçes ispençe* per household and the widows were paying 6 *akçes*. However, unlikely, there were some arrangements about the Gypsy prostitutes in places like İstanbul, Edirne, Sofya and Filibe. In case of prostitution, women had to pay 100 *akçes* under the name of *kesim* every month, but they would pay taxes like *cürm-i cinâyet* and *resm-i arûsâne* in accordance with the law just like the other *reâyâ* did. Like the previous law issued, this law also contained matters about frontier infringements; orders to bring back run-away Gypsies; and the prohibition of intermingling of Muslims and non-Muslims. About the tax-holders, it was noted that with the condition of excluding Gypsies who were registered in *evkâf*, *hâs*, *emlâk*, *ze'âmet* and *tîmâr*, the leader of the Gypsy *sancak* was in charge of collecting taxes like *cürm ü cinâyet*, *siyâset*, *rûsûm-ı örfiyye* and *bâd-ı hevâ* from Gypsies who were attached to the Gypsy *sancak*. Other people such as janissaries, leader of the province *sancak* did not have the right to intervene. The above-mentioned taxes of Gypsies who were registered in *evkâf*, *hâs*, *emlâk*, *ze'âmet* and *tîmâr* belonged to the *ra'iyet sahibi*. The other officials could not intervene. Gypsies who had a permission to perform auxiliary services as *müsellems* would pay *harâc-ı padişahî*, but not *avârız-ı divâniyye*, *ispenç* and *rûsûm-ı örfiyye*. Additional clauses of the law were about the administration and taxes of Niş, Semendire, Paşa and Niğbolu like in Biracık locality of Semendire *sancak* where every Gypsy household would pay 80 *akçes* as *resm-i flori* and Gypsy

households and *mücerreds* of Niğbolu *sancak* would pay 6 *akçes* as *kaftanlık* every year after they paid their poll-taxes.<sup>121</sup>

The second law issued during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent was *Cingâne Yazmak İçin Ta'yîn Olunan Emine ve Kâtibine Hükiim* (An Order to the Steward and his Scribe Appointed to Inscribe Gypsies) and it was dated 1537. Briefly, the law was about the rules that the scribes had to obey in the register of Gypsies. In the law, it was noted that some Gypsy groups travelled with their women and there were no infidel Gypsies among them, but they did not pay their tax of *avarız* and that they did not obey Islamic rules and just paid 22 *akçes* in taxes. For those groups, it was important to know how they were recorded in the new register. If the *kesîm* or other taxes were recorded, it had to be investigated. The information about their paid taxes in the past or about their laws and traditions were demanded. Without following the orders of Islam, Muslim Gypsies who stayed among non-Muslims and who did not pay the same amount of tax with them had to be investigated because as the law prescribed, they had to be treated in the same manner. In addition to this, it was declared that Gypsies who settled in the villages were paying their taxes; *bennâk resmi* and *âvârız*, but there were Gypsies who stayed in some shops and rooms in İstanbul, Edirne and other places. Some of them paid *âvârız* and some did not and also some of them did not obey Islam, so they had to be investigated, too. In that situation, it must be learned what kind of practice and law had been applied to those types of people in the past. Who used to pay *âvârız* and did not pay anymore had to be written as well. From the law, we learn some Gypsies settled in some villages; and whenever the scribes of the province found Gypsies, they recorded them as *râiyyet* and registered them in *evkâfs*, *emlâks*, *timârs*, bridges

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<sup>121</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, "Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, pp. 117–144.

and castles. *Ahkâm-ı şerîfe* was demanded from those who were registered in *evkâf*, *emlâk*, *timâr* and castles. Moreover, a separate register was demanded containing the names and the number of those Gypsies who were recorded in the Gypsy *sancak* beforehand and who were recorded with the order later in *vakf*, *mülk*, *timâr* and *castle*. The law informed us about the conversion. Non-Muslim Gypsies who were converted into Islam asked for exemption from *harâç*; they just wanted to pay *kesîm*. If they stopped their relations with the non-Muslims, and if they began to fulfill the requirements of Islam, their wishes could be accepted. Besides those matters, the taxational situation of Gypsies coming from Moldavia, Hungary and Wallachia had to be informed. Lastly, help from other officials of the regions in the process of the register was needed.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to those two, during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, we also see two short legal arrangements. The first one was recorded in the *İstanbul Müftülüğü Şer'î Siciller Arşivi, Üsküdar Mahkemesi Sicilleri*, no. 6/15, p. 138. It was about the adjustment of taxes like poll-tax and *harâç*, which Gypsies were liable to pay. The second one was also in the same archive and number was 6/15 and in the page of 137. Those two could be thought as mutually complementary.<sup>123</sup>

In 1541, as recorded in a *defter*, there were two special laws for the Gypsy *sancak*. The titles were *Kanûn-ı Seraskerân-ı Livâ-yı Cingâne* and *Kanûn-ı Müsellemân-ı Livâ-yı Mezbûre*. The first one contained those provisions like the taxation and the administration. The second one included the provisions about the *müsellems* (campaigners) and *yamaks* (assistants) such as ‘the number of *müsellems*

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<sup>122</sup> Faika Çelik, *Gypsies (Roma) in the Orbit of Islam: The Ottoman Experience (1450–1600)* (Montreal: Master of Arts Thesis, McGill University, Institute for Graduate Studies in Islamic Studies, 2003), pp. 114–120.

<sup>123</sup> Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, vol. 5, p. 46.



was three or four individuals in every unit,' 'yamaks were paying 50 *akçes* as *harçlık* (also *avarız*) to *müsellems*,' 'if they were *mücerred*, they were paying 25 *akçes*,' 'in the case of a campaign, the *müsellems* took the money, but if there was no campaign, they could not take the money.'<sup>124</sup>

Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) with his *fermân* in 1574 told that Gypsies working in the mines in Bosnia-Herzegovina would be exempt from some taxes; and nobody had the authority to interfere in their activities. In the case of breaking the laws, they had to be caught by their *çeribaşı* (commander of troops) and turned over to the state.<sup>125</sup>

According to another *fermân*, which was presented to our attention by Margaret Hasluck and which was issued during the reign of t Sultan Ahmed I (1603-1617), all Gypsies in the western part of the Balkans (today south Albania, northwest Greece) were obliged to pay a tax and fines like poll-tax, *ispenç*, *cürüm*, *cinâyet* and *bâd-ı hevâ* in 1604-1605. The person who was responsible for the collection of taxes was called Süleyman. From Muslim Gypsies, 180 *akçes* and from Christian Gypsies, 250 *akçes* would be taken by him. Furthermore, he was in charge of collecting, encashing and registering. In the case of desertion, he was given the authority to catch them wherever they might be. When they were caught, they would pay their taxes, but they had to pay one more, actually a fine of 300 *akçes*.<sup>126</sup>

The state that knew how to punish them in case of runaways also knew how to deal with individuals who oppressed and harassed Gypsies. Above-stated man also

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<sup>124</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Zirai Ekonominin Hukuki ve Mali Esasları: Kanunlar*, vol I. (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2001), pp. 243-244; and, Enver M. Şerifgil, "Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, pp. 117-144.

<sup>125</sup> Ali Rafet Özkan, *Türkiye Çingeneleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2000), p. 23.

<sup>126</sup> Margaret Hasluck, "Firman of A. H. 1013-14 (A.D. 1604-5) Regarding Gypsies in the Western Balkans," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, third Series, XXVII/1-2 (January-April 1948), pp. 1-12.

had to prevent *beylerbeyi* (governor), *ümera*, *müteferrika*, non-com or sergeant, voivode from oppressing those people. If there was any crime committed by them, the punishment would be applied according to the standing law. In that part, this person had the prerogative to prove the crime. From the records, it is possible to know that there were two types of Gypsies, sedentary and nomadic, dwelling in the tents and the same document told us that some sedentary Gypsies worked as “iron-worker,” “charcoal burner” and “castle watchmen.”<sup>127</sup>

### Taxation

The legal arrangements or the decrees were not the only way to scrutinize Gypsies, but also there were tax registrations to carry out. Gypsies were firstly mentioned in Ottoman tax registrations in 1430. It was about a region on the Danube. The documents told that there were so many Gypsies, both Christian and Muslim living in Bulgaria. 431 Gypsy households were registered in the *timâr registers* of Nikopol *sancak*. The percentage of them in total was 3,5%.<sup>128</sup> Besides this, there was also a tax document dated 1487-1489 for the registration of Christian Gypsies living in İstanbul, Vize, Gelibolu, Edirne, Çirmen, Yanboli, Filibe, Sofya, Nikopol, Vidin, Kyustendil, Krushevats, Smederevo, Yeni Pazar, and Bosna. According to the registers, there were 3.237 households and 211 widow households, and so the leader of the house and widows were held responsible to pay taxes.<sup>129</sup>

Going through the legal arrangements or the codes aforementioned, it could be said that they were generally about taxation. That situation was the proof that in the

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<sup>127</sup> Margaret Hasluck, “Firman of A. H. 1013–14 (A.D. 1604–5) Regarding Gypsies in the Western Balkans,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, pp. 1-12.

<sup>128</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, pp. 31–32.

<sup>129</sup> Donald Kenrick, *Çingeneler: Ganj'dan Thames'e*, p. 60.

presence of nomadic Gypsies, the Ottoman Empire mostly remained inefficient in point of tax-collection. Especially the provisions about the register demonstrated that situation very-well. Nevertheless, the increase in the legal arrangements and the augmented precautions about the tax matters were not enough to prevent Gypsies from wandering and turning them into reliable tax-payers. In that situation, the disagreements and troubles became inevitable. Meanwhile, it was not easier to collect taxes than to make the decision. Collecting taxes in time would always constitute a problem for the state and also to lead the state to take extra measures for this. The state officials tried to make Gypsies settle in a certain place and force them through settlement just in order to make them 'accessible' individuals in the matter of taxation. Nevertheless, trials mostly failed because of lack of determination, lack of coercive measures and the arbitrary-based structure. They resorted to so many different ways not to pay those taxes such as changing their place or relocation, pretending to be a tax-collector or paying to another tax-collector, hiding, migration, travelling in the dark, implying inaccurate exemption claims, etc.<sup>130</sup>

Even in the evasion process, some ridiculous events happened. In 1809, an infidel Gypsy was caught in the mosque of Silivri on the suspicion of espionage. However, at short notice, over his testimony and the testimonies of people who knew him, it was soon clearly understood that he was not a spy. He was just a Gypsy who had fun for a while in Wallachia and then, five years previously, he had left this place and had wandered in certain neighbourhoods of Rumelia. Then, he came to İstanbul and hereafter, he went to Silivri. When he was in Silivri, he encountered a tax-collector, so to evade the tax-collector; he entered hastily into the mosque. People who

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<sup>130</sup> Faika Çelik, "Probing the Margins: Gypsies (*Roma*) in the Ottoman Society 1450–1600," in: *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 173-199.

witnessed his hurry and distress presumed him to be a spy. Nevertheless, after the truth emerged, he was not disenfranchised, but he was sent to penal servitude. No need to mention, this case was also a clear sign of the discrimination and prejudice about Gypsies.<sup>131</sup>

In reply to the attitudes of Gypsies, tax-collectors used methods like writing fines, requesting a receipt of their paid taxes, imposing a penalty on tax-evaders, taking Gypsy children hostage, wandering with Gypsies to ensure the payment of the taxes, not caring about the exemption assertions, etc. Eyal Ginio gives a perfect example of ‘hostage-taking’ in his study:

Fatma bint Mehmet, a Gypsy woman from Salonica, who belonged to the group (*cemaat*) of the *kazgancı* (makers or sellers of copper caldrons), submitted a claim against Mehmet Ağa ibn Hüseyin, the collector of the Gypsy *cizye*. According to the plaintiff, two months prior to the litigation the tax collector took her son, Şahbaz, with him to ensure that no member of their group would run away. He kept her son with him until three days prior to the litigation in court. Fatma added that she had also heard that the tax collector occasionally put pressure on her son in matters that were related to the group’s interests and even threatened him several times with floggings. She then told the court that no one had told her that her son had died three days previously and that he was buried; she was not given the opportunity to see his corpse. Following the submission of her claim, the court asked for information from a group of respectful men who were present at the burial. They declared in court that the plaintiff’s son had indeed served the tax collector. However, they contended, Şahbaz died while he was far away from his mother, the plaintiff, and it had not been possible to alert her about his death. As they were charged with the preparation of the body for burial, they added, they could assure the court that his death was natural and not the result of violence.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> BOA, HAT, 283/16879, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilhicce 1223 [15 Şubat 1809].

<sup>132</sup> Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies*, pp. 7–44.

Especially about the cruelty and the oppression of tax-collectors, in a document dated 1758, the collection of taxes was attempted to be regulated and the oppression of Gypsies was prohibited. And for every fifty Gypsies, a Gypsy chief was appointed.<sup>133</sup> Another document dated 1840, tax-collectors and Gypsy chiefs who were in charge of collection of taxes like poll-tax and *mal-ı maktu'* from the nomadic Gypsies inhabited in Şumnu and other counties took much more money than the designated amount. It was even declared that a respectable amount of money ended up in their pockets, so this sort of atrocity had to be prevented. However, how to stop the cruelty of tax-collectors was not mentioned in the document.<sup>134</sup> The tax-collectors and Gypsy chiefs tended to treat non-Gypsy individuals on the assumption that they were from the Gypsy community. For example, in spite of having *hüccet* (title-deed), a Muslim man from Müderrisli village of Karlıoğlu locality in Filibe was ranked *Kıptî*; and he was obliged to pay *maktu'* by *çeribaşı* and tax-collectors. Due to the document he held, they were warned not to consider him a Gypsy.<sup>135</sup>

The documents told that some interesting taxes were collected from Gypsies in general. For example, in the *fermân* written in 1684 for the judges in Selanik, Genitsa and Berhoia, 650 *akçes* were taken from Muslims as pig tax and voting tax; and from Christians 750 *akçes* were taken. For that matter, the amount of those taxes was increased in 1695.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> “Bolu, Kütahya, Biga, Hüdavendigar ve Kocaeli Sancaklarında Çingenelerden Alınan Cizye ile İlgili Bir Belge,” *Çele*, 2/29 (Eylül 1965): pp. 25–27, and p. 35.

<sup>134</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 10/466, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Muharrem 1256 [27 Mart 1840].

<sup>135</sup> BOA, C.DH. 85/4217, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Şevvâl 1144 [19 Nisan 1732].

<sup>136</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 153–157.

## Occupations

It does not matter how much tax money you got from Gypsies or what kind of methods you used to collect the taxes because seemingly some of them openly resisted it, but also there was still the group who made an effort in order to pay the taxes demanded from them; so the question here was; how? In other words, how they paid their taxes or how they got the money to cover their expenses. In short, the question had to be asked was how they managed their lives! In general, they worked as acrobats, actors, bear trainers, blacksmiths, chimneysweeps, dancers, healers, herbalists, musicians, ‘producers and fixers of weapons and ammunition,’ puppeteers, seasonal agricultural workers, ‘raisers, sellers and traders of livestock,’ sellers of brooms as well as raw and prepared foods, sieve-makers, singers,<sup>137</sup> tinsmiths, goldsmiths, sword-makers, stove-makers, makers of clout nails, leather dealers, tailors, carpet makers, basket-weavers, spoon-makers, comb-makers, dyers, *halva*-makers, cheese-mongers, butchers, *kebab*-makers, gardeners, muleteers, guards, prison guards, man servants, couriers, monkey trainers, well-diggers, farriers, brick casters, manufacturers of shoes, slipper makers, ironmongers, dressmakers, hardware dealers, custodians, butlers, sinkers, cabbies, manufacturers of carriages, coppersmiths, boiler-smiths, jewellers, executioners, coal miners, cavalrymen, doctors, *subaşı*s (policeman), monks, surgeons and cloisterers,<sup>138</sup> gold-diggers, borers, boilermakers, locksmiths, hatchet makers, cutlers, gunsmiths, steel-makers, stablemen, shipbuilders, carvers, soothsayers, harness makers, saddlers, builders, violinists, veterinarians, chamberlains, venturers, millers, *bohçacıs*, *döğencis*, *hallâcs*, *darıcıs*, *serrâcs*, butchers, candle makers, sellers of zythum, beggars,

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<sup>137</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, pp. 153–157.

<sup>138</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 49.

herdsmen, foresters, cooks, raiders, luteplayers, *ellicis* (auxiliary server), hairclothmakers, horseshomakers,<sup>139</sup> flower-sellers and counterfeiters. In addition to all these diverse professions, it was also possible to meet Gypsies who did agriculture and farming.

Even though they worked in so many different occupations, there were some jobs which were performed by Gypsies perfectly. When that very occupation was talked about, the first thing or name that came to mind was mostly Gypsies. For instance, with their organized entertainments decorated with music (playing the instruments and singing) and dances, Gypsies became an inseparable part of the show business. Even Evliya Çelebi mentioned the guilds constituted by Gypsy musicians and dancers (both *çengi* girls and *köçek* boys) for entertainment purposes.<sup>140</sup>

In their musical activities, they were successful in playing instruments like *zurna* (shrill pipe) and percussion-grouping, string quartet, tambourine, violin, and drums. Gypsy musicians generally played in local festivals and official celebrations like the accession, birthday celebrations, and appointment of viziers. Even in 1846, two Gypsy bands were invited to the reception for Sultan Abdülmecid in Gabrovo. When he liked the music they played, he was not contented with the fee, but he awarded their chief with a special violin decorated with ivory.<sup>141</sup> Actually, the underlying reason of their success in bringing a new perspective to music was their interpretation of the traditional types of music. The proof of that could be their services in the Ottoman military band known as *mehter* (the janissary band). That is

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<sup>139</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>140</sup> From the account of Evliya Çelebi, we keep informed about the guilds of bear trainers and horse traders, musicians, girl and boy dancers, *mim* artists, male artists, and *boza* sellers... Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. 1, ed. Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: YKY, 2003), p. 521, p. 551, p. 646, pp. 656-658.

<sup>141</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 77.

to say, their musical instincts enabled them to serve in the janissary band. The document dated from 1797 showed that the *ağas* of Yedikule benefited from the services of Gypsies as *mehters*.<sup>142</sup>

Next to their performing talents, they were also ironmasters or forgers or blacksmiths. The exemption granted to ironmongers in return for their services showed how much the state appreciated that ability. The primary materials used in that iron work were anvil, hammer and mallet. Besides, to hold the iron, they were using tongs and to give water to the iron, they had a kind of bowl full of water. As ironmasters, they were producing apparatuses and devices for the villagers such as axe, hatchets, hand brush hooks, adzes, anchors, shovels, augers, hooks, stone dressing tools, trivets, and pair of tongs, nails, hubs, and hinges. For example, the stone dressing tools and nails necessary for the scaffolding in the construction of Süleymaniye Mosque (1550-1557) were produced by Gypsies.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, they also cut nails from raw-iron, made chains called *kadina* to put on the feet of the slaves, manufactured anchors, and produced iron components of ship construction.<sup>144</sup>

On top of that, in 1731, iron components of Boğazkesen castle, subordinated to Galata, were repaired for free by a Gypsy. In return for the service and *ücret-i ırğâdiye*, they were exempted from *maktu'*, poll-tax, *âvârız*, *divâniyye* and *tekâlif-i őrfiyye*.<sup>145</sup> In 1771, in return for the exemption from the poll-tax, the nails of naval galleons of *tersâne-i âmîre* were frozen by 36 Gypsies.<sup>146</sup> In 1816, iron devices of

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<sup>142</sup> BOA, C.AS. 424/17579, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Cemâziyyelâhir 1212 [1 Aralık 1797].

<sup>143</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, "Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, pp. 117–144.

<sup>144</sup> İsmail Altınöz, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Çingeneler," in: *Yeryüzünü Yabancıları: Çingeneler*, comp. Suat Kolukırık (İstanbul: Simurg, 2007), pp. 13-31.

<sup>145</sup> BOA, C.AS. 961/41811, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 29 Cemâziyyevvel 1144 [29 Kasım 1731].

<sup>146</sup> BOA, C.BH. 154/7329, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 13 Safer 1185 [28 Mayıs 1771].



the large bridge over the Maritza in Filibe were repaired and fixed free of charge by eight Gypsy ironmasters who were *müsellems*; and in return for their services and *ücret-i ırgâdiye*, they were exempted from *maktu*'.<sup>147</sup> In 1823, iron devices (of prisons) in Boğazkesen castle were mended again by a Gypsy man (prisoner) in return for the exemption from *tekâlif*, *nüzul* and *âvârız*.<sup>148</sup> In addition to all these, it was seen that there were Gypsy blacksmiths in the Arsenal of Kasımpaşa; and as a result of the demand for wandering blacksmiths and the decrease in the number of people who could claim a 'fixed' position in the eighteenth century, the number of Gypsies in the state service showed an increase. However, it was not only restricted to Kasımpaşa. Gypsy blacksmiths could be seen in Kağıthane, Tophane and Balat.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, Slavka Draganova mentioned that in the province of Danube, Gypsies were mostly employed as blacksmiths with a 300-400 *kuruş* income. Nevertheless, the yearly income of one Gypsy blacksmith was recorded as 100 *kuruş*. In contrast to this, the yearly income of tinsmiths and tenants (*kirâci*) was 300 *kuruş*.<sup>150</sup>

The aforementioned cases showed that Gypsies used crafts in ironwork and that craftsmanship exempted them from certain taxes. However, the service which freed them from taxes was not limited to ironwork. Other respectable services such as the ability to make and to fix guns could bring profit. That way, they both went on campaigns and were exempted from taxes. For example, a Gypsy man who had served in the campaign of *Moskof* (Muscovy) and in the battle of Hemedan castle and

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<sup>147</sup> BOA, C.BLD. 68/3358, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Muharrem 1232 [8 Aralık 1816].

<sup>148</sup> BOA, C.ADL. 45/2714, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1238 [18 Şubat 1823].

<sup>149</sup> Marsh, Adrian. *'No Promised Land' History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies* (London: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Humanities, University of Greenwich, 2008), p. 186.

<sup>150</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Tuna Vilayeti'nin Köy Nüfusu VII. Dizi - Sayı 201* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), p. 28.

who became *ma'lûl* (disabled) was exempted from the poll-tax.<sup>151</sup> In 1827, a Gypsy was charged to provide besoms to the *medrese*, *imâret*, mosque, tombs and other waqfs of the Sultan Selim II. In return for his service, he became exempted from *maktu'*, but the condition of that service was to become a Muslim.<sup>152</sup>

Nevertheless, the factor which brought on the exemption was not always a respectable profession or service to the state. On the contrary, inability to serve and poverty could be important excuses and could have similar results. For example, a Gypsy man named Mehmed sent a petition to be exempted from poll-tax because he was poor and he had lots of people who depended on him for a living so his petition was accepted and he became exempted from the poll-tax.<sup>153</sup> Here, a point not to be forgotten is that the living standards of Gypsies were low. Even if they worked, they could not find enough money to sustain their lives. Therefore, individuals who were unable to sustain their lives were allowed to stay in bed sitters of the charitable foundations for free or they were provided with help of the foundations. What is more, they found a chance to work in those foundations in return for exemption from certain taxes.<sup>154</sup>

Another profession in which Gypsies were active was the health sector. In the first half of the seventeenth century, there was a Gypsy woman named Sabiha, who lived in Üsküdar. In reality, she was working as a hernia surgeon. Patients came from far away for her treatment.<sup>155</sup> Sometimes they also performed extraordinary jobs like

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<sup>151</sup> BOA, C.AS. 937/40627, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Rebiyyülevvel 1144 [1 Ekim 1731].

<sup>152</sup> BOA, C.MF. 50/2491, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Zilhicce 1239 [22 Ağustos 1824].

<sup>153</sup> BOA, HAT. 282/16776, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilhicce 1252 [6 Nisan 1837].

<sup>154</sup> İsmail Altınöz, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler," in: *Yeryüzünün Yabancıları: Çingeneler*, pp. 13-31.

<sup>155</sup> İsmail Altınöz, "Osmanlı Toplum Yapısı İçinde Çingeneler," *Türkler*, pp. 422-432.

in 1860s, in Vidin, Gypsies were in charge of catching stray dogs whose numbers increased considerably; and got paid 2 *kuruş* per dog.<sup>156</sup>

Looking into the professions practiced by the Balkan Gypsies in the late eighteenth century, it seemed that in those territories, Gypsies generally performed crafts, horse-trading, mining and metallurgical economies and military affairs for the state and for the *âyâns*.<sup>157</sup>

### Criminalism and the Penalty Process

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to say that they earned their living with elbow grease; or that they lived in accordance with the laws. What made them famous or stigmatized was the crimes they got involved in. In her work on Gypsies, Faika Çelik talks about part of an imperial decree issued to all Ottoman provincial and sub-provincial governors and judges of the respective sub-provinces. This is important in order to show how a “great problem” was caused by Gypsies:

Currently, in your dominions some groups of wanderers and Gypsies have emerged and they have been engaging in various unlawful activities and behaving immorally. They have been wandering in the cities, towns and villages. With their prostitutes and their entertainment and musical instruments, they have been going to social gatherings and bazaars where there are huge crowds, misleading whomever they meet and disturbing the public peace. While passing through neighbouring cities, in the scarcely populated areas, they have been murdering and plundering those upon whom they can prevail and various travellers and they have constantly been causing disorder and not refraining from such abominable acts. Since the removal of the harms that they

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<sup>156</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 79.

<sup>157</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 189.

have caused is necessary and indispensable, I have ordered that...<sup>158</sup>

According to Ottoman archival documents, the most well-known crimes Gypsies committed were murder, beggary, robbery, counterfeiting, prostitution, theft, vagabondage, corruption of public morality with music and shindigs, extortion, cheating villagers with fake coins, and bothering other communities. From the decree sent to Beyşehir (1567), Antalya, Aydın, and Saruhan (1569), we learned that some Gypsies were involved in crimes like hi-jacking, plundering products of arable fields and threshing, stealing carpets or rugs of the prayer rooms.<sup>159</sup> One archival document from 1763 signified different types of crimes committed by Gypsies as follows: in order to educate him as a *köçek* (dancer boy), a Gypsy man captured and deforced a boy. This boy was from İzmit and he was found in Kuşadası. Then, he was rescued by the decision of the court and he was turned over to one of his relatives.<sup>160</sup>

The most popular punishment for crimes was *kürek cezâsı* (penal servitude). Especially crimes like theft, pickpocketing, banditry, brigandage, aiding and abetting, murder, being accused of murder, *fesâd*, atrocity, prostitution, fraudulence, counterfeiting, disobedience to the imperial edict, issuing fake charters (*berât*), imitation of sultan's signature, falsifying weights in the scales, espionage, and religious crimes resulted in penal servitude.<sup>161</sup> For instance, in one case, a Gypsy was

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<sup>158</sup> Faika Çelik, "Exploring Marginality in the Ottoman Empire: Gypsies or People of Malice (*Ehl-i Fesâd*) as Viewed by the Ottomans," *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Working Papers*, EUI RSC No. 2004/39 (December 2004), pp. 161-182.

<sup>159</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Çingeneler," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 420-426.

<sup>160</sup> BOA, C.DH. 152/7554, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 20 Safer 1177 [30 Ağustos 1763].

<sup>161</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, p. 89.

sentenced to five years of penal servitude because of rape and robbery.<sup>162</sup> Even Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent sent an imperial decree to all judges of the Rumelia province where he ordered penal servitude for those Gypsies involved in theft and robbery.<sup>163</sup> In the archival documents, for instance, Mehmed and Hasan who were from Piraya village of Tirnova county in the *sancak* of Silistre were arrested for murder and sentenced to five years of penal servitude. After they completed their punishment, it was decided that they would go back to their hometown. Besides, they were also obliged to pay their *diyet* (blood money).<sup>164</sup> Another crime story could be explored from the statement of Eyal Ginio. He stated that a Gypsy named Mustafa from Yenice-i Vardar (Gianitsa) stole 350 *akçes* from the pocket of a Christian villager in broad daylight in the central market of Karaferiye; and after a verdict had been reached, he was punished with severing of his hand.<sup>165</sup>

Other types of crimes such as prostitution or beggary were punished with fines or exile. For example, in a document dated 1734, there was an order to exile the Gypsy beggars from İstanbul. The order was sent to *Hassa Bostancıbaşı*, the master of Çatalca and to all tax-collectors in İstanbul and Çatalca. From the document, we learn that Muslim and non-Muslim Gypsies who stayed in and around Çatalca and Kağıthane and who made a living by basket-weaving, boiler-making, and tinning, spent their winter in the villages and farms, but they spent their summer by setting up their tents around İstanbul. Women and children in ragged and tattered clothes

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<sup>162</sup> Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 74.

<sup>163</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, “Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI. Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler,” *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, pp. 117–144.

<sup>164</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MVL. 53/32, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Şabân 1268 [27 Mayıs 1852].

<sup>165</sup> Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies*, pp. 7–44.

bemoaned to people they encountered on the road and bothered them by begging. It was ordered that they should be removed from İstanbul and sent back to places where they stayed in the winter time.<sup>166</sup>

Furthermore, imprisonment was among the penalties applied to criminal Gypsies. Besides these punishments, other examples included, in one case, a Gypsy killer named İbsar punished with *kisas* (retaliation).<sup>167</sup> Another retaliation case was cited by Haim Gerber. In that case, a murder case from Rumelia was in question; and two women sued a Gypsy man with the murder of their next of kin. They requested his death by retaliation. However, the man admitted that the crime occurred involuntarily.<sup>168</sup> Another case told us that a Gypsy killed another person accidentally; and his punishment was *diyet* and *pranga* (shackles).<sup>169</sup>

The Ottoman Empire officials were not contented with the punishments defined by the standing law, because they were aware that the punishments became inadequate for disciplining those people, so it also attempted to take some small-scaled provisions in order to prevent their undesirable behaviours or crimes. For example, in 1551, horse riding was prohibited for Gypsies because of inducing crimes such as theft. Instead of it, donkeys and oxen were allowed and that practice was repeated in 1574. In addition to this, carrying a weapon and working as acrobats in the horse market of İstanbul was prohibited for Gypsies, too.<sup>170</sup> In 1869, the

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<sup>166</sup> Cevdet Türkay, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Yasaklar,” *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, no. 64 (Ocak, 1973), pp. 18–22.

<sup>167</sup> BOA, A.}DVN. 69/82, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Ramazân 1267 [29 Temmuz 1851].

<sup>168</sup> Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective*, p. 49.

<sup>169</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MVL. 36/36, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Safer 1267 [18 Aralık 1850].

<sup>170</sup> Faika Çelik, “Exploring Marginality in the Ottoman Empire: Gypsies or People of Malice (*Ehl-i Fesâd*) as Viewed by the Ottomans,” *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Working Papers*, pp. 161-182.

Ottoman authorities gathered in Edirne, and they made some decisions. One of the decisions was about Gypsies and prevention of their thefts, because their general tendency in those times was to come around Hasköy from Yenice and Gümülçine and steal some animals. That is why, it was decided that Gypsies should be encouraged to engage in agriculture by giving them some lands in the regions where they lived.<sup>171</sup>

It was not always necessary to commit an important crime, but small-scale crimes might be committed. For example, in the year of 1825, there was an order about the prohibition of playing an instrument or music in the recreation spots of İstanbul. Contrary to that order, a man with Gypsy origin played music in these places and he was demanded to be punished with banishment to Edirne.<sup>172</sup> “Disturbing the public peace” just like done by the nomads who lived in tents also caused complaints and petitions from other people came for the prevention of all these. Some nomadic Gypsies ran wild in ceremonies and weddings of towns, and those Gypsies were warned and they promised to obey to the rules.<sup>173</sup>

The reveller character of Gypsies, especially the Gypsy women, created some disturbances in the public and they were mostly were warned not to act like this. For instance, in one of the noble rescripts, Gypsy women ranted and raved (*çalıp çağırirlar imiş!*) in the streets of İstanbul. Therefore, in the noble script dated 1790, it was decreed that their unapproved acts had to be put under control and stopped (*çalıp gezmesinler!*).<sup>174</sup> Besides the check on amusement among Gypsies themselves, the Ottoman Empire also attempted to bridle the recreation activities of both Gypsy

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<sup>171</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1309/53, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 14 Rebiyyülevvel 1286 [24 Haziran 1869].

<sup>172</sup> BOA, C.BLD. 41/2015, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Zilhicce 1240 [24 Temmuz 1825].

<sup>173</sup> BOA, C.BLD. 69/3441, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Safer 1236 [8 Kasım 1820].

<sup>174</sup> BOA, HAT. 195/9735, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilhicce 1204 [9 Eylül 1790].

women and men from different ethnic backgrounds. In effect, the Gypsy women who took part in those activities mostly became dancers. At any rate, these acts were regarded as “inappropriate,” so it was prohibited. In 1860, when there was a rumour about the entertainment of a pasha named Ramiz with the Gypsy dancers, it was investigated and the accuracy of the rumour was proven. However, he was not the only person who did this; and others were involved, so this action was certainly prohibited by the state.<sup>175</sup>

The dominance of the Gypsy ethnicity sometimes caused them to be labelled as potential criminals like in 1853, the daughter of Erman and Kirkor was lost. Gypsies were among the alleged criminals and it was stated that if she was in the house of Gypsies, it should be investigated and rescued, but if she was in one of the houses of individuals of Islam, an explanation had to be given.<sup>176</sup>

Gypsies were not always in the ‘felon’s dock,’ but sometimes they could be innocent. In the year of 1724, in Minkaliye county of Silistre, Gypsy men complained about the oppression of other people and especially how their women were sold by emphasizing the ‘uselessness’ of the Gypsy women.<sup>177</sup> In 1766, in Yenice-i Nasreddin village and other villages of Dobruca, the bandits detained the wives and animals of Gypsies. Then, because of this cruelty, Gypsies dispersed. Also, this affected the amount of the poll-taxes. The order was issued to the governors of Silistre and Niğbolu for the capture of those bandits. Seemingly, the point which attracted the attention of the authorities was the poll-tax. Maybe, the main policy of the Ottomans about Gypsies was ‘nothing should harm the poll-tax’

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<sup>175</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.UM. 441/97, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyevvel 1277 [13 Aralık 1860].

<sup>176</sup> BOA, HR.MKT. 66/36, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Safer 1270 [7 Kasım 1853].

<sup>177</sup> BOA, C.DH. 31/1529, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Recep 1136 [28 Mart 1724].



or ‘do not shoot the poll-tax.’<sup>178</sup> In 1768, the *serdâr* (the commander-in-chief) of Minkaliye named Süleyman and his friend Çelebi Ali, who was from the village of Hamzacı, took the wives of Gypsy men who came to the county in more recent times. They even regarded that as *kıyaktır* and sold those women to *kıyakçılar*. Furthermore, by taking assets and belongings of those Gypsies by force, they tyrannized them. As a result of this, they caused the cancellation of *mâl-ı mîrî*.<sup>179</sup> It was seen that the cruelty of the other people was generally about the Gypsy women. Nevertheless, people did not just capture Gypsy women and sold them, but they also used them in order to entertain themselves. For instance, in the year of 1861, we witnessed a submitted complaint: Mehmed, who was an innkeeper in Çukurhan, around Rami Kışlası, and Recep and Ömer, who were working as *korucu* around the same region, stopped some Gypsy women who were on their way in order to force them to dance. When Gypsies complained about them to the officials, the *zaptiyes* responded to the incident, but an armed fight broke out. At the end, the criminals were captured and severely punished.<sup>180</sup>

### Gypsies in Population Records

So! Where did Gypsies live at that period, or what is the total number of Gypsy population at that period? As they mainly lived as nomads and they always tended to move, it was not possible to get detailed data about their number or where abouts in the Ottoman Empire from the foundation of the empire to the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. According to Noel Malcolm, there was a census held in the province

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<sup>178</sup> BOA, C.DH. 118/5883, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Zilhicce 1179 [6 Haziran 1766].

<sup>179</sup> BOA, C.ADL. 10/663, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Safer 1182 [6 Temmuz 1768].

<sup>180</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MVL. 123/88, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyyevvel 1277 [12 Ocak 1861].

of Rumelia in the 1520s and up to that census, the total number of Gypsies was 17,000 (60% Christian and 40% Muslims). Particularly, in Kosovo, there were 164 Gypsy households in Priştina, 145 in Novo Brdo and smaller numbers in other towns. There, the majority of the Gypsy population was Christian and nearly all of them had Serbian Orthodox names. Malcolm commented: Gypsies had already been there even before the arrival of the Ottomans.<sup>181</sup>

In 1523, in Rumelia, there were 3,926 Muslim Gypsies, 9,623 non-Muslims and 442 widows, so the total number was 13,991. In 1530, there were 13,497 Gypsies; 3,895 Muslims and 9,602 non-Muslims. If the numbers of Gypsies living in foundations, properties and other places were counted, the total number increased to 15,079.<sup>182</sup> According to the numbers of Ömer Lütfi Barkan, with the censuses taken between 1520 and 1535, 4,203 Muslim Gypsy households and 10,294 Christian Gypsy households (totally 14,497 Gypsy households) were determined in the Rumelia.<sup>183</sup>

Through the end of the seventeenth century, it was supposed that the total number of Gypsies (male and older) in Anatolia and Rumelia was 45,000, and 10,000 were Muslims, and 35,000 Christians.<sup>184</sup> According to the census of 1831, in Rumelia, the European part of the Ottoman Empire, there were 33,905 *Kıbtî* populations and in Anatolia, there were 1,802 *Kıbtîs*. The total number of Gypsies in

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<sup>181</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Kosova: A Short History*, p. 206.

<sup>182</sup> İsmail Altınöz, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler," in: *Yeryüzünün Yabancıları*, pp. 13-31.

<sup>183</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Sürgünler," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol.15, no. 1-4 (Ekim 1953-Temmuz 1954), p. 237.

<sup>184</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, p. 68 and p. 191.

1831, in the Ottoman Empire was 35,707.<sup>185</sup> Fazıla Akbal gives different numbers about the census of 1831, and she claims that the total number of Gypsies according to the census of 1831 was 35,975 and the percentage of Gypsies in overall communities was 0.01%.<sup>186</sup> Other numbers about the Gypsy population up to the 1831 census were as Stanford Shaw stated 36,675, and up to Bilal Eryılmaz, it was 36,673 (0.98%). Furthermore, Eryılmaz stated that there were 29,530 [2.16%] in Rumelia and 7,143 [0.30%] in Anatolia.<sup>187</sup> According to the census held in 1844, Kemal Karpat declared the number of Gypsies as 214,000 and according to his statement; almost all of the Gypsy population lived in the European part of the empire.<sup>188</sup>

Diving into the particular regions in order to get some information about the number of Gypsies could bring a successful conclusion. For example, in the census held in 1477, there were 31 Gypsy households in İstanbul.<sup>189</sup> According to one archival document dated 28 May 1834, the number of Gypsies in the *sancak* or district of Silistre was counted as 2,450. Gypsies in that *sancak* lived in Karinabad, Aydos, Doskasrı, Pravadi, Yenipazar, Kozluca, Umurlakih, Pazarcık, Babadağı and Çardak.<sup>190</sup> Besides, with the information of an edict from 1706, Eyal Ginio, who studied Gypsies of the eighteenth century in Selanik by delineating the *sicil*, the

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<sup>185</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), pp. 149–156.

<sup>186</sup> Fazıla Akbal, “1831 Tarihinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İdari Taksimat ve Nüfus,” *Belleten*, XV/60 (Ankara, 1951), pp. 617–628

<sup>187</sup> Bilal Eryılmaz, *Osmanlı Devletinde Gayr-ı Müslim Tebanın Yönetimi* (İstanbul: Risale, 1996), p. 72 and p. 77; and, Stanford J. Shaw, “The Ottoman Census System and Population 1831–1914,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; 9 (1978) Cambridge University Press, pp. 335–336.

<sup>188</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, p. 156.

<sup>189</sup> İsmail Altınöz, “Osmanlı Döneminde İstanbul Çingeneleri,” in: *Bir Çingene Yolculuğu*, eds. Hasan Suver, Başak Kara, and Aslınur Kara (İstanbul: Fatih Belediyesi Yayınları, 2009), pp. 119–127.

<sup>190</sup> BOA, HAT. 1268/49088A, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Muharrem 1250 [28 Mayıs 1834].

records of the *şeriat* court declared that in overall Selanik, there were 4,000 Gypsy taxpayers, and one thousand of them (500 Muslims and 424 Christians) lived within the city-walls.<sup>191</sup> In 1530, Kırkkilise owned 402 Gypsy households and 134 of them were Muslims and 268 were non-Muslims. The total number of the population of that region was around 3,056. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were 93 sedentary and 159 nomadic Gypsy households in Edirne. The non-Muslim Gypsy population was 173 households and among that number, just 16 households lived a sedentary life.<sup>192</sup> According to *salname* data of Edirne province in 1871-1872, there were 2,747 Gypsy men and they mainly lived in Edirne, Sliven, and Tekirdağ. The percentage of the population was also % 0.4. Up to another *salname* data which was issued four years later, 1875-1876, in Edirne, the number of Muslim Gypsies was 22,688 and the number of non-Muslim Gypsies was 4,614. The statistics showed that the data constituted four years ago did not include Muslim Gypsies, but just had non-Muslim Gypsies.<sup>193</sup> Köstendil district of Sofya in Danube province had 184 Muslim Gypsy men and 315 Non-Muslim Gypsy men in 1874. In Pazarcık of Varna district in 1874, there were 35 Gypsy Muslim households with 230 individuals (the household with two individuals: two; with four individuals: seven; with six individuals: thirteen; with eight individuals: six; with ten individuals: six; with twelve individuals: one household).<sup>194</sup>

About where they lived, it could be said that in 1530, Gypsies stayed in 90 places (mainly *haslar*, *mirliva hasları*, *timâr*, *vakıfs*, properties and castles) as 383

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<sup>191</sup> Eyal Ginio, "Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies*, pp. 7-44.

<sup>192</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>193</sup> Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City (1400-1900)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983), p. 324.

<sup>194</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Tuna Vilayeti'nin Köy Nüfusu VII. Dizi - Sayı 201*, pp. 34-35.

communities. Some of the districts where Gypsies lived were İstanbul, Silivri, Vize, Pınarhisar, Kırkkilise, Çirmen, Akçakızanlık, Hasköy, Yenice-i Zağra, Edirne, Filibe, Tatarpazarı, Eskihişar-ı Zağra, Dimetoka, Keşan, Timur-hisarı, Gümülcine, Yenice-i Karasu, Drama, Siroz, Üsküp, Kalkandelen, Köprülü, Yenice-i Vardar, Selanik, Karaferye, Serfice, Kırçova, Pirlepe, Manastır, Kestorya, Horpişte, Bihlişte, Görice, Florine, Sofya, Şehirköy, Berkofça, Silistre, Yanbolu, Prevadi, Ilıca-i Köstendil, Ustrumca, İştıp, Kratova, Ivranıya, Agriboz, İzdin, Livadya, İstefe, Atina, Tırhala, Alasonya, Yenişehir, Fener, Çatalca, İnebahtı, Vulçitrın, Priştine, Novabri, İskenderiye, İpek, Alacahisar, Zaplana, Avlonya, Delvine, Belgrad, İlbasan, Draç, Ohri, Debri, Prizrin, Angelikasrı, Srebreniçe, Brevnik, Yenipazar, Narde, Mora, Niğebolu, İvraca, Lofça, İzladi, Tırnovi, Çernovi, Şumnu, Plevne, Semendire, Rudnik, Brançova, and Niş.<sup>195</sup>

According to the census held in 1831, in the province of Rumelia, Gypsies lived in Tekfurdağı, İncik, Malkara, Bergos, Çorlu, Ereğli, Evreşe, İnez, Keşan, Edirne, Akçakızanlık, Gümülcine, Yenice-i Karasu, Uzuncaabat Hasköy, Sultanyeri, Drama, ‘Çığlacık and Sarışaban,’ Filibe, Tatarpazarı, İhtaman, Sofya, Şehirköy, Pravişte, Berkofça, Nevrekop, Menlik, Timurhisar, Zihne, Siroz, Selanik, İznebol, Ustrumca, Toyran, Karadağ, Avrathisar, İvraca, ‘Kratova, İvraniye and Palanga-i Eğridere,’ ‘Vidin, Akçar, Karalom and Belgradcık,’ ‘Çunarka, Godgoskaca and Esferlik,’ Köprülü, Perlepe, Samakov, Köstendil, Behişte, Kesriye, Manastır, Florina, İstrava, Hotpeşte and Nasliç. In the province of Silistre, they lived in Niğbolu, Ziştoy, Rusçuk, Niş, Prizren, Yehud, Tirguvişte, Gude, Üsküp, Kalkandelen, Kırçova, Varna, İsakçı, Minkalye, ‘Balpk and Kuvarna,’ Maçın, Köstence, Hırsova, Tulça, Karinabad, Babadağı, Doskasrı, Aydos, Yenipazar, Pravadi, Umurlakih, Kozluca,

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<sup>195</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, “Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler,” *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, pp. 117–144.

Pazarcık and Çardak. In the province of Anatolia, they lived in the districts of Kütahya, Muğla, İzmir, Urla, Birunabad, Tiryanda, Cumaabad, Karaburun, Çeşme, Seferihisar, Mandiçe, Balat, Talma, İneabad, Kızılhisar and Menteşe. In the province of Sivas, they were in Köprü. In the province of Adana, they mainly lived in the district of İçel. In the province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid, they were in Şile, Taşköprü, Limni, Sakız and Kıbrıs. Finally, they were also seen in the province of Çıldır.<sup>196</sup> The census results showed that in Anatolia Gypsies mostly dwelt in Biga, Hüdavendigâr, Karesi, Kütahya, Bolu, and Kocaeli.<sup>197</sup>

What about İstanbul? According to the population census held in İstanbul in 1477, 31 Gypsy households were ascertained.<sup>198</sup> However, generally in İstanbul, they settled or lodged in places like Çınarçeşme, Balat, Edirnekapı, Topkapı, Yenibağçe, Sulukule, Ayvansaray-Lonca, Kasımpaşa-Hacı Hüsrev, Üsküdar-Selamsız, Beyoğlu-Yenişehir-Sazlıdere, Büyükdere-Çayır and Topkapı. Especially, a considerable number of Gypsies lived in Topkapı. P. G. İnciciyan claimed that Gypsies lived in Topkapı were originally Armenian; and they converted to Islam in the reign of Sultan Ahmed III and the grand vizier İbrahim Paşa. He continued that they had a small-scale cemetery outside the city wall and in the view of Davutpaşa Palace.<sup>199</sup>

As a locality or quarters, the Ottoman statesmen applied a kind of physical segregation over Gypsies. Gypsies were compelled to stay in their own districts outside the city centres or in the outskirts. Some documents from the eighteenth century (1761) in *İstanbul Ahkâm Defterleri* told us that Gypsies began to settle

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<sup>196</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, pp. 149-154.

<sup>197</sup> Bilal Eryılmaz, *Osmanlı Devletinde Gayr-ı Müslim Tebaanın Yönetimi*, p. 89.

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>199</sup> Orhan Erdenen, *Lale Devri ve Yansımaları* (İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2003), p. 117.

down alongside Muslim people from different ethnic backgrounds. When the inhabitants of Hoca Ali neighbourhood in Eđrikapı came to complain about the newly-born Gypsy settlement and the disorder created by those newcomers such as their unhealthy animals, prostitution, and combustible materials used in their professions, it was ordered that Gypsies who began to settle down there had to go back to their own neighbourhood. If the newcomers did not have Gypsy ethnic background, they were allowed to settle down.<sup>200</sup>

In the pre-Abdülhamid period, the decisions were made about their settlement in different periods. The Ottomans brought forward many reasons for this: they wandered all the time both in Rumelia and Anatolia; and they were involved in robbery. Besides, they had immoral activities. Therefore, they had to be recorded and encouraged for cultivation. Actually, the most important reason was not among them and those reasons could be side factors. The most important reason was the inability to collect taxes properly.<sup>201</sup> Due to these, a settlement process was initiated in the Balkans and Anatolia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, in the 1630s, Sultan Murad IV ordered that Gypsies had to stay in a certain place and adopt a settled lifestyle. In the same century, trials were interrupted because of the wars which erupted between Austria and the Ottoman Empire. Those wars caused Gypsies to migrate to other parts. In those wars, the north-east Serbia, the north-west Bulgaria and the east of Banat were invaded by the Austrians. Many Gypsies who benefited from these went interiors. This was called as “second Gypsy migration to the Balkans.” In the reform period, the settlement process continued; and some resulted

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<sup>200</sup> Ahmet Kal'a and Ahmet Tabakođlu, *İstanbul Ahkâm Defterleri; İstanbul'da Sosyal Hayat II* (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Kùltür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı, İstanbul Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1998), pp. 238-239, pp. 273-275, and pp. 283-284.

<sup>201</sup> BOA, C.DH. 61/3032, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Safer 1261 [9 Mart 1845]; and, BOA, C.DH. 141/7019, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Rebiyyülevvel 1261 [23 Mart 1845].

in success, but most of the time, those efforts were blighted. In 1854, the sultan allowed Gypsies to dwell anywhere they wanted and travel around the villages with the condition of not bothering the local population and just minding their own business.<sup>202</sup> Mithad Paşa, who governed the province of Danube from November 1864 to March 1866, attempted to terminate the nomadic lifestyle of Gypsies; and his suggestion was approved, but it was never implemented. In spite of this, in general administration, many changes occurred in that region and the change about Gypsies was in taxational matters. A new tax, Gypsy tax became obligatory for Gypsies, and it was enforced.<sup>203</sup> In 1859, in the district of Edirne, Gypsies whose male population was 2,016 were forced to settle and to do agriculture and husbandry so that they would not suffer privation. It would be wrong to state that the trials did not come up with positive results at all, because in some parts, the efforts led to success. At that part, the Ottoman state demanded the regulation of their taxes and taxational records. If they left after all these, it was decided to turn them over to their hometown. As it was noticed from this too, the collection of taxes was the top priority.<sup>204</sup>

### Gypsies in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century was a period when the nationalistic ideas became central issues; and Gypsies also played a role in that process. Gypsies took part in the national independence of the Balkan states: for example, we saw them in the uprising of Serbians against the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the nineteenth century. When Serbia somehow got its autonomy in 1812, the new state in the leadership of

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<sup>202</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 43, p. 59; and, p. 68.

<sup>203</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Tuna Vilayeti'nin Köy Nüfusu VII. Dizi - Sayı 201*, p. 8.

<sup>204</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.UM. 349/12, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Şevvâl 1275 [9 Mayıs 1859].



Prince Miloş Obrenoviç kept the traditional system of taxation including the poll-tax of Gypsies. For a people who had permanent settlement, it was 11 *kuruş* a year for every person between the ages of 15 and 18; and 4 *kuruş* for kids. In 1818, for the nomadic people, it was 21 *kuruş* per person a year. Only Gypsies in Belgrade were exempted from that tax. In 1839, that tax was abolished just for the Christian Gypsies and the Muslims continued to pay it. With that system, they could be encouraged to convert to Orthodox Christianity. In 1844, citizenship act gave Gypsies the same rights with the Serbians but the authorities most of the time retained the old habits. In 1853, a decision dictated that sedentary groups paid taxes to the local authorities, but nomads would continue to pay poll-tax. For married adults, it was 24 *kuruş*; for single adults, it was 12 *kuruş*; and for kids between 8 and 14 ages, it was 8 *kuruş*. All these taxes were abolished with the law of 1884 named as immediate taxation law.<sup>205</sup>

In the province of Danube, Muslim Gypsies and non-Muslims who stopped paying the military tax after the year of 1865 were liable to pay special Gypsy tax. That tax was divided into four categories. In the first one, there were artisans and people who were capital owners and they paid 75 *kuruş*. People in the second group paid 50 *kuruş*; and the third group had to pay 30. In the last group, there were workers and minors. They would pay it in three months: October, November and December; and people who were recorded and whose ages were between 15 and 79 would pay it.<sup>206</sup>

In the province or *sancak* of Niş, in 1864, taxes of Gypsies were regulated because of the appearance of some taxational problems. Gypsies had 272,530 old debts (matured liability) and it became impossible to collect them all. With the new

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<sup>205</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, pp. 82–84.

<sup>206</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Tuna Vilayeti'nin Köy Nüfusu VII. Dizi - Sayı 201*, p. 145.

register, 5,200 *zikürs* were determined and the kids were exempted. Tax-payers were divided into five groups. In the first class, the number of people was 500, and they would pay 50 *kuruş*. In the second class, there were also five hundred people, and 40 *kuruş* per individual would be paid. The number of people in the third class was again 500 people, and the amount was 30 *kuruş* per head. The fourth class consisted of 1,000 people, and 20 *kuruş* per head would be paid. Lastly, the fifth class included 1,000 people too, and they would pay 10 *kuruş* per head. The aggregate amount that was expected to be collected was 90,000 *kuruş*. When half of the money was collected, a *vergi senedi* would be given and their old debts would be recorded in the *tezkere*. For the collection of the taxes, tax-collectors would be appointed with a salary of 1/20 *kuruş*.<sup>207</sup>

The last great changes occurred in the poll-tax and the military service. With the *Islâhât Fermânı* (Reform Edict), the poll-tax was turned into the *iâne-i askerî* and then the title of the exemption tax was changed to *bedel-i askerî*. Nevertheless, Gypsies were not subjected to that application. In 1867-1868, they were obliged to pay a tax, *kıbtîyân vergisi*, which was peculiar to them instead of the poll-tax or as an exemption from the military service.<sup>208</sup>

Interestingly, some non-standard applications could be seen. For example, in 1869, Gypsies were obliged to pay taxes like *emlâk, temettu'* and the special Gypsy tax (*kıbtîyân vergisi*); and so their military service was prohibited. However, in some counties of Adana, despite the Gypsy tax, they were recruited. When the situation was noticed, it became a distressful situation to stop the conscription of those people. It could create complications, but also, taking taxes at the same time was out of the

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<sup>207</sup> BOA, İ.MVL. 516/23252, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 14 Rebiyyülâhir 1281 [15 Eylül 1864].

<sup>208</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 134/62, adet: 4, vesika: 4, 28 Zilhicce 1316 [9 Mayıs 1899].

question. Therefore, the authorities decided to eliminate the special tax and conscription among them continued.<sup>209</sup> In the year of 1873, some decisions were made about the conscription of Muslim Gypsies and the abolition of the Gypsy tax, but the implementation of the decisions and the adaption to the new regulation (by both the state and Gypsies) would take time.<sup>210</sup>

As seen above, the Ottoman statesmen had a different approach to Gypsies. Maybe, the Ottoman Empire never totally ignored this unusual group. What is more, the state issued some laws with the thought of controlling them or improving them as well as keeping them within certain borders. However, some applications and the provisions about them compelled us to think about the effect or the importance of being a Gypsy and the effects of their eccentric lifestyles. This was so powerful such that their ethnic identity overweighed their religious identity. All the same, as witnessing the approach or the endeavours of the state in the previous centuries before the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, we perceived that there were some aberrations in the proverb “the exceptions do not disprove the rule.”

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<sup>209</sup> BOA, İ.ŞD. 15/653, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 27 Safer 1286 [8 Haziran 1869].

<sup>210</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MHM. 472/52, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1290 [12 Ocak 1874]; and, BOA, A.}MKT.MHM. 472/53, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1290 [12 Ocak 1874].

The date in the document of A.}MKT.MHM. 472/53 was different than the date of the document. The date in the document was indicated as 20 Şevvâl 1290 [11 Aralık 1873]; and, 28 Teşrînisânî 1289 [10 Aralık 1873].

## CHAPTER 2

### THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN STATE AND GYPSIES IN THE REIGN OF SULTAN ABDÜLHAMİD II (1876-1909): THE PROBLEM OF 'MAKING DO WITH' THE STATE OR 'COPING WITH' THE STATE<sup>211</sup>

Romani speaking, brown-skinned and lithe  
as the native deer of the hills, music in their  
hearts and the dance in their naked feet, the  
Turkish Gypsies are true representatives of  
the *kâlo rat*.<sup>212</sup>

In the Ottoman Empire, as we all know, the population was divided into two main groups. The first group was *askerî* class (the military or administrative class) which embraced 'men of pen' and 'men of sword.' By fulfilling some functions, they stood as "the delegates of the sultan" and so that mission or position in the Ottoman regime added the distinction in their life like being officially exempted from all taxation. The second group was the *reâyâ*; merchants, artisans and peasants. They went after the productive activities and also they were liable to pay the taxes.<sup>213</sup> Nevertheless, their past experiences showed us that Gypsies were never able to be included in either of these two. They did not perform public functions or mostly not pursue productive activities. Furthermore, they were not tax-payers in real terms, because they were perceived as unreliable in taxation matters. More importantly, without a stable residence, unapproved jobs, rebellious actions and bizarre

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<sup>211</sup> The Phrasal Verbs used in the title, "Making Do" and "Coping With," were inspired from the sources below: Michael de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1984), p. 29; Necmi Erdoğan, "Making do with State Power: Laughter, Grotesque, and Mêtis in Turkish Popular Culture," (England: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Lancaster University, Sociology Department, 1998); Suraiya Faroqhi, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550- 1720* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1995).

<sup>212</sup> *Kâlo Rat* = 'black blood' or the rarer pure Romani. See: Juliette de Bairacli Levy, "Gypsies of Turkey," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, third series, 31 (1952), pp. 5–13.

<sup>213</sup> Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 16.

appearances, they were far from what is depicted above. The picture they assumed was more marginal. In that case, by marginalizing them much more, the state did not enlist them in the military service and also they were exposed to the burden of *cizye* (poll-tax). However, this situation did not give them a total free hand or a total delimitation. On the other hand, their marginality could be perceived as a series of situations between exclusion and integration.<sup>214</sup> Especially, that matter made them “a group who had waited in the hall,”<sup>215</sup> and the fact arising from the feeling of ‘not belonging to any room’ or ‘not partaking in any room’ was the binarism generated by being in the middle of acception or rejection of the state law. The result was the lives wobbling between the antonyms such as “obedience and rebellion, consent and dissent, ideological incorporation and subversive challenge.”<sup>216</sup> Naturally, this kind of survival brings along the ability of figuring out the blanks in the state system. Then, by using certain tactics like “practical intelligence, tactical creativity, trickery, simulation, dissimulation, disguise and vigilance,” they made do with the state.<sup>217</sup> The most prevalent example of this could be seen in taxation, conscription and nomadism.

Nevertheless, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) whose sovereignty constituted two different groups according to which he was “the red-sultan” (*le sultan rouge*) or “the grand-emperor” (*han*), something was about to alter

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<sup>214</sup> According to Anne M. Lovell, marginality is sometimes confused with social exclusion from a dominant social order and from a institutionalized system of material and symbolic exchange. However, marginality is best understood as a state or a series of situations between social exclusion and social integration.

See: Anne M. Lovell, “Marginality,” in: *Encyclopedia of Homelessness*, ed. David Levinson, vol. I (London: Sage Publications, 2004), pp. 371-375.

<sup>215</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingenerler*, (İstanbul: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2005), p. 27.

<sup>216</sup> Necmi Erdoğan, “Devleti İdare Etmek: Maduniyet ve Düzenbazlık,” *Toplum Bilim*, no. 83 (1999-2000), pp. 8-30.

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 8-30.

for both sides. Because in a reign whose sultan made a great effort for keeping the empire together and whose sultan took every step to make the empire centralized with the help of railways, telegraphs, steamboats, conscription, telephone, and taxation, it would not be easy making do with the state just as they had done before. Namely, the state had no time, and so 'control' and 'benefit' were frequently used words. Taking them under control, defining their wandering places, making them settled, encouraging them for agriculture would be the central issues of the reign without giving up the idea that by nature, they were different, not just in terms of 'exterior,' but also in terms of 'interior.'

On the other hand, the state was not conniving at some of their actions. In contrast, it tried to reconcile relations between them and itself as well as showing a tendency to make them a part of the system, maybe not a total part of the system, but at least to correlate with the system. The main point for the state was that 'as much as you benefit me, I would benefit you.' For Gypsies, it could be said that they continued to find gaps in the system and they used tactics because long time ago they had noticed how the weakness gave them a kind of power in the system. However, in that period, there was one difference about Gypsies. Some of them were more conscious and at least, they were powerful enough to develop a strategy against the state. That is to say, all Gypsies did not make a consensus about lolling against the tactics and methods in order to live in the Ottoman territory. In some situations, they continued to make do with the state, but in some situations they preferred to cope with the state in a real sense. Briefly, some of them had a word to say and forced the closed doors to get out of 'the hall.' So, if we delve into the main apparatus that the interrelations between the state and Gypsies were based on, it can be helpful to draw the picture clearer.

## Problem of Denomination

Supposedly, it would be a good start to look into the titles Gypsies were called because in most cases, given titles reflected how you perceived them. In that reign, some of the terms used typically to describe Gypsies were *Çingene*, *Kıbtî*, *Arabacı*<sup>218</sup> (meaning horse-drawn wagons), *Poşa* or *Hay-Poşa*,<sup>219</sup> *Luri*, *Mitrip* or *Mirtip* (used in southern *Van*), *Abdals*, *Karaçi*<sup>220</sup> and *Tahtacı*. Even in the archival sources, diverse titles could be found for depicting them like *Çingene*, *Çingane*, *Cingene*, *Kıptî*, *Kıbtî*, *Kıptîye*, *Kıbtîye*, *Kıptiyân*, and *Kıbtiyân*. Having called them with various titles pointed out two things actually. Firstly, regarding derogatory meaning of the *Çingene*

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<sup>218</sup> In the document taken from BOA, particularly from the department of Y.A.RES. 83/70; adet: 2, vesika: 2, dated as 3 Cemâziyyelevvel 1314 [9 Kasım 1896] the term of *Arabacı* was used to entitle a village in Düzce county of Kastamonu province. Its administration was annexed with the administration of the village *Kıptî*. As though this annexed type of administration caused troubles in the conscription and the civil service, because the local council was inefficient to have a grasp of the informations about both villages so at the end, they were broken apart.

<sup>219</sup> *Bosa* or *Posa* was the Armenian type of Gypsies. Terminological meaning could be “idles” and supposedly given by Armenians, but Alexandre G. Paspati and some other scholars rejected this thesis and proved the term had nothing to do with Armenian language. There were a lot of rumours about the outcome of that term but the most exiting one was; “in the past, some group of people originated from *Boşa* or *Poşa* came into the presence of governor of Sivas and when the governor asked about their occupations, they responded, ‘we are making basket and playing drum and clarion.’ Then, the *Paşa* says what you are doing is for nothing (*boşa!*) so the term became widespread into the public and in time, with phonetic change, B was turned into P.” Unlike others, these Gypsies had settled life-styles and they were far from their original traditions because they accepted Armenian traditions, customs and language. As an occupation, they were dealing with making baskets and sieves. Today, in Turkey, they were living in Sivas, Kastamonu, Çankırı, Ankara, Vezirköprü, Merzifon, Erzurum, Artvin, Erzincan, Van, Ağrı, Bayburt, Afyon, Kars, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt; mostly where Armenians had lived before. See: Sarkis Seropyan, “Vatansız Tek Ulus Çingeneler ve Çingenelerin Ermenileşmişleri, Haypoşalar,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXXIV /202 (Ekim 2000), pp. 21–26; Esat Uras. “Poşalar: Elekçi Çingeneler Hakkında Etnografik ve Sosyolojik Bir Etüd,” *Çığır*, no. 176, 177, 178, 179, 180 (1947): pp. 99–102, pp. 115-117, pp. 131-132, pp. 147-149, and pp. 163-165; and, Erdoğan Önder, “Bir Alt Kimlik Örneği Olarak Poşalar,” *Türk Yurdu*, XIX/145 (1999), pp. 38–49.

<sup>220</sup> The name of Persian Gypsies in Azerbaijan language was *Karaçi*. This name was given either their life in black tents or being dark-skinned. See: N. Pour Efkari, “İran’da Çingeneler Hakkında Toplanan Gözlem, Mülakat, Ses alma, Fotoğraf ve Diğer Bilgiler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyoloji Kürsüsüne Sunulan “İran’da Çingenelerin Sosyal Yapısı Üzerine Bir Araştırma” Adlı Doktora Tezinin 4. Bölümüdür.* (İstanbul: Mayataş Matbaacılık ve Neşriyat A. Ş., 1978).

(Gypsy)<sup>221</sup> as well as the source of the title *Kıbtî* (Egyptian), misunderstandings and misbeliefs about those people somehow predominated in this period.<sup>222</sup>

When the title ‘Çingâne,’ which was an inauspicious wording, was articulated, it makes the malice and the curse of a native tribe or the cause of hatred everlasting. Whereas, people whom we call as Çingâne are descended from the dynasty of Manchurian Tatars, the north of China and the capital of that Manchuria was the city of Çingeyân or Çingiyân so the title Çingâne comes from this. That is why; the term does not prefigure the famous curse of ‘Çin’ and ‘Gân’ and its hatred. Even if there is this kind of story, this is a historical anecdote so there was no reason for that the term to include the meaning of vituperation and damnation till the Day of Judgement.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Outside of the theory that the term Çingene emerged as a disrupted version of the title (*Anthinganoi*) of a Gnostic sect in Byzantine Empire, there are some theories constituted by the researchers in order to bring an answer to the outcome of the term such as it can be the corrupted version of *Çandala* which is given to Pariahs in the books of Brahman. The other suggestions are that the term is originated from the word of *toyeng* (musically skilled, dancer) in Indian language, or Gypsies are called so, because they carried out the name of people, *çangar* and *zinger*, who are dwelling on the banks of Gur. See: M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420–426.

According to Ali Rafet Özkan, the word Çingene that is used firstly by the Turks is originated from the word *çeng* which is a sort of a stringed instrument played as holding straight so the title *çengi* is the person who plays this instrument as well as the girl who dances. The affixes –gan and –gen are making plural of the Persian words that are ended with the letter of –e. The word Çingene can be derived from the words of *çengi-gan* or *çengi-gane*. Another theory tells us that Gypsies are the horse-shoers described with the term *Ahen-ger* (*ahen*= iron, *ger*= monger, blacksmith) in Persian and Turkish languages. Then, the *ahen-ger* is associated to *Athinganoi* that is Gnostic sect in Byzantine so with the combination of these two words, the title *çingene* emerges. See: Ali Rafet Özkan, *Türkiye Çingeneleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2000), pp. 7-8; and, Ali Rafet Özkan, “Çingene Hayat Tarzı ve İnançları,” *Akademik Araştırmalar*, 1/4 (1997), pp. 80–86.

Another interesting theory for the outcome of this term was the notion that they were coming from the East Asia.

<sup>222</sup> One source indicated that in time, the word *Ozan* (Turkish popular poet-singer) got the dimension of contempt and, so in the nineteenth century Anatolia, it became the word that was used in the meaning of Çingene (Gypsy) or *Çalgıcı Çingene* (player or instrumentalist Gypsy). For a long time, Gypsies were well-known with their playing and singing performances, so *Ozan* as the derogatory title was used also to define them. See: Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, “Ozan,” in: *Edebiyat Araştırmaları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1966), pp. 136-137.

<sup>223</sup> “Çingâne bir lafz-ı menhûsdur ki telâffuz olunduğu zaman bir kavm-i yerlinin şenâ’at-i mel’ûn-ânesini ya da bâdi olarak nefret-i kalbiyyeyi idâme eder. Halbûki bizim Çingâne dediğimiz tâ’ife ‘Çin’ in cihet-i şimâlisinde bulunan Mançûrî Tatarları sülâlesinden ve bu Mançûryâ’nın makarr-ı idâresi ‘Çingeyân’/‘Çingiyân’ şehri olmağla bu nâma nisbetle yad olunduğundan tarîhçe ma’lûm olan ‘Çin’ ile ‘Gan’ in mel’ânet-i mel’ûn-anesi bâ’is-i nefret olarak bu tâ’ifeye şimûlü olamayacağı ve olsa bile tarîhe ‘âid bir fikra olub el yevmü’l-kıyâm t’an ve l’an ile bed-nâm kalmaları hiçbir sebab-i ma’kûle müstenid olamadığı cihetle...”

BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].



The second thing about the given titles was that the state was unable to define who was really a Gypsy and who was not, or likewise, by which titles should they be denominated. For instance, the name *Abdâl* was used to call Gypsies, but it was not what it seemed. In common usage, it means bewildered, addled and foolish. This word was originally found in Islamic mysticism for naming people who avoided worldly affairs and devoted themselves to God. They were sofis and saints who had taken part in *evliyâ zümresi* (saint class) called *Ricâlü'l-gâyb*. In addition to this, in literature, this term was used for naming dervishes as well as for naming some locations and some group of people including individuals. Nevertheless, for most of the time, this term indicated some group of people living as nomads and vagabonds. Their musical aspirations, begging, making baskets, cauldrons, and forging iron, convergence and nearly similar appearance caused them to be labeled as Gypsies.<sup>224</sup> However, as most scholars agreed upon, there was not any relation between Gypsies and *Abdâls*. According to Adrian Marsh, they were supposed to be “the mixture of Afghan-Turkic nomads inhabiting in Anatolia or a group similar to the Yenische of Germany, Resande of Scandinavia or Romanichals of England.” According to their own claim, they were a distinct Alawi tribe living in the region.<sup>225</sup>

As convergence, Ahmet Caferoğlu stated that both Gypsies and *Abdâls* had their own languages and just one of them, at certain times, borrowed some words from the other, but there was not any other similarity. More importantly, the public who did

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<sup>224</sup> Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, “Abdal,” in: *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiyat Enstitüsü, 1935), pp. 22–56.

<sup>225</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies* (London: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Humanities University of Greenwich, 2008), p. 185.

not understand either evaluated them in the same context.<sup>226</sup> According to Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, this situation appeared just because of Gypsy disguise as dervishes for an easy pass in Anatolia.<sup>227</sup> Likewise, *Tahtacı* which was also *Alevi* groups was another term used by the Ottoman state unfairly to imply Gypsies. Especially some archival sources are corroborative of the usage of that term in the sense of Gypsy. Up to one archival source, they were nomads as well as timber labourers. Besides, they lived in the districts of Aydın, Denizli, Antalya and Isparta and Isparta's county, Eğridir, specifically in the villages of Aşağı and Yukarı Gökdere and Battal Kahya as well as in the village of Sandıklı. Especially the ones who performed a military duty as *redif* (local military reserve unit) in the battalion of Eğridir claimed that they were citizens of Persia. That is why; in the last census held in Isparta, they were not recorded and never being treated on the registry basis apart from recording their birth dates. Then, the state ordered the completion of their records and interchange of their passports with the *nüfus tezkeresi* (census receipts).<sup>228</sup> One more title which was presented to our attention by Adrian Marsh was *Kinchors*. It was an Armenian word used to call Gypsies which were prevalent in the provinces of Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van. Adrian Marsh explained how that term appeared:

The term appears again at the Berlin Conference of 1878 after the Ottoman defeat by Imperial Russia, albeit in an “unofficially” submitted note to the Plenipotentiaries from the Patriarch. The terms related to the late eighteenth century exhortations of the Armenian clergy to marry Armenian

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<sup>226</sup> Ahmet Caferoğlu, “Anadolu Abdallarının Gizli Dillerinden Bir İki Örnek,” in: *60. Doğum Yılı Münasebetiyle Fuad Köprülü Armağanı* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi, 1953), pp. 50–53.

As related about the subject, also see: Cemil Cahit Güzelbey, “Abdallar,” *Folklor* 3, 25/5 (İstanbul, 1972), pp. 21-25.

<sup>227</sup> Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, “Abdal,” in: *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 22–56.

<sup>228</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1222/1, adet: 7, vesika: 1-4, 7 Zilkâde 1325 [12 Aralık 1907].

Gypsies, thereby bringing them into the orbit of the Armenian people proper, as additional members of the nation in the discussions about numbers of Armenians.<sup>229</sup>

Among all these titles, undoubtedly, the most extensive usage belonged to the term *Kıbtî* (Egyptian). In reality, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, they did not get the title for belonging to the native Copt community of Egypt. Gypsies got the title over the possibility of coming from Egypt. However, the more surprising point is, in spite of the inaccurate knowledge, the term *Kıbtî* or its other versions bearing more official meaning considering the archival documents could be understood easily that the state preferred to call *Kıbtî* rather than *Çingene* or *Çingâne*. In some of the documents, *Çingene* was written beforehand and then as scratching it out, the clause of *Kıbtî* was added.<sup>230</sup>

Even if the historical name of these scattered people, who were able to combine and to arouse two incompatible feelings: hatred and mercy among civilized people, was ‘*Kıbtî*,’ in the language of all human beings, they were called as ‘*Çingâne*’ (Gypsy).<sup>231</sup>

However, this common usage of the word did not hinder some probable confusion, because there was still a group who really deserved that title and misuse of the word for implying Gypsies caused a problem like the existence of one title for two different groups. With an experience in both the documents and Gypsies, it could

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<sup>229</sup> Adrian Marsh, ‘*No Promised Land*’: *History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 185.

<sup>230</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 631/41, adet: 6, vesika: 3, 12 Şevvâl 1320 [12 Ocak 1903]. Sometimes, the two of them were used in the same document. See: BOA, TFR.I.KV. 63/6237, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [12 Haziran 1904].

<sup>231</sup> “*Ahvâl-i hâzırası nefret gibi, merhamet gibi iki hiss-i mütehâlifî cem’ ve celb eden bu perâkende ta’ifenin tarihçe ismi ‘Kıbtî’ ise de elsine-i enâmda namı ‘Çingâne’dir.*” BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

be overwhelming. That was just the exterior of the problem which put researchers in a tight spot, but as delving into the documents about Gypsies, there emerged the interior of the problem which was directly associated with Gypsies and which seemed deeper than the former one.

As the term *Kıbtî*<sup>232</sup> was alienated from the original meaning and became associated with Gypsyism, the term began to bother Gypsies who were especially Muslims and who described themselves as being really far from the ordinary Gypsy image. As it was known, the general attitude of the state was to put them in a certain place, make them settled and record them and consequently hand over *Tezkere-i 'Osmâniye* (census receipts). The sign over those receipts was clear-cut. For the Muslim ones, it was *Kıbtî-i Müslim* (Muslim Gypsy) and for the non-Muslim, it was *Kıbtî-i Gayr-i Müslim* (non-Muslim Gypsy). In either case, putting the *Kıbtî* before the name or the religion was an obligatory process. Nevertheless, the usage of the term was not limited to the receipts. Most of the time, the neighbourhoods also bore the title of *Kıbtî*. It seemed the state wished to be aware of which individual was Gypsy and which was not, as well as which neighbourhoods belonged to Gypsies and which did not. It was probably derived from a doubt about their faiths. In that reign, this created displeasure, especially on the side of the Muslim ones. They believed that they were Muslim just like other Muslims. Therefore, they did not want to be pointed at and to be belittled by putting the title of *Kıbtî* in their census receipts or in the title of their neighbourhood. In that case, authorities who were confronted with

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<sup>232</sup> Sometimes, *Kıbtî* was not enough to decipher the ethnicity of those people. Besides the usage of *Kıbtî* as a title, some of the documents bore also one more ethnic title which showed an alteration according to the places where Gypsies preferred to live or according to the hegemony which Gypsies fell under, like *Sırb tebaasından ve Kıptî taifesinden...* (A person... from Serbian subject and Gypsy people) or *Yunanlı Kıptî* (Greek Gypsy) or *Bair Mahallesi Kıptîlerinden ve Bulgar Cemaati'nden* (From Gypsies of Bair neighbourhood and Bulgarian Community).

See: BOA, DH.MKT. 2227/96, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Rebiyyülevvel 1317 [1 Ağustos 1899]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 73/7297, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Recep 1323 [12 Eylül 1905]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 141/14008, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Şabân 1325 [28 Eylül 1907].

the reaction of Gypsies towards underlining the title of *Kıbtî* in *Sicillât* and *Tezâkir-i 'Osmâniye* consulted the upper seats in order to be informed about what had to be done.<sup>233</sup>

In June of 1902, in the name of a group of people, a couple named Abdülkerim bin Halil and his wife submitted a petition for the removal of that title from their census receipts as well as the modification of the neighbourhood titles which were known as *Sepetçi Kıbtiyânı* (the Basket-Maker Gypsies) and *Elekçi Kıptiyânı* (Griddle or Sieve Maker Gypsies). The state responded that the title of *Kıbtiyân* was used to indicate the ethnicity, and not anything else. Then, after consulting the department of religious affairs, it accepted its illegitimacy of writing down that title in the section of religion, so the title was removed both from the receipts and from the titles of neighbourhood by writing only the religious denomination and turning *Elekçi Kıbtiyân* into *Cedvel Başı* and *Sepetçi Kıbtiyânı* into *Sakızlar* neighbourhood (Chewing Gums) respectively.<sup>234</sup>

In the next year, *muhtar* (local mayor) in Kale-i Sultaniye (Çanakkale) and his two assistants submitted a similar petition. Their neighbourhood's title was changed as *Çay* (Tea) neighbourhood and also the title *Kıbtî* was erased from the census receipts. But, unlike the other documents, in this one, there was a well-explained motive for the petition. They performed all the religious duties and they were obliged to do military service, so they deserved to be treated like an ordinary Muslim as well as to be called just as Muslims. Furthermore, a circular letter was published in the newspaper of *Asır* for the abolition of the title. Eventually, the petition was accepted,

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<sup>233</sup> BOA, ŞD. 2501/19, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 22 Rebiyyülâhir 1303 [28 Ocak 1886].

<sup>234</sup> “*Kıbtî lafzının mezâhibe teşmîli diyânet nokta-i nazarından gayr-i câ'iz bulunduğu beyânıyla tezkere-i 'Osmâniyelerinin mezheb hânesine Müslim 'ibâresi yazılarak yedlerine yeniden tezâkir-i 'Osmâniye i'tâsıyla evvelce verilmiş olan tezkerelerin ibtâl ve kaydlarının tashîhî...*” BOA, DH.MKT. 521/25, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 3 Rebiyyülevvel 1320 [10 Haziran 1902].

but in the document, we see one more important phrase like this: “Muslims had to be treated according to their religion and non-Muslims had to be treated according to their religion.”<sup>235</sup> That phrase did not only accept the cancellation of the unwanted title, but also put a barrier between Muslim Gypsies and non-Muslim Gypsies.

The length of the process of petitions connoted that getting the deserved one would not be so easy and simple on behalf of Gypsies, because the Muslim ones had to prove themselves to the authorities and to the state. In the year of 1903, in Kavala county of Drama district, some Muslim *Kıbtî* people applied for the change of their neighbourhood’s title as *Dere* because of the degraded use of *Kıbtî*, and partly because they performed all the worldly and religious duties of Islam as well as being obliged to do military service. Moreover, some from another neighbourhood called *Arabacı* also applied to be treated in the same way. In addition to this, Gypsy groups of Kavala in Selanik also wished the state not to call or write *Kıbtî* in their census receipts. To reach their goal, the local mayor of the town, Salih wrote a petition to the authorities. In reply to his petition, the authorities asked for the investigation of some points which were as follows: Did the petitioners perform their religious duties like five-time praying and fasting? Were they obliged to do military service? It was seen that petitioner Salih had signed the petition. So, did they have a separate local mayor? Did they live outside of the city or separately from other Muslims? Lastly, did they inter-marry with other Muslim girls from different ethnicities? As a result of the interrogation, it was stated that they performed all these, so they deserved not to be called *Kıbtî*. Then, the certificates were renewed and promulgation appeared on

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<sup>235</sup> “*Din-i mübîn-i Ahmedîye’ye ‘âid her türlü vezâ’if-i İslamiye’yi ve husûsiyle hizmet-i mukaddese-i askeriyeyi müfthirâne ifâ eylemekte olduğumuz halde beyn’en-nâs Kıbtî lafzıyla yâd edilmeliğimiz çâkerlerimize pek çirkîn görüldüğünden tahrîr-i cedîd esnasında Kıbtî lafz-ı müstehcenin derc edilmemesi ‘Asr gazetesinin 16 Haziran 321 tarihli nüsha-i matbû’asıyla ta’âm edilmiş olduğundan bu ‘âciz kullarından dahî Kıbtî elfâzının ref’iyle cemâ’at-i İslâmiyye misillü hakkımızda mu’âmele olunmasının tahrîr komisyonuna emr ve irâde buyrulmasını yab-ı merhametlerine sığınarak istirhâm-ı mücâseret eyleriz fermân. Muhtâr-ı Mahalle-i Kıbtî-i Müslim Mahmud”*  
BOA, DH.MKT. 632/19, adet: 8, vesika: 6-8, 13 Şevvâl 1320 [13 Ocak 1903].

the journals for the right of Muslim Gypsies not to be called by this derogatory word.<sup>236</sup> The same application coincided in the year of 1905 with a kind of announcement in the newspapers of Selanik and *İkdâm*.<sup>237</sup> In January of 1909, some petitions for the annulment of the title were accepted and in conformity with the provisions of *Kanûn-i Esâsî*, it was found necessary to interchange the census receipts which included these titles.<sup>238</sup> However, they were not contented with committing petitions, but also on the way of achieving their goals, some Gypsies even tempted to threaten the officials with not coming to the registers, which made the officials angry, so they evaluated the situation as unacceptable.

Actually, the interesting point about the petitions was when they objected to the denomination, they not only grounded their petitions on the inhumanity of the application, but also they quoted references from the provisions of the registry. A local mayor of a Gypsy quarter in Köprülü objected to the writing down of the word *Kıbtî* in the new records just like the former register had done. They even refused to go to the register and the state officials had to force them for the recording. Therefore, the local mayor had nothing to do but submit a petition. In the petition, the local mayor emphasized the violation of the provisions of the *tahrîr-i cedîd* (the new register) and he claimed the provisions pointed out that everybody was free to be recorded as he or she wished and be treated according to his declaration. Then, the local mayor continued as follows:

Recording our people, who have nothing difference than the  
*İslâm*, as *Kıbtî* and treating our people in that way is

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<sup>236</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 628/64, adet: 22, vesika: 7 and 13, 7 Şevvâl 1320 [7 Ocak 1903].

<sup>237</sup> BOA, İ.HUS. 131/1323 Cemâziyyelevvel-008, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Cemâziyyelevvel 1323 [6 Temmuz 1905].

<sup>238</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2718/80, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Muharrem 1327 [24 Ocak 1909].

impermissible and by giving soldiers and accepting the general taxes sequaciously, we are indifference from Islamic people. This kind of unfair treatment demotivates and devitalizes our Islam and also we know that the supreme justice of the sultan, our excellency is not going to consent to that treatment as well as the conscience of the state will not tolerate that. By serving your merciful governance with utter faithfulness and obedience, we wished to be treated as Islam in the register.<sup>239</sup>

Nevertheless, the state did not reply in the affirmative to every petition. The reason might be that the owner of the petitions could not scrape through the exam: 1) Performing religious duties 2) Military service 3) Settling near Muslim Quarters 4) Intermarrying other Muslim girls from different ethnic backgrounds. In the year of 1907, Muslim Gypsies who lived in the neighbourhood of Hoca Ali desired not to put the title of *Kıbtî* in their census receipts again, but their petitions were not accepted. Some officers even had doubts about the Gypsyism of some people living in the neighbourhood because of the lack of ethnic title in their census receipts, so those officers asked to which department they had to apply for an inquiry of the real ethnic background of those people: census taker or the *Zaptiye*?<sup>240</sup> Likely, in the April of 1907, in the petition submitted by a Gypsy called Necib, there was a wish for reversion to the old type of census receipts. In the previous receipts of Muslim Gypsies living in the street of Sepetci Çıkmazı of Solaksinan and Selami Ali Afif neighbourhoods in Üsküdar (*Scutari*), just “Muslim” was written, but then the

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<sup>239</sup> “Ba’dema hiçbir husûsta İslâm’dan farklı olmayan tâ’ifemize Kıbtî ıtlâkı ve nüfûs kaydında o yolda mu’âmele buyrulması memnû’ bulunmakta olduğu gibi ‘asâkîr vermek ve mûmâsili tekâlîf-i ‘umumiyyeyi fart-ı mutâva’atla kabûl etmek sûretiyle İslâmiyetten hiçbir cihet-i mehcûriyetimiz bulunmamış bu gibi mu’âmele-i gayr-i muhakka ile şevk ve şetâret-i İslâmiyemizin kesrini ve evvel-sûretle matlûb-ı ‘âliyeye mugâyir mu’âmele ifâsına ‘adâlet-i celile-i hazret-i padişâhî râzî olmayacağı gibi vicdân-ı devletlerinizin dahî cevâz-dâre olmayacağını bildiğimizden hâkpa-yı merhamet ihtivâ-yı devletlerinize cebîn-sây-ı ‘ubûdiyyet olarak İslâm olmak üzere mu’âmele-i kaydiyyemizin icrası...”  
BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 74/7352, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Şabân 1323 [15 Ekim 1905].

<sup>240</sup> BOA, ZB. 320/75, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Kanûnisânî 1322 [9 Şubat 1907].



receipts were renewed, the title *Kıptî* was added so that renewal created displeasure among them. They even declared that unless just their religion was put down, they would not get their new receipts nor would they accept to be recorded.<sup>241</sup> As an excuse, they stated that “they should not be defamed by the title of a group of people whom they were not followers of.”<sup>242</sup> Nonetheless, the state preferred to underline that they were actually Gypsies, and putting the ethnicity in the census receipts was an obligation so what they had to do was to come and to get their new receipts.<sup>243</sup> Therefore, in the year of 1908, the receipts of people living in the same region called Cemil, İsmail, Mehmet, Fatma and Hatice were also renewed for not including the title of *Kıbtî-i Muslim* or *Muslime*.<sup>244</sup> In addition to this, due to the same reason, the census receipts of all 54 people then decreased to 53 people because one of them, Hacı Mehmed had died.<sup>245</sup>

Above mentioned events showed that denomination began to be a problem for Muslim Gypsies. To handle this, they acted as determined individuals and gave petitions to the authorities. In this process, they preferred to defend themselves by using the gaps in the law and in the system. However, in return, the statesmen were unable to act uniformly and coherently and it sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected their pleas. The criteria of this “sometimes” could be about how Gypsies met the requirements of the statesmen and made them believe. Conversely, the problem could be in the state itself. The problem could be about how the state shuttled

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<sup>241</sup> BOA, ZB. 21/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Nisan 1323 [20 Nisan 1907]; and, BOA, ZB. 322/7, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Kanûnisânî 1323 [9 Şubat 1908].

<sup>242</sup> “*Sâlîki olmadıkları bir tâi’fe namıyla lekedâr edilmemeleri,*” BOA, DH.SN.M. 7/139, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Safer 1325 [11 Nisan 1907].

<sup>243</sup> BOA, DH.SN.M. 7/139, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Safer 1325 [11 Nisan 1907].

<sup>244</sup> BOA, ZB. 82/92, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Kanûnisânî 1323 [11 Şubat 1908]; and, BOA, ZB. 322/54, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 14 Şubat 1323 [27 Şubat 1908].

<sup>245</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1244/37, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 1 Rebiyyülevvel 1326 [3 Nisan 1908].

between perceiving Gypsies as a part of or not a part of something. Specially, if it was considered that even some of the old census receipts contained *Kıbtî* and the others did not, it looks like the perception of the state towards Gypsies had been oscillating between those two for a long time.

### Military Service

Officially, all Gypsies, for a certain period of time, were exempted from the military service and instead of it; they were obliged to pay a tax called poll-tax, whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim. However, the existence of some exceptional circumstances should be asserted here, because in return for the specially rendered services, certain groups of Gypsies were exempted from some levies. This group where Gypsies took part was called “intermediary class between *Askerî* and *Reâyâ*.”<sup>246</sup> Especially the *sancak* of Gypsies and *müsellem* organization were products of that understanding. The services or auxiliary works performed by Gypsies in return for the right of exemption were metal-workers, drovers, grooms, horse-trainers, porters, powder-makers, tent-makers, fletchers (arrow-makers) and musicians who led the armies.<sup>247</sup>

As it was already said, all these were exceptional, meaning, Gypsies were never able to enter a military class or they never had the precedence to participate in the *devşirme* system. The probable cause was their supposed worldly marginality. On the other hand, because of their marginality or dishonourable ways of living, they were not given the duty in palace services or in the Janissary army. However, for Marushiakova and Popov, Gypsies had served in the regular army; they also stated

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<sup>246</sup> Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 16.

<sup>247</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 182.

that there were Gypsy groups who served the regular Ottoman army; they even took part in the defence of Kosovo against Austrian invaders in 1788. Besides, their service continued till the end of the nineteenth century. From their statements, it was claimed that in the decline period of the state, the accorded privileges to Gypsies who served in the army and reserve units disappeared slowly and Marushiakova and Popov also asserted that in the official report issued on 21 January 1874, the state refused to acknowledge the early services of Gypsies in the army. It was even stated that they never served in the army, but the state would benefit from their services in the future.<sup>248</sup>

In later centuries, with the reforms held in certain times, position of Gypsies in the military system was also transformed. By abolishing the old type of military forces, the Ottoman military system underwent through changes by organizing a regular army called *Muallem Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye* (Trained Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad). In addition to the regular army, in 1834, a system called Prussian Landwehr was based and local military reserve unit called as *Asâkir-i Redîf-i Mansûre* (Victorious Reserve Soldiers), briefly *Redîf*, was constituted. The healthy men between the ages of 23 and 32 who comprised 12 *Tabur* (battalions) were called on duty. They were trained twice a year and in war time, participated in the regular army. However, their primary concern was to order and to regulate in the countryside. In 1869, Hüseyin Avni Paşa brought new regulations to the system. In that system, soldiers were divided into three groups: *Nizâmiye* (Regulars), *Redîf* (Reserve-Landwehr) and *Mustâhfiz* (Guards-Landsturm).<sup>249</sup> In 1870, revising the

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<sup>248</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, trans. Bahar Tırnakçı (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2006), pp. 40-41, and p. 68.

<sup>249</sup> Eric Jan Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice," in: *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia (1775-1925)*, ed. Eric Jan Zürcher (London, New York: I.B. Tauris; New York: Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 79-94.

whole recruiting system, a new military law was issued and apart from some minor alterations, the basic rules stayed the same until the year of 1908. In 1879, the time of services increased to six years in the regular army and the service in *Redif* decreased to six years and along the same lines, the time of being *Mustâhfız* decreased from eight to six years as well.<sup>250</sup> As seen from these phrases, in order to provide the perpetuity of the state, the Ottoman Empire grasped the necessity of the conscription and regular army, so it gave up the luxury of selecting soldiers from among diverse ethnic groups.

Honestly, the fuse of the process was ignited in 1839, with the Reform Edict of *Gülhane*. The *Tanzîmât* brought the first regulation of conscription in 1844 and in the regulations of 1870, it was clear that all Muslim Ottomans were obliged to do military service. In 1856 of *Islâhat Fermânı* (Reform Edict), non-Muslims were regarded as equal with the Muslims and this awaited equality manifested itself in terms of the military. However, both sides were not content with this situation. In effect, with the territorial loss, the number of non-Muslims decreased, but again in that reign, their number was 30 percent of the population and poll-tax was abolished, but it was still one of the important incomes of the state after the *öşür* (tithe). So, the exemption tax was constituted instead of the poll-tax. It was named firstly *iâne-i askerî* (military assistance), then the title turned into *bedel-i askerî* (the military payment-in-lieu). It was less than the price demanded from the Muslim ones and like in the previous years, it was paid to *mültezim* (tax-farmers) and then paid to salaried treasury officials until 1909. So until 1909, doing military service remained in theory for Ottoman non-Muslims. Then, in that very year, the Committee of Union and Progress changed the regulations by putting the obligation of doing military service

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<sup>250</sup> Eric Jan Zürcher, "The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice," in: *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia (1775-1925)*, pp. 79-94.

for the whole Ottoman subjects.<sup>251</sup> In the whole process, differently from the previous centuries, Muslim Gypsies were obliged to do military service as well. An archival document showed that Gypsies, from the date of 1873 onwards, began to be obliged to do military service.<sup>252</sup> In other words, the military service of the Muslim Gypsies was formalized. Even in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, doing military service became the initial door to be knocked on ‘the hall.’

In the Ottoman Army, as participating in the lot or a year of a conscription called *kur’a* (drawing of lots), the Muslim Gypsies served in *Nizâmiye*, *Redîf*<sup>253</sup> and *Zaptiye*. Some of them served as artilleryman, cavalry, drummers, *Mekkâreci* (soldiers in charge of carrying the goods on animals), transporters, and so on. If a Muslim Gypsy who did not succeed in the lot was called *kur’a bakayası* (remain of the lot), he had to wait until the next lot, but the control over him would be continued. For example, in 1891, Gypsy Nazif bin Hüseyin from the county of Cisri Mustafa Paşa (Svilengrad) was a *kur’a bakayası* and it was observed that he settled in the county of Harmanlı and it was also stated that the quality of his new lot was needed to be announced to him and the news about him had to be sent here. The state

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<sup>251</sup> Eric Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice,” in: *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia (1775-1925)*, pp. 79-94.

<sup>252</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MHM. 472/53, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1290 [12 Ocak 1874]. The date in the document was different than the date of the document. The date in the document was indicated as 20 Şevvâl 1290 [11 Aralık 1873].

<sup>253</sup> For the example of their service in the *Nizâmiye*, see: BOA, DH.MKT. 671/11, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 22 Zilhicce 1320 [22 Mart 1903]. For their service in *Redîf*, see: the document dated as 1902. In that document, the shipment order of a Gypsy man named Ahmed living in Gülmezoğlu neighbourhood in Filibe was sent and his dispatchment was demanded. See: BOA, DH.MKT. 2587/2, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Zilkâde 1319 [10 Şubat 1902]. In order to search dispatchment, see the documents: BOA, DH.MKT. 1224/32, adet: 8, vesika: 1, 7 Zilhicce 1325 [11 Ocak 1908]; and BOA, ZB. 617/104, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Nisan 1324 [8 Mayıs 1908].

applied to Bulgaria about his military service in the empire and the state let Bulgaria know that he had to serve in the military service.<sup>254</sup>

Nevertheless, the conscription faced difficulties because initially, it needed well-established population records in order to find military resources. As we look at from the side of Gypsies, especially like a group of people who had been living as wanderers, it would not be easy. But, in such a reign of the sultan who emphasized centralization and control all over the state, the recording in particular for military purposes would be of vital importance compared to the former years. The lack of register meant the less potential soldiers and fewer tax-payers.<sup>255</sup> As proving that, between 1882 and 1890 and later on 1893, the population records were constituted although to a lesser extent, not so perfect in spite of all the factors mentioned, but better than the previous ones. According to those records, the number of population was 17.5 million. In addition to the lack of efficient recording system, other than great wars such as the 1897 War with Greece, under normal circumstances, doing military service was not requested considering the span of the 1897 War and the span of the military service. In that respect, the lucky ones were people who had picked up an empty lot or paying *bedel-i nakdî* (cash payment-in-lieu) or *bedel-i şahsî* (personal replacement). Otherwise, they could record someone else in their place by paying him. The price of exemption or privilege was 5,000 *kuruş* or 50 golden *lirâs*. However, for the exemption, they could not sell a house or a land or anything else. What is more, it was different from the price paid by non-Muslims, because non-

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<sup>254</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1817/21, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Recep 1308 [9 Mart 1891]; and, BOA, HR.TO. 177/89, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Mayıs 1891.

<sup>255</sup> The problems born from the omissions in the register were natural such as some were not recorded and some people were recorded according to the previous records but the more important thing is that some boys, especially their birth dates were not recorded and that caused a trouble for the military service.

See: BOA, DH.MKT. 1222/1, adet: 7, vesika: 1, 7 Zilkâde 1325 [12 Aralık 1907].

Muslims paid much less than the individuals who paid *bedel-i nakdî*. Again, at the end, men who paid and men, who had empty lots, were recorded in the group named *ihtiyât* (active reserve units).<sup>256</sup>

Bearing all these in mind, the strict control mechanism over Gypsies should not surprise us. The natural result of this process in terms of Gypsies was the increase in the Gypsy records because the state attempted to control them in the previous years, but just for taxation and despite this, it was unable to reach a complete succession. Now, there appeared more than one reason to sew something up. The archival documents stand in front of us as corroborative forces of this situation. Examining the documents, the attempt of the state in the way of recording Gypsies and interrogating their military situation was so explicit. For example, in 1899, among Gypsies living in the tents in Manyas, Gönen and Bandırma, 19 potential soldiers were denounced. Also, it was ordered that off count people would be detected and their settlements would be provided.<sup>257</sup> However, like every system, there were also some gaps in this system as well. Those gaps or blanks were partially constituted by faults of the state officers, meaning from the centre of the control. In 1892, two Gypsy men, Şakir bin Süleyman and Ali bin Hasan from İnceğiz and Boyabad villages whose birth dates were registered as 1857-1858 and 1861-1862 were not recruited until then because of the mistake of the registrar, so this census taker was discharged and it was opted to have a military procedure for these Gypsy men.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Eric Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice,” in: *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia (1775-1925)*, pp. 79-94.

<sup>257</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2281/6, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Şabân 1317 [7 Aralık 1899]; and, another document about the potential Gypsy soldiers in Selanik (Thessaloniki) and the strict control over them was; BOA, ZB. 607/123, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Nisan 1323 [11 Mayıs 1907].

<sup>258</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2029/122, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyevvel 1310 [11 Aralık 1892]; and; BOA, DH.MKT. 2035/10, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1310 [26 Aralık 1892]. In the Islamic calendar (Hijri), the above-mentioned dates were given as 1274 and 1278.

After a certain point, the conscription brought the lives of the Gypsy men to a point of no return, because, before, they did not have to do military service. Paying a reasonable amount of money was enough, but when the conscription of all Muslim Gypsies emerged, there appeared another two options which were more formidable than the previous one. If you were a Muslim Gypsy man, you had to serve in the army or have a cash-payment or personal replacement. There would not be any other option apart from that. In the year of 1886, it was learnt some Muslim Gypsies who were living in Konurlar village or Künbed village in Saları locality, Konya, were not registered for a while and men were left out of the lot because of their services in Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergâhı, they particularly were providing woods for that dervish convent. In return for their services, there emerged a decree which indicated their exemption from taxes like *âvarız-ı dîvâniyye* and *tekâlif-i örfiyye*. Nevertheless, that decree could not be an acknowledgement for their exemption from military service. In effect, in the years of 1865-1866, they were left out of the military service, not because of their services or the decree, in contrast, at that time all Gypsies were excluded from the military service. After that, the situation changed in favor of Gypsies, so from the year of 1884-1885 onwards, application of the lot system over those men was brought into force. Therefore, at first, people of the village were registered, so their number was determined as 171 men and 133 women and 60 households. Later on, men of the village were obliged to do military service.<sup>259</sup> As cash-payment, the amount was much more than the classic amount. The main point was how they paid this money unless they wanted to serve in the army. For example, in one of the documents dated 1894, we see that some Muslim Gypsies in Jerusalem

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<sup>259</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1368/131, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 30 Zilhicce 1303 [29 Eylül 1886].

The equivalent of years, 1865-1866 in the Islamic calendar (Hijri) was 1282 and the equivalent of years, 1884-1885 was 1302.



who were wanderers, having nomadic lifestyles and living as beggars did not have the complete records in the register a few years back. Therefore, they were obliged to pay the exemption tax, but then, they were recorded and obliged to do military service. In those days, they were not content with this situation, and they made a petition to be exempt. Nevertheless, after the date of 1890-1891, the return of the exemption from the military service as payment was defined as 1,181 *kuruş* per year. It was stated that it was impossible to pay off this tax for a group of Gypsies who had no regular income and who were in a miserable condition with no property, land, demesne or revenue. Moreover, they were not engaged in craft, agriculture or commerce, so it was impossible to pay it off, but if they served in the army, they did not have that kind of obligation. In that sense, for some nomadic Gypsy groups, military service could mean emancipation. That is why, for now, they had to be in the army.<sup>260</sup> As personal replacement, in later years, the local mayors and local council in Siroz (Serres) demanded the acceptance of the *bedel-i şahsî* in order to be exempted from military service. In that type of exemption, the way of exemption changed to sending someone else in your place. However, for this, you had to persuade him or pay him off. The normal procedure did not approve of that kind of application on behalf of Gypsies, but the point was that they had been serving in *Redîf* and *Nizâmiye* sections of the military like other Muslims did as well as performing all the obligations for many years, which made it easier for Gypsies. Therefore, getting a *bedel-i şahsî* (personal replacement) among the Muslim Gypsies could be eligible.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 403/37, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Safer 1313 [29 Temmuz 1895].

<sup>261</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1231/81, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Muharrem 1326 [8 Şubat 1908].

Unfortunately, records and obliging them to do military service was not the only problem in regard to the situation of Gypsies. Actually, there was a more serious problem about Gypsy conscription than the recording, which was the problem of staying willingly in the army, that is to say, the escapes or hiding; briefly, 'desertion.' For a group who had been kept out of this formation, there would be needed more than the obligation or conscription. You can compel them but cannot make them stay. Therefore, in this case, desertion was inevitable. In 1899, Hüseyin bin Ahmed from Akseki county and Salih bin Emin from Koçana village of Cisri Mustafa Paşa (Svilengrad) county escaped from their military service to Rumelia. Now, it was noted that Hüseyin was working as blacksmith in Hasköy (Haskovo) town and Salih was in Ahdar village of Hürmetli county so their pending return as soon as possible was ordered.<sup>262</sup> Another case occurred in the year of 1903, a Gypsy man named *Kıptî* Timur bin Yaşar who was a soldier in the *Nizâmiye* (Regular Army) deserted. In those days, he was seen in Plevne (Pleven) of Bulgaria so it was ordered that he had to be caught in a short period of time.<sup>263</sup>

In 1902, by taking all his guns with himself, a Gypsy soldier from Cumâ-yı Bâlâ fled from his military service in Nizâmiye section of the army. After a while, he surrendered to a Bulgarian police precinct in Karataş and Bulgarian lieutenant took mauser rifle of the fugitive soldier in exchange of a couple *kuruş* (the real price of the rifle was 58,860 *kuruş*) and he admonished the Gypsy not to tell he broke out with the guns, in contrast, he wanted him to tell that he escaped armless. After necessary warnings were issued, Bulgarian lieutenant sent him to the government of Köstendil. Nevertheless, the guns were not the only possessions taken by the Gypsy

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<sup>262</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2225/9, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Rebiyyülevvel 1317 [26 Temmuz 1899].

<sup>263</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 671/11, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 22 Zilhicce 1320 [22 Mart 1903].

soldier. Besides, there were 75 ammunitions (cartridge), clothes, underwear, and *fes*, so taking all these back was ordered.<sup>264</sup>

Another desertion case was a man named Necib bin Şahin or Kacib bin Şahlan from the *Zaptiye* section of the military who had escaped to Balkans, particularly Bulgaria and after four years of desertion, he was caught while he was trying to take refuge in the state by passing the region of Cumâ-yı Bâlâ (Blagoevgrad). The exciting part of the story was that he brought one Bulgarian run-away soldier with him, so both were brought to the local government.<sup>265</sup> Occasionally, we see Bulgarian soldiers who tended to escape into the Ottoman territory. In 1905, a Gypsy named Salih bin Hasan who was among natives of Osmanpazar and an artilleryman of Bulgaria broke away from the military service while putting on the military uniform, and he came and surrendered to a police precinct around Razlık. Then, he was sent to the local government for the investigation of his desertion.<sup>266</sup>

In 1906, we are confronted with another desertion case. Many Gypsies deserted from 2. *Ordu-yı Hümmâyûn* and they went to Yanbolu, Tatarpazarcık, and most probably, through Balkans, particularly Bulgarian territory. However, the difference of that case was not how Gypsy soldiers escaped, quite the reverse, the important part of the case was the implied motive in the escapes. The reason underlying those Gypsy escapes could be explained by the unfair nomination of Gypsies. It was claimed that during the military roll-call, at the end of the names of Gypsy individuals, the clause of *Kıbtî-i Müslim* was added. However, when a Gypsy escaped from one of the battalions in *hatt-ı imtiyâz*, some leading Gypsy individuals

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<sup>264</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 85/80, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 28 Şabân 1320 [30 Kasım 1902].

<sup>265</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 243/34, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Zilhicce 1324 [18 Ocak 1907]; and, BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 152/21, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Zilhicce 1324 [22 Ocak 1907].

<sup>266</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 129/80, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [28 Haziran 1905].

from Filibe came to explain the excuse of the runaway soldier and they underlined that before the conscription, people were informed through the alteration in the census receipts and this time, there would not be the title of *Kibtî-i Müslim*. Nevertheless, in the census receipt given in the battalion, he encountered with the same clause again, so he broke out. The increase in the desertion of Gypsy soldiers was explained with the same reason. However, again, the veracity of that reason was not proved, but the investigations continued.<sup>267</sup> If we generalize the cases of desertion, it was noticed that the fugitives of the military had a tendency of escaping to Rumelia. Besides, among all those fugitives, just a few of them returned remorsefully and demanded to be accepted back.<sup>268</sup>

After desertion, another one of the most common problems seen in military service of Gypsies was committing crimes: physical injury and murder. The physical injuries were mostly done by a bayonet, knife or a bullet.<sup>269</sup> In one case, Gypsy Mustafa who was from Prespe region and who served in the *Redif* battalion of Manastır deserted from the army with the guns he was in charge of. During his visit home, he was injured by Halil bin Yakub and all his guns including cartridges were graped.<sup>270</sup> In murder cases, if a soldier killed another person, the crime would be 15 years of penal servitude by the virtue of 174<sup>th</sup> article of the code and also his record would be crossed out of the military.<sup>271</sup> Yet another case showed that the unpermitted egression could cause trouble. While two Gypsy soldiers whose battalion was located

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<sup>267</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 143/10, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 3 Cemâziyyevvel 1324 [25 Haziran 1906].

<sup>268</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 984/58, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 7 Cemâziyyevvel 1323 [10 Temmuz 1905].

<sup>269</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 132/13175, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Cemâziyyevvel 1324 [8 Temmuz 1906].

<sup>270</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 90/8960, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 21 Safer 1324 [16 Nisan 1906].

<sup>271</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 800/26, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 18 Ramazân 1321 [8 Aralık 1903].

in Üsküb were having libation in the pub during the day, one of them killed the other with bayonet and got 15 years of penal servitude.<sup>272</sup>

The murder cases showed us how Gypsies resisted military service by getting involved in the injury or murder cases and desertions. Two Gypsies, mainly friends, escaped from the army, but on the way, one of them named Ali bin Mehmed murdered the other one, İbrahim bin Mehmed. At first, he was released because of lack of evidence. Just as he escaped three times, it was decided to banish him to Tripoli. However, when adequate evidence was found, based on the same article of the code, he was sentenced to 15 years of penal servitude. In addition to this, his record in the military was deleted.<sup>273</sup> In some situations, accidental deaths could be seen, meaning, five friends from the army went to take some supplies and two of them stopped to wash and drink near the brook. This very moment, one of them gave his gun to the other with the safety off and so he was injured and then enraged, the injured soldier killed his friend. Finally, one was injured and the other was dead, the injured one got fifteen years of penal servitude beside deleted records from the army.<sup>274</sup> In another murder in the army, two Gypsy soldiers; Abbas bin Halid and Yaşar went to pick up apricots and another soldier; İbrahim bin Mehmed Ali warned them as it was wrong, and then Abbas killed him with a Mauser rifle and was sentenced to fifteen years of penal servitude. Besides, Yaşar was thought to shoot to scare İbrahim and got the punishment of three years more to his military service, one year fetter and encasing of lost cartridges from himself. Then, in the investigation, it was understood that these two shots were against the guards who came to arrest them

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<sup>272</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1024/14, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 9 Ramazân 1323 [7 Kasım 1905].

<sup>273</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 969/42, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 10 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [14 Haziran 1905].

<sup>274</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1165/49, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 25 Rebiyyülevvel 1325 [8 Mayıs 1907].

and so the punishment of Yaşar changed to six months of imprisonment based on the 179<sup>th</sup> article of the code.<sup>275</sup>

Though not so common, seduction was also seen among the soldiers. From the cavalry battalion, Drummer Gypsy Şakir bin Hayrullah, who was 22 years old, seduced a 10 years old girl named Ayşe bint-i İsmail who was from Ali Bey village in Siroz (Serres). In the virtue of 198<sup>th</sup> and 200<sup>th</sup> articles of the code, he was convicted with three years of penal servitude and also in the virtue of 46<sup>th</sup> article of the code; he was fettered for one year.<sup>276</sup> Rarely, there were also examples of the abduction. The wife of the soldier serving in the transport battalion was abducted by a Gypsy man and in the chasing; their existence in various parts of the Üsküdar such as Bulgurlu, Çınar, Uzunçayır, or İmam Paşa Çöplüğü of Beyoğlu was informed.<sup>277</sup> About the committed crimes by Gypsy soldiers, the most exiting case should be the event occurred in the date of 1903; Mehmed Ali and Bayram from the battalion of *Redîf* (Preşova or Preševo) which set forth through Florina verbally attacked the Italian Consul in Manastır by shouting as “Infidel!” Therefore, the authorities wanted them to be taken into custody.<sup>278</sup> It was interesting to note, besides a huge diplomatic scandal between two countries, something coming out of a Gypsy’s mouth whose faith was suspected for a long time and was regarded as implausible.

In order to get involved in any event related to the army, it was not necessary to be a Gypsy soldier. Even though they were not soldiers, with the natural curiosity they owned; Gypsies had a finger in every pie and were confronted with the military

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<sup>275</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 303/151, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 18 Şevvâl 1325 [24 Kasım 1907].

<sup>276</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 254/40, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 8 Şevvâl 1321 [28 Aralık 1903].

<sup>277</sup> BOA, ZB. 95/24, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 30 Ağustos 1323 [12 Eylül 1907]; BOA, ZB. 390/70, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Eylül 1323 [14 Eylül 1907]; BOA, ZB. 82/10, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 11 Eylül 1323 [24 Eylül 1907]; and, BOA, ZB. 416/99, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Teşrînisânî 1323 [21 Kasım 1907].

<sup>278</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 755/40, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 2 Cemâziyyelâhir 1321 [26 Ağustos 1903].

matters. In the year of 1900, it was denounced that a man, Kel Hasan, who was banished forever, came to İstanbul as disguised soldier. He hid during the day, and at night, he committed crimes. As a punishment, he was exiled to Diyarbakır.<sup>279</sup> Another interesting event was from the year of 1899, a Gypsy migrant came to Erzincan from Dobruca, named Osmanoğlu Ali had medals of *Sadakat* and *Kars* in their belongings and he was investigated and as a result, the investigation revealed that he bought them from a man in Dobruca (Dubrovnik). These medals were sent back.<sup>280</sup> Additionally, Gypsy presence near ammunition-store was not very well received. A Gypsy was found near ammunition-store and he was investigated quickly, and he stated that while he was ploughing his land, he left his bread basket and then came here to take it.<sup>281</sup>

About the weapons, surely, the state had an obdurate stance. For instance, a Gypsy found a bomb (1,5 *okka*) in Sosodol, the district of Baneska and immediately, inquiry was started about the bomb because it was newly made and there was the possibility of 'defeatism.' Then, it was understood that the bomb was made in this district.<sup>282</sup> Likewise, in 1903, two Gypsy brothers; İbrahim and Raşid who inhabited near barracks in Cumâ-yı Bâlâ (Blagoevgrad), found two dynamites and while they were toying with them, one of them exploded and all the left fingers and two right fingers of İbrahim were blown off and the exploded dynamite injured Raşid's left arm. A detailed investigation commenced to answer the questions whether they were thrown on purpose and if there were any other dynamites. After that event,

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<sup>279</sup> BOA, ZB. 419/134, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 30 Haziran 1316 [13 Temmuz 1900].

<sup>280</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2156/7, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Şabân 1316 [3 Ocak 1899].

<sup>281</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 84/8362, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Muharrem 1323 [13 Mart 1905].

<sup>282</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 17/1638, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Cemâziyyelâhir 1321 [25 Ağustos 1903]; and, BOA, Y.A.HUS. 455/43, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 3 Cemâziyyelâhir 1321 [27 Ağustos 1903].

authorities stated that those types of unknown and dangerous materials had to be brought to the officers instead of toying with them.<sup>283</sup> In 1905, unauthorized hunting powders, 42 *kilo* in five tinplates were found in the upper side of Gypsy quarter of Kavala and they were handed over to Kal'a-i Hakâni (Çanakkale).<sup>284</sup>

### Taxation

The non-Muslims who were patronized by the state were granted a covenant of protection as well as liberation from the military duty on the condition of paying a special poll-tax. Whereas just male population fell under the obligation of poll-tax, females, children, cripples, grey-beards and clergy were excluded from it. In that exclusion, there was no place for Gypsies, especially for the Muslim ones. In other words, unlike the normal practice, Muslim Gypsies had been obliged to pay this tax for a long time. It did not matter that they were Muslims. The difference between non-Muslims and Muslim Gypsies was that Muslim Gypsies were a group of people who had Muslim names, but still obliged to pay poll-tax. On the other hand, they just created a third category of 'Gypsies with Islamic names.' In that case, why the state obliged all Gypsies to pay *cizye* (poll-tax) without classifying them as Muslims and non-Muslims? İsmail Altınöz claims two reasons for that situation. Firstly, they were not *ehl-i kitâb* (followers of other books of God) and secondly, they had nomadic lifestyles and tended to change places all the time. Briefly, the basis of poll-tax was the flexibility in their attitude and behaviours.<sup>285</sup> Eyal Ginio, in his article, laid emphasis on this:

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<sup>283</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 64/115, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 13 Rebiyyülevvel 1321 [9 Haziran 1903].

<sup>284</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 70/6969, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Safer 1323 [2 Mayıs 1905].

<sup>285</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, p. 204.



For the Ottoman administration, Gypsies' adoption of Muslim names did not symbolize their true religious belief, which implied full membership in the Muslim community, but served as only a cover that endowed its holder with some marginal reduction in his obligation to pay the poll-tax...<sup>286</sup>

However, it would appear that their 'unproved religious basis' took the lead. Even if most of them had paid for a long time, the resistance to the tax was seen after all and the objections were such as to query how far this theory of 'unproved religious basis' was true. Faika Çelik gave an example of this:

The story behind the *fetva* (fatwa) tells of how a Muslim man called Mustafa was recorded in the *tahrîr* register as a *Çingene* (Gypsy). Consequently, he was asked to pay poll-tax (*cizye*). However, Mustafa did not accept this and went to Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi for a *fetva*. He stated that, as a good and practicing Muslim, he should not be obliged to pay poll-tax simply because he was recorded in the register as a *Çingene*.<sup>287</sup> Yahya Efendi considered the case and issued a *fetva* stating that Mustafa was a good Muslim fulfilling all the requirements of Islam and that the people around him had confirmed this fact. Therefore, he was not to pay poll-tax. With this *fetva*, Mustafa went to the court and received a certificate (*hüccet*) stating that he was a Muslim, not a *Çingene*, and so was not obliged to pay *cizye*.<sup>288</sup>

This example from the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire demonstrated that the line between being a Gypsy and being real citizen of the state was religion. If an Ottoman Gypsy substantiated his faith in Islam, he would not be Gypsy anymore.

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<sup>286</sup> Eyal Ginio, "Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies*, pp. 7–44.

<sup>287</sup> Among the archival documents of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, I did not encounter with any document which was about recording Gypsies as *Çingene* in the register. Even, when they had complaints about this matter, they did not commit petition for the alteration of the title *Çingene*, but for the title *Kıbfî*. That is to say, these two words were not the titles used evenly, but the titles whose frequency of occurrence underwent a change.

<sup>288</sup> Faika Çelik, "The Limits of Tolerance: The Status of Gypsies (*Roma*) in the Ottoman Empire," *Studies in Contemporary Islam* 5, 1–2 (2003), pp. 161–182.

What he was turned to be was a faithful Muslim. Nevertheless, it was not easy to prove their faithful conversion into Islam. They had to demonstrate their faiths and they needed to demonstrate all the religious obligations of Islam performed by them. Otherwise, they were liable to pay poll-tax. In general understanding, in the eyes of Ottoman officials, Gypsies always had the potential to pretend to be Muslims.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, drastic changes occurred about this tax. At first, with the *Islahât Fermânı* (Reform Edict) issued in 1856, non-Muslims were accepted as equal with Muslims and imposing the military duty for the non-Muslims became a current issue. This means, the poll-tax was abolished and non-Muslims were officially included in the military system, but as though inducting the non-Muslims into the army seemed impossible for both Muslims and non-Muslims, it was decided to fulfill the obligation of the military service with a kind of payment or *bedel*. This exemption in return for a payment or price was firstly called *iâne-i askerî* (military assistance) then *bedel-i askerî* (the military payment-in-lieu) until the year of 1909. In that year, the *bedel-i askerî* and all other conscription-exemption taxes were abolished, and all male subjects regardless of religion were required to perform military duty. Considering Gypsies, with the regulations of 1870 which prescribed that all Muslims had to serve in the military, Muslim Gypsies were also obliged to serve in the army and so this meant that they did not have to pay this tax and so their redemption from the tax began. Nevertheless, their redemption from the tax did not happen so easily, because even if the official date seemed as 1870, *de facto* it was so different. One of the archival documents told us that in 1867-1868, Gypsies were obligated with the tax of *temettu'* and *emlâk* (property tax) as they were obliged to pay a separate tax called *Kıbtîlik* or *Kıbtiyân* (Gypsiness).<sup>289</sup> Apparently, after the

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<sup>289</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 134/62, adet: 4, vesika: 4, 28 Zilhicce 1316 [9 Mayıs 1899].

The equivalence of the above mentioned dates of 1867-1868 in the Islamic calendar (Hijri) was 1284.

abolition of poll-tax, they became liable with the tax which was completely peculiar to them and there was a regulation through that tax.

As we have seen before, through the centuries, there had been legal regulations that included especially the terms of taxation. The last of those regulations could be called *Kıbtîyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâmnâme*<sup>290</sup> (Charter about the Way of Collecting the Gypsy Tax). By this regulation, it aimed to eliminate the intricacies and corruptions which caused a decrease in the amount of taxes because the taxes taken from Gypsies were among the incomes of the treasury. It was stated that the tax called *Kıbtîyân Vergisi* (Gypsy Tax) was collected regularly and it was peculiar to the status of Gypsies. Besides, if the Muslims Gypsies were not recruited, it was not necessary to collect the tax of *Bedel-i Askerî* from the non-Muslim ones. That phrase meant that both Muslim and non-Muslim would be treated the same, without differentiating according to their religion. Especially, the expression *Kıbtîlik hâlî için* (For the status of Gypsies) proved that for a while, about the taxation matter, the state continued to segregate Gypsies from the rest of the society. Furthermore, for Gypsies who had demesne, landed property and domain in towns and villages, there was the obligation of paying the tax property and it would be taken separately.<sup>291</sup>

Every Gypsy man was amenable to pay this yearly tax of *Kıbtîyân* whose amount was regulated according to the classes. The taxes would be taken in the month of March in every year and after they paid their taxes, they would be given a document of payment or kind of the receipt according to their classes. The first class was the

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<sup>290</sup> About the date of the tax regulation, I did not encounter any date in *Düstûr*, but Abdurrahman Sayın gives the date of the regulation through the Gypsy tax as 1281 (1864-1865). See: Abdurrahman Vefik Sayın, *Tekâlîf Kavâidi (Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi)* (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı, 1999), p. 455.

<sup>291</sup> “Kıbtîyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâmnâme,” *Düstûr*, I. Tertip, vol. II (İstanbul, Ankara: Başvekâlet Neşriyat ve Müdevvenat Dairesi Müdürlüğü, 1872), pp. 34–38. For the summary of the regulation, see: Abdurrahman Vefik Sayın, *Tekâlîf Kavâidi (Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi)*, pp. 454-456.

people who had considerable amount of capital in towns and villages and who were craftsmen. The second and third classes were people who came after the first class and lastly, the fourth one was workers, boys and labourers. The condition in that regulation was that the board of governors of the province had to determine the classes of Gypsies by looking at their economic situations. After that, the board of governors of the district had to determine the population of every town and evaluate their conditions and so with the help of this evaluation, the population needed to be divided into four categories and this categorization would be criterion of the document of tax collection. Then, they would be given free ‘class documents.’ Their continued nomadic way of life was not ignored by the officials and in a period of three months, from the beginning of October to the end of December, Gypsies who were between the ages of 15 and 70 were registered with the help of board of governors and other Gypsies and they would take their documents of classes. With the condition of keeping one copy in the district, the registers would be sending to the main district and the population of the main district would be added and then at the beginning of January, all would be sent to the province. According to the classes, the paid documents would be constituted and would be sending to all districts before the month of March.<sup>292</sup>

The interesting part of that regulation was that the state also learnt how to make do with Gypsies. Both sides were good in evaluating the others side’s move. The state by evaluating the actions of Gypsies sent double amount of paid documents to the districts where there was the possibility of the Gypsy existence. At the initial year, they were obliged to pay their taxes by showing their class documents and in later years, they would pay their taxes with the paid document that they took when

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<sup>292</sup> “Kıptiyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâm-nâme,” *Düstûr*, I. Tertip, vol. II (İstanbul, Ankara: Başvekâlet Neşriyat ve Müdevvenat Dairesi Müdürlüğü, 1872), pp. 34–38.

they paid their taxes in the initial years. By this way, their places would be determined. If there were Gypsies who came from the outside of this province or district, their taxes would be determined by the board of governors of districts according to that situation. If Gypsies did not pay their taxes in three months after the month of March would be called to the centres of district and would be processed according to the tax code that was constituted after the month of March. If they did not pay through the end of sixth month, on the condition of showing their class documents, they would pay the taxes imposed on their classes. If they did not own class documents, they would be considered run-aways in the period of taxation and counted as leaving their own living places, so they were obliged to pay first-class taxation or were sentenced to prison.<sup>293</sup>

Then, they were given their own classes of documents. The officers who had duty in the taxation would be paid 5 % of the received amount. Determining the owner of the documents or having clear names on the documents was important and also the changes in the economic situation would be illuminated on the documents and augmentations and abatements had to be shown regularly. People who had physical disorders and Gypsies who had the duty in the *muhtâr* or local mayor with the official seal of Gypsies would not pay the Gypsy tax. Until those days, the Gypsy tax was the tax taken through property holdings but now by the provinces and districts, totality of monthly amounts were written in the *defters* and at the end of a year, the totals would be made and 5% amount that were paid to the officials in charge of collection would be shown. The regulation also included that unfair attitude and cheating would be punished.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> “Kıptiyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâmname,” *Düstûr*, pp. 34-38.

<sup>294</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 34-38.

As it was seen above, the state seemed so determined to collect taxes regularly and properly so that it attempted to be ready for confronting every possible threat coming from the side of Gypsies.

Being valid from the year of 1873,<sup>295</sup> Islamic part of Ottoman Gypsies began to perform the military service and non-Muslim part became liable for the exemption tax, *bedel-i askerî*. Actually, the beginning of the process was interesting. The document dated as 1873 indicated that it began with the petition of Gypsies in Edirne. In their petition, they stated that they were fulfilling all the requirements of Islam and also they were paying their taxes such as *emlâk* and *temettu'*, but despite this, they were obliged to pay the tax peculiar to them. Therefore, they demanded the abolition of the Gypsy tax and wanted to do military service. In the decision dated 3 July 1872, it was stated that because of the difficulty to separate Gypsies who were the followers of Islam and Gypsies who were the followers of their own customs, all Gypsies had to stay away from the military service. If they were accepted to the army, immoral Gypsies could affect other soldiers badly. However, later, it was admitted that some Gypsies in Edirne were living in accord with the Muslim Ottoman life standards, meaning, dealing with agriculture, and going to the mosques and also paying their taxes, yearly 150.000 *kuruş* in total. If they were taken to the military, other Gypsies might be settled. Looking into the developments afterwards, it could be said that the case started the fire for the changes in the military situation of Gypsies and then, their recruitment was accepted officially and the decision was

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<sup>295</sup> In the document dated as 30 November 1893, it was written that the tax *bedelât-ı askerî* was started to be imposed and issued on non-Muslim Gypsies of Serfice in the year of 1297. This situation could be indicator of two things. Firstly, the one of the dates could be wrongly stated; and secondly, the date when Muslim Gypsies began to perform their military duties could undergo change according to the places and regions.

See: BOA, DH.MKT. 175/44, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyelevvel 1311 [30 Kasım 1893].

announced to all the provinces.<sup>296</sup> At the same time, this new application meant the abolition of the tax peculiar to Gypsies (*Kıbtîlik Vergisi* or *Kıbtiyân Vergisi*).<sup>297</sup> Seemingly, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the process of taxation was not conducted according to the ethnicity just like the former centuries had. The state began to apply the usual process and it gave particular importance to religion.

Actually, there was not any definite amount about this tax, *bedel-i askerî*, but as it was stated in the section of the military service, it was not a great amount compared to the money paid by Muslims. Again, in spite of the statement about the existence of a difference between the amount paid by Muslims and non-Muslims, there were cases to cause some confusion. When the Muslim Gypsies in Jerusalem, who were wanderers and beggars were recorded, the process that included the obligatory military service commenced. However, before that application, they just paid the exemption tax, *bedel-i askerî*. Just not to have that obligation, they asked for the cancellation of their record. By virtue of the edict, after 1890-1891, for the individuals who were recorded and obligated with the service, the necessary transactions were executed. Unless they were not obliged to do military service, the yearly tax was constituted as 1,181 *куруş*. If their demand was accepted, in that situation, they had to pay that amount but it seemed impossible because they did not have any property or regular income and also they were not dealers in trade, crafts and agriculture. Briefly, according to the state, they had no option apart from performing the military duty.<sup>298</sup> As far as the sources indicate to us, apart from the

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<sup>296</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MHM. 472/53, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1290 [12 Ocak 1874].

The date in the document was different than the date of the document. The date in the document was indicated as 20 Şevvâl 1290 [11 Aralık 1873]; and, 28 Teşrînisânî 1289 [10 Aralık 1873].

<sup>297</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 134/62, adet: 4, vesika: 4, 28 Zilhicce 1316 [9 Mayıs 1899].

<sup>298</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 403/37, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Safer 1313 [29 Temmuz 1895].

*bedel-i askerî*, Gypsies were also liable to pay other taxes like, *tekâlîf-i emiriye*, *temettu'* (tax on distribution),<sup>299</sup> *emlâk*<sup>300</sup> (tax on property), and *gümriük* (tariff).

If we take into consideration the past experiences of Gypsies about taxation, it would be necessary to ask their attitude to pay their taxes at that period, because they were mostly against paying their taxes. Even if they did not object officially, the socio-economic conditions of Gypsies, at least for a considerable number of them, prevented them from paying all. Again, considering the abolition of poll-tax and the state's treatment according to the religion, meaning, the exemption tax obligation for the non-Muslims and the military service of Muslims, there had to be less resistance than in the former centuries. In any case, it still became unavoidable to see resistance to the taxes. Even though the system did not allow the existence of the gaps and tried to fill these, there were still some gaps noticed by Gypsies and when they were aware of them, they quickly turned the situation in their favour. In the past, the initial object to avoid paying poll-tax was to claim their being Muslim and also for avoidance of both the poll-tax and other taxes, they had been using some well-known tactics such as "sudden relocation, giving false allusions to ostensible exemptions or pretending that the taxes had been paid to another tax collector, finding shelter among local dignitaries and people of power."<sup>301</sup>

Besides, some Gypsies, for the sake of not paying the taxes, dared to injure or kill the tax-officers. Sometimes, they pretended to be tax officers and took taxes from the

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<sup>299</sup> As a word, *temettû'* means profit or benefit. As the tax, in accordance with the income, it is the tax paid by everybody to the state. In the Ottoman Empire, by estimating yearly amount of earnings of craftsman and tradesman, it was taken from in percentage and per mille. See: Abdurrahman Vefik Sayın, *Tekâlîf Kavâidi (Osmanlı Vergi Sistemi)* (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı, 1999), p. 441.

<sup>300</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 134/62, adet: 4, vesika: 4, 28 Zilhicce 1316 [9 Mayıs 1899].

<sup>301</sup> Eyal Ginio, "Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State," *Romani Studies*, pp. 7–44.



tax-payers and even in return, they gave fake document of receipts. Also, they were provoking their communities by denying payment of the taxes. To stop all these, the state had taken some measures like assigning some officers to walk with them; paying attention to the recording, applying the criminal sanction for both the authorities and Gypsies.<sup>302</sup> One of the interesting measures was, in the case of Gypsy avoidance of the taxes, officers were obliged to give an account to a higher authority. If Gypsies ran away without payment, taxes which were not taken from Gypsies could be taken from the tax-officers. Sometimes, they had to pay this, but at other times, the officers also ran away with the thought of being unable to pay and ultimately, their properties could be expropriated by the state.<sup>303</sup> In the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the most famous tactic was relocation. Apparently, in their eyes, the nomadic lifestyle would always stand as the strategy that they never hesitated to apply in order to attain the goal. Some groups used it not just to avoid the payment, but also to get away from military service. In addition to this, as a result of the territorial losses that occurred in that period and the migration coming afterwards, new kind of tactic or, more truly, a new kind of taxation problem emerged, not on purpose but unintentionally. For example, a non-Muslim Gypsy family consisting of two sons aged as 3 and 9 and a father (Yorgi veled-i Zeys) had to migrate to Serfice (Serbia) in 1883-1884, because Yenişehir (Larissa) was relinquished to the Greeks. So, they could not pay their taxes of *bedel-i askerî* since they were not registered in tax office and when the tax officer became aware of this situation, it demanded unpaid taxes of the previous years. Therefore, these individuals requested to be

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<sup>302</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneleler*, pp. 212-213, and pp. 216-217.

<sup>303</sup> *ibid.*, p. 219.

exempted from all the taxes which they were obliged to pay.<sup>304</sup> It was declared that after the migration, those people who were forced to migrate for political reasons did not have to serve in the military or to pay that tax within six or more than six years and then when it was expired; the system would function as usual:

Being valid from the date of migration, among the places that were relinquished to Greece, people who just migrated during the evacuation would be exempted from the military service for ten years and people coming from Cezair would be exempted from the military service for twenty years. After the evacuation, people migrated from the district of Yenişehir and all other immigrants would be exempted from the military service for six years. This was of the necessity of the imperial decree and as well as was among the special decisions. Due to the fact that ten years past over the relinquishment and evacuation of Yenişehir, aside from the immigrants of Cezair, people who completed their six years exemption was obligated with the military service...<sup>305</sup>

Sometimes Gypsies did not have to make a great effort to find cracks in the system and especially the inability and negligence of the officers could make it easier for this community. It can be said that their inefficiency could also be transformed to a strategy, which is ‘to benefit;’ just like what happened on July of 1903. Some non-Muslim Gypsies who were living in tents as nomads near Ankara were not recorded for the taxation purposes and an Armenian priest of Akdağ named Dragise sent a telegram in order to ask whether or not he would take the military tax from those

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<sup>304</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 327/41, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Recep 1312 [2 Ocak 1895].

<sup>305</sup> “*Tarih-i hicretlerinden mu’teber olmak üzere Yunanistan’a terk olunan mahallerden yalnız hîn-i tahliyede hicret edenlerin on ve Cezair’den gelenlerin yirmi ve ba’de’l-tahliye Yenişehir Sancâğı’ndan hicret edenlerle muhâcirîn-i sâ’irenin kâffeten altı sene hizmet-i ‘askeriyeden ‘afv ve istisnâsı idâre-i seniyye ve mukarrerât-ı mahsûsa icâbâtından olub Yenişehir’in terk ve tahliyesi on seneyi tecâvüz eylediğine binâen şimdi Cezair muhâcirlerinden mâ’adâ bi’l-‘umûm muhâcirînden altı sene müddet mu’âfiyeti ikmâl edenlerin tekellüfât-ı ‘askeriye ile mükellef tutulmakda oldukları anlaşıldığına...*”

BOA, İ.DH. 1327/1313 Ca-03, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 2 Cemâziyevvel 1313 [20 Ekim 1895].

nomads. However, the answer became interesting because before asking such a question, the authorities found it as obligatory to interrogate why those people were not recorded.<sup>306</sup>

That was the picture seen from the perspective of Gypsies, so what about the tax officers?<sup>307</sup> In the previous centuries, their reaction was harsh towards this group of people and they took some counter-measures like “taking hostages from Gypsies, inflicting hefty fines on tax dodgers, having violent attitudes to Gypsies, abandoning dwellings and ignoring any false allegations of exemption.”<sup>308</sup> When the officers crossed the line, the state was compelled to intervene in the situation and mostly, in those cases, the tax officers were taken under investigation. The rule was clear, if Gypsies were asked to pay higher taxes, the money had to be paid back or if they were killed, the guilty must be found and punished. Additionally, individuals who were in charge of tax-collection, attempted to finish up the documents distributed by the treasure house by picking up the taxes from people who were not liable to pay. Sometimes, the authorities took higher taxes from Gypsies who had to pay lower taxes. In contrast, they were taking lower taxes from the elite group in return for a bribe so the effective length in the taxes was met by taking taxes from the poor ones. Besides, the tax officers were applying pressure to tax payers. Also, the officers tended to seize taxes from kids and elderly people. However, these people had to be

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<sup>306</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 739/31, adet: 3, vesika: 1-2, 24 Rebiyyülâhir 1321 [20 Temmuz 1903].

<sup>307</sup> Initially, it was necessary to note that some documents signified one important point about Gypsies and the tax collectors. At that time, some Gypsies were not standing just as tax-payers, but also tax collectors. Meanwhile, some tax-collectors were using some Gypsy men in order to assist themselves in the tax process and these kinds of people were called as *Teroğlan*. See: Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, *Tarih Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: İmge, 2000), p. 148.  
BOA, TFR.I.KV. 84/8362, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Muharrem 1323 [13 Mart 1905].

<sup>308</sup> Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies*, pp. 7–44.

exempt from paying taxes.<sup>309</sup> At other times, the tax officers could ask for the tax from individuals who were not originated as Gypsies or officers could insist on taking taxes from Gypsies who had the written order for their exemption from certain taxes.<sup>310</sup> In the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, we see that some of the counter measures which most of the time took the form of ‘abuse’ towards the tax-payers continued to be referenced. For example, in March 1886, the *Kaymakam* of Ezine in Karesi *sancak*, Hüseyin Vasfi was forcing Gypsies by imprisonment and coercion, especially Ali from Bahçe district to get cash fine as well as causing damages to his animals and belongings. Then, this official was taken under judgement and in place of him, someone else was appointed by procuration.<sup>311</sup> Another kind of abuse was trying to make dead people liable for tax such as in 1893, an official collected the tax of *Bedelât-ı Askeriye* from non-Muslim Gypsies of Serfice (Serbia) and as we understood from the document, this man tried to excise the dead non-Muslim Gypsies and he notarised 5,000 *kuruş* to the commission of the register.<sup>312</sup>

It was a usual process to take taxes from Gypsies who had regular incomes and who were managing their lives by certain type of occupation. However, if they did not have a regular income, the state could tolerate their non-payment. Some group of Gypsies, 12 female and 13 male who were subjects of the Serbia arrived at Cisir-i Mustafa Paşa (Svilengrad) to pass through Bulgaria, but they had brought their horses whose values were less than 50 *kuruş*. The problem here was that for a certain period of time, the state prohibited the extraction of animals, particularly cavalry and trotting ones, for the military purposes but then the law was abrogated just with the

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<sup>309</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, pp. 211-212, and p. 220.

<sup>310</sup> *ibid.*, p. 215; and, p. 223.

<sup>311</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1348/64, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 27 Cemâziyyevvel 1303 [3 Mart 1886].

<sup>312</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 175/44, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyevvel 1311 [30 Kasım 1893].

condition of taking 5 *lirâs* for each animal as *ihracât resmi* (export price). Unless they paid the price determined as 500 *kuruş*, their passage would not be permitted. Further, as understood from the documents, they were also obliged to pay the tax of *gümrük resmi* (tariff) for the cereals which they took from Eastern Rumelia. The situation was informed and the response received was that it was the rule to take some deposit and assurance (500 *kuruş*) for these kinds of animals (*kirâ hayvânları*: supposedly, they hired those animals for carrying their cereals and then they would probably send them back to Eastern Rumelia), but this community was far from giving all these because they were so poor and they had to take their essential needs from Eastern Rumelia. In the name of human kindness, they were exempted from the tax of *gümrük*. Also, it was stated that if 500 *kuruş* of export price was taken from the animals which they used to transport their needs, they could not go and would be destitute of subsistence. Then, it was learned that when these people were not released without taking 5 *lirâ* as an export price, they were forced to go to Bulgaria by the Serbian chemindefer. Therefore, the trade between Macedonia and Bulgaria was interrupted and to stop this, they were finally let to pass to Bulgaria without any payment.<sup>313</sup>

To collect taxes regularly, the Ottoman Gypsies used some methods like accommodation of tax collection to the local practices. That is to say, in the case of Gypsies, the state attempted to collect the taxes properly in the time of their annual Festival of *Kakava* (fifth and sixth of every May). This meant two things; it was a fest related to the copper cauldrons used for cooking food for Gypsies; and for the state, it was the “basic measurement of units of taxation by the Ottoman enumerators

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<sup>313</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2227/96, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Rebiyyülevvel 1317 [1 Ağustos 1899]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2285/90, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 14 Şabân 1317 [18 Aralık 1899].

and tax collectors.”<sup>314</sup> Nevertheless, the state was also aware that some permanent solutions were needed in order to collect taxes regularly, because short-term solutions would just postpone the problem. What happened until that time was this actually. Therefore, the problem was needed to be solved completely. On the other hand, they were needed to be recorded, settled and encouraged to have a regular income. Briefly, they needed to be ameliorated.

### The Melioration Process

As far as Gypsies of the Ottoman Empire are concerned, ethnicity was superior to other concepts. As a result of emphasizing their ethnicity so much and obsessing over the points that constituted their ethnic identity, they were mostly recognised and described as “peripheral,” “backward,”<sup>315</sup> and “marginal.” These notions had been so dominant in the general understanding that the empire was unable or failed to create the alternatives of these notions. However, when the empire underwent through the changes like reforms, economic backwardness, modernising policies, increasing westernisation, those notions came into prominence much more than the previous years. This time, it was more than an obsession, because the empire tried to see something behind it. If there was a problem or a deficiency, it would be wrong “sweeping it under the carpet,” so what had to be done was to fix them and to overcome the deficiencies.

If you want to control a group of people and if the control over them benefits you in military, taxation and social rest terms, there was one thing left to do: melioration or change by reforms. It is like a phrase, ‘if you do not comply with the conditions,

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<sup>314</sup> Adrian Marsh, *‘No Promised Land’: History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 181.

<sup>315</sup> *ibid.*, p. 184.

you should make them to comply with yourself.’ This is exactly what was about the Ottoman Gypsy community. It was obvious; their conditions were not appropriate for the state system and at least, at a given time, the Ottoman Empire made an effort to change some things about the Gypsy matters, but such efforts failed most of the time. However, the Ottoman state, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, seemed getting its feet on the ground. During his time, with a more conscious standing, thanks to the political process that the state went through, the state approached the situation multi dimensionally such as settlement, religion and education, because just as it was written in one of the books, “if they are fed, they become ‘cornfed,’ if their awareness is raised, they become ‘free,’ if they are educated, they become ‘well-informed,’ and if they are exemplified, they become ‘good.’”<sup>316</sup>

if scrutinizing and meliorating people, who could not have made a good showing for the name of the humanity aside from being born and dying for centuries and people who were incapable and suffer an affront among the humanity, benefit to the ruler (or possession) and the community, why putting forward an idea to succeed this could not be permissible?<sup>317</sup>

### Towards Improving the Islam of the Ottoman Gypsies

The first dimension in this ‘sacred duty’ was to meliorate their religion or to turn them into real faithful individuals, at least the Muslim ones. Actually, in the Ottoman Empire, Gypsies were living under the titles of Muslim and non-Muslims and the

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<sup>316</sup> Hüseyin Kılıç, *Çingenem Çengi Çengi* (Ankara: Saypa Yayınları, 1996), p. 26.

<sup>317</sup> “’Asırlardan beri küre-i arz üzerinde doğub ölmekten başka başlıca bir insânlık nâmına isbât-ı vücûd edemeyen ve cem’iyyet-i beşeriyye arasında muhakkar bulunan bir tâ’ife-i zâ’ifenin tedkik ve islâh-ı ahvâli melik (mülk) ve millete ‘âid fevâ’idden ‘add olunursa istihsâl-i muvaffakiyyet için serd-i fikr etmek neden caiz olamam?’”

BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

reforms which the state wished to make were not for the non-Muslim people actually, in contrast, for Muslim ones. The reason was that if there was segregation or any kind of discrimination towards Muslim Gypsies as claimed by the researchers, this was probably the result of the distrust in the faiths of Muslim Gypsies.

The Turks viewed them as less reliable and trustworthy than other people. Dominant groups considered unsettled Roman to be useless parasites, because they did not have stable occupations. Muslim Roma were taxed higher than other Muslims based on the rationale that they did not follow the rules of Islam and did not live Muslim lifestyles (most Gypsy women, for instance, refused to wear a veil); in essence, their behaviour was inconsistent with the religion.<sup>318</sup>

Supposed as less religious than the other Muslims, the state tried to increase the religious level of this group. It was thought that they kept their Islamic religion, but they were not able to apply religious basis properly so *envâr-ı İslâmiyet'e tenvîr etmek* (to enlighten with Islamite) was essential. This was the core mission of the government as well as *vezâif-i mukaddes-i diyânet-perverî* (the sacred mission of the religious affairs). Therefore, to make them fulfill their religious duties, an *imâm* (Prayer Leader) was assigned for religious education of 70 households Muslims Gypsies of Kragovaç (Kraguyevca, Kragujevac), Belgrad (Beograd) and the *imâm*'s salary was determined as 300 *kuruş*.<sup>319</sup>

In the year of 1891, the teacher of Ottoman and Persian languages in *Siroz Mekteb-i İdâdi ve Mülkiyesi* namely Sadi Bey presented a report about Gypsies. He gave his report through the agency of *Zaptiye Nâzırı* (director general of public

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<sup>318</sup> Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 85.

<sup>319</sup> BOA, İ.HR, 315/20204, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 21 Muharrem 1307 [17 Eylül 1889].



security) and in the introductory writing of the report, which was committed to paper by *Zaptiye Nâzırı*, the population of Muslim Gypsies was indicated as more than 500,000. In his introductory article; *Nâzır* confirmed Gypsies' inadequacy in religious affairs as well as the inadequacy of the religious men to teach them the essence of the Islam. Moreover, he stated that no solution was brought to end their nomadic lives, so they were left on their own. Therefore, they bore no profit for the state and what is more, leaving them to their destiny caused some troubles and extravagances. If this situation continued, *Nâzır* was afraid of the conversion of Muslim Gypsies into Protestantism by the provocation of the British Missioners and they could be used by British authorities in the political arena. Therefore, according to his statement, they were needed to be elaborated as soon as possible and to be made beneficial to get over those possible problems. Likewise, Sadi Bey, in his report, tried to get the attention of all people to a point which was maybe they were in the lower part as a faith, but just as a result of some stereotyping ideas, to insult them was not acceptable. He continued, they might be heathens or they did something wrong, but they were all Muslims and if there was hatred for them because of their seizure and larceny, there had to be mercy among the Islamic religion as well as Islamic people.<sup>320</sup>

These attempts could be seen as discrete, but this is still enough to prove that the state stopped blaming them and it took action.

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<sup>320</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

The report was published in one book about Gypsies, see: Ahmet Uçar, "Çingenelere Dair Sultan II. Abdülhamid'e 1891 Yılında Sunulmuş Bir Rapor," in: *Bir Çingene Yolculuğu*, eds. Hasan Suver, Başak Kara and Aslınur Kara (İstanbul: Fatih Belediyesi, 2009), pp. 130-141.

## Process of Sedentarization

Another dimension on the way of meliorating Gypsies was the settlement policy. Having no permanent settlement was perceived as the source of the problems created by them, and also it was considered that the nomadic lifestyle made them have a free hand. That is to say, this was the scarf that the body suffered from, so it was necessary to heal or to cut that scarf. Just because of that, the state tried to prevent their migration to İstanbul or any other place. They were not regarded as immigrants and when the authorities encountered with the new comers, the first thing to do was to find out whether they were Gypsies or real immigrants. If they were real immigrants, the state provided an appropriate settlement for them, but if they were not, the authorities sent them back to their own place where they were presumably registered. On top of that, the state tried to arrange their travel to the other states. If they were living in the borders of the Ottoman Empire, they should not find the right to travel as they wish, so irregular migrations to foreign states were prohibited as well.<sup>321</sup> Specifically, assuming Rumelia was their favourite place, not only the Ottoman Empire, but also other states like Romanian government and Hungarian government took necessary precautions to end their migration and crimes like theft.<sup>322</sup> Seemingly, even though the states could not mostly strike a balance about the political issues, they found a common ground about Gypsies.

One another report given about the settlement policy belonged to Şakir Paşa, *yâver-i ekrem ve müfettiş (aide de camp and inspector)* in Amasya and the governor of Sivas, Hacı Hasan Hilmi Paşa. They stated in their reports that when they became

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<sup>321</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1872/95, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1309 [30 Eylül 1891]; and, BOA, İ. DH. 1265/99410, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Recep 1309 [24 Şubat 1892].

<sup>322</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2609/6, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 8 Cemâziyyelâhir 1323 [10 Ağustos 1905].

obliged to pay certain taxes, some group of Gypsies denied both of them and lived in tents as nomads. They were damaging in terms of military, morality, theft and *tekâlîf-i umûmîye*. As a solution to all these troubles, they proposed to give a field to make these vagabond masses settle as ‘scattered’ and ‘collectively’ in order to prevent their damages mainly theft (stealing animals of villagers) and amorality (of Gypsy dancers) especially in the counties of Havza, Bafra and Köprü in the province of Sivas. Thereby, this would guarantee both the emancipation from the sleaze and the tranquillity. However, presenting a settlement was not enough in their eyes and there had to be more than the settlement, which is to motivate them for the agriculture. By counting on their oppositions, they suggested that they had to be forced and they must be obligated with some taxes (*tekâlîf-i emîriye*) and register. Briefly, in their eyes, without waiting for their approval, to civilize, to make these tattily living people happy and to make them ‘land owners’ had to be the primary concern.<sup>323</sup>

A similar request came from the province of Aksaray, Künbed village and the provinces of Hüdâvendigâr and Ankara, because Gypsies were getting around without *mürûr tezkeresi* (travel permits) and they were involving in theft and murder cases.<sup>324</sup> In 1892, in the region of Davud Dede in Bursa, more than 40 houses were built newly and in these houses, Rumelian Gypsy immigrants were settled. However, according to the records, some of them were registered, but some others were not. When that settlement took the shape of a neighbourhood, it began to be called “Davud Dede” and the seals of local major and *imâm* were prepared and sent

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<sup>323</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 134/62, adet: 4, vesika: 1-4, 28 Zilhicce 1316 [9 Mayıs 1899]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2205/64, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Muharrem 1317 [21 Mayıs 1899].

<sup>324</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2269/68, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Recep 1317 [13 Kasım 1899].

there.<sup>325</sup> In 1903, in the town of Lankaza, Selanik, in order to bring a regular lifestyle to Gypsies as well as to get them out of miserable conditions, it was decided to make a settlement place which was peculiar to Gypsies, including Muslims and non-Muslims. Supposedly, this was demanded by Gypsies with a petition. At first, in the place, 50 houses were planned to be constructed. One appropriate and abandoned field was found, and 80 houses for Muslim Gypsies and 13 houses for non-Muslim Gypsies were constructed. However, Muslim and non-Muslim dwellings were supposed as differently, not one within the other. This neighbourhood was called as Yeni Mahalle (new neighbourhood).<sup>326</sup> It was seen that the suggestions on the way of providing a settlement was brought forward by different individuals like; Mehmed who was tinsmith and chamberlain of *Kahvedeğirmenci Esnâfi* submitted a petition to the state. He suggested that nomadic Gypsies who lived in the 60 households and who were populated as 400 and 500 and who were not responsible with the tax, *tekâlîf-i emîriye* should be habited in the villages of Armenian and Yarımbergos.<sup>327</sup>

In that period, Gypsy settlement was so important and if an officer was able to catch and make them settled, he would be rewarded. In 1907, 15 nomadic Gypsies, who wandered through the provinces of Ankara and Konya disturbed the local population by getting involved in theft and grabbing. Then, it was heard that they ran to the province of Adana. To bring them in, the gendarmerie commander Ömer Bey was appointed. When Gypsies were trapped, they had to take refuge in the farm of Hacı Ali Efendi who was a member of the *ulema* in Adana and also the member of Administrative Council. Then, having no other option, they surrendered to the chair

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<sup>325</sup> BOA, ŞD. 2601/30, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülevvel 1310 [12 Ekim 1892].

<sup>326</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 492/90, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 22 Muharrem 1320 [1 Mayıs 1902]; and, BOA, İ.DH. 1412/1321 Cemâziyyelevvel-21, adet: 5, vesika: 1-5, 18 Cemâziyyelevvel 1321 [12 Ağustos 1903].

<sup>327</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1289/7, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 6 Şabân 1306 [7 Nisan 1889].

of the province. In their investigation, they claimed that they were from Kağızman in Erzurum, not a Gypsy, they were Muslims and they migrated as 100 individuals and living in miserable conditions, so they demanded to be settled in a convenient place and also to be registered. Their settlement was decided in the province between the province and Serkazı locality. The more important is those who contributed to their capture were rewarded and they got promotion.<sup>328</sup>

For Gypsies of Gostivar, the construction of 42 houses were agreed upon and thinking this field could be small, it was intended to buy the field next to the decided one, approximately, 4 *dönüm* (a land measure of about 920 square metres). This new field was supposed to belong to Şaban Bektaş. The problem here was that the real value of the field was 6,000 *kuruş*, but there was not enough budget to cover it. Therefore, the authorities renounced this field and attempted to find another convenient place for the buildings.<sup>329</sup>

The semi-nomadic lifestyle was not allowed as well. In that type of living, Gypsies had a winter residence, but also they had an active nomadic season within the regional boundaries. However, this got to be stopped and they needed to have a permanent settlement for the purpose of conscription and census receipts. In the year of 1890, the decision of settlement was made for a group of people, 120 households who lived as semi-nomads in Zir and Yabanabad counties of Ankara.<sup>330</sup>

Gypsies tended to travel to diverse places in the Ottoman Empire, but evaluating the places where they travelled or migrated, İstanbul preceded by far. The general approach of the state was harsh at those matters. Actually, the problem was not

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<sup>328</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 81/3, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Muharrem 1325 [17 Şubat 1907].

<sup>329</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 177/17609, adet: 10, vesika: 3, 27 Şabân 1325 [5 Ekim 1907].

<sup>330</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1748/102, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 20 Zilhicce 1307 [7 Ağustos 1890].

where they lived, but how they lived. As long as standards like proper settlement, regular income, peace was ensured by Gypsies, they were allowed to live in İstanbul. For example, some nomadic Gypsies who were travelling around Sakız Ağacı neighbourhood in Kasımpaşa met and it was heard that they were bothering local population by begging. Probably, they came here from Adapazarı, İzmit, and Bursa. Taking into consideration the damages they caused, sending back to the places where they came from was determined. This process was just performed for the problematic and recidivist ones. The individuals who settled and who were recorded over here as well as who were not bothering the local community would not be touched. This substantiated one point, which is, even if they migrated to İstanbul or Rumelia, they would be allowed to stay there with the condition of having a certain dwelling and not disturbing the locality. The state supposed, if all the population was sent to Anatolia or to the place where they came from, this would be unfair and injustice for Gypsies who were earning their living by working honourably, so they would not be sent, but would be warned in the way of abstaining from those crimes.<sup>331</sup>

The motivation through the settlement did not come only from the state itself. Sometimes, some Gypsies chose to settle somewhere intentionally. To obtain a permanent residence, they generally made petitions in order to build a house. In 1888, a Gypsy named Halil bin Ali wanted to build a house in a field or farm in Kumanova, Kosova where he owned the responsibility (*uhde*). This was the field in the neighbourhood and as the tax of *öşr* (Islamic tithe) yearly amount of 5 *kuruş* was collected as an income, as well as this field was *arâzi-i emîriye* (state land). The case

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<sup>331</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1486/84, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1305 [19 Şubat 1888]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1491/3, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Cemâziyyelâhir 1305 [2 Mart 1888].

was investigated and at the end, building a house on that field was allowed.<sup>332</sup> Sometimes, they were able to get a field without paying anything to the state. For example, in 1893, Salih bin Mehmed Ali and Hasan bin Said demanded a free field to construct a dwelling in Gypsy neighbourhood, Kosovo and the authorities stated that it was 8 or 10 *dönüm* fields and also there was a backwater over here so the petition was accepted.<sup>333</sup> In this case, it was necessary to ask why the state preferred this place. On the other hand, the backwater over the field left the question mark over minds. If there was not a backwater, would the state allow Gypsies to live there?

Occasionally, Gypsies wanted permission from the authorities not only for constructing a house, but also a shop. In Kumanova, to be able to construct a house and two shops on one part of the vegetable garden which consisted of 7 *dönüms*, Demir bin Ali and Mehmed Bin Bayram applied for a letter of approbation. As it is seen, this was a glebe, of the foundation of Tatar Sinan Bey, but the right of disposition belonged to these Gypsies. Their petition was accepted but two conditions were put forward. The first one was that the real value of the field was 1,500 *kuruş*, so they had to pay yearly 60 *para* as '*mukataa-i zemîn tahsîsi*' and secondly, they had to obey the rules of the foundation. Afterwards, the certificate of approval was given to them with the purpose of improving this backward area.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1550/17, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Muharrem 1306 [3 Ekim 1888]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1559/102, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1306 [31 Ekim 1888].

<sup>333</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 155/23, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Rebiyyülâhir 1311 [23 Ekim 1893].

<sup>334</sup> BOA, İ.DFE. 18/1324 Şabân-08, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 29 Şabân 1324 [18 Ekim 1906]. Another similar example was happened in Drama district. Two individuals applied for the construction of a household by turning the field into the plott whose right of disposition they owned. It was among the place belonged to the foundation of the Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. They were allowed and in return, yearly 60 *para*, commercial paper (*senet*) and the guarantee of not abusing this place were requested.

See: BOA, İ.DFE. 20/1325 Zilhicce-04, adet: 6, vesika: 5-6, 16 Zilhicce 1325 [20 Ocak 1908].

In some instances, Gypsies did not ask for the permission to build a house but what they asked for was a constructed house. Local Gypsy mayor of Kalkandelen wanted the authorities to be settled but according to him, the houses should have been built by the authorities. Of course, they were rejected. However, they were shown a wasteland in Kuruköy to be able to make their own houses. Each would get 150 meters and as so they began to construct, they would be given a certificate of ownership free of charge.<sup>335</sup> Later, about the houses, there emerged a problem. In that region, there were places only for 20 houses, but the number of applicants was 34. Those people should not be removed and also they had no luxury to object to these. At the end, the final decision was that each house would have these measures: the width was 6 meters and the length was 11 meters. Of course, they consented to those 66 m<sup>2</sup> small houses. In reality, the state was well-aware of the situation, because they were poor and they had no other option other than the acceptance.<sup>336</sup>

Among their requests, there was a kind of demand like asking for whole separate neighbourhood. In Poyran village of Drama district, Selanik, Gypsies whose numbers were 77 households and 368 populations, asked for a separate neighbourhood and separate local council. Their obstacle was, they were illiterate people, even in the council, that could create some troubles in the military process, but it was considered that maybe it could be an obstacle but at the same time, it could also be a motivation to reading and writing. Therefore, they were given permission.<sup>337</sup>

The petition for constructing a house on the field did not always yield better results on behalf of Gypsies such as in November of 1889, Mehmed Efendi, whose

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<sup>335</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 168/16741, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1325 [17 Temmuz 1907].

<sup>336</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 172/17152, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 16 Recep 1325 [25 Ağustos 1907].

<sup>337</sup> BOA, BOA, DH.TMIK.S. 62/63, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Rebiyyülevvel 1324 [28 Nisan 1906]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1141/72, adet: 3, vesika: 2, 26 Zilhicce 1324 [10 Şubat 1907]; and, BOA, İ.DH. 1457/1325 Recep-30, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 27 Recep 1325 [5 Eylül 1907].



father Hasan Efendi was among the artisans of muleteers in Yenibahçe, decided to sell the field which he had the right of disposition and when the aspirants came, he was selling the field by dividing into the pieces. A Gypsy couple, namely Sadık and Zeliha, from the immigrants of Eski Hisâr-ı Zağra (Stara Zagora), desired to buy one part of the field and, so they made an application for this. However, after a little enquiry, the local mayor, *imâm* and inhabitants of the region figured out that the couple were not immigrants, but they were simply Gypsies. Moreover, it was clearly understood that they had been living for 30 years in Susaklı Gypsy neighbourhood or other neighbourhoods. Therefore, upon the complaint of the local inhabitants, the procedure stopped.<sup>338</sup> Another reaction to Gypsy settlement came from Lüleburgaz. When the inhabitants heard the possibility of Gypsy habitation in some villages of Lüleburgaz county, in the district of Kırkkilise, they had recourse to the authorities in order to prevent this.<sup>339</sup>

After providing a permanent settlement, the state policy was to make people, who were mobile and unable to subsist themselves, become a property owner and dealer of an occupation. By that way, they could reach prosperity as well as freeing themselves from indigence.<sup>340</sup> The tactic needed to be used by the state was shown in one of the documents. The only possessions that Gypsies had were animals (horses) and tents. In case of taking all their possessions and giving them land, with the whole outfit, it would be easier to make them settled and encouraged them for agriculture.<sup>341</sup> Nevertheless, considering Gypsies as the owner of a property such as land or field or dwelling was a slender chance, but was not impossible because as the

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<sup>338</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1677/27, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Rebiyyülâhir 1307 [26 Kasım 1889].

<sup>339</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 424/52, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1313 [9 Eylül 1895].

<sup>340</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 403/37, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Safer 1313 [29 Temmuz 1895].

<sup>341</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 628/64, adet: 22, vesika: 10, 7 Şevvâl 1320 [7 Ocak 1903].

sources tell, at that time, there were Gypsies who became property holders. It could be sometimes a land. In Yeniköy village of Düzce county, when Osman died, his field that was nearly 9.5 *dönüms* (a land measure of about 920 m<sup>2</sup>) was inherited by his grandson Ali bin Hüseyin. However, the field was not convenient for the settlement of immigrants and there was not any demand from them. Ali bin Hüseyin appraised 1,395 *kuruş* for its tender offer, and the state eventually permitted this.<sup>342</sup> In the village of Voştine, the province of Yanya, Aydın Cahan bought a field and he wrote a petition in order to construct a house on his own property.<sup>343</sup>

As seen the cases above, both the state and Gypsies took a major step for a sedentary lifestyle. However, it would be still wrong to arrive at a conclusion like ‘most Gypsies became sedentary,’ because still there were huge numbers of nomadic Gypsies living in the borders of the empire. In addition to this, this was not a process completely performed by the state. There was a tendency of Gypsies to settle and it could not be denied. Besides, one point must be underlined, which is, maybe the Ottoman Empire started a sedentarization process and it tried to make these so-called vagabonds settled. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the empire began to see them as a complete part of *reâyâ* and gave up segregating them in some matters. Some cases could prove this, but the place of the some constructed residences claimed the opposite. The separate settlement or quarters apart from the usual neighbourhoods, the denial of the petitions just by looking at the oppositions of the local inhabitants and presenting them with a field in the backwater told a lot. The most important part is, when there emerged a new settlement, the state sometimes neglected the substantial residences. For example, in 1893, infrastructure problem arose in

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<sup>342</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 397/26, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 21 Muharrem 1313 [14 Temmuz 1895].

<sup>343</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 992/70, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Cemâziyyevvel 1323 [30 Temmuz 1905].

İstanbul, particularly, in Piripaşa, Sakız Ağacı and Karaman neighbourhoods of Kasımpaşa. In those places, sewerage and drainage flowed outside. When the situation got worse, some arrangements and reforms for the infrastructure was requested.<sup>344</sup> Thus, some sort of segregation would always exist as long as the state kept the ethnic identity of Gypsies in a corner of its mind.

### Education

Another type of amelioration process was realized in the field of education. The state apprehended that without education, you could not manage to bring up them to the level you crossed, even if you had done something in the religious or settlement affairs. Therefore, maybe there was not a far-reaching application about the education; but in this period, the base for this was laid and it created a difference compared to the former centuries. Therefore, in Kosova, a school was constituted for the education and the discipline of the Muslims Gypsy kids. Abdülkâdir Kemâl Paşa, who tried to instruct and rescue the Gypsy children from indigence, turned a domicile into a school and it was opened in 1891. As a salary, the teacher was assigned 200 *kuruş* and for the other expenses like housekeeper or fuel, 250 *kuruş* were assigned. Nearly 130 students were recorded. However, there occurred a problem. Until a certain period, the expenses were covered by this man and from now on, it was demanded to appropriate funds regularly for the school.<sup>345</sup>

Another school was constituted in Can Paşa neighbourhood of Tekfurdağı town in 1893. A desolate, devastated closed school was repaired and was put into service, peculiar to Muslim Gypsy boys. The reason was that Muslim Gypsies were obligated

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<sup>344</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 134/11, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Rebiyyülevvel 1311 [16 Eylül 1893].

<sup>345</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 135/81, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Recep 1309 [11 Şubat 1892].

with military service and taxation, but they were illiterate, no aptitude for reading and writing, living a nomadic life and also they lost the religious duties and their Islamicism. The only way to resolve all these was ‘the education’:

There was not any other instrument apart from the school in order to invite the nomadic community, who did not have enthusiasm for reading and writing, to the civilization and so, for them, opening schools, whenever it was found an opportunity, would be beneficial certainly.<sup>346</sup>

With education, they both would learn the religious affairs and rescue themselves from all these problems.<sup>347</sup> On 5 June 1893, the school was reopened with a great ceremony and it was decorated with the flags, *tuğra* (sultan’s signature) and flowers. All community; sheiks, soldiers (*asâkîr-i redîf*), officers, *ulema*, teacher, notables, housekeeper and students were present. Even, under the leadership of Lütfü Efendi who was authorized to instruct, all people prayed and the guest at present said “*Padişahım Çok Yaşa!*” (God bless you my Sultan!). The school was titled *Hamidiye Mekteb-i İdâdîsi* (Hâmidiye Primary School) or *Can Paşa İbtidâiye Mektebi*.<sup>348</sup> At that time, there were 205 girls and 326 boys around the region. For now, 41 boys between the ages 5 to 15 were accepted, and mainly most of those boys were orphans, poor and destitute. As a salary, the teacher was allocated 250 *kuruş*

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<sup>346</sup> “*Okuyub yazmağa hevesi olmayan bu gibi tâ’ife-i bedeviyeyi dâ’ire-i medeniyete celb ve da’vet etmek için mektebden başka vâsita bulunamayacağından bunlar için imkân-ı müsâ’id oldukça mektebler küşâdı her vechile fevâ’id-i teşîreyi müstelzem olacağı der-kâr bulunduğundan...*” BOA, MF.MKT. 182/110, adet: 5, vesika: 1 and 4, 21 Rebiyyülevvel 1311 [2 Ekim 1893].

<sup>347</sup> “*Hem cehâlet ve bedeviyetden refte refte istihlâsı ve hem de usûl ve adâb-ı dîniyye ve İslâmiye’lerini tahsîl ve ta’lim gibi maddi ve ma’nevi fevâ’id ve menâfi husûlüne hâdim olacağına...*” BOA, MF.MKT. 182/110, adet: 5, vesika: 3, 21 Rebiyyülevvel 1311 [2 Ekim 1893].

<sup>348</sup> The two documents was saying the opposite things about the title. As one was clearly giving title *Hamidiye Mekteb-i İdâdî*, the other one is indicating the title as *Can Paşa İbtidaiye Mektebi*. See: BOA, MF.MKT. 182/110, adet: 5, vesika: 3, 21 Rebiyyülevvel 1311 [2 Ekim 1893]; and, BOA, MF.MKT. 191/101, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1311 [2 Ocak 1894].

monthly, the *bevvâb* got 100 *kuruş* and for the fuel or any other expenses, 500 *kuruş* was allotted. All these expenses would be covered from the *cemaât sandığı*.<sup>349</sup>

Another school was opened in Atpazarı neighbourhood of Manastır in 1905. This was a primary school and its name was *Numûne-i Şefkât*. Unlike the others, it was a new type of school, not reopened or repaired one. Among 200 *kuruş* of the saved money from the previously constituted schools, 150 *kuruş* would be given as salary to the chosen teacher, Hafız Salif Efendi who graduated from *Dâr-ü'l-Muâllimât* and 50 *kuruş* would be given to *bevvâb*, Hafız Şükrü Efendi. Both of them were recorded and started to work on 2 September 1905. Just some part of Salih Efendi's salary would be sent to *sandık-ı mahsûs* as an *âidât* (revenue).<sup>350</sup>

Lastly, it was seen that there were more than 100 Gypsy households in Draç, but none of the children was going to school as well as they were growing ignorant of Islamic rules and norms. That ignorance could impel the foreign authorities to exploit them. Therefore, a primary school for Gypsy children was opened in Draç (Durrës), on 14 January 1903 and Şahin Efendi was appointed as the teacher of the school. His salary was determined as 150 *kuruş* monthly. Nevertheless, the allowance could not be found for the salary of the teacher. Assigning the salary that was reserved for the teacher salary of another school, 110 *kuruş*, was considered, but with that amount, a teacher was appointed for the mentioned school, so in the correspondances, necessity of finding a budget for the salary of the teacher was emphasized, otherwise, the

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<sup>349</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 182/110, adet: 5, vesika: 1, 21 Rebiyyülevvel 1311 [2 Ekim 1893]; BOA, MF.MKT. 191/99, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1311 [2 Ocak 1894]; and, BOA, MF.MKT. 191/101, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1311 [2 Ocak 1894].

<sup>350</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 913/38, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 4 Muharrem 1324 [28 Şubat 1906].

newly-built and newly opened school would be closed until assigning an appropriate budget.<sup>351</sup>

Lastly, from the documents, we learnt that there was *Sibyân Mektebi* (elementary-primary school) in Gypsy neighbourhood in the town of İŝkodra. For the teaching post in *Sibyân Mektebi* of Gypsy neighbourhood, Hafız Muharrem Efendi was appointed with the salary of monthly 100 *куруŝ*.<sup>352</sup>

## Demography and Settlement

### Ottoman Gypsy Life Models: Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic and Sedentary

In the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, Gypsies were mostly living in the towns, cities, villages and districts as nomads, settled and semi-nomads. By a majority, they were living in Rumelia, in the Balkans, but it was possible to meet them in certain parts of Anatolia as well.

Concerning their lifestyles, we know that in Bosnia, Gypsies were classified and got titles according to their life models. The nomadic Gypsies were called ‘Black Gypsies.’ Those Gypsies were born with ‘*Ĉergaŝi*,’ from the Turkish word *çergi*, meaning tent. They had the Islamic religion, but as for language, they kept most of their *Romani* Language. The sedentary Gypsies were called ‘White Gypsies’ who were settled mostly, but the settlement made them lose their original language, the *Romani* Language. They were Muslims in Bosnia, but in Serbia and Macedonia, they were Orthodox. The dialect they had was the sign of a long existence in the South Slav lands. The third group was ‘*Karavlası*’ meaning ‘Black Vlachs.’ They were not

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<sup>351</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 756/40, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 21 Şevvâl 1321 [10 Ocak 1904].

<sup>352</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 1012/3, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 3 Recep 1325 [12 Ağustos 1907]; and, BOA, MF.MKT. 1017/47, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Şabân 1325 [21 Eylül 1907].

to be perceived as Gypsies, but they spoke one dialect of the *Romani* Language. The local population called them ‘Serbian Gypsies’ possibly, because of living in Serbia or being the members of the Eastern Orthodox church. Some were bear-trainers whose occupation was an old Romanian Gypsy occupation and whose members were called *Ursari*.<sup>353</sup>

Among these three groups, the nomads<sup>354</sup> should be mentioned at first because, in spite of the increase in the number of sedentary Gypsies,<sup>355</sup> the numerical superiority still belonged to the nomads and everybody who was a little aware of the system or how the state functions could understand the threat constituted by the nomadic Gypsies. Actually, this did not only involve Gypsies, but other nomads having diverse ethnic backgrounds were also perceived as possible threats:

A general suspicion of nomads was part of the character of the Ottoman state. Able to cross borders, difficult to control during and after campaigns and to tax, often unsuitable as enforced settlers on abandoned lands, nomads could be

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<sup>353</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), pp. 116-118.

For further and detailed categorisation of Gypsies in Bulgaria, see: Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria* (London: Hurst, 1997), pp. 116-117.

<sup>354</sup> The nomadic lives of Gypsies are underscored in the poets, novels and stories. Jean Paul Clebert explains that situation as: “The poets of the romantic movement, from their homes and their own narrow world, have sung with a nostalgia inspired by the nomadic life. The love of freedom, the reaction against the monotony and routine, the taste for novelty, for the unexpected and for risk, inveigled not only authentic vagabond intellectuals, but at the majority of studious writers into the quest of a new inner world.” See: Jean Paul Clebert, *Gypsies*, trans. Charles Duff (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1963), p. 91.

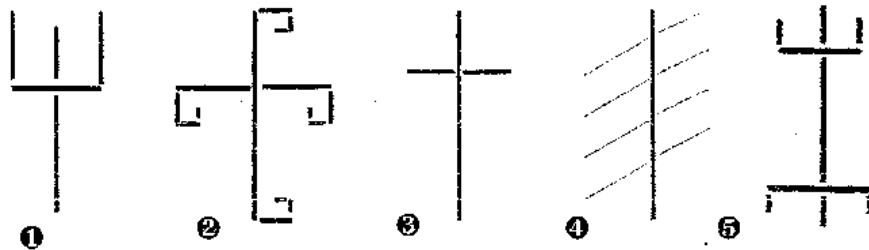
As samples from the Turkish novels and stories which involved in the tent life of Gypsies, see: Selahattin Enis, “Çingeneler,” in: *Dünyadan ve Bizden Çingene Hikâyeleri*, ed. Tahir Alangu (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1972), pp. 302-309; and, Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *Çingeneler* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1997).

<sup>355</sup> This was an argumentative issue among the travellers of the second half of the nineteenth century. French writer Ami Boué and Greek Doctor Alexandre G. Paspati were saying the opposite about the rate of the nomads and sedentaries. Ami Boué mentioned the numeral superiority of sedentary Gypsies and for Paspati; the superiority was belonged to the nomads. See: Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchingianes ou Bohémiens de l’empire Ottoman* (Constantinople: Antoine Koromela, 1870), 11; and, M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420-426.

perceived as smugglers, gun-runners, illegal traders with the empire's enemies and sources of social discontent, heretical belief and crime. Gypsies, Vlahs, Turkmens and Tartars all attracted the attention of Sultans, pashas, viziers who formulated and promulgated legislation designed to curtail or limit movements of whole sections of the population including at times women, in a variety of ways.<sup>356</sup>

Taking the group who posed such a huge challenge under control was not as easy as it was thought. It was natural to see the appearance of some disturbances or some ridiculous incidents. Especially, their nomadic spirits caused disruption in the register. As they did not have a definite place in the period of registering, they were registered in a place where they were spotted or where they were stayed temporarily, but the place where they came from were noted at every turn. That is why, the records and the reality were not in harmony and the place written in the record was not the same place where they lived recently.<sup>357</sup> Therefore, in case of a problem that had to be handled, it was difficult, even impossible, to find them by looking into their records.

Actually, it was also hard to find Gypsies off the records, because they knew how to protect themselves. Nomadic Gypsies had a special system or method to emigrate easily and in safety. In that system, it was given place to signs and indications which were known only by them:



<sup>356</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 192.

<sup>357</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, p. 175.



The first one is used widely. The long part showed the way to follow. The second one, *Svestika* or *Svastika*, let them know that the road was closed and dangerous. The third one which resembles a cross indicates the road with its long part. The last sign was used to show that going that way is very risky because of the possibility of the death. Nevertheless, it was impossible to learn the meaning of the fifth sign. There were other signs just known to them. In addition to this, spreading the grass on the roads was supposed also a way to indicate the way that should be followed. Especially, during the travelling at night, they used the sign in a cross format. On the left side of the road, a piece of wood was put and by cutting through the upper part, another stick was put in that hole. A group of Gypsies who came to the place where two or three roads are combined looked at the left side for the stick and understood that they should follow the road shown by the stick.<sup>358</sup>

Notably, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the notion of settlement was accentuated more than the former years. In other words, the state felt the need of emphasizing the exact opposite of nomadism because of their changing missions in state system which was mostly constituted by the political structure of the late Ottoman Empire. Against the Gypsy nomadism, the state, in the first place, became aware of the necessity to recognize them. It had to put a barrier between nomadic Gypsies and the people who really deserved to be called ‘immigrant.’ At that period, besides wandering between the villages or districts, the general attitude of the nomadic Gypsies was to shuttle between Rumelia and Anatolia. Especially, Gypsies who tried to go from Anatolia to Rumelia or from Rumelia to Anatolia were encountered constantly. To prevent this, the state officials attempted to interrogate individuals who demanded permission of easy passage. If their ethnicity was Gypsy,

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<sup>358</sup> Esat Uras, “Poşalar: Elekçi Çingeneler Hakkında Etnografik ve Sosyolojik Bir Etüd,” *Çığır*, no. 176 (Temmuz 1947): pp. 99–102; Sarkis Seropyan, “Vatansız Tek Ulus Çingeneler ve Çingenelerin Ermenileşmişleri, Haypoşalar,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXXIV /202 (Ekim 2000), pp. 21–26.

they were sent back to where they came from because all knew that this was not the first migration or this was not a migration in a real sense. For example, Veli Çavuş (local mayor) and 11 Gypsy households who were from Bulaklı village of Çorlu county came to Edirnekapı and İstanbul at night-time secretly. The order of the state about them was “if they were Gypsies, they needed to be sent back to their neighbourhood, or if they were immigrants in a real sense, they needed to be settled in a convenient place.”<sup>359</sup> Otherwise, 84 Gypsies who came from Kalas to İstanbul spent one night around Okmeydanı and departed again. It was found necessary not to let them go away and send them as soon as possible.<sup>360</sup> Similarly, 59 Gypsies who tried to go to Selanik by boat of Kerkira which was of the Greek Company were asked to be observed by sending a telegram to Selanik, Biga, Kavas, and Aynaroz.<sup>361</sup>

When the authorities encountered wandering Gypsies, they were not only contented with finding out where they came from, but also they inquired about their census receipts and military situation. For instance, in the years 1889-1890, 20 or 25 itinerant Gypsy households were ascertained in Zir county of the province of Ankara. It was soon understood that 17 households had their census receipts, but 78 people did not. In addition to this, in Yabanabad county of the same province, unrecorded nomadic Gypsies were found. What had to be done was clear. It was to record them and to hand over their receipts and to inquire their military situation.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> “*Kıbtî iseler mahallerine îâdeleri, mûhacirînden oldukları takdîrde mûhacirîn-i sâ’ire-i misillû Anadolu’ya geçirilerek münâsib bir mevki’ide iskânları...*” BOA, DH.MKT. 1872/114, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1309 [30 Eylül 1891]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1872/95, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1309 [30 Eylül 1891].

<sup>360</sup> BOA, ZB. 417/14, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Mart 1324 [3 Nisan 1908].

<sup>361</sup> BOA, ZB. 606/35, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Mart 1323 [21 Mart 1907].

<sup>362</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1678/91, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Rebiyyülâhir 1307 [3 Aralık 1889]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1701/72, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Recep 1307 [22 Şubat 1890].

If they were wandering despite everything, the next step was to question their travel permits. In 1899, this time, in Künbed village of Aksaray in the province of Konya, some Gypsies wandered without travel permits were denounced. The same individuals were seen in the provinces of Ankara and Hüdâvendigâr as committing crimes like theft and killing. Therefore, something had to be done to amend their circumstances.<sup>363</sup> In case of including a fault on the permits, the officials made an effort to adjust it as soon as possible. In Livadiye in 1903, a Gypsy Costa veled-i Andoni's travel permit was given without sticking a stamp which costs 10 *para*. It was renewed within the shortest time and the expense was covered by the institution that prepared the travel permits.<sup>364</sup> In addition to this, there could be rarely individuals who acted as if they owned travel permits. Bektaş oğlu Musa who was from the inhabitants of Edirne moved to İstanbul with his family. In his statement, he asserted that he got the travel permit from the local mayor of Gypsies in Topkapı, Mehmed Çavuş and owing to that document, he could travel easily. However, Mehmed Çavuş did not accept the existence of such a document and his name was not written in any record.<sup>365</sup>

In the case of nomadism, committing crimes such as theft and plunder made Gypsies visible and noticable in the eyes of the state officials. In other words, their inclination toward crimes caused them to be caught and this situation caused the state to take precautions. This type of nomads was confronted in archival documents mostly. Actually, they were permitted to migrate sometimes, but this was abused by some Gypsy individuals. Gypsy İsmail bin Halil was allowed to migrate from

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<sup>363</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2269/68, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Recep 1317 [13 Kasım 1899].

<sup>364</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 798/9, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Ramazân 1321 [28 Kasım 1903].

<sup>365</sup> BOA, ZB. 629/137, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 27 Mayıs 1325 [9 Haziran 1909].

Karakışla village of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık (Dobrich) to Edirne. When his identity was questioned, it was figured out that nobody with that name migrated and this name was just a nickname or alias. Maybe, he did not reveal his real name to travel in Edirne easily and if any official stooped him, he probably said that he got permission to live in Edirne or to migrate anywhere he wished.<sup>366</sup> Another abuse was, 23 Gypsy households who were among the immigrants of Şumnu (Shumen) were accepted to migrate and settled in Anatolia. Then, by way of Çatalca, they went out of Edirnekapısı and went through Rumelia. On the way, they plundered and it was heard that recently they were in Adapazarı. Their passage to İstanbul was stopped in 1907 and their stay in *Pâyitaht-ı Saltânât-ı Seniyye* was prevented.<sup>367</sup>

The second group was the semi-nomads. This group of Gypsies was migrating according to the season. During the winter, they were staying in their winter quarters, but in the summer, they chose to go to summer pastures. If we give an example, in winter season, they were moving to the interior of Anatolia, such as İzmit, Adapazarı, İznik and in the summer time; they were coming back to Rumelia, places like; Edirne, Babaeski, Çorlu or beyond, even İstanbul. In İstanbul, they were staying in places like; İçerenköy, Merdivenköy, Uzunçayır, Çırpıcı, the meadows of Veliefendi,<sup>368</sup> Makriköy, Küçükçekmece, Edirnekapı, and around Topkapı. Especially, their existence in İstanbul caused some recording problems. One archival document could be our guidance in the way of comprehending those problems. During the register in 1906, Muslim and non-Muslim Gypsies who were staying around Bayındır Ağa neighbourhood of Topkapı asked for being registered and they

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<sup>366</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2823/21, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 4 Cemâziyyevvel 1327 [24 Mayıs 1909].

<sup>367</sup> BOA, ZB. 478/21, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Ağustos 1323 [24 Ağustos 1907].

<sup>368</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Çingeneler," in: *Eski İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat*, eds. İ. Gündoğ Kayaoğlu and Ersu Pekin (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1992), pp. 144-150.

wished to obtain their census receipts just like the others. Then, two census takers arrived to perform all these, but after a while, they complained to the regional police for the existence of troubles like threats and curses as they registered Gypsies of that region. Over that complaint, the police officers decided to be punished, but an investigation was held. In the first place, it was understood that there were not nomadic Gypsies around Topkapı, but around Makriköy and in the above mentioned neighbourhood, there were Gypsies who owned a dwelling and who were called *Elekçi*. Secondly, it was figured out that this kind of situation was not true. The census takers lied about it because of an unknown reason, whether they had a special purpose or just wanted to threaten the regional police.<sup>369</sup>

Moreover, the census takers took money ranging between 100 *para* and 26 *kuruş*. After these, they were replaced with the new census takers. From the documents, it was understood that these officers brought more than 300 Gypsies, who lived in tents from Küçükçekmece to that neighbourhood and they were attempted to be registered and to get their census receipts. However, their residence over there was not permissible on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, and also, these Gypsies had no connection with this place because in the winter time, they were usually going to interior parts of Anatolia, particularly İzmit and in the summer time, in the season of treshing, they were passing to Rumelia, particularly Küçük Çekmece. They were making baskets, treshing and around İstanbul and its villages, they were even stealing animals and stuff of inhabitants. There had been a kind of order though their register but to record them as the community of İstanbul and to give them the right of living there was unacceptable. This was the faults of the former census takers. Probably, the census takers got the permission of recording near 20 and 30 Gypsies

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<sup>369</sup> BOA, ZB. 20/19, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Eylül 1322 [19 Eylül 1906]; and, BOA, ZB. 319/1, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Teşrînievvel 1322 [14 Kasım 1906].

and but they dictated more than 200 papers of census receipts and priced those receipts. Among all these Gypsies, even after the prohibitions, 10 or 15 Gypsies had their census receipts which showed their recording in that place and in a short period of time, it became evident that these were the old receipts given ten years before. However, according to their census receipts, they had no dwelling in the neighbourhood as well. As a result, there was the order to record Gypsies who were not nomads or the semi-nomads, but Gypsies who owned dwellings over there.<sup>370</sup>

Besides, in the province of Ankara, Gypsies in Zir and Yabanabad tended to alter their households in the winter and summer. Especially, a group counted as 120 households travelled without register.<sup>371</sup> Likewise, in 1891, 34 households and 131 population who were the inhabitants of the province of Edirne, came to Edirnekapi and another group numbered as 27 households moved from Çatalca to İstanbul. However, they were settled in a place before and again, they wandered by introducing themselves as real immigrants. This situation revealed one point which is the settlement did not always lead to success. That reminded us that the settlement of Gypsies were not an easy process. In these cases, the reaction of the authorities was to return them to their original places.<sup>372</sup>

Speaking of the semi-nomads, kind of a middle group should be mentioned too. This was an exiled group. The exile was one of the most applied methods used in punishments of Gypsies. When they were exiled to a place or penal colony, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, they were obliged to stay there and there was a group who took long-term banishment which meant long-term settlement. The crimes

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<sup>370</sup> BOA, ZB. 20/19, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Eylül 1322 [19 Eylül 1906]; and, BOA, ZB. 319/1, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Teşrinievvel 1322 [14 Kasım 1906].

<sup>371</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1748/102, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 20 Zilhicce 1307 [7 Ağustos 1890].

<sup>372</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 1245/97526, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Safer 1309 [29 Eylül 1891].

which resulted in that punishment were knavery, murder, theft, banditry, damage local community, and wounding. For example, 13 Gypsies who committed crimes like theft, wounding and damage local population were decided to be exiled. One was sent back to Edirne and other 12 were banished to Halep and Diyarbakır.<sup>373</sup> In another case, woman named Fatma was exiled to Kastamonu because of her inappropriate behaviour.<sup>374</sup> Likewise, due to the similar reasons, a man named Tirnovalı Hasan, at first, was exiled to Bursa and Sivas but over the continuation of the misbehaviour, at the end, he was banished to Diyarbakır.<sup>375</sup> As the documents indicated, Diyarbakır was perceived as a “perfect place” for exiles. That is to say, when other places were regarded as inadequate for Gypsies, the next stop always became Diyarbakır. For example, over the possibility of escape from Adana, individuals who were exiled from Aydın and Selanik to Adana were then taken to Diyarbakır with the thought that the rampart around the province made it easy to control the exiles. Nevertheless, authorities did not approve of that situation and warned the commissioned officers not to send people who were banished to Adana.<sup>376</sup>

As the third group, there were sedentary Gypsies who were settled in different neighbourhoods, localities, counties and districts. It is believed that they have more coordinated lives than the nomads. Furthermore, supposedly, they were less loyal to their own customs and traditions than the nomadic Gypsies were. Because of that feature, the sedentary Gypsies could not get along with the nomadic people and they

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<sup>373</sup> BOA, ZB. 617/158, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Mart 1324 [17 Mart 1908]; BOA, ZB. 616/109, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Mart 1324 [7 Nisan 1908]; BOA, ZB. 616/167, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Nisan 1324 [21 Nisan 1908]; and, BOA, ZB. 617/30, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Nisan 1324 [26 Nisan 1908].

<sup>374</sup> BOA, ZB. 438/62, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Nisan 1322 [29 Nisan 1906].

<sup>375</sup> BOA, ZB. 420/32, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Nisan 1318 [23 Nisan 1902].

<sup>376</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1754/120, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Muharrem 1308 [25 Ağustos 1890].

called the nomads “ignorant” and “rude” and in contrast, the nomads called the sedentary Gypsies *kalp çingene* (pseudo Gypsy), *reâyâ çingenesi* (Gypsy who is subject to a person or a state), *kalpazan çingene* (Gypsy the counterfeiter), and *Lakhos*.<sup>377</sup>

The Gypsy settlements were called by diverse titles such as 1) personal names; Ali Bey, Bayrambey, Gülmezoğlu, Selami Ali Afif, Solak Sinan, Bayındırağa, Ayşe Kadın, Davud Dede, 2) physical geography; Köprü, Dereköy, Dere, Çay, Gökdere, Havza, Uzunçayır, Bahçe, Çayır, 3) names of religious people: Hoca Ali, Mümin Hoca, Erenler, 4) occupation name; Çavuş, Sepetçi, Elekçi, Arabacı, Sepetçi Çıkmazı, Demirci, and also 5) the others as; Lizan, Şehirköy, Okplanga, Sakızlar, Cedvelbaşı, Pangaltı, Saz or Nar, Menfuk, Ahdar, Baneska, Karahan, Nekşitan, Poyran, Yeni, Say, and Cedfid. Beside all this, there were also some Gypsies who were registered in the foundations and living in the rooms of *vakıfs*.

The archival documents told us that the titles of the neighbourhood were subject to change. There were two reasons for this. The first one was the demand of the new settlement peculiar to Gypsies. That demand came from Gypsies themselves. The reason underlying this could be the crowd, or the refusall to live among other ethnic communities, the opposition of the local inhabitants, or just a wish to have a neighbourhood that consisted of Gypsies. Albeit, we know that some situations necessitated the symbiosis of Gypsies and other ethnic groups. For example, Gypsy blacksmiths in Albania were obliged to live with villagers in order to serve the needs of the village.<sup>378</sup> Whatever the real reason was Gypsies were committing petitions

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<sup>377</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 420–426.

<sup>378</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, ‘*You’re Roman!*’ *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, (Los Angeles: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology, 2002), p. 134.



this way. There was an order to give the title of Davud Dede to the district where Rumelian Gypsy immigrants were settled in Bursa. The number of Gypsies over there was 40 households.<sup>379</sup> In addition to the new settlement, Gypsies also demanded a new local mayor and new local council such as for the Muslim Gypsies who were living in Poyran village of Drama district as 77 households and 368 populations, the Gypsy settlement called Yeni Mahalle was constituted with its new local mayor and new local council.<sup>380</sup>

The second reason for the altering the title of the quarter was that Gypsies did not demand any titles for the characteristics of the Gypsy ethnicity. On such an occasion, they made a claim to change it. At the end, their neighbourhoods were called Davud Dede,<sup>381</sup> Cedit,<sup>382</sup> Küçük,<sup>383</sup> Say,<sup>384</sup> Demirci,<sup>385</sup> Yeni,<sup>386</sup> Dere,<sup>387</sup> and Çay.<sup>388</sup>

Gypsies did not only write petitions for the change of the title or separate quarters for them, but when they were not recorded in the record period; they sometimes let the state officials know about that situation. In the year of 1907, non-Muslim Gypsy

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<sup>379</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 1299/1310 Rebiyyülâhir-01, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 2 Rebiyyülâhir 1310 [24 Ekim 1892].

<sup>380</sup> BOA, DH.TMIK.S. 62/63, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Rebiyyülevvel 1324 [28 Nisan 1906]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1141/72, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 26 Zilhicce 1324 [10 Şubat 1907]; and, BOA, İ.DH. 1457/1325 Recep-30, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 27 Recep 1325 [5 Eylül 1907].

<sup>381</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1997/20, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Safer 1310 [6 Eylül 1892].

<sup>382</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2178/110, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Zilkâde 1316 [16 Mart 1899].

<sup>383</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 1363/1316 Z-16, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 25 Zilhicce 1316 [6 Mayıs 1899].

<sup>384</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2287/54, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Şabân 1317 [22 Aralık 1899]; and BOA, DH.MKT. 2374/114, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1318 [17 Temmuz 1900].

<sup>385</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2470/14, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Zilhicce 1318 [9 Nisan 1901]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2501/55, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Rebiyyülevvel 1319 [22 Haziran 1901].

<sup>386</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 492/90, adet: 3, vesika: 2, 22 Muharrem 1320 [1 Mayıs 1902]; and, BOA, İ.DH. 1412/1321 Ca-21, adet: 5, vesika: 1, 18 Cemâziyyelevvel 1321 [12 Ağustos 1903].

<sup>387</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 628/64, adet: 22, vesika: 1, 7 Şevvâl 1320 [7 Ocak 1903].

<sup>388</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 632/19, adet: 8, vesika: 7, 13 Şevvâl 1320 [13 Ocak 1903].

family who consisted of Hristo veled-i Yorgi, Anastasia bint-i Dimitri and their three sons and who was living in Manisa came to the officials to inform about their unrecorded situation. In the registering process, they were not able to come as for an illness affected them. Then, it was proved that they told the truth and their records were completed.<sup>389</sup> That event signified two things. One was that the non-Muslim Gypsies could be as enthusiastic as Muslim Gypsies and the other making a petition to be recorded voluntarily was the sign of a big step from the point of Gypsies of that reign.

Though the titles that included Gypsy or other usage of the words, there were some places called directly with the title of *Kıbtî* or the titles reminding it. However, there was not any relation between the ethnic group and the places called. Supposedly, those were given by non-Gypsies. The most well-known was *Çingene* or *Çingâne İskelesi* or *Kıbtîyân İskelesi* (Gypsy Port). It was a settlement close to Süzebolu town (Sozopol), exactly between Süzebolu (Sozopol) and Bergos. It was used for overwintering of ships of the navy. Today, this place is by the shores of the Black Sea within the borders of Bulgaria.<sup>390</sup> Other titles were *Çingene Boğazı*,<sup>391</sup> *Çingene Bayırı*<sup>392</sup> (in Tırnovi), *Çingene Tepesi*<sup>393</sup> (in Debre), *Çingene Poroyı*,<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1156/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 14 Safer 1325 [29 Mart 1907].

<sup>390</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1831/64, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Ramazân 1308 [4 Mayıs 1891]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1849/21, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Zilhicce 1308 [12 Temmuz 1891]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1879/74, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Rebiyyülevvel 1309 [19 Ekim 1891]; BOA, Y.PRK.SH. 12/34, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Ramazân 1320 [19 Aralık 1902]; BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 97/29, adet: 5, vesika: 1, 22 Rebiyyülevvel 1321 [18 Haziran 1903]; BOA, Y.MTV. 278/85, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 19 Recep 1323 [19 Eylül 1905]; BOA, Y.PRK.MK. 21/76, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Zilkâde 1323 [20 Ocak 1906]; BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 148/18, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Recep 1324 [17 Eylül 1906] and, BOA, Y.MTV. 289/75, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Recep 1324 [17 Eylül 1906].

<sup>391</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 136/80, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Şabân 1309 [9 Mart 1892].

<sup>392</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 20/63, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 27 Zilhicce 1315 [19 Mayıs 1898]; and, BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 206/72, adet: 6, vesika: 1, 29 Recep 1321 [21 Ekim 1903].

<sup>393</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 44/4310, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 16 Cemâziyyelevvel 1322 [29 Temmuz 1904].

*Kıbtî Çeşmesi*<sup>395</sup> (in Serfice), *Çingeneli Jandarma Karakolu*<sup>396</sup> (Ksendire), *Çingene* or *Çingâne Köşkü*,<sup>397</sup> and also the titles of the neighbourhoods; *Kıbtî Bayır*<sup>398</sup> (in Manastır), and *Kıbtî Ormanı*<sup>399</sup> (in İzmit), *Kıbtîye Nahiyesi*<sup>400</sup> (Aden, Yemen), *Çingeneli Köyü*<sup>401</sup> (in Ksendire), *Çingene Konakları* (three hours away from Beykoz).<sup>402</sup> There was one more location called with their title which is *Kıbtî Mezrâsı* (Gypsy Hamlet). It was a *mezrâ* in Siroz (Serres) and it belonged to a foundation named Hacı Muhiddin, but its right of disposition was of *Maârif*.<sup>403</sup>

Considering the question where Gypsies lived at that time, there were diverse sources which we can refer to. By all means, the first source was the Ottoman census records. Looking into the census records, such as the census of 1881/82-1893, it was possible to deduce that the non-Muslim Gypsies generally preferred to live in the provinces and special districts in Erzurum, Bitlis, Çatalca, Diyarbakır, Tokat, Sivas, Kastamonu, Sinop, Kudüs, and İstanbul. According to the 1895, they lived in regions like Erzurum, Ankara, Çatalca, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Zor, Selanik, Kastamonu, Kosova,

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<sup>394</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 139/13831, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Safer 1325 [7 Nisan 1907].

<sup>395</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2105/65, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Rebiyyülâhir 1316 [12 Eylül 1898]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2202/110, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Muharrem 1317 [14 Mayıs 1899]; BOA, İ.DFE. 8/1317 Muharrem-01, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 23 Muharrem 1317 [3 Haziran 1899]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2218/16, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Safer 1317 [3 Temmuz 1899].

<sup>396</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 131/13012, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 20 Zilkâde 1324 [5 Ocak 1907].

<sup>397</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 167/53, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Cemâziyyevvel 1326 [15 Haziran 1908]; and, BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 185/8, adet: 17, vesika: 1, 7 Ramazân 1326 [3 Ekim 1908].

<sup>398</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 76/7515, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Şabân 1323 [9 Ekim 1905]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 166/16583, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 17 Rebiyyülâhir 1326 [19 Mayıs 1908].

<sup>399</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 311/58, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Zilkâde 1313 [16 Nisan 1896].

<sup>400</sup> BOA, İ.HUS. 102/1320 Zilkâde-036, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Zilkâde 1320 [9 Şubat 1903].

<sup>401</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 128/12743, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Şevvâl 1324 [9 Aralık 1906]; and, BOA, TFR.I.SL. 141/14094, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Rebiyyülevvel 1325 [30 Nisan 1907].

<sup>402</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 1/25, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Ramazân 1296 [24 Ağustos 1879].

<sup>403</sup> BOA, MF.MKT. 341/36, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 23 Cemâziyyevvel 1314 [30 Ekim 1896].

and Musul. According to the statistics of 1897, there existed a Gypsy population in Aydın, Erzurum, Ankara, Beyrut, Çatalca, Diyarbakır, Selanik, Suriye, Sivas, Trabzon, Kosova, Konya, Kudüs, Manastır, Mamuretülaziz, Hüdavendigâr, and Yanya. The census of 1906-1907 stated that Gypsies were in İstanbul, Aydın, Erzurum, Ankara, Bursa, Sivas, Konya, Kastamonu, Halep, Selanik, Edirne, Manastır, Kudüs, and Çatalca.<sup>404</sup>

Secondly, scanning the whole archival documents of the reign, the regions or place where they lived, traveled or wandered emerges. Generally, the documents told us that they lived in regions like Adana, Ankara, Aydın, Basra, Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefîd, Diyarbakır, Edirne, Erzurum, Halep, Hüdavendigâr, İstanbul, Karesi, Kastamonu, Konya, Kosova, Mamuretülaziz, Manastır, Selanik, Sivas, Çatalca, Kudüs, Yemen, Trablusgarp, Yanya, and İzmit. As an autonomous place, there was a Gypsy population in the Eastern Rumelia and also in the lands which were left to newly-born states like Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania; there was a remarkable Gypsy population as well.

Specifically, in the province of İstanbul, they lived in Üsküdar (Bulgurlu, Uzunçayır, Çınar), Beyoğlu, Makriköy, Küçük Çekmece, Topkapı, Yarımburgaz, Çatalca, Çorlu, Sarıyer, Kalas, Okmeydanı, İzmit, Gebze, Gümüşsuyu, Yenibağçe, Galata, Büyükdere, Kasımpaşa, Piripaşa, Edirnekapı, Sulukule, Terkos, and Beykoz. As Alexandre Paspati who was a well-known traveller pointed out, in the second half of the nineteenth century, there were 140 Gypsy families in İstanbul and the total number of Gypsy families, who were settled in towns and cities in Silivri, Çorlu,

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<sup>404</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), pp. 122-169.

Çatalca, Büyükçekmece and Tekirdağ, was actually 123.<sup>405</sup> From the famous novel of Osman Cemal Kaygılı, ‘Çingenerler’ (Gypsies), it was understood that Gypsies were living in Büyükdere, Çırpıcı, Topçular, Erenköy, and Çamlıca.<sup>406</sup> However, in İstanbul, they were predominantly staying in Topkapı, Edirnekapı, Kasımpaşa (Çürüklük, Hacı Hüsrev), Ayvansaray-Lonca, Sulukule, Üsküdar (Selamsız, Fener, Çingene Fırını), Yenibahçe, Kumkapı, Kadırga, Ziba, Büyük Karaman, Dülger-zade, Yenişehir and Sazlıdere of Beyoğlu.<sup>407</sup> Abdülaziz Bey claimed that Gypsies, most likely Muslim Gypsies, were habiting in Selamsız of Üsküdar, Lonca, Sulukule, Balat, Ayvansaray. However, according to his perspective, Christian Gypsies were not staying in İstanbul, but they were coming from Rumelia and after staying a while, they were going to the interiors of Anatolia and in cities over there.<sup>408</sup>

Especially, in his book, Osman Cemal Kaygılı underlined the importance of the neighbourhoods of Sulukule and Ayvansaray-Lonca. He also mentioned that people who lived there should not be called Gypsy, because they were not beggars and they lived on what they could honestly do, briefly they were sedentary people, not even close to nomadic Gypsies. According to him, they could be called *Bohem* or *Çigan*, but it was wrong to call them *Çingene*.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchingianes ou Bohemiens de l’empire Ottoman* (Constantinople: Antoine Koromela, 1870), p. 11.

<sup>406</sup> Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *Çingenerler* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1997), p. 13.

<sup>407</sup> Osman Ergin, “Çingene Çeyizi Gösterisi,” *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları*, 5/118 (Mayıs, 1959), pp. 1903-1905; and, Sermet Muhtar Alus, “Çingenerler” in: *Eski İstanbul’da Gündelik Hayat*, eds. İ. Gündoğ Kayaoğlu and Ersu Pekin (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1992), pp. 144-150.

<sup>408</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, eds. Kazım Arısan and Duygu Arısan Günay (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), p. 329.

<sup>409</sup> Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *Köşe Bucak İstanbul*, ed. Tahsin Yıldırım (İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2003), pp. 189-190.

It was possibly true to say that Gypsies were living on the outskirts, rural area and near provinces. As a dwelling, they had lived in tents (erected beyond town lines) haymow, meadows, cottages mostly made of tinplate and huts. To settle in one place was not a long process for them. They had the tendency to settle over night and when this was combined with the negligence of the officers, the settlement could be extended quickly. After that, the only thing to do was to get their settlement away. For example, in İstanbul, some Gypsy settlements were found in the meadow of Büyükdere and around Kışlâ-yı Hümâyûn Ta'lîmhânesi in Beyoğlu. Gypsies who were around Kışlâ-yı Hümâyûn Ta'lîmhânesi, Beyoğlu were living in tin cottages that cost 20 or 25 *kuruş*. At the beginning, the total number of their cottage was 20, but thanks to their aptitude for staying there as well as the disregard of the officials the number augmented to 100. The problem was more than occupying an unapproved place. If they were able to live according to the standards, their stay could be tolerated, but they had occupations which could not be approved of as well as habits which could not be ignored. For example, in their tin cottages, there was not a toilet actually. Therefore, most of them went to the toilet in fresh air. Moreover, in tin cottages of Beyoğlu, one sergeant or noncom was found dead and there were also some habitual criminals over there. That is why, as a solution, the local authorities decided to take their cottages away. They were not permitted to settle anywhere around there.<sup>410</sup> In the same manner, the settlements in the meadow of Büyükdere where Gypsies settled from Aydın were abolished too.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 277/58, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Cemâziyyelâhir 1323 [17 Ağustos 1905]; and, BOA, ZB. 615/69, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Şubat 1323 [11 Mart 1908].

<sup>411</sup> BOA, ZB. 55/53, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Ağustos 1322 [23 Ağustos 1906]; and, BOA, ZB. 387/94, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Ağustos 1322 [5 Eylül 1906].

In some cases, the state was strikingly positive about the Gypsy settlement, so it even supported the settlement in inconvenient places. For example, the state officers learned that some group of Gypsies constructed houses made of adobe and hay or straw between the farm of Haktani (Hankani) and Özyarar village, one and a half hour away from Manastır. This place was allocated for the animals of people of Manastır. The number of unauthorized constructed houses was 42 households and the houses covered 19,500 m<sup>2</sup> (12 *dönüm*) of *merba'-i mahall* (summer lieu). Actually, it was forbidden to occupy those kinds of pastures. However, those people had been living in misery and poverty and as a result of this new lifestyle, *iltizâm* or order was brought to their life. If they were dragged into poverty again, it would be a crime against humanity. So, the state would not mind if they continued living in those households, but it was found necessary to cross the borders all around the houses and to leave a mark on foursquare. They should never surpass the limit determined by the authorities. The district would be called Yeni Mahalle. This field was one of the *vakıfs* of Fatma Sultan and İbrahim Paşa, personages of Manastır and according to the *Arâzi Kanûnnâmesi*: 97<sup>th</sup> article of the code, it was a pasture formerly peculiar to a village. It was prohibited to construct a house, corral, dairy farm or vineyards and orchards over it. If they were constituted, they could be destroyed. However, those settlements were let with the condition of not surpassing the limit.<sup>412</sup>

### Demographical Results

In counting the Gypsy population, the Ottoman Empire mainly had chosen to segregate Gypsies from the rest of the society. In general, unless the documents

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<sup>412</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 1354/ 1315 Zilhicce-16, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 5 Zilhicce 1315 [27 Nisan 1898].

permitted to the ethnic affiliation,<sup>413</sup> they constituted certain categories in the census documents such as Muslims and non-Muslims (Christian, Armenian, and Jewish). This is the religious based categorisation, but about the number of Gypsies, the officers chose to make a side-category, titles as *Kıbtî* (Gypsies). Through the end of the century, this tendency was about to change and instead of showing the whole community as a separate group, the state officials tended to register the non-Muslims separately.<sup>414</sup> This kind of affair qualified Gypsies to be mingled freely with the Muslim crowd if only on paper. Nevertheless, the separation of the Muslims and non-Muslims and the tendency showing the Muslim numbers in the category of Muslims created one problem. That is, it was nearly impossible to get a full-number of Muslim Gypsies. Therefore, the censuses held in the late Ottoman Empire emphasized the non-Muslim Gypsies. One more point had to be kept in mind that the number was not complete because in some parts of the empire, Gypsies had retained their nomadic characteristics and the empire found no way out to record the whole.

As widely claimed, to get the precise data about the number of Gypsies, the first reference should be the small-scale or full-scale census results of the Ottoman Empire that were held at certain times. In the empire, the first census was held in 1831, completed between 1830 and 1838, but it was fulfilled for the fiscal purposes mainly taxation and just included the male population of the empire. Coming to the results of the 1831 census, different numbers were put by the researchers about the number of Gypsies such as Fazıla Akbal puts the Gypsy or *Kıbtî* number as 35,975 (1%), Stanford Shaw gives as 36,675, Bilal Eryılmaz counts as 36,673 (0.98%) and

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<sup>413</sup> According to the Adrian Marsh, it was not a contravention because in the Ottoman system, there had been always complex ethnic, religious, and class distinctions. Even, he noted that Karpat also mentioned ethnic differences in counting of the population of 1831 such as Jews, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Yörüks, *Alevis*, *Tahtacı* and etc.  
Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 182.

<sup>414</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, pp. 122-169.



Kemal Karpat says as 35,707, 0.98 %.<sup>415</sup> Then, in the year of 1844, another census was performed, mainly for military purposes; the conscription. Karpat gives the number of Gypsies as 214,000.<sup>416</sup>

Briefly, in both of them, the intention was not to reach the exact number of the population or the socio-ethnic composition. The people who were unable to pay any tax or be conscripted into the army such as women, orphans, and high-ranking officials were not given any place. Recording the nomadic groups such as Gypsies, they were predominantly omitted in these censuses as well.<sup>417</sup> After the census of 1844, some other censuses were also performed like Rumelia Census of 1852, Anatolian and Syrian Census of 1856, and Danube Census of 1874. After the war of 1877-78, there emerged one census, but because of the influx of immigrants, the census was not completed easily.<sup>418</sup>

After the imperfect and deficient censuses, the more developed ones were performed during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II such as in the years of 1882, 1895 and 1906. One of the most important general censuses held in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II belonged to the years of 1881-1882/1893. According to its figures, the total Ottoman population was 17,388,604 and the number of non-Muslim Gypsy population was 3,153 (1,509 women and 1,644 men). The provinces and

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<sup>415</sup> Fazıla Akbal, "1831 Tarihinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İdari Taksimat ve Nüfus," *Belleten*, XV/60 (Ankara, 1951), pp. 617–628; Bilal Eryılmaz, *Osmanlı Devletinde Gayr-ı Müslim Tebanın Yönetimi* (İstanbul: Risale, 1996), p. 72; Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 114; and, Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman Census System and Population 1831–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; 9 (1978) Cambridge University Press, pp. 335–336.

<sup>416</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830–1914), Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, p. 156.

<sup>417</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), p. 81.

<sup>418</sup> Halime Doğru, "Osmanlı Devletinde Toprak Yazımından Nüfus Sayımına Geçiş ve Bir Nüfus Yoklama Defteri Örneği," *Anadolu Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1/2 (Eskişehir, 1989), pp. 245–247.

*sancak* in which they stayed were Erzurum (8 women, 7 men), Bitlis (70 women, 89 men), Çatalca (220 women, 212 men), Diyarbakır (82 women, 81 men), Sivas (200 women, 235 men), Kastamonu (894 women, 971 men), Kudüs (35 women, 49 men).<sup>419</sup> About the number of the non-Muslim Gypsies in the census of 1895, Karpat gives the total non-Muslim Ottoman Gypsy number as 3,923; 1,827 women and 2,096 men.<sup>420</sup>

In 1897, the non-Muslim Gypsy population was 19,550; 10,309 men and 9,241 women and the percentage of them over the whole population was 0.10 %. They were generally in Aydın (5), Erzurum (120), Ankara (1,111), Beyrut (6), Çatalca (442), Diyarbakır (164), Selanik (6,612), Suriye (3), Sivas (1,764), Trabzon (41), Kosova (2,848), Konya (486), Kudüs (101), Manastır (2,579), Mamuretülaziz (21), and Yanya (3,247). The birth rates of the same year told that the birth number of non-Muslim Gypsies was 311 (186 men and 125 women) and the percentage was 0.04 %. In contrast to the birth numbers, there were 228 deaths (145 men and 83 women) and the percentage was 0.06 %. As a place of the births were held, the places such as Dersaâdet (1: 1 men), Ankara (41: 29 men and 12 women), Çatalca (16: 10 men and 6 women), Hüdavendigâr (6: 3 men and 3 women), Selanik (90: 57 men and 33 women), Sivas (40: 18 men and 22 women), Konya (4: 1 men and 3 women), Kosova (32: 31 men and 1 women), Kudüs-i Şerif (54: 23 men and 31 women), Yanya (27: 13 men and 14 women).<sup>421</sup> About the places of death, there were Ankara (20: 11 men and 9 women), Çatalca (12: 7 men and 5 women), Selanik

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<sup>419</sup> Karpat, Kemal. "Ottoman Population Records and The Census of 1881/82–1893," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (October, 1978), pp. 237- 274.

<sup>420</sup> Kemal Karpat, *The Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 122-169.

<sup>421</sup> Tevfik Güran, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlk İstatistik Yıllığı 1897 = The First Statistical Yearbook of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1997), pp. 21-38.

(67: 36 men and 31 women), Sivas (17: 8 men and 9 women), Kosova (37: 37 men), Manastır (53: 29 men and 24 women), and Yanya (22: 17 men and 5 women).<sup>422</sup>

The difference between the former censuses and the Census held in 1906-1907 was that the latter one included all Gypsies, Muslims and non-Muslims. This is the sign that the Ottoman state had trouble to adopt Gypsies even if they were Muslims. The total Ottoman population was 20,884,630, and in total population the total Ottoman Gypsies were 16,470 (8,629 men and 7,841 women). Gypsies can be seen in İstanbul (129 men and 136 women), Aydın, Erzurum, Ankara, Bursa, Sivas, Konya, Kastamonu, Halep, Selanik (2,455 men and 2,281 women), Edirne (1,769 men and 1,617 women), Manastır, Kudüs, and Çatalca (284 men and 265 women).<sup>423</sup>

Apart from the general censuses, it was possible to count the number of Gypsies on a regional basis. Karpas stated that in 1878-1880, there were 327 Gypsies in the province of Halep, and 866 Gypsies in the province of Sivas and then, in 1897, there were 32 Gypsies in Erzurum and 1,647 in Sivas.<sup>424</sup> From McCarthy's statement, we can deduce that the Gypsy number of Halep in 1897-98 was 668.<sup>425</sup> According to McCarthy, in 1911, there were 640 non-Muslim Gypsies in Manastır, 851 in Serfice and 1,026 in Görice, and the total was 2,517. In 1911, Üsküb of Kosovo province had 1,411 non-Muslim Gypsy populations.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Tefik Güran, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlk İstatistik Yıllığı 1897 = The First Statistical Yearbook of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 21-38.

<sup>423</sup> Kemal Karpas, *The Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 122-169.

<sup>424</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 194-197.

<sup>425</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Population History of the Middle East and the Balkans* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 2002), pp. 202-203.

<sup>426</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

If we look at Anatolia, in 1877-78, Sivas had 1,576 Gypsies (849 men and 727 women), in 1895, excluding Bayburt and Hınıs, there were 123 Gypsies in Erzurum.<sup>427</sup> From the general registers of 1911-1912, we are informed about the Gypsy population such that there were 2,122 in Hüdavendigâr, 3,397 in Aydın, 71 in Mamuretülaziz, 29 in Erzurum, 789 in Antalya, 390 in İçel, 84 in Karahisar, 417 in Karasi, and 275 in Kütahya. In 1912-1913, there were 1,534 Gypsies in Ankara, 186 in Aleppo and 486 in Menteşe and also in 1913-1914; there were 1,437 Gypsies in Bolu.<sup>428</sup>

The archival documents also afford us to be erudite about their numbers. For example, in 1898, in the *sancak* of Canik (particularly Alaçam), there were 41 non-Muslim Gypsies.<sup>429</sup> In 1895, in the province of Sivas, particularly Tokat, Amasya, and Karahisar districts and some other counties of the province, there were 957 non-Muslim Gypsy men and 770 non-Muslim Gypsy women lived.<sup>430</sup> In 1904, the villages attached to Üsküb such as Üsküb town, there were 197 non-Muslim Gypsies and in Hüseyin Şah, there were 13 non-Muslim Gypsy population.<sup>431</sup> In 1909, the number of Muslim Gypsies in the province of Halep was 390 and they lived in the counties; Halep *şehri* (130), Antakya *şehri* (27), Kilis *şehri* (177) and Ayıntab *şehri* (56).<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Mehmet Demirtaş, *Doğu Anadolu'da Nüfus Hareketleri (93 Harbi Sonrası)*, (Van: Master Tezi, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, Tarih Bölümü 1996), pp. 136-149.

<sup>428</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Osmanlı Anadolu Topraklarındaki Müslüman ve Azınlık Nüfus (Osmanlı Anadolu'sunun Son Dönemi)*, trans. Kur. Kd. Alb. İhsan Gürsoy (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1995), pp. 95-98.

<sup>429</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.DH 10/42, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Zilkâde 1315 [18 Nisan 1898].

<sup>430</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 106/38, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 15 Rebiyyülevvel 1313 [5 Eylül 1895].

<sup>431</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 54/5385, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilhicce 1321 [17 Mart 1904].

<sup>432</sup> BOA, Y.EE. 37/40, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Rebiyyülâhir 1327 [27 Nisan 1909].

However, about some regional, administrative units and villages, we have more precise data. For example, in the *sancak* of Plovdiv in the year of 1876, total population of taxpayers was 13,892; 12,471 Muslims, and 1,421 Christian Gypsies. The population distribution of Gypsies considering the districts: Plovdiv: 5,474 Muslims and 495 Christians; Tatar-Pazarcık: 2,120 Muslims and 495 Christians; Haskovo: 1,548 Muslims and 145 Christians; Stara Zagora: 989 Muslims and 70 Christians; Kazanlık: 1,384 Muslims and 24 Christians; Çirpan: 420 Muslims and 88 Christians; Ahi Çelebi: 377 Muslims; and, Sultan Eri: 159 Muslims. From those records, Marushiakova and Popov deduced that there were not even numbers of Gypsies in every district and comparatively, in Thrace, and Walachia and Moldova Principalities, the population was above. In the early centuries, the population rates showed a tendency towards Christians, but the situation changed in the late nineteenth century, and the rate of Muslim Ottoman Gypsies began to rise above.<sup>433</sup>

The records of the autonomous states and independent states, which just achieved their independence in 1878, also gave some ideas about the Gypsy population such as the Bulgarian Principality (1878-1908), and Eastern Rumelia held many censuses like 1881 and 1885. The criterion was the mother-tongue. The data of the censuses showed that 37,600 (1.87%) Gypsies were living in the principality and 26,724 (2.83%) Gypsies lived in Eastern Rumelia. With the incorporation of the Eastern Rumelia to that principality, new census was constituted on 31 December 1887, and followed with the censuses of 1892, 1900 and 1905. According to those censuses, Gypsies seemed to be the second biggest Muslim group, and three fourth of Bulgarian Gypsies were Muslims. They were mostly divided into subgroups and living in the places where the Muslims lived without intermixing. In general, they

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<sup>433</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 66.

lived in their own quarters in cities and in the countryside, as well as speaking the Turkish language.<sup>434</sup>

Ömer Turan gives the number of Muslims who were registered as Gypsies, as 70,000 in Bulgaria in 1900, just recorded ones; they were about 77,000 in 1905.<sup>435</sup> According to Bulgarian officials' statistics, the number of Gypsies in the principality, classified according to the nationalities, was 89,549 (18,369 in towns and 71,180 in villages) in 1900; and 99,004 (20,545 in towns and 78,459 in villages) in 1905. The mother tongue classification of the census said that in Bulgaria, there were 50,291 Gypsies in 1887; 52,132 in 1892; 89,549 in 1900; and 67,396 in 1905. Between 1900, and 1905, the number of Gypsies increased and the number of Gypsy speaking decreased. According to Ömer Turan, they neither spoke Turkish nor Bulgarian, and he explains the situation as follows: "I therefore assume that the Bulgarian authorities, wishing to say there were fewer Turks, registered a certain amount of Turks as Gypsies. The Bulgarian authorities are said to have manipulated figures to their own advantage later on in history as well."<sup>436</sup> On the other hand, he claimed that "either Gypsies were included in other mother tongue groups or the others were included in the groups of Gypsies. The other possibility is that after a while, some other ethnic groups were recorded as Gypsies." In the 1881 census held in Eastern Rumelia, the total number of Muslim and non-Muslim Gypsies was 19,549, and the

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<sup>434</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria-Policy and Community Development," *The Roma Education Resource Book 2*. Available: [http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria\\_Marushiakova-Popov.html](http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria_Marushiakova-Popov.html) [10.03.2009].

<sup>435</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), p. 101.

<sup>436</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

Ottoman Commissariat in Sofia, considering the census of 1888, gave the number of whole Muslims as 667,210 and at least, 50,000 of them were Muslim Gypsies.<sup>437</sup>

### Inter-state Gypsies

In the Ottoman Empire, Gypsies spread to diverse places, but if we arrange those places in order as regards their population, the Rumelia and the Balkans came first by far. They had been living on the Balkans for many years so much so it was considered that they migrated and began to live there even before the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman Empire took control over those lands, they entered under the domination of the empire. Majority of them converted into Islam and some others remained Christians or in the terms of the empire as non-Muslims. That is to say, they were not independent people anymore, what the empire was affected by would affect them as well. Undoubtedly, the century whose affairs affected these people was the nineteenth century. Because in the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was exposed to some social, political and economic changes and the Balkans where Gypsies mostly lived received its share from those changes. In the nineteenth century, the nationalism and nationalistic movements left marks on them. Gypsies also did not stand away from the struggle of the Balkan people in the nineteenth century. Sometimes, they played an effective role, but sometimes they were abused and became victims of the rebellious groups. The 'Uprising of April of 1876' in Bulgaria was one of the examples of this. In that uprising, they were victimized by rebellious local groups. In the town of Koprivshtitsa, the groups killed all the inhabitants of Gypsy quarter including women and children.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, p. 114.

<sup>438</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 82.

Serbia revolted in 1804 and 1813. Then in 1815, it declared its autonomy and finally in 1878, independence came to Serbia. Between 1821 and 1827, Greek independence movements came to the scene and it had fought with the Ottoman Empire many times. In 1830, Greece achieved its independence and in the years 1864 and 1881, it extended its borders. In 1859, Walachia and Moldavia (Romanian) were unified and remained under the Ottoman rule until 1878.<sup>439</sup> After the so called Berlin Treaty signed after the Russian-Ottoman War in 1877-1878, commonly known as *93 Harbi* in the Ottoman historiography, the principalities of Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania, which had *de facto* sovereignty, proclaimed independence from the empire. After long centuries of Ottoman domination, Bulgaria was turned into the principality of Bulgaria covering the land between Danube River and the Balkan Mountains. In 1885, the province of Eastern Rumelia was annexed to Bulgaria and finally, in the year of 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence and with the İstanbul Protocol signed between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria on 19 April 1909, their independence was approved. With the allowance given by the treaty, Austro-Hungarians occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina. No doubt, Thrace and Macedonia were among the last areas in the Balkans to be incorporated into the successor states. The Ottoman control over there ended with the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). Those affairs which hit the headlines of the political situation in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II brought about a change on the side of Gypsies.

Even though those places went out of Ottoman control, the legacy of the empire remained for a while, that was the *millet* system. Meaning religion was used as a differentiating factor there. Minorities who had the Orthodox faith were easily

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<sup>439</sup> Adrian Marsh, *'No Promised Land': History, Historiography and the Origins of Gypsies*, p. 193.



assimilated to the mass of the new nation. Even, if they were the “non-territorial” minorities like non-Muslim Gypsies, it was easier. They tended to join the relevant majority group-Bulgarians in Bulgaria, Greeks in Greece and so on.<sup>440</sup> Unfortunately, it was not so easy for the Muslim Gypsies. With the newly-born states, many Christians migrated to Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania and Muslims living over there were expelled to the remaining Ottoman lands. Among the Muslim immigrants, Muslim Gypsies also participated.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a modern Greek state was constituted around Athens and the Peloponnese and in time, it increased its territory with retreat of the Ottoman Empire. In the new states, the citizenship and the ‘Greekness’ was mostly associated with being a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. When the notion of ‘state’ was improved with extension of the borders, the citizenship showed deference and the concept of ‘foreign’ was insisted on. The result of this situation was hostility and a huge Muslim migration. Of course, Gypsies were among the immigrants. Some of Gypsies moved to Anatolia and others stayed somewhere in the Balkans.<sup>441</sup> Especially the archival documents showed that in Yenişehir, there was a remarkable Gypsy population and when it was given to Greeks; many Gypsies had to migrate to the Ottoman lands.<sup>442</sup> In the year of 1909, we saw that Gypsies from Yenişehir migrated to Selanik in different groups as a result of the Greek atrocity. The first group consisted of 14 individuals fled to Selanik by the boat of a person named as Hristo Kargana, and they settled among Gypsies of Çayır neighbourhood. Secondly, Gypsy Halil and his five friends who were from Duhan village of

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<sup>440</sup> Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki, *Muslim Identity and the Balkans State* (Washington Square, N. Y.: New York University Press, in association with the Islamic Council, 1997), p. 20.

<sup>441</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>442</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 327/41, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Recep 1312 [2 Ocak 1895].

Yenişehir came to Selanik and wrote a petition for their acceptance to the citizenship of the Ottoman state. Their excuse was the aggression and insult of Greeks over themselves. In the procedure, on the way of citizenship, the state stipulated a condition of five years' residence in the empire, but their situation could create an exception. However, the possibility of that kind of exception must be inquired. Thirdly, 7 Muslim Gypsies migrated to Selanik, Çayır district by the boat of Şişko Polo. All these groups, after the migration, chose to settle down among Gypsies.<sup>443</sup> Fourthly, as the news received from the passport office signified, over the scorn of Greeks, a Muslim Gypsy group, which consisted of 22 individuals, migrated from Yenişehir to Selanik by the boat of Şişko Polo in 1909.<sup>444</sup> Beside the forced migration, there could be seen voluntary migration just like Gypsies who were citizens of the Ottoman state tended to escape to Greek territory. Kostapolo who was from Maniş village of Grebene county in Sarıkça district and Apostol from Lenbova village and Dimitri veled-i Yenko from the Şeyka farm escaped to Greece in 1889.<sup>445</sup>

Another newly born state was Serbia and the most interesting news about Gypsies over there was the case of conversion. In the year of 1892, it was heard that some Muslim Gypsies whose number could be counted as 100 converted into another religion. Moreover, in the news, it was written that other Muslims had also the intention of conversion. Those people were converted with the help of Priest Vasi Yankoviç in the village of Dokmira, the Tamnav Town, Valtero District. The news was firstly published in the Russian newspaper of *Peryajofski Kray* or *Peryayonski Krayı* issued on 19-21 August 1892 in Rostov. Then, the news reappeared in the

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<sup>443</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 216/21579, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Şabân 1327 [18 Ağustos 1909]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2906/83, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Şabân 1327 [22 Ağustos 1909]; and, BOA, TFR.I.SL. 217/21661, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Şabân 1327 [25 Ağustos 1909].

<sup>444</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 217/21689, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Şabân 1327 [27 Ağustos 1909].

<sup>445</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1613/12, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Şabân 1306 [7 Nisan 1889].

Serbian newspaper, *Male Novine*, issued on 24 September 1892, published in Belgrade. Above the news published in *Peryajofski Kray*, the correspondences with the Belgrade embassy and with the consuls of Niş, Vranja, Öziçe was made. The first reaction toward this news was denial and if there was conversion into Christianity, people who converted could be unfaithful and vagabond Gypsies.

None of the Muslims tergiversated. However, according to the memorandum of Mufti of Niş and Mr. Hazi's response which were in the jacketed official letter, the truth was so; some vagabond Gypsies who were different than the real Muslim Gypsies, who abused their religious feelings to afford advantage to them as well as who had no connection to any religion or sect, accepted the Orthodoxy.<sup>446</sup>

According to the consul of Niş, the difference between the real Muslim Gypsies and converted ones was the latter stole and manticulated. They were also different in terms of customs and morality. Some of them indicated their religion as Christianity and others insisted on Islam, but they were capable of changing religion. They had two names: a Turkish name and a Serbian name. They changed their names according to their benefit. Admittedly, it was stated so; "if they had any expectation from us, they call themselves with the Islamic names 'We are Islam' but in order to get along with the local government, they say 'We are Christians'."<sup>447</sup> Therefore, if there was any conversion, it could be among them. The consul also stated that he forced some of them to participate in religious ceremonies. The importance of the

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<sup>446</sup> "*Hiçbir Müslümân tanassur etmemiştir. Ancak Niş Müftüsü'nün muhturasıyla Hâzi Bey'in sûret-i melfûf tahrîrât-ı cevâbiyesine nazaren hakikat-ı hâl şundan 'ibâretidir ki asıl Müslümân Kıbtîlerinden küllî farkları bulunub hissiyât-ı diniyelerini cerr-i menfa'at-ı zatiyyeye alet-i ittihâz eden ve hiçbir din ve mezhebe mensûb olmayan bir tâkim serserî kıbtîler Ortodoksî mezhebini kabûl etmişlerdir.*"  
See: BOA, Y.A.HUS. 266/16, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 3 Rebiyyülâhir 1310 [25 Ekim 1892].

<sup>447</sup> "*Bizden bir istifâde beklediklerinde İslâm ismiyle 'İslâmız' yahud hükümet-i mahalli ile hoş geçinmek için 'Hristiyanız!' derler.*"  
See: BOA, Y.A.HUS. 266/16, adet: 4, vesika: 1-2, 3 Rebiyyülâhir 1310 [25 Ekim 1892].

former Gypsies was that with the help of consul and religious persons, they were taken under control for two or three years. Furthermore, their wedding or funeral ceremonies were performed by the *imâm* and on the important days like Ramazan or Feasts, they came to the mosque, and also their children went to school so they were given religious education and preaching. However, in the process of denying the conversion, it was accepted that it was not for once only because, in the last winter, the conversion occurred in Serbia. Among some Gypsies, who lived in Zayçar, approximately 70 Gypsies, changed their religion. One official formed an opinion about their faiths and did not deem necessary to announce this to the authorities. Probably, this man thought that they had already no faith so it was unnecessary to let the state know about it. Moreover, the reason of their conversion was lack of a religious leader.<sup>448</sup>

Then, in 1893, a similar kind of news reappeared but with only one difference. This time, they were compelled to. The news that Muslim Gypsies were forced to alter their religion, otherwise, they were obliged to migrate, was announced to Belgrade Embassy. The petition was given by Muslim Gypsies living in Şehirköy (Pirot) and Palanka. In their petition, it was stated that first 10,000 Muslim Gypsies were converted into another religion by force and this time, the same application was tried to be performed over them. They were living in Pirot as 50 households. Their two options, leaving the country or accepting the conversion were conveyed through the medium of *imâm* and *ex-imâm* of Bayraklı mosque and Bosnian Süleyman bin Halil Bamiç. As a result of the investigation, it was discovered to be a made-up news. The *imâms* of Belgrade mosques were warned not to interfere in political affairs; otherwise, they would be dismissed. Moreover, it was understood that three

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<sup>448</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 266/16, adet: 4, vesika: 1-2, 3 Rebiyyülâhir 1310 [25 Ekim 1892].

months ago, some individuals went to above-mentioned villages and offered to write a petition by putting the conversion claim, so they considered that by this way, authorities would protect them. What was needed was told to them by Hacı Mehmed Aġazade İbrahim Aġa (*imâm*) and then they signed the document. When İbrahim Aġa was asked, he blamed Tevfik Efendi who was a conductor. He was from Leskofça and before, he worked in a gendarme battalion in Selanik. Four years ago, he came to Niş to straighten affairs and four months ago, he went to Şehirköy and (Ayvaraniye) and he was appointed to the railway as conductor. These individuals agreed upon the ideas of Nevzad. They complained because of their misbehaviours. However, none of the Gypsies converted in that region.<sup>449</sup>

Another conversion case was displayed through a letter written by Hasan bin Kara Mustafa, the inhabitant of Belgrade. In his letter, he complained about the maltreatment of the local government and he wanted to migrate with his sons to the Ottoman territory. He was the head of a poor Gypsy family and a dulcimer player. In addition to this, he was a religious, morally justified and benevolent person. His only crime was to be pleased with the result of the war between Japan and Russia. In the war, Russia was badly defeated. Therefore, he was treated badly and also, he was condemned to 15 days of prison. Moreover, his son working in the Serbian official post was forced out of his job. He demanded his migration to Kosova as well as the employment of his sons, at least one of them, who spoke German and Serbian and who had a good grasp of Turkish language by being educated in *Üsküb Sanâyi Mektebi*. It could be an associate translator, police officer or any other convenient job. His petition of job and migration was approved on March 1907.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. 274/43, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Zilkâde 1310 [21 Mayıs 1893]; and, BOA, Y.A.HUS. 276/54, adet: 5, vesika: 1 and 4, 9 Zilhicce 1310 [24 Haziran 1893].

<sup>450</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 159/15840, adet: 4, vesika: 1-4, 14 Rebiyyülevvel 1325 [27 Nisan 1907].

The sources showed that the cases mentioned above could be true. As it was known, Vranje was a major Gypsy settlement. The Gypsy population over there was Muslim Gypsies who spoke Serbian. When Muslim Albanians and Muslim Slavs were expelled from the Serbian state, those Gypsies became the only Muslim community which was permitted to remain on the Serbian territory. They could be allowed to remain, but it did not mean that they would remain as Muslims. Nevertheless, in the 1890s, the Orthodox Church started a campaign to convert them. The process of conversion ended with success and 2,000 of them were easily converted.<sup>451</sup>

Like the situation of Gypsies in Bulgaria, Gypsies were mostly Muslims and the others were Orthodox Christians. As for language, some Muslim Gypsies spoke Turkish. Majority of Gypsies were living in the country including nomads which had permanent winter settlements.<sup>452</sup> Nevertheless, the general appearance was not good. Zoltan Barany claimed that after the date of 1878, Gypsies' social position declined further because 80% of them who had the religion of Islam now became the minority religion. In addition to this, he stated that when the industrialization came to Bulgaria, Gypsy craftsmen were affected economically. At that time, in one part, some of them were serving the rural population and in agriculture-based areas, they had a particular place in society, but in other parts, the general sayings, biases arose from their lifestyles and life conditions and crimes committed by them continued to affect their social position in a bad way. The educational affairs had hardly reached them and they perceived education as a waste of time. Just some Gypsy children of

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<sup>451</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Kosova: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 208.

<sup>452</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria-Policy and Community Development," *The Roma Education Resource Book 2*. Available: [http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria\\_Marushiakova-Popov.html](http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria_Marushiakova-Popov.html) [10.03.2009].

peasants benefited from it. Bulgaria was the first European state which founded schools for Gypsies.<sup>453</sup>

One of the most important developments about Bulgarian Gypsies in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II was the changes in the Electoral Law of 1901 that abolished the right of Gypsies to vote. In the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the Eleventh Regular National Assembly that was held on 31 May 1901, “law for the amendment of the Electoral Law” was issued. According to paragraph 2, articles 4 and 7, it was accepted that: “including the non-Christian Gypsies and also all those Gypsies who cannot establish residence” would be among people ‘who cannot be voters.’ That is to say, the electoral rights of Muslim Gypsies and the nomads were revoked.<sup>454</sup> The reason of that deprivation was that Gypsies were voting in exchange of a certain price, so in areas where Gypsies constituted the majority of the population, the winner of the elections was nominees who got the support of Gypsies. This situation got the attention of Kara Velof. The interesting point here is that all above-mentioned actions were shown as performed only by Muslim Gypsies. After that, the importance of Muslim Gypsies decreased immediately and Gypsy quarters and huts were destroyed and they were shown a place to live on the outskirts of the centres. They began to subsist with cart-wright and portorage. They were obliged to cover a distance in order to go to work.<sup>455</sup> As a reaction to this, the first Gypsy conference

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<sup>453</sup> Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolities* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 87-88.

<sup>454</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, “The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria-Policy and Community Development,” *The Roma Education Resource Book 2*. Available: [http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria\\_Marushiakova-Popov.html](http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria_Marushiakova-Popov.html) [10.03.2009]. In 1879, Gypsies organized a conference in Hungary discussing on the political and civil rights of European Gypsies. See: Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolities* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 95; and, David Crowe, *Gypsies of Eastern Europe*, ed. John Kolsti (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 67.

<sup>455</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 282/95, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 22 Zilkâde 1322 [28 Ocak 1905]; and, BOA, A.)MTZ.04. 137/60, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1323 [19 Ocak 1906].

was held in Vidin, in 1901 and it was decided to organize campaigns.<sup>456</sup> In 1903, 12 Muslim members in Subranie queried the restrictions on voting and in October of the same year, they submitted a petition to the presidency of the Subranie whose petition involved 28 articles about the requests and demands for the Muslims. One of the articles was about the rights of Muslim Gypsies. Even though it failed to obtain political rights for the Muslim Gypsies, the same kind of effort was repeated to the end of 1905. At this time, the leaders of the efforts were Dr. Marko Markof and Mustafa Ragib. They arranged several meetings and started campaigns in Sofia. In spite of the opposition from Bulgarians, he called the representatives of Gypsies to the congress to deprecate the dispossession of their electoral rights. The first Gypsy Congress in Sofia was carried out on 31 December 1905, and it lasted three days. The speeches were in Turkish and Gypsy language. One of the lecturers named Ali; the son of Mutyis asserted:

Our nationality 'Gypsy' is called an insult because we are poor. The administrators of Egypt are Gypsies too. Our only difference lies in that we are illiterate. We want to read and write. We do not have any schools. People are equal. This is not denied by the Quran or by any other holy book. Besides, a few months ago, the Islamic leader in İstanbul ordered that the Muslim Gypsies living in the Ottoman Empire, would accomplish their military and religious services, and declared that the use of the term "Gypsy" in an insulting or prejudicial way would not be accepted by Islam, or by justice. The Sultan commanded everyone to be cautious in word and deed, and to avoid using the word "Gypsy" to define these Muslims. Our only problem is "ignorance." The educated Gypsies in Egypt, Europe and even in Bulgaria succeed. We ask for schools and electoral rights.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria-Policy and Community Development," *The Roma Education Resource Book 2*. Available: [http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria\\_Marushiakova-Popov.html](http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria_Marushiakova-Popov.html) [10.03.2009].

<sup>457</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, pp. 259-262.



In the congress, Gypsies were identified as Muslim and Bulgarian citizens. The main point was that they could serve in the army and they could pay their taxes but even though both the Berlin Treaty and Bulgarian Constitution said the opposite, they could not participate in the elections. This should not have been their price for all these.<sup>458</sup> The members of the congress determined to send a telegraph to the prince for their electoral right and opening up of the schools. Five Gypsy representatives appealed to the Prince and the president of Subranie. Especially Muslim Gypsies of Filibe were very interested in opening up schools for education. For education, they attached importance to attending the congress. However, one archival document stated that when they had that right, they tried to intervene in the education affairs and became partly opponents. In that situation, the point made the state abstain from was their re-intervention in the matters and because of their illiteracy and ignorance; they could become somebody's pawn. Therefore, they could cause Islam to be trampled on. In this case, there would be a guarantee of not letting this happen, but either way, the schools would be open and it was thought that schools could be guaranteed. That is, if they were educated, there would not be that kind of problems. A convenient school would be open and a teacher would be appointed with the salary of 60 *franc*.<sup>459</sup>

Moreover, Mustafa Ragip demanded the publication of a newspaper in Bulgarian and French to assert the Gypsy rights, but it was rejected. Meeting with the second president in Subranie, a visit to the supporting newspaper, reading the telegraph sent to the Subranie during the session of the president of the Subranie and a deputy gave a lecture for Gypsies. After the congress of Sofia, the Gypsy commission with the

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<sup>458</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, pp. 259-262.

<sup>459</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 282/95, adet: 2, vesika. 1, 22 Zilkâde 1322 [28 Ocak 1905]; and, BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 137/60, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 23 Zilkâde 1323 [19 Ocak 1906].

contribution of Dr. Markof and Mustafa Ragıp assembled several times mostly in the Muslim Gypsy settlements in Plovdiv, Haskovo, Yambol, Burgas, Aytos, Varna, Ruse, Dolbrich, and Balchik. The Muslim public and press supported this movement.<sup>460</sup> The registration of the Gypsy elementary school in different times could be the profit of that running battle. Eventually, the Bulgarian National Assembly voted for the new electoral law and in that law, the rights of those Gypsies were given back.<sup>461</sup>

Apart from that matter, about Gypsies of Bulgaria, some migratory cases were seen. Some Gypsies, particularly from Filibe, Cumâ-yı Bâlâ, Peştere and Pazarcık, tried to pass from Bulgaria to the Ottoman Empire. In general, they had no passports. One of the cases was as follows: a Gypsy soldier who was in charge of the department of *Zaptiye* had escaped to the Emirate four years ago. In these days, he was caught while trying to go into the Ottoman Empire with his friend, a run-away Bulgarian soldier.<sup>462</sup> A few of them tried to come to the border and attempted to slip over it in order to escape from Bulgarian oppression. Ten Gypsies from the people of Pazarcık attempted to escape from the Bulgarian atrocity and came to Robçoz *Hatt-ı İmtiyâz*. One time, ten Gypsies as families arrived at the prerogative line (*imtiyâz hattı*) and took refuge in a police station, but then they were consigned to the local government and the second time, thirty-five Gypsies tried to escape and twenty-one took refuge in the battalion in Yahyalı and fourteen took refuge in the battalion of

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<sup>460</sup> Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, pp. 259-262.

<sup>461</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria-Policy and Community Development," *The Roma Education Resource Book 2*. Available: [http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria\\_Marushiakova-Popov.html](http://www.osi.hu/esp/rei/Bulgaria_Marushiakova-Popov.html) [10.03.2009].

<sup>462</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 243/34, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Zilhicce 1324 [18 Ocak 1907].

Hocalar, but they were consigned to the local government.<sup>463</sup> Thirdly, seventeen Muslim Gypsies who were from the community of Peştere took sanctuary in the police-station to be able to cross over the border.<sup>464</sup> As a fourth, seven Muslim Gypsies from the community of Filibe crossed the border from the region Rubçoz without passports.<sup>465</sup>

As it was seen above, some of the escapes resulted in their capture. Nearly all of them were Muslims, but it would not be completely true if we made a judgement that they all attempted to migrate to the Ottoman Empire because of the Bulgarian atrocity. It could be helpful to bear in mind their nomadic characteristic. In general, they managed to come to the border, but they were captured and consigned to the local government as soon as possible. They all tried to enter the country from the region of Robçoz. From 14 June 1907 to 21 September 1907, nearly 116 immigrants attempted to take refuge in Çreşova in Robçoz in order to migrate to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>466</sup> One of the important problems when migrating to the empire was nomadism and the crimes they committed like theft, pickpocketing and injury. They were given punishments like jail and as long as they did not become well-behaved, they were banished to far-away places such as the interior part of Anatolia (Diyarbakır) and Arabia (Halep).<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 158/67, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Cemâziyyevvel 1325 [30 Haziran 1907]; BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 159/56, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelâhir 1325 [1 Ağustos 1907]; BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 249/30, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Recep 1325 [10 Ağustos 1907]; and, BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 159/94, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Recep 1325 [15 Ağustos 1907].

<sup>464</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 247/112, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Cemâziyyevvel 1325 [24 Haziran 1907].

<sup>465</sup> BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 157/99, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 23 Rebiyyülâhir 1325 [5 Haziran 1907]. For similar escape or migration cases, see: BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 244/12, adet: 7, vesika: 4, 14 Muharrem 1325 [27 Şubat 1907]; and, BOA, A.}MTZ.04. 157/2, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Rebiyyülâhir 1325[14 Mayıs 1907].

<sup>466</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 250/44, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 13 Şabân 1325 [21 Eylül 1907].

<sup>467</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1237/4, adet: 11, vesika: 1-2, 27 Muharrem 1326 [1 Mart 1908].

Nevertheless, the passage to Bulgaria was not as easy as passing to the Ottoman territory, because around 1897, Bulgaria forbade the migration of Gypsies, probably Muslim Gypsies. However, as it was understood from the documents, there was not a strict control, but lately, control for the application of the rule increased so even if they managed to get on the boat; they were not allowed to descend. Therefore, they were not given any passport for migration. Again, Gypsies who migrated there without a passport were given back to the empire.<sup>468</sup> At one time, nearly 121 Gypsies were caught and sent back. Once, some Muslim Gypsies who wanted to go to Silistre were given passports, but they were sent back around Gaipler region, Eastern Rumelia. Documents indicated that a special law was issued in order to prevent the entrance and settlement of nomadic Gypsies. Moreover, this prevention was in operation for ten years. That is why, even though they had passports, they were still sent back to the empire. Gypsies who were from a foreign state were also included in that law. In this case, the state officials wanted to know the number of Gypsies who passed from Bulgaria to the Ottoman Empire. Despite this, the state reacted to this application and the reaction of the state was that “Bulgaria was non-authoritative about the acceptance of Muslim Gypsies.”<sup>469</sup>

In the year of 1907, important information was received. A committee planned to send bombs from Filibe (Plovdiv) to Edirne and Kırkkilise through Gypsies, so

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<sup>468</sup> “*Bulgarların Müslim Kıbtîleri ‘adem-i kabûle salâhiyetleri olmadığı der-kârdır.*”

BOA, DH. MKT. 1204/44, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 29 Şabân 1325 [7 Ekim 1907]; and, BOA, ZB. 22/107, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Eylül 1323 [7 Ekim 1907].

<sup>469</sup> BOA, ZB. 598/102, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Teşrînievvel 1323 [16 Ekim 1907]; BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 254/83, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Safer 1326 [13 Mart 1908]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2665/86, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 27 Şevvâl 1326 [22 Kasım 1908]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2737/63, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 21 Muharrem 1327 [12 Şubat 1909].

taking precautions and preventing their entrance was ordered. It was declared that they probably departed from Filibe (Plovdiv) on 12 August 1907.<sup>470</sup>

Other than these extreme cases, when the Muslim Gypsies committed a theft and were arrested, their transfer to Bulgarian officers was demanded. Sometimes, it was impossible to turn them over to Bulgarian officials as a result of the falsified news because there was no record about their arrest.<sup>471</sup> For example, from Tekri (Tekirli) village of Pazarcık in Eastern Rumelia, Bekiroğlu Mehmed murdered a Bulgarian who had carnal abuse toward Mehmed's wife. With the murder, he broke out of border and ran away to Salça (Selçe) village of Ropçoz. And here he was arrested by forest guards and over his coming clean, he was taken under custody. Then, he was also accused of murdering Mustafa oğlu Hasan from Gavavara town in the county of Tatarpazarcık. Consequently, it was decided to hand him over to the Bulgarian government.<sup>472</sup> Another interesting case was the disappearance of two Gypsies with their oxen in Razlık, while they cut firewood on the border of Baçova village. After the investigation held by Mülazım Ali Efendi, it was understood that Gypsies and the oxen of those Gypsies were abducted to Bulgarian territory by four bandits.<sup>473</sup>

As a matter of fact, the only problem between the borders did not come out with the individuals, but also with the animals. It could be said that it caused more problems than the humans because as we all know; Gypsies were a nomadic group of people who were generally moving with their animals. In usual procedure, it was an obligation to take considerable amount of money for the animals, like mostly used

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<sup>470</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 249/49, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Recep 1325 [14 Ağustos 1907].

<sup>471</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1507/57, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Şabân 1305 [10 Mayıs 1888]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1531/64, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Zilhicce 1305 [11 Ağustos 1888].

<sup>472</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 244/27, adet: 6, vesika: 1 and 4, 27 Zilkâde 1311 [1 Haziran 1894].

<sup>473</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 794/66, adet: 10, vesika: 1 and 5, 26 Şabân 1321 [17 Kasım 1903].

horses. However, the economic situation did not always permit the continuation of that application. The tax was called *gümrük resmi*. They were generally poor and it was impossible to pay that tax. Moreover, it was learned that they hired those horses to carry their goods. Besides, those horses were not so valuable. Therefore, the state which was aware of the condition let them pass to Bulgaria without payment.<sup>474</sup>

In reality, Bulgaria was not the only country who prevented the Gypsy migration. In the same manner, the entrance of Gypsies to Romania was prohibited because of the epidemics they carried and their corrupted behaviours. Foreign Gypsy groups would be dismissed, and the ones who held their travel permits would also be arrested. Besides, the Romanian government took some precautions to stop all these.<sup>475</sup> At that time, Gypsy migration from Romania to the Ottoman Empire was usually seen. One group who had passports took off in order to go to Çorlu and their number was 15 households and 80 people. They, at first, tried to stay in Çatalca, but it was prohibited and their further deployment was demanded. They spent one night in Okmeydanı and on the way to Silivri; they departed to go to Çorlu. Another 84 passported Gypsy group went to Kasımpaşa and Okmeydanı. They were all nomadic Gypsies and their stay over there could not be allowed. In addition to this, some in disguise were involved in anarchism. To stop this situation, their travel to Dersaâdet had to be prevented by not giving visa to their passports. Some were prevented from going further, but it was heard that some were still in Ali Bey village of Küçükçekmece.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2227/96, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Rebiyyülevvel 1317 [1 Ağustos 1899]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2285/90, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 14 Şabân 1317 [18 Aralık 1899].

<sup>475</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 631/41, adet: 6, vesika: 1-3, 12 Şevvâl 1320 [12 Ocak 1903]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2609/6, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 8 Cemâziyyelâhir 1323 [10 Ağustos 1905].

<sup>476</sup> BOA, ZB. 617/141, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Mart 1324 [14 Mart 1908]; BOA, ZB. 339/28, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Mart 1324 [21 Mart 1908]; and, BOA, ZB. 490/46, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Teşrînievvel 1324 [19 Ekim 1908].

In addition to Romania, Hungary also took some precautions for that. Because the nomadic Gypsies got involved in theft and murder, Hungarian government prevented the Gypsy settlement in the cities and also their children could not be educated in state schools anymore.<sup>477</sup> Apart from all these, even if there were not so many documents like the other state had, there were a few documents about international Gypsies. For example, in 1907, according to one document, 26 Gypsies got on a Russian ship from Genova and Pire in order to go to Batum, so the authorities announced to Sindo, Canik, Lazistan, Giresun, Ordu, Fatsa, and İnebolu about not letting them get out.<sup>478</sup>

Lastly, an interesting correspondence emerged about ‘the international nomadic Gypsies.’ 79 people and 18 families of Bosnian Gypsy immigrants who were unable to feed themselves departed to go to Basra and Yemen. Then, they went to Bombay without passports and money. Probably, they had heard that Bosnian immigrants were permitted to stay there. However, they lived there in extreme poverty. Therefore, the authorities wanted the Ottoman Empire to send some money, exactly, 200 *lirâ-yı Osmânî* (Ottoman *lirâ*) or 80 British *lirâ* in order to send those immigrants back, because they did not have enough revenue or output. As there was no time to wait for the money, the local inhabitants collected the required money among themselves. Maybe, the existence of those people bothered them so much that they decided to collect the money. At the same time, the Ottoman officials sent the money, and then learned that the money was collected so the Ottoman Empire stated

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<sup>477</sup> BOA, HR.SYS. 168/59, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Temmuz 1907.

<sup>478</sup> BOA, ZB. 606/32, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Mart 1323 [20 Mart 1907].

that if the money was saved, the money which was addressed there was needed to be sent back through the agency of the bank.<sup>479</sup>

Consequently, if we go through the interrelations between the Ottoman Empire and Gypsies, the evaluation that you will do depends on where you perceive the emergent situation. Looking from the 'big picture,' it will not be wrong to evaluate the period as a progress in terms of Gypsies. Actually, it was the result of steps taken mutually. In some situations, the state felt the necessity to take its step further and also Gypsies understood the importance of struggling for getting their due or helped the state to carry its steps forward in matters about them. By courtesy of this, some unclarified affairs were laid bare in taxation, military service, denomination, settlement, education, augmentation in their religious basis, census categorization, and so on. In these fields, they gained striking profits. Looking from the 'small picture,' they still had a negative image to get rid of. Because of this, the doors were closed without being opened and they were neglected in some matters. Moreover, the attempts of some resulted in failure and some chose to remain as before. Thus, despite everything, I think, in talking about Gypsies in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), what is important for us is not to discuss whether the glass is empty or full. What is more important is to perceive that the glass is really filled partially.

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<sup>479</sup> BOA, A.}MKT.MHM. 524/40, adet: 18, vesika: 1-12, 5 Safer 1322 [21 Nisan 1904].



## CHAPTER 3

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STRUCTURE OF THE OTTOMAN GYPSIES

#### Inter-communal Relations

Never tell a *Gadjo* where you are going or where you have been. If they know where you come from, they will close the road behind you. If they find out where you're heading, they will have a gallows waiting.<sup>480</sup>

Despised by the Turks and hated by the Christians... The surrounding population views Gypsies as everywhere else as an impure, intellectually and morally inferior race.<sup>481</sup> Konstantin Jirecek

I suppose those two quotations give an idea about the relations between Gypsies and the non-Gypsies, in the Gypsy terminology nominated as *Gadje*. The true nature of Gypsies always created a problem for the Ottoman society and the state. In the relations with the state, they found some ways to live and to go on, sometimes reacted and sometimes escaped. That is to say, they somehow had an option, but coming to the society or the communities, the options decreased quickly, because you can save yourselves from the state but cannot escape from the people. There was no place to live without people called *Gadje*. Actually, this 'dead-end' was what makes their relation interesting. In that situation, they were obliged to have a relation with them, maybe worse or maybe better. The more important part is that their

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<sup>480</sup> Louise Doughty, *Fires in the Dark* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 17.

<sup>481</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans*, trans. Olga Apostolova, ed. Donald Kenrick (Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), pp. 74-75.

relations with the other ethnic communities constituted the relations with the state or the approach of the Ottoman Empire over themselves.

### Inter-communal Relations on Conflicting Interests

Before diving into the intercommunal relations, it will be beneficial to start by looking into the titles given reciprocally. In the previous chapter, we have mentioned about the titles given by the other ethnic communities to Gypsies such as *Kıbtî*, *Abdâl*, and *Çingene*. However, we also talked that unlike the others, Gypsies preferred to call themselves as *Rom* or *Romani*. On the opposite side of this, Gypsies did not give so many titles for the non-Gypsies. They prefer to call them with two ways. Firstly, they called all the non-Gypsies; particularly Christians, Muslims, Jews, as *Gaco* or *Gadje*. *Gaco* designated the husband, and *Gaci* designated the wife. Secondly, they gave different names to each of the ethnic communities. For example; they called Turks *Khorakhái*, the Bulgarians *Dás*, the Greeks *Balamó*, and the Jews *Jut*. To Turkish Gypsies or Gypsies of the Muhammedan religion, the title *Khorakhané Rom* (Turk-Rom) was given.<sup>482</sup> In addition to these titles, Lucy M. J. Garnett puts forward one more title given by them to all Gypsies, which was *Gatchin*.<sup>483</sup>

At the first glance, Gypsies seemed as isolated from the rest of the society and regarding their lives and peculiarities, the communities felt sometimes a kind of superiority or condescension over Gypsies or sometimes their attitude to them could be mocking, disdain, exclusionist and even mercy. The teacher of *Siroz Mekteb-i*

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<sup>482</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohemiens de l'Empire Ottoman* (Constantinople: Antoine Koromela, 1870); and, Alexandre G. Paspati, "Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 7 (1860–1863), pp. 143-270.

<sup>483</sup> Lucy M. J. Garnett, "Çingene Kadınları: Aile Hayatları ve İnançları," *Dans Müzik Kültürü*, no. 64 (2002), pp. 163–167.

*İdâdi ve Mülkiyesi*, Sadi Bey approached the situation by two sided feelings: hatred and mercy. He asserted that they aroused hatred among the surrounding community because of their immoral attitude, theft, stealing, opting for criminalism, lack in faith and living in squalor. However, at the same time, people took pity on them. The reason was clear; they did all these because of ignorance or illiteracy. They were illiterate, and they had no concept of the state, the religion, the Islamism, and the humaneness. Briefly, ignorance was their excuse and therefore, the results of this ignorance; crimes or other inconvenient activities had to be different from what other people were involved in. He summarized the situation by citing two proverbs; “the ignorance brings forth the indigence, the indigence brings forth the murder.” He also says; “the indigence was a tree and the fruit of that tree was the murder.” In overall statements, he did not put every Gypsy in the same plot, and fairly he admitted the existence of Gypsies who earned their lives forging or portering and who were not involved in those types of activities.<sup>484</sup>

The above-stated point gave a general idea about the approach of the communities over them. In the name of deepening the factors that constituted the relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies, Alexandre Paspati specified that Gypsies were foreigners to the people in the middle of whom they lived. They escaped from their society and their civilization, so they were perceived as wild, independent, and savage people.<sup>485</sup>

Additionally, Paspati stated that unlike the others, Gypsies had neither political history, nor literary history. As a substance, they were earning their lives by carrying on some dishonourable jobs. Besides, what they had done was to comply with their

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<sup>484</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

<sup>485</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohemiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, pp. 1-2.

feelings. On the other hand, they had no shame of their race. They expressed themselves with the same animation which they showed in their steps and in their gestures. That is to say, they were different naturally from their surrounding society.<sup>486</sup>

However, there were some other matters, which were attributed to Gypsies by the surrounding society. For example, on a religious basis, they neglected to observe religious commands, so they were so-called religious sometimes because of the weakness or sometimes because of the fear of punishments or to receive benefits. Briefly, they were considered pagans. The kind of religion which they declare is so superficial, so the Muslims and the Christians did not deem them any place in their religious hierarchy, meaning, they blocked their entrance into their mosques and churches.<sup>487</sup>

The statements indicated that one of the basic factors, which influenced the relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies negatively, was their opting for criminalism; most commonly, theft. They were involved in theft, robbery or stealing habitually, and when they stole or disseised something from non-Gypsies, their value in the eyes of non-Gypsies depreciated. For example, in the year of 1905, a Gypsy dancing girl named Fatma, who dwelled in Gülmezoğlu neighbourhood in Selanik, went to the store of a Jewish lapidary or jeweller and bought a diamond ring which was valued at 125 *kuruş*. However, the only condition of exchange was to pay the price the next day and if she could not pay, she was to bring it back to the Jewish lapidary. Nevertheless, a week past over the sale and there was no girl, no money, or no diamond ring. Then, the lapidary began to look for her, but he could find neither

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<sup>486</sup> Alexandre G. Paspatis, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohemiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>487</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

the girl nor the ring. He applied every way to take his ring back, but all these failed. By the way, months passed too. Lastly, he applied to the police in order to take the ring back with the officers.<sup>488</sup>

Another larceny case occurred in Kavala in the year of 1903. In the morning, a Gypsy man tried to steal a moneybag or purse from the pocket of an individual who was from the British community. Actually, he was able to steal the money, but then, he was caught with the moneybag, so the moneybag was returned to the owner and the thief was submitted to the justice.<sup>489</sup>

In addition to the theft, they also tended to abuse people with whom they lived or in other words, their tendency to deceive the surrounding society composed a negative image in the eyes of the non-Gypsies. In the year of 1905, three individuals from the Ottoman Gypsy community deceived people. One of them introduced himself as a Persian *şehbender vekili* and probably promised people to get a passport for them in return for 45 *kuruş* so that way; they would get rid of the military service. By the same method, they deceived many people and got their money. That situation became known with the complaint of Mehmed bin Ahmed.<sup>490</sup> This was an example for the small-scale deceit, but there were the big-scale ones as well. Sometimes, some Gypsies benefited from the tension between the Muslims and the Christians by giving a false colour. In 1897, a Gypsy woman fabricated false news about the attack of Christians on three mosques in Edirne.<sup>491</sup> Likely, it was learnt that in 1909, two Gypsy men from Çankırı were wandering around the town of Kalecik and disseminated that Christian families would be destroyed within two days. Therefore,

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<sup>488</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 66/6557, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [13 Haziran 1905].

<sup>489</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 21/2001, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Recep 1321 [2 Ekim 1903].

<sup>490</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 977/14, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [24 Haziran 1905].

<sup>491</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 156/50, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Zilhicce 1314 [4 Mayıs 1897].

the families got into a panic and they were hyped up. The alleged offenders were caught and in their interrogations, they contradicted it. Then, the notables of non-Muslims were gathered and were advised not to believe all these news. In spite of everything, in the perception of the authorities, what they had done was tantamount to murder.<sup>492</sup>

In 1909 again, there emerged the news that some Christians were massacred in some places of the province of Konya, or some group of people were eradicated by 1,500 Armenians. The case was called as *Bozkır Vak'ası*. However, an event really occurred, but not between Muslims and Christians, conversely, between the new-comer nomadic Gypsies, numbered as fifty or sixty and the inhabitants of the region. The reason of the quarrel was stated as follows: the boiler-smith Gypsies presumed to feed their animals with the meadows and that irritated the villagers. However, it was not certain who circulated these kinds of news, which had the possibility of causing a severe problem. It was whether Gypsies or people who had the intention of benefiting from the situation. Even if Gypsies were not involved in these, the event was important to show the relations between the nomadic Gypsies and the surrounding population. That is, when Gypsies constituted a threat to the lives of the inhabitants, the problem became inevitable between two sides.<sup>493</sup> Outside of these peculiarities, the wandering life of their musicians, their banquets, the debauchery, sexual looseness and the prostitution moved them also away from a very good society.

However, Gypsies were not always the side that made their relations worse. In other words, they did not contribute to the negative social biases constantly. Maybe,

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<sup>492</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2816/77, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 27 Rebiyyülâhir 1327 [18 Mayıs 1909]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2880/41, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 1 Recep 1327 [19 Temmuz 1909].

<sup>493</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2825/7, adet: 3, vesika: 2, 7 Cemâziyyevvel 1327 [27 Mayıs 1909]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2827/85, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 13 Cemâziyyevvel 1327 [2 Haziran 1909].

their actions, not all of them, could deepen the biases, but already existing biases among the society could be harmful for them, especially for the innocent Gypsies, even if they did not do anything that deserved to draw reactions. An event told by British Consulates, Charles Brophy and Stanislas Clair in the region of Varna in the second half of the nineteenth century could be a good example of how the substantial biases hurt them:

Gypsies make a living largely by supplementing the proceeds from their craftwork with the sale of the produce of their small herds, of butter and milk, in the towns. However, since they do not own the land, they have to buy flour for their needs and corn for their animals from the Christians. For them the villagers put up the price, which becomes higher for every article sold. The payment is in money or in labour. When Gypsies offer their labour, the profit to be made from them can go even higher, as the rates offered for Gypsies' work can be arbitrarily lowered. In this way, Gypsies are a good source of profit for the villagers. However, as the spring comes and their herds can graze in the fields, they can sell more butter and milk in Varna, and in this way make more money and be less dependent on the village. The local Bulgarian populations then call a meeting of their leaders at which they decide to make them go away, since Gypsies graze their herds in the meadows without paying for this privilege, at the same time buying very little produce from the village. In this respect it must be added that the Christians themselves do not pay anything for the use of these huge lands with meadows but they make a fuss about the use of the land by Gypsies. The pressure that followed was put in a 'delicate' way – one night, without warning, the houses of Gypsies were set fire on so that the poor Gypsies had to go away. In the winter, however, many of them came back and asked if they could stop in a different place, also near village. And, since for the inhabitants of this village, Dereköy, the winter is the most profitable season because of Gypsies, they granted them permission with pleasure.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans*, pp. 74-75.

Their substantial biases were so strong that it caused them to abstain from living in the same place or quarter with Gypsies. For instance, in the year of 1895, it was heard that some Gypsy individuals would be settled in some villages of the county of Lüleburgaz, in the district of Kirkkilise. The local population who was informed of that probable Gypsy settlement applied to the authorities for a revoke of the decision. Also, in the year of 1889, a Gypsy couple who intended to buy land to live on was precluded by the Muslim inhabitants. However, at the beginning, the sale was approved, because those two Gypsies presented themselves as immigrants, but then their Gypsy ethnicity was heard and local Muslim population who did not want to intermingle with these Gypsies protested against the sale, so the sale was stopped.<sup>495</sup> That case indicated that living in the same place did not bother Gypsies in reality, but this situation bothered the local population much more.

Actually, some local population did not just abstain from living in the same territory, but also they abstained from helping them. In the year of 1906, a Gypsy family departed from Ohri in order to go to Resne and on the way, they felt a need to stay overnight, so they demanded from the villagers a place to stay. However, they were rejected. Nevertheless, they were not just rejected, but at the same time, they saw a group of people coming towards themselves. An event broke out, and a Gypsy man had to escape and leave his paralysed wife and other Gypsy man there. After the escape, he stayed in the forest and in the morning, he went to the police to save his family. Nevertheless, there was no clue about their lives or deaths, and also it was informed that they did not arrive in Resne at all. Presumably, something was done to them by the Bulgarian bandits.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 424/52, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1313 [ 9 Eylül 1895]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1677/27, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Rebiyyülâhir 1307 [26 Kasım 1889].

<sup>496</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 93/9214, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Rebiyyülevvel 1324 [11 Mayıs 1906].



Especially, from the documents, we learnt that Gypsies suffered from the actions of the bandits especially the Bulgarian bandits. They were disseised, kidnapped, locked up, injured and slaughtered with knife.<sup>497</sup> Even if it was not the Bulgarian bandits, there were cases like beating, injury and murders of Gypsies by the Bulgarians.<sup>498</sup> Sometimes, the ordinary villagers could get involved in the events towards Gypsies as well. For example, in 1907, while three Gypsy men and one Gypsy girl, who was a servant, were going on a visit from Kratova to Kumanova, they were trapped by the Bulgarian villagers near Kumanova and also the villagers fired over Gypsies, so the girl was dead, one Gypsy man was injured at first and then, he died too. Also, the other Gypsies saved their lives by escaping to another village. After the search, twelve Bulgarians were arrested.<sup>499</sup> Other than this, there could be an argument and fight between women of two ethnicities. For instance, in 1907, in Pirlepe, Gypsy Esmâ bint-i Murad and her sister fought with their neighbours, Bulgarian women over a horse, in the end, Esmâ was injured on her head.<sup>500</sup>

Besides Bulgarians, there were pounding, injuries, and murders of Gypsies by other ethnic groups as well. For example, in 1907, another Gypsy family who went to Ohri from Resne was injured on the way by an *Ulah* herdman. Likely, in 1898, in

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<sup>497</sup> BOA, A.} MKT.MHM. 480/88, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1293 [29 Haziran 1876]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 5/406, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Zilkâde 1320 [14 Şubat 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 87/8616, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 25 Şabân 1323 [25 Ekim 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 149/14866, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelelvel 1325 [2 Temmuz 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 156/15538, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Recep 1325 [2 Eylül 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 163/16245, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1326 [20 Nisan 1908].

<sup>498</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 5/459, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 30 Zilkâde 1320 [28 Şubat 1903]; BOA, A.}MTZ.(04), 90/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Zilhicce 1320 [23 Mart 1903]; BOA, A.}MTZ.(04). 98/9, adet: 3, vesika: 2, 2 Rebiyyülâhir 1321 [28 Haziran 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 101/10074, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Cemâziyyelâhir 1324 [14 Ağustos 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 133/13290, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Zilhicce 1324 [11 Şubat 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 182/18199, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Şevvâl 1325 [4 Aralık 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.SL. 186/18501, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Cemâziyyelelvel 1326 [7 Haziran 1908].

<sup>499</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 164/16355, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 2 Cemâziyyelelvel 1325 [13 Haziran 1907].

<sup>500</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 127/12668, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Rebiyyülâhir 1325 [10 Haziran 1907].

İşkalanta village of Kalabaka, a large group of bandits came to the tent of the nomadic Gypsies whose number was seven and they attacked Gypsies over there. The two of them were burned alive, the other two were murdered and one was injured. The remaining two managed to escape and reported the event to the authorities.<sup>501</sup> In 1890, a Gypsy man, aged 35 who was actually from the immigrant of Leskofça and dwelt in Priştine made a complaint about his pounding by the *kavas* of the Serbian consul. He said that after he bought his bread, he began to go home and at the same time, he was singing a song. When he came in front of the residence of the consul, his *kavas* went out, and asked why he was singing and ordered him to stop it. Then, he began to beat him with a stick in his hand and after a while, the consul and his wife also went out and supported the *kavas*' action. In his interrogation, the Gypsy accepted his insobriety and said that Gypsies tended to sing a song all the time and his drunkenness also contributed to this situation. However, the document told us that the same Gypsy man seemed to sing the song a second time and therefore, he was taken to the police precinct. After that, another event occurred and this time, the *kavas* was murdered and the first person who came to mind as a suspect was that very Gypsy man. However, it was soon understood that he did not kill the *kavas*. The murder occurred, while the Gypsy man was taken to the administration after singing the song for the second time. In reality, the killer was a Serbian immigrant and his friend.<sup>502</sup> It was also possible to meet with cases that

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<sup>501</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 132/13194, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Cemâziyyelâhir 1325 [19 Temmuz 1907]; and, BOA, Y.PRK.PT. 17/40, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Zilkâde 1315 [31 Mart 1898].

<sup>502</sup> BOA, HR.HMŞ.İŞO. 175/19, adet: 5, vesika: 1, 1 Rebiyyülevvel 1308 [15 Ekim 1890]; and, BOA, HR.HMŞ.İŞO. 175/35, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 11 Rebiyyülâhir 1308 [24 Kasım 1890].

occurred between Greeks and Gypsies. Some of the cases showed that Gypsies were killed by individuals from the Greek community as well.<sup>503</sup>

Sometimes, the fear of Gypsies from the surrounding people or the officers caused them to get hurt. For instance, in the year of 1907, while a Gypsy man from Baldeste-i Zir village of Usturumca was going to the threshing with his horses, he encountered a sentry of the military station on the way. When the sentry asked him questions, the Gypsy did not only leave the questions unanswered, but also started to run away, so the sentry shot him from his left leg.<sup>504</sup>

In the year of 1903, a Gypsy man and his six friends, who were living in the Gypsy neighbourhood in Gilan, went to the forest in order to gather firewood and three Christian people came near them and tried to take their axes by force. After they grabbed them, the Christians injured two of them with the rifle.<sup>505</sup> Likewise, in the year of 1905, when a group of people, a Gypsy among them, went to the forest with the same purpose, Christians from Bizikova village ambushed them and attacked them with stones and sticks. As a result, some people were wounded and among the injured individuals, there was a Gypsy man, too.<sup>506</sup>

In 1906, a man who had been committed to prison for murder escaped from the detention barracks in Prizrin. Then, over his larceny in the breakout days, *gayr-i muvakkat tevkiif* was ordered for him, but the officials failed to capture and arrest him. Finally, he sneaked into the house of a Gypsy family and also he attempted to rape the Gypsy wife, so when the husband witnessed the attack of the criminal

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<sup>503</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 73/7209, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1323 [24 Mayıs 1905].

<sup>504</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 152/15172, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelâhir 1325 [1 Ağustos 1907].

<sup>505</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 47/4672, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 9 Şevvâl 1321 [28 Aralık 1903].

<sup>506</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 103/10237, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 16 Recep 1323 [16 Eylül 1905].

In order to inquiry similar case, see: BOA, TFR.I.KV. 83/8241, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Zilhicce 1322 [27 Şubat 1905].

toward his wife, he injured the fugitive with bullets. By that way, the criminal was arrested again.<sup>507</sup>

Apart from the abuse of the communities, the officers also tended to abuse Gypsies. In the year of 1903, a Gypsy was brought to the police precinct by the officer who patrolled in the bazaar on Easter. The excuse of the officer was the slapping by the thief boy. After booking him in, he went back to the bazaar but when he returned, he found the boy released by the commissar. Also, the commissar told him that he would not patrol in the bazaar anymore. Therefore, he wrote a petition to complain. However, the commissar claimed exactly the opposite and he said that the officer was bringing Gypsy people to the precinct without any reason. Lastly, he brought a Gypsy boy whose age was thirteen and who was working as servant for a landlord from Üsküp. Apparently, the officer beat the boy with a whip calamitously. After he learnt the release, he threatened the commissar.<sup>508</sup>

In 1903, a complaint was received about the director of Ayazmend, İsmail Hakkı Efendi. According to the complaint, the director assaulted a Gypsy girl with intent to rape. An investigation started about him, but, in the eyes of the public, he lost his personal dignity. Again, he would be treated according to the result of the interrogation.<sup>509</sup> Likewise, in 1903, a Gypsy was pounded with flagellum by a drunken gendarme in the town of Siroz. Then, the gendarme was caught and so an investigation started about him.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 121/12028, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 30 Muharrem 1324 [26 Mart 1906].

<sup>508</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 8/718, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 22 Muharrem 1321 [20 Nisan 1903].

<sup>509</sup> BOA, Y.EE.KP. 19/1841, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Rebiyyülâhir 1321 [4 Temmuz 1903].

<sup>510</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 27/2627, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Ramazân 1321 [26 Aralık 1903].

For the murder of a Gypsy by Bosanian gendarme in Boşova-i Bâlâ, in 1904, see: BOA, TFR.I.SL. 55/5428, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Şabân 1322 [20 Ekim 1904]; and, for the murder of a Gypsy by an Albanian who was *sekbân* in the farm of Sarıgazi, in 1905, see: BOA, TFR.I.SL. 75/7448, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [15 Haziran 1905].

Even if the number of thefts was not as high as the ones Gypsies committed, Gypsies could be dispossessed and robbed. The document dated 1903 told us, in Görice; some stuff was stolen from the store of a Gypsy. The value of the stolen things was 128 *kuruş*.<sup>511</sup> In addition to these kinds of events, there could be seen double sided collisions. For example, in the year of 1904, in Gostivar, there appeared a clash between the drummer Gypsies and the soldiers. Both sides had casualties and wounded individuals. Even, one Christian boy who was twelve years old was killed while he was passing by.<sup>512</sup>

Sometimes, the conflict of interest could cause some disagreements among Gypsies and other ethnic groups. For instance, in the year of 1903, a Greek, named Denya veled-i Done and a Gypsy man, named Kara Mehmed oğlu Hüseyin argued because of the water which was reserved for the irrigation of a land in the farm of Ulumara. The Gypsy man hit the head of Denya with forging bellows, but he was caught and turned to *dâ'ire-i istintâk* (questlon office).<sup>513</sup>

#### Inter-communal Relations on Common Interests

The relation between the surrounding population and Gypsies were not just based on conflict and disagreement. There were still Gypsies who could be able to establish a good relationship with non-Gypsies. In the previous part, we have mentioned the separate settlement or the neighbourhood of Gypsies. However, we are also conscious of the living of Gypsies and the non-Gypsies side by side. That meant, sometimes, the two groups managed to live in the same place. In addition to this, in

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<sup>511</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 5/438, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Zilhicce 1320 [4 Mart 1903].

<sup>512</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 68/6733, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelevvel 1322 [4 Ağustos 1904].

<sup>513</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 14/1314, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Rebiyyülâhir 1321 [1 Temmuz 1903].

some cases, we witnessed the inter-marriage between Gypsies and the other ethnicities. About this, Alexandre Paspati divided the Turks and the Christians. He stated; “Turks were not prissy in the selection of their wives, and they often married Gypsy women. However, it was not the same with the Christians and they attempted to keep themselves aloof from family connections with Gypsies, and so they rarely had any intercourse with them. No Gypsy is ever permitted to enter into any of the sacerdotal offices of the Greek church.”<sup>514</sup>

Even though the inter-communal marriages were not so widespread, the love between the Gypsy girl and the non-Gypsy man or the love between the non-Gypsy girl and the Gypsy man was the mostly emphasized subject in the Ottoman novels and stories. In the famous novel of Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Çingene* (Gypsy), we see, Şems Hikmet Bey, who was the son of a trader and who was so much interested in music, fell in love with a Gypsy girl named Ziba whom he met in Kağıthane. The girl was among the Gypsy women who earned their lives dancing, singing, playing musical instruments and imitating Gypsy fight in Kağıthane, the famous excursion spot of the period. For him, the girl and her voice were so good, but her smarmy attitudes and speech reduced all the values in her. Therefore, with the effect of the love he felt, Şems Hikmet Bey decided to educate the girl for revealing her beauties and legitimizing his love against the public. In reality, the novel was such a good example to explain the relations between Gypsies and the surrounding populations. Especially, Ahmet Midhat Efendi approached differently prejudices and biases of the society about Gypsies (impure Gypsy touch, irreligious Gypsies, loose Gypsy women, after the sexual relation with the Gypsy girl, the man would never be cleaned, not eaten food which was cut by Gypsies, their continuous pre-religion

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<sup>514</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, “Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, pp. 143-270.

faiths), and he endeavoured to demonstrate that they were humans too and in spite of their irritating attitudes, they could be civilized by education. The author proved this by showing the girl as educated individual at the end of the novel. Interestingly, Ahmet Midhat Efendi stated in the novel that the real culprit of the actions of Gypsies was other people who were unable to educate them.<sup>515</sup> Outside of this, in *Çingene Kızı* (Gypsy girl), Mahmut Esad Karakurt mentions a story of love bond and sexual intercourse between a man and a Gypsy girl who sang songs and told the fortunes of people.<sup>516</sup> Likewise, in “Yıldı Bir,” Refik Halid Karay told the love-story between a miller, Bekir, and the Gypsy girl.<sup>517</sup> In his story of *Değirmen*, Sabahattin recounted the love-story between the daughter of a miller and Gypsy clarinet player.<sup>518</sup> As a sample from abroad, we have the short story of David Herbert Lawrence, *Çingene ve Bakire* (Gypsy and the Virgin). In it, he told the love of a girl named Yvette to a Gypsy boy.<sup>519</sup>

Apart from this, even if there were disagreements between these two groups, the non-Gypsies could not totally ignore Gypsies, because they needed Gypsies who had a certain type of profession and who had the skill that could be beneficial for the inhabitants. In the year of 1907, a Greek from the town of Langaza was killed by a Muslim Gypsy. This person was also connected to the Greek committee. After the event, some of the Greeks decided not to call the musician Gypsies to their weddings

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<sup>515</sup> Ahmet Midhat Efendi, “Çingene,” in: *Letâif-i Rivâyat* (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2001), pp. 437-496; and, Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Çingene*, ed. S. Emrah Arlıhan (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2009).

<sup>516</sup> Mahmud Esad, “Çingene Kızı,” in: *Bir Gönül Masalı* (İstanbul: Cemiyet Kitâbhanesi (Necm-i İstikbâl Matbaası), 1926), pp. 9-13.

<sup>517</sup> Refik Halid Karay, “Yıldı Bir,” *Memleket Hikâyeleri* (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1997), pp. 121-128.

<sup>518</sup> Sabahattin Ali, “Değirmen,” *Değirmen* (İstanbul: YKY, 2008), pp. 13-23.

<sup>519</sup> David Herbert Lawrence, “Çingene ve Bakire,” in: *Çingene ve Bakire*, trans. Mehmet Harmanacı (İstanbul: Say, 2004), pp. 164-263.

or important ceremonies. In defiance to the decision, a Greek hired the Gypsy musicians to play in his wedding. Other Greeks were angry at his attitude, and ordered him to turn them out. If he did not do this, they would compel him and not to let into the church. Therefore, the wedding would not be realized. The essential precautions were taken against the possibility of unapproved event and the individuals were given warning on this. Affirmatively, Selanik Greek metropolitan bishop ordered not to let Gypsies play in the wedding. The authorities reacted to the situation because in this case, this kind of hostility would affect the Islamic people in a bad way. Moreover, this situation could cause major malice, so what had to be done was asked to the upper seats.<sup>520</sup> This situation proved how much the abilities of Gypsies were appreciated by other ethnic communities.

Some murder or injury cases could be a guide about the inter-communal relations. For instance, in 1907, a Gypsy who was regarded as bandit by the authorities was captured as unarmed in Rumeli-i Şarkî. However, the point which made the situation interesting was that his intimate friend was also a bandit and he was an Albanian.<sup>521</sup> Another case about the friendship of the banditry occurred in 1908. During the patrol of the gendarme, a Gypsy man was met and the gendarme searched him, and he found a letter written by priest of patriarchate. The letter was actually about the destruction of abducted Bulgarian and other Bulgarian in the village and the burning of the houses of the Bulgarians. Looking into holder or transporter of the letter, we witness, the Gypsy involved in the case and managed to

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<sup>520</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 169/16827, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Zilkâde 1325 [21 Aralık 1907].

<sup>521</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 308/63, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Rebiyyülevvel 1325 [23 Nisan 1907].



establish some relations with people from other community, even if the relationship was based on the criminal act.<sup>522</sup>

Consequently, we can say that Gypsies had their own rules and distinct features, and insisting over these rules make them rioter in the eyes of the surrounding population. Being rioter in the eyes of the *Gadje* segregated them from the rest of the world. That created a trouble for their living and substance and pushed them to steal. It was just like a chain. One ring was from the communities and one ring from Gypsies, ethnic tensions escalated. On the other hand, the interesting part of the relation between Gypsies and *Gadje* was that it was the same person who aroused hatred and repulsion among people and who amused and entertained people.

### Religion

There is a famous saying that we all know, which is; “there are seventy-two and a half nations in the world and the half one is Gypsies.” This is the real version of the saying, but in a book,<sup>523</sup> I saw another version of it, and this appears to be more effective than the previous one. In that, “there are seventy-two and a half religions, and the half one is the religion of Gypsies.” Actually, the later one is more correct, because all the treatments, laws, tortures, and practices applied to Gypsies were mostly the result of the supposed ‘half faith.’ This ‘half faith’ hypothesis always makes them an unnoticeable element in all the states and empires. Evidently, they absorbed some of the practices and faiths of other religions without giving up their own beliefs. This two sided religion makes the authorities sceptical about them. This scepticism illuminated the records and proverbs. Just like Evliya Çelebi said: “The

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<sup>522</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 205/20461, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelâhir 1326 [20 Temmuz 1908].

<sup>523</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Çingeneler*, p. 85.

Rumelian Gypsies celebrated Easter with the Christians, the Festival of Sacrifice with the Muslims, and Passover with the Jews.”<sup>524</sup> In his account, Alexandre Paspati made an inference and says; “they have no principles, they serve no God, but the God of gain and fraud, and they conform to all religions. They excite the voluptuous passions of others, but they rarely fall themselves into the sins which they lead others into. A merciless death hangs over the woman who has illicit intercourse, whether with a Gypsy or a foreigner.”<sup>525</sup> The subject of religion was similarly commented by Edson L. Clark as; “they have no principles, no religion; serve no God, but the God of gain and fraud. They have no word in their language for God, or for immortality. Outwardly, however, and for their own advantage, they are ready to adopt any religion as circumstances may require. They make a trade of exciting and pandering to the licentious passions of others, yet are themselves, in some countries at least, rigidly chaste.”<sup>526</sup>

It was possible to find prejudicial anecdotes about their unsatisfactory religion. In one of the anecdotes, it was said, one day, a Gypsy man went to the mosque and took his seat for praying. As a place, he sat down near Kara Rüstem who was troublesome in the neighbourhood. At the end of the prayer, while everybody saluted towards the right, including *imâm*, the Gypsy man saluted to his left, Kara Rüstem. And, after the prayer, people asked the Gypsy man why he saluted to his left, and the Gypsy man replied as; “the God forgives, but Kara Rüstem does not.”<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Victor Friedman and Robert Dankoff, “The Earliest Known Text in Balkan (Rumelian) Romani: A Passage from Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*,” *Journal of Gypsy Lore Society*, I (1991), pp. 1-21.

<sup>525</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, “Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, pp. 143-270.

<sup>526</sup> Edson L. Clark, *Turkey* (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier & Son, 1900), p. 503.

<sup>527</sup> Suat Kolukırık, *Dünden Bugüne Çingenerler: Kültür, Kimlik, Dil, Tarih* (İstanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2009), pp. 122-123.

Some explanations were made in order to bring a meaning to that situation. It was explained with the absence of the private “house of God” or “house of prayer.” According to a rumour, as befitted the position of Gypsies, the first and the last church was made of cheese. Gypsies, who impoverished, were obliged to eat it, so they had no church any more. Therefore, they prayed in Armenian, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches and when they got sick, they appealed to the “Blessed Virgin.”<sup>528</sup>

This scepticism about their faith never ended up in the material world. Conversely, it caused also a problem after death. About this situation, Alexander Paspati gave a description of an event:

In a small village near Tchorlu (Çorlu) between Constantinople and Adrianople, called *Deghirmen Kioy* (village of the Mill), encamped in 1866 a party of wandering *Tchinghianés* with their bears. They had all Musulman names, and were considered Musulman Bohemians. One night, one of them, called Mustapha, in passing a river with his bear got imbedded within the mud up to his waist. His cries were heard by some workmen at a neighbouring farm, but, thinking that highwaymen were at their work, they left the poor fellow to his fate. In the morning, he was still found in the mud-dead. His companions went to the Greek Priest in the village to have him buried, but the priest, knowing that up to that day he had been called Mustapha, was unwilling to bury him. His companions alleged that his name was Theodore. Finally, the Turks, finding no vestige of circumcision, gave him up as a Christian, and he was buried according to the rites of the Christian church.<sup>529</sup>

Because of the ‘half faith’ hypothesis, there occurred a disagreement about the grave and burial ceremony of the Ottoman Gypsies. Orthodox church sent the dead

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<sup>528</sup> Nazım Alpman, *Başka Dünyanın İnsanları: Çingeneleler* (İstanbul: Ozan, 1993), p. 155.

<sup>529</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, “Turkish Gypsies,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Old Series, 1 (1888), pp. 1–3.

body to the mosques and mosques sent them to the Orthodox church. In the case of the acceptance of the body by the Muslims, the grave was always situated in a far-flung part of the cemetery. In that case, what was the cause of this or what created such case. Their dealings with magic, witchcraft, fortune telling, and never making the best of the religion they had, and being apathetic to their accepted religion brought suspicion about them. Maybe, these are all the reason to find an answer through the treatment to Gypsies. The response should be simple like in Christianity, white symbolizes good and the black symbolizes evil, and because the skins of Gypsies were dark, it made people think that they were evil.<sup>530</sup>

Of course, it was not that simple, but they retained their faiths and beliefs and this was explaining partially the alleged half faith. The explanation of the other half was coming from Hermann Berger. Hermann Berger commented on the profaneness in Gypsies and stated that it was because of the oppression of the communities whom they stayed among as guests, so that caused them to pretend to be faithful Muslims or Christians to get rid of oppression. Furthermore, those historical and social circumstances caused them to be shy about the giving any information about their social, religious and spiritual customs.<sup>531</sup>

In the censuses held in that reign, we could not see any other religion apart from Islam and Christianity. Especially regarding Islam, that created an interesting picture, because it is obvious that the Ottomans had a problem about believing their Muslim identity, but there was no any other category as religious bases, just Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, there was not record decently to differentiate Sunni

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<sup>530</sup> Ali Rafet Özkan, *Türkiye Çingenelemi* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2000), p. 19.

<sup>531</sup> Hermann Berger, *Çingene Mitolojisi*, trans. Musa Yaşar Sağlam (Ankara: Ayraç, 2000), p. 13.

Muslims and Shiite Muslims about Gypsies.<sup>532</sup> However, W. R. Halliday asserted that the majority of Gypsies were Sunni Muslims. Outside of this, she also claimed the existence of some Ottoman Gypsies who had the Armenian faith. Those Gypsies were living northern part of the Asia Minor.<sup>533</sup>

Despite this, Reşat Ekrem Koçu preferred to separate Gypsies of İstanbul into three parts considering religion; 1) Atheist or Faithless 2) Muslim Gypsy 3) *Kıbtî-i Nasrânî*. According to *Nasrânî* Gypsies, their ancestors chose to convert to that religion in the period of Byzantine Empire and they got all Greek names like Lambo, Dimitri and Kosti. Reşat Ekrem Koçu states that it does not matter that they are Muslims or *Nasrânî*, because they have no concern with the church or the mosque.<sup>534</sup> Moreover, based on the statement of İsmail Altınöz, in the previous eras, Gypsies were affected by the religious voices of the places where they passed and we could witness this situation with the help of their names such as Şahkulu, Piri, Haydar, Hacı, Hoca, Tabduk, Emre, and so on.<sup>535</sup>

About the religious bases of Gypsies, James Baker claimed that majority of Gypsies had the Islamic religion and a few accepted the tenets of the Greek church. He even admitted that in the Ottoman Empire, the morality of the Christian Gypsies was in lower line as comparing with the Muslim Gypsies.<sup>536</sup> Besides, İlber Ortaylı pointed out that in İstanbul, there were some Gypsies who had Greek-Orthodox

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<sup>532</sup> Kemal Karpat, *The Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 122-169.

<sup>533</sup> William Reginald Halliday, "Gypsies of Turkey," in: *Folklore Studies, Ancient and Modern* (London: Methuen, 1924), pp. 18-19.

<sup>534</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Çingeneler," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VII (İstanbul: Ercan Matbaası, 1971), pp. 3986-3999.

<sup>535</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, (İstanbul: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, 2005), pp. 180.

<sup>536</sup> James Baker, *Turkey* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1877), pp. 200-201.

belief. However, they were not living in the famous neighbourhoods such as Sulukule and Ayvansaray; because according to his statement, in those regions, Gypsies were generally Muslims.<sup>537</sup> Besides, Alexandre Paspati also gave accounts about the religious bases of Gypsies. He said that the sedentary Gypsies were mostly Christians, but died without baptism and the nomadic Gypsies were mostly Muslims, but died without circumcision.<sup>538</sup> According to the place where they stayed, Muslim Ottoman Gypsies became Sunni or *Alevi*. Among them, there were even some Gypsies who visited the Armenian Church. Besides, to get rid of expenses like priest or *imâm*, the nomadic Gypsies buried their dead at night. Apart from these, Alexandre Paspati also asserted that they called God as *Devel*.<sup>539</sup> According to the statement of Halliday, about why they did not go to the church, they replied as “we have not enough money for ourselves, let alone for the priest,” and about keeping the *Ramâzan*, they answered as “we keep *Ramâzan*, brother, all the year round, save when God throws before us a little bit of meat.”<sup>540</sup>

Mrs. Blunt also emphasized their “heathen superstition” against Muslim and Christian religion. Firstly, she mentioned that “a fire was continually burning in their camps” and, also she said; “On the first of May all go in a body to the seacoast or the banks of a river, where they throw water three times on their temples, invoking the invisible *genii loci* to grant their special wishes.” Thirdly, she pointed out that they were drinking annually some potion and its preparation was just known by the oldest and wisest of the tribe. It was taken as “a charm or preventive against the snake bites,

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<sup>537</sup> İber Ortaylı, *İstanbul'dan Sayfalar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1999), pp. 138-139.

<sup>538</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, p. 169.

<sup>539</sup> *ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>540</sup> William Reginald Halliday, “Gypsies of Turkey,” in: *Folklore Studies, Ancient and Modern*, pp. 18-19.

so they can catch snakes and handle them with the greatest impunity, but are never known to kill or hurt these animals.”<sup>541</sup>

Among the points underlined Mrs. Blunt, there was one point emphasized repeatedly by researchers, which was ‘the fire.’ The fire is so important for them even there is a saying that if you want to recognize whether a person is *Roman* or not, you light a fire and wait three minutes and after three minutes, a person who watch the fire and fan the flame is *Roman*.<sup>542</sup>

About the differences between the Muslims and the Christians, Alexandre Paspati took us to an interesting point. As you all know, with the thought that there was neither Gypsy dictionary nor a grammar book, Alexander Paspati wrote a book about Gypsies mainly focusing on the Gypsy language. He believed that the religion was an effective and determinant factor in the language of Gypsies. He pointed out that the Muslim Gypsies were losing their idiom fast, and a few of the new generation know anything of it:

They strive to show zeal in their new religion, and consider their vernacular idiom as partaking of Christian heresy, and of course avoid speaking it as much as possible. In contrast to it, the Christian Gypsies still retain it with an incongruous mixture of Greek and Turkish terms. The profound hatred of the Muslim Gypsies, or rather their contempt of everything pertaining to a Christian, inherited from the genuine Moslems, makes them shy and very poor guides in such matters.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> Mrs. John Elijah Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years Residence among Bulgarians, Greek, Albanians, Turks, and Armenians, by a Consul's Daughter and Wife*, ed. Stanley Lane Poole (London: J. Murray, 1878), p. 160.

<sup>542</sup> Erdinç Çekiç, “Ben Romanım (İnsanım) Roman (Çingene) Kültürü Üzerine Söyleşi,” *Bilim ve Teknik*, 37/442 (Ankara, 2004), pp. 74–75.

<sup>543</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, “Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, pp. 143–270.

It would be absolutely wrong to emphasize the complete lack of faith Muslim or Christian. At least, for the Islamic faith of Gypsies, it could be underlined that some kept the religious orders and we learnt that from their petitions for the erase of the title coming before their religion: *Kıbtî*. The deletes of that title showed that they achieved to prove their well-based Islam.

If we ask about the religious conversion, there were not so much archival documents. In 1893, some claimed that the Muslims Gypsies were forced to the religious conversion in Serbia, but the falsity of the news was understood in a short time. In contrast to the conversion from Islam to Christianity, there was a document to show us that a Christian Gypsy girl converted to Islam in 1903. The Gypsy girl named İlya Aftim was living in Yeni Mahalle, Görice. The girl who was twenty-two years old came to the *Zaptiye* and submitted a petition for the conversion and the alteration of her name that was suitable for the Islamic religion. In her interrogation, she gave a statement that six months ago, she had a dream and being affected by the dream, she decided to change her religion. Then, she told her dream to her parents, but they objected to her decision and her family even scared her off. In the *Zaptiye*, the officers kept her in the ward and at times, she was visited by her parents for dissuading her. Even, some people from her neighbourhood also visited her for changing her decision and if she gave up of this decision, she would be given 50 *lirâs* by the metropolitan bishop. In the interrogation, we learnt that some people objected her to staying in the ward and the officers asked her whether she was content about her sending to one of the mansions of Muslim men. She declared that she came with her free-will and she would be content with every decision made about her. At the



end, the officers were persuaded that there was no coercion or constraint and she changed her religion on her own accord.<sup>544</sup>

In 1904, coming to the centre county, a Gypsy woman from the Bulgarian community, Alto bint-i Nikola, submitted a petition to convert and her petition was put into process, but we do not know that if she finally converted or not. Similarly, in 1905, another Gypsy woman applied also for conversion, but then she regretted it, and she was turned over her husband by the officials. However, toward the evening, she was abducted by three individuals. Looking at their names like Bayram, Kadri and Yusuf, we can predict that they were Muslims and also among them, there was a Gypsy man too.<sup>545</sup>

### Occupations

In the Ottoman Empire, most of Gypsies did not have permanent residence or stable occupation and they mostly managed their lives with temporary jobs, or jobs whose income was not great, so that situation caused them to have low welfare level. They went where they could feed themselves, or went where they found the money for managing their lives. They fed themselves when they could find food or otherwise they could not have this. Therefore, they could even die because of poverty and deprivation. In the year of 1905, in the desolation of Gazi Mehmed Bey Medresesi, Karaferiye, an individual was found as dead. In the inquiry, it was learnt that the corpse belonged to a Bosnian immigrant and Muslim Gypsy man. The man whose name was Rahman was around sixty ages and probably he went there ten

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<sup>544</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 2/170, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Şevvâl 1320 [8 Ocak 1903]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 3/239, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 14 Şevvâl 1320 [13 Ocak 1903].

<sup>545</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 43/4270, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Rebiyyülâhir 1322 [22 Haziran 1904]; and, BOA, TFR.I.KV. 106/10591, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Şabân 1323 [20 Ekim 1905].

years ago. Finally, after the physical examination, it was understood that he died because of destitution and indigence.<sup>546</sup>

Sadi Bey, the teacher of *Siroz Mekteb-i İdâdi ve Mülkiyesi* always talked about the low-economic standards of the Ottoman Gypsies. He said that some of them were eating unhealthy foods or piece of foods poured on the ground. Also, they were stirring the junk thrown aside and they took things that they could eat. Even, he defined that they were green with envy about the foods of the dogs. Therefore, as clothes, those Gypsies were wandering with patched *aba*, *kebe* and *setre* or in the winters, they could stroll bare-footed and half naked. Despite that, they were not helped due to the belief that it was not permissible to give alms to them.<sup>547</sup>

In the case of not finding or what they earned was not enough for their living, they were obliged to ask for help from the state officials. If the families who were poor and unable to be self-sufficient had a new-born twin, they were helped in terms of additional contribution titled *tevem*. The amount of the ascribed money was always 30 *kuruş* per month and per head. The payment was rendered from the *belediye sandığı* or *belediye veznesi*.<sup>548</sup>

By reason of poverty, they were sometimes unable to have financial support to the landscape plan. For example, in the year of 1903, in Üsküp, some decisions about the construction of the street and roads were taken. So, in order to realize these plans, the financial and bodily aid was needed. However, a local major of one Gypsy

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<sup>546</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 76/7561, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [30 Haziran 1905].

<sup>547</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

<sup>548</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1719/73, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Şabân 1307 [19 Nisan 1890]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1866/103, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Safer 1309 [10 Eylül 1891]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1930/105, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Şabân 1309 [9 Mart 1892]; BOA, DH.MKT. 317/40, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 13 Cemâziyyelâhir 1312 [11 Aralık 1894]; BOA, DH.MKT. 367/77, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 2 Zilkâde 1312 [27 Nisan 1895]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2729/27, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 12 Muharrem 1327 [4 Şubat 1909].

neighbourhood of Yenitepe in Üsküp declared that they could not subsidise because of lack of budget and also all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood consisted of poor people.<sup>549</sup>

To provide their livelihood, the officials sometimes accepted performing of some professions in places where they wished. In the year of 1909, the nomadic Gypsies demanded to stay in the tents in Uzunçayır, Üsküdar and also they demanded to do their jobs there. At first, the officials hesitated to permit them, because they could disturb the surrounding population and could commit crimes such as theft. However, after a while, it was also thought that if they were not allowed, they could not get their sustenance and they would resort to crimes such as stealing. That is why, they were finally permitted.<sup>550</sup> On the other hand, in that case, the authorities realized that the real factor that pushed them to the robbery or stealing was the inability to feed them, because everybody who was hungry would steal sooner or later. Again, it would be certainly wrong to combine all the Gypsy-related robbery activities to the hungry or starving. Of course, there might be other factors as well.

Interestingly, for some reason, some Gypsies chose to live in the calamity, even if they were helped by the state officials. In Alasonya, in 1907, the military doctor of Alasonya saw a disabled man lying in the street in the snowy weather, and he informed the situation to the authorities. Then, it was learnt that the above-mentioned man was a lonely Gypsy whose hands and feet were crippled. He was given bread and to be settled, a cottage was constructed for him. However, instead of staying in

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<sup>549</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 4/381, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Zilkâde 1320 [8 Şubat 1903].

<sup>550</sup> BOA, ZB. 395/60, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 9 Haziran 1325 [22 Haziran 1909].

his cottage, he preferred to stay outside, and also that situation had been continuing for five or ten years.<sup>551</sup>

İlber Ortaylı separated the Gypsy settlement according to the economic conditions and living standards. He declared that Gypsies in Ayvansaray-Lonca were the most demanded and the most skilled Gypsies, but at the same time, they were too consumptive. As compared with them, Gypsies in Sulukule were poorer than other Gypsies.<sup>552</sup>

Despite everything, some of the professions like crafts meant much more thing than their livelihood because the jobs, which they did, were oriented to supply the society somehow. Briefly, they could fill some of the important niches in the society. Zoltan Barany explained that perfectly:

Although the Roma were at the bottom of the imperial era's economic and occupational scale, they had a well-defined position in imperial economies and played useful and valuable economic roles. In general, the more backward and less developed a region, the more important was Gypsies' economic contribution. In essence, traditional *Romani* skills were appropriate to pre-industrial economies, but industrialization resulted in their gradual economic displacement and increasing marginalization... Because the Ottoman Empire was considerably less industrialized and there was a virtual absence of state-supported economic development under the Turkish Rule, the Roma remained a valued economic contributor for a longer period of time.<sup>553</sup>

As the archival documents declared, the general Gypsy professions of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II were dancer, boiler-smith, blacksmith, drummer, herdsman,

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<sup>551</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 115/11408, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 14 Zilhicce 1324 [28 Ocak 1907].

<sup>552</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İstanbul'dan Sayfalar*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>553</sup> Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*, pp. 88-89.

musician or instrument player, carrier, servant, field-hand, harvester, orchard labourer, tenant farmer, *terođlan*, stone quarry worker, butcher, spoonbill, stock-breeder, farm labourer, tilery labourer, acrobat, sesame collector, labourer in vineyard, *çiftlik aylakçısı*, thresher, *kalburcu*, farmhand, carter, village keeper, and dung dealer.<sup>554</sup> According to other sources, there were basket-weaver, bear trainer, beggary, *bezirgân*, *burgucu*, candle-maker, carpenter, cartwright, carver, chamberlain, clown, cooker, coppersmith, cowherd, cutler, *cüllâh*, *döğenci*, *ellici*, farriery, flower-seller, forest-keeper, fortune teller, griddle maker, gold digger, gun-maker, hatchet maker, *hayyât*, healer, horse-shoer, horse-trainer, horse-dealer, hostler, jewellery, *küreci*, locksmith, lute, miller, miner, oiler, packager, panicum sower, raider, saddler, seller of zythum, *serrâc*, shepherd, ship-maker, sieve maker, soothsaying, steelmaker, strainer, tinsmith, veterinarian, and violin player.<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 66/6557, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [13 Haziran 1905]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2825/7, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 7 Cemâziyyevvel 1327 [27 Mayıs 1909]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1707/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Recep 1307 [11 Mart 1890]; BOA, Y.MTV. 254/40, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 8 Şevvâl 1321 [28 Aralık 1903]; BOA, DH.MKT. 269/2, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Safer 1312 [7 Ağustos 1894]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 15/1462, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Cemâziyyevvel 1321 [26 Temmuz 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 3/217, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Şevvâl 1320 [9 Ocak 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 22/2102, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Recep 1321 [12 Ekim 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 40/3992, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Recep 1321 [19 Ekim 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 53/5272, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Ramazân 1322 [5 Aralık 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 94/9348, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [24 Haziran 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 76/7543, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [28 Haziran 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 149/14877, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Zilkâde 1324 [17 Aralık 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 152/15163, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Zilhicce 1324 [26 Ocak 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 154/15363, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 14 Muharrem 1325 [27 Şubat 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 145/14479, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Şevvâl 1325 [13 Kasım 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 169/16859, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Zilkâde 1325 [2 Ocak 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 176/17544, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Safer 1326 [12 Mart 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 177/17645, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Şabân 1326 [6 Eylül 1908]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1290/7, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Şabân 1326 [6 Eylül 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 51/5005, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Cemâziyyelâhir 1322 [3 Eylül 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 67/6678, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Muharrem 1323 [4 Nisan 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 75/7448, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Rebiyyülâhir 1323 [15 Haziran 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 173/17232, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Recep 1325 [1 Eylül 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 158/15791, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Şabân 1325 [21 Eylül 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 202/20169, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Cemâziyyevvel 1326 [27 Haziran 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 91/9059, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Safer 1324 [24 Nisan 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 84/8354, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 5 Zilhicce 1323 [30 Ocak 1906]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 95/9414, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Rebiyyülâhir 1324 [2 Haziran 1906].

<sup>555</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, pp. 234-35; and pp. 237-238.

Apart from these, there were monkey trainers, shrill pipe player, *çifte naracı*, chair puppetry, mat or reed tissue weaver for the chairs, the seller of *arene*, executioner, and seller of *demirhindi şerbeti* (tamarind sorbe).<sup>556</sup> According to Alexandre Paspati, who travelled Gypsies of the Ottoman Empire noted in his article published in 1889 that Muslim Gypsies of Hariampol in Western Thrace, near the town of Çorlu, were dealing animal trading. He also asserted that all Gypsies in the Rumelia were nearly musicians and they had well-favoured sounds as well as they tend to dance with the accompaniment of the violin. However, they were sometimes carrying the harvest in the farms and sometimes they were engaging in agricultural activities. Gypsies in Bulgaria were not employed in those occupations, but what they did was the basket-making and ironmongery. He also mentioned that some Gypsies of Kırklareli were making and selling sweetmeats. Furthermore, he informed us about female bath workers in Kazanlık, Edirne.<sup>557</sup>

James Baker claimed that in Slivmia, in which the number of inhabitants was 25,000 including Turks, Bulgarians and a few Greeks, Jews, and some Gypsies, he founded a workshop for making cloth that would have done credit to England. This was the institution of government and 200,000 yards of cloth were turned out for the army, and the machinery was all Belgian, at the same time, all the women employees were consisted of Gypsies. He describes the outlook of the Gypsy employees as:

They were a wild-looking set, some of the girls hideously ugly and others remarkably pretty, with that lively, careless, and independent air which is so characteristic of the nation. I was told that morality was not one of their virtues, but they are kept in excellent order while in the factory. The town is

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<sup>556</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII /137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 30–33.

<sup>557</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, "Turkish Gypsies," *Journal of Gypsy Lore Society*, I (1889), pp. 3–5.

kept healthy and clean by running streams led from the mountains, and which ramify through the whole place. All the slaughter-houses are obliged to be in one quarter, and the animals are killed over the stream, which prevents effluvium.<sup>558</sup>

Gypsies in Üsküp (Skopje) (Gazi Menteş, Çarşı, Tophane, Cedid, Katib Şahin) were managing their lives as performing the occupations like *çeribaşı* (Gypsy Chief), locksmith, blacksmith, *kerizci*, porter, *şbig*, worker in martial department, bucket dealer, band of musician, hoodlum of Turkish bath, hostler, gas dealer, workman, fardel dealer, lease-holder of field, vigneron, and builder.<sup>559</sup>

Conversing about Gypsies at the beginning of the twentieth century, Willy Sperco declared that Gypsies were tinsmith, seller of tongs and grills, and seller of *mangal* (braiser). At times, they sold them and in return for these, they got old clothes or empty bottles. Also, they sold tobacco collected from the cigarettes, flowers and greens; *radika* and *kokina*. He also informed us about the fortune tellers and told that they were telling the fortunes of people looking into playing cards, horse-beans, palm, and coffee.<sup>560</sup>

In the nights of the *Ramazân*, there were individuals who promenaded the streets and playing the drums. They generally read the *manzûmes* and after finishing their performances, they waited for their tips. They were mostly composed of Gypsies. They consisted of two individuals: one holding the drum and the other holding the

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<sup>558</sup> James Baker, *Turkey*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>559</sup> Sabri Sürgevil, "19. yy Ortalarında Üsküb Çingeneleri," *CIEPO Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi XIV. Sempozyum Bildirileri 18-22 Eylül 2000, Çeşme = Comite Internationale des Etudes Pre-Ottomanes et Ottomanes (14.: 18-22 Eylül 2000: Çeşme) [Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi Sempozyumu (XIV.: 18-22 Eylül 2000: Çeşme-İzmir)] ed. Tuncer Baykara (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004), pp. 697-709.*

<sup>560</sup> Willy Sperco, *Yüzyılın Başında İstanbul*, trans. Remime Köymen (İstanbul: İstanbul Kütüphanesi, 1989), p. 56.

flambeau. It was a kind of entertainment peculiar to the *Ramazân*. To listen to them for quite a while, the tips were given lately and if it was necessary, the special extra time for listening was demanded. In the mansion or residence of wealthy families, the tips were not given openly, but given as tied to the edge of embroidered handkerchief or paper-wrapped.<sup>561</sup>

Abdülaziz Bey declared that in winter, Gypsy women were picking up cheese-flower, patience dock, lamb's ear, chicory plant, which were raised on their own in the wilderness and stone-deaf. Then, they were selling all these by visiting houses one by one. In summer, the Gypsy women were collecting corn poppies, daisies and fumitory from the wilderness, and some bean fields and they were selling them by walking around the neighbourhoods with the baskets. Besides, Gypsy men were manufacturing and selling slice bar, grille, *ateş küreği*, *tahta küp kapbağı*, *tiny yemek tablası*, chopping board, *çamaşır kafesi* for drying the clothes, and movable little ladder in their home.<sup>562</sup>

In that reign, there was a respectable number of Gypsies who were wood-coal manufacturers. They mainly went to the forest and the mountains to manufacture the wood and the coal. If there was any restraint factor on the way of their livelihood, they were complaining to the state officials just like happened in the year of 1895. Gypsies of Sivas who were providing for that got across an obstacle this time. When they went to cut the tree in the forest, they were prevented so they, particularly the local mayor of Harmanlı Gypsy neighbourhood, applied to the authorities for regaining their rights. In his statement, the local mayor declared that they had no

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<sup>561</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, eds. Kazım Arısan and Duygu Arısan Günay (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), pp. 258-259.

<sup>562</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 330-331.



property or landed property and without this, they could not give their taxes so there emerged a remaining debt and also their families were hungry.<sup>563</sup>

Among all those professions mentioned above, some were based on the master-apprenticeship system. Besides, one part of these occupations was clearly inherited from father to son. All above the occupations told us that Gypsies were openly engaged in agriculture. Zoltan Barany underlined an important point which is:

For logical reasons, many occupations common among the Roma were practiced on the road and required the use of minimal equipment. Their reputation as thieves, beggars and prostitutes contributed to expulsion and persecution that went hand in hand with the prohibition of settling and of land ownership. Thus their traditional propensity to keep moving and engage in occupations peddling, wood carving, bear taming, tinkering, basket-weaving- that afforded a certain amount of personal independence and liberty and could be exercised while travelling was reinforced.<sup>564</sup>

What Barany tried to underline was actually true: their nomadic character added so much to their occupational life so that wandering a lot made them aware of nature better than the sedentary ones, because the local inhabitants only knew the region where they lived, but Gypsies travelled to different regions, different parts of the nature so they saw many climates and the contribution of these many climates to the region and to the plants. Their speciality in the plants and healing actually comes from this point. Especially when we think about the approach of the other people, they got to find to cure their diseases and the diseases of their animals.

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<sup>563</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 338/37, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 3 Şabân 1312 [30 Ocak 1895]; BOA, DH.MKT. 487/58, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Muharrem 1320 [24 Nisan 1902]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 7/603, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Zilhicce 1320 [23 Mart 1903]; and, BOA, TFR.I.SL. 171/17055, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Zilhicce 1325 [21 Ocak 1908].

<sup>564</sup> Zoltan D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*, p. 89.

Their talent in blacksmith was so developed nearly they monopolized that craft. In one of the articles, about their ability in iron, the phrase is used by one Gypsy: “we can make humans from iron.” That expression was enough to put in plain words of their success in that profession.<sup>565</sup> In the past, we know that Hungarian Gyves were probably done by Gypsies and blacksmiths. Moreover, two separated handcuffs (one for neck and one for foot) called as *çinçer*, *çinger*, *çinzer* were also made by Gypsies. Besides, irons of the ships were prepared by them too.<sup>566</sup> Also, some Gypsies who were blacksmiths were helped by the villagers and they were housed by the villagers in order to make them remain in the same village to serve their purposes.<sup>567</sup> About that blacksmith, the nomadic Gypsies had information about the processing the iron over the anvil. To sell or to exchange with something else, they produced grille or tong, slice bar, trivet, lighter, and cut nail. In addition to this, in their economy, there was the producing of the materials like; strainer, sieve, hair comb, spindle and spindle whorl, as well as tinning the coppers. They produced hair comb from the horny layer which constituted outer part of horns of the bovine animals. To manufacture this, they used a simple clamp that were portable and made of tough wood. The raw material of the spindle and spindle whorl was the wood. The material used for the production of these was a cogwheel which was made of wood and which was worked by band with the hand-power. The meadow grasses were used to draw circular lines over the spindle and spindle whorl.<sup>568</sup> Not just in blacksmith, but also

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<sup>565</sup> Nazım Alpman, “Roman Havası,” *National Geographic*, no. 32 (Aralık 2003), pp. 18–80.

<sup>566</sup> İsmail Altınöz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler*, pp. 234-35; and pp. 237-238.

<sup>567</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, ‘You’re Roman!’ *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, (Los Angeles: Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology, 2002), p. 134.

<sup>568</sup> Enver M. Şerifgil, “Tarihten Görüntüler: XVI: Yüzyılda Rumeli Eyaletindeki Çingeneler,” *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* (1–157 Sayılar) 15 (1981), pp. 117–144.

other parts of mining were in the hands of Gypsies. They were miners in the Novo Brdo and muleteers in Trepça regions of Kosovo and armourers and falconers around Prizren.<sup>569</sup>

About producing *elek* (sieve) and the beginning of that profession, the *Poşas* owned an interesting legend. According to it, while one of Jesus Christ's apostles was eating food, the apostle gave Christ a piece of bread. Christ saw the dirt on the bread and immediately, he broke off a pinch of hair and he gave them to the apostles. Then, he blessed the hairs. Upon that, the apostle learnt to manufacture the *elek*, so he was respected as the ancestor of *elekçis*.<sup>570</sup>

Those crafts were not just owned by the nomadic Gypsies. The sedentary Gypsies also performed all these in a stable or permanent shop. It was generally situated between or in the neighbourhood. However, at the same, this could be perceived as a danger by the authorities. For example, 1890, a Gypsy couple whose names were Şakir and Fatma were blacksmith and they intended to buy a shop in the street of Hüsreviye, Makriköy. Nevertheless, in the neighbourhood, the usage of fire for the irons was seemed as inappropriate and dangerous. The shop was also made of *kargir* but as a precaution, *davlumbaz* and *saç* were added. Again, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood gave petitions to prevent that because of their fear of a possible danger. At the end, that kind of shop was rejected.<sup>571</sup>

One of the outstanding occupations attributed to Gypsies was the death penalties. This was not applied only in the Ottoman Empire. The rest of the world was aware of this very well. This role was given to Gypsies, to the hands of the supposed marginal

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<sup>569</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Kosova: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 102-103.

<sup>570</sup> Sarkis Seropyan, "Vatansız Tek Ulus Çingener ve Çingenerin Ermenileşmişleri, Haypoşalar," *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXXIV /202 (Ekim 2000), pp. 21-26.

<sup>571</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1748/41, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Zilhicce 1307 [5 Ağustos 1890].

element. Interesting point is that there were not too many sources for the executioners, the mission of Gypsies. This kind of the information was known by everyone, but it was not much written in the sources. However, it was known that until the year of 1826, there were state executioners under the dominance of *cellâtbaşı* (the head of the executioners). The *Ocak* (unit) of that profession whose executioners were trained with the military discipline was situated in the Topkapı Palace, near *Hamlacılar Ocağı* (the unit of palace boatmen). *Cellât Ocağı* (the unit or corps of executioners) was actually under the command of *bostancıbaşı ağa* who was one of the biggest *zâbits* of the palace and directly attached to the sultan. *Cellâtbaşı* had a *yamak* (assistant) or *muâvin* (auxiliary). If the execution would be performed by him, he got with his one or two assistants. However, *cellâtbaşıs* executed only the influential individuals. There were two types of executions: *âdiyen* execution or the execution by torturing. The executioners in that unit did not only fulfill the executions, but also they extracted confessions from arrested people. *Cellât çeşmesi* (executioner fountain), *cellât mezâdı* (executioner auction) and *cellât mezârlığı* (executioner cemetery) in Eyüp were the important remnants of that profession. As it was seen, this profession was institutionalised by the Ottoman rule until 1826; the date symbolized the abolition of the Janissary Corps.<sup>572</sup>

Nevertheless, we do not have knowledge about the aftermath, but it was perceived that the profession continued to be left in the hands of Gypsies. Supporting that idea, Halliday said, “In May 1909, three Gypsies were employed to pull the ropes and kick away the chairs at the public hanging of rebel soldiers in Turkey,

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<sup>572</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Osmanlı Tarihinde Cellâtlar," *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, no. 6 (Temmuz, 1971), pp. 20–23; and, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Tarihimizde Garip Vakalar* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1958), pp. 23-29.

receiving for their services an English sovereign apiece.”<sup>573</sup> Apparently, Gypsies were employed in that service, but why? According to Eyal Ginio, this could be perceived as an “additional punishment and insult for the culprit.”<sup>574</sup> For Juliette de Bairacli Levy, this task was given to them by the Gentiles, and they did not embrace any accepted religion. This is why, they were chosen for being executioner.<sup>575</sup> I believe that this seems like a two sided insult, one for Gypsies and one for the culprit. The culprit got his share with being punished by Gypsies, and Gypsies were insulted initially by fulfilling the necessities of being executioner; and afterwards, they were despised or insulted while their dead bodies were buried in a “special,” not in good terms, cemetery, far away from the other souls. It seemed that the second one, which was both physical, but more spiritual basis, was full-scale segregation and insult. That secret duty of Gypsies managed to become the subject of the story of Halikarnas Balıkcısı, called “Çingene Ali.” In the story, Ali was given a duty, which was the person who was condemned to death would be hanged by Çingene Ali just because he was a *Kıptî*. However, as having compassion for the guilty, he refused that job and run away.<sup>576</sup>

Another interesting Gypsy occupation was the collection of the dog craps. It was nearly a valid sector and it was commercial commodity until the beginning of twentieth century. With the basket in their back, pointed stick in their hands, Gypsies walked the streets and collected the dog craps. The only condition in that job was to

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<sup>573</sup> William Reginald Halliday, “Gypsies of Turkey,” in: *Folklore Studies, Ancient and Modern*, p. 33.

<sup>574</sup> Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims Nor Zımmis: Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies* 5, vol. 4, no. 2 (2004), pp. 7–44.

<sup>575</sup> Juliette de Bairacli Levy, “Gypsies of Turkey,” *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, third series, 31 (1952), pp. 5–13.

<sup>576</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, “Çingene Ali,” in: *Ege'nin Dibi* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 1952), pp. 19–24.

bring the craps to the tanneries as fresh. The headiness of the crap collector (*Tabakhâneye bok yetiştirmek!*) came from this and so that the proverbs about the craps and tannery also originated from that situation.<sup>577</sup>

Looking into the sources, we can come to the inference that there were remarkable Gypsy acrobats in the Ottoman Empire, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. As Musahipzâde Celâl told us, in winter, they were performing in the trapezes, rocking rings, tables and chairs which were organized and founded in the theatres of İstanbul. However, in the summer, it was performed in the excursion spots. They were displaying their skills on the robes, hawsers, masts, and chinning bars.<sup>578</sup>

Some of the Gypsy females were employed in the baths by dint of women, whom they met in the neighbourhoods while wandering in their youths. Their responsibilities were sweeping out the bath in the evenings, cleaning the shoes of the customers, lifting or putting the shoes in an order after the cleaning and giving the shoes to the owners when they were leaving the bath. The Gypsy women also worked as *hamâm anası*, who were obliged with buying the stuff demanded from the street, and *hamâm ustası*, who was in charge of bathing the customers. Some women were stopping by to the houses of wealthy people for the purpose of dancing. If they were presentable and *güzel sesli*, they could find the chance to establish an intimacy with the lady of the house and also they were able to win the approval of the lady. With well-sounded speeches and charming walking, they made friends with the

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<sup>577</sup> Şefik Okday, *İçine Ettiğimiz Dünyası* (İstanbul: Kendi Yayını, 1993), p. 82.

<sup>578</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1946), pp. 68-69.

ladies and they made themselves accepted and entering into the elite group. It seems, by this way, they managed to reach prosperity.<sup>579</sup>

They were famous as beggars. The grief in their faces, the repeated name of God, the opening hands, and *sine qua non* the insistence were the main apparatus of that profession and Gypsies were too successful in that. Nevertheless, the state's approach to that success was not so good, and had not been before. The general perception about the Gypsy beggary<sup>580</sup> was that they never gave up begging, even if they did not need anything for their substance. It was believed that this was the part of being a Gypsy, but we do not know how much the perception was true. However, at least, that legend proved something which was the dominancy of Gypsies in that occupation. It was rumoured that:

Once upon a time, a very rich man fell in love with a Gypsy girl. By warming the cockles of his parent's hearts, he brought the girl into their house. The girl was adorning the most precious jewels in the house of rich man. Soon after, the girl began to disappear. Forewoman, who was sensible of this, was on the Gypsy girl's trail and she saw that the girl locked herself in her room for one or two hours every day. That attitude was bitten by the bug of herself and when the girl entered her room, forewoman kept observed from the keyhole. Finally, she witnessed this scene: after the girl put a slice of bread on every couch in the room, she stood in front of every couch one by one and said:

— "Please madam, give me a slice of bread for the God's sake. My children were starving at home. Please, pity on me for the sake of your children." And she was begging by

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<sup>579</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, p. 331.

<sup>580</sup> In the journal named *Hanımlara Mahsûs Gazete*, there was a little and incomplete story written by Halide about Gypsies. In the story, we witness how a lady was dealing with the little Gypsy girl whose age was nine and who was working as beggar and habiting in Selamsız. In the story, lady told that the meaning of "their not growing into manhood" in our eyes could be explained by their insistency on retaining their own nationality. With the help of the story, we are also learning the thoughts of the non-Gypsies about Gypsies: 'loose morality,' 'irreligious standing,' 'trouble maker,' 'perfect dancer,' 'beautiful and coquettish girls,' 'deceiver'... etc.

See: Halide, "Çingâne Kızı: Küçük Çingâne," (Tefrika Eser) *Hanımlara Mahsûs Gazete*, Sayı: 29–231/ 69-271, 30 Cemâziyyevvel 1317-19 Rebiyyülevvel 1318/ 23 Eylül 1315-13 Temmuz 1316.

saying these. Then, she was taking the bread on the couch and at that time:

— “May God be pleased. The God fertilize you. The God bless your children to you.” She was praying with this way. The forewoman surprised when she saw this and the night comes, she told the entire story, from the beginning to the end, to the master of the house. The rich man realized the mistake that he made as falling in love with the Gypsy girl and he noticed that he made a big mistake by bringing a Gypsy girl to his house as his wife. The next day, he turned her back to her cottage or hut.<sup>581</sup>

H. G. Dwight underlined the Gypsy beggars and their insistent attitude and he gave an example about their yielding. He says, “the beggars yield as ‘May you enjoy your youth!’ ‘May you know no bitterness!’ ‘May God forgive your dead,’ Diminutives are much in favour among these gentry. And every two minutes someone comes with a platter or with a brass casket sealed with a big red seal and says, ‘your assistance,’ adding ‘for the church,’ or ‘for the school,’ ‘for the hospital,’ if you seem to fail to take in what is expected of you.”<sup>582</sup>

Their insistency mostly caused discomfort among the local population. For instance, we know that in 1888, Gypsies, who lived in the neighbourhood of Sakız Ağacı, Kasımpaşa, bothered the local population by begging. It was supposed that they went there by wandering through Adapazarı, İzmit and Bursa. Their number was supposedly 267, including men and women. As a result of state’s involvement, 82 of them gave the guarantee to stop their actions and promised not to repeat again. However, for the others who preferred to continue that, it was decided that they would be sent to another place in Anatolia.<sup>583</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk Adet ve İnanmaları* (İstanbul: Burhanettin Basımevi, 1939), pp. 165–166.

<sup>582</sup> H. G. Dwight, *Constantinople: Settings and Traits* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers publishers, 1926), pp. 334-335.

<sup>583</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1486/84, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 6 Cemâziyyelâhir 1305 [19 Şubat 1888].



According to the perception of Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, the beggars of İstanbul were separated into two parts: the local or permanent beggars and temporary beggars. For their method, he stated that the beggars who were reading *kaside* and *mavâl* out loud wandered between the quarters and courtyards of the mosques. The blind beggars among them travelled either with the individuals who owned healthy eyes or alone. The *kasidecis* were mostly Arabs or probably Gypsies who imitated the Arabian dialect. Some of the beggars located at the door of the mosque, the beginning of the streets, and the corners of thoroughfares. Those types of beggars were blind, *müsin*, *alil*, inattentive, lamed, *kıyâm* and *kuûda bî-cemâl* and they always stayed in their own location, called as *gedik*. The right to travel in the streets during the *aşr-i muharrem* was belonged to the *gedikli* group. The itinerant beggars that consisted of middle-aged, women, elders, children were partly in Eyüp, Edirnekapısı and Karacaahmet cemeteries. Besides, they travelled in the shopping-districts. In the eyes of Ali Rıza Bey, most of them were actually healthy, only pretended to be sick. They were thought the basic rules of the beggary and they benefitted every opportunity to find something, money, cigarettes, foods. The permanent beggars had a kind of leader called as *kethüda* or *kahya* who was selected among seniors and competent beggars. In addition to this, there were the beggars coming from countryside who were mostly *tâife-i ekrâd* Gypsies (Kurdish). Those Gypsy beggars were barefoot, unclothed, and bareheaded. Some of them were also Christian women of the islands, who collected the children and came to İstanbul with them. Lastly, apart from the beggars of the countryside, a group who was gathered in İstanbul in order to benefit from the abundance of the *Ramâzan* could be witnessed.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), pp. 53-56.

They were also dealing with *kallâblık* (making fake coins) and counterfeiting. By making fake coins, they were causing monetary depreciation. However, it was necessary to note that Gypsies generally dealt with coins, not banknotes. The interest in the coins was result of the general Gypsy talent in forging or blacksmith. Especially, the archival documents authenticated this. In the year of 1892, some *kalb mecrediye* (fake coins) were found among the money given by farmers and then, it was understood that fake coins were given by tent dweller Gypsies to the farmers and those fake coins tried to be introduced into the market so necessary warnings were given to other administrations through preventing this.<sup>585</sup> In 1900, five *kalb mecrediye* were founded in the pockets of two Gypsy men and with the post, these fake coins were sent to *Darbhâne-i Âmîre* in order to be searched.<sup>586</sup> In the same year, one *kalb sim mecîdî* was founded in the hand of a Gypsy man in Koniçe, Yanya. Hereafter, it was sent to İstanbul for an inquiry.<sup>587</sup>

One of the most popular and active Gypsy professions was fortune-telling. Both the persuasive and insistent attitude of the Gypsy women and the never-ending curiosity of the humankind over the future signified that this profession would be performed for a long period of time. Sermet Muhtar Alus perceived them as exasperatingly importunate and persistent. When they imposed themselves on somebody, they did not leave easily. According to them, all men and women were the sultans, coming to the elders; they were effendis even if they were high-ranking pashas. As looking in the fortune, Alus asserted that the fortune-teller took out eight or ten horse beans, blue bead, the tooth of marten cat, and a piece of coal from the

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<sup>585</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2003/25, adet: 1 vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1310 [17 Eylül 1892].

<sup>586</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2395/83, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Rebiyyülâhir 1318 [26 Ağustos 1900].

<sup>587</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2402/31, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Cemâziyyevvel 1318 [13 Eylül 1900]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2418/112, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyyelâhir 1318 [24 Ekim 1900].

rag bag and with the taken money, she was grasping all these things and laying out three times and the fortune teller repeated cock-and-bull stories without stammering.<sup>588</sup> About fortunetelling, there was an interesting part in the novel of Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *Çingeneler*. In one part of the novel, the character was mentioning about the famous fortune-teller named Afitap from Kağıthane. That Gypsy was supposed to tell the fortune of Sultan Abdülhamid II and said to him that he would be in the throne after three months.<sup>589</sup>

One of the favourite places of the fortune-tellers was *mesire yeri* (excursion places), because people who did not reside in a kiosk or mansion had no other option to get a fresh air apart from going to the recreation spots. Besides, it was a place to escape from the daily problems or activities. The famous places were Kağıthane Çayırı, Göksu, Veliefendi Çayırı, Beykoz Çayırı, Küçüksu, Çırpıcı, Büyükdere, Beşiktaş, Sarıyer, Büyükçamlıca, Haydarpaşa, Kuşdili and Fener Bahçesi. Of course, Gypsies were prerequisite for these spots. In his books like *Fuḫş-i Atîk* and *Şehir Mektupları*, Ahmet Rasim made references to Gypsy musicians and Gypsy women dancers and singers in the excursion spots.<sup>590</sup> In his article, Ahmet Haşim drew a perfect analogy about Gypsies in Kağıthane. He says:

The Gypsy (*Çingene*) is the most beautiful type that remains close to human nature. It is thought that these uncultivated

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<sup>588</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII /137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 30-33; Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Çingeneler," in: *Eski İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat*, eds. İ. Gündoğ Kayaoğlu and Ersu Pekin (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1992), pp. 144-150; Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Türk ve Dünya Yazarlarından Çingene Öyküleri*, ed. Hasan Aydın (İstanbul: İnkılâp, 2004), pp. 7-11. In order to be informed about the fortunetelling of Gypsies such as hand reading, card reading, moles, fire reading... etc, see: Ray Buckland, *Secrets of Gypsy Fortunetelling* (USA: Llewellyn Publications, 1988).

<sup>589</sup> Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *Çingeneler* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1997), p. 65.

<sup>590</sup> Ahmet Rasim, *Dünkü İstanbul'da Hovardalık, Fuḫş-i Atîk* (İstanbul: Arba, 1987), p. 66; and p. 129; and, Ahmet Rasim, *Şehir Mektupları 1-2, 3-4*, ed. Nuri Akbayar (İstanbul: Arba, 1992).

people with their bronze faces and porcelain teeth are a merry group of trees that have entered into human form. The *Çingene* personifies spring.<sup>591</sup>

Women who were there were addicted to fortune-telling and their devotion to fortune-telling brought good revenues for the employee of that profession. Generally, the fortune-tellers wandered with a youth while practising their professions. Their general tendency during the practice was going from door to door to find an individual to do fortune-telling. Nevertheless, sometimes, it was not their only goal. Abdülaziz Bey told that when the *hanım* of the house left the fortune teller in order to bring her bread or water, they mostly benefited from the condition and stole shoes or slippers or whatever they found and ran away quickly. The contrast of this also caused problems. For example, some individuals tended to go to the house of the fortune-teller and sometimes, the fortune-teller could abuse that situation. Some women could even be seduced and could be exploited sexually. In their houses, there were women who were available for prostitution.<sup>592</sup>

Another profession practiced by Gypsies of the recreation spots or *mesire yerleri* was the bear-training. As everybody knows, the bear-training was, for a certain period of time, the most popular entertaining tradition. It did not cost too much. By means, it was cheap as well as an entertainment, which could be benefited by everybody, whether rich or poor. As the parents brought their children with them to the excursion spots, the bear-training could be an effective income at the same time.

This was explained by Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Bey and he pointed out that while bears

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<sup>591</sup> Ahmet Haşim, "Çingene," *İkdâm*, no. 11150 (7 Mayıs 1928); and, Ahmet Haşim, *Bütün Eserleri II: Bize Göre: İkdâm'daki Diğer Yazıları*, eds. İnci Enginün and Zeynep Kerman (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p. 25. For the English translation of the analogy, see: Sonia Tamar Seeman, 'You're Roman!' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, p. 164.

<sup>592</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, eds. Kazım Arısan and Duygu Arısan Günay, p. 331.

were played, the dogs which were scared of the bears surrounded the bear-trainer and the dogs barked continuously. Besides, he also mentioned the watchers of the monkeys, so the mentioned monkey-trainers could be among Gypsies.<sup>593</sup>

Lastly, being a musician was obviously their favourite profession and constituted the basis of many Gypsy professions. Especially, in the Lonca in Ayvansaray, there could be seen a *gedikli* public house and there were many important Gypsy musicians here. Many performers or *saz sanatçısı* had contributed to the Turkish music. There were of course important musicians in Sulukule, but not in the situation of competing with the musicians of Lonca such as *Zurnazen*, and *Nârazen*. Outside of this, there were also Gypsy musicians raised in Selamsız of Üsküdar.<sup>594</sup>

#### Family Life: Woman and Children

It was not definitely known how many members there were in one Gypsy family, but the general perception was indicating over-populated Gypsy families. Despite the indefinite number, the leader or head of the family did not change. We see *Çeribaşı* (Gypsy chief) as the person who administered Gypsies. The main responsibility of the leader who did not have any term of office in real terms was to mediate between the state and Gypsies in terms of needs as well as controlling the air (tension) among Gypsies. They held him in high-esteem and never showed any disobedience to him; and even Mehmet Halit Bayrı told that their marriage ceremony was performed by him. Even in the difficult times, they consulted to him.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir Zamanlar İstanbul*, ed. Niyazi Ahmet Banoğlu (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), p. 207.

<sup>594</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Dairesi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1994), p. 37.

<sup>595</sup> Mehmet Halit Bayrı, *Halk, Adet ve İnanmaları*, p. 165.

## Children

Starting with children, we can say that there were not much more ages which the Gypsy children could be 'children' in real terms; because in very young ages, they began to work. Actually, the Gypsy women had many children and in reality, they loved the children, but this was not the only reason. When they once got children, they were used to making those children work at early ages. Those children were potential money makers and even if they did not earn money directly, they helped their father or mother to earn money such as in beggary. In one sense, as regarding their professions, the early ages were convenient to be educated for the continuation of some professions. It was also true for dancing. Gypsies tended to educate their children when they were little and by taking tambourine in their hands, they mostly started to sing and to teach the moves of the dancing. The children who started to learn dancing in their early ages became perfect dancers even when they were 8 or 10 years old.<sup>596</sup>

Apart from early professional life, they were involved in early family life. By means, the Gypsy girls and boys were married in very young ages, like 13, 14, and 15 ages,<sup>597</sup> as well as becoming fathers or mothers in very young ages. This situation actually originated from customs and traditions of Gypsies. Despite the fact that they

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<sup>596</sup> Mehmet Halit Bayrı, *Halk, Adet ve İnanmaları*, p. 164.

In the short-story of Ömer Seyfettin, we witness a Gypsy child as a real hospitable. He is showing the way to new comers to the village, found food and even, he took no tip. The hospitality in him is so high so that the child was seen the most hospitable person among over all the inhabitants of the village, even if he was not a villager in a real sense. See: Ömer Seyfettin, "Tam Bir Görüş," in: *Efruz Bey* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1996), pp. 117-125.

In the story of "Küçük Dost Kemancı" of Necati Zekeriya, even if his father's approach to Gypsies was positive, his son did not want to be friend with a Gypsy violinist boy and he depicted his reluctance precisely. However, after his father impressed on that Gypsies were human beings too, the son regretted to act like and in time, he became friend with the Gypsy boy. See: Necati Zekeriya, "Küçük Dost Kemancı," in: *Dünyadan ve Bizden Çingene Hikayeleri*, ed. Tahir Alangu (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1972), pp. 327-330.

<sup>597</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 144/14359, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Ramazân 1325 [28 Ekim 1907].

were considered free and capable of doing everything they wish, they might have the strict rules and obligations about the girls and boys. These rules could be directed to protect the boys and girls from the dangers of the outer life, and the marriage could be a shield for it. Maybe, that is why, they married in tender ages and they grew up together.

It was not important at which age they married, but the important part of their weddings was the ceremony. The attitudes of Gypsies, dances, music, clothes, the bride, the groom all drew attention of non-Gypsies. We see writers who were impressed with the wedding ceremony, and expressed it in their writings. Girizan Tunara recounted a Gypsy wedding in Paşa Hamamı of Balat. He was clearly impressed with their entertainments, joys, eccentric clothes, and the customs. He commented on it as good observation scene. Besides, Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar witnessed a Gypsy tent wedding in Sarıyer, and he mentioned their poverty, because the groom had no special clothes for the wedding, and he gave one of his clothes to the groom. He admitted that he had fun at the wedding, but he also did not hesitate to express his concern about the children who would grow up in poverty too.<sup>598</sup>

Likewise, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı also told a Gypsy wedding procession that he witnessed in Filibe in 1921. However, what he was impressed with was not the ceremony. It was the attitude of Gypsies about seeing themselves as the inheritor of the Ottomans, even if the Ottoman rule had ended in Bulgaria. For instance, they were dressing just like the Ottomans, *cepken*, *çakşır*, *ökçeli rügan*, *ferace*, *yaşmak*, *fes*. They were smoking from *yasemin ağzılık*, and *kehribar*. Also, their weddings resembled the wedding of the Ottomans. Especially, he asserted that the sounds from

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<sup>598</sup> Girizan Tunara, "Balat'ta Paşa Hamamında Çingene Düğünü," *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları* (İstanbul) VI/144 (Temmuz 1961), pp. 2441–2442. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, "Kıpti Düğünü," in: *Gönül Ticareti* (Ankara: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1939), pp. 125-133.

drums and clarions made him remember the panorama of the past carnival. Apart from that, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı thought that Gypsies had a democratic life among themselves because in a Gypsy cortege, he paid attention to a scene in which a *çeribaşı* (Gypsy chief) was walking near a Gypsy whose clothes were ragged and in dirty. Even if their status was different, they could talk to each other and walk alongside.<sup>599</sup> Besides, Osman Ergin expressed a Gypsy dower display in Ayvansaray. He describes the display as the most rudimentary way of boasting and showing off. Furthermore, about the display, one point attracted his attention, which was Gypsies giving importance to shawls, so for him, and this was the proof of their Indian origin. Also, the beginning of the display with the sun rise indicated that Gypsies brought their old custom and beliefs from the heliolatry India.<sup>600</sup> In the short-story of Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, a Gypsy woman was asked the wedding day of Gypsies. The woman replied: “If we had Muslim wedding, we hold it on Friday, but if it is a Gypsy wedding, there is no time for this. The bride and groom know about the day. Nevertheless, they generally do not wait for the wedding and make out before it.”<sup>601</sup> In the story of “Sur Dışında Hayat,” Sait Faik Abasıyanık presents a panorama of the tent dweller Gypsies near the city-wall from Silivrikapı to Mevlanakapı. Those people are tinsmith, coppersmith, musicians, singers, instrument players. Among them, there is a newly married Gypsy couple. Actually, that couple is newly married

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<sup>599</sup> Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Çocukluğum, Gençliğim, Siyasi ve Edebi Hatıralarım*, (İstanbul: Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1973), p. 42; and Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, “1921 Yılında Filibe’de Bir Çingene Düğün Alayı,” *Tarih ve Edebiyat*, no. 1 (İstanbul, 1982), pp. 19–20.

<sup>600</sup> Osman Ergin, “Çingene Çeyizi Gösterisi,” *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları* (İstanbul) 5/118 (Mayıs 1959), pp. 1903–1905.

<sup>601</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç* (İstanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1958), p. 151.



and according to their saying, they were nomads and working as coppersmith and thresher.<sup>602</sup>

Nevertheless, it did not mean that every Gypsy child would be born legitimately. The Ottoman archival documents showed that there were many illegitimate children, or adulterine bastards. In the case of the existence of the illegitimate children, according to the documents, the Gypsy women attempted to get rid of the child. She could bury it in the field, could choke it, and could throw it into the water. In 1905, in Tikveş, the daughter of Gypsy Gorgi choked her new-born baby. In the same year, a corpse of a baby was found in the brook in İştîp. Most likely, the mother killed her adulterine baby and thrown it into the brook.<sup>603</sup>

Sometimes, families who were unable to provide sustenance for the child could leave the child to die. In 1907, with the help of his wife, a Gypsy man who was around 18 years old, and who was working as servant for a landlord killed his baby who was two and a half months old. After the murder, that couple from the Gypsy neighbourhood of Karaferiye buried the body in the Gypsy grave. Their excuse was being unable to take care of the baby. However, an investigation was held and it was learnt that the baby was thrown to the well-hole. Furthermore, after the examination, the truth came out: the baby was thrown alive.<sup>604</sup>

### Women

Secondly, we have Gypsy women. In reality, the position of Gypsy women in the family was not uniform. There were some differences among them and the

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<sup>602</sup> Sait Faik Abasıyanık, "Sur Dışında Hayat," in: *Havuzbaşı* (İstanbul: Bilgi, 1998), pp. 87-88.

<sup>603</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 72/7180, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Rebiyyülevvel 1323 [21 Mayıs 1905]; and, BOA, TFR.I.KV. 96/9508, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Cemâziyyevvel 1323 [6 Temmuz 1905]. For a similar case, see: BOA, TFR.I.ED. 6/523, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Zilkâde 1321 [20 Ocak 1904].

<sup>604</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 132/13139, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Zilhicce 1324 [21 Ocak 1907].

profession was one of the criteria that constituted the differences. As claimed by Ali Rıza Bey, women, who practised professions like *hamâm ustası*, *hamâm hademesi*, *bohçacı*, *askıcı* and *çengi* were devoted to their freedom. They did not endure the pressure of mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and husband, unable to deliver an opinion, smutted, bone-lazy and abstinent. Even if they were exposed to them, they started uproar. Besides, they were as strong as their husbands. At the same time, they were acute, hard-working, skillful, interfering, and also they were good-humoured or smiling, and smooth-spoken against the public. They abstained from bringing about their problems and sorrows.<sup>605</sup>

The documents proved that there were Gypsy women whose situation indicated the opposite direction. Some women were beaten or injured by their husbands and even their husbands tended to kill them. And, not surprisingly, there were cases which showed the murder of the wife by the husband.<sup>606</sup> In the case of run-away to her father's house, there emerged serious problem such as in 1904, in Raman village of İpek, the wife escaped to her family home and when her husband came to take his wife, an argument occurred between the father and the groom and the groom killed his wife's father with rifle. In 1906, in Manastır, while the Gypsy husband beat her wife, he hit his child at the same time, and the child died on the ground.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), p. 31.

<sup>606</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 4/335, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Zilkâde 1320 [31 Ocak 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 21/2026, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 21 Rebiyyülevvel 1321 [17 Haziran 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 24/2323, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Şabân 1321 [2 Kasım 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 35/3481, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Muharrem 1322 [9 Nisan 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 62/6123, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [1 Haziran 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 67/6652, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Cemâziyyelevvel 1322 [27 Temmuz 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 117/11627, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Cemâziyyelâhir 1324 [18 Ağustos 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 148/14735, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Cemâziyyelevvel 1325 [22 Haziran 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.KV. 193/19227, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Safer 1326 [27 Mart 1908].

<sup>607</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 51/5086, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilkâde 1321 [16 Şubat 1904]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 91/9059, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Safer 1324 [24 Nisan 1906].

At that period, about the girls and women, there were many rape cases. The perpetrators were from among Gypsies and non-Gypsies. The women could be captured and raped while she was cutting wood in the mountain or she could be raped by sheriff during her arrest. If she was lucky, she could save herself from the rape. In the terminology, there are two types of phrases for the rape: *izâle-i bikr* (deflower) and *fi'il-i şenî*. In 1902, in Yanya, while a Gypsy girl was cutting wood in the mountain, she was captured by a Gypsy man and his friends from the same neighbourhood. Then, she was taken to a house and raped there, *izâle-i bikr*. In 1903, while Rukiye bint-i Mehmed, who lived in Karaferiye, was going to her house, she was raped by a man with a criminal past. This action was called *fi'il-i şenî*. In 1904, in Gilan, a Gypsy woman was captured by a man and then, he took her to his friend's house. There, he raped her. In the same year, in Kalkandelen, two men attempted to assault with intent to rape to a Gypsy woman who was working as servant in the farm of a landlord. However, she was able to save herself by shouting loudly. In 1904, in Yenice, when Gypsy Yuvan went to collect sesame with his family, two servants of a landlord went to the place where Yuvan and his family stayed and they seized the daughter of Yuvan who was thirteen years old and they deflowered her.<sup>608</sup>

However, sometimes, the matter of rape might be abused by Gypsies, because in the year of 1905, a Gypsy girl claimed that the son of Tevfik Bey, who lived in Nevrekop, deflowered her. The family of the boy evaluated this situation as slander and especially his mother applied for the examining of the girl. In the report of the

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<sup>608</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 487/58, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Muharrem 1320 [24 Nisan 1902]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 25/2478, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Ramazân 1321 [24 Kasım 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 18/1730, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 6 Rebiyyülevvel 1321 [24 Ocak 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 50/4985, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Zilkâde 1321 [7 Şubat 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 51/5005, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Cemâziyyelâhir 1322 [3 Eylül 1904]; and, BOA, TFR.I.SL. 155/15480, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Recep 1325 [26 Ağustos 1907].

doctor, it was clarified that she was neither raped nor deflowered. Probably, the girl went to that kind of extreme for profit.<sup>609</sup>

In that reign, apart from rape or deflowering, interestingly, there were events like suicide. Some Gypsy women attempted to commit suicide, but the reason was in doubt. However, in one case, the reason of the suicide was certain. The Gypsy woman, named Zeynep bint-i Çelebi, shot herself from her bellybutton with a revolver because of her disagreement with her husband. Among the cases, one woman committed suicide with poison.<sup>610</sup>

About the family life, the general perception was that in the family, there was a division of labour. Most of time, the manufacturer was the Gypsy men and the sellers of the produced materials were women and the children. That reminded us an order or equilibrium in the economic structure of the family. At the same time, that situation brought out to minds a point, which is, if one side disappeared suddenly, the balance might soon be disordered. For instance, in the case of a punishment, like banishment or penal servitude imposed for the Gypsy man, the family was stuck in a very difficult situation. At that time, the wife could demand the forgiveness of the remaining term of her husband's sentence.<sup>611</sup>

In every situation, the Gypsy woman and the Gypsy girl was attributed value by both Gypsies and non-Gypsies. We even witness that there were many articles,

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<sup>609</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 87/8664-1, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 5 Ramazân 1323 [3 Kasım 1905].

<sup>610</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 39/3886, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Recep 1321 [10 Ekim 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 86/8581, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Muharrem 1324 [4 Mart 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 154/15308, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Zilhicce 1325 [25 Ocak 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 198/19792, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 26 Rebiyyülâhir 1326 [27 Mayıs 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 194/19312, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Rebiyyülevvel 1326 [5 Nisan 1908]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 42/4128, adet 1, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülâhir 1322 [4 Temmuz 1904].

<sup>611</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 961/75999, adet: 3, vesika: 2-3, 27 Zilhicce 1302 [6 Ekim 1885]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1707/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Recep 1307 [11 Mart 1890]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1711/75, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Şevvâl 1307 [26 Mart 1890].

books, stories and novels which included or were based on the Gypsy girls and women. In “Sarı Bal,” Refik Halit Karay tells the story of a beautiful and talented singing and dancing Gypsy girl and the story of men whose lives are ruined for the sake of that Gypsy girl.<sup>612</sup> In “Cura” of Halikarnas Balıkcısı, we encounter Gypsy girl who was collector of coal, seller of *hindiba* and grille and tongs. She is kind-hearted and true-hearted as well as grateful to person who behaved nicely to her. In his another story, Halikarnas Balıkcısı recounts the struggle for life of a Gypsy woman, named Kancay. She was esteemed by the surrounding society, contrary to general literary approach. So, when she died, people who knew her did not say that a Gypsy woman could not be buried in the cemetery of Muslims, and they prepared a grave for her.<sup>613</sup> Just like the others, the Gypsy girl in “Mürüvvet” of Sait Faik Abasıyanık is so beautiful and coquettish enough for causing suffering in the hearts of men.<sup>614</sup> The Gypsy girl figure also appears in the novel of Melih Cevdet Anday, *Raziye*. We have a chance to follow the adoption of a Gypsy girl by a man. By adopting the Gypsy girl, man intended to educate and to turn her into a modern individual.<sup>615</sup> In “Çingene Karmen,” of Kemal Bilbaşar, we witness the love of a Gypsy shoeshiner, Hasan, for Gypsy *kantocu Karmen* of an improvisational theatre. When the theatre left the city, Gypsy shoeshiner felt sorrow for her, but then he also left the city and went to İstanbul in order to find Karmen.<sup>616</sup> In the story of “Pembe,”

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<sup>612</sup> Refik Halit Karay, “Sarı Bal,” in: *Memleket Hikâyeleri* (İstanbul: İnkılâp, 1997), pp. 66-75.

<sup>613</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, “Cura,” in: *Gülen Ada* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 1957), pp. 45-51; Halikarnas Balıkcısı, “Kancay,” in: *Dünyadan ve Bizden Çingene Hikâyeleri*, ed. Tahir Alangu (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1972), pp. 216-223.

<sup>614</sup> Sait Faik Abasıyanık, “Mürüvvet,” in: *Lüzumsuz Adam* (İstanbul: Bilgi, 1996), pp. 130-137.

<sup>615</sup> Melih Cevdet Anday, *Raziye* (İstanbul: Adam, 1990).

<sup>616</sup> Kemal Bilbaşar, “Çingene Karmen,” in: *Dünyadan ve Bizden Çingene Hikâyeleri*, ed. Tahir Alangu (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1972), pp. 224-231.

written by Hakkı Özkan, there was a woman named Pembe who was married and who was working in various jobs like; collecting papers, fortunetelling, selling flowers, but at the same time, she was a prostitute too.<sup>617</sup>

Beside the short stories, there are novels based completely on the Gypsy girls. As samples of these novels, it can be given that the Gypsy girl character drawn by Erich von Stroheim, *Paprika: Çingene Aşkı*, is not so innocent. In the novel, we read the life and the death of a Gypsy female fatale.<sup>618</sup> The Gypsy female figure of *Çingene Pilici* is not a grownup girl; just a nine-year-old girl and we read sections from her little world.<sup>619</sup> Besides, Xavier de Montepin's *Çingene Kızı* is another novel in which the Gypsy girl became dominant character.<sup>620</sup>

Somehow, the Gypsy girls and women gained a seat in the accounts of the travellers. However, most travellers preferred to evaluate them in a much more romantic and orientalist approach. For example, when Miss Pardoe, in her visit to İstanbul, encountered a group of nomadic Gypsies, the first thing caught her eye was the love between two Gypsies. The girl who was sixteen years old had black-eyes, and rosy lips, and she seemed to look at a boy whom probably she was in love with. He was holding the bridles of the donkey and made her eat cherries, which were given by Miss Pardoe.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Hakkı Özkan, "Pembe," in: *Dünyadan ve Bizden Çingene Hikayeleri*, ed. Tahir Alangu (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1972), pp. 310-315.

<sup>618</sup> Erich von Stroheim, *Paprika: Çingene Aşkı*, trans. Günseli Tunç (İstanbul: Nil Yayınevi, 1963).

<sup>619</sup> Erdoğan Tokmakçioğlu, *Çingene Pilici* (İstanbul: Ekicigil Basımevi, 1955).

<sup>620</sup> Xavier de Montepin, *Çingene Kızı*, trans. K. S., ed. Mustafa Reşid, 2 vols (İstanbul: Cemal Efendi Matbaası, 1306 [1889]).

<sup>621</sup> Julia Pardoe, *Şehirlerin Ecesi İstanbul: Bir Leydinin Gözüyle 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Yaşamı*, trans. Banu Büyükkal (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), pp. 293-294.

Apart from the romantic and orientalist approach to the girls and the love affairs between the girls and the boys, there were some realities or dramatic events too. In those events, the girls could be sometimes the sources of the problem. Taking the matter a step further, it could be pointed out that girls might face with the injury for the matrimony issue just like happened in 1908. A girl from the village of Kalınbak, Drama was injured by a Gypsy man from the same village because of the marriage event. She was injured on her shoulder and her abdominal and the man was captured by the authorities.<sup>622</sup> Especially, abductions of the girls could be outcome of crimes like injury or murder.<sup>623</sup> Occasionally, if a girl with a different ethnic background was abducted by a Gypsy man, compulsion was searched under the event. In 1908, a father, named Lazo from Tikveş, gave a petition for finding his daughter who was eighteen years old and who was a virgin or maid. That was a regular case and what makes it interesting was the approach of the father to the event. According to him, she was abducted by force by a Gypsy man, named Ali, and he did not think voluntary abduction was likely because the boy was a Gypsy, meaning from the most inferior group and he did not have any assets or possession. Also, he was ugly so if all those conditions were taken into account, his daughter was absolutely abducted by force.<sup>624</sup>

Besides, polygamy could be observed. In some situations, a Gypsy man might have two wives at the same time or, in contrast, a man not necessarily from among Gypsies, but might be from other communities might abandon his wife and children

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<sup>622</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 174/17369, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Muharrem 1326 [23 Şubat 1908].

<sup>623</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ED. 7/610, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [17 Mayıs 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 63/6234, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [12 Haziran 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 98/9760, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyyelevvel 1323 [2 Ağustos 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 140/13998, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 11 Rebiyyülevvel 1325 [24 Nisan 1907]; and, BOA, ZB. 436/76, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Teşrînievvel 1324 [31 Ekim 1908].

<sup>624</sup> BOA, TFR.I.ŞKT. 144/14335, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Safer 1326 [6 Mart 1908].

and could marry or live with the Gypsy women. Such was the case, as it was learnt that in 1905, Mahmud Ağa had two houses, but also he was married to a Gypsy woman so by the officers, it was thought that he intended to be unfair to his children.<sup>625</sup> In the year of 1887, a woman named Zeynep who was one of the inhabitants of Kavala, submitted a petition to the authorities. In her petition, she demanded bringing back of her husband who left her and their three children without allowance three months ago. It was heard that recently he married a Gypsy woman and lately, they lived in Filibe.<sup>626</sup> Nevertheless, the general perception about the marriage to the Gypsy girl was that because of the everlasting contamination in Gypsies (for not having proper religion), men from different ethnicity did not marry or have sexual intercourse with Gypsies. If they did that, they would not be cleaned, no matter how much they bathed.<sup>627</sup> Seemingly, in spite of existing stereotypes or prejudices, there were still men with different ethnic backgrounds who preferred to have relations with Gypsy girls.

In the year of 1908, a murder was reported to the officers, which took place in Oşlan village of Vulçitrın. Wives of a Gypsy man, Demir were killed by another Gypsy man while they were sleeping. Of course, apart from perceiving the case as a murder, one point attracted our attention, which was that Demir had two wives, so polygamy could be valid among Gypsies too.<sup>628</sup> In other times, the escape of the lovers was seen as a case. In 1895, a Muslim Gypsy girl named Ümmetullah escaped with a boy from Iranian origin named Acem Rıza in order to get married. According to the standing law, the marriage of Ottomans with Iranian individuals was

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<sup>625</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 231/23002, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Şevvâl 1322 [4 Ocak 1905].

<sup>626</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1461/101, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Rebiyyülevvel 1305 [20 Kasım 1887].

<sup>627</sup> Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Çingene*, ed. S. Emrah Arlıhan (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2009), p. 29.

<sup>628</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 193/19265, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Safer 1326 [1 Nisan 1908].



prohibited. Therefore, they had to be found and the Iranian individual had to be sent back to his country. The news that they were in İstanbul in those days emerged, but it was soon understood; they did not come to İstanbul.<sup>629</sup>

The outstanding feature of the Gypsy women was their motivation in the entertainment or performing arts. It was not so important that they were professional or not, because every Gypsy woman was able to dance and familiar with music. However, that peculiarity was sometimes considered as a threat to the social order and morality. In 1894, the dancing and libation of the Gypsy women in the weddings was perceived as a threat in the counties Mut, Anamur and Gülnar, of İçel in the Adana province. They were dangerous for the manners and morality and their positions affected the veiled Islamic women in a very bad way. Furthermore, that gave rise to criminal circumstances. Therefore, it was a condition to take measures for the prevention of this.<sup>630</sup>

Actually, the libation was not valid only in the weddings. In different times and places, the Gypsy women could have libation with the men whether from Gypsies or from other communities. For instance, in 1898, in Üsküdar, during *işret* (libation) with the Gypsy women, one officer and some *ağas* supposed that people passing by them were smugglers, but in reality, they were Kurdish sheep traders. Then, threatening with guns, they took the stuff of the Kurds such as four *top Amerikan bezi*, four packages of snuffs, a pair of boot, and some clothes and also they killed their donkey.<sup>631</sup> Sometimes, because of the women who were considered immoral, there emerged fights that resulted in murder. In one of those fights, Hasan heavily

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<sup>629</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 361/55, adet: 8, vesika: 1, 5 Şevvâl 1312 [1 Nisan 1895].

<sup>630</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 269/2, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Safer 1312 [7 Ağustos 1894].

<sup>631</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ZB. 21/6, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Muharrem 1316 [18 Haziran 1898].

injured Gypsy Mehmed with a revolver in Kırçova, in 1907.<sup>632</sup> In other words, the immoral attitude of the wife could result in a family tragedy. A wife sometimes had sexual intercourse with another man apart from her husband. In that case, murder became inevitable. Gypsy Şevket, from Kumanova, beat his wife who entered into Halil's house, and then he killed her by firing three shots in 1903.<sup>633</sup> In Petriç, in 1907, bones of a woman, a part of woman jacket and drawers were found in the field of Hüseyin Ağa. After the examination, the event became clear: those items belonged to Gypsy Naile bint-i Sena who disappeared twenty days ago. May be, she was killed by her husband, Gypsy Halil bin Mestan, and the reason of the murder was *fuhşiyât* (prostitution).<sup>634</sup>

One another characteristic of Gypsy women was the fights or quarrels among them. Especially Sermet Muhtar Alus mentions Gypsy fights in Sulukule. He stated that non-workers and spendthrifts visited Sulukule and in return for the money, they made Gypsy women fight just for fun. Gypsy women who got the money began to fight by saying "I am more beautiful," "my husband was younger than yours." Then, songs, *mani* (Turkish poem) and tambourines were involved in the fight. After a while, he continues, the direction of the fight changed as opening shirts and showing underwear. Furthermore, whole stuff in the house was poured out. When a *çeyreklik* was put, men got involved in it with their *çifte-nara*, shrill pipes and *zilli maşa*. It was followed with a scuffling, rolling around, pinching and biting, briefly a ruthless fight.<sup>635</sup> The fight could end in a physical injury, the fire of the tents and even

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<sup>632</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 129/12899, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Cemâziyelevvel 1325 [26 Haziran 1907].

<sup>633</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 47/4621, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Şevvâl 1321 [23 Aralık 1903].

<sup>634</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 151/15053, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Cemâziyelâhir 1325 [20 Temmuz 1907].

<sup>635</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Kültür İşleri Dairesi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1994), pp. 36-37.

murder, but there would not be a long-term resentment. In reality, they did not fight just for money; in contrast, it was done intrinsically. Whatever the reason was, their fights received attention, but it was not always funny. Sometimes, the fights ended in crimes like injury or murder. Possibly, we could meet cases like a Gypsy woman beaten by her neighbours with firewood and an important reason was not needed all the time and just a donkey might well be the igniter of the quarrel.<sup>636</sup>

### Animals of Gypsies

If we mention the family life of Gypsies, we should not ignore the animals. The animals they owned were like part of their family. The animals were horse, mare, donkey, colt and donkey-foal. Those animals were carrying elder people who could not walk as well as pregnant women, the poles of the tents and other stuff. At the back of the convoy, there was a donkey and the head of the group usually rode on it. Other people around were generally carrying bags and sacks or the babies.<sup>637</sup> However, in taking animals outside of the Ottoman borders, they could create trouble. For example, for a while, it was prohibited to take animals like cavalry and trotting animals out of borders. However, with the abolition of that application, there occurred an application of taking 5 *lirâs* for each animal such as horses. Nevertheless, Serbian Gypsies, who intended to cross to Bulgaria, generally had low economic welfare, so paying those demanded taxes was impossible for them.

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<sup>636</sup> BOA, TFR.I.MN. 35/3473, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Muharrem 1322 [22 Mart 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 139/13830, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Safer 1325 [7 Nisan 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 127/12668, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 28 Rebiyyülâhir 1325 [10 Haziran 1907].

<sup>637</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Çingeneler," in: *Eski İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat*, pp. 144-150; and, Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, pp. 30-33.

Because of economic inability and probable destitution and interruption in international trade, they were allowed to pass without paying any tax.<sup>638</sup>

### Costumes and Appearance

Of course, there would be great effect of clothes and appearance of Gypsies in their differentiation from the other parts of the society. There was not actually a definite Gypsy outlook, but the classic knowledge about their outlook was they were mostly dark-skinned people. However, there could be seen some Gypsies with brown or fair hair. Especially, Mehmet Halit Bayrı told that there were brown haired and blonde people among Gypsies of Ayvansaray.<sup>639</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu stated that the nomadic Gypsies had more typical and beautiful facial lines and more active body structure rather than the sedentary Gypsies who lived in Lonca and Sulukule. According to him, for the most part, all Gypsies had dark skins, black hair, and dark green eyes.<sup>640</sup> An archival source about the missing case provided us with data about the appearance of a Gypsy called İbrahim bin Mehmed, who was around sixty-five. According to the document, he was a middle-sized, dark-eyed, dark-coloured *çehreli*, blonde or fair moustached and bearded man.<sup>641</sup>

According to Ali Rafet Özkan's statement, the general Gypsy typology was that they were middle-sized, agile, big and dark and blue and hazel eyed, thick and long eye-lashed, and (*pala*) moustached men. Their mouths were thin and elegant, teeth were white and smooth, and chins were rounded. Their foreheads and temporal were

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<sup>638</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2227/96, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 23 Rebiyyülevvel 1317 [1 Ağustos 1899]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2285/90, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 14 Şabân 1317 [18 Aralık 1899].

<sup>639</sup> M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk, Adet ve İnanmaları*, p. 165.

<sup>640</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Çingeneler," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 3986-3999.

<sup>641</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 72/7140, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Rebiyyülevvel 1323 [18 Mayıs 1905].

narrow, and skulls were small. Their hair was black, fuzzy, long and abundant. Their skins were dusky. Women over mid-life were fat and they had wide buttocks. Adults were fit and strong and had a formed physical structure, and tough muscles.<sup>642</sup>

The accounts of the travellers could provide us with some information about the appearance of the Ottoman Gypsies. For instance, Mrs. Blunt says;

They are muscular, thin and of middle size; with dark skins, bright sparkling eyes, low undeveloped brows, and well defined nose, wide at the nostril; the lower part of the face is ill-formed and sensual. When quite young, some of the women are very pretty and much appreciated by the Turkish community as dancing girls, in which calling their utter want of decency and morality makes them adepts. When a gypsy woman is advanced in years she becomes perfectly hideous; her brown skin shrivels up through privation and exposure, her body gets thin and emacipated, and her uncombed elf locks, half concealing her features, give her the appearance of a witch. The cunning creature, aware of the effect she produces, makes capital out of it, by impressing the credulous with a belief in her uncanny powers of predicting the future, casting or removing the evil eye, or other magic spells, invoking benefits or bringing evil upon those who refuse charity or provoke her anger; thus extorting from fear the alms that pity refused.<sup>643</sup>

In addition to the traveller accounts, we can get information from the photos of the time. However, there was a disadvantage about the photos, postcards, especially the photos of the travellers. When the travellers were not able to get in contact with the people of the Orient, they used their imagination and tried to create something from their imagination. In the photographs, the view or the scene could be created in the studio and the aim was obviously to try to take photos of something from the

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<sup>642</sup> Ali Rafet Özkan, *Türkiye Çingeneleri*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>643</sup> Mrs. John Elijah Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years Residence among Bulgarians, Greek, Albanians, Turks, and Armenians, By a Consul's Daughter and Wife*, pp. 161-162.

East. Over the demand, the scene was constituted and the actors were animating the demanded scenes, but generally, for diverse scenes, the same actors were used. In time, the photos began to illuminate not the lives of the Ottomans, but the Ottoman lives in the head of the westerners. The decors were constituted and as Muslim women could not give these kinds of poses, models were chosen from the women who were working in the barrel houses of Pera. As coming to Gypsies, the women who were displayed as Gypsy in the photographs might not be a Gypsy in real terms. The information that we can get from them was the clothes associated with the clothes of the original Gypsies.<sup>644</sup>

The Gypsy women were easily recognized from a distance because of their clothes, voice, attitude, manner and appearance. All those were characteristics of women and those made them different from other women, but also constituted the common points of the women of that ethnicity. According to the Sermet Muhtar Alus, their appearance was generally wearing rags, dirty, casually tied headgear that was full of holes, uncombed hair, *alaz taraz* bangs, angel wings or bunches, sunburned and bronzed hands and face, jet-black brows, incessantly moving eyes, pearly white teeth, a printed shirt that was canary yellow, pale orange, sky blue *amvi* and pink, loose baggy trousers, and barefoot.<sup>645</sup> According to Abdülaziz Bey, the clothes that Gypsy women put on were uniform. The clothes were red or reddish and loosely-cut and collarless shirt, which were made of printed cloth and which had so

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<sup>644</sup> Engin Özendes, *Sébah & Joaillier'den Foto Sabah'a: Fotoğrafta Oryantalizm* (İstanbul: YKY, 1999), pp. 160-166.

The document dated as 1906 indicated that the postcards of the *Kıbtîs* were not always allowed. When the officials were informed that in Galata, an Austrian, Fruchterman, was selling the postcards of the Egyptian *Kıbtîs* (real *Kıbtîs*, not Gypsies), who were shown in a covered costume (the Islamic costume), the sales of the postcards were prevented immediately.

BOA, ZB. 592/5, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 31 Temmuz 1322 [13 Ağustos 1906].

<sup>645</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Çingeneler," in: *Eski İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat*, pp. 144-150; and, Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, pp. 30-33.

many cuffs, baggy trousers with long crotch and usually yellow colour and the socks, yellow shoes and *gürde* (blue coloured cloth that was made of American cloth in the style of cassock). The youths let their hair free and they were veiling or covering their heads casually. Of course, coquettish walking and charming glances constituted an important part of their attire. The Gypsy women coming from the Rumelia wore baggy trousers, a short *salta* and there would be a pair of *kundur*as in their feet as well as they put on blue beads, rings and putting some *mangır* in the shape of beads and money between their braiding.<sup>646</sup>

For the clothes and appearance of the Gypsy men, Sermet Muhtar Alus asserted that the men dressed in a similar manner with the women. They had shapeless, very creased, pale, oiled fez in their heads. Their faces were almost bloated and there were moustaches from pockmark, *kel kıl* shaving, and again pearly white and copper-bottomed thirty-two teeth. They wore shirts made of scrubbing cloth and they were wrapping woollen belts from their chest to crotch. Below their belly, they had trousers and smallclothes which were turned into oilcloth as a result of being worn frequently and also they went around shoeless.<sup>647</sup>

However, the difference was not only between Gypsies or other ethnic communities or between Gypsy women and Gypsy men, but also regarding the appearance and the clothes, there were also differences between the nomadic Gypsies and the sedentary Gypsies. The nomadic Gypsies wore jodhpurs, bolero or a short embroidered jacket with full sleeves, printed baggy trousers, and red cummerbund clothes. In contrast to this, sedentary Gypsies who had permanent residence in Sulukule did not wear these. Only, some women among them were willing to wear

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<sup>646</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 329-330.

<sup>647</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Çingeneler," in *Eski İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat*, pp. 144-150; and, Sermet Muhtar Alus, "Eski İstanbul'da Çingeneler," *Tarih ve Toplum*, pp. 30-33.

the clothes with gaudy and vivid colours. Therefore, their loose robe, blouse, coat, *maşlah* (a long, open-fronted cloak), headgear had the colours like green, yellow, pink, blue, purple and their fabric was included the figures of branch, flowers and leafs. Men of Sulukule dressed just like other ethnic groups and they knew to wear cleanly and plain-clothed as ‘the man-about-town.’<sup>648</sup>

### The Festival of *Kakava*

The most important Ottoman Gypsy festival was *Kakava*. The festival *Kakava*, which is a kind of welcoming party for the spring, is said to have 6,000 years of history. This festival is celebrated nearly in every region where Gypsies lived and even if the regions and districts changed, the tradition never changed. Actually, it was originated in Egypt and Asia Minor.<sup>649</sup> According to Necdet Sakaoglu’s argument, terminologically, *Kakava* means *kokulu hava* (odorous air) or *kahkaha* (laughter) was directly an entertainment peculiar to Kırklareli. It was realized one day later than *Hıdırellez*, or the following Sunday of *Hıdırellez*. For *Kakava*, the spring feast, the shores of tributary and the fountains were the chosen places and the night before, people moved to meadows with their blankets and beds. In this day, so many different food was eaten and diverse beverages were drunk, so that a foreigner might be surprised about abundance of the food. Nevertheless, the cost was so much in proportion with food. Before all this, traditionally, the Gypsy leader declared the traditional *Kakava* announcement in front of the community:

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<sup>648</sup> Osman Cemal, *Kaygılı, Köşe Bucak İstanbul* (İstanbul: Seli Kitaplar, 2003), p. 190.

<sup>649</sup> Nazım Alpman, *Başka Dünyanın İnsanları: Çingeneler*, pp. 98-99.



The happy and holy day of Gypsies, who are among the ancient and noble people, will begin half an hour, fifteen minutes and three seconds before the sun-rise. It was an invitation card of the ritual of the Great and Sainted Hızır İlyas Feast, whom we are indebted to.<sup>650</sup>

The *Kakava* had the mythological explanations and according to the legend, Gypsies had the leader called *Babafingo* and while Moses, Jewish prophet was passing the Red Sea by splitting with his baton, he was actually escaping from *Babafingo* and his troops. When he passed, the sea was closed and *Babafingo* and his troops were left in the sea. Here, in the day of *Kakava*, it was thought that *Babafingo* wanted to ascend to the water surface. Nevertheless, he was linked with forty layers of chains. He managed to break thirty-nine layers, but failed to break the last one. If he was able to break it and ascend to the water surface, a Gypsy state would be founded. The Jews knew about the day when he came to the surface and therefore, when two ethnic communities encountered, Jew turned his back to the Gypsy in order not to babble out something. That is why; they were enemies. Even, when the Jews went to the synagogue, Gypsies attempted to make a noise and play their instruments around the synagogue in order to bother them.<sup>651</sup>

Tayyib Gökbilgin claimed that the festival which was celebrated nearly everywhere in the Ottoman Empire was an invented day by the head of Gypsies; *çeribaşı* to make easy the collection of the taxes. When they started to pay their taxes

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<sup>650</sup> “*Millet-i kadîme-i necîbten Kıptiyân’ın yevm-i mesûd-ı mübâreki bugün gün doğmadan yarım saat, onbeş dakika, üç saniye evvel başlayacak. Edâsını borçlu olduğumuz büyük ve mukaddes Hızır İlyas Bayramı’nın âyin-i dâvetiyesidir.*”

Necdet Sakaoğlu, “Kırklareli’nde Gelenek Bolluğu: Kakava Bayramı,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII/137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 34–37.

<sup>651</sup> Nabey Önder, “Çingeneler ve Bir Travay,” *Folklor Dođru* (İstanbul), no. 41 (1975), pp. 22–26.

in a different way, this application disappeared. Moreover, it was said that it was given up with the period of *Tanzîmât*.<sup>652</sup>

Alexandre Paspati gave information about the same practice and the ritual celebration of the spring. He stated that for the spring, Gypsies already went out of their winter quarters and they arranged to meet in the middle of some green field, near some source of water. This was called *Kakava*, the feast of cauldrons, which was celebrated around 23 April.<sup>653</sup> During three successive days, these nomads, in the middle of their tents, devoted themselves to banquets, to celebrations, to dancing and to singing. Every Gypsy is required to sacrifice a lamb and to invite all passers-by to its table which was covered with flowers and endowed well with wines. At the end of these three days, they paid their annual levy to *Çeribaşı*; they regulated their contentious business, and left the country with their tents and their animals. Paspati asserted that the sedentaries ignored the name and so it became obsolete among the nomads in the vicinity of İstanbul. However, the perception of the government was different and it was conceived as better for the collection of the taxes.<sup>654</sup>

According to Ali Rafet Özkan, it was realized on 5 and 6 May of every year and it was celebrated in a place called Şeytandere, Kırklareli. The word *Kakava* had the meaning of *Tencere* Fest in Gypsy language. In the Ottoman Empire, it was celebrated from the fifteenth onwards. In fifth of May, all Gypsies went to “Çamlık” outside of the city, Kırklareli and the green tree branches gathered by themselves from that place was hanged out to the doors and windows. With this tradition, they believed that they stopped all the evil spirits, demons and witches, so they could not

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<sup>652</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbiçgin, “Çingeneler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. III (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), pp. 420-426.

<sup>653</sup> Above-mentioned day is arranged according to the Julian calendar. The equivalent of the day in the Gregorian calendar is 5 of May.

<sup>654</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, *Etudes sur les Tchinghianes ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, pp. 27-28.

go around the homes and hurt humans, animals and crops. On the same day, they put shocks (*spica*) in their houses to bring fertility. Before the sunset, they generally burnt a mat (*hasır*) and everybody had to jump over this fire three times. Besides, they had the tradition called *41 otu*. To the water filled in pots from Şeytan Deresi, they threw 41 stones, 41 grasses, and they took a bath with that water in the morning of 6 of May. In addition to these, eating any lamb or goat before this day was prohibited. If they ate, they would be supposed to eat the meat of their dead children. The lamb or goat was sacrificed before the sunrise. After the eldest member of the family prayed to God, the animal was turned to east. After the water was given to the animal for absolution, sacrifice was completed. It was believed that in the fest of *Kakava*, people got the ability of conjuration. The same kind of traditions was valid also in India and Europe *Aziz George Günü*. Before the Şeytan Deresi, this tradition was realized in the place of Asılbeyli village. Just because of murder, the place was named Şeytan Deresi. For 7 years, this fest was celebrated here, but then with the addition of cultural and artistic activities, it was turned into a complete festival.<sup>655</sup>

#### “Crime and Punishment”

The teacher of *Siroz Mekteb-i İdâdi ve Mülkiyesi*, Sadi Bey recounted that Ottoman Gypsies were involved in many unlawful activities such as theft, murder. However, the interesting part of their crimes was they were aware of the unlawful activities of each other and mostly they tended to deny their unlawful activities. They did all these in secrecy; therefore, it was hard to get information about their crimes. In order to be aware of their activities, according to him, it was essential to know their language, *Kıbtîce*. For example, they were so fast in stealing something and the

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<sup>655</sup> Ali Rafet Özkan, *Türkiye Çingeneleri*, pp. 119-120.

officer who was appointed for that case was surprised about what he saw and he had nothing apart from *hiisn ü zann*. If they stole the animals of the villagers, they attempted to sell the stolen animal as soon as possible. Then, the villagers felt helpless and had nothing to do. Furthermore, he stated that Gypsies in the farm were helping to illegal individuals. Also, the nomads were damaging the places or regions where they wandered. Also commented by him, some unruly Gypsy groups were stealers and burglars until they were noticed, and then they became beggars.<sup>656</sup>

Theft, murder, injury, counterfeiting, prostitution, rape, pulling a gun on officers were all sorts of crimes committed by Gypsies. However, if we put the complaints about Gypsies into an order, on top of the list, there will always be theft and stealing activities. Their stealing activities were even given places in the accounts of the many travellers such as James Baker who says; “The characteristic of Gypsies in Turkey was the petty theft. He steals anything which comes in his way, and he has a particular fondness for poultry. A goose is irresistible; and as those birds are plentiful in Turkey, a Gypsy family may be tracked, somewhat like a paper chase, by remnants of down and feathers.”<sup>657</sup> Also, Mrs. Blunt says;

In winter, they quarter themselves in the vicinity of towns or villages, where they have a better chance of carrying on their trade of petty thieving. The nuisance they become to a neighbourhood is increased by the hopelessness of obtaining any recovery of property stolen by them. The Gypsy is by no means particular as to the nature of the object he covets, but will condescendingly possess himself of an old horse found conveniently in his neighbourhood, or venture further and lay hands on anything from a useful article of dress to a stray  
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<sup>656</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

<sup>657</sup> James Baker, *Turkey*, p. 339.

<sup>658</sup> Mrs. John Elijah Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years Residence among Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, and Armenians, By a Consul's Daughter and Wife*, p. 162.

However, the question why appears in the minds and just like the problem of the origin, there could be attempts for finding a mythological explanation for this:

When Holy God gave out wheat to the *gažos*,  
He called the Rom as well  
To give them some  
But the Rom did not have a sack,  
Because they were poor  
Then the Rom said to Holy God:  
“Dear Holy God,  
Give us ours in the *gažos*’ sack!”  
So Holy God poured the wheat into the *gažos*’ sack.  
But afterward the *gažos*  
Did not want to give wheat (to the Rom),  
Even if the Rom asked for it,  
That’s why the Rom steals from the *gažos*.<sup>659</sup>

So, what they stole at that period? Actually, they stole different things such as animals mainly horse, cart horse, *camış*, *bargir*, chicken, goat, ox, *buzagađı*, donkey, rough rice or paddy, domestic utensils, money, gold, *helva*, carpet.<sup>660</sup>

Generally, it was said that a Gypsy did not steal from another Gypsy, but the archival documents showed that it was not true anymore. A Gypsy might easily steal from another Gypsy. Stealing could be performed by couples. In Kavala, a couple named Aydın and Fatma entered into another Gypsy’s house and stole some domestic utensils, such as copper covered braiser. In the investigation, the stuff was

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<sup>659</sup> Michael Stewart, *The Time of Gypsies* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1997), p. 18.

<sup>660</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 4/8, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Cemâziyyelâhir 1297 [16 Mayıs 1880]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2016/24, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Rebiyyülâhir 1310 [29 Ekim 1892]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2547/105, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Recep 1319 [23 Ekim 1901]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 46/4590, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Ramazân 1321 [18 Aralık 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 47/4646, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Şevvâl 1321 [27 Aralık 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 112/11119, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Şevvâl 1323 [15 Aralık 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 132/13177 adet: 1, vesika: 1, 16 Cemâziyyelevvel 1324 [9 Temmuz 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 147/14662, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Şevvâl 1324 [26 Kasım 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 118/11728, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Muharrem 1325 [9 Mart 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 157/15667, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Safer 1325 [6 Nisan 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 193/19258, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Safer 1326 [30 Mart 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 202/20186, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyyelevvel 1326 [28 Haziran 1908]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2913/25, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 12 Şabân 1327 [29 Ağustos 1909].

found in their house, so they were arrested.<sup>661</sup> In 1887, from the banditry, Ali Çavuş, who was from the county of Avrathisarı, threatened Mehmed Ali and Salih, from the Gypsy community and robbed them with the help of another two Gypsies; father and son. The booty was 10 *lirâ*. However, they were captured and arrested and according to the standing law, Ali Çavuş was penalized with four years of penal servitude in Adana, and Gypsies who helped him were also sentenced to two years in the castle, Selanik. Later, the punishments were decreased from four years to two years and from two years to one year.<sup>662</sup>

In stealing, beating, injury and murder, the victim might be involved in the event and its dimension could be turned into seizure. In contrast to this, the criminal might be caught during the robbery and face physical harm.<sup>663</sup>

At times, thefts hurt people who got burgled and it meant much more than petty thefts. In 1902, Ebubekir Sıdkı Efendi, who was the leader of Karakeçili *aşireti* and who was dwelling in Kuyusular village in Eskişehir sent a document about the trouble they had. He expressed that nomadic Gypsies who passed from Rumelia and Iran stole animals such as cart-horse and *çamuş* which were raised in the villages. If the situation was not stopped, the villagers would give up raising animals and that would bring more trouble for the state because they sent the animals for military

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<sup>661</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 28/2799, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Şevvâl 1321 [11 Ocak 1904].

<sup>662</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1402/11, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Cemâziyyelâhir 1304 [3 Mart 1887].

<sup>663</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 63/6233, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [12 Haziran 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 49/4862, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 22 Recep 1322 [2 Ekim 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 101/10013, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelevvel 1323 [26 Ağustos 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 126/12583, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülevvel 1324 [14 Mayıs 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 186/18539, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 8 Safer 1327 [1 Mart 1909]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 192/19136, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Cemâziyyelevvel 1327 [1 Temmuz 1909].

transportation or shipping. It was mentioned that the same group sealed documents with fake seals, so they underwent inquiry and proceeding.<sup>664</sup>

Coming to the question of how their stealing or robbery was punished by the officers, in 1878, two Gypsies from the neighbourhood of Gazi stole ten *kıyye* corn flour from the shop of Kürkçü Sava in Arasta *Çarşı* of Vidin. The criminals were captured and they were punished with 20 *şer değnek*.<sup>665</sup> In 1889, four Gypsies who stayed in the tents in Terkos stole some stuff like a piece of iron of *Dersaâdet Anonim Su Şirketi*. It was convinced that the event was not so important and that is why, the criminals were released on bail.<sup>666</sup>

One another crime of that period was counterfeiting. As the main term used about money in the Ottoman Empire was *akçe* and for the fake coins, the title *kalp akçe* or *kalp para* was used. The counterfeiters were denominated as *kallâb*, *kalpazan*, *sikkezen* and *zebânzedi*. Those words also meant liars and unreliable. Mainly, *kalp akçe* and *kalp para* were not the only terms used for fake coins. Besides, there were *kem akçe*, *kırık akçe*, *kırpık akçe*, *kızıl akçe* and *züyûf akçe*. Cutting fake coins needed special ability, training, talents and also the knowledge, so it could not be done by everybody. Gypsies were good at that profession because of the mastership in forging and locksmith. In the past, as they were crowded in Rumelia, the orders were often sent to the judges of the places where Gypsies stayed and they were warned and ordered to take precautions to prevent this. Gypsies were seen as the professional criminals about that matter. For example, in the order sent to the judge

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<sup>664</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 551/45, adet: 3, vesika: 1, 25 Rebiyyülâhir 1320 [1 Ağustos 1902].

<sup>665</sup> BOA, C.ADL. 80/4841, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Safer 1295 [5 Şubat 1878].

<sup>666</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1629/133, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Şevvâl 1306 [19 Haziran 1889]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1641/106, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Zilkâde 1306 [23 Temmuz 1889]. For another example of releasing on bail, see: BOA, TFR.I.KV. 70/6994, adet: 5, vesika: 1-2, 18 Cemâziyyelâhir 1322 [30 Ağustos 1904].

of Selanik, dated 8 July 1576, it was demanded that Gypsies spread to the fairs and when they came to the city; their *kallâbs* must be investigated and inspected. However, their talents in mining were sometimes abused by somebody else. For instance, son in law of *kethüda*, who lived in Genelü village of Yaviçe did not free the jewellery of Gypsies and did not let them go out of the village and he made them prepare the *kalp akçe*, *kalp* golden, *kuruş*, and *şahi*. The general punishments of that crime was the banishment, the jail, to punish them in the crime scene, sending to İstanbul, cutting an organ, hanging from the neck or throat, the penal servitude, cutting of one hand, and the capital execution.<sup>667</sup>

In the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the words used in the description of that crimes were *kalb mecrediye*, *kalb sim mecrediye*, *sahte mecrediye*, and *kalb akçe*. Actually, the documents were not clear that Gypsies were responsible individuals, but the fake coins were generally found in their pockets and after the fake coins were found, the next step was to send them to the *Darbhâne-i Âmîre* to examine the coins and to prevent their introduction to the market. For this, a telegram was sent to centres; Syria, Hüdavendigâr, Hicaz, Bağdad, Selanik, Sivas, Adana, Diyarbakır in order to warn the authorities in the regions.<sup>668</sup>

Looking into the archival documents, it was deduced that the most common crime committed by Gypsies was murder. If the killers, who committed the murder, were captured and arrested, they were punished with the death penalty, penal

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<sup>667</sup> Emine Dingeç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kalpazanlık Faaliyetleri 1560–1600," *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, no. 32 (2007), pp. 73–96.

<sup>668</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 2003/25, adet: 1 vesika: 1, 25 Safer 1310 [17 Eylül 1892]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2395/83, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Rebiyyülâhir 1318 [26 Ağustos 1900]; BOA, DH.MKT. 2402/31, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Cemâziyyevvel 1318 [13 Eylül 1900]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2418/112, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Cemâziyyelâhir 1318 [24 Ekim 1900].



servitude.<sup>669</sup> Apart from this, if there was an accidental murder, the killer might be released. For instance, a Gypsy man, who killed his mother accidentally with a gun, was at first punished with six months of prison sentence, but then he was released in 1897.<sup>670</sup> The forgiveness might come also to the remaining term of the sentence such as Gypsy Şakir Ali from the county of Yakova, who had been punished with a prison sentence over sixteen years, was forgiven by the officials.<sup>671</sup> The diverse offensive weapons were used in murders such as dagger, stick, shotgun, revolver, rifle, gun, *martin kurşunu*, knife, pistol, butcher, knife, and axe.<sup>672</sup>

Another common crime after murder was pounding and physical injury. The injury or pounding cases, which were realized with a piece of iron, knife, stone, kicking, flintlock gun, dagger, axe, stick, revolver, mouthpiece, gun, rifle, *martin kurşunu* did not need significant reasons most of the time. A little thing might have the power to set the fire. In other words, money, discussion in the libation, window

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<sup>669</sup> BOA, İ.DA. 17/760, adet: 4, vesika: 1-2, 5 Cemâziyyelevvel 1293 [28 Mayıs 1876]; BOA, İ.AZN. 91/1327 Zilkâde-16, adet: 41, vesika: 1-2, 24 Zilkâde 1327 [8 Aralık 1909]; BOA, İ.AS. 100/1327 Zilkâde-199, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 28 Zilkâde 1327 [12 Aralık 1909].

<sup>670</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 170/60, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Recep 1315 [4 Aralık 1897].  
Another example of the accidentally murder, see: BOA, TFR.I.SL. 214/21396, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Recep 1327 [31 Temmuz 1909].

<sup>671</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 1240/97191, adet: 8, vesika: 1-3, 11 Muharrem 1309 [17 Ağustos 1891].  
In a document dated as 1906, it was shown that elderliness could be effective in the cancel of the remaining time of sentence. See: BOA, TFR.I.SL. 104/10328, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Rebiyyülevvel 1324 [30 Nisan 1906].

<sup>672</sup> BOA, TFR.I.SL. 1/56, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 25 Ramazân 1320 [26 Aralık 1902]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 13/1234, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Muharrem 1321 [19 Nisan 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 40/3992, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Recep 1321 [19 Ekim 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 56/5561, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Muharrem 1322 [5 Nisan 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 54/5306, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Şevvâl 1322 [11 Aralık 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 85/8421, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Muharrem 1323 [20 Mart 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 91/9029, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 19 Rebiyyülevvel 1323 [24 Mayıs 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 80/7956, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 10 Cemâziyyelâhir 1323 [12 Ağustos 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 146/14505, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülâhir 1325 [2 Haziran 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 145/14479, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Şevvâl 1325 [13 Kasım 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.MN. 186/18559, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Safer 1327 [5 Mart 1909].

matter, quarrel during playing cards in the coffee-house, the clash between two Gypsy groups, debt owed to one might result in the injury and pounding.<sup>673</sup>

Actually, the crimes were not committed by individuals or groups as one by one or separately, but sometimes more than one crime could be committed by one person. According to the type of the offences, the retributions were determined. In 1888, Boço bin Bayram from Ertumanca or Otomanca town of İpek county, committed many crimes such as *tarîk-i şekâvete sülûk* (being on the banditry road) or banditry, and high-way robbery or hijacking, stealing, especially by crossing people's path, he and his friend harmed the community a lot. As a punishment, his lifetime banishment to Adana was decided, but for the punishment, it was needed to prove the guilt of the offender in a trial. Finally, his offence was determined and he was banished to Adana for three years.<sup>674</sup>

Mehmed bin Mustafa, who was from Kilitli village, Darıdere county, committed offences like seizure or grabbing, plundering, pillage, briefly he was a bandit. He was not contented with these crimes, but also drew his gun to the military police. Therefore, decidedly, his punishment was determined as the penal servitude in Akka for five years and after he completed his sentence, he would be under the supervision

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<sup>673</sup> BOA, TFR.I.KV. 27/2684, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 3 Cemâziyyevvel 1321 [28 Temmuz 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 19/1802, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Cemâziyyelâhir 1321 [13 Eylül 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 25/2479, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Ramazân 1321 [24 Kasım 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 45/4447, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Ramazân 1321 [4 Aralık 1903]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 30/2964, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Zilkâde 1321 [8 Şubat 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 36/3575, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Muharrem 1322 [6 Nisan 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.MN. 40/3986, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 27 Rebiyyülevvel 1322 [12 Haziran 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 64/6368, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 12 Rebiyyülâhir 1322 [26 Haziran 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 69/6802, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Safer 1323 [15 Nisan 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 87/8669, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 7 Ramazân 1323 [5 Kasım 1905]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 135/13496, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 14 Cemâziyyelâhir 1324 [5 Ağustos 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 121/12033, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 1 Safer 1324 [16 Mart 1907]; and, BOA, TFR.I.KV. 197/19664, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Rebiyyülâhir 1326 [16 Mayıs 1908].

<sup>674</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1531/109, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Zilhicce 1305 [12 Ağustos 1888]; BOA, İ.DH. 1097/85997, adet: 4, vesika: 4, 21 Zilhicce 1305 [29 Ağustos 1888]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1542/27, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Muharrem 1306 [12 Eylül 1888].

of *Zaptiye* for the following two years.<sup>675</sup> Another criminal committed an offence like murder, crossing the path and he was penalized with twelve years of penal servitude.<sup>676</sup> In 1907, when Kahraman bin Mehmed caused a scandal intoxicated in Üsküdar, particularly an affront to the officer, wandering in the fairground by creating a scandal, *icrâ-yı rezâlet* and *tecâvüzât*, an inquiry was launched about the person and in a short period of time, the results showed that what he had done intoxicated was the tip of the iceberg. According to his criminal history, there were the crimes like drawing gun, abduction, pounding, injury, *baskın*, *münâza'a*, coming back from his place of banishment as fugitive.<sup>677</sup>

Another common Gypsy crime was prostitution. There were not only Gypsy prostitutes, but also the prostitutes of other ethnic groups. However, the financial circumstances of Gypsies dragged them into that and it was legalized as professions. Actually, the empire also legalized it somehow because for a long time, it tried to stop it and always added this as a clause in the laws, but a decrease was never seen or the prostitutes were not punished according to the matters of standing laws. Faika Çelik explained;

Why were the prostitutes not punished with what was prescribed in the letter of law? I suggest that this was due to a consideration of the social consequences of the situation. Not everybody could afford to marry or buy concubines in Ottoman society. Therefore, prostitution functioned as a safety valve in the controlling of male sexual desire and as such filled a niche in Ottoman society. Furthermore, it seems

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<sup>675</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1765/86, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Safer 1308 [30 Eylül 1890]; BOA, İ.DH. 1200/93892, adet: 4, vesika: 1-3, 5 Rebiyyülevvel 1308 [19 Ekim 1890]; and, BOA, DH.MKT, 1777/137, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Rebiyyülevvel 1308 [3 Kasım 1890].

<sup>676</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. 1677/62, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Rebiyyülâhir 1307 [27 Kasım 1889].

<sup>677</sup> BOA, ZB. 82/28, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 24 Ramazân 1323 [7 Ekim 1907].  
For similar cases, see: BOA, TFR.I.KV. 47/4606, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Şevvâl 1321 [22 Aralık 1903]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 1237/4, adet: 11, vesika: 1, 27 Muharrem 1326 [1 Mart 1908].

that it was a lucrative source of revenue for the state, when properly managed. In short, due to these considerations prostitution was accommodated by the state and tolerated by the legal authorities. Gypsies' involvement in this trade has demonstrated to us how the Ottoman authorities dealt with prostitution. Yet from the subaltern perspective, their engagement in this trade also offers us a glimpse into one of the survival strategies available to paupers in Ottoman society.<sup>678</sup>

At the same time, another place did not tolerate prostitution. In Tebriz, Gypsies were dwelling in a quarter called Kuçe Sokak and they had occupations like dancers and musicians. However, in 1901, the quarter became a hole of prostitution and the public suddenly attacked it. They expelled some of them outside of the city and cut off the hair of some who repented in order to show them to everyone and in order to make them avoid repeating that occupation.<sup>679</sup>

Abdülaziz Bey mentioned the houses in which the prostitutes stayed and performed their professions and he stated that two out of ten of the women were from Gypsies of İstanbul and other two out of ten were from Gypsies of Siroz, Edirne and Manastır.<sup>680</sup>

The teacher of *Siroz Mekteb-i İdâdi ve Mülkiyesi*, Sadi Bey emphasized the immoral attitudes of Gypsy girls. With their coquetry, they accustomed the naive

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<sup>678</sup> Faika Çelik, "Probing the Margins: Gypsies (*Roma*) in the Ottoman Society 1450–1600," in: *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 173-199.

<sup>679</sup> N. Pour Efkari, "İran'da Çingenerler Hakkında Toplanan Gözlem, Mülakat, Ses alma, Fotoğraf ve Diğer Bilgiler," İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyoloji Kürsüsüne Sunulan "*İran'da Çingenerlerin Sosyal Yapısı Üzerine Bir Araştırma*" Adlı Doktora Tezinin 4. Bölümüdür (İstanbul: Mayataş Matbaacılık ve Neşriyat A. Ş., 1978).

<sup>680</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, p. 335.

boys to a drunken life and then, when the boys were attached to the girls, they consumed all the properties of the boys and also they drove them to poverty.<sup>681</sup>

Their entertaining activities called *Çengili* and *Çalgılı* created troubles for the public peace. They sometimes went to weddings or prepared some entertainment in front of their tents or in their tents. With those activities, they undermined the morale of the society and increased the prostitution. Mustafa Akdağ mentioned that Gypsies, including men and women and dancers and musicians, were getting intimate with the invited men in the weddings. Openly, they were acting as prostitutes. Interestingly, it was claimed that Gypsy girls were decorated by other Gypsy women on purpose. They were using those girls in the weddings and entertainment activities to seduce the married men, adult men, young boys of the villages and cities in order to cause them to spend their money for themselves. By this way, there were girls who benefited from the financial situation of wealthy groups and even caused them to become insolvent. There was a group who was called *Gurbet Tâifesi* and these people, husband and wife, were going around for theft and especially; they were introducing girls or women as their wives in order to benefit from them in prostitution. Around 1567, there were crowded groups called with that name in the village of Dimboz, between Bursa and Yenişehir. They robbed, stole and acted as prostitutes. The inhabitants of the village complained about them and the authorities pushed them for the settlement. There occurred a debate or conflict among them about the application of the order and the rebels were arrested. Despite this, they were not taken under control.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 47/180, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 24 Cemâziyyelâhir 1308 [4 Şubat 1891].

<sup>682</sup> Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası: Celali İsyancıları* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1995).

In that profession, Gypsies did not always use women, but also boys could be abused by them. For instance, in the year of 1907, the officers learnt that two individuals named Trabzonlu *Hallac* Mehmed and *Çingene* Osman visited the boys dwelling in the bed-sitting rooms in İstanbul and encouraged them for immorality. They were caught and their sending back to their hometown for good was decided.<sup>683</sup>

Surprisingly, there was a visible complaint about those entertainments regarding the moral and noise dimension. However, among the individuals who entertained with Gypsy music and Gypsy women, we see the officers. They hired the women, made them play and dance and some of them went to the houses of the prostitutes. In reality, the documents which I have indicated that the state did not ignore this type of immorality and punished some officers involved. However, I do not think that these are all, but there must be more than four or five individuals which escaped the state's notice.<sup>684</sup> To punish the officers, involvement in those activities was not always necessary because the officers, who were unable to interfere were also penalized. Thus, two police officers, Neşet and Mehmed *Efendis* failed to interfere with the group consisting of a customer and Gypsy men entertainers and who entertained in the car by playing shrill pipe. They amused themselves with music and they wandered around in a car. However, the officers became inadequate and as a punishment, their five daily wages were deduced per head.<sup>685</sup>

Even though it was not as widespread as previously mentioned crimes, deceiving people by serving as “quack” doctor could be counted as a crime committed by

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<sup>683</sup> BOA, ZB. 461/15, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 13 Kanûnievvel 1323 [26 Aralık 1907].

<sup>684</sup> BOA, ZB. 64/39, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Eylül 1322 [4 Ekim 1906]; BOA, ZB. 471/78, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 5 Teşrinievvel 1322 [18 Kasım 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 203/20232, adet: 3, vesika: 3, 2 Cemâziyyelâhir 1326 [1 Temmuz 1908]; and, BOA, DH.MKT. 2814/57, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 26 Rebiyyülâhir 1327 [17 Mayıs 1909].

<sup>685</sup> BOA, ZB. 84/78, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 2 Temmuz 1325 [15 Temmuz 1909].

Gypsies in that period. As a matter of fact, the news in one of the periodicals of the time demonstrated this. According to the news published in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, a Gypsy woman living in Sofya was acknowledged with her ability of treating so many diseases, but then, her trick was revealed and by filing charges against her, she was condemned to two months in prison. Actually, the case became apparent with the event that a woman from one of surrounding villages came to request Gypsy woman's help for his daughter-in-law who contracted a serious disease. The Gypsy doctor, at first, examined the patient and guaranteed that she could cure the woman, but just in return for 20 francs. The mother-in-law paid the demanded money without any hesitation, so when the payment was rendered, the Gypsy woman doctor began to cure the sick woman by taking her into a dark room, travelling around her, extinguishing flaming coals in the water, and babbling. When she finished her peculiar type of treatment, she sent the mother-in-law near the sick woman and declared woman's complete recovery from the illness. The situation became clear, when one of the relatives of the countrywoman became aware of the circumstance and saw nonhealing woman, he or she appealed to the government, and quack Gypsy woman doctor received two months of imprisonment.<sup>686</sup>

Lastly, we see that there were other crimes such as rape punished mostly with penal servitude, poisoning, incension (house, farm or the forest), drawing a gun to the officer, and vagabondage. The children could be the criminals too. For example, in 1892, two Gypsy boys named Bayram and İsmail, whose ages were 7 and 10,

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<sup>686</sup> -----, "Çingâne Tabip," *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, Sayı: 560, 23 Rebiyyülevvel 1324/ 4 Mayıs 1322, p. 6.

threw stones at the European train passing in Hadımköy and the windows of the train shattered. Then, they were delivered with their documents to the courthouse.<sup>687</sup>

### New Leaders of Performing Arts and Music: Gypsies!

In the area of performing arts, the peculiarities of Gypsies became much more visible. Of course, obviously, they satisfied the needs of the Ottomans by showing their skills in some crafts so they provided somehow material satisfaction in socio-economic life of the Ottomans. However, what made them important was not limited to this. They provided something much more important, which was a spiritual satisfaction. They made their presence felt as dancers, singers, players, musicians, puppeteers, and acrobat. The question could arise here, whether they had not been doing all these before. The response was of course, they had been doing them, but in the late Ottoman Empire, particularly in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, they won a more stable place in the cultural life of the Ottomans. On the other hand, after a certain period of time, the first thing that came to mind when we call music and dance began to be the ‘Gypsy.’ As a matter of fact, that situation caused some misunderstandings about the ethnic background of the other musicians and the dancers because there were not just Gypsy communities employed as dealers of these professions, we had Jewish, Greek and Armenian dancers and a kind of perception began to be set in: those people might be originated as Gypsy.

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<sup>687</sup> BOA, İ.DH. 961/75999, adet: 3, vesika: 2-3, 27 Zilhicce 1302 [6 Ekim 1885]; BOA, ZB. 436/28, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 21 Nisan 1324 [4 Mayıs 1908]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 66/6570, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelevvel 1322 [20 Temmuz 1904]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 52/5106, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Recep 1322 [14 Eylül 1904]; BOA, Y.MTV. 255/155, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 18 Zilkâde 1321 [5 Şubat 1904]; BOA, DH.MKT. 1984/100, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 15 Muharrem 1310 [8 Ağustos 1892]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 134/13327, adet: 2, vesika: 2, 29 Cemâziyyelevvel 1324 [22 Temmuz 1906]; BOA, TFR.I.SL. 159/15842, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 20 Şabân 1325 [28 Eylül 1907]; BOA, TFR.I.KV. 184/18329, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 9 Zilkâde 1325 [15 Aralık 1907]; and, BOA, DH.EUM.THR. 4/7, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 1 Ramazân 1327 [16 Eylül 1909].



## Musical Aspirations

Gypsies were born with a musical ability and actually, it was more than ability. They feel the music in their spirits. By music or every kind of entertainment tool done with the music, they entertained both the society and themselves. They knew how to amuse people because, at first, they entertained themselves too. Secondly, there was an anomie in their style and music, and that anomie aroused people's interest. Thirdly, they had the ability of adopting other nations or state's musical instrument and musical styles. For instance, they were good at playing the traditional Turkish music or instruments like drum and clarion, and they created different kinds of musical universe in which it was possible to find followers.

As we talked about music, at first, two concepts should be mentioned here: which were *hânende* and *sâzende*. *Hânende* was a term used to describe people who sang; and its plural form was *hânendegân*. As Sermet Muhtar Alus explained, the famous female *hânenes* were among Lonca, Sulukule, Selamsız of Üsküdar and the well-known of them were Gülistan, Safinaz, Andelip, Elmas, Küçük Şöhret, Ceylan.. He stated that people of the wedding community and demos of Kağıthane, Silahtarağa and Çırpıcı were enamoured of the folk songs and *mânîs* (traditional Turkish quatrain form) of Gülistan, Safinaz and Andelip.<sup>688</sup> In spite of their success, at that time, as a language, it was stated that the dialects of *hânende* Gypsies were perceived as corrupted. Especially, the great poet Urfalı Nabi hated the disrupted dialect of *hânende* of İstanbul.<sup>689</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları*, pp. 210-213.

<sup>689</sup> Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, "İlk Mübaşirler," in: *Edebiyat Araştırmaları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1966), pp. 294-296.

There were unprofessional Gypsy girl singers too. Lucy M. J. Garnett says that Gypsy girls who sang in the streets of İstanbul and other cities and who partially covered their faces were named *Ghiovende*. According to her statement, those girls were also brought to the houses for special entertainments and weddings and amused the guests with their dancing performances with songs and musical instruments tambourine and violin. They were generally called to the houses of the Turks. And, some of the girls wandered from village to village with the monkey and bear trainer Gypsy men and in the entertainments, they had the dances that resembled *nautch*, and they presented aggrieved performances in company with drum, tambourine, bagpipe, and end-blown flute.<sup>690</sup> Alexandre Paspati also mentioned the young Gypsy women who sang love songs while travelling in the streets and public places.<sup>691</sup>

*Sazende* was used in place of *mutrip* as well as used in order to imply on the individuals who played the *saz*. As the plural form, the word *sâzendegân* was used. These musicians were able to play bow instruments, percussions and wind instruments and all depended on *sâzendebaşı*. They could go to houses for concerts, and at times, dancers or *rakkase* accompanied them. The instruments mostly played by them were lute, violin, zither and clarinet. In the older times, we got information about the usage of instruments like *çökür*, *çeşde* and *kudüm*. With their performances, they could be appointed to play in the festival of the sultan and the circumcision ceremonies.<sup>692</sup> The famous *sazendes* of the 1900s were Sulukuleli Arap

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<sup>690</sup> Lucy M. J. Garnett, "Çingene Kadınları: Aile Hayatları ve İnançları," *Dans Müzik Kültürü*, no. 64 (2002), pp. 163–167.

<sup>691</sup> Alexandre G. Paspati, "Memoir on the Language of Gypsies, as Now Used in the Turkish Empire," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, pp. 143-270.

<sup>692</sup> İsmail, Altınöz, "Osmanlı Toplumunda Çingeneler," pp. 249-250; and, p. 260.

In his accounts, James Baker was expressing a wrestling match just outside of the town of Barakli-Djuma. In the match, besides the other nations, he got across with Gypsies and especially a Gypsy band consisted of a drum and a clarionet... That band was probably accompanying the match, but when the first match was over, the winner Bulgarian had another match with a Gypsy boy who was

Mehmet, Selamsızlı Zurnacı Emin, and Edirneli Kara Mehmet and with their clarions or shrill pipes, they mostly played instrumental tunes or melodies. In their repertoires, there were *pehlivan havaları*, *ceng-i harbîler*, *karşılamar*, and *kantos*.<sup>693</sup>

Coming to the general characteristic of the Gypsy music, in his article about the Gypsy music, Kurt Striegler underlined the importance of the music of *ibtidâi* (primitive) tribes like Gypsies for researching the general evolution of music. He brought an answer to the musical abilities of Gypsies. They were successful in music, because they were living as vagrants in poverty and also they were far away from the concept of motherland. Furthermore, they were mostly despised by other communities. Therefore, above-mentioned factors compelled them to express their feelings and anguishes with instrumental music. In a manner of speaking, this was a way of self-expression. In the words of the author, “the music gives power which is enough to resist poverty and contempt.” Nevertheless, this did not attach a practical value to them. The instrumental music was emblazing t ambitions, but it did not personify them by attributing to the historical and vital personalities. In addition to this, Striegler pointed out the differences between his music (*medeni müzik*) and the Gypsy music. In the Gypsy music, there was no place for rules or bases for the alteration of the modes, and the tones and *armoni fasılas* were more different from Western music, but they exercised control over the audience. However, in all these factors, it should be mentioned that the music had rhythm and prosodies which were peculiar to it. The effective point here was the possibility to turn a melancholic song

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twenty-five years old. Finally, he won the wrestling competition. See: James Baker, *Turkey*, pp. 336-338.

<sup>693</sup> Melih Duygulu, *Türkiye’de Çingene Müziği: Batı Grubu Romanlarında Müzik Kültürü*, (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2006), p. 47.

into a cheerful song. Their music had a variety of prosodies (*vezin*) and there were abundant and various decorations or embellishments in it. Furthermore, there was too much *gamlar*, *koromatik nağmeler*, and *ses kaydırmaları*, called *port de voix*, which was used to decorate motifs.<sup>694</sup>

About the musical instruments played by Gypsies, in his travel notes, Evliya Çelebi mentioned the *çeşde* players (kind of musical instrument) and he counted them as 300 and showed Selanikli Benekli Şah as the creator. This instrument was mostly played by Gypsies who resided in Balat by strapping it to their necks and so they were going around Eyüp and Kağıthane. The masters of that instrument were *Deli Hüsam*, *Kemal Çingene*, *Zorlu Receb*. Nevertheless, we do not know that it was continued to be played by Gypsies of that period.<sup>695</sup>

Drum and clarion were definitely the instruments mostly played by Gypsies. Especially it was known, by the dint of Gypsies, there appeared numerous drum and clarion players in İstanbul. In the nineteenth century, clarion was replaced by clarinet. Again, all the clarinet players were of the Gypsy origin as well.<sup>696</sup>

Apart from these, historical sources indicated that Gypsies were also playing such instruments as *kemân-i kibtî* (*tek telli*, and stringed instrument), *ceng*, and *santur*.<sup>697</sup> In his talk about the *ceng* (a small harp), Bülent Aksoy underlines the existence of Gypsy women who played that instrument. Especially, he thought that it was mainly played by Gypsy women in cities.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> K. Striegler, “Çingâne Musikisi,” *Hayat Mecmuası*, vol. 1, no. 26 (1927), pp. 513–515.

<sup>695</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. 1, ed. Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: YKY, 2003), p. 640.

<sup>696</sup> Bülent Aksoy, “Contributions of Multi-Nationality to Classical Ottoman Music,” Available: [http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical\\_ottoman\\_5.htm](http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical_ottoman_5.htm) [26.10.2009].

<sup>697</sup> Melih Duygulu, *Türkiye’de Çingene Müziği: Batı Grubu Romanlarında Müzik Kültürü*, p. 122.

<sup>698</sup> Bülent Aksoy, “Contributions of Multi-Nationality to Classical Ottoman Music,” Available: [http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical\\_ottoman\\_5.htm](http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical_ottoman_5.htm) [26.10.2009].

The other musical instruments played by Gypsies were violin, lute, and tambourine. There were Gypsies who acquired fame for playing a certain musical instrument. For example; *Çingene* Donsuz became the master of playing the tambourine.<sup>699</sup> Şevket Rado defined the tambourine which had two types: the round form and either with or without cymbals.

The tambourine is the musical instrument with a round wooden drum covered with very fine parchment and it is played by drumming on it with the fingers. It entered into the Turkish music as a percussion instrument but played by the *hânen*des who were very fine male singers and who drum on the tambourine during the instrumental sections. The cymbals are arranged in groups of four or six pairs arranged opposite one another around the edge of the drum. Every time the tambourine is struck by the fingers the cymbals produce a pleasant and cheerful accompaniment to the melody. As for the cymbals used by the dancers as they dance were made of brass, and are round in shape with a depression in the centre. They were attached by string to the thumb and forefinger and were struck together in time with the rhythm of the dance.<sup>700</sup>

In his article, Cihat Aşkın mentions that Gypsies were an important factor in usage and spreading out the violin culture within the borders of empire and in the Balkans. Many of the violinists learnt to play by studying on their own. In their learning process, listening to other musicians and then imitating them might have been helpful. Besides, some of them could benefit from the experiences of their musician fathers. Especially, Denizoğlu Kemani Ali Bey, who was a Gypsy player, made an important contribution in its development. In the night clubs, Kemani Bülbüli Salih Efendi was one of the famous violinists. He got that Bülbüli name because of his imitation of the nightingale. Besides being the teacher of Mustafa

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<sup>699</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 383-385.

<sup>700</sup> Şevket Rado, *Aletler ve Adetler* (İstanbul: Akbank Kültür ve Sanat, 1987), pp. 24-25.

Sunar, he also played with Tanburi Cemil Bey. From his remaining recordings, Cihat Aşkın analyzes his style:

His style is very plain and does not use ornaments as much as the others. His vibrato is an arm and wrist vibrato as we can perceive from the recording. He does not use finger vibrato very often. Much of the time he uses continuous vibrato. Sometimes he does not use any vibrato. He defines the differences between the notes clearly. He has a small but musical, non-creamy and sweet tone. His intonation is always correct even in the high pitches. He alternates the amount of bow he uses for the characteristics of the melodies.<sup>701</sup>

Another Gypsy violinist was Kemani Memduh (1868-1938). Several times, He had the distinct honour to play in the presence of Sultan Abdülhamid II. According to Cihat Aşkın, that man who left records was one of the first users of western tuning system. Haydar Tatlıyay was another Gypsy originated violinist. Haydar Tatlıyay who began to play the instrument at the age of eight found the opportunity to live in Çanakkale, İzmir, Egypt, and Haleppo. Cihat Aşkın explains him and his style as follows:

His style was arabesque and his compositions display the influence of Arab Music. He used to practice regularly. In a short time, he was called the Paganini of Turkish Music. His instrumental works were a revolution for the instrumental Turkish Music. But nobody was able to play them because of the difficulties of the technical passages. However, he was a great technician but was poor musically. His musical taste was far away from the style of Turkish Music. He used some Arabic tunes in his taksims that affected his position in Turkish Music Society. He did not know to read the music, always played by memory. In his playing, he played very long phrases which were full of ornaments. He used finger vibrato when he needed. He did not need to use the vibrato

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<sup>701</sup> Cihat Aşkın, "The Violin in Traditional Turkish Music: A General Outlook," Available: [http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?violin\\_history\\_8.htm](http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?violin_history_8.htm) [26.10.2009].

much of the time because the ornaments did the same job. His playing was far from classical Turkish music, but there is technical brilliancy in his recordings.<sup>702</sup>

As the violin player, one of the famous violinists was *Kemani* Tahsin from Lonca. It was said that he played perfectly and people went to listen to *curcuna* and *köçekçe* from him. He was perceived as moustached, plump, handsome and active like the bow of his violin. He was even invited to the weddings of Paşa and Efendi.<sup>703</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey called attention to the existence of successful musicians. These were lute player Hamza, violin player Emin Ağa, who were taken in to the palace in the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, and other violin players; Memduh, İhsan, and Bülbül Salih. He said that the voices of the Ahmet Bey (the son of Emin Ağa), İsmet Ağa and Mustafa Ağa brightened the area. Shortly, in the remotest areas of İstanbul, it was possible to hear the sounds of violin, lute and dulcimer as well as the active songs.<sup>704</sup>

As the instrument played by Gypsies of the time, we have *Kemençe*, too. *Kemençe* which was known as the *lyra* or *lirâ* in the Balkans and Aegean islands was a bowed instrument. *Kemani* Hızır Ağa who was a musician and writer of music showed a single-stringed instrument that resembled *kemençe* and he referred to it as *kemân-ı kıptî* (Gypsy violin). In reality, Gypsies were one of the introducers of that instrument into the classical music. Vasil (1845-1907) was a great *kemençe* player and he was a Greek musician of Gypsy origin. With his help, it was used for the first time in classical concerts. Tanburi Cemil Bey (1873-1916) followed suit and used the

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<sup>702</sup> Cihat Aşkın, "The Violin in Traditional Turkish Music: A General Outlook," Available: [http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?violin\\_history\\_8.htm](http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?violin_history_8.htm) [26.10.2009].

<sup>703</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları*, p. 197.

<sup>704</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı*, p. 175.

instrument with equal mastery. Bülent Aksoy comments on this: “even from then on the Greek and Gypsy tradition in the *kemençe* has been carried on by other Greek, Gypsy, and Gypsy-Greek *kemençe* players.”<sup>705</sup>

Another musical instrument was the *çifte nara* or *çifte nağra*. There was a story about the instrument called *çifte nara*. While there was a wedding ceremony in a kiosk near Yenikapı *Mevlevihâne* (lodge used by Mevlevi dervishes), the *çifte nara* of Gypsies burst and the player Gypsy, knocking at the door of the *Mevlevihâne*, demanded *çiftenâra* of *kudümzenbaşı*. *Kudümzenbaşı* rejected that demand because of the misnomer of the instrument by the demander. According to *kudümzenbaşı*, it was not *çiftenâra*, but a *kudüm-i şerif*. The sheikh of the dervish convent who was *Mesnevihan* Osman Selâhaddin *Efendi* (1820-1886) said that you should not have dispirited them; you could give it. If it fell into the hands of Gypsies, it would become *çifte nâra*, but in the case of returning back here, it would become *kudüm-i şerif* again.<sup>706</sup>

The musicians of the beginning of the twentieth century were raised in Kasımpaşa and Selamsız. Especially, the players of shrill pipe or clarion were playing classical songs or works with *kaba zurna*. *Zurnazen* Emin, his son Ferhat, Şaban Usta and Arap Mehmet were the most famous of the clarion players of the time. However, among Gypsies, the players were more popular than the singers. Of course, there were singers, but they were paling beside the players. However, some of the singers called *hanende*, even performed for the troops or teams of the palace, *ince saz takımları*. The most famous of them were Ayvansaraylı Kurban, İbrahim

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<sup>705</sup> Bülent Aksoy, “Contributions of Multi-Nationality to Classical Ottoman Music,” Available: [http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical\\_ottoman\\_5.htm](http://www.turkishmusic.org/cgi-bin/d?classical_ottoman_5.htm) [26.10.2009].

<sup>706</sup> Ersu Pekin, “Müzik bir Çingene Sanatıdır; Ama...,” *Metin And’a Armağan* (İstanbul: Metgraf Matbaası, 2007), pp. 373-403.



Bey, Mehmet Bey and Hurşit Efendi.<sup>707</sup> Finally, we see the clarinet and ever since from the late nineteenth century, clarinet entered under the dominance of Gypsies.<sup>708</sup>

### Gypsies and Gypsy Motifs in Performing Arts

#### The Dancing Boys: *Köçeks*

In the past, the general term used to indicate dancers including girls and boys were *çengi*, but in time, the alternative of the word appeared for the boy dancers. The terms used for the boys were *köçek*, *tavşan* (the rabbit) or *tavşan oğlanı*. The term *rakkas* was occasionally used alongside the term *köçek*. The music used during the dancing was called *köçekçe* for the *köçeks* and to name the music accompanying the boys, *tavşanca* was used. Metin And explained why there was terminological diversity for the boy dancers. He says; “the dancing boys got this last name because they used to make grimaces, facial contortions, light steps and jumps, and generally move the muscles and skin of their faces like a rabbit in their dance called *tavşan raksı*.” In addition to this, there was also difference between the *köçeks* and the *tavşans* regarding their dressing.<sup>709</sup>

It was not easy to become a *köçek*, because that profession necessitated an appropriate face that reminded the visage of the young girls, languorous eyes, and thin-bodied. However, having all these was not enough and beside all these, they had to be well-trained in the *meşkhânes* (the practicing houses). The owners of those houses were mostly Greeks and Jews and also Gypsies who had been trained for a

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<sup>707</sup> Melih Duygulu, “Türkiye Çingenelerinde Müzik,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, XXIII/137 (Mayıs, 1995), pp. 38–41.

<sup>708</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, ‘You’re Roman!’ *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, p. 144.

<sup>709</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* (Ankara: Forum Yayınları, 1963), p. 26.

long time in those houses could work as the teacher of the dance and the music. Probably, it would take one or one and a half years to train the boys.<sup>710</sup>

The Gypsy male dancers were mainly from Akkerman, Siroz, Selanik, Edirne and İstanbul. Three or four of them got together and constituted a troop and they had a leader or the organizer called as *kolcu* or *kolbaşı* as well as assistants called *yoğurtçu* and *pusatçı* whose job was playing the giddy goat while the *köçeks* were dancing. The dancers who were over 25 years old, meaning at an advanced age, could be the leader of a troop or to be *yoğurtçu* in the troop. There were separate dancing troops as Muslim, Greek, Jews and Armenian. The troop of Islam was constituted largely by Gypsies or *Kıbtîs*. In the wedding, circumcision, festivals and banquets, recreation spots, the dancing boys were demanded mostly. After the bargain with the leader of the troop, it became possible to hire them.<sup>711</sup> They were dancing in general entertainment places, in special invitations in the houses or the association or in the coffee houses. When the winter came, they became unemployed so they began to work as cupbearers. They pleased their customers with a cup of drink, appetizers or a little coquetry.<sup>712</sup>

Metin And stated that as a costume, they wore a brocaded kilt made of fringed silk fabric, a belt put in the liquid gold, silk shirt processed with hemstitch, brocaded *dilme* made of velvet or red broadcloth, red tissue fez, silk *çevre* whose borders were embroidered with gilded silver thread. Coming to the rabbit boys, in contrast to

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<sup>710</sup> Z. Melek, "Eski Devirlerde Köçekler ve Çengiler," *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası* (Kasım, 1953), pp. 2705-2707; and p. 2729.

<sup>711</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 390-393.

In his account, Reşat Ekrem Koçu stated that the dancing boys were mostly originated from the Greeks, and then from Gypsies and then from Armenians and Jews. See: Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Eski İstanbul'da Çengiler," *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, 2, no. 7 (1970), pp. 27-30.

<sup>712</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, ed. Sami Önal (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), pp. 59-60; Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), pp. 177-178.

wearing of skirt by *köçeks*, they wore baggy-trousers made of broadcloth, *camadan*, wrapping multicoloured *şal* (mantilla) over their belly and they were not bareheaded but put on their head an adorned and inlaid conical hat.<sup>713</sup> Z. Melek tried to explain the difference between the costumes of two types of male dancers. She emphasized that the boys who had been dancing for a couple years started to grow old and so they were promoted to the class of *tavşan oğlanları*, and also as they lost the freshness of their legs, they wore baggy trousers made of thin broadcloth.<sup>714</sup>

They used *çarpara* or *çalpara* (clappers), *zilli maşa* (“a simple form of tongs with three arms or small cymbals attached to each arm”), *çegane* (jingling johnie), wooden spoons, *zil* (small metal finger cymbals or castanets) and finger snapping. Sometimes, the boy dancers danced with a handkerchief, and *ma jolica* plates. In the performance, the clowns, *curcunabaz*, who were wearing a grotesque masks on their faces, could be seen imitating the dancers of the boys so their inability to dance like the dancing boys could amuse the audience. The dances of the *köçeks* were called by diverse titles like; *kaytan oyunu*, *tura oyunu*, and *fes oyunu*. Sometimes, they performed a water dance. They could dance as long as they retained their beauty and hid their beards.<sup>715</sup>

Colliding the jingles, *çarpate*, a type of castagnette that were tied to thumbs and middle fingers of both hands they were opening their arms graciously and on tiptoes,

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<sup>713</sup> Metin And, “Eski Temaşa Oyunlarımızdan Çengiler ve Köçekler,” *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, 1, no. 2 (1968), pp. 25-29.

For the clothes of the dancing boys, Abdülaziz Bey stated that they were generally wearing special costumes consisted of short, brocaded waistcoat, loosely-cut, collarless white shirt, *eteklik* that had diverse colours and decorated with brocaded fringes and spangles, a belt which was set with precious stones and a kind of slipper titled as *filar* whose sole was thin and which was tied to the foot with ribbon. In summer, over the possibility of existence of red tissue floor covering, the base of the slipper was chalked as a mere formality. They were bareheaded and free hairs. See: Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 390-393.

<sup>714</sup> Z. Melek, “Eski Devirlerde Köçekler ve Çengiler,” *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, pp. 2705-2707, and p. 2729.

<sup>715</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 26-27.

they were moving shoulders and body melodiously so, in a sense, they were dancing in step with the playing instrument. Abdülaziz Bey told that during the dance, the played instruments consisted of *lavta* (lute) and *kemança*. Other musical instruments were not used much.<sup>716</sup>

Refik Ahmet Sevengil mentioned the individuals who spent a lot of money just in order to attain the compliment or attention of the dancing boys. It was said wealthy individuals were reduced to extreme poverty for their sakes. As a result of that peculiarity, the dancing boys were called with the titles like Zalim Şah, Fitne Şah, Nazlı Şah or the nicknames such as Saçlı Ramazan Şah, Can Şah, Kúpeli Şah, Kúpeli Ayvaz Şah.<sup>717</sup>

As it was said above, with their youth, beauty and skills in dancing, they were able to provide the addiction of the customer or the audience to themselves. One of the famous admirers was Enderunlu Fazıl who was a famous poet. In his book, *Defter-i Aşk* (The Book of Love), Fazıl recounted the story of Gypsy İsmail who was the famous *köçek* of his time. Another book of him was *Çenginâme* that was written to present the famous dancing boys of the century.<sup>718</sup> This was one side of the story of the dancing boys, but there was also a negative side which included quarrels, discussions and disagreements among people because of them. Therefore, we can see

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<sup>716</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 390-393.

In her article, Z. Melek added *sine-i keman* and *tabourine* to the above-mentioned instruments. See: Z. Melek, "Eski Devirlerde Köçekler ve Çengiler," *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, pp. 2705-2707; and p. 2729.

<sup>717</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, p. 59.

<sup>718</sup> Murat Bardakçı, *Osmanlı'da Seks* (İstanbul: İnkılâp, 2005), pp. 115-151.

Enderunlu Fazıl's books were not limited with these. Outside of these, his other books were also attention grapping. One of the was *Hûbannâme*. In *Hûbannâme*, he was explaining the boys coming from different ethnic groups, including the Gypsy boys. In another book, *Zenannâme*, he was expressing his ideas on the women from different ethnicities, including the Gypsy women. See: Enderunlu Fazıl, *Hûbannâme ve Zenannâme*, ed. Ercümen Muhib (İstanbul: Yeni Şark Kitabevi, 1945), p. 36.

For the story of *köçek* İsmail, see: Reşad Ekrem Koçu, *Eski İstanbul'da Meyhaneler ve Meyhane Köçekleri* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2002), pp. 67-74.

that with an order dated as 1857, the institution of the dancing boys was prohibited.<sup>719</sup>

### The Dancing Girls: Çengis

While mentioning Gypsies, it would be certainly unfair not to mention the Gypsy women dancers called *çengis*. Firstly, it will be necessary to dwell on the terminology, because at the beginning, the word *çengi* was used to describe both the dancing boys and the girls. Supposedly, there were two explanations about the origins of the word. It was originated in the word *çeng* or *çenk* that is an old musical instrument and like “upperchested harp” and the cymbals was sometimes accompanying it. Another explanation was based on the similarity between the sounds of the word *çengi* and *çingene* (Gypsy in Turkish). Actually, the profession, especially in the late Ottoman Empire was predominantly performed by Gypsies so; naturally the word might be derived from the title of that group.<sup>720</sup>

Like the dancing boys, the dancing girls also constituted some guilds or companies called *kol*. A typical *kol* included the leader of the company: *kolbaşı*, the

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<sup>719</sup> Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. II (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946-1956), p. 300.

In contrast to this, the *tavşan*, *köçekçe* and *curcuna* dances continued for a while among the courtiers. Some high officials of the Sultan Abdülhamid II were organizing entertainment activities behind the closed doors. See: Z. Melek, “Eski Devirlerde Köçekler ve Çengiler,” *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, pp. 2705-2707; and p. 2729. Besides, in the book of Şevket Rado, it was stated that in one of the months of *Ramazân*, Çankırlı Hacı Şeyhoğlu Ahmet Kemal Bey saw a *tavşan*, actually two, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, in a *semâi kahvesi*, where singers were usually gathering, in Şişli. See: Şevket Rado, *Aletler ve Adetler* (İstanbul: Akbank Kültür ve Sanat, 1987), pp. 24-25.

<sup>720</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* (Ankara: Forum, 1963), p. 26.

Abdülaziz made a different comment on the subject and pointed out that formerly, the band which included the players of the instruments like; *çeng*, *rebap* (stringed instrument with a long neck), harp, *erganon*, tambourine, reed flute, lute and zither, was called as *çengis* referring to the instrument *çeng* and then, in addition to the instrument players, there emerged also dancers in the team or band. In spite of this, the band continued to be called as *çengi*. That is to say, *çengi* was the former names of the instrument players. At the end, it was divided into two classes. Females, who were dancing, were called as *çengi* and females, who were playing their instruments in the course of the dance or *oyun*, were called as *sıracı*. The women who were described as *sıracı* were mostly of the Gypsy women. See: Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 388-389.

assistant, and twelve dancing girls. Besides, there was a person in the service of the girls, the *soygunçu*. She was in charge of the wardrobe of the girls and helped them in the alteration of their costumes. To accompany the dancing, there were four musicians called *sıracı*. They played instruments like the fiddle, *nakkâre* (a double drum), and tambourines. To decorate their dances, they used additional musical instruments or motifs such as *çarpara* or *çalpara* (clappers), *zilli maşa* (“a simple form of tongs with three arms or small cymbals attached to each arm”), *çegane* (jingling johnie), wooden spoons, *zil* (small metal finger cymbals or castanets) and finger snapping.<sup>721</sup> In other times, they were also dancing with the *ma jolica* plates and those dancers were called *kasebaz*. In addition to this, they tended to play with the silken scarf in order to play shy maidens or the flirting courtesans. Besides, they were also pantomimes and famous pantomimes were *Kalyoncu* (galley sailor), *Zeybek*, the *Hamâm* (the bath) and *Kilci* (the fuller’s earth called *kil*).<sup>722</sup> The general dancing moves were explained by Metin And and he says;

Their dancing consisted of suggestive contortions, a good deal of stomach play, and twisting of the body, falling down on the knees with torso held back, until the head nearly touched the floor behind a position which usually encouraged enthusiastic spectators to place a coin on the forehead, and writhing and swaying the body with a side twist. Every muscle and both shoulders were made to quiver, and all this was alternated with a certain mincing grace and affectation. Sometimes they would perform a pantomime of physical love

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<sup>721</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>722</sup> Metin And, "Eski Seyirci İçin Türk Sanat Dansları: Kadın Dansçılar (Çengiler)/ Turkish Dancing As Spectacle Dancing Girls," *Türkiyemiz*, 21, no. 63 (1991), pp. 16–23.

Refik Ahmet Sevengil told that the women called as *sıracı* were playing the instrument like violin, *çiftenara*, and *dâire*. See: Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, p. 61. Abdülaziz Bey stated that as an instrument, there were 3 tambourines, 2 violins, 2 dulcimers and in case of need, 2 tabourins and 1 *bozuk*. See: Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 388-389. Z. Melek added *lavta*, *sinekemani*, *kemençe* to the above-mentioned tambourine and *nakkare*. See: Z. Melek, "Eski Devirlerde Köçekler ve Çengiler," *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, pp. 2705-2707; and p. 2729.

with an expression of restrained passion: retiring as if alarmed or humiliated, and sometimes assuming bold and daring attitudes, pretending to throw their breasts or lips to the spectators. The dancing girls occasionally impersonated males.<sup>723</sup>

Their business place was a woman's bath in Tahtakale. Their ages were not more than thirty or thirty-five, but the leader of the *kol* could be sixty. In that age, traditionally, the leader should take part in the opening of the dance called *ağır ezgi*. In the programme of the *Çengi kolu*, there were four parts;

First a song was sung as an overture, then the *kolbaşı* would come to the middle of the room and salute the spectators with her hands, and the company would go around the room four times, moving in rhythm to the tune called as *ağır ezgi* with their arms held tight. The second part was executed without the *kolbaşı* and her assistant. With finger cymbals and bodies bending swaying in dreamy undulation, the dancers wriggled their shoulders and hips with a slow rocking movement of the pelvis and the thighs, each leg slightly flexed and the heel lifted from the ground, while slowly rolling their belly in a circular movement, they shook their breasts. If they were encouraged by their admiring spectators, they would make themselves more sensual and tantalizing by displaying their breasts in a most daring manner. The third part was called *tavşan raksı* (the rabbit dance), and similar to the dancing boys, they wore trousers, a short fitting jacket and a small cap, and also danced with finger cymbals. Their movements consisted chiefly of whirling, jumping and hopping. The fourth part was more of a pantomime and singing in chorus.<sup>724</sup>

The education and the training were two important and effective concepts about the dancing girls. The girls had to be well-trained and well-educated and it was given

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<sup>723</sup> Metin And, "Eski Seyirci İçin Türk Sanat Dansları: Kadın Dansçılar (Çengiler)/ Turkish Dancing As Spectacle Dancing Girls," *Türkiyemiz*, pp. 16–23.

<sup>724</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 16–23.

mostly by the masters of that profession. However, it was not enough by itself, besides, there had to be a suitable physical appearance. According to Reşat Ekrem Koçu, for being a dancing girl, beside the shape of the body, the shape of feet would become so effective and all the artifices would be gathered in feet. Therefore, feet had to include those characteristics: tough calf, thin ankles, long and tapering fingers, and as boys' feet (*oğlan ayağı kıyımında*). For the free move of the body, it had to be *tıkız*, *yağsız balık eti* and also the breasts should be little developed or grown. The hands had to be as appropriate as the feet. Actually, according to the perspective of Reşat Ekrem Koçu, the Gypsy girls were cut out for being dancers because their dark skins benefited them in disguising as men and so there would be no difference between the disguised girls and good-sized and beardless boys. If we added "the classic Gypsy recklessness" to that, Koçu thought that they would play their roles in a perfect way. In spite of this, he compared the Gypsy dancers to the regions. He considered Gypsy dancers were brought from Damascus of Syria and Tırnova of Bulgaria. Meaning, Gypsy dancers from those places were much more popular and skilled than the dancers of İstanbul, particularly Ayvansaray.<sup>725</sup>

In the process, firstly, the demander had to bargain with *kolbaşı*, who was in charge of the organization and the contract and if there was a consensus, the date and the place were announced to other members of the troop. On the determined day, the clothes<sup>726</sup> were taken from the house of the *kolbaşı* because there was not one type of

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<sup>725</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Eski İstanbul'da Çengiler," *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* 2, pp. 27-30.

Sometimes, the demanders were going to the places of *çengis* like Ayvansaray and after they saw their dances with their own eyes in the places of dancers, they chose the dancers themselves. If the demander was not appreciating the dancers, he or she was leaving the place by giving little money. At that point, without feeling jealous, Gypsies recommended some other dancers to the demanders. See: M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk, Adet ve İnanmaları*, p. 167.

<sup>726</sup> M. Halit Bayrı stated that the clothes were carried by the former dancers who were obliged to leave the dance as for the problem of ageing. Those former dancers were called as *posatçı*, a group of people around the ages of 40 or 45. Beside carrying the package of the girls, they were teaching to the



clothes and Gypsy dancers had to change clothes in accordance with the quality of the dance. In essence, the leader of the troop was accompanying the dance or acting and when they intervened, they undertook the most effective roles. If there were Arabs, Persians or the drunken person, individuals who were able to imitate their languages were allowed to play those roles. The titles of the acting or the dance of *çengis* were *Tahir ve Zühre*, *Kırk Haramiler*, *Arzu ve Kamber*, *Cezayir dayıları*, *periler padişahı*, *Bekri Mustafa*, *gemici oyunu*, *aşıkla maşuk*, *perilere karışma*.<sup>727</sup> The trick or dancing styles of *çengis* were given differently by Sermet Muhtar Alus and he proclaimed styles as diverse such as *köçekler*, *çoban*, *zeybek*, *Arabis*, *Acem*, *koç bilezik*, *gemici* and *hora*.<sup>728</sup>

The *çengis* played an important role in *Beşik Alayı* which was a sort of ceremony prepared for ‘woman recovering from childbirth’, specifically woman who gave birth to her first child. However, the ceremony could be constituted only by great or wealthy families because of the expenses and the size of the dwelling or mansion. Holding tambourines in their hands, the two dancing girls were located to the two sides of the cradle and in the front rank, there was *kolbaşı* so the cradle was carried slowly to the *sofa* and was put in the middle. In the meantime, tambourines were continued to be played by the girls. Then, they were stopped and *kolbaşı* came into the middle and read a *manzûme* (poem). Then, the cradle was brought to the room of puerperal in the company with the music coming from tambourines and folk songs. It was put in front of the puerperal and all congratulated the new mother and the blanket of the cradle was pulled to the tip-toe and a few golds, which were put in the

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girls to dance and to enthuse the dancers in order to amuse people. M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk Adet ve İnanmaları*, pp. 168-171.

<sup>727</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 388-389.

<sup>728</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları*, p. 174.

cradle, were collected and given to the mid-wife, so the ceremony ended. It was the turn of the dancing girls. However, before the dancing girls started to dance, women called *sıracı* were seated over the mattresses so the girls began to dance. The dancers who stayed in the mansion ate their meals with the community of the mansion and then, they were given gifts and money one by one. After the last congratulations and returning thanks, *kolbaşı* left a white handkerchief to the *baş kalfa* (master headworker) with the intention of not breaking off with the mansion and reminding gift.<sup>729</sup>

The *çengis* were also hired for another type of ceremony called *kırk hamânu* which was a gathering or tradition done for the new-born and the mother. When the mother and the child reached the end of a forty-day period, she was taken to the bath and the family, all the relatives and neighbours were invited. In the bath, the meals were eaten and the *çengis* danced and musicians played. Then, the mother and the baby bathed.<sup>730</sup>

The *Çengis* also participated in the circumcision ceremony. After the boys were circumcised, an entertainment was organized for the householders, the relatives and the intimate friends. The prerequisite of the entertainment was the *çengi* troops. As they were invited before, they took their place in the mansion. Firstly, *çubuks* and coffees were served and banquet was thrown. The *sıracı* women began to greet them with a *temenna* and then the dance or acting started. After the *çengis* danced, women who played an instrument called *bozuk* accompanied them. At the end, musicians

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<sup>729</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 17-23.

The same ceremony was described by Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey as less detailed and a little bit differently such as he called the ceremony as *beşik çıkma merasimi* and also he stated that when the cradle was put in the middle of the sofa, as sitting in the head of the cradle, Ebe Hanım began to sing a lullaby. See: Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir Zamanlar İstanbul*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>730</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1946), p. 22.

who were trained in the mansion performed a program, so the amusement part ended.<sup>731</sup>

As the *çengi* team became an inseparable part of the wedding, it was possible to see them in certain parts of the wedding ceremony like the *gelin hamâmı* (the bride-bath), *kına gecesi* (henna night), and *paça günü*. In the ceremony of *gelin hamâmı*, the bath was usually was hired for the family of the bride days before. The bride and her family were met by the performances of the *çengis* and after she entered, she took off her clothes during the *saz faslı* so she wore *ipek futa* and *sedef nalıns*. While she was having bath, the musicians continued to play and *çengis* danced. After she finished his bath, she was welcomed with the music and the dance and she was served lemonade. The team was singing folk-songs and wished happiness for the bride-groom. Then, the *sıracı* was also praying for the couple and finally they took their tips. Apart from that type of organized entertainment in which the *çengis* were employed, there was also special bride-bath organized only by Gypsies for their community. The mother of the Gypsy girl brought a couch from the house to the bath. It was a special couch for the bride. Besides, many couches and chairs were carried to the bath and the bath was decorated. Then, the invited people came with their bags or packages. The *saz faslı* was launched and firstly, the bride's mother came to the scene and began to explain how she raised her daughter and how she taught her to dance or other abilities and how many bottom drawers were collected for her. A mother of another girl also came to describe her daughter, too. During all these, the instruments were played and the *çengis* danced. After everybody spoke in praise of her daughter, the bride became undressed. *Sırmalı silecek* and *ipekli futa* were given to her and also she held a silver bowl, the mirror, hair comb and silver

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<sup>731</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, p. 53.

pattens. In the company of dances, she was inserted into the bath. The bride was bathed by the *hamâm ustası* and then, the tips were given by the mother. The *çengis* and players ecstasized people and sorrowful folk-songs were sung, so the bath was completed. After the distribution of the *yemiş* (dried fruits and nuts) and the dressing of the beautiful clothes, everybody set off home.<sup>732</sup>

In *Kına Gecesi* (henna night), men were entertained in *selâmlık* with musical instruments and drinking. In *harem*, *çengis* were dancing, and to henna in the hands of bride and they were singing a kind of folk-song. At first, they put henna tray in front of the invited women and seated the bride. Then, henna with the gold was put into the palm of the bride, the gold for good fortune and prosperity. In addition to the various dances of the *çengis*, they were also bringing a wheeled galleon which the colourful candles were lit on and which was made of beeswax. They were disguised as *kalyoncu* (sailor) by putting on brocaded short *dizlik* (kneepad), wide-sleeved tulle shirt or blouse, brocaded waistcoat, brocaded conical hat, silken Tripoli turban, and silken cummerbund. Pulling the ropes of galleon, they were singing the folk-song of the sailors and they were showing it around so the entertainments lasted all night long. The plays performed by the dancing girls were not limited to the galleon; there were also plays like *Çeşme*. Musahipzade Celal commented on the plays or performances of the dancing girls and said that those performances were not different from cantabile comedy.<sup>733</sup> The *Çengis* were not alone, but also there were *hanendes* and *sazendes* in the night. Those two groups entertained the guests and told the *mânîs* which praised the bride. The *çengis* danced and the entertaining groups picked up their tips benefiting from the benevolence contest between the relatives of the groom

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<sup>732</sup> M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk Adet ve İnanmaları*, pp. 171-173.

<sup>733</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, pp. 8-9.

and the bride. Ercüment Ekrem pointed out that they were either from Gypsies of Ayvansaray or Jewish girls of Balat. On that night, there were dancing girls who became prominent with their steps, trembling breasts, swinging heads and the facial and bodily beauties. They could take 40, 50 or 100 *sarı lirâ*. If they entertained the men in the *selâmlık* part, they could earn more money than they thought. The *sazendes* could also benefit from the generosity of them, if they were up to the task. Towards the midnight, the classic songs were stopped and the *köçekçe*, *oyun havaları*, and *çiftetelli* were in demand. The purported folk songs were repeated all together.<sup>734</sup>

Another important role played by the Gypsy dancing girls was *Paça Günü* (the second day of the wedding). If the groom entered in the bride's house as *içgüvey* (living with his wife's parents), a special day, the Friday morning, was put into practice. The day before *paça*, the sheep legs, which were prepared one day ago, were sent by the groom to the house in regard to the number of people in the house. Besides, clotted cream was also sent. In the same day, as usual, the musicians awaited as prepared, but not in the same clothes worn on the wedding day. A perfect player and dancer team stood ready for entertainment. First, musician women called *sıracı* sat down and launched to play and then the *kolbaşı* of the *çengis* came into the middle and she greeted the audience with a *temenna* and let the people know about the name of the play. After that, the dancing girls danced in due course.<sup>735</sup>

From the statements of Abdülaziz Bey, it was deduced that the dancing Gypsy girls did not only go to the place they were requested, but there were also Gypsy women who danced on demand and who formed a group as for the excursion spots.

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<sup>734</sup> Ercüment Ekrem, "Kına Gecesi," in: *Dünden Hatıralar* (İstanbul: Yedigün Neşriyat, 1957).

<sup>735</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 131-133.

Maybe, they were not professionals but just danced as they liked. Besides, they also sang songs and some of them played musical instruments. In return for their acting, they were given tips.<sup>736</sup> Mehmet Tevfik evaluated that in excursion spots such as Kağıthane, dances of the Gypsy women, who sang folk-songs at the same time, were degrading because moves or gestures of the dancing girls were based on tempting people, particularly the male group.<sup>737</sup> Furthermore, Ali Rıza Bey commented that the attitudes of those Gypsy women (offering to sing and to dance and in return, insistent to get their tips) in the excursion spots irritated the gentlemen of Kağıthane.<sup>738</sup> According to Mehmet Halit Bayrı, those women enchanted the youths. The most famous of those women was Pullu Fatma. As rumour had it, the son of a pasha fell in love with Pullu Fatma, but he was married and had two children. Lastly, he divorced his wife and began to live with that woman. For that Gypsy woman, he spent all his money and finally, he became destitute.<sup>739</sup> However, they were respected by women too. As Refik Ahmet Sevengil asserted, like the lovers of the dancing boys, the dancing girls also had their lovers from among wealthy ladies. Those women rewarded them from time to time and invited them to their houses.<sup>740</sup>

As it was seen, toward the late Ottoman period, the number of dancing girls who had Gypsy ethnic background increased. Reşat Ekrem Koçu claimed that the dancers out of dynastic palaces (in the palaces, the *çengilik* was taught to women who were from different ethnicity, except Turkish ones) were completely originated in

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<sup>736</sup> Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, pp. 294-295; and, p. 300.

<sup>737</sup> Mehmet Tevfik, *İstanbul'da Bir Sene* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1991), p. 87.

<sup>738</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir Zamanlar İstanbul*, p. 207.

<sup>739</sup> M. Halit Bayrı, *Halk, Adet ve İnanmaları*, p. 171.

<sup>740</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, p. 63.

Gypsies.<sup>741</sup> Nevertheless, with the augmentation of the Gypsy dancers, researchers and witnesses of the period tended to get into a comparison with the dancers of the former centuries and the later centuries.

The general perspective about the Gypsy dancers was not good. According to Reşat Ekrem Koçu, the girls of the latter centuries were mostly Gypsies and they were dancing miserably.<sup>742</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus declared that there were dancing girls with Gypsy ethnic background, especially among Gypsies of Lonca, but ‘the powers that be’ did not so much esteem them. The trade-people, people from outskirts and *yufka ceplis* demanded them in the main.<sup>743</sup> For Ali Rıza Bey, the increase was much more about the prohibition that was brought to the dancing boys. He approached that period as depletion for the male dancers and decline for the female dancers. He stated, even if the institution of *çengi* was not abolished, their influence over the social and cultural life of the Ottoman Empire decreased because of lack of desire that had caused the women to come to the house of *kolbaşı* in order to learn the dance. At the same time, that period brought an augmentation in the lives of Gypsy girl dancers. They began to dance more often, but Ali Rıza Bey disdained their dance and considered their dances as incompatible with the genuine *çengilik*. That is to say, for him, there had to be some conditions for being a *çengi* such as having information about *sazendelik* and *hanendelik* and every step had to be taken according to the tempo of the music. Furthermore, the dancer had to obey the rules of that profession such as *kafa tutma*, *omuzdan titreme*, *bel kırma*, *topuktan çarpma*,

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<sup>741</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, “Eski İstanbul’da Çengiler,” *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>742</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>743</sup> Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Yazıları*, p. 174.

*turnak üstünde uçar gibi koşma*. When she practised them, moves had to be in harmony with the *saz*.<sup>744</sup>

Accordingly, Musahipzade Celal who witnessed a *çengi oyunu* in his lifetime, criticised the performances of Gypsy girls in the weddings and denoted that he watched all these with loathing because according to him, the performance of Gypsies was not more than belly-dance and there was no place for belly-dance in the *çengilik*. Briefly, he believed, after the *çengilik* fell into the hands of Gypsies, the art took a disgusting form.<sup>745</sup> Apparently, they acted like in the past, there were not Gypsy dancers, but they were derived suddenly and after their emergence, they lowered the tone.

Apparently, there was a kind of consensus among the witnesses of the period and the researchers of the period. However, the most important supporter of that idea was none of them, but it was the sultan and the state itself. The state officials and the sultan achieved a consensus about the Gypsy dancing girls who lowered the bar. Especially this negative perception manifested itself perfectly in international exhibitions. When a British Company named *Olympia Anonim Şirketi* came to İstanbul in December 1893, and expressed its intent of opening an exhibition, namely *Londra'da İstanbul Şehri* in order to give an idea about the customs and traditions of the Ottoman Empire, the sultan and the officials reacted. Actually, at the beginning, the directors demanded some boats, oarsmen and the players, but the state considered that as inappropriate. However, the reaction of the state and the sultan was not about the demanded boats or oarsmen and even sending of this stuff might benefit the local or regional trade. The state reacted to displaying some Gypsy and Jewish women as

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<sup>744</sup> Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı*, p. 29.

<sup>745</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, p. 10.



samples from “Oriental people” because it could harm the image of the state. Besides, it was too degrading and improper in the eyes of the sultan and the officials. Furthermore, that was also unacceptable in terms of Islam and Ottomanism. However, the company repeated its intent but the state did not take a step back. Then, Britain evaluated the decision of the palace as contrary to freedom of trade. Actually, for the Ottomans, there was a much more important obstacle than freedom of trade. For the exhibition, the company could include some Greeks, Arabs and some other unwanted peoples in their programmes. Also, the Gypsy and Jewish women who were sent to Marseilles for manufacturing cigarettes could pass to London from there. Finally, the state approved of the demands of the company on the condition of not damage the state’s honour.<sup>746</sup> However, when the possibility of another exhibition emerged in the year of 1894, the state and the sultan reacted to this likewise. It was heard that a person named Agop Balyan came to İstanbul as the representative of a Belgium Company which prepared an exhibition or representation. The worse part of the story was his wandering in Sulukule and Beyoğlu and his attempt to make a deal with some Gypsy women. When the sultan and the officials were informed about this situation, an order was given to Ottoman

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<sup>746</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.HR. 17/64, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 29 Zilkâde 1310 [13 Temmuz 1893]; BOA, Y.A.HUS. 283/64, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 25 Rebiyyülâhir 1311 [4 Kasım 1893]; BOA, Y.A.HUS. 284/29, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 4 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [13 Kasım 1893]; Y.A.HUS. 285/19, adet: 1, vesika: 1, 17 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [26 Kasım 1893]; Y.PRK.BŞK. 34/4, adet: 1, vesika: 1 20 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [29 Kasım 1893]; BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. 34/6, adet: 4, vesika: 1-2, 21 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [30 Kasım 1893]; and, BOA, Y.A.HUS. 285/66, adet: 8, vesika: 1, 21 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [30 Kasım 1893].

The other documents about the subject, see: BOA, Y.A.HUS. 284/36, adet: 4, vesika: 1, 6 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [15 Kasım 1893]; BOA, Y.A.HUS. 285/67, adet: 4, vesika: 1-4, 21 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [30 Kasım 1893]; BOA, Y.A.HUS. 285/86, adet: 2, vesika: 1-2, 24 Cemâziyyelevvel 1311 [3 Aralık 1893]; and, BOA, Y.A.HUS. 286/60, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 8 Cemâziyyelâhir 1311 [17 Aralık 1893].

For more information about the subject, also see: Selim Deringil, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji*, trans. Gül Çağalı Güven (İstanbul: YKY, 2002), p. 158.

Embassy in Brussell to prevent any display that could damage the status and dignity of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>747</sup>

### The *Kukla* Show: Gypsy the Puppeteer!

For Gypsies who proved their abilities and success in music and dance, the next step would be to find a new sector in order to reflect their musical abilities and to prove also that not only in dance and music, but also they could be successful in other parts of performing arts. One of them was the “puppet show.”

The history of the puppet show was as old as the history of the humanity, because people were born with this ability. That is to say, in reality, every human-being was naturally a puppeteer. Every one of us attempted to move some stuff or toys and made them speak. Nevertheless, it was shocking that there was not much written about the puppets, more likely as a result of the ignorance or misinterpretations of the researchers about the sources for the puppet show. And it was merely called *kukla* (puppet) in the seventeenth century. However, the origin of the word was obscure and to find the source, it was claimed that the word *kukla* was originated in the words of the Gypsy language: *kukli* or *kuki*. However, this word was encountered among the language of German Gypsies.<sup>748</sup>

For a long time, there had been perplexity about the word puppet and the word *hayâl*. Some foreign travellers used the word puppet in order to describe both shadow theatre and the puppet theatre. Coming to the word *hayâl*, this word was used for both shadow and puppet theatre, but at all times, it was used to define shadow theatre. Even, *Çadır Hayâl* of Turkistan, which was the string puppet

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<sup>747</sup> BOA, Y.MTV. 99/55, adet: 2, vesika: 1, 7 Muharrem 1312 [10 Temmuz 1894]; and, BOA, Y.MTV. 100/38, adet: 3, vesika: 1-3, 15 Muharrem 1312 [18 Temmuz 1894].

<sup>748</sup> Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1969), p. 94.

(marionette) show carried out in a tent, or *Kol Korçak* was misevaluated and it was commented that these were a shadow theatre, so looking into this, the general perception was shaped as the shadow theatre came here from Turkistan (from China to Mongols and from here, with the help of the Turks, it was passed from the Far-East to the west). However, *Çadır Hayâl* was a marionette and *Kol Korçak* was a hand puppet. Unfortunately, there was not a shadow play in Central Asia or in Persia.<sup>749</sup> Similarly, the Persian string puppet or marionette *Hayme-i Şehbâzî* was perceived as the shadow theatre improperly because it was played at nights. Unlikely, the old Turkish texts, not following the general misunderstanding, narrowed down the circumference by adding the word *zill* to the word *hayâl* in order to imply just on shadow theatre so the new format was constituted as *zill-i hayâl* or *hayâl-i zill* (phantoms of shadow or shadow phantoms).<sup>750</sup>

Nevertheless, the long-term confusion proved that actually, there was not completely detailed information about the puppets and the difference between the puppets and the shadow theatre. However, about the early period of the puppets, Metin And informed us that in early centuries, the puppeteer had an assistant and that assistant joined the onlookers and conversed with one of the puppets when it was alone on the stage and appealed to the public. There were four types of puppets and these were *iskemle kuklası* (jigging puppet or *marionette à la planchette*), *el kuklası* (hand or glove puppet), *ipli kukla* (marionette) and the giant puppets. In addition to these, there were also puppet types whose definitions were not obvious. These were *yer kuklası* (ground puppet) and *ayak kuklası* (foot puppet). Among all these puppet kinds, the one was performed by Gypsies, which was the jigging puppet. It was

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<sup>749</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>750</sup> Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre: With an Appendix on the History of The Turkish Puppet Theatre* (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 1979), pp. 22-25.

mostly shown by street entertainers. In that type, there were “from one or two to four music box figures with a string passing horizontally through their breasts, strung from an upright post fixed on a small booth or chair.” As the string was pulled, “the puppet moved to the music.”<sup>751</sup> Celal Esad Arseven explained this type of puppet played by Gypsies. It was especially performed by the puppeteers in excursion spots like Kağıthane and Göksu. He stated that there were two or four dolls aligned over a foursquare wooden chair or seat and those dolls were carried over to *amud mil*. Those dolls were moved by the puppeteer by means of pulling the ropes which were tied to the dolls from below the chair or seat and so the dolls were bouncing and rotating. At the same time, the puppeteer was singing and by playing his tambourine and another instrument, the music was also accompanying dancing puppets. The accompanying musical instrument could be the violin or *kemençe*. Those puppets consisted of two couples, a man and a woman. Celal Esad Arseven gave the names of the puppets. The women were called İzmirli Katingo and Rabia and the men were called Dalyancı Yani and Hergeleci Panayot. The reason why men were given Greek names and women were given Gypsy names was to prevent a possible beating coming from the public because of the name resemblance.<sup>752</sup>

One of the attester of that show was Felix Kanitz. He explained a puppet show that he saw around Sviştov, Bulgaria;

From the nearby village pleasant sounds and loud laughter could be heard. I looked around to find the reason for this merrymaking and spotted through the fence an amusing scene- a pair of Muslim Gypsies wearing motley costumes were presenting a play with puppets on a string in which “actors” dressed in French fashion were bowing and moving

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<sup>751</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>752</sup> Celal Esad Arseven, “Kukla,” *Sanat Ansiklopedisi*, fasikül XIII (1950), pp. 1156–1161.

in a circle to the sounds of a tambourine and a bagpipe. At the same time, the Gypsy was giving his puppets first words of praise, then words of rebuke:

-Hey, hey, not so fast Kara Abdullah, or you will rip off your lovely trousers! - Mehmed don't gaze at Fatimah in this amorous manner!- And you, lovely Suleiman, don't let your dress fly so high, or... -and between he was pouring out improper phrases, and on top of all this there were the actions of a monkey sitting on the bagpiper's shoulder and performing various poses.<sup>753</sup>

### The Shadow Play: *Karagöz*

According to the general perception about the shadow theatre, it was firstly recorded in China and India and then with the travels westward, it reached Turkey, but the actual route was not defined yet. However, as stated in earlier pages, it could not have been spread over Persia or Central Asia because it was unknown in these places. The initial records about it dated back to the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the Near East, particularly Egypt. About the Ottoman Empire, there were the remnants of sources which indicated the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but the explicit sources pointed out to the sixteenth century. Historian Muhammed ibn Ahmet ibn Iyas recorded in his *Tarih-i Mısır* that Yavuz Sultan Selim, after the conquest of Egypt in 1517, watched a shadow play and loved it and then brought the performer to İstanbul for his son.<sup>754</sup>

About the origin of the play, so many theories were put forward. The most-well known was in the reign of Sultan Orhan in the fourteenth century two individuals were working in the construction of the Ulu Cami' mosque in Bursa. One of them

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<sup>753</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 66-67. H. G. Dwight was mentioning about the Gypsy puppeteers who "carry miniature marionette shows on their backs in glass cases." See: H.G. Dwight, *Constantinople: Settings and Traits*, p. 334.

<sup>754</sup> Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre*, p. 25.

was Hacivat, a brick-mason and the other was Karagöz, a blacksmith. Because of their humorous or funny talks, the construction of the mosque was hitched so the sultan was angry and he hanged them, but then he regretted it. In order to soothe him, Şeyh Küşteri constructed a curtain or screen, and he made the puppets of the two men to move. There were also different versions of the story such as “Şeyh Küşteri used yellow slippers for the movement of the puppets,” “the two men were friends of the sultan, somehow they were angry with him so they were hanged,” “it happened in the reign of the Sultan Bayezid,” “Hacivat, a grocer and Karagöz, a blacksmith had their shops that were face to face and their talks stopped the construction of the mosque so their heads were cut by the grand-vizier and by holding their heads, they went to the sultan in order to complain.”<sup>755</sup>

Refik Ahmet Sevengil asserted that the play was known by the Arabs before the Turks. The name of the play in the Arabs was *tayf-ı hayâl*. For him, in the twelfth century, the play had its fame and its demanders. However, he accepted the differences between these two. When Şeyh Küşteri came to the lands of the Turks, to Bursa from the Arabic lands, he did not completely transfer the play into Turkish and made some essential changes in the characters, or tips and attractive parts of “the lives of Ottomans” were added to the play.<sup>756</sup>

About the titles Karagöz and Hacivat, theories and guesses were put forward too. Initially, it was supposed that Karagöz was originally a villager, named *Kara Oğuz* from the native tribe of Karakeçili in Orhaneli, Bursa. Then, in time, the title was turned into first Karaöküz, and then, when the plays organized with *Hacı Ahvad* or

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<sup>755</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 34-35. Evliya Çelebi told the different version of the story, see: Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre*, p. 33. About the hearsay that Şeyh Küşteri showed two people “Hacı İvaz” and “Hacı Evhad” and their humorous talks by renaming them as Hacivat and Karagöz in the shadow play in the reign of Yıldırım Bayezid, see: Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Bir Zamanlar İstanbul*, p. 207

<sup>756</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1926)*, pp. 53-54.

*Hacı İvad* took the attention of Şeyh Küşteri, he changed the name to *Karagöz*.<sup>757</sup>

Secondly, it was also claimed that the name of the character *Karagöz* derived from the name of an Egyptian vizier, Baha-ed-din Karakush who was an intimate of well-known individual, Salah-al-din (Selahaddin Eyyubi). He put him in charge of the mission in Egypt because of the attacks of Ibn Mannati. This person satirized him in his work titled “the Book of Empty Head, Concerning the Resolves of Karakush.” Therefore, it was perceived that *Karagöz* originated from this.<sup>758</sup>

Musahipzade Celal declared that the play was brought by Küşterli Şeyh Ahmet from the Central Asia and according to the legend, in the presence of Orhan Gazi, that person showed a *hayâl* (shadow show) in the curtain in order to explain a symbol, which belonged to mysticism. In time, *Karagöz*, *Hacı Evhad* (Hacivat) and many other portraits were added to the *hayâl* and all sort of subjects were discussed. It was believed that the play retained its mystic basis till Yavuz Sultan Selim and in the reign of the Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and Sultan Murad IV, the subjects taken from the lives of the community were included in it so with its wits, epigrams, puns, songs and local folk-songs, the shadow play was presented to the sultans, elites, grandees and public. Thereafter, the shadow play defined its own quality according to the audiences. That is to say, there appeared two types of puppeteers of the shadow show: shadow-showmen who performed in the coffeehouses, weddings appealing to the middle-class and shadow-showmen who were called masters by showing in the mansions, kiosks, palaces. In the shadow-show appealing to the public, sections from the lives of İstanbul residents were given place. In contrast to this, shadow-show of the high-class was maintaining its mystic character and it had to retain its tradition. In the period of the late Ottoman Empire, the play fell into the

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<sup>757</sup> Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu*, p. 124.

<sup>758</sup> Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre*, pp. 33-34.

hands of the *tulumbacı* (fire brigade) and even if there was not old-type of master in the palace, the play did not completely lose its essence.<sup>759</sup>

The quality of *Karagöz* in the initial centuries and in the late centuries was open to discussion but whatever the quality was, all certainly agreed that the play attracted great attention in the public, mansions, and palace and it was also played in coffee houses. Even, it managed to enter into the circumcision ceremonies of the sultan's son. However, the audience was not limited to one place or region but there were every kind of audiences from the public. In addition to this, it was not just for the children. Constantly, it was a general entertaining tool and every person from every age and every class could come to watch it. The place for the public was always the coffee-houses. Some coffee-houses opened its doors for *Karagöz* only in the month of *Ramâzan*, but in other times, there could be founded coffee-houses for the *Karagöz* shadow play.<sup>760</sup>

The shadow play consisted of three parts: *mukaddime* (prologue or introduction), *muhâvere* (dialogue) and *fasıl* (the main plot). However, before the prologue, a *göstermelik* (screen ornament) was appended to the linen cloth. This could be an abstract figure or a picture.<sup>761</sup> The play was mostly based on “the political and social satires,” “the critiques of the contemporary period,” “jokes,” “imitation of high officials and prime ministers.”<sup>762</sup> In the play, of course *Karagöz* and *Hacivat* were the main characters, but not the only characters. There were others, too. In the representation of the character, the title resembled today's titles. In order to define ethnicity, religion, the particular profession, the pattern of behaviour social classes

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<sup>759</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, pp. 63-66.

<sup>760</sup> Ercüment Ekrem, “*Karagöz*,” in: *Düünden Hatıralar* (İstanbul: Yedigün Neşriyat, 1957).

<sup>761</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, p. 35.

<sup>762</sup> *ibid.*, p. 38.



were utilised. As an example, we can present Gypsy, Greek, Jew, Kurd, Arab, Persian, Armenian, Zeybek, Laz, Albanian, Turk, boatman, minstrel, villager, opium addict, bully, Zenne, Kayserili, Matiz, drunk. The clothes, the language, the dialect, gestures, movement, music and songs accompanied those social figures. The decorative matters had not been forgotten either. The plants, animals, and certain objects and fantastic beings were represented in a schematized version.<sup>763</sup>

It would be necessary to ask the relation between *Karagöz* and Gypsies, because some of the subjects about them are still discussed today. We know that the Gypsy was shown as a separate character, but aside from the separate representation of the Gypsy, it was supposed that the main character, *Karagöz* also originated in Gypsy. Actually, the basis of *Karagöz* supposedly came from India by dint of Gypsies who appeared in north-western India. On the way to Europe and Asia, they were supposed to stop in Turkey and made the Indian shadow theatre popular here. For Metin And, the existence of shadow play in India was not certain. Even if it was certain, it was probably in south India, but Gypsies came out from northern India. Furthermore, he asserts that there was not any clue about the Gypsy shadow players in any country. About the Ottoman Empire, from the accounts of Metin And, we learnt that there were some Gypsy shadow players such as in the seventeenth century, Sultan İbrahim wished to bring a Gypsy shadow player named Ahmet to the status of Janissary Ağa as a joke. Also, in the beginning of the twentieth century, *Karagöz* was played by Gypsies in Dobruca.<sup>764</sup> About the relation of *Karagöz* with Gypsies, first of all, in the play, he clearly told that he was a Gypsy and also he presented himself as *efkâr-ı*

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<sup>763</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, 'You're Roman!' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>764</sup> Metin And, *Dünyada ve Bizde Gölge Oyunu* (Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1977), p. 242, p. 264, and p. 370.

*fukaradan ve gürûh-ı Kıptiyândanım* (I am from the poverty-stricken people and from the band of *Kıptî*). Moreover, his occupation was asserted as blacksmith such as in the plot of *Ferhad ile Şirin* and also in some other plots, he declared that his occupation was making and selling grills and tongs and just like Gypsies, he was playing clarion and drum and even he was able to sing *çeribaşının ezgisi* or *çeribaşı havası* or *Todi havası* such as in the plot of *Bahçe*.<sup>765</sup> This song was melodised in the *makam* of *Nihâvend* and as an *ölçü*, it was of 9/8 which was mostly used in the Gypsy music. Whenever the Gypsy motif took part in the play, that song was played.<sup>766</sup> However, in spite of various Gypsy terms existed in the plots, when Karagöz encountered a Gypsy, he did not understand actually what he or she said to him. In the plot of *Hamâm* (bath), the main woman was a Gypsy who was called Müncire.<sup>767</sup> In some of the plays, diverse Gypsy peculiarities could be found such as in *Karagöz'ün Yazıcılığı*, *Karagöz'ün Meyhaneciliği*, *Kanlı Kavak*, and *Ferhad ile Şirin*. The professions of some characters such as bath-worker (Bok Ana), tightrope walkers also reminded us of Gypsies. In some plots, he was even attributed as the son of Bok Ana. As the costumes of *Karagöz*, we see a headgear titled *ışkırlak*. For that headgear, as claimed, it resembled the headgear of Gypsies.<sup>768</sup>

Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil criticizes researchers who were convinced about the Gypsiness of *Karagöz* as being influenced by the opinions of Evliya Çelebi,<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> Metin And, *Dünyada ve Bizde Gölge Oyunu* (Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1977), p. 241; Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre*, pp. 33-34; Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu*, pp. 288-89; Uğur Göktaş, "Türk Gölge Oyunu Tasvirleri, Kişileri," in: *Karagöz Kitabı*, ed. Sönmez Sevgül (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), pp. 69-90.

<sup>766</sup> Melih Duygulu, *Türkiye'de Çingene Müziği: Batı Grubu Romanlarında Müzik Kültürü*, p. 196.

<sup>767</sup> Metin And, *Dünyada ve Bizde Gölge Oyunu*, p. 310.

<sup>768</sup> Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu*, pp. 288-189.

<sup>769</sup> In his study, Selim Nüzhet Gerçek underlined that he was not agree with Evliya Çelebi as regards probable 'Gypsy ethnic background' of *Karagöz*. See: Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, *Türk Temaşası: Meddah, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ebüziyya, 1930), p. 54.

Karagöz's taking to the stage by saying *Zombornos Keros*, Karagöz's professions which were peculiar to Gypsies, and some Gypsy terms in the play. Actually, he admits the existence of some Gypsy references in the shadow play such as *Karagöz* told Hacivat that if he did not call him in Gypsy language, he would not come down, or Karagöz's mentioning his relatives in Sulukule, or his coming from Selamsız, his playing clarion ingeniously. However, searching Gypsiness in Karagöz's identity was unavailing for him because there was not any clue in Karagöz's appearance and clothes. It was more likely Turkish. Furthermore, he did not agree on the matter of *ışkırlak*. In his eyes, folk hero who acted as a spokesman for the spirit of public had to be commoner and had to dress as the folks. Briefly, that artificial identity was not more than being part of the humor and satire. In order words, it was just a cover for keeping the public satire in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>770</sup>

Nihal Türkmen points out that the existence of terms coming from Gypsy language in the jargon of artificer of *Karagöz* and *Ortaoyunu* could be explained by Gypsy identity of Karagöz or by the wish of the artificers who originated in Gypsy through using terms from their own language. However, she says that there were Gypsy artificers, too. Under these circumstances, penetration of Gypsy terms into the jargon of players seemed only natural.<sup>771</sup>

Generally, Gypsies in the plots of *Karagöz* were temporary second-class types and character. They spoke with the language of *argo* which was peculiar to them. They wore colourful clothes. In the language of *Karagöz*, Gypsies were called *Todi*. They were seen in *Cambazlar* and *Yazıcı*. In the plot of *Cambazlar*, when Karagöz died, Hacivat called Gypsies in order to hold the funeral. In the plot of *Yazıcı* or

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<sup>770</sup> Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil, *Karagöz* (İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941), pp. 149-152, and pp. 158-159.

<sup>771</sup> Nihal Türkmen, *Ortaoyunu* (İstanbul: MEB, 1971), pp. 96-97.

*Karagöz'ün Yazıcılığı*, the Gypsy was among the people or customers who came to Karagöz in order to make him write a letter. By the way, the new occupation of Karagöz became a scribe.<sup>772</sup>

### Ortaoyunu

As Refik Ahmet Sevengil states, “*Ortaoyunu* was a *Karagöz* which were landed on the ground from the curtain.”<sup>773</sup> It was an improvised play performed by live actors without adhering to the script as well as abiding by the *kanavas* (a kind of synopsis) of the play. It was always played in a round arena where it was surrounded by the audience. The play was the combination of instrumental music, song, dance, imitation and dialogue which were covered within the frame of a certain episode.<sup>774</sup>

It was not certain when the play began to be performed, but it took its precise shape in the first half of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century. Based on the idea that the term *ortaoyunu* began to be used in the theatrical activities in the nineteenth century, the emergence was also associated with the nineteenth century. However, no of branch of art appeared suddenly, by contrast, there should be a process for the development. Therefore, it was supposed that throughout history, *ortaoyunu* was called with diverse titles such as *kol oyunu*, *meydan oyunu*, *zuhûrî* or *zuhûrî kolu*. According to Cevdet Kudret, for a long time, there were the acts like *musiki* (music), *raks* (dance), *muhâvere* (dialogue), *taklîd*

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<sup>772</sup> Uğur Göktaş, “Türk Gölge Oyunu Tasvirleri, Kişileri,” in: *Karagöz Kitabı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2000), pp. 69-90; and, Uğur Göktaş, *Karagöz Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Anadolu Sanat Yayınları, 1986), p. 15, p. 21; and p. 69.

<sup>773</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, p. 77.

<sup>774</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, vol. I, (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1994), p. 1.

(imitation), *temsîl* (representation) and all these branches were united and made up *Ortaoyunu*.<sup>775</sup> For example, in the past, the term *şu'bedebâz* was used for the former entertainers. They were organized as *kol*. In it, there were acrobats, conjurors, animal trainers. People who were called *şu'bedebaz* were playing small-scale plays that resembled *piyes*. Among the plays, there was even a play about Gypsies: *Çingene Muşakkası*. A Jewish man fell in love with a Gypsy girl and during the sexual intercourse, they were seen by somebody else and so they were caught. An unclean fore-stomach was put to the head of the woman and the man was mounted on a horse backwards and taken to the gallows tree in order to be hanged.<sup>776</sup> In addition to this, Raphaela Lewis indicated Gypsies as one of the entertainers of the month of *Ramâzan*. Gypsies were telling folktales by mimicking women and the voices. To take some rest, they were playing instruments. If people around them did not listen to them, they put their instruments aside and with their sticks, they knocked on the table in order to silence the noisy crowd.<sup>777</sup>

Likely, Metin And states; “it could be a development from the class of puppeteers, conjurors, story tellers, strolling actor-mimes, musicians and dancers or an amalgamation of all these types of entertainers with dances.”<sup>778</sup> Interestingly, beside the discussion of ‘new’ and ‘old,’ some researchers attributed the origin of *Ortaoyunu* to the ancient Greek mime, Byzantium, the *Commedia dell’arte* because of the relation of the Ottomans with the Italian states. Also the origin was perceived as *Karagöz* shadow play concerning the similarities between these two. Some of

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<sup>775</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, vol. I, p. 3 and p. 8.

<sup>776</sup> Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *İstanbul Nasıl Eğleniyordu (1453-1927)*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>777</sup> Raphaela Lewis, *Osmanlı Türkiyesinde Gündelik Hayat: Adetler ve Gelenekler*, trans. Mefkure Poroy (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Yayınları, 1973), p. 132.

<sup>778</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, p. 39.

them took on the road by commenting on the term *Orta* (middle). It could be the output of Janissary corps and as we know, the Janissary corps consisted of companies called *orta*. Also, a section, which was comprised with the men of the acting performances, existed in the Ottoman Army, so the term *Orta* could mean the entertainers of the soldiers. Secondly, the word could be associated with the *Comedia dell'arte* and the word *arte* might be associated with the *oyunu*. In other words, the Turks called this as *Arte Oyunu* and then they might turn it into *Ortaoyunu*. Thirdly, the Jews had a finger in it, because of their contributions to *Ortaoyunu*. They brought some *seyirlik oyun* from Spain and Portugal. *Bir perdelik oyun* was called as *auto* in Spain. It was also used for short *sözlü oyun*. Mightly, the Jews were calling the plays in Turkey as *Auto Oyunu* so it might be turned into *Ortaoyunu*. Fourthly and as relation our subject, it was argued that some of the concepts of *Ortaoyunu* were coming from the language of Gypsies such as *maskere* means ‘in the middle’ or ‘play in the middle.’ Furthermore, as a sound, there was a similarity between the Arabic word *maskhara* and the Spanish *mascara*, the Persian *meşkere*, Turkistan *maskarabaş*, and the Turkish version of the word. By that way, it could be translated into Turkish with the meaning ‘in the middle’ in the Gypsy language, so it might be turned into *Ortaoyunu*.<sup>779</sup>

The play was consisted of four parts: *öndeyiş*, *söyleşme* (*arzbar-tekerleme*), *fasıl* (the play) and *bitiriş*. The main characters were Kavuklu and Pişekar, but there were other characters like Gypsy. In the plots, as *Çingene*, the words *Todi* and *Roman* were used to indicate. Besides, the dialect of Gypsies was illuminated into the play. For instance, Gypsies were inclined to say as *iyi/ii*, *ağacığım/aaciiim*.<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>780</sup> Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu*, p. 210, p. 232, p. 283.

In the *Ortaoyunu* as well as *Karagöz*, Gypsies were temporary types. There were many Gypsy words in the *Ortaoyunu*. They had a vocabulary peculiar to them. For example, instead of *nasılsın* (how are you?), they were saying *sos kerosa*. Like this, there was special usage of the words by Gypsies such as *aynalı* (good), *uçlanmak* (to give), *papel* (money), *peniz* (to promise or parole), *çay* (girl), *şorolo* or *çavoro* (boy), *hastar etmek* (sexual intercourse), *mühreci* (*sevici*), and *pandelli* (tambourine).<sup>781</sup> Many terms used in *ortaoyunu* originated in the Gypsy language such as *gaco*, *cûd* (Jew), *denilo* (dummy type), *balama* (Greek or *tatlı su Frengi*). The word *matiz* came from the Gypsy word *matto*, meaning the drunk.<sup>782</sup>

Metin And asserted; “in both *Karagöz* and *Ortaoyunu*, Gypsy wears black, full plaited knee breeches, a black sash and a black short jacket. He boasts a fez bound with a turban and holds a pipe in his hand. The Gypsy woman wears a long blue ulster-like mantle and carries a basket of flowers.”<sup>783</sup> As it was seen from the above-mentioned statement, there was an additional character of Gypsy but the effect of the Gypsy ethnicity was not limited to one character. In the dialogues or conversations, there were some attributes to Gypsies as an ethnicity. In the plot of *Bahçe* (the Garden), *Kavuklu* misunderstood the speech of *Pişekar* and turned *vâris-i yegânesidir* into *Paris Çingenesi* or within the dialogue of the Rumelian and *Kavuklu*, there was the speech of ‘being a Gypsy.’ *Kavuklu*, considering the profession of the Rumelian who was the bear-trainer, asked him whether he was

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<sup>781</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 300-301.

The Gypsy contribution was not limited with the words, but also there was a lullaby about *dana* (calf) and *lahana* (cabbage). Its original version was in the Gypsy language and also it was a little bit different. It seems, some parts were taken and others were fabricated. See: Necdet Sakaoğlu, “Kakava Bayramı,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, pp. 34-37.

<sup>782</sup> Metin And, *Kavuklu Hamdi'den Üç Ortaoyunu* (Ankara: Forum, 1962), pp. 10-11, p. 18; Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu: Kukla, Karagöz, Ortaoyunu*, p. 229, pp. 301-304.

<sup>783</sup> Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, p. 47.

Gypsy or not.<sup>784</sup> In the plot of *Büyücü* (sorcerer), *Kavuklu* who entered into the *çergi* drew an analogy of “Çingene çergisi.” In the plot of *Büyücü Hoca*, the dancing Gypsy girls were mentioned and supposed that the dancing girls in Tekirdağ were mostly Gypsies. The proverb about Gypsies was told; *Çingene evinde musandıra*. In the plot of *Çivi Baskını*, seller of corn poppy (a Gypsy profession) and Gypsy *saz takımı* (band) were mentioned. In the plot of *Eskici Abi*, the Gypsy monkey trainers were talked about and it was stated that Gypsy monkey-trainers were taking the monkeys to the top of the stake and giving them a conical hat and a mirror, the monkeys were played and if the audience liked the performance, they were throwing nuts and peanuts to the monkey. In the plot of *Ferhad ile Şirin*, in the conversation between *Kavuklu* and Rumelian, *Kavuklu* was telling something to the Rumelian about being a Gypsy and inferior status of Gypsies.<sup>785</sup> In the plot of *Hamâm* (the bath), the term *Çingene* and the Gypsy word, *şorolo* (boy) were used in the text. Besides, the Gypsy bath-workers were mentioned. In *Kâğıthane Safası*, we encountered with the Gypsy instrument players as additional characters. They were playing *çifte-nara*, violins (three or four), *ud* and *dâire*. In *Mahalle Baskını*, Gypsies were mentioned as bear-trainers. In *Mandıra and Pazarcılar*, similar to the previous plot, the bear-trainer Gypsy was implied on. In *Pazarcılar*, the word *Çingene* (Gypsy) was used in order to emphasize the ethnicity of an individual or kind of insult. In *Sandıklı*, the phrase *usta Çingene* was told (might be for the musical talents of the *Kayserili* or while *Kayserili* was singing the folk-song, he and *Kavuklu* was dancing facing one another and that situation caused him to say ‘I made the bear dance for you’). In *Telgrafçı*, the basket-maker Gypsies were implied on. Besides,

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<sup>784</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, vol. I, p. 130; and p. 152.

<sup>785</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, vol. I, p. 161, p. 189, p. 200, p. 237, p. 239, p. 263, and pp. 318-319.



from the conversations, it was deduced that Gypsies could work as collectors of the *köpek tersi* from the streets and taking them to the tanner house. Lastly, in the plot of *Tireli*, the bear-trainer Gypsies were told and the phrase was used: “It was up to your Gypsyism” and meaning, it was up to your generosity. The phrase *aferin usta Çingene* (bravo master Gypsy) was also repeated here.<sup>786</sup>

### Kantos

The nineteenth century was the period in which the performing arts gained a different dimension because by dint of the Italian performers who visited İstanbul, the Ottomans found a change to meet with the Western type of performing arts like operas, operettas, and plays. For those theatrical companies, theatre stage was constructed in the palaces of Yıldız and Dolmabahçe. After that, the first Ottoman theatre company was constituted by Güllü Agop on 16 May 1870 and he was granted the privilege to play in Turkish and by this way, the interest of the public over the theatres increased. However, the most important development of that period was the outcome of the *tuluât* theatres as a result of the adaptation of improvisation tradition to the ‘stage’ or ‘the dramatized version of the improvised street folk theatre.’ Beside the theatrical performances; theatres, operettas, the Western influence was also seen in the musical structure of the Ottoman Empire, so a new kind of music genre; *Kanto* (cabaret songs or theatrical song) was created.<sup>787</sup>

Terminologically, the word *kanto* was derived from the Italian word *canto* or *cantare* or from Latin word of *cantus*. It was probably taken from an itinerant Italian

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<sup>786</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, vol II, pp. 52-54, p. 101, p. 210, p. 237, p. 319, p. 326, p. 351, pp. 420-421, p. 461, p. 463, p. 469.

<sup>787</sup> Şefika Şehvar Beşiroğlu, “İstanbul’un Kadınları ve Müzikal Kimlikleri,” *İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 3/2 (2006), pp. 3-19.

theatre company. As a meaning, singing and dancing on the stage and the songs written for this were entitled as *kanto*.<sup>788</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that it was not independent form, but in contrast, it came along with the understanding of *tuluât* theatre which was the blended the elements of the traditional Turkish theatre and the elements of the Western theatre such as the band or orchestra and the European style of singing.

If we come to the place of Gypsies in the *kantos*, it could be said that Gypsies were the perfect themes for those songs. There were even separate *kantos* constituted according to the theme and Gypsies were represented in *Çingene Kantoları* (Gypsy *kantos*). In other words, just like in the older theatrical forms, there were characters and social figures in the *kantos* too. The social type like Gypsy was one of the most applied one. In the constitution of Gypsy character, the importance was given to the dialect, costumes, the music, the gestures, and dance. Especially, the costume and accessories had an important place in the communication with the audiences. The ordinary *kantocus* could take all the attention over themselves with the help of these and so they could be applauded much more. Therefore, over the demand of the audience, they should be in colourful clothes and also they should be buxom, coquettish, and fluff. Besides, the decor and the music were as important as the former matters. *Kantocus* got on to the state in the costume of nomadic Gypsies of the camping side, and they were performing in front of the scenery in which the nomadic lives of Gypsies were represented. *Oyun havası* (belly dance music) decorated the *kantos*. The *kantos* which were melodised with the most lissom belly dance musics were able to enter into the *keriz*, an acting repertoire of Gypsies in

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<sup>788</sup> Mustafa Nihat Özön and Baha Dürder, *Türk Tiyatrosu Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1967), p. 240; and, Melih Duygulu, *Türkiye’de Çingene Müziği: Batı Grubu Romanlarında Müzik Kültürü*, p. 78.

Sulukule and Ayvansaray. The women were called Naile and Pembe and the men were called as Todi and Çolak. The famous names of the Gypsy *kantos* were Peruz, Şamran, Büyük Amelya, Virjini, Küçük Amelya and Eleni.<sup>789</sup> Cemal Ünlü speaks of the *kanto* and *kantocus* in his article and he said that besides singing *kantos*, those women were also singing the folk-songs. Especially, among them, Nassib, Gülfidan and Şevkidil were probably originated from the Gypsy ethnicity.<sup>790</sup> Melih Duygulu asserted that Gülistan, who was a famous performer of the 1900s, were originally Gypsy. However, he commented that the *kantos*, which were sung by her in the company of clarion player, Arab Mehmet were full of mistakes. Also, at the same time, she set a good example for the illumination of Gypsy style or mode to the *kantos* by an original Gypsy.<sup>791</sup>

It was necessary to ask that what kind of peculiarities the *kantos* include about Gypsies. Firstly, it was possible to see the life modes of Gypsies such as the nomads in nomad camping side, tent-dwellers, and wanderers. Then, in the *kantos*, the Gypsy social type tended to introduce them and to give account about the professions such as fortune teller, bear trainer, caner, *hasırcı*, *lavantacı*, *labadacı*, blacksmith, player of certain musical instruments such as clarion, drum and tabourin, seller of grates and tongs, seller of *gelincik*. Thirdly, in order to give the impression that they were Gypsies, the dialect or the language of Gypsies were used. Especially, there could be seen lots of words entitled by us as cant. Outside of those three matters, Gypsies were associated with the factors such as; personalities (hard-working, coquettish, sassy, and pleasure-seeking), the music (singing and playing an instrument), the

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<sup>789</sup> Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *İstanbul Geceleri ve Kantolar* (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1999), pp. 20-21.

<sup>790</sup> Cemal Ünlü, "Sözlü Taş Plaklar: Güzellik Yarışması," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 94 (Ekim 1991), pp. 39-49.

<sup>791</sup> Melih Duygulu, *Türkiye'de Çingene Müziği: Batı Grubu Romanlarında Müzik Kültürü*, p. 85.

pleasure, absolute freedom, carefree life, meadows, brooks, making love, paramour, fiance(e), amatorist, dancing, entertainment, the spring enthusiasm, clothes (*atlas mintan, atlas fistan, kadife cepken*) and drinking.<sup>792</sup> As an example of Gypsy *kantos*, there were;

<p><u>Çingene Kantosu</u><sup>793</sup></p> <p><i>Çingene derler bize Meylimiz var kerize Biz ier eęleniriz Gece Gündüz zevk ederiz</i></p> <p><i>Çalar göbek atarız Sonra biz fala bakarız Çalsın zurna, def, dümbelek Atalım biz de birer tek</i></p>	<p><u>The Gypsy Kanto</u></p> <p>We are called as Gypsy We are inclined to <i>keriz</i> We drink and have fun We enjoy day and night</p> <p>We play and dance Then, we tell fortune Play clarion, tambourine, tabourin We have a drink too</p>
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<p><u>Çingene Kantosu</u><sup>794</sup></p> <p><i>Kara kaşlı Penbe geldi bize Gerdanında sünbüller ile Yanaęında güller ile Parmaaęında ziller ile Yeni yeni kantolar Yeni yeni naęmeler Eski püskü c�meler Güzel oynar todiler</i></p> <p><i>Peruz'un Nev� Kantosu</i></p>	<p><u>The Gypsy Kanto</u></p> <p>Black eyebrowed Penbe came to visit us With hyacinths in her dewlap With roses in her cheek With cymbals in her finger Newly kantos Newly musical tones Motheaten <i>c�mes</i> Well-dancing Todis</p> <p>Performed by Peruz</p>
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<sup>792</sup> Ergun Hiyılmaz, *İstanbul Geceleri ve Kantolar*, p. 70; Malik Aksel, "Sulukule'den Direklerarasına," *Türk Folklor Arařtırmaları*, 283 (1973), pp 6552–6555; and, Reřat Ekrem Kou, "Çingene Kantoları," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VII (İstanbul: Ercan Matbaası, 1971), pp. 4002-4005.

<sup>793</sup> Ergun Hiyılmaz, *İstanbul Geceleri ve Kantolar*, 70; Malik Aksel, "Sulukule'den Direklerarasına," *Türk Folklor Arařtırmaları*, 283 (1973), pp. 6552–6555.

<sup>794</sup> Reřat Ekrem Kou, "Çingene Kantoları," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 4002-4005.

<p><u>Bahar Geldi ah Oldu Yaz</u><sup>795</sup></p> <p><i>Bahar geldi ah oldu yaz Bülbül öter eyler niyaz. Haydi kızlar etmeyin naz Eğlenelim şimdi biraz Al kayıkçı yavaş yavaş Çek küreği etme telaş Başa sünbül gülleri takınca O gözle biraz bakınca Can alırız can veririz Bir kerecik sarılınca.</i></p> <p><i>Rast makam</i></p>	<p><u>Spring has Come, Ah, It's Summer</u></p> <p>Spring has come, ah, it's summer The nightingale is singing, it plays coy. Come on girls, don't be coy Let's celebrate now Take the boatman slowly Pull the oar, don't hurry When fastening lilies and flowers to your head When looking with those eyes a little bit We take a soul, we give a soul When embracing a little bit.</p> <p>Performed by Küçük Virjin</p>
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Another type of *kantos* in which Gypsies took part thematically was called *düetto*. Fundamentally, in *düettos*, the *kantos* were put on as twosome musical play. There was a colourful stage and two *kantocus* began to dispute mutually. The two mostly consisted of two women, but sometimes, one of them could disguise as man. This would become really surprising part for the onlookers.<sup>796</sup> Ergun Hiçyılmaz explained that initially, this was the request of the onlooker because that gave the audience a real pleasure. Secondly, they wanted to see them together in order to have some evaluations. It could be a good box office for the director of the theatre.<sup>797</sup>

<p><u>Çingene Düettosu</u><sup>798</sup></p> <p><i>-Kaynanam falcı karı, yoktur onun emsali Dün akşam çergide çalmış</i></p>	<p><u>The Gypsy Düetto</u></p> <p>-My mother in law is a fortune teller woman, she is peerless She stole in the tent</p>
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<sup>795</sup> Sonia Tamar Seeman, 'You're Roman!' *Music and Identity in Turkish Roman Communities*, p. 182.

<sup>796</sup> Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *İstanbul Geceleri ve Kantolar*, p. 23.

<sup>797</sup> Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *Çengiler, Köçekler, Dönmeler, Lez'olar* (İstanbul: Cep Belgesel, 1990), p. 14.

<sup>798</sup> Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *İstanbul Geceleri ve Kantolar*, p. 134.

<p><i>Kocamın paralarını</i>  <i>-Koluna sepet takar, sokaklarda fal bakar</i>  <i>Güzel olurum diye, başına çiçek takar</i>  <i>-Kocam seni beğenmez, asla sözüne güvenmez</i>  <i>-Kocama gözüni diktin</i>  <i>Seni gidi utanmaz</i>  <i>-Seninki süpürgeci</i>  <i>Meşelikten ne haber</i>  <i>-Seni kahpenin piçi</i></p> <p>Makam: Hicaz</p>	<p>The monies of my husband          -She is hanging the basket, tells fortune in the streets          To become beautiful, she puts the flower on her head.          -My husband does not like you, never take your word for it          -You set your eye on my husband          You rascal, shameless          -Yours is seller of brooms          What is up oak barren          -You, bastard slip of the prostitute</p> <p>Performed by Luçika-Verjini</p>
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Glancing over the whole period, the standing of Gypsies in socio-economic and cultural life posed differences. Socially and economically, they represented the ‘weakest link’ in the chain. They were presumed as the weakest link because with the effect of the deep-seated ‘Gypsy’ image or misbehaviours of some Gypsies or Gypsies’ disparate outlook on life, they were perceived as wild, savage, morally loose, so-called religious, criminals (as regarding theft, stealing, murder, counterfeiting, and tendency through deceiving), and performers of dishonoured professions. Nevertheless, the existence of Gypsies, who were able to live in accordance with the generally accepted life standards, and the finding somehow a middle ground in some respects such as living in the same territory, being friends, inter-marriage between two ethnic groups and Gypsy crafts’ fulfilling some economic niches did not make a great changes in the quality of the link. In contrast to their standing in socio-economic life of the Ottoman society, in the cultural life, they were nearly representing the strongest link, especially by the end of nineteenth century. With their ability in the entertainment sectors of the empire, such as in dance (*çengi* and *köçek*), music, instrumental music, puppetry, they got a crucial foothold in the Ottoman cultural structure. Furthermore, even if they could not show

any ethnic dominance in the social and economic life, their ethnic features were preponderant enough to enter into other forms of popular culture such as *Karagöz*, *Ortaoyunu* and *Kantos*.

As a result, we can deduce, all above-mentioned things are justifying the famous statement of Angus Fraser about the mission of a Gypsy. He says; a Gypsy is like “a custom keeper.”<sup>799</sup> Of course, they had their own customs and traditions, but we cannot deny that when they encountered with a society, they got something from it and they were insistent to keep of that custom. Even, when the society lost its custom or legacy, the Gypsy continued to protect and in order to survive, he made it alive somehow. If we think that there are so many different Gypsies living in different societies, there can be some kind of guarantee for traditions and customs, because we know that many cultural tools were living inside of Gypsies.

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<sup>799</sup> Angus Fraser, *Avrupa Halkları: Çingeneler*, trans. İlkin İnanç (İstanbul: Homer Bookstore, 2005), p. 204.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, the information on Gypsies who are supposed to exist from the earliest time of the history of humanity, and the information on their past experiences is not so deep-rooted. As far as I am concerned, it is derived from the fact that until nowadays, ethnic groups, empires, states, communities were narrated or transferred to us as correlating to a piece of land or territory. In a manner of speaking, the place to stay or to live is assumed as part of the history of the individual and part of the identity of the individual who stands there. Whereas discussing the people we call Gypsies, there occurred a trouble for setting up the above mentioned connection, probably, because of their living conditions, socio-economic lives, characteristics or just because other people uprooted them. That situation might bring forward the long-term unanswered questions like where they came from or where their homeland is or indirectly, who they are. In the wake of long-standing silence, the matters, which are benighted as relating to their history, began to be illuminated increasingly. That, in a sense, meant the opening of the first door and leading to a path, so what remains is to walk on that path and to open every closed door en route. After that, the obscure part of their history in the specific periods, centuries, territories, states will start to be clarified.



Likewise, if we consider some strategic lands or territories in which they stayed or wandered were under the domination of the Ottoman Empire that prevailed for 624 years in the world history, bringing to light of that part of their history or their history in that empire becomes essential as well. Actually, the probable studies will not just illuminate the history of Gypsies in that empire, but also it will illuminate an ambiguous segment of the Ottoman society. That is why, this thesis, in a general sense, started to be prepared as departing from the problematique of explaining Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, in this thesis, I tried to investigate the meaning of the concept of ‘Gypsy’ and the situation of Gypsies in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II whose rule is one of the most critical and highly disputed periods of the Ottoman Empire and also whose sovereignty caused two different groups: supporters of the idea of “the red-sultan” (*le sultan rouge*) and supporters of “the grand-emperor” (*han*).

However, in this thesis, I attempted to reflect ‘Gypsies in the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II’ and ‘the the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II in Gypsies’ for its best and worst. I do not profess any entire marginality or any entire accommodation or integration, because my intention is to explain the theme without being a captive of discourses like marginality, contempt, segregation, expulsion, stigmatization and integration so on. On the other hand, I wished to expose the substantial conditions in the triangle of the rule, the society and the Gypsy, because considering the criticality of the aforesaid period and the rule of the sultan, it is comprehended that the substantial circumstances included all the discourses at the same time, so basing the thesis on one discourse would be a narrow-minded approach in my eyes.

Fundamentally, what makes Gypsies of the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II remarkable is truly that nested situation. Actually, on the basis of the interrelation

between Gypsies and the state, it is necessary to admit that the meaning of the word 'Gypsy' did not lose its meaning. Somewhere deep, the word 'Gypsy' retained its meaning as vagabond, itinerancy, ignorance, poverty, and immorality in the eyes of the state. Moreover, Gypsies, at least some of them, were attentive not to forget the meaning of the same word for them such as freedom, the escape, the power, struggle for survive, idiosyncratic and so on. That situation continued sneakingly, but this was not the basic issue or question anymore. On the other hand, what matters was not the meaning of the concept, but what it meant at that period. That was the question that needs to be answered.

Thinking about the political and economical troubles which the state and the sultan had, it is only natural to find an answer to that question and to ascribe a meaning to the concept of 'Gypsy.' In other words, the state had no luxury to leave them to their own devices and also the expectation from that community was much more than the payment of their taxes. Therefore, they had to be controlled, the wandering places had to be defined; a new kind of settlement policy had to be applied for them; agricultural encouragement had to be performed; and their ignorance had to be taken under control. Briefly, the blanks whose number was much more in the previous centuries and which were recognized easily by them had to be reduced. This would provide a two sided advantage; for the state, the dominance over that community would augment and it would provide certain types of benefits from them and for Gypsies, they would stand more integrated into the state system and this situation caused some Gypsies to become confident, aware of being strategic in some matters with a high sense of belonging. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to perceive the situation one-sided or inclining from the state to Gypsies. Maybe, some new doors were opened to them, but at the same time, they were capable enough to

compel some doors to open for themselves. On the other hand, it was the path which was possible to proceed from two sides or which was possible to take a step reciprocally.

One of the steps, which were taken reciprocally, occurred in the census receipts. Gypsies who were Muslims began to complain about the ordinary Gypsy image and its reflection on the census receipts. In that period, to describe them, the title of *Çingene* (Gypsy) was used generally among the Ottoman society. However, in the official documents, another title *Kıbtî* was also used. The more important thing is the state officials were using every means possible to utilize the title, *Kıbtî* in the documents about them such as census receipts or in the name of the Gypsy settlements and neighbourhoods. In the eyes of the officials, the motive behind that attitude was clear. That group of people was known for their ‘so called religious or so called Islamic’ affinities. On the other hand, Gypsies had the tendency to change religion easily, and even though they accepted any religion, they continued to retain their pre-religious customs, traditions, beliefs and superstitions. Nevertheless, for some of the Muslim Gypsies, the insistence of the state officials over that title meant an insult to both their personality and their Muslim faith, because according to them, they were fulfilling all the religious obligations and also they were obliged to do military service. That is why, Gypsies applied to the Ottoman authorities by committing their petition for the removal of that degrading title from the title of their neighbourhood and also from their census receipts. For the sake of their aim, they even dared to intimidate the officials not to come to the registry.

The officials’ first reaction to these petitions was to consult the department of religious affairs. And then, some conditions were stipulated such as fulfilling the religious obligations (like five-time prayer, fasting), military service, living with or

near other Muslims, and inter-marriage to girls with a different ethnic origin. If the department of religious affairs conferred on their rights, the title was deleted as well. Actually, the acceptance of their petition did not just mean the approval of their religion or being Muslim, but also meant the separate treatment to Muslims and non-Muslims as a usual Ottoman practice. Nevertheless, it did not always proceed in that tempo that is the petition and the approval. In some cases, the officials rejected the petition and wished them to continue being called this way. Maybe, they were unable to address the officials' needs, or maybe, the officials were so engaged in classic Gypsy image and so they could reject looking the other way.

Another effective development was realized in military service. As it was known, in the previous centuries, all Gypsies, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, were exempted from military service. In return for that exemption, they were forced to pay *cizye* (poll-tax). Only in some situations, some of them were utilized in the auxiliary services and so they were freed from the poll-tax. Eventually, at the end of 1873, Muslim Gypsies began to officially serve in the military. Nonetheless, transition to the military service and to accommodate it was not so easy. In the first place, there was the need of complete records because even if they were tried to be recorded before, there was the fact that the nomadism was still a powerful notion. Again, despite that, the control mechanism in registering Gypsies was working well again. In addition to this, for the Muslim Gypsies who were not willing to serve in the army, there were some official and unofficial ways to avoid such as the exemption tax, whose amount was higher than the usual exemption tax, *bedel-i askerî*, sending another individual in your place, benefiting from the faults of the officers who were working in the registry, and direct or unofficial desertion from military service.

As it was understood from their newly-began military service, the most important tax which Gypsies were obliged to pay had been the poll-tax. That tax had presented them a kind of exception or exemption from military service. As a matter of fact, it will be more correct, if we comment that they were kept out of the military service and they were alienated from the army, because the ‘exemption’ that we mention here was not a favour, but the price of being a Gypsy. The effect of that price was so dominant that it caused the authorities to ignore Muslim Gypsies. The interesting part of the story was that it was the same factor that made the authorities to disregard the Muslim Ottoman Gypsies as well as put all Gypsies in a sceptical position in the eyes of the empire. Unfortunately, the emancipation from the exemption tax did not become so easy because after the abolition of the poll-tax, non-Muslim communities of the empire continued to pay the tax under the name of *bedel-i askerî*, but it was not the title of the tax paid by Gypsies. The reason is, after the abolition, they began to pay another tax called *Kıptîyân Vergisi* (the Gypsy tax), a special tax implemented only on Gypsies including Muslims and non-Muslims. Obviously, they continued to be perceived as irreligious. Even if there were some Gypsies who performed the religious obligations just like an ordinary Muslim, the worldly doubtful religious basis of Gypsies put every Gypsy in the same plot, so the innocent might suffer along with the guilty. Finally, in the year of 1873, the Gypsy tax was abolished, so Muslim Gypsies were obliged to do military service and the non-Muslims were obliged to pay the tax of *bedel-i askerî*.

If we look at the general taxation issue of that period, because we know that there were other taxes which they were liable to pay rather than the above-mentioned taxes, the awareness of Gypsies through paying their taxes somehow carried on. If there was not any official reaction to pay the taxes, their economic structure did not

let them pay. In that case, the authorities could tolerate Gypsies whose regular income was not enough for the payment. However, there were unofficial ways which could be tolerated by the state officers. One of them was the tactic of sudden relocation, so we notice that their itinerant or wandering lives continued to be an effective gun for them to use against taxation. Other than these, in that period, the territorial contraction of the Ottoman Empire and also the migration of the Ottoman Gypsies to the remaining Ottoman lands generated a new way of evading the taxes because inability to record new-comer Gypsies for a while caused unpaid Gypsy taxes. Besides, the ineffectiveness of the officers in recording the tax-payer Gypsies enabled some Gypsies to avoid paying their taxes. To prevent the evasion issues, the officers resorted to palliative solutions such as taking the Gypsy taxes in their famous feast of *Kakava*, and, but in the long-term, officers contemplated on permanent solutions like recording, habitation policy, encouragement of Gypsies to have a regular income. Nevertheless, the problems in taxation did not just stem from Gypsies. Also, there was another dimension of taxation which was the ongoing harsh treatment of some tax officers toward particular Gypsies. Some officers used coercion, imprisonment over Gypsies or they tended to make some dead Gypsies taxpayers. In that case, the higher authorities did not indulge the actions of the officers, and they attempted to punish them in the shortest possible time.

In that reign, the empire was well-aware that they had to mull over the solutions in the long run. Especially, religion, education, and settlement were the three distinct areas in which the state needed to focus its attention on. In the area of religion, to improve their religious basis, specifically of the Muslim Gypsies, the state began to appoint a religious leader, or *imâm*. Furthermore, to educate new Gypsy children, schools were opened, the old schools were repaired and the teachers were appointed.

Besides, they were tried to be encouraged to become agriculture dealers, landowners, property holders, and profession dealers, briefly “regular” Ottomans.

Again, for the long-term solutions, the state had to compete with nomadism and to apply a convenient settlement policy in the first place. In struggle with nomadism, as an initial step, the officers tried to divide the wandering Gypsies and the real immigrants. If they were convinced of the Gypsyism of the people who wandered within the empire, they endeavoured to control and to record them, to give their census receipts and to interrogate their military situation. In the case of insistence over the wandering, the officers were examining their travel permits. However, rarely, some wandering Gypsies could introduce themselves under another name or fake name for travelling easily, or could pretend that they got the document from another authority. Nevertheless, their involvement in theft and plunder caused them to be captured easily. Moreover, because of some committed crimes, they could be banished to a place and that could provide a kind of settlement for them. The precautions were not just taken for the nomadic Gypsies, but also the state did not have the permission for semi-nomadism. Therefore, the same procedure was adopted for them as well.

In the next step, the officers preferred to send Gypsies, especially the nomadic and semi-nomadic Gypsies, whose number in the empire was still considerable back to where they came from. After providing their backtrack, the state officers endeavoured to guarantee their settlement in those places. To tell the truth, when we consider that Gypsies tended to gather in some places in certain times of the years, the state’s action could be justified. Especially, İstanbul was the main place on their route, and so many Gypsies were falling into a habit of coming and settling overnight in İstanbul. Gypsies who defined İstanbul as their route allegedly disturbed the local

people. Therefore, the authorities did not let the itinerant Gypsies stay there. However, it did not mean that Gypsies were never allowed to stay there. As long as meeting the requirements such as proper settlement area, regular income, social peace, and so on, they had the chance to live in İstanbul.

The recording and the place for settlement was not always offered or obliged by the state officers to Gypsies. It could be possible to find Gypsy individuals who made an effort to act in accordance with the normal Ottoman practices. For example, some Gypsy individuals could come to the registry on their own accord to announce their unrecorded situations. Furthermore, in some respect, Gypsies demanded from the state officers to be given an appropriate house to live in. There were Muslim Gypsies who demanded their settlement by migrating to the Ottoman Empire. That is to say, with the territorial losses and newly-emerged states on the old Ottoman territories such as Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, Muslim Ottoman migration from the these nation states into the territory of the Ottoman Empire increased, and the Muslim Ottoman Gypsies were also included in this category. In general, they were complaining about the pressure and the atrocity over them so they wanted the authorities to accept them into Ottoman citizenship and wanted the authorities to settle them in convenient places. Honestly, they did not always need an official request in order to migrate and sometimes, some of them chose to migrate secretly and covertly into the borders of the empire.

In the settlement policy of the empire, there were some thought-provoking points, for example, the officers could give a land in which there was a backwater or just because the inhabitants did not approve of the Gypsy settlement among themselves, the giving or selling the mentioned lands to particular Gypsies could be stopped and so their petitions could be rejected in this manner. It seems Gypsies had to cover so



much distance in order to lessen the effect of the bad Gypsy image. Sometimes, the exact opposite situations were also seen. For example, Gypsies could be self-imposed for the separate settlement, maybe because they did not want to live among other ethnic communities or maybe, because of the crowdedness of the settlement, or maybe because of desire for owning a settlement or neighbourhood which belonged to them.

Actually, some cases showed that the state did not just struggle with the problems about Gypsies, but also the problem in itself, the problem that arose from the prioritising the 'bad ethnic image of Gypsies.' It seems that it was overwhelmed in some respects. For example, until a certain period of time, regardless of their religion, all Gypsies were put in the same category in the census statistics. Meaning, as for the dominance of their ethnic identity rather than the religious identity, they were categorized as Gypsies. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, just non-Muslim Gypsies began to be shown separately and Muslims Gypsies were illustrated in the category in which the Muslim communities of the empire took part.

In addition to this, in the case of conversion news about the Muslim Gypsies of the new nation states, it reacted as soon as possible. As the first reaction, it tended to deny it and then, another interesting situation occurred. The officers stated that if there was any conversion, the converted Muslims could be unfaithful and vagabond Gypsies. Moreover, the consuls stated that there were real Muslim Gypsies who were faithful and whose customs and the sense of morality were different from others. Briefly, they were the controlled Gypsies and they were coming to the mosques and sending their children to school. They were celebrating religious feasts. But, other so-called Muslim Gypsies were involved in stealing and pickpocketing. Besides, they had the tendency to change their religion according to their benefits. It was thought

that they acted this way, because they had no religious leader who could teach them religious matters. Also, some Gypsies could claim that they were forced to change their religion; otherwise, they were given the condition to leave the country. However, as understood, some of the news was fabricated, but some others were real. In other words, some Gypsy individuals really demanded their salvation from that situation and their migration to the place where they supposed to belong. Apart from this, about the conversion matter, we also witness the cases of conversion, specifically *ihtidâ'*, the conversion from Christianity to Islam.

Even if the some conversion news were fake, the actuality of some others and the wish of particular Muslim Gypsies who needed the aid of the state to be saved and helped to migrate to the Ottoman territory meant that some Muslim Gypsies saw themselves as part of the Ottoman Empire. Also, they probably considered it as their religious rights.

However, the surprising dimension about the Muslim Gypsies of the new nation states was actually their hard trial to take back their rights in the area of election. When the right to vote in the election was taken back from the Muslim Gypsies of Bulgaria, the conferences and congress were held and the petitions were submitted to the authorities. Instead of passing more beneficial positions, meaning conversion to Christianity, Muslim Ottoman Gypsies were insisting on their electoral and educational rights. Finally, they were able to get these back.

Unfortunately, unfaithful attitude over Muslim Ottoman Gypsies who were living in these regions was not limited to these. Bulgaria also declared that the migration of Gypsies, probably Muslim Ottoman Gypsies, into Bulgarian territory was prohibited. As a response to it, the Ottomans declared that Bulgaria had no right to do this, or to make that kind of decision. Other than Bulgaria, Romania made the same decision

too, supposedly because of the epidemics which they carried as well as their corrupted behaviours. Likewise, Hungary prevented the Gypsy settlement in cities and afterwards, it did not let Gypsies send their children to the state schools because of their murder and theft activities.

Looking into their relations with other ethnic communities, it can be said that the relations had ups and downs. In other words, Gypsies were sometimes excluded, mocked, and despised because of the peculiarities and their life standards. Moreover, Gypsies were perceived by the society as wild, independent, savage, dealer of unapproved occupations, immoral, criminals (injury, murder, steal, robbery, theft, cheating, prostitution, counterfeiting, rape), irreligious, sexually loose, weird looking, wanderers, people who live in squalor, threats to their lives in terms of natural sources. Therefore, the inhabitants avoided to live with Gypsies in the same quarter. But, sometimes, they benefitted by means of their profession and even the communities had pity on them due to various reasons. Before anything else, in their eyes, Gypsies were ignorant and illiterate. In addition to this, they lacked notions of state, religion and humanity.

In this very moment, one point should be underlined that in the cases of bad interrelations between Gypsies and other ethnic groups, the negative relations did not stem only from Gypsies. Clearly, the biases and the fabricated Gypsy image of the communities had a determinant role in these relations so that it could be so harmful for the innocent Gypsies or for Gypsies who made a great effort to act in harmony with the usual Ottoman norms. For example, because of the fabricated hatred and repugnance, in the case of need, the inhabitants could hesitate to help Gypsies. Again, it will be wrong not to point out that there could be intimate relations, even the inter-marriage or complicity between the inhabitants and Gypsies. Above all, in

either situation, the other communities were still contingent upon Gypsies in specific affairs such as in entertainment and nightlife.

Compared with other ethnic communities in that reign, the Ottoman Gypsies had low-welfare and living in economically sub-standards. To make a living, they were capable of doing every kind of jobs (collection of dog craps, beggary, cleaning shoes, street selling, counterfeiting, fortune telling, certain types of crafts, animal training, musician... etc). For this, nearly all family members worked. When they could not provide their living, they needed the assistance of the state. Directly, the state officials tried to contribute some of them economically. Indirectly, the state officials sometimes let nomadic Gypsies stay and perform their professions in inconvenient places such as forbidden pastures.

In spite of earning their lives by doing various professions, it cannot be denied that they were talented, especially in some crafts like forging, coppersmith. Moreover, with those kinds of professions, they filled some important niches in the economy. Nevertheless, there was another dimension of their professions. Meaning, the professions were not always the return of their talents. Sometimes, they could perform some jobs as a reflection of their peculiarities and ethnic structures in the minds of the state. In other words, because of the negative image or negative effect of their ethnic identity in the eyes of the state officials and society, they were given some jobs as an insult or a kind of punishment. The most important example of this was the death penalties. For a long period of time, the death penalties were executed in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkish Republic by Gypsies.

In spite of doing everything, through the end of the nineteenth century, we witnessed how Gypsies became successful in the entertainment sector of the Ottoman Empire. They became the visible face and indispensable part of the entertaining in

this respect; they got a steadier place in the Ottoman society. If we look at the sub-categories of entertainment, at first, we saw Gypsy musicians: players of certain types of instruments and singers of various songs. Different from others, they owned a dissimilar musical style more like an anomie. Furthermore, they were capable of easily adopting the cultural tools of other ethnic communities and they combined their own elements with the elements of other ethnic groups. Other than the musicians, Gypsies also served the entertainment life as puppeteers and dancers including male (*köçek*) and female dancers (*çengi*).

Especially, it can be asserted that many of male dancers and female dancers had an imprint on the cultural and social life of the Ottoman Empire. That imprint was too recognizable so that in the late Ottoman period, it easily drew the attention of the foreigner exhibition directors. The directors even came to İstanbul and demanded the Gypsy women dancers exhibit in the international exhibitions as samples from the Orient. Unfortunately, that request was found as improper because displaying Gypsies as sample of the empire could damage the dignity and the status of the Ottoman Empire in international affairs so it was prohibited by the sultan and the officers. Not giving the Gypsy women that chance could be evaluated as another type of affront through Gypsies by the Ottoman state.

Nevertheless, the state's actions were not enough to reduce the importance of Ottoman Gypsies in cultural life. Even if Gypsies did not personally take so many parts in the performing arts, again the Gypsy image succeeded in entering *Karagöz*, *Ortaoyunu* and *Kanto*. *Karagöz* was supposed to be originated in the Gypsy ethnicity. Apart from the main characters, there could be found secondary Gypsy types in both *Karagöz* shadow play and *Ortaoyunu*. In the situation that the Gypsy types were not in these theatrical plays, the most used Gypsy motifs were

superseding the types and characters. Lastly, in *Kantos*, we catch sight of Gypsy motifs and even some of the *kantos* and *düettos* were called *Çingene Kantosu* (Gypsy Canto) and *Çingene Düettosu* (Gypsy Duetto).

After glancing over the relations between the state and Gypsies and the society and Gypsies, we became aware that the positive elements and negative elements penetrated into each other. On the other hand, from my standpoint, in the relation triangle of that period, it is possible to see the integration or the accommodation in the exclusion, the normality in the marginality, and the secret appreciation in the contempt. However, again, it would be too simple to decide the marginality and the segregation about the situation of Gypsies in that period looking into the negative elements. The difficult thing was to be able to evaluate well the positive developments in their lives. I suppose, in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), there were considerable positive developments and advances. This thesis is for flashing a sudden light on Gypsies in historical conduct by paying more attention to the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. However, the light is not for taking a one-sided approach by being an opponent or proponent of neither Gypsies nor the state. The light is just for making grey points more visible and apparent in order to go beyond the so-called ideas, beliefs, and sayings, in other words, jet-black and snow-white points.

Consequently, even though Gypsies were just beside us every time, they were able to approach us as much as our prejudices permitted. These people whom we preferred to reject just because we used to do so and whom we overexerted to change occasionally owned spirits that were so free, unfettered and distinctive. Nevertheless, our motives of abstention towards the unknown set up the barriers that prevent us from fairly treating free souls and distinct characters of Gypsies. In the way of

eliminating these barriers, there is a need to face our prejudices and step forward to correct existing misinformation about this community. Most people named Gypsies as *Buçuk Millet* (Half Nation) by considering themselves as a part of the whole. Possibly, this work helps us to realize that the word “half” is much more related with the inadequate knowledge about Gypsies rather than their deficiencies compared to the other “seventy-two” whole nations.

## APPENDIXES

### A. Samples from the Referred Documents and Their Modern Turkish Transcriptions

1) “Kıbtîyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâm-nâme,” *Düstur*, I. Tertip, vol. II. (İstanbul, Ankara: Başvekâlet Neşriyat ve Müdevvenat Dairesi Müdürlüğü, 1872), pp. 34–38.

## ( قبطیان و برکوسنک صورت تحصیل )

( حقنده نظامنامه در )

برنجی بند قبطی طائفه سندن آلتقده اولان و برکو قدیمدن مرتب و مقنن واردات خزینة جلایه دن ایسه ده صورت استحصالتده برطاقم بولسزلق و قاریشلق و قوعه کلکده اولدیغندن سایه معالیوایه حضرت شاهانده ولایتک امور ملکیه و مالیه سی حقنده اجرا قننان تنظیمات و اصلاحات اقتضاسیجه بوماده نک دخی برقاعده قویه و مطرده تحتة قونسی لازم کلش اولوب شویله که قبطی نامنه اولان تبعه دولت علیه دن اخذی مقنن بولنان رسومات قبطیایک حائنه مخصوص بروبرکو اولوب مسلم قبطیلردن عسکر آلتدیغی کبی غیرمسلم قبطیلردن دخی بدل عسکری آلتیق اقتضا ایتمه جکندن و فقط مسلم و غیرمسلم قبطیلردن قصبه و قریه زده املاک و عقار و اراضیسی اولتارک تحریر جدید اصولی اوزره املاک و تمتعات و برکوری بشقه جه آلتوب بوکا طوقنیه جفتدن یالکر قبطیایک حالچون هر شخص ذکورک بهرسنه تأدییه سی مرتب ذمتی اولان و برکو آتی بنده بیان اولنان صنوفنه کوره توزیع و استحصال اولته جقدر

ایکنجی بند ولایت داخلنده بولنان مسلم و غیرمسلم قبطی طائفه سنک نفوس ذکوری درت قسیمه تقسیم اولته رقی و برکوری اکا کوره ترتیب اولته جقی و بو و برکو بهرسنه مارتدن بدأ ایله تحصیل اولتوب نهایت اوچنجی آیده ارقه سی آتته جقدر و هر شخص مرتب ذمتی اولان و برکو بی تأدییه ایتدیجه صنوفنه کوره یذبنه مطبوع ادا تذکره سی و بریله جکدر اوچنجی بند صنف اول اعتبار ایدیله جک نفوس قصبه و قریه زده اولدیجه سرمایه و صنعت صاحبی اولان و ایکنجی و اوچنجی صنف اولتارک بالنسبه مادوننده بولنان طلقدن اولوب دردیجی صنف دخی عمله و ایشیجی و حدیث السن اولتاردر

دردیجی بند ایشو قاعده جدیده نک حقیقه و تمامیه اجرای فعلیایچون اول امر ده هر محله موجود مسلم و غیرمسلم قبطیلرک حال و محل و کجه لانه کوره سبججه یکونندن بمقداری صنف اول و ثانی و نقدری صنف ثالث و زابع اوله جغی مجلس اداره ولایتده تفریق و تعیین اولته رقی و تحریرات

﴿ مخصوصه ﴾



مخصوصه ایله بیلدیریلرک بو تقسیمدن رأس سنجاقی اداره مجلسلرنده دخی هر قضا نك كذاك نفوسنه و موجودینك حال و تحمل و اقتدازینه تطبیقا درت صنف اوزره حصه ویرکوسی تفریق و تقسیم ایدیلرک تنظیم اولنه جق ادا تذکره لری اكا كوره کوندلرک لازم کله جکندن قضالده موجود نفوس قبطنی بند آئیده بیان اولنه جق قاعده اوزره تخریر و مرکز ولایتدن بیان اولنان نسبته کوره موجودی صنوف اربعه یه تقسیم اولندرق یدلرینه مجانا صنف تذکره لری و یریله جکدر

بشنجی بند قبطنی طائفه سنك اکثریسی بر قضا و یابر سنجاقده نمن و تفرز ایتوب کویدن کویه و طاغدن طاغنه کردکلرندن طویلجه بولندقلری زمان قیش موسملری اولسینه بدایت مصلحتده بردفعه لك اوله رق نشرین اول ابتدا سندن کانون اول اتهاسنه قدر اوچ آی ظرفنده هر قضا داخلنده بولنان مسلم و غیر مسلم قبطنلرک اون بش یا شده ودها یوقاروسنده اولاردن تمش یا شده بولنانلر قدر تخریر ایله برابر اوچنجی بندده بیان اولنان نسبته کوره قضال مجالس اداره سی معرفتیه و یکدیگرینك اخباریله صنف لری تعیین اولمقله برابر چونکه کوندریلان صنف تذکره لری هر صنفه مخصوص اوله رق بشقه بشقه رسمده اولدیغندن و هر قوچانده یوز عدد تذکره بولندیغندن تخریر اولنان قبطنی قنغی صنفدن ایسه اوصنفه مخصوص تذکره لردن بریسی نمونه سی وجهله طولدیریلوب و قضایه مخصوص بیوک مهرله تمهیر ایدیلوب اوقبطنینك یدینه مجانا و یریله جک واشبو تذکره یه وضع اولنه جق نومرو ایله حاملنك اسمی و صنعتی عینیه قوچاننه دخی یازیله جقدر

النجی بند قبطنی و یرکوسنك درت صنفنه مخصوص اوله رق اتخاذ و تنظیم اولنان ادا تذکره لری مارتدن صکره اشبو و یرکودن هر شخص حصه سنك تحصیل عقیبنده و یریله جکندن بند سابقده محرر اصول اوزره هر قضا داخلنده بولنان قبطنی طائفه سنك نفوسی تخریر و موجودی صنوف اربعه یه تقسیم اولندقدن صکره قوچانلری قضالده حفظ اولندرق بر قطعه ذیلی مضبطه لو دفتر یاپیلوب رأس سنجاقه و اورادن دخی

زاس سنجاق اولان قضانك قبطيانى دخی علاوه ایله کانون نائی ابتدا سنده  
جانب ولایتہ ارسال قلند جقدر

یدنجی بند سنجاقلردن اشبودفتلر وزود ایتد کده هر سنجاقك موجود  
قبطیان نفوسچون صنوف اربعه دن بمقدار ادا تذکره سی کوندرلک  
لازم کلور ایسه مطبعه ولایتده طبع وظهرری جانب محاسبه دن مهر  
مخصوص ایله تمهیر اولنهرق مارتدن اول سنجاقله کوندریله جقدر وقبطی  
طائفه سنک بروجه محرر بریده طورمدقلری جهته هر سنجاقه کوندریله جک  
تذکره نك احتیاطا نصی مقداری فضله وزیاده ارسال ایله جقدر

سکرنجی بند سنجاقلردن دخی هر قضانك تذکره لری بند سابقده اولان  
اصوله تطبیقا تفریق اولدقدنصره چونکه اولجه تحریر اولمش بولنان  
قبطیلردن هر برنك صنفی بدینه ویرلش اولان صنف تذکره سندن معلوم  
اوله جفتدن واشبو ویرکونك تحصیلیچون استخدام اولنه جق موظف ویاغیر  
موظف مأمورینه تحصیلات واقعه سندن یوزده بش اجرت تحصیلیه  
ویریه جکندن قضا لجه هر صنفدن اقتضای قدر ادا تذکره لری  
اولوجهله انتخاب اولنه جق معتبر کفیلو مأمورله تسلیم ایله بولنر قبطی  
طائفه سندن بولدقلری شخصك یدنده کی صنف تذکره سنی استیوب آلهرق  
اوتد کره قنغی صنفه مخصوص ایسه اوصنفه مخصوص ویرکوبی اخذ ایله  
بدینه اوصنفه مخصوص قوچاندن برقطعه ادا تذکره سی قطع ایدوب  
وآچیق محللرینی نمونه سنه کوره طولدیروب تمهیر ایدرک پاره بی آلدیغی  
آدمک بدینه ویره جک واشبو تذکره به وضع اولنه جق صره نومروسی  
قبطیلر یدندن آله جق اسکی تذکره لره واشبو اسکی تذکره لک نومرو لری  
دخی یکی ویریه جک تذکره به قونیلوب اسکی تذکره نك قنغی قضا تذکره سی  
ایدوی ویریه جک ادا تذکره سندن محل مخصوصنه کوستریله جقدر

طقوزنجی بند قبطیلرک صنوف اربعه سنی تعیین ایچون برمنوال محرر  
ویریه جک صنف تذکره لری ابتدای سنه به مخصوص اولوب ابرتسی سنه  
هر قبطینک سنه سابقده ویرمش اولدیغی ویرکوب ایچون بدنده بولنه جق  
ادا تذکره سی صنفی تعیینه کافی اوله جفتدن برنجی سنه هر قبطینک بدنده  
\* بولنان \*

بولتان صنف تذکرہ لری واندنصرکہ کی سنہ لڑہ اولکی سنہ لڑک ادا تذکرہ لری  
 اساس انخان اولنہرق ویکی تذکرہ ویرلدیکہ اسکی تذکرہ لری کیرو  
 انہرق انک موجبہ تحصیل ماموری مال ماموریلہ حسابنی کورہ جک  
 وشاید یدندہ اولان صنف وادا تذکرہ لرندن بریسنی بند آبدہ محرر  
 الی آی مدت ایچندہ قضاء ضایع ایتمش ویاخود ولایت خارچندہ کائن  
 محلدن کلش ویاچین تحریرده بولنہ میہرق صکرہ دن میدانہ چیتمش قبطی  
 بولنور ایسہ تحصیل مامورلی بومقوله لک صنفنی خود بخود تعیین  
 ایتموب قضا مجلس ادارہ سنہ جلب ایله اورادہ تعیین اولنہ جق صنفی  
 موجبہ ویرکوسی آتوب ادا تذکرہ سی ویریلہ جکدر

اونجی بند مارتدن بدأ ایله اوج آی مدندہ ویرکوی مرتبنی ویرمیان  
 قبطیلر رأس قضایہ جلب اولنہرق ولایتک سکسان برسندہ سی مارتندن  
 اعتبارا یاپیلان ویرکوتعلیماتنه توفیقا معاملہ اولنہ جقدر وسنہ ابتداسندن  
 الی آی نہایتنه دکن ویرکوسی ویرماش بولنلنلرک یدلرنده ادا تذکرہ لری  
 اولیہ جغندن اومقوله ل بولندیغنی واله بکدیکی یرده صنف تذکرہ سنی ابراز  
 ایدرلر ایسہ صنف لرنہ مخصوص ویرکولری و تذکرہ ابراز ایده مدکلری  
 حالده تحصیل زمانندہ صاوشمش ویا محللارندن فرار ایتمش اولہ جقلرندن  
 اومقوله لردن تام برنجی صنف ویرکوسی آتوب وویرمز ایسہ حبس ایله  
 تحصیل ایدیلوب یدلرنہ اوصنفک ادا تذکرہ سی ویریلہ جکدر

اون برنجی بند تحصیل مامورلی قبطیلرک یدلرنده بولتان عتیق تذکرہ لہ  
 نظر ایدرک انکلہ صنفنی تعیین ایده جکی واندنصرکہ هر سنہ دخی  
 سنہ سابقہ قیاسا تذکرہ ویرہرک ویرکوسی تحصیل ایلیہ جکی درکار  
 ایسده بولنلرک ایچلرندن فوت اولان ویاخود ولایتک خارچنہ کیدنلرک  
 تذکرہ لری ید آخرہ بکیمک قابل اولہ جغندن اومقوله تذکرہ لرک حین  
 معاینہ سندہ اسم وشہرت واشکال وصنعتنہ کوزلجہ دقت اولنہرق مذکور  
 تذکرہ لک صحیحاصاحبی اولدیغنی تبین ایتمدیجہ همان ابراز اولتان تذکرہ لری  
 سند ایتمک جائز اولیہ جقدر برده بعض اهل صنعت و تجارتک تحول احوال  
 جهتیلہ صنعت و تجارتنہ سکتہ کلدیکی ویاخود دیگر برعارضہ یہ مبنی  
 قدرتسزلکی تحقق ایتمدیکی حالده اومثالورک مجلس ادارہ قضادہ احوالی  
 تبین ایتمدیریلہرک صنفنک تنزیلی جائز اولدیغنی کی صنعت و تجارتنی ایلرولتمش  
 وقدرت و ثروتی زیادہ لشمش اولنلرک دخی ینہ مجلس مذکورده تحقیق

ایده‌جک اقتداریتہ کورہ صنفنک ایلرولدلسی لازم کله‌جک وهر حالده  
وجودجه سقط و عمل مانده اولوبده حالجه دخی اقتداری مفقود اولنلردن  
وبرده قبطی جاعتلرینک مهر رسمی ایله مختارلق خدمتده بولنانلردن  
قبطی ویرکوسی آلمیه جقدر

اون ایکنکی بند اشبو قبطی ویرکوسی شمدی به قدر مقطوعیت صورتده  
اولق حسبیه واردات مقررہ دن ایکن شمدی شو قاعده ایجابجه مقدراری  
غیر معین اوله جقدن قضا و سنجاقلریجه شهریه مقدار حاصلاتی آیلق  
دفترلینه ادخال اولنه جق وسنه آخرنده دخی بر خلاصه سی یاپیله رق  
وتحصیلدارلرینه ویریلان یوزده بش اجرت کوستریله رک بشقه‌جه تقدیم  
قلنه جقدر

بالاده بیان اولتان اصول وقاعده به جزئی و کلی فساد قارشدیرمش اولنلر  
حقنده جزا قانوننامه همایونی اقتضا سنجه ترتب ایده‌جک مجازات  
بلاتا‌خیر اجرا قلنه جقدر

﴿ واردات ﴾

## Kıbtîyân Vergisinin Sûret-i Tahsîli Hakkında Nizâm-nâmedir

1. Birinci Bend: Kıbtî ta'îfesinden alınmakta olan vergi-i kadîmden müretteb ve mukannen vâridât hazîne-i celîleden ise de sûret-i istihsâlinde bir tâkım yolsuzluk ve karışıklık vukû'a gelmekte olduğundan sâye-i ma'âlî-vâye-i hazret-i şâhânede vilâyetin umûr-ı mülkiye ve mâliyesi hakkında icrâ kılınan tanzîmât ve ıslâhât iktizâsınca bu maddenin dahî bir kâ'ide-i kuvveye ve matrede tahtına konulması lâzım gelmiş olup şöyle ki Kıbtî nâmına olan teba'a-i devlet-i 'aliyeden ahzı mukannen bulunan rüsûmât Kıbtîlik hâline mahsûs bir vergi olup Müslim Kıbtîlerden 'asker alınmadığı gibi gayr-i Müslim Kıbtîlerden dahî bedel-i 'askeri alınmak iktizâ etmeyeceğinden ve fakat Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Kıbtîlerden kasaba ve karyelerde emlâk ve 'akâr ve arazîsi olanların tahrîr-i cedîd usûlü üzere emlâk ve temettu'ât vergileri başkaca alınıb buna dokunmayacağından yalnız Kıbtîlik halî için her şahs-ı zikûrün beheresine te'diyesi müterettib zimmeti olan vergi atî bendde beyân olunan sınıfına göre tevzî' ve istihsâl olunacaktır.
2. İkinci Bend: Vilâyet dâhilinde bulunan Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Kıbtî tâ'ifesinin nüfûs-ı zikûrû dört kısma taksîm olunarak vergileri ona göre tertîb olunacak ve bu vergi beheresine Martdan bede' ile tahsîl olunub nihâyet üçüncü ayda arkası alınacaktır ve her şahs müterettib zimmetî olan vergiyi te'diye ettikçe sınıfına göre yedinde matbû' edâ tezkeresi verilecektir.
3. Üçüncü Bend: Sınıf-ı evvel i'tibâr edilecek nüfûs kasaba ve karyelerde oldukça sermâye ve san'at sahibî olan ve ikinci ve üçüncü sınıflar onların bi-n-nisbe madûnunda bulunan tâkımdan olup dördüncü sınıf dahî 'amele ve işçi ve hadîs-i elsen olanlardır.
4. Dördüncü Bend: İşbu kâ'ide-i cedîdenin hakkıyla ve tamamıyla icrâ-yı fi'iliyâtı için evvel-i emrde her mahallde mevcûd Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Kıbtîlerin hâl ve mahall ve tahammülüne göre sancâkça yekûnundan ne mikdârı sınıf-ı evvel ve sâni ve ne kadarı sınıf-ı sâlis ve râb' olacağı meclis-i idâre-i vilâyetde tefrîk ve ta'yîn olunarak ve tahrîrât-ı mahsûsa ile bildirilerek bu taksîmden re's-i sancâk idâre meclislerinde dahî her kazânın kezlik nüfûsuna ve mevcûdiyetin hâl ve tahammül ve iktidârına tatbîkân dört sınıf üzere hisse-i vergisi tefrîk ve taksîm edilerek tanzîm olunacak edâ-yi tezkereleri ona göre gönderilmek lâzım geleceğinden kazâlarda mevcûd nüfûs-ı Kıbtî bend-i atîde beyân olunacak kâ'ide üzere tahrîr ve merkez vilâyetden beyân olunan nisbete göre mevcûdu sınıf-ı erba'aya taksîm olunarak yedlerine meccânen sınıf tezkereleri verilecektir.
5. Beşinci Bend: Kıbtî tâ'ifesinin ekserîsi bir kazâ veya bir sancâkda temekkün ve takarrür etmeyib köyden köye ve dağdan dağa gezdiklerinden topluca buldukları zamân kış mevsimleri olmasıyla bidâyet-i maslahatda bir def'alık olarak Teşrînievvel ibtidâsından Kanûnievvel intihâsına kadar üç ay zarfında her kazâ dâhilinde bulunan Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Kıbtîlerin on beş yaşında ve daha yukarısında olanlardan yetmiş yaşında bulunanlara kadar tahrîr ile berâber üçüncü bendde beyân olunan nisbete göre kazâlar mecâlîs idâresi ma'rifetiyle ve yekdiğerinin ihbârıyla sınıfları ta'yîn olunmakla berâber çünkü gönderilen sınıf tezkereleri her sınıfa mahsûs olarak başka

başka resimde olduğundan ve her koçanda yüzer ‘aded tezkere bulunduğundan tahrîr olunan Kıbtî hangi sınıftan ise o sınıfa mahsûs tezkerelerden birisi numûnesi vechle doldurulub ve kazâyâ mahsûs büyük mührle temhîr edilip o Kıbtînin yeddinde meccânen verilecek ve işbu tezkereye vaz’ olunacak numero ile hamilinin ismi ve san’atı ‘aynıyla koçanına dahî yazılacaktır.

6. Altıncı Bend: Kıbtî vergisinin dört sınıfına mahsûs olarak ittihâz ve tanzîm olunan edâ-yi tezkereleri Martdan sonra işbu vergiden her şahs hissesinin tahsîli ‘akîbetde verileceğinden bend-i sâbıkda muharrer usûl üzere her kazâ dâhilinde bulunan Kıbtî tâ’ifesinin nüfûsu tahrîr-i mevcûdi sınıf-ı erba’aya taksîm olunduktan sonra koçanları kazâlarda hıfz olunarak birer kat’a zeyli mazbatalı defteri yapılab re’s-i sancâğa ve oradan dahî re’s-i sancâk olan kazânın Kıbtiyânı dahî ‘ilâve ile Kânûnisâni ibtidâsında cânib-i vilâyete irsâl kılınacaktır.
7. Yedinci Bend: Sancâklardan işbu defterler vürûd ettikde her sancâğın mevcûd kıbtiyân nüfûsu için sınıf-ı erba’adan ne mikdâr edâ tezkeresi gönderilmek lazım gelir ise matba’a-i vilâyette tab’ ve zahrları cânib muhâsebeden mühr-i mahsûs ile temhîr olunarak Martdan evvel sancâklara gönderilecektir ve Kıbtî tâ’ifesinin ber-vech muharrer bir yerde durmadıkları cihetle her sancâğa gönderilecek tezkerenin ihtiyâten nısfî mikdârı fazla ve ziyâde irsâl edilecektir.
8. Sekizinci Bend: Sancâklardan dahî her kazânın tezkereleri bend-i sâbıkda olan usûle tatbîkan tefrîk olunduktan sonra çünkü evvelce tahrîr olunmuş bulunan Kıbtîlerden her birinin sınıfı yeddinde verilmiş olan sınıf tezkeresinden ma’lûm olacağından ve işbu verginin tahsîli için istihdâm olunacak muvazzaf veya gayr-i muvazzaf me’mûrine tahsîlât-ı vâkı’asından yüzde beş ücret tahsîliye verileceğinden kazâlarca her sınıftan iktizâsı kadar edâ tezkereleri ol-vechle intihâb olunacak mu’teber kefilli me’mûrlara teslîm ile bunlar Kıbtî tâ’ifesinden buldukları şahsın yeddindeki sınıf tezkeresini isteyib alarak o tezkere hangi sınıfa mahsûs ise o sınıfa mahsûs vergiyi ahz ile yeddinde o sınıfa mahsûs koçandan bir kat’a edâ tezkeresi kat’ edip ve açık mahallerini numûnesine göre doldurub temhîl ederek parayı aldığı adamın yeddine verecek ve işbu tezkereye vaz’ olunacak sıra numerosu Kıbtîler yeddinden alınacak eski tezkerelere ve işbu eski tezkerelerin numeroları dahî yeni verilecek tezkereye konulub eski tezkerenin hangi kazâ tezkeresi idüğü verilecek edâ tezkeresinden mahall-i mahsûsuna gösterilecektir.
9. Dokuzuncu Bend: Kıbtîlerin sınıf erba’asını ta’yîn için bir minvâl-i muharrer verilecek sınıf tezkereleri ibtidâkî seneye mahsûs olub ertesi sene her Kıbtînin sene-i sâbıkada vermiş olduğu vergi için yeddinde bulunacak edâ tezkeresi sınıfını ta’yîne kâfi olacağından birinci sene her Kıbtînin yeddinde bulunan sınıf tezkereleri ve ondan sonraki senelerde evvelki senelerin edâ tezkereleri esâsı ittihâz olunarak ve yeni tezkere verildikçe eski tezkereleri geri alınarak onun mûcibince tahsîl me’mûru mâl me’mûrlarıyla hesâbını görecek ve şayed yeddinde olan sınıf ve edâ tezkerelerinden birisini bend-i atîde muharrer altı ay müddet içinde kazâ-yı zayi’ etmiş veyahûd vilâyet hâricinde kâin mahallden gelmiş veya hîn-i tahrîrde bulunamayarak sonradan meydana çıkmış Kıbtî bulunur ise tahsîl me’mûrları bu makûlelerin sınıfını

hod-be-hod ta'yîn etmeyib kazâ-yı meclis idâresine celb ile orada ta'yîn olunacak sınıfı mûcibince vergisi alınıb edâ tezkeresi verilecektir.

10. Onuncu Bend: Martdan bed'e ile üç ay müddetde vergi-yi mürettibini vermeyen Kıbtîler re's-i kazâyâ celb olunarak vilâyetin seksen bir senesi Martından i'tibaren yapılan vergi ta'lîmâtına tevfikân mu'âmele olunacaktır ve sene ibtidâsından altı ay nihâyetine değin vergisini vermemiş bulunanların yedlerinde edâ tezkereleri olmayacağından o makûleler bulunduğu ve illâ geçtiği yerlerde sınıf tezkeresini ibrâz ederler ise sınıflarına mahsûs vergileri ve tezkere ibrâz edemedikleri halde tahsîl zamânında savuşmuş veya mahallerinden firâr etmiş olacaklarından o makûlelerden tam birinci sınıf vergisi alınıb ve vermez ise habs ile tahsîl edilib yedlerine o sınıfın edâ tezkeresi verilecektir.
11. Onbirinci Bend: Tahsîl me'mûrları Kıbtîlerin yedlerinde bulunan 'atîk tezkerelere nazar ederek onunla sınıfını ta'yîn edeceği ve ondan sonra her sene dahî sene-i sâbıkaya kıyâsen tezkere vererek vergisini tahsîl eyleyeceği der-kâr ise de bunların içlerinden fevt olan veyahûd vilâyetin hâricine gidenlerin tezkereleri yed-i âhire geçmek kâbil olacağından o makûle tezkerelerin hîn-i mu'âyenesinde isim ve şöhret ve eşkâl ve san'atına güzelce dikkat olunarak mezkûr tezkerenin sahîhân sâhibi olduğu tebeyyün etmedikçe hemen ibrâz olunan tezkereleri sened etmek câiz olmayacaktır. Bir de ba'zı ehl-i san'at ve ticâretin tahavvül-i ahvâl cihetiyle san'at ve ticâretine sekte geldiği veyahûd diğer bir 'arızaya mebni kudretsizliği tahakkuk ettiği hâlde o misillülerin meclis-i idâre-i kazâda ahvâli tebeyyün ettirilerek sınıfının tenzîlî câiz olduğu gibi san'at ve ticâretini ilerletmiş ve kudret ve serveti ziyâdeleşmiş olanların dahî yine meclis-i mezkûrda tahakkuk edecek iktidârına göre sınıfının ilerledilmesi lâzım gelecek ve her hâlde vücûdca sakat ve 'amel-mânde olub da halce dahî iktidârı mefkûd olanlardan ve bir de Kıbtî cemâ'atlerinin mühr-i resmi ile muhtârlık hizmetinde bulunanlardan Kıbtî vergisi alınmayacaktır.
12. Onikinci Bend: İşbu Kıbtî vergisi şimdiye kadar maktû'at sûretinde olmak hasebiyle vâridât-ı mukarrerden iken şimdi şu kâ'ide icâbınca mikdârı gayr-i mu'ayyen olacağından kazâ ve sancâklarca şehriyye mikdâr-ı hâsılâtı aylık defterlerine idhâl olunacak ve sene-i âhirinde dahî bir hulâsâsı yapılarak ve tahsîldârlarına verilen yüzde beş ücret gösterilerek başkaca takdîm kılınacaktır.

Bâlâda beyân olunan usûl ve kâ'ideye cüz'î ve küllî fesâd karıştırmış olanlar hakkında cezâ kanûn-nâme-i hümayûnu iktizâsınca terettüb edecek mücâzât bilâ-tehîr icrâ kılınacaktır.





## Pişe-gâh-ı ‘Âli-i Hazret-i Sadâret-Penâhîye

Ma’rûz-ı Çâker-i Kemîneleridir ki

Edirne’de bulunan İslâm mahallâtında tavattun ve temekkün etmiş olan Müslim Kıbtîler tarafından verilen ‘arzuhâlde kendileri ehl-i perde olub şe’âir ve ferâ’iz-i İslâmiyeyi edâ ve teba’a-yı sâ’ire misillü emlâk ve temettu’ vergilerini ifâ etmekte oldukları hâlde Kıbtîlik nâmıyla dâhi başkaca vergi talep olunması hakâret ve ma’zûriyyetlerini mûcib bulunduğundan bahisle mezkûr verginin ‘afvıyla evlâdlarının silk-i celîl-i ‘askeriyeye kabûlü istid’â olunmuş ve Rumeli ile Anadolu cihetlerinde bulunan Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Kıbtîyân tâ’ifesinden alınacak vergi hakkında Şûrâ-yı Devlet kararıyla makâm-ı ‘âli-i cenâb-ı vekâlet-penâhîlerinden tastîr ve tesyîd buyrulmuş olan 26 Rebiyyülevvel 89 tarihli ve kırk numarolu emr-nâme-i sâmiide tâ’ife-i merkûmeden âdâb-ı İslâmiye ile mutassîf ve müte’eddib olanlar ile henüz ‘âdât-ı sâbıkaları dâ’iresinde bulunanların tefrîk ve temyîzi müşkil ve bunlardan ehl-i ‘örf ve edeb olmayan gürûhun ‘asker-i şâhâne meyânında bulundurulması sû-i ahlâklarının sâ’ir efrâda sirâyetini istilzâm ile berâber ‘askerlik şerefini muhîl olacağı cihetle bunlardan ‘aynen ‘asker alınması terbiyet-i ‘umûmiyye hakkında mebzûl olan mesâ’î işârıyla bu kavmin dâhi kâmilen dâ’ire-i edebe alındığına cezm ve yakîn hâsıl olacak zamâna ta’lîkân şimdîlik kemâ-kân hizmet-i ‘askeriyeden müstesnâ bırakılmaları münâsib idü ki iş’âr buyrulmuş olub ancak bunlar üç kısım olub bir tâkımı Hristiyan ve bir tâkımı İslâm ise de gayr-i mutavattın ve hayme-nişîn ve bir tâkımı müddet-i medfideden beri Edirne Vilâyetinin ekser kasabât ve ferâsatta sâkin ve ehl-i perde ve ashâb-ı zirâ’atından olarak salefû’l-zikr hayme-nişîn Müslim Kıbtîleri gibi ‘âdât-ı sâbıkaları dâ’iresinde bulunanlardan olmayıb edâ-yı salavât ve ifâ-yı cami-i şerif ile hıfz-ı kurân eder tâkımdan olduklarından Kıbtîliği ‘adem-i kabûl ile teba’a-yı Müslime misillü emlâk ve temettu’ vergilerini vermekte ve evlâdlarının silk-i ‘askeriyeye kabûlünü istid’â ve ısrâr etmekte olduklarına ve ma’lûm-ı ‘âli cenâb-ı vekâlet-penâhîleri buyurulduğu üzere indü’l-şer’ efrâd-ı gayr-i Müslimeden ‘arz-ı ihtidâ edenlere evvel-i anda İslâmiyyet mu’âmesi icrâ olunmak lazım gelib bunlar ise ber-vech ma’rûz-ı sahbü’l-i’tikâd Müslim ve ezmine-i keşîdeden beri sâkin olarak ferâ’iz-i İslâmiyeyi ifâ eylemekte bulduklarına ve vilâyet dahilinde tahrîri icrâ kılınan şehr ve kasabât ile henüz tensîkât-ı tahrîriye altına alınmayan ba’zı kasaba ve karyelerde sâkin bu misillü ehl-i perde Müslim Kıbtîlerden sınıf-ı erba’a üzerine senevî alınması lazım gelen verginin mikdârı ise ancak yüz elli bin guruş baliğ olabileceği kuyûddan anlaşılıp merkûmlardan ‘asker alınması devletçe kavâ’id-i ‘adîdeyi ve ‘asker alınan nüfûs-ı Müslimine bir i’âne olmasıyla teneffüslerini mûcib ve diğerk hayme-nişîn olan tâ’ifenin dâhi bu hevesle iskân ve dâ’ire-i ‘ırz ve edebe idhâllerini mûcib olacağı gibi Rumeli kıt’âsında bunlar pek çok hâne ve nüfûs olmağla böyle bir kıt’a-i nâzikedede öyle binlerce nüfûs-ı Müslimeye İslâm nazarıyla bakılmayıb dâ’ire-i cem’iyyet-i İslâmiyeden eb’âd olunmaları tecvîz buyrulacağına binâen bu makûle-i sâkin ve dâ’ire-i edebde dâhil bulunanların kur’a-i şer’iyyeye idhâli nezd-i dakâyık-ı ve fer-i cenâb-ı sadâret-penâhîlerinde tasvîb buyrulacağı halde icâbı icrâ kılınmak üzere keyfiyyetin sûy-ı kemînelerine ve vilâyet-i sâ’ireye emr ve iş’âr buyrulması bâbında ve her hâlde emr olunan hazret-i veliyyü’l-emrindir. 20 Şevvâl 90 / 28 Teşrînisâni 89

Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı

لايحه عبوديه ساجده نظام مدر  
عصر دن بى كره اهره وزنى طرف با اولدن باسه باييج اناسمه نامه اجات چور ايديه مينا ججه بئر اهره نه محقر  
برلمان بطائفه زانفلك تبيعه اوصلاص اهوالى ملك و نه عاده فو اردن عد اولورسه ۳ تحصيل بونفيت ايجون  
سرد فدا بئر دن جا ر اولورسون ؟ اهوال حاضره سى نفرت كجى ، رحمت كجى ايكى حسن مخالفه سى جوج حبيب ايرن بوز كره  
طائفه له تاريخچوسى ، قبطى ، اويص الله انامده نامى ، حنكاه ، در ، حنكاه اولور هزه اولور بوز اولور بوز  
سكفزان عوامه خنده نايجا سنده حكيمه كين بيايه حقيقت لازمه انسانده اولونده بو همنوعم برلمان طائفه حنكاه  
فكر خصوصى عهد اتمك دن كرى طوره مام . حنكاه بر لفظ خود كره كلفظ اولوندى زمان بقوم بر لوله هفت  
معدونانى ياره باردى اولورده نفعه قيدي اولور ايدر . حاله كره بزم حنكاه ديگر طائفه حنكاه حمت  
سالمنده برلمان ماجورى نانا لرى سلاله سنده و بر ماجورى يانلا مقاراره سى « حنكاهان » شهرى اولونده  
برنام نسنده ياد اولوندينده تاريخچو معلوم اولان ايجون ايدر كان ، ك ملسه ملسه سى باعث نفرت اولورده  
بو طائفه سى اولور حنكاه اولور سبه تاريخ عاده بقره اولوب الى بوم القيام طمن لمن ايدر بى نام كهرى  
صح بربب معقوله مند اولور بى حنكاه بولونكى كونده محاسن خالى و مفسدك مالى اولان بولفظ سى  
اورده دن قالد عود بر چودى داما اضطراب ايرن بر چو بئر كك التباى حكومه در . خصصا اسلام اولونده  
بازر بونام الله بولوندى قور سنده مينا حنكاه سنده حقايت اسلاميه و انانيف نظريه تجويز اولونده  
رها : باجه ملافه حقيقت . مثلا ايكى بيك ناول ايكى شخصى ليرك ارتقا باندنكى نضاحت و  
دون بت برست و شرك اولان كيرينه بولون اطهار هدايتى شريف حميد جم بول اولوب سابعه اهوالى  
قاله التمامه مفضاى اهكام سعيه دن بولوندى آجه فكر ليرك بوندر ايجون سوز سوز كره بولور مدار اولور  
بنا عيب بو طائفه انسانده اسلاميت نظرده نقد سزاوار نفرت ايه عيله او قدره ، شايانه رحمت صابيه  
اهوال حاضره سبه سزاوار نفرت در . هو كره عيب كوجم كره كره اكلارينده يكاضى غضب و نفرت وقار بولور  
سربا عيسى ارتقا ب ساعده . بر سكت ايجنه بوييه ايكى نفع سرفضا اولان بر طائفه بولور بولور  
صبات و حيايتى اولوندى كره كوج معلوم ايكه زانا محقر اولور بر طائفه دن نفرت ايتامك ممكنه ؟



دعا جہالت سفاتی ، سفات جنابتی تولیدیدر است اساسی اتحاد ایندیکر بوقیاس از زمین برکہ ہر منصفانہ  
 و سونہ لازم کبود معارفی ولایاتہ ہانہ سارہ رفوق ایند سلیوید ولایہ چویتی سونہ اولدقن عملہ بیلم  
 ولایہ چیمہ دمنہ مقدار نفوس لاق اولدو زبسہ بکدن اسک اولیان " قبضی سلم " اجمیہ اولدو زبسہ نفرینہ بازدی  
 اولدوسی بریدر ؟ ہای او قویوب باز مریخی برلم دیہ دولت ، اسلامت ، انسانیت ، دیکدر بکا  
 عائد عاری بریدر اولون عجا برفکر ، جیس الہیہ بر قبضی بولہ بیلدی ؟ دنیا بوزندہ نفس صرفدن  
 کعبا محروم دیہ و دنیا دن بجز فالان بوقارہ جاہل انسانر ، بوقارہ الہی عمیتہ بون بجز سفاندہ  
 بک ہرقوی اگر تا بیدہ لہ جاخندہ حضرت اولدو فروختی مع ایدوب برلہ دو کدر برین ہر دلدو ماکولاق کیزینہ  
 بزنت فروتہ لہا بیدر تکلم لہو لایوب بیکری کوربور . بطرفہ انبیا کورہ لری قاسدیرہ رق ایدرندن  
 جیقان سرنہ قینبیری ، اولسہ لہا و قدری بک بوز ایدون با لہو ابر حیانت حکمہ در . کورکدن نالی اولینی  
 نعر غلطہ ایند قبیلدن برسی کیزی حسنی کینہ و بوز برندن بحالی عبا و کورہ سرنہ موفو اولدو سدرہ برسی سنانہ  
 سونہ قاری جیچیلدن سواقدرہ قابلینہ حالہ بصد افکار لہو بنا . بوزہ حدہ جاہل و کسبہ عقاب و کورن  
 معاونت و روی رفت کورہ مز . بوسفالت اجمیہ ہر کوری منت ، کور کوری حقارت حقیقہ تحمل اولدو بوزہ  
 دیکدر . جمعی بیری اجمیہ لہر اولو عیب جیلدن برسی نامیہ ایشہ کیم بک دلہ فضانت حیانتہ  
 نقدی ایدرک و بوزیم نبت اولورسہ حد زانہ اجیل و سف اولان قبضی مقولہ سہ مجر و سوسہ سفالت و جہالتہ  
 انیکوی فضانت کیمہ اولدو بول کوریم مز قبیلدن دیر حیانت و صانہ ابر کیم کینان جیمار لہو وار در کور  
 دیکر لہو سرف و صفا شہ اشراک ایزر بومشہار بزم ارعازک جانای سوا ہندہ . سفالت با جاہل  
 موبسی جنابتہ براغا جی کورکنتہ کسک لازمدر . بر سکنہ قبض و قبضی زوق عمیتہ سبب سنا سب اولور  
 عبرتہای وقہانہ اولورہ توفیقہ لہر زنجیر جنابتہ بولنا نون بوزہ طغیان سلف سفالتہ ایقاع جرم جنابت  
 ایند طاقمندر اجمیہ قاری کورترین تہدیر سردفادک احسانہ دکن ، اخفانہ خدمت ایدہ بیلر . بر پارہ  
 اولک استیان بر فیکر قاری طیارہ بکولوبجاہل . بو حقیقت طبیعی قیاسی اصلاح اهلای خوب و جرسی  
 چوقدن سوسہ اولان قبیلدی جہال سفالت اجمیہ بر افعدہ بوزندہ بولیم مؤلفہ زمان و صفت اولدو مکر کردہ .  
 زیر زمان وزیمہ نوع بجی بیری بر فہا و سعادت ایم سیر و نامیہ ایشہ کیمہ در نفعیا بار سہ حیدر الخصال  
 و سہریار عمیم النوال اقدر حضرت لہ امان مقدسہ طاعتی زیر دست حضرت لہ لری بر امن امان اولان عثمان بیدر  
 بلا استنا نالی نعت فراوان اولدینہ منحہ و منطف ایشہ ممکنہ درکہ عثمان بیدر اجمیہ ہمدہ برفوہ اسلام بیلہ  
 شوہال بر بیان استمالہ بولند قوی عرصہ عیبیا بولسوزندہ بوزدنک جہالہ ایقہ احتمال دیر لسون



برباد شاه افرسی که عقده جبروت و برن انباشتار چنده عشره محتاج اولان برنجه اصلاحتا و زینتک جلوه نمای  
 ساه موقوفه ایلمنه اون اوج ، اومه دست سرفرده موفد اولدر . چسره برستاکر ملک و درتک آن بان عدلی  
 صیت و سانی ایچون بلا فائده زمان حادرات سونان عمومی نکران اولمده جبب نفع صفت و دفع منبع صرفت  
 نقطه مشرتجه بالذات الامانه حکماء چاره لر بلور . کچونجه طمانی اولمور برنی سلاحت عمومی نامه فدای ایدر .  
 بریناه عالم که الطافی رعنا به جلیله سی بنون عالمه شامدر . عسکر کینه خلافتی و دو جلیل عدلی سلاحت  
 و فائده ایلمه اختصای فریده ایتمده اولدر . بر باد شاه عادل نصیم نعت اطرافه البیر بریناه صانک و سیم  
 بوز بکچوم محتاجه ایتمه دیر ایتمه بوز بوز قفقزک قطعی موجودینه قابل اولدر یعنی هر حال مستفی دلکدر .  
 دستکوز برستان ، شفقت ، دادسی رضواهان ، و الطعنه صفت اخیصه نبی نیکان حکمی دیر و دولت  
 قدر نلو شوکلو عثمانیلا "غازی سونن عبدالمجید نانی" - روحی و روح العالمیه شاه - افروز حضرتیک  
 آمال عالی و مقاصد بیزه توفیق حرکت اصقای اتمه و هر بر عاومر حکومت سیمه فریفته ذمت اولمده عسکدر  
 جناب پاکر هدیه ابراهیم بریلان اصلاحت جلیله نیک اتم شتمای اولمده و زینتک اصلاح احواله دار معروضان  
 کماله کماله حاکمیه دها بر قاع سز علاوه ایدر . قطعه دولت بیدمت عثمانیک زینتک سز جناب سز کتبخان  
 انقزی زمان مسلمان اولدر ایتمه حاله انقزی جریده لرک "قطعی سلم" قید صفت و دها سز سز آیدر .  
 سلام ارمده بویه نفقه نکسلی هر زمان انقاع مکتوبی موجب اولدینی و ایش نفعه دیماندر . دیرینی اسلام  
 قیل ایدر بر کیمیه قطعی دولت ، بوردی اولسون ، فرستان اولسون . شمس لرک ایدر لرک و اهل عاداتا  
 محاربت و اخوت ابراهیم انقزی و فضائل اسلام نیک تعلیمی و ساه و کیمیه قدر نیک لرک ایدر لرک و اهل عاداتا  
 نکس لرک اسعالی فریده هاینه نیک و اویسمی زید دن تخلیص کی بر بویک حکم برنی ایمن قطعه اطلار  
 سلاحت او قدر اهدیت و بر لیکدن میدر هر دن ایب بو محاربت سرفده نه محروم قالدق ساه و عاده قید کینیز مجبور  
 بیه الاسلام بو موجودیه تمادی نفق قیدی مودی اولمده نیک زباده اسلام ایچون یار و عیار نظر باعت  
 اسف عظیم در . بوکون محالک محروم شها : نه هر فریده اهل عمومی باز بیزدن یکده فرقی اولمده قطعه کینیز  
 رضی قطعی اولمور ایچون اولسون بولر خصلت و بیزدن بر محسنت کور سیدی بیه بودر بر سر و مضر نریه حکم سله اولدر  
 هر دن ایب کیمیه بر زمان ایچون ناسفک باسندن سیم کیمیه جرمه هصانک بر استقبالی ، هسینک بر عس  
 دوتونک مواظبه کنده صابرم اصلاحتی ز وضع فکر ایتمک بوز فرقی بویه نفق ضرورت ایتمه و هر فرقت اولدر  
 کندی حاله نیک لرک ایدر لرک استقباله کی مضرری قابل قدر اولمده . سلاحت جرمه قاید اولدر مجور

انسانیت نامہ حضرت بردہ کی لہ نہ باسمہ کوسرماکی معناداریدہ اہانبیک بکون انظار دقتی جالب اولیدہ ممالک  
 مودت شہانہ بولسان قطبیری حمایہ بقا لشمہ بوزندن صلت وبت ایچون حصہ حضرت اولجہ سچولر تصور اولدمازی؟  
 کچون بسو قیل ازی اولردہ بوزر جواہانہ صلت وبت برطلم سرستہ کجاہہ دیرکجه وسیعہ مدخل اولدماز لری؟  
 نیک ویدی فرقن عجز اولان بوجہین قوام بل قولوی انفعال واضلال اولجہ ایچون خاطر وخیال کچولر تروقت  
 ال زیباہ بوزدن مائل اولدمازی؟ لھالہ مستدر و شادون اولان بکر دھک سیفالتہ استقبال عائد -  
 مضائق مہبت اندیشہ وکھیدہ؟ مدینا ایچیدہ بدویت ، نعمت معرفت ایچیدہ جلال ، تروت ایچیدہ ضرورت  
 برکبسی حیانتہ کفن بدوسہ ایدرک زارہ دفن ایزل قیندیز . قطبدرک نہ ہیبتی وار؟ دینلر نصیحتہ فکر ایچ -  
 دوستیخیدہ کہ بعضک بکچولر سولجہ سید قوی بر جودی ایچم مضطرب ایدرک سنا قدرہ دوزر لہ سفند دندہ بوزر  
 شو خاطر بیدہ کچولر کہ اولد جوادن ارہ مرہ باعث سز سزہ اسلام اولد دوزرہ اھذا این بقیاع غیر صلت اسلام ایچ  
 شرف و احمد ، علی ، حبیبہ سید بنام اولدینی سب سب جوادن ایدر . بری طرفہ انا سندہ بابا سندہ اسلام  
 نابو طوغسہ اسلام ایچیدہ بوسہ قوجہ بر طائفہ بوزر جہندن بری تقصہ دیدہ سبہ ایلدیکی کوبور . بوزر  
 احمد ، محمد علی کبی ال مقصدی طایف قوی حالہ حالا اسلام سرفی قاجدر کھونجی شرف دن  
 نہ بکدر . بونی بوزر لر بوزر فصل اسلام دچکیز ا؟ چالده عربساندہ یعقوب ، یوسف ، الیاس ایچہ  
 نھان کبی اسلام سید بنام اولان سربانی ، موسی ، عبیدی معتدی رہ امیدہ نظر اسلام طایفہ انصاف  
 خصصا بوزر فضد اولد مرہ سہ دیدہ بوزر اولان عربجی بزون لھان زیباہ کوزل بیلر . مفضلہ صعبہ تبعاع ایزلہ  
 اوزرہ فکرہ سوغ این بوی تقوائی ترک ابد بیان حقیقت نقطہ کلام . احکام شریعہ استناد ایدر  
 بوجہ .؟ دہ بر سوال وارد اولد البتہ بوقد جویجی ویرہ جکر بوجواب صوابہ فاشی خدات اسلام بیدلا  
 بوزر بری سز ایچون استعمال اید قوی باسما علی براز ایچم کندن ، اگر بکندن ، طوفیقین لھدی شرفاً و سیدراً  
 صنع مؤخذہ بہ دھان ایدر بکن بری یاندہ مستور بہ شود طوسون بکچورہ امینہ ، علیہ خاطر نیک کوزدن  
 طوقی فریادہ اولان موزر بید ایچیدہ ، حیثیجہ و بر طریقی دیبانہ ہر ہا شرو بازارہ کز مبدنہ فصل ساعدہ ایدر  
 بر اسلام عالمی سیانہ خود بخود بر ناموزرہ خولی امکان ہا ایچیدہ دہ . حتی فرجہ باب خون اولان بر شمسک کیفیت  
 قتلدن ظریف صاحبانہ ممدورہ وقانوناً مفضلو طوبتاور . بر خاطر لھان سندہ بویچہ ! دیگر خاطر لھان سندہ  
 مسلم فریضم ایچون برمانہ ، بر بخود کوی بویچہ سلمہ السلام کویچہ حقیقتہ بابنہ باری الافراقہ بویچہ  
 اتباعا بر انترہ ، اجوی اولم !! بوزر جاری دیکر . بدکانہ دیرم ! ہا بیکر اولد ایچم خاطر نیک  
 ز جودی بولسان حبیبہ اعالم بر بیکرہ برادیناسی لھان سندہ بولیدر لر دیدہ ودیت افورج فای جانہ سبیا

اوهر اکیسه عکراک کبک بولک بیزینجی خاز ، ان عالی بزو طیفه فی ایضا ایله صلیبی بولور . بوجیه اغالر  
 بره و او فاطمه لرم و والده اولوق بره احمد ، ناعده نوردیه لری وارد . اکیسی بر محکمینه ،  
 بینه احمدی ناز و نعلد روتسیاب اولورده حکیمه علم و ادب تحصیلنه اجبابه ایتر دیکرینه احمدی اوکت  
 قیسه مکیمه قیونیه دیوغلارلا . بونور برونک ، برونک ایکی اسلام عکراکدن عالم شوره کلمه  
 ایکی احمد و کلمه ؟ بونور اکیسه معصوم ایله برده فضیلت فطرن ، دیکرینه دناس مختلف قیسه  
 اینله « حاضی مولود الا ... الخ » حکم شریفه میانی دوزمی ؟ احکامه صولور ایکنده کی بولستاشها و قانونا  
 جاز و قایل تا اولی اولدینجه حالده ادریان مختلف غننده و دناسک بر ارضین او را حینه سیوزلر ، مایور کوندر ب  
 کویا شردیه خرفی نامیده ، فکارانه و ناسینر و ارازه تاشدی مشور اولان اجنبد نوزده مجیمان کی کویا شرف  
 و نضیر دیوار اولور . سیاهیه اجنبدیه کوزلری قیامه حکمه اولدینجه بونور ارضاع و اهل غریبه اندک دوشی جمله  
 مشور اتدن اولوق کیم بیلر سیاهت دوزلرک اندر ، یاز یوزلر بویاز قتری اندر ، هیزه اولور اولورک  
 اسلام نامه اسناد اوله نیشده می ایتر ؟ خرفینه حجت اسلامیه بونی قطعیار داید .  
 سولینه و لایحی ایلنده کی قیطیدی غمز اولوق عهدیه اولدینجه شوخا طره بیه براه کی مشور انم کوره بایورم  
 اولدینجه ایلنده هر صولور اولور اولورن بره ، اسدی اسلام ایلدینجه مغز اولدینجه فرستایه مقدار نفی  
 اولور او تو رسیه راه لرک در هابیک بونور نفر اولورن دیم . حالیکه سینی مذاهب نامی ایلده زهر ایلک  
 بر فکرک القاسید بر سیوزلر باز فکارانه خرف ایسه بیضی ، دیهاصل ، بولاسلین ذانا بجز  
 بولسان قیطیددن بکده بکجه بر سی اغفال و اضلال ایله بکجه بولور قیستی او رو بایه بونور قیستنه قاری  
 صفوا اهل و غمناک اسلام بر بکجه احمد ، محمد مصطفی علی ، فاطمه اسدی قید و معاذاته  
 خستیان نامیرنه بدیل ایله نرو بیان ایله حکمی وارد خاطر اولورمازمی ؟ اوزسان اسلامیت جداره ایلد  
 ایله اولورمازمی ؟ بابو طائفه بکره بوضو بده قول شرارت ایسه ایدرم سلا سیت ایچون نقره جنم و نقر  
 فکره سوق ایله بیلر . بو خاطر بر وهم خیالین عبارت ده و کدر . خستیان خا ایلر نه حقیقت  
 ورری اداره لری کی بکجه ایسه حدت اجنه حالیکه قیطیان بالبع خستیان اصل و عاداته تابع  
 اولور قری و خستیان کجوزده ناسره و حکماک قومی وان زیاده بونور قیطیدن برسی خستیان اولورن خستیان  
 کی سرت بایلی و انددن عکراک نامی بونی ارک قیطیدر اندر می و ازا که بایجه بر بید ایلی  
 و ذانا اسلام دیکر قیطید اسلام ایله برام خستیان ایله رو خف با عقده سرت بونور عجب ایسه  
 و کزن اضلال عکراک نامه فکرجه ایله بید خستیان قیطیدر تا هکی کیفیت و اسرعی ایکن



انسان معاینه، اثره، نامی قبول اینها کی بعضه احوالند استدلال اوها طرأه اوله بیجاالی بردلالت  
 قوه مرسته قویه مازمی؟ بیجوها طره لرن کافوسی واهی، واهمین عاری عذابه لم. انسان اولرینه  
 سبه ایلیان قیطید مارا عله اسلامدر. خیر دنیا اولافره، فالمدینه هم بریندن ارضی اولورمی؟  
 بویله قدر ویران نطقده به اکلرین اوزره بزم "قطب صم" دیکیز لطفه نك اصداغ اهلوی مجده اهل  
 ایزرس ماکو ط اولان مفرات ماده و مضمونه نظر اهیتمه التماس و استقبال دسونماس اولور. هابوکه  
 بر زمان اچون تجویز ایلمکه بونسه اولان بصفه و اهلال هر زمان اچون جبار اولرمانه نیا عیبه  
 و ایضا خدن حکم بیز دها هر جوده مذکور زمان وقوع و ظهورین اشم قیطید اصداغ اهل الة عطفه غان  
 عناه بیولسی سربا، قانونا سیاست، انسانیه اهم امور دن عد اولر نجه قدر سابقه اهیتمه ا  
 بواهیتمه یلزد بو اهیتمه قاری عهده نیکر وارزد ایزر بر اهلان ایس ساینه قدر بویله جنب  
 باد اهیتمه بکون حکومت سینه برینسانی هر سده کویوک بر اجاتی قیلدن اهیتمه بارینی برینسانی  
 اساع ایدر عله برینسانی المقتصد و کوشنده بر اصداغ که استقبالیست ملک و ملی  
 مصلی اولور، اجات که اهیتمه عذابه و عدالتی اهر و حسان کویور، بر تیب که وضع قوه  
 و صیب صفت اچون آرزو ایلر، بر اصل که خیر اهلان و برینجه عهده اولور، بر لایحه که بکون  
 صالح اهلان بولسان بیونسیک نفوسک اسلام قوه ناهیه بلا استقامت الحاقه اولور  
 لزومه و دیده دولت نامه عهده اولور، بویسه بیز سیک نفوسه باعث قوه و خجانی اولر نجه بار  
 انسانیه و اسلامیه اچون یک بون محلی جامع اولور. اهله ایلر صبح بویله موه و الر اچون سندن  
 عدولر جنبی جرح سن تمدنیه و چون عالم انسانیه قاری ال کانی بر اصداغان جیهه سندن اولر نجه  
 لیکیم بولور بولونک تاخیری البته تجویز اولر مانه بولر آنده حرفی لازم کلان مبالغ قیه جیهه  
 بار اولر لسی اچون معاونت اسلامیه بر لجهت بولیده و ایدر تا سیکاری اقصا ایدر مده مسجد  
 و مکتب تدارکی مکنده، بنا بویر آن اول نذیر لازم نیک اتحادیه وسیله اولر ایدر ایلر ایلر عیبه نیک  
 عهده نطقه جرات ایلر مع فی ایلر بویله نیک حاله بر ایدر کی تحقیق و موه و ایدر عیبه نیک نطقه اهلان  
 بویله دهان یازده عهده و ایضا خنده احتیاط ایدر هکیم و بر موه و ایدر خاترات خیر اهلان نیک و هی بیجا  
 اخبار و انسان با نفع بر جبارت ایلر سوره حیران حیثیات عبودیتکارانه ایلر عهده و ناهیه ایلر

بروز صفت اعدای  
 سید عثمان و فارسی  
 معاصر



رضایه التوفیه . ۱۵ کانون ثانی ۱۲۰۶



## Lâyhâ-i 'ubûdiyyet-i sâniha-i bende-gânemdir.

'Asırlardan beri küre-i 'arz üzerinde doğub ölmekten başka başlıca bir insânlık nâmına isbât-ı vücûd edemeyen ve cem'iyet-i beşeriyye arasında muhakkar bulunan bir tâ'ife-i zâ'ifenin tedkîk ve ıslâh-ı ahvâli mülk ve millete 'âid fevâ'idden 'addolunursa istihsâl-i muvaffakıyyet için serd-i fikr etmek neden câiz olamasın? Ahvâl-i hâzırası nefret gibi, merhamet gibi iki hiss-i mütehâlifi cem' ve celb eden bu perâkende tâ'ifenin tarihçe ismi 'Kıbtî' ise de elsine-i enâmda nâmı 'Çingâne' dir. Çingâne olsun her ne olursa olsun bir tâkım sebük-magzân 'avâmın hazze-i sayîhasından çekinmeyerek beyân-ı hakikat lâzıme-i insâniyyet olmağla bu hem-nev'imiz bulunan tâ'ife hakkındaki fikr-i mahsûsumu 'arz etmekten geri duramam. Çingâne bir lafz-ı menhûsdur ki telaffuz olunduğu zamân bir kavm-i yerlinin şenâ'at-i mel'ûnânesini ya da bâdi olarak, nefret-i kalbiyyeyi idâme eder. Hâlbuki bizim Çingâne dediğimiz tâ'ife Çin'in cihet-i şimâlisinde bulunan Mançuri Tatarları sülâlesinden ve bu Mançurya'nın makarr-ı idâresi 'Çingiyân / Çingeyân' şehri olmağla bu nâma nisbetle yâd olunduğundan tarihçe mâ'lûm olan 'Çin' ile 'Gan'ın mel'anet-i mel'ûnânesi bâis-i nefret olarak bu tâ'ifeye şümûlü olamayacağı olsa bile tarihçe 'âid bir fırka olub el-yevmü'l-kıyâm t'ân ve l'ân ile bed-nâm kalmaları hiçbir sebep-i mâ'kûle müstenid olamadığı cihetle bugünkü günde mahâsinden halî ve mefâsedle mâlî olan bu lafz-ı menhûsu ortadan kaldırmak bir vücûdu dâ'ima muzdarib eden bir cerihânın kesbü'l-benâmı hükmündedir. Husûsen İslâm olmakla berâber bu nâm altında bulunmaktan kurtulamayan Çingeyânîlere hakâret İslâmiyyet ve insâniyyet nazarınca tecvîz olunmamak daha ziyâde muvâfık-ı hakîkâtdir. Meselâ iki bin sene evvel iki şahıs-ı lemک irtikâb ettiği fezâhât değil dün putperest ve müşrik olan bir kimsenin bugün ezhâr-ı hidâyeti şeri'at-ı Ahmediye'ce kabûl olunub sevâbık-ı ahvâli kâle alınmamak muktezâ-yi ahkâm-ı şer'iyyeden bulunduğunu az çok fikirlenmek bunlar için söz söylemeye pek büyük medâr olur. Binâen-'aleyh bu tâ'ife insâniyyet ve İslâmiyyet nazarında ne kadar sezâ-vâr-ı nefret ise belki o kadar da şâyân-ı merhâmet sayılabilir. Ahvâl-i hâzırasıyla sezâ-vâr-ı nefretidir. Çünkü 'umûmiyyetle değilse de ekseriyetle erkeklerinin yegâne san'atı gasb ve sirkat ve kadınlarının sermâye-i mâ'îşeti irtikâb şenâ'atidir. Bir memleket içinde böyle iki menba'-ı şerr ü fesâd olan bir tâ'ife yekdiğerinin şerîk-i habâset ve cinâyeti olduğu herkesçe mâ'lûm iken zâten muhakkar olan bir tâ'ifeden nefret etmemek mümkün müdür? Fakat bu nefret bir fâ'ide-yi müfîd olamadıktan başka pek büyük bir mazarratı mucîb oluyor ki asıl buna te'essüf edilir. 'Âcizleri üç sene müddet polis komiserliğinde bulunduğumdan vukû'ât-ı delâletiyile bunların ahvâl-i 'umûmiyyesine oldukça vukûf hâsıl etmiş ve 'arîz ve 'amîk tedkîkâtda bulunmuş olduğumdan ma'rûzât-ı kem-terânemin maddeten isbâtı her zamân için mümkündür. Tadâd ve tafsîlinden sarf-ı nazarla bunlar icrâ etdikleri habâset ve cinâyetlerinin pek çoğunu ketm ve ahfâya muvaffak olabilirler. Çünkü yekdiğerlerinin ketm-i fesâdına sâ'idir. Mütecâsir oldukları vukû'âta dest-res olabilmek için ba'zı kere pek büyük bir mahârete ve hele Kıbtîce bilmeğe 'arz-ı ihtiyâç eder. Meselâ emvâl-i mesrûka aralarında öyle bir sür'at ve mahâret-i pendâne ile aşırılır ve tahkîkine 'azîmet eden me'mûr o derecelerde şaşırır ki maznûn-ileyh hakkında hüsn-i zandan başka bir şey bulamaz. Hâlbuki bir fakîr köylünün iki eli hükmünde bulunan hayvânâtı dahâ o sâ'atte satılmış ve köylü biçâresinin iki eli böğründe kalarak me'yûsen 'avdet etmiş bulunur. O köylü vergi ile de mükellefdir! Bu düşkün tâ'ifenin efrâdı habâsetde eşhâs-ı sâ'ireye makîs olamadığı gibi, sâ'illeri de selle-i sâ'ireye aslâ benzemez. Bu

miskînler görünmeyinceye kadar sârik ve görüldükten sonra bir sâ'il-i bi-'âr olur. Çiftliklerde bulunan Çingeyânîlerin eşhâs-ı rezîleye mu'âveneti dahâ ziyâde câlib-i dikkattir. Göçebe halinde bulunanların geçtikleri ve uğradıkları yerlerde 'alenen irtikâb ve icrâ ettikleri fezâhat ve hasârat hakîkaten tahammül-fersâdır. Bunlar dest-i hasârını her tarafa isâl ettikleri hâlde garîptir ki vücûdlarına çekirge kadar ehemmiyet verilmemiştir. Sâkinân hayme-i sefâhat olan duhterân-ı Kıbtîyân kendilerine mahsûs bir nev'-i 'işve-i behferîyâne ile sâde-dilân memleketi 'ayş ü nûşa alıştırmak ve şehvet-perestânın elinde, avucunda bulunanı sefâhatle yiyip bitirmek mesleğinde fevk-âl-âde bir mahâret-i mel'anetkâraneye malikdirler. Buldukları mahallerde bunce senelerden beri şenâ'atın neşv ettiği ta'affün, sefâletin saçtığı pislikle birleşerek 'azîm birer mezbele kalesi şeklini almış iken oralarda burun sokmaktan lezzet alan hunefâ mizâc gençlerin uğradıkları bunca beliyât-ı 'azîme ve ara sıra vukû'u-yâfte olan cerh ve katl gibi vukû'ât-ı cinâiyye alan 'enzâr-ı intibâhı açamadığından başka 'âdet-i belde beliyyesi sırasında hükm sürüyor. Solda sıfır kadar hükümsüz 'addolunan bu mahlûkun zikûr ve zenâmı hazîne-i celîleye o kadar ziyân terettüb ettirmiş ve o kadar hanedânın hân mânını söndürmüştür ki devr-i endîşâne bir muhâsibin teşkîl edeceği yekûn mutlakâ milyonlardan aşağı değildir. Ahvâlini pek ihtiyât-kârâne 'arz ettiğimiz bu tâ'ife işte şu sûretle nefrete lââyık olmakla berâber sûret-i atîye ile de merhâmete şâyân görülüyor. Şâyân-ı merhâmettir! Çünkü her nerede olursa olsun dâ'imâ cehâlet sefâleti, sefâlet cinâyeti tevellüd eder. İşte esâs ittihâz ettiğimiz bu kıyâs üzerine bir kere de mun'asîfâne düşünmek lâzım gelir. Ma'ârifi vilâyât-ı şahâne-i sâ'ireye tefevvuk eden Selânik vilâyet-i celîlesini numûne olarak 'arz edelim. Vilâyet-i celîle dâhilinde mikdâr-ı nüfûsu lâ-akall otuz beş binden eksik olmayan "Kıbtî-i Müslim" içinde otuz beş neferin yazıp okuması var mıdır? Haydi okuyub yazmalarını bırakalım. Dîn ve Devlet, İslâmiyyet, insâniyyet ne demektir, buna 'âid 'âdi bir derecede olsun 'acabâ bir fikr bir hisse alabilmiş bir Kıbtî bulunabilir mi? Dünyâ yüzünde ni'met-i ma'arifetten külliyyen mahrum ve dîn ve dünyâdan bî-haber kalan bu kara câhil insânlar, bu mahlûk-ileyhi 'umûmiyyetle zebûn-ı pençe-i sefâlettir. Pek çokları ekseriyâ belediyeler cânibinden muzırr-ı sıhhat olarak fer ve hatta men' edilüb yerlere döktürülen her türlü makûlâtı kendilerine bir ni'met-i fevk-âl-âde bilerek tehâlükle toplayıp yedikleri görülüyor. Bir tarafa atılan gübreleri karıştırarak içlerinden çıkan sebze kırıntılarını, ölmüş tavukları yemek bunlar için bâd-i hevâ bir ziyâfet hükmündedir. Köpeklerin nâ'il olduğu ni'mete gıpta eden Kıbtîlerin bir kısmı kendi cismini köhne ve yüz yerinden yamâlî 'abâ ve kebe ile setre muvaffak olabilirse de bir kısmı şitânın şiddetine karşı çır-çıplak sokaklarda kaldığı hâlde ba'zı efkâr-ı bâtıleye binâen bunlara sadaka câiz değilmiş 'itikâdıyla kimseden mu'âvenet ve rû-yi rikkat göremez. Bu sefâlet içinde çektikleri mihnet, gördükleri hakâret hakîkaten tahammül olunacak derecelerde değildir. Cem'iyyet-i beşeriyye içinde her türlü ma'îşet ve sa'âdet-i beşeriyyesini temîn etmiş iken bin türlü fezâhat ve hıyânete tasaddi edenlerin vücûduyla nisbet olunursa hadd-i zâtında echel ve esfell olan Kıbtî makûlesinin mücerred sevk-i sefâlet ve cehâletle irtikâb ettikleri fezâhat pek de o kadar büyük görülemez. Kıbtîlerden demircilik ve hamâllık etmekle geçinen bahtiyârlar da vardır ki diğerlerinin sirkat ve fezâhatine iştirâk etmez. Bu müstesnâ da bizim iddiâmızın canlı şevâhdindir. Sefâlet bir ağaçtır ki meyvesi cinâyettir. Bu ağacı kökünden kesmek lâzımdır. Bir memleketin zabt ü rabtı servet-i 'umûmiyyesiyle mütenâsib olur. 'İbret-nümâ-yı vukû'ât olan tevkîf-hânelerde zincîrbaz-ı cinâyet bulunanların yüzde doksanı sâ'ik-i sefâletle ikâ-yı cürm-i cinâyet eden tâkımındandır. Açlığa karşı gösterilen tehdîd şerr ü fesâdın imhâsına değil ahfâsına hizmet edebilir. Bir parça ekmek isteyen bir fakîrin karnı dayâk yemekle

doymaz. Bu hakikat-ı tabî'iyeye karşı ıslâh-ı ahvâlî vücûb derecesini çoktan aşmış olan Kıbtîleri bu hâl-i sefâlet içinde bırakmak bundan böyle muvâfık-ı zamân ve maslahat olamasa gerektir. Zirâ zamân ve zemîn nev'-i beni beşeri bir refâh ve sa'âdet ile tebşîr ve te'mîn etmektedir. Husûsen padişâh-ı Hamidü'l-Hassâl ve Şehriyâri Amimü'l-nevâl efendimiz hazretlerinin âmal-i mukaddese-i mülûkânesi zîr-i dest-i hanrevânelerinde pür-emin ve âmân olan 'Osmânlıların bilâ istisnâ nâ'il-i ni'met-i ferâvân olmalarına münhasır ve mün'atıf iken mümkün müdür ki 'Osmânlılar içinde hem de bir fırka-i İslâmiyyenin şu hâl-i perişân iştimâlde buldukları 'arz-ı 'atebe-i 'ulyâ buyrulsun da bunların bu hâlde bırakılmasına ihtimâl verilsin. Bir padişah-ı akdes ki 'akıllara hayret veren iğtişâşât arasına 'asırlara muhtâc olan bunca ıslâhât ve terâkkiyâtın cilve-nümâ-yı sâha-i muvaffakiyyet olmasına on üç, on dört sene zarfında muvaffak olmuştur. Bir Hüsrev-i bi-hemtâ ki mülk-i devletinin en bân-ı i'tilâ-yı hayat ve şânı için bilâ ifâte-i zamân hadisât ve şuûnât-ı 'umûmiyyeye nikrân olmakla celb-i nef'-i millet ve def'-i ve men'-i mazarrat nokta-i mühimmesince bizzât ilhâmâne ve hekimâne çareler bulur. Gecenin tatlı uykularını selâmet-i 'umûmiyye nâmına fedâ eder. Bir penâh-ı 'âlem ki eltâf ve 'inâyet-i celîlesi bütün âleme şâmilidir. 'Asr-ı güzîn-i hilâfeti ve devr-i celîl-i 'adâleti İslâmiyyet ve insâniyyet ile ihtisâs-ı müzeyyen etmiş olan bir pâdişâh-ı 'âdil-i na'im-i ni'met-i itlâkına elyak bulunan memâlik ve sa'y-i şâhânesinde yüz binlerce muhtâcîn-ı ecnebiye dilsîr iken böyle bir fırka-i müftekırının kat'iyen mevcûdiyyetine kâ'il olamayacağı her hâlde müstagni-i delâ'ildir. Dest-kübr-i zîr-i destân, müşfik-i ümmet, dâders-i dâd-ı hâhân, veliyy-ni'met-i bî-minnet, halîfe-i nebî-i zişân hâmî-i dîn ve devlet kudretlü şevketlü 'atâbetlü "Gazi Sultân Abdülhamîd-i Sâni" -ruhu ve ruhü'l-âlemîn-i ferâh- efendimiz hazretlerinin âmâl-i 'âliye ve makâsid-i seniyyelerine tevfi-k-i hareket asdikâ-yı ümmete ve her bir me'mûr-ı umûr-u hükümet-i seniyyeye ferîke-i zimmet olmağla 'asr-ı sa'âdet-hasr Cenâb-ı Padişâhîde icrâ buyrulan ıslâhât-ı celîlenin etemm-i mütemmimâtı olmak üzere Kıbtîlerin ıslâh-ı ahvâlîne dâir ma'rûzât-ı bendegâneme hasb-el-hamiyye daha birkaç söz 'ilâve ediyorum. Kıbtîler devlet-i ebed-i müddet-i 'Osmâniyyenin zîr-i cenâh-ı şevketine cân attıkları zamân Müslümân olmuşlar iken hâlâ nüfûs cerîdelerinde "Kıbtî-i Müslim" kaydıyla mukayyid ve mu'âmele-i sâ'iresi ayrıdır! İslâm arasında böyle tefrika teşkîli her zamân ikâ'-yı müşkilâtı mûcib olduğu vâreste-i 'arz ve beyândır. Dîn-i mübîn-i İslâmı kabûl eden bir kimseye Kıbtî olsun, Yahûdi olsun, Hıristiyân olsun, şea'ir-i şer'at-ı İslâmiye şân-ı celîli muktezâsınca muhâdenet ve uhuvvet ibrâz olunması ve fezâ'il-i İslâmiyyenin ta'lîmi ve lisân ve âyin-i kadîmenin terk ettirilmesi vel-hâsıl âdeten Türkleştirilmesi emsâlini tarîk-i hidâyete teşvîk ve o kimseyi terdîdden tahlîs gibi birer büyük hikmete mebni iken Kıbtîlerin ezhâr-ı İslâmiyyetine o kadar ehemmiyyet verilmediğinden midir her neden ise bu muhâdenet şerefinden mahrûm kalarak lisân ve âdat-ı kadîme kendilerinde mevcûddur. Beyn-el-İslâm bu mevcûdiyyet temâdi-i nefret-i kalbiyyeyi müeddi olmağla yine en ziyâde İslâm için yâr ve ağıyâr nazarında bâ'is-i esef-i 'azîmdir. Bugün memâlik-i mahrûse-i şâhânenin her tarafında ahvâl-i 'umûmiyyesi yazdığımızdan pek de farklı olmayan Kıbtîler kendilerinin dahî Kıbtî olduklarını unutmuş bulunacaklardı. Bunlardan bir muhsenât görülmeseydi bile bu derece şerr ü mazarratları da çekilmemiş olurdu. Her ne ise geçmiş bir zamân için te'essüfden başka elden bir şey gelmeyeceği cihetle her hâlin bir de istikbâlini, her şeyin bir de 'aksini düşünmek muvâfık-ı hikmettir sanırım. İslâhı lüzûmuna hasr-ı fikr ettiğim bu fırkayı böyle fakr u zarûret içinde ve mahza mazarrat olarak kendi hallerine terk edersek istikbâldeki mazarratları kâbil-i tehdîd olamaz. Meselâ hiçbir hak mukâbilinde olmayarak mücerred insâniyyet nâmına bir hizmet perdesi altından baş

göstermeyi mu'tâd eden ecânibin bir gün enzâr-ı dikkatini câlib olub da memâlik-i mahrûse-i şâhânede bulunan Kıbtîleri himâyeye kalkışmak yüzünden mülk ve millet için mahza mazarrat olacak neticeler tasavvur olunamaz mı? Küçük bir teşvîkin eseri olarak bunlar bed-hâhân mülk ve millete bir tâkım ser-rişte-i şikâyet vermekle vesile-i müdâhale olamazlar mı? Nîk ü bedi-i farkdan 'âciz olan bu echel-i akvâm pek kolay iğfâl ve ızlâl olunacağı için hâtır ve hayâle gelmeyecek şerr ü mefsedet en ziyâde bunlardan me'mûl olunamaz mı? Her hâlde müsta'id-i şerr ü şekâvet olan bu gürûhun siyeh-i sefâletle istikbâle 'âid mazarrâtı mûcib endîşe değil midir? Medeniyet içinde bedeviyet, ni'met-i ma'arifet içinde cehâlet, servet içinde zarûret bir kimseyi hayâtında kefen-be-dûş ederek mezâra defn etmek kabîlindedir. Kıbtîlerin ne ehemmiyeti var? diyenler na'mîk-i fikr ile düşünmelidir ki ba'zı kere bir küçük sivilceyi bile kavî bir vücûdu iyice muztarib ederek yatâklara düşürmek isti'dâdında bulunur. Şu hâtırayı da geçmeyelim ki evrâk-ı havâdis ara sıra bâ'is-i meserrât-ı İslâmiyye olmak üzere ihtidâ eden birkaç gayr-i Müslimin İslâm ile müşerref ve Ahmed, Ali, Hüseyin isimleriyle benâm olduğunu sebt-i sicil havâdis eder. Beri tarafta anasından babasından İslâm nâmıyla doğmuş ve İslâm içinde büyümüş koca bir tâ'ife yüzlerce seneden beri telkîn-i dîn-i mübîn edilmediği görülür. Bunlar Ahmed, Mehmed, Ali gibi en mukaddes isimleri taşıdıkları hâlde hâlâ İslâmın şartı kaçıtır, kelime-i münciyye-yi şahadet ne demektir bunu bilmezlerse bunlara nasıl İslâm diyeceğiz?! Bu hâlde Arabistan da Yakub, Yusuf, İlyas, Abdullah Numan gibi İslâm isimleriyle benâm olan Süryânî, Musevi, İsevi milletlerini de isimlerine nazaran İslâm tanımak iktizâ eder. Husûsen bunlar fazla olarak lisân-ı dîn-i mübînimiz olan Arapçayı bizden dahâ ziyâde güzel bilirler. Maksâd-ı aslıden tebâ'üd etmemek üzere fikre sünûh eden bu gibi teferru'âtı terk ile beyân-ı hakikat noktasına gelelim. Ahkâm-ı şer'iyyede istisnâ var mıdır, yok mudur? diye bir su'âl vârid olsa elbette yoktur cevâbını vereceğiz. Bu cevâb-ı savâba karşı muhadderât-ı İslâmiyye meselâ yüzlerini setr için isti'mâl ettikleri yaşmağın birâz inceliğinden, eğriliğinden, doğruluğundan dolayı şer'ân ve şedîden men' ve muâhezeye dûçar edilirken beri yanda mestûriyyet şöyle dursun binlerce Emine, Ayşe, Fatma'nın göğüslerinden doğru fırlamış olan memeleriyle açık, saçık ve bir tarz-ı bî-edebânede çarşu pazarda gezmelerine nasıl müsâ'ade edilir? Bir İslâm 'âilesi meyanına hûd ve be hûd bir nâ-mahremiñ duhûlü imkân haricindedir. Hatta ferce-yâb-ı duhûl olan bir şahsın keyfiyyet-i katlinden dolayı sâhib-i hâne ma'zûr ve kanûnen ma'füvv tutulur. Bir Fatma'nın hânesinde böyle! Diğer Fatma'nın hânesinde Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim için bir mâni'a, bir mahzûr görülemiyor. Sellemeñ-üs-selâm girip çıkmak bâbında bâri alafrânga modasına ittibâ-en bir "entere" usûlü olsa!! Bu da câri değildir. Buna ne diyelim! Hâlbuki o her iki Fatma'nın zevceleri bulunan Hüseyin ağalar bir bölükte bir onbâşı tâkımında bulunuyorlar. Dîn ve devlet uğrunda fedâ-yı câna müheyyâ ve her ikisi de 'askerlik gibi en büyük bir meziyyeti hâiz, en 'âli bir vazîfeyi ifâ ile mübâhi bulunuyor. Bu Hüseyin ağalar peder ve o Fatmalar da vâlide olarak birer 'Ahmed' nâmında nûr-i dideleri vardır, ikisi de bir memleketlidir, birinin Ahmed'i nâz ve ni'amlâ perver-i şebâb olarak mektepte 'ilm ve edeb tahsiline icbâr edilir. Diğerinin Ahmed'i o mekteb-i feyz-i meksebin kapusuna bile uğratılamaz! Bunlar bir devletin, bir vatanın iki İslâm 'askerinden 'âlem-i şühûda gelmiş iki Ahmed değil midir? Bunların ikisi de ma'sûm iken birinde fazîlet-i fitrat, diğerinde denâet-i hilkat farz etmek "mamin mevlüdün illâ" hükm-i şerîfine mübâyin düşmez mi? Ahkâmın sûr-i icrâiyyesindeki bu istisnâ şer'ân ve kânûnen câiz ve kâbil-i te'vîl olamadığı hâlde edyân-ı muhtelif 'indinde ve dünyânın bir ucundan öbür ucuna misyonerler, me'mûrlar gönderip güyâ neşr-i dîn gayreti nâmıyla da fedâ-kârâne ve insâniyyet-perverâne nümâyişleri meşhûd olan ecnebîler nezdinde 'acabâ ne gibi sû-i

telakki ve tefsîre düçâr oluyor. Seyyahîn-i ecnebiyyenin gözlerini kapamak mümkün olmadığı cihetle bu gibi evzâ'-ı ve ahvâl-i garîbe onların dâhi cümle meşhûdâtından olarak kim bilir seyâhat defterlerinde 'neler' yazıyorlardı. Bu yazdıkları 'neler' her ne olursa olsun İslâm nâmına isnâd olunduğuna şüphe mi edilir? Gayret-i milliye ve hamîyyet-i İslâmiyye bunu kat'îyyen reddeder. Selânik vilâyeti dâhilindeki Kıbtîleri numûne olarak 'arz etmiş olduğumdan şu hâtırayı da buradaki meşhûdâtıma göre yazıyorum. Vilâyet-i celîle dâhilinde her ne sûretle olursa olsun bir senede isimlerini İslâm isimleriyle kayda muvaffak olduğumuz Hıristiyânın mikdâr-ı nüfûsu otuz, otuz beş raddelerindedir. Haydi, yüz nefer olsun diyelim. Hâlbuki serbest-i mezâhib nâmı altında zehirlenecek bir fikrin ilkâsıyla bir misyoner birâz fedâ-kârâne gayret ederse bu sefil 'bu cahîl' bu İslâmiyyetten zâten bî-haber bulunan Kıbtîlerden belki binlercesini iğfâl ve ızlâl edebileceği ve bu muvaffakiyyetini Avrupa'ya ve bütün Hıristiyânlığa karşı müftehirâ i'lân ve rağmen-âlâ-İslâm bu binlerce Ahmed, Mehmed, Mustafa, Ayşe, Fatma isimlerini kayd ve ma'âz-Allah Hıristiyân nâmlarına tebdîl ile neşr ve beyân eyleyeceği vârid-i hâtır olamaz mı? O zamân İslâmiyyet cidden dag-dâr-ı esef edilmiş olmaz mı? Ya bu tâ'ife bir kere bu sûretle de kabûl-i şerâret ederse ileride mülk ve millet için ne kadar vahîm ve muzırr fikirlere sevk edilebilir. Bu hâtıra bir vehm ve hayâlden 'ibâret de değildir. Hıristiyân hânelerinde çiftliklerinde ve reji idâreleri gibi ba'zı iş mahallerinde ücretle çalışan Kıbtîyân bi-t-tab'i Hıristiyân usûl ve 'âdatına tâbi' oldukları ve Hıristiyân gençleriyle nâ-meşrû' harekâtın vukû'u ve en ziyâde bu Kıbtîlerin bir kısmı Hıristiyân olub Hıristiyânlar gibi serbest yaşadığı ve onlardan 'asker alınmaması bu bî-idrâk Kıbtîlerce onlara meyl ve inhimâ ki başlıca bir vesîle olması ve zâten İslâm dediğimiz Kıbtîler İslâm ile bayrâm Hıristiyân ile rûz-i hafr yapmakta müşterek bir kavm-i 'acîb bulunması ve kesret-i ihtilât ve 'askere alınmamak fikr-i câhilânesiyle Hıristiyân Kıbtîleriyle te'ehhül keyfiyyeti ve ismi Ali iken esnâ-yi mu'âyenede 'Petro' nâmını kabûl etmek gibi ba'zı ahvâlden istidlâl o hâtır-ı haran olan hayâli bir delâliyyet-i kavîyye sırasına koyamaz mı? Bir de bu hâtıraların kâffesini vâhî ve ehemmiyyetten 'âri addedelim. İnsân olduklarına şüphe edilmeyen Kıbtîler mademki İslâmdır, hasreddünya vel ahire kalmalarına hiçbir sâhib-i vicdân râzı olur mu? Buraya kadar verilen tafsîlâtan anlaşıldığı üzere bizim "Kıbtî-i Müslim" dediğimiz tâ'ifenin ıslâh-ı ahvâli bahsinde ihmâl edilirse melhûz olan mazarrât mâddiye ve ma'neviyye nazar-ı ehemmiyyete alınmamış ve istikbâl düşünülmemiş olur. Hâlbuki bir zamân için tecvîz edilmekte bulunmuş olan bir gaflet ve ihmâl her zamân için câiz olamaz. Binâen-'aleyh 'arz ve izâhından çekindiğimiz dahâ birçok mahzûrun zamân-ı vukû' ve zuhûrundan akdem Kıbtîlerin ıslâh-ı ahvâline 'atf-ı 'inân-ı 'inâyet buyrulması şer'ân, kanûnen, siyâseten, insâniyyeten ehemmiyyet-i umûrdan addolunacak kadar şâyân-ı ehemmiyettir! Bu ehemmiyyete yahûd bu vahimeye karşı arzû ettiğimiz ve 'arz eylediğimiz bir ıslâhât ise sâye-i kadr-i tevâbih-i cenâb-ı pâdişâhide bugün hükûmet-i seniyyenin bir tenbîhâtı sırasında küçük bir icrâatı kabûlden iken yarın bir tehiyyâtı intâc edecek bir mesele rengini almağa isti'dâd görülmesindedir. Bir ıslâhât ki istikbâlce selâmet-i mülk ve milleti mücib olur, bir icrâat ki ucunda 'ind-Allah ve 'ind-el-nâs ecr ve hasenât görülür, bir teşebbüs ki men'-i mazarrat ve celb-i menfa'at için arzû edilir, bir emel ki hayr-hâhâne ve sühûletle husûl-pezîr olur, bir lâyhâ ki bugün memâlik-i şâhânedede bulunan beşyüz bin nüfûsun İslâm fırka-i naciyesine bilâ-istisnâ ilhâk ve idhâli lüzûmuna ve dîn ve devlet nâmına 'arz olunur, bu beşyüz bin nüfûsun bâ'is fevz-i necâtı olmağla berâber insâniyyet ve İslâmiyyet için pek büyük mahâsini câmi' olur. Hele icrâsı hiçbir tarafın müdâhale ve iltizâmı neticesinden 'addolunamayacağı cihetle milel-i mütemeddineye ve bütün 'âlem-i insâniyyete karşı en şanlı bir ıslâhât-ı celîle cümlesinde olacağı tabi'i bulunur. Bu icrâatın te'hîri

elbette tecvîz olunamaz. Bu icrâatta sarfı lâzım gelen mebâliğin hazine-i celîleye yâr olmaması için mu'âvenet-i İslâmiyyeye mürâca'at yolu da vardır. Tesîs ve küşâdı iktizâ eden mahallerde mescid ve mekteb tedârîki de mümkündür. Binâen-'aleyh bir ân evvel tedâbir-i lâzımenin ittihâzına vesîle olmak emeliyle işbu lâyiha-i abîdânemin 'arz ve takdîmine cür'et eyledim. Mamafih irâde buyrulduđu hâlde bu bâbdaki tedkîkât ve meşhûdât-ı 'acizâneme tevfi ken efkâr-ı massıra-i bende-gânemin dahâ ziyâde 'arz ve izâhına ihtiyâr edeceğimi ve misillü diđer hâtrât-ı hayr-ı hâhânenin dahî ba'demâ ihbâr ve inbâsına başkaca bir cesâret alacağımı sevk-i vicdân ve hissiyyât-ı 'ubûbiyyet-kârâne ile 'arz ve te'mîn eylerim. Ve min-Allah-el-Tevfik.

15 Kanûnisânî 1306

Siroz Mekteb-i İ'dâdi ve Mülkiyesi Lisân-ı 'Osmâni ve Farsî Mu'allimi

بلدرین محمدی

باش کاتب دارهسی

صدارة تذكرة حضوره صورتی

لوندرو ده هتا بول شهری نامیه تکیای پییلوئه شهرک در سعاد و قضاة سی طرفه نبارک ایدیلوئه قایمیارک تبعه دولت  
علیه ده اولارینه منی غرضتارینه ساعده اولوب اولماکی حکومت سینه نیک رای و اختیارینه موقوف اولوب انجه موقوف  
اجته جانینده ذکر اولاند شاره کوندرطک اوزره سیایسه ایدیلوئه قایقار و ده شکره و کبه یکر میدنه زیاده سی اسال  
اولدینی حالده بی سکر عدینک امرینه مناعت اولنی سرتی تجارته معایر اولر جینی انقاره سفری طرفه نباره  
و بوباید ره حقت و برلی اتمکی ایدیلرک دایر خارجیه نظارت جلیله سی تذکره سنک تقدیمی و بوباید هتدائی قرضه رسیده  
دستیجی اولونه ایچماق اولدولمک تاریخی تذکره حضوره صدارینا هیلری ملفوضیه برابر منظر علی اولری قایمه بیایدینه  
اسا برتی دینار هیلی کی بونلرک امر اولنی دخی تجارف محلیه نیک منافع موافقه اولرینی هرقله مذکور قایقارک امرینه  
صرف بونقظه نظر ده ساعده اولنی طبیعی اولوب شوقدرک لوندرو ده هتا بول شهری نامیه یایلم جوهر شهر دیه کویا  
احوال شرقیه نیک نمونه لری کوندرطک اوزره برقامت قرضی و بودی قایمیارک اهلای شرقیه لایحه و بودی و کبار و اتم سترشیا و شهربان قاضیا ایدیلر  
بوتی ایدر باقلمه و بوزره برقامت اولورک بوندرده شهربان ایچومه تجرید و اعزانه میانه و برطک قطع جائز اولر وسیله بوباید  
خارجیه نظارت جلیله نه مراجعت وقوعده سامان اولر و عثمانیله صفقاریام و طیفه مأموریت ایچومه جواب رد اعطای  
لوزره و دیه بونسه ایکنه خارجیه نظری باش حضرتی طرفه بویلدره جواب و برطکله اولنی بادی ناسف اولرینی کی  
کچده بو خصوص ایچومه بوزره قایمی تجرید قیام اولنی اوزرینه برضطه امر و فضا له یایلمه بلایه و شهار قلیبی  
و جلیله بو قاطعه ساعده ارنجه ره اولر امرده لازم کلانه سفار و معر فتمه بونلرک نه ایچومه تجرید ایدیلر  
اولرینی و نه صورتیله استقام اولر جملاری ماده لریام صفقارنک تحققی مقضی بولندینی حالده خطیه نظرق علیه نه  
بوباید تاسیفات اخذیله رخصت اعطای ایچومه امر و برلی کی اییدیلر اولوب انجه بوجور نله امره سی دخی جائز اولرینی  
بوباید قطعاً ساعده ارنجه ره اولر امرده بونلرک مذکور شاره نه و جلیله استقام اولر جملاری بیه بربر و غرام  
طیب و وجیب اولوب عرصه غنیه علیا قاضی و بعد مادخی اولر امرده و عمل تجرید نه زینار ساعده اولرینی شرفدار  
اولونه اراده سینه جناب خلاقینا هی ایجاب جلیله نه بونقیبه ایدیلر ایچماق اولدولمک لایحه سینه

مقابلله ارنجه  
قولاری  
ایچماق  
عبدلکریم  
تبرک

Yıldız Sarây-ı Hümayûnu  
Başkitâbet Dâiresi

Sadârete Gönderilen Tezkere-i Husûsiyye Sûreti

Londra'da İstanbul Şehri nâmıyla teşkîli istenilen meşherin Dersa'âdet Acentası tarafından tedârik edilen kâyıkcıların teba'a-i Devlet-i 'Aliyeden olmalarına mebni 'azîmetlerine müsâ'ade olunub olunmaması hükûmet-i seniyyenin re'y ve ihtiyârine mütevakkıf olub ancak merkûm acenta cânibinden zıkr olunan meşhere gönderilmek üzere sipâriş edilen kâyıklardan şimdîye değin yirmiden ziyâdesi irsâl olunduğu hâlde yedi sekiz 'adedinin imrârına mümâna'at olunması serbest-i ticârete mugâyir olacağı İngiltere Sefîri tarafından ifâde ve bu bâbda ruhsat verilmesi iltimâs edildiğine dâir Hâriciye Nezâreti Celîlesi tezkeresinin takdîmini ve bu bâbda istîzânı mutazammın resîde-i dest-i tebcîl olan 17 Cemâziyyevvel 311 tarîhli tezkere-i husûsiyye-i sadâret-penâhîleri melfûfuyla berâber manzûr-ı 'âli oldu kâyıkcı mübâyâ'asına esâsen bir şey denilemeyeceği gibi bunların imrâr olunması dâhi ticâret-i mahalliyyenin menâfi'ine muvâfık olduğu cihetle mezkûr kâyıkların imrârına sırf bu nokta-i nazardan müsâ'ade olunması tabî'i olub şu kadar ki Londra'da İstanbul Şehri nâmıyla yapılacak meşherde güyâ ahvâl-i şarkiyyenin numûneleri gösterilmek üzere bir tâkım Kıbtî ve Yahûdi kadınlarının ahâli-i şarkiyye gibi irâ'esine ve bu gibi daha bir tâkım münâsebetsiz şeyler teşhîrine kalkışılması maddesine nazar-ı bi-kaydî ile bakılmak ve buradan bir tâkım adamların işbu meşherde teşhîr için tahrîr ve i'zâmına meydân verilmek kat'â câ'iz olamamasıyla bu bâbda Hâriciye Nezâret-i Celîlesine mürâca'at vukû'unda Müslümânlık ve 'Osmânîlik sıfatlarıyla vazîfe-i me'mûriyyet icâbınca cevâb-ı redd 'itâsı lâzımeden bulunmuş iken Hâriciye Nâzırı Pâşa hazretleri tarafından bu yolda cevâb verilmemiş olması bâdi-i te'essüf olduğu gibi geçende bu husûs için buradan kâyıkcı tahrîrine kıyâm olunması üzerine bir mantûk-ı emr ü fermân-ı hümayûn teblîğ ve iş'âr kılındığı vechle buna kat'â müsâ'ade olunmayarak evvel-i emrde lâzım gelen sefâret ma'rifetiyle bunların ne için tahrîr edilmekte olduğu ve ne sûretle istihdâm olunacakları maddeleriyle müteferri'âtının tahkîki muktezî bulunduğu hâlde Zâbtiye Nezâret-i 'Aliyesine bu bâbda te'mînât ahzıyla ruhsat i'tâsı için emr verildiği işitilmiş olub ancak bu sûretle emr i'tâsı dahî câ'iz olmadığından bu bâbda kat'â müsâ'ade olunmayarak evvel-i emrde bunların mezkûr meşherde ne vechle istihdâm olunacaklarını mübeyyin bir program talep ve celb olunub 'arz-ı 'atebe-i 'ulyâ kılınması ve ba'demâ dâhi o misillü adam ve 'amele tahrîrine zinhâr müsâ'ade olunmaması şeref-sâdır olan irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı hilâfet-penâhî icâb-ı celîlinden bulunmağın ol-bâbda. 20 Cemâziyyevvel 1311 ve / 17 Teşrînisânî 309





## Tahrîr-i Nüfûs-ı Mahalli-i ‘Aliyesi Riyâset-i Cânib-i Sâmîsine

Din-i mübîn-i Ahmediyeye ‘âid her türlü vezâ’if-i İslâmiyyeyi ve husûsiyle hidmet-i mukaddese-i ‘askeriyeyi müftehir-âne ifâ eylemekte olduğumuz hâlde beyn-en-nâs Kıbtî lafzıyla yâd edilmekliğimiz çâkerlerimize pek çirkîn görüldüğünden tahrîr-i cedîd esnâsında Kıbtî lafz-ı müstehcininin derc edilmemesi ‘Asır gazetesinin 16 Haziran 321 tarihli nüsha-i matbû’asıyla ta’ mîm edilmiş olduğundan bu ‘âciz kullarından dahî Kıbtî elfâzının ref’iyle cemâ’at-i İslâmiyye misillü hakkımızda mu’âmele olunmasının tahrîr komisyonuna emr ve irâde buyrulmasını yâb-ı merhametlerine sığınarak istirhâm-ı mücâseret eyleriz fermân.

Muhtâr-ı Mahalle-i Kıbtî-i Müslim, Mahmud

Mahalle-i Mezkûr A’zâsından, Musa

A’zâ, Mehmed



Dâhiliye Nezâret-i Ceflesine

Devletlü Efendim Hazretleri

Rumeli-i Şarkî ve Bulgaristan'dan pey-der-pey gelmekte bulunan muhâcirîn meyânında bulunan birçok Kıbtî-i Müslimlerin meşrû' bir işle iştigâl etmeyib vilâyetin hatt-ı imtiyâz üzerinde bulunmasından dolayı etrâf kazâ ve köylerden sirket ettikleri hayvânât ve sâ'ireyi Rumeli-i Şarkîye aşırıp yine bu tarafa geçmekte ve bir tâkımları da derûn-ı şehre sirket ve yankesicilik ile zabt ü rabt husûsunda müşkilât ikâ' etmekte ve asıl yerli fukarâ-yı ahâlinin dahî ma'îşetlerini güçleştirmekte olduklarından bahisle bunlardan meşrû' bir işle iştigâl etmeyüb yalnız nüfûsa kayd olunarak sirket ve yankesicilik ve emsâli cerâ'im ile serseri yana dolaşanların Anadolu ve Arabistan cihetlerinin münâsib mahallerine gönderilmeleri ve gitmek istemeyenlerin geldikleri mahalle i'âdeleri lüzûmu polis müdürlüğünden bâ-müzekkire ifâde olunmuş ve fi'l-hakîka bu Kıbtîler sûret-i serseri yana da dolaşarak te'mîn-i ma'îşeti i'tiyâd etmiş tâkımdan olmalarına mebnî muhâcirîn-i sâ'ire misillü dâhil-i vilâyette emr-i iskânlarının te'mîni müşkil ve ma-hezâ ba'zı Kıbtîlerin Rumeli-i Şarkîden bu tarafa mevâdd-ı muzırre idhâline vesâtet etmek istedikleri de mesmû' olduğuna göre bunların buralarda bulunmaları inzibât nokta-i nazarından mahzûru dâ'î bulunmuş olduğundan iktizâsı 'arz ve istîzân olunur ol-bâbda emr ü fermân hazret-i men-leh-ül emrindir. 8 Muharrem 326 ve / 29 Kanûnisânî 323.

Edirne Vâlîsi

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