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THE OTTOMAN  
BALKANS, 1750–1830**

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Crisis and State Intervention  
in Late Eighteenth-century  
Karaferye (mod. Veroia)<sup>1</sup>

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ANTONIS ANASTASOPOULOS

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Modern historiography has invariably considered the eighteenth century a period of reduced central control over the Ottoman provinces. The state was giving ground, while the provincial elites (*ayans*) were expanding their power, since their cooperation and good will had become essential for administering smoothly the affairs of the realm. This phenomenon has traditionally been viewed as an aspect of and a factor that accelerated the general "decline" of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> In more recent years, it has been singled out as the trademark of a whole era: the period of "decentralization"<sup>3</sup> or "the age of the *ayans*."<sup>4</sup> The wars against Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century enhanced the self-confidence of the *ayans*, because the state depended extensively on their services for the recruitment of troops as well as for the collection and dispatch of provisions; besides, governors who were ordered to participate in campaigns often entrusted the administration and security of their districts to *ayans* for the duration of their absence.<sup>5</sup> As a result, central authorities were faced with serious challenges from their provinces in the closing decades of the century.<sup>6</sup>

A study of state involvement in instances of local crisis in the provinces can contribute some evidence as to whether the central authorities maintained overall control of the empire or had been reduced to overlords with only nominal authority.<sup>7</sup> When faced with a serious problem, the inhabitants of a region presumably turned to that person or authority that was thought to be best equipped for coping with it successfully.<sup>8</sup> In fact, reports about local crises kept reaching the central authorities quite often even in the last decades of the eighteenth century, that is, when their control over the provinces is considered to have been at a low. The persistence of that practice over the centuries is connected with the role of the Porte as redresser of wrongs and guarantor of the welfare of its subjects.

Public order was indispensable for the proper functioning of the Ottoman system of administration, and its preservation was projected as one of the basic duties of the state and its officials. According to the Islamic tradition of government that the Ottomans had adopted, the subjects of the state were entitled to conditions of order and justice, so as to be able to produce wealth, part of which the state would then collect in the form of taxation for the needs of the army, the administration, and the palace. Consequently, official Ottoman ideology put particular emphasis on justice and the protection of the subjects from oppression and the excesses of corrupt officials and roaming outlaws.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious that such a policy in the long run promoted the state's own interests, as it secured the loyalty of its subjects and guaranteed its continuing existence. Regardless, however, of whether the state's concern for its subjects was indeed genuine or not, the population of the empire benefited from this ideological stance, since it entailed Istanbul's obligation to intervene in the provinces and restore order whenever it received a petition that reported a breach of law.<sup>10</sup>

In the light of late-eighteenth-century developments, though, it is an issue whether people of that time were petitioning the Porte because its intervention was known to be effective or just because it was a natural last step to take when everything else had failed. There were also occasions when the Porte intervened in the name of the people, but really following reports that it had received from its own provincial officials and not from members of the local society. A second issue is whether the government had developed consistent operable mechanisms of dealing with local crises that were challenging—in reality or theoretically/ideologically—the proper functioning of Ottoman institutions. That would include a mechanism of checking, either at the center or locally, the truth of claims submitted to it. In fact, it

seems that the Porte took all claims to be true in principle and expected provincial authorities eventually to establish if they were justified or not.<sup>11</sup> It is, therefore, important to investigate carefully the role played in such cases by state officials, such as governors, deputy governors, and judges, because they represented the interests of the state but exercised their authority in the local setting. Such systematic investigation could lead to an attempt to determine whether there were one or several patterns of state intervention in crises in the provinces, as well as their evolution over time. Here we will focus on one particular case from Karaferye in the southern Balkans in 1782; we will also try to draw parallels with and point out differences from other occasions of state intervention in the region and elsewhere, so as to place that particular incident in a wider context.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the town of Karaferye was the center of a *kaza*, which belonged to the *sancak* of Selânik (Salonica). The judge (*kadi*) of the Islamic court was the immediate representative of the Ottoman state in the region,<sup>12</sup> but the affairs of the *kaza* were also under the jurisdiction of the *sancak* authorities. Those were the pasha-governor (*mutasarrıf*) or his deputy (*mütesellim*), who was usually selected from among the local notables. Karaferye and a large section of the *kaza* were part of the imperial estates (*havass-i hümayun*), and their fiscal revenue was farmed out on life-term contracts (*ber vech-i malikâne*). The tax farmer then subleased the district's income to a third party who held the title of *voyvoda*; strictly speaking, the *voyvoda*'s authority was fiscal, as defined by his contract with the *malikâne* holder,<sup>13</sup> but he certainly played an important political role in the affairs of the *kaza*. Karaferye had a mixed population of Muslims and Christians (as well as some Jews).<sup>14</sup> The Muslim and Christian community leaders, usually described as *ayans* and *kocabaşıs* respectively, were another significant factor in local politics. Military authority was entrusted basically to the commander (*serdar*) of the janissaries,<sup>15</sup> but also to the mercenary troops (*sekbans*) charged with fighting brigandage and securing the passages of the region.

The single most important source about Ottoman Karaferye is the registers of the town's Islamic court of law (*kadı sicilleri*). The surviving registers of the latter half of the eighteenth century mostly contain incoming orders either from Istanbul or Salonica, a fair proportion of which were issued in response to petitions of individuals or groups of people or to reports by local officials. Overall, the court registers demonstrate both that the sultan's subjects made quite extensive use of their right to appeal to him, and

that correspondence among various authorities—including Istanbul—was frequent.<sup>16</sup> As valuable a source as they are, Ottoman decrees and court registers were compiled for the needs of Ottoman administration and therefore usually do not supply detailed accounts of how cases developed from beginning to end.<sup>17</sup> Given that there are not any supplementary sources that could fill the narrative gaps of the court registers of Karaferye or counter the version of events found in them, the surviving material usually gives hints rather than definite answers to the questions and hypotheses of the modern historian.

Information about the 1782 incident comes from one decree (*buyruldu*) issued by the deputy governor of Salonica and two imperial decrees (*ferman*), which have been copied in the judicial registers of Karaferye. According to them, the *serdar* of Karaferye was murdered a few days after his appointment to the post. A group of more than twenty men stormed his residence and killed him with a bullet from a firearm, while also wounding one of his men in the course of the battle. The intruders had a casualty too, as they lost one of their men in the exchange of fire. The motive for the attack was not specified. At first, it was said that the murder was completely unjustified; later, it was stated that it was related to local antagonisms and grudges that the inhabitants of Karaferye held against one another. Such problems were not unusual in the town<sup>18</sup> and frequently were intrinsically linked to the wider struggle for local domination, which was in turn closely connected with financial interests and the control of the fiscal and military resources of the region.

Four inhabitants of Karaferye were identified as leaders of the group of men who carried out the attack. Those four were Elhacmehmedağazade Seyyid Osman Bey, Hafız Ali and Abdullah Agha, the sons of Mustafa Agha, and Osman Agha.<sup>19</sup> The dead intruder was said to be a man of Osman Bey. Initially, the incident was reported to the *mütesellim* of Salonica, but soon the Porte, too, was informed about it. The state appointed an agent of its own to the case and ordered the Islamic court of Karaferye to hold a public trial and determine the identity of the culprits of the attack; those found guilty should be imprisoned.<sup>20</sup> There was also a financial aspect in the case, but it was not explained very well in the documents. According to the imperial decrees, the court of law was expected to establish the debts of the accused, collect them and return them to their rightful owners (*zimmeterinde sabit olan hukuk-i ibad şer'le tahsil ve istirdad; şer'an sabit olan hukuk-i ibad marifet-i şer'le tahsil ve ashabına istirdad*).<sup>21</sup> On the whole,

the state put particular emphasis on the judicial resolution of the crisis. All parties involved were summoned to appear in court and present their arguments; the judge would then decide who was guilty of what and who was innocent. However, things did not develop as smoothly as planned, since the state agent, who had been appointed in order to assist the court of law, was accused of misconduct. The eventual outcome of the case is sadly not known, because no further entries about this incident can be found in the surviving registers of the Islamic court of Karaferye. We do not have any minutes of the investigation that was carried out or private correspondence or diaries of those involved in the affair either.

We can discuss the case in some detail, however, on the basis of the three decrees issued by the authorities of Salonica and Istanbul. The *buyruldu* was issued by Abdurrahman, the *mütesellim* of the *sancak* of Salonica, on 12 June 1782, and was addressed to the *kadı* of Karaferye as well as to the district's elite and petty functionaries (*ayan-i vilayet ve zabitan ve iş erleri*).<sup>22</sup> Abdurrahman did not state in his decree whether he had been informed about the incident through official channels or from a private petition, nor did he give any concrete instructions. The case had not yet been reported to Istanbul, since the *mütesellim* warned that if the culprits of the murder were not tracked down, arrested, and eliminated, news of the attack would reach the Porte and then more people would be implicated in and criticized for what had happened. The higher a case reached, the more burdensome and costly it became for the local population, since more officials were involved in restoring order and the people of the region in question were obliged to cover their expenses and fees as well as to cope with their illegal demands.

It has been argued that the eighteenth-century *kadı*'s power was severely compromised by the rise of the *ayans*,<sup>23</sup> but this and other cases suggest that, as far as official rhetoric was concerned, he was the undisputable heart of the Ottoman system of administration and also a vital link between the state and the locality in crisis management. In fact, the only Karaferye authority to which the *buyruldu* actually referred was the *kadı*,<sup>24</sup> even though the arrest of the culprits required by all means the use of force, and the *mütesellim* did not dispatch troops or even an agent to oversee the operation. He entrusted the local elements in Karaferye with the arrest but did not specify them, which is a sign either of indifference or of confidence in local institutions and notables, with the *kadı* occupying a special place among them. The *mütesellim* only asked to be notified of the progress of the investigation. It

seems as if he did not treat the particular incident as very serious, and he also apparently thought that it could be dealt with locally.

The formulation of the *mütesellim's* decree offers itself to remarks on official ideology as expressed by a state official who probably was of local origin.<sup>25</sup> The *mütesellim* called the culprits of the attack *eşkiya* (outlaws, bandits) and classified the incident as *fitne* (sedition, disorder).<sup>26</sup> Both words form part of the standard terminology used by the state and its representatives when referring to the disruption of the daily routine of provincial life. To initiate action, the *mütesellim* pointed out that *fitne* was not to God's liking, but he also had recourse to a much more immediate threat, namely the possible intervention of the central authorities. Besides, he insisted on two motifs connected with the ideal of order. First, he indicated in the opening phrase of his decree that it was a holy duty of the elite and those in power to guarantee the welfare of the poor subjects of the sultan and to maintain order in the realm; actually, the *serdar* had been appointed so as to fulfill these duties for the benefit of the local populace. Second, he stressed the danger of disorder spreading to other regions if tolerated; such an eventuality was obviously an unwelcome menace to the stability of the Ottoman system.

Things did not turn out the way Abdurrahman had hoped that they would. On the contrary, the culprits of the attack were not arrested and the central authorities did get informed of and involved in the affair. The first *ferman* was issued one month after the *buyruldu*, in mid-July 1782.<sup>27</sup> It was addressed to Hasan, the new *mütesellim* of Salonica, and to the Islamic judge of Karaferye (called *naib*, i.e. deputy judge, this time), who remained the only local recipient of decrees about the incident. In the light of their ascendancy in the Balkans in the second half of the eighteenth century, it is important to note the absence of the *ayans* of Karaferye from among the addressees of this and most *fermans* of that period.<sup>28</sup> The Porte was informed about the incident from dispatches that the new *mütesellim* had sent to it. Hasan actually held the title of imperial head doorkeeper (*dergâh-i muallam kapıcıbaşlarından*), and did (or was forced by circumstances to do) what his predecessor had chosen not to, namely inform the government of what had happened in Karaferye. Probably the new *mütesellim* was an outsider, because it was noted in the *ferman* that the incident had taken place prior to his arrival in the region. If Abdurrahman was indeed a local *ayan*, one may assume that he was bound by a notion of local interest, which Hasan did not share; instead, his own loyalty was to the sultan—even though it is not

known if his title still bore with it a special link to or a sense of duty toward the Palace in the closing decades of the eighteenth century—and the governor who had appointed him. However, Hasan was not the only informant of the central government. An *ilam* of the *naib* of Karaferye had also reached Istanbul in the meantime.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the local judge performed his role as channel of communication between the center and the periphery.

On the ideological level, the formulation of the decree of the central authorities strongly resembles that of the former *mütesellim*. The culprits of the attack were again branded *eşkiya*, only that this time it was specified that the group behind the four leading figures were brigands (*zümre-i eşkiyadan mâlumülesami şekavetkârları tahrik . . .*). The incident was not called *fitne*, but was given another usual characterization of situations that the state viewed as instances of disorder: *ihtilal-i belde* (disturbance of the public order of the town). Furthermore, the decree stated that it had been reported that following the incident, the poor subjects of the sultan (*fukara*) had been left feeling insecure, and that if the situation was not remedied, they would be increasingly oppressed and tormented by the day, while the region would experience chaotic conditions. That was sufficient cause for alarm and necessitated the state's intervention with a view to restoring order (*kaza-i mezkûr gereği gibi taht-i nizama [sic] ve rabıtaya idhal*). Thus, the incident was coated with an ideological garb, which presented it as something more dangerous than a mere criminal act, namely a threat to the stability of Ottoman society. Nevertheless, the state did not step in by virtue of its authority alone, but, as always, because it had been asked to issue a decree that would give a solution to the problem. In other words, the state invoked society and its torment as a means of legitimizing its intervention.

On this particular occasion, the state went one step further and clarified that it was the *valis'* and *mütesellims'* duty to restore order in their regions and to make sure that people prosper. Consequently, the *mütesellim* was charged with bringing to justice those accused of the attack and the murder of the *serdar*. However, he was not alone in the case any more, as the state appointed its own agent. His appointment was a sign par excellence of the state's immediate concern for the case, as he was expected to play a central part in the resolution of the crisis.<sup>30</sup> İsmail, the agent, was an imperial head doorkeeper, like Hasan. Apart from the title, the two men also largely shared jurisdictional area, since İsmail was *mubayaacı* (supervisor of the compulsory sale of grain to the state) of Salonica. It is not known if he was a local figure or not, nor on what grounds he was selected as the state's agent. Due

to lack of evidence, one can only speculate that somehow he may have been thought of as a specialist in handling the financial aspect of the case, or that he was the nearest available *kapıcıbaşı*, or maybe that he had mediated for the case to reach Istanbul.<sup>31</sup>

İsmail was instructed to assist not only the *mütesellim* but also the court of law during the trial which was expected to take place. The state believed that that trial would restore order in the town and, thus, gave a solution, which did not deviate from its usual legalistic/judicial approach to disturbances in the provinces.<sup>32</sup> Those accused in the *serdar* case were to be tried in public in the presence of their opponents. The Islamic court of law was ordered to establish, collect, and return what was due by the accused, and also keep in jail those proved—in accordance with the provisions of the law (*şer'an*)—to have committed the murder. Thus, the court of law was once again confirmed as the center of provincial administration. Before closing the decree, the state did not fail to exhibit its traditional distrust of its officials, as it warned them against extracting amounts of money from innocent and decent people, who had nothing to do with the case.<sup>33</sup> Otherwise, the state was content to expect to receive a report about the speedy settlement of the affair and return to the everyday routine. However, for the case to close, the *mütesellim* and the *mubayaacı* had to manage to arrest the culprits first. They also needed to be men of integrity.

Indeed, the *mubayaacı* did not make proper use of his appointment, or so he was accused in a second *ferman* issued between 29 September and 7 October 1782, that is, two and a half months after the first one.<sup>34</sup> It was addressed again to Hasan, *mütesellim* of Salonica, and to the *kadı* of Karaferye.<sup>35</sup> According to the *ferman*, the *mubayaacı* sent a report to the Porte and explained that the *eşkiya* had fled before the arrival of the first *ferman* and had not been found.<sup>36</sup> He and the sharia court then proceeded to confiscate the properties of the accused (*emlak, çiftlikân, mahsulât*). They compiled an inventory and sent it to Istanbul, indicating that if farmed out, the confiscated property would generate an annual income of 5,000 *kuruş*.

However, the case did not end there, as Seyyid Osman Bey, Abdullah Agha, and Hafız Ali exercised their right to send a petition (*arzuhal*) to the Porte and present their version of the facts. Even though one would have imagined that it was in the Porte's interest to accept its agent's version as the truth and close the case as fast as possible, the account of those who had been named as the culprits of the attack and the murder was not rejected, but taken very seriously. This attitude stemmed either from the state's utter

respect for the principle of justice or from its realization that it could not ignore the three men, who presumably were persons with influence on local society.<sup>37</sup> In either case, the state acted in a way that eventually was in conformity with the principle of protecting its subjects from the abuses of those in power. Of course, it has to be admitted that there is a third, more prosaic explanation, namely that the three men had good connections that enabled their voice to reach the Porte.

Osman, Abdullah, and Ali complained that they were not related to the murder of the *serdar* and that they had been wrongfully accused by spiteful local enemies despite the absence of legally acceptable evidence against them. They also claimed that their enemies had obtained *ilams* against them through bribery. Furthermore, they alleged that the *mubayaacı* had concealed that the sultan had ordered that a public trial be held in Karaferye; instead, he had claimed that the *ferman* simply referred to their sentences and arrangements concerning their detention (*kalebend*). He asked them to pay a service fee (*on kese akçe hizmet-i mübaşiriyye*), and when it became obvious that they did not possess the money that he had asked, he confiscated their properties.

To make their case stronger, the three men presented a group petition (*mahzar*) by the people of Karaferye, who confirmed that the accused were not connected with the murder and that the *serdar* had orally named his murderers before he died. The state's agent was accused of misconduct and it was asked that he be removed from the case. Indeed, the Porte confirmed that it was illegal to confiscate the properties without trial, and replaced İsmail with Ali, one of its *gediklis* (holder of a privilege), who became its new agent to the case. Otherwise, orders remained the same. A trial still had to be held and its outcome had to be reported to the Porte. This time, the local court of law and the new agent were explicitly warned to strictly follow the orders and to avoid siding with one or the other party.<sup>38</sup> It is not entirely clear how the authorities reached this decision. The claims of the three men were sanctioned by the *başdefterdar* who reported that the confiscation had not been carried out in the prescribed way and asked for the replacement of the agent. The *şeyhülislam* was also involved in the affair, but the relevant section of the *ferman* does not allow us to understand exactly how. Most likely, two inhabitants of Salonica informed him about the situation and the illegal actions of the *mubayaacı*, and asked for justice for the three men. On the side of the copy of the *ferman* in the judicial register of Karaferye, the scribe noted that a letter of the grand vizier and a decree of the *mütesellim*

of Salonica had also been received about the same case. The arrival of three decrees indicates that by then the affair was taken quite seriously. Considering that originally the *mütesellim* had thought that issuing a *buyruldu* was enough, one is justified in asking whether it had been unrealistic on the part of that official to expect such a case to be resolved at the level of the *sancak* or whether the case reached Istanbul due to bad handling and as a result of the connections of those involved.

What emerges clearly from the authorities' response to the *serdar* incident is that law and order were at all times in the heart of Ottoman official ideology and rhetoric at all levels of administration. The incident was not treated as a simple murder case or as a private affair.<sup>39</sup> It was not seen as a direct challenge to Ottoman authority either. In the eyes of Ottoman administrators it was the subjects' feeling of safety and presumably their trust in the Ottoman system of government at large that was at stake. In case the murder of the *serdar* went unpunished, respect for order could collapse, and that would eventually have a serious impact on a cash-strapped administration that was in need for social and fiscal stability.<sup>40</sup> Besides, Karaferye may not have been an important town, but there were good reasons for the state to dislike unrest in the region. First of all, the routes connecting Macedonia with southern Greece passed through the district. Then, Russia posed in the last third of the eighteenth century a very real threat to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and Karaferye was a predominantly Christian region. Finally, the central authorities were struggling for a number of years to restrain the Albanians, who had managed to dominate much of the institutional framework and economic life of southwestern Macedonia. Appearing weak was obviously not an option for the Ottoman state in the face of such internal and external challenges to its authority.<sup>41</sup>

A situation that was somewhat similar to that of 1782 had arisen in the region 162 years earlier. In 1620, Mirza, the *subaşı* of Karaferye, was found dead in a river near the town.<sup>42</sup> Certain aspects of this incident serve as food for thought, both on how crisis situations were dealt with and on the limitations set on the historian by the sources. What is interesting for our purposes is that the early-seventeenth-century incident was handled as a private affair: the relatives of the dead man went to the local court of law, asked for an investigation to be carried out, and accused someone of the murder. That person was arrested, tried in the Islamic court of Salonica, and executed. Even though the victim was an official,<sup>43</sup> like the *serdar* in 1782, there was no mention of applying to higher administrative authorities or of

their involvement in the investigation about the murder. Four possibilities open up, when trying to explain why this affair was handled differently from the one in 1782. The first possibility is that the affair of 1620 was indeed considered to be private/personal with no further consequences for the life of the district or for public order as perceived by Ottoman official ideology. The culprit was discovered rather quickly and was found to be a lowly individual (a slave of the *voyvoda*, but still a slave) who posed no threat to the Ottoman system.<sup>44</sup> His motive was not cited in the surviving sources, but he apparently did not express the feelings or serve the purposes of a larger interest group.

This is the likeliest explanation for the different handling, but one should also consider the time distance between the two cases. On the one hand, conditions in the Balkan provinces of the empire were very different in 1620 and in 1782, and the state may have been much more sensitive to responding to what was perceived as a challenge to stability on the latter than on the former occasion. On the other hand, procedures may have been different in the early seventeenth century, so that such crimes were not reported to higher authorities, but were handled locally. Nevertheless, given the tenacity of traditional forms in the Ottoman polity, this explanation is rather unlikely.

Another possibility is that the difference between the two cases is an illusion that stems from the nature of the source material. That is, gaps may exist in the court registers of either 1620 or 1782, or different principles of keeping records may have applied to the two eras. As the 1782 case becomes known to us through incoming orders of the provincial and central administration and not through local registrations, even though a trial must have taken place at some point, so could there have been an appeal to the Salonica or Istanbul authorities in 1620, but without keeping record of it. It was not necessary that such a decree should be mentioned in the surviving entries.

The fourth possibility touches on a methodological problem. Quite simply, it may be a vain anachronism to try to establish strict procedures. Even nowadays, when fixed principles apply (or supposedly apply) to the handling of criminal affairs and crises, not all cases are dealt with identically. It is not unlikely that appealing to Salonica or Istanbul depended on whim and the particular circumstances. In other words, it is possible that there was not a standard procedure. If a case was considered threatening or if it had not been settled locally after a certain period of time, and someone, whether in an official capacity or not, decided to report it to a higher authority, then the situation got out of local control and entered the regional or imperial setting.



From then on, steps and the relevant rhetoric were more or less standardized and the steps of action taken depended both on the urgency of the situation as well as on the efficiency of those involved in resolving the problem.

Still, the main question is why the 1782 incident was not treated as a private affair—as the murder by his enemies of an individual who happened to hold an office. Was it that the victim was the *serdar*, an official with law-enforcement authority? Was it the number of intruders and the violence of the incident? Was it the identity of the intruders? Or was it the general conditions and balance of power in late-eighteenth-century Karaferye, of which we know very little due to lack of contemporaneous narrative sources that deal with the town's microhistory? It is reasonable to assume that it was local circumstances and people who decided whether a murder would be considered a private matter that could be dealt with locally or whether they would take it to higher authorities and thus transform it into a crisis situation connected with the issue of stability in the region.<sup>45</sup> If circumstances were not taken into consideration, the 1620 and 1782 cases would paradoxically suggest that Istanbul was more readily invited to interfere in local life in the period of decentralization than in the early seventeenth century, when its control over the provinces was supposedly tighter and those involved in the murder had been the deputy and the slave of its appointee.

This would mean that the role of the state was to determine what steps should be taken each time for the restoration of order; it was, though, the local society that decided in the first place what was a crisis and what was not. According to Islamic law, the *kadı* court could investigate homicide only after the victim's next of kin had brought action; there was no prosecution *ex officio*. Thus, in theory the murder of the *serdar* could have been investigated only if his relatives had applied to the *kadı* and asked for retaliation or blood money; in theory again, it was a decision of the victim's relatives to bring such issues to the public sphere. However, there was no mention of the relatives of the deceased in 1782, and the whole case certainly surpassed the limits of a mere murder. Since Ottoman legal theory had brought matters relating to public order under the jurisdiction of the *ehl-i örf*,<sup>46</sup> a crime with repercussions on local politics lay in a gray zone between *sharia* and *kanun*, and its handling was determined by local conditions.

As far as state intervention in the provinces is concerned, a comparison with other cases from the near or distant past reveals certain constants. For instance, respect for formal procedures was a very important aspect of Ottoman ideology; it actually was an idea that cut through social groups

and geographic regions. Suraiya Faroqhi has pointed out that a *kadı* in late-sixteenth-century Anatolia did not simply try to exert influence on his colleague in Çorum so as to have his robber enemy convicted, but “used his contacts to push his complaint against Canfedaoğlu and his men through the appropriate offices, and . . . secured a rescript which ordered the *kadı* of Çorum to hear the case. On another occasion, probably somewhat later, he secured a rescript that Canfedaoğlu was to be executed if he had killed anyone.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, the *kadı* felt that he had to apply to the central authorities, even though contacting the local judge could have sufficed. When compared with the case of 1782 from Karaferye, Faroqhi's study suggests that little had changed over time in the official response of the state authorities to crisis situations in the provinces. At first, a provincial governor, namely the governor-general of Rum, reported the case to the Porte. The imperial council then ordered that the case should be tried by the *kadis* of Sivas and Gelmuğad with the assistance of the governor-general, who apparently acted as state agent. As in 1782, the state did not convict the accused; instead, it entrusted two provincial *kadis* with establishing the guilt of Canfedaoğlu, and only instructed that he should be sentenced to death in case he was found guilty, as indeed happened.<sup>48</sup> Almost two hundred years later, the procedure was still the same, despite the difference in the geographical setting and the general conditions of the empire. Of course, there is an issue as to whether state officials were equally powerful and efficient in 1595 and in 1782. Apart from that, it becomes apparent that it was not due to weakness or detachment from the provinces that the state only contributed two decrees and an agent to the Karaferye incident. Giving judicial solutions to local problems was an immutable principle of Ottoman administration; in that sense, the state acted predictably in 1782. If a situation was thought to be more critical or urgent, then the authorities could decide to send in troops and restore order.

That happened in Karaferye in 1758–59. There was a conflict between two rival groups of *ayans*, whose actions had created conditions of *ihtilal-i nizam* and *fitne*, and rendered them *eşkiya* in the eyes of the state. Following petitions by the population of the district, the Porte intervened in order to defend its subjects and its sense of order. At first, the state tried to settle the issue through decrees that were ordering the incarceration and banishment of those involved in the troubles. When it was realized that one of them had a force of four hundred armed Albanians and could not be arrested, the state dispatched troops under the command of the governor of Köstendil

and appointed an agent, who was charged with informing the Porte about developments in the case as well as with confiscating the property of the rebel. When troops failed in their mission to arrest him, the state put to use another of its administrative methods by making the local people sign declarations that were holding them collectively responsible against the return of the undesired members of the two groups to the *kaza*. In the meantime, the state filled all vacancies in the administrative framework of the *kaza* so as to facilitate return to normality. The *kadı* of Karaferye was involved in the handling of the affair in his roles as a channel of communication between Istanbul and Karaferye, a notary and a judge, and all relevant documents were copied in his register.<sup>49</sup>

The centrality of the role of the *kadı* also becomes apparent in two cases of expulsion of governors by the janissaries and population of Aleppo in 1775 and 1784. The *kadı* did not take the initiative, but the rebels sought his sanction before taking action, while, on one occasion, he actually met with the governor before his removal. Furthermore, the rebels explained the reasons for their revolt in reports that they sent to the Porte via the Islamic court.<sup>50</sup> Even though the Porte's and the governors' control was certainly weakened and the *kadı* might have been forcibly dragged into action, it is interesting to note that the Ottoman state and its institutions remained stable points of reference. Such cases confirm that the subjects of the sultan could only imagine themselves in the Ottoman context, and that usually they rejected the representatives of the system without contesting the essence of that system.

The murder case of 1782 can also be juxtaposed with another case of the same year which lies midway between that one and the 1758–59 disturbances, and shows that sometimes a warning could precede action through the sharia court, a governor, or an agent. Ali Rüşdi Efendi, former *kadı* of Siroz (Serres) and *ayan* of Karaferye,<sup>51</sup> was accused of oppressing the population of the *mukataa* of Karaferye, which was held as *malikâne* by a certain İsmail, an imperial sword-bearer (*cenab-i hilafetmeabım silahdarı olan mir İsmail*). More specifically, he was accused of meddling in the affairs of the region and in the appointment of armed guards (*pandor*) as well as of charging the population amounts of money disguised as taxes and interfering with the apportionment of taxes. It is not clarified who notified the Porte of his behavior, but it may have been either the *kadı* or the *voyvoda* via the *malikâne* holder, because these two were the addressees of the *ferman* that was issued. Besides, these two officials, *kadı* and *voyvoda*, were the only ones who were entitled to handle the affairs of the inhabitants of the

region, as was explained in the *ferman*. The issue was again disturbance of the public order of the region (*ihtilal-i nizam*) that resulted in impoverishment and flight of the *reaya* and subsequently led to reduction of the tax revenue (*mal-i miri*). However, this time it was admitted that the welfare of the subjects was not the sultan's only concern, as it was stated that the revenue that accrued from the Karaferye *mukataa* was large, and obviously, therefore, Ali Rüşdi Efendi's attitude could not be tolerated. As far as ideology is concerned, it is also interesting to note that the *ihtilal* category was used to bring together dissimilar situations, such as fiscal abuses and the murder of a *serdar*. Ali Rüşdi had been exiled in the past for the same sort of behavior, and this time he was given notice that if the Porte heard more of him, he would be immediately sentenced to life banishment to "distant places."<sup>52</sup> The *kadı* was once again heavily involved in the affair. He was held responsible for reporting to the Porte about Ali Rüşdi's behavior, for taking action against him, as well as for protecting the subjects and preventing any similar abuses (he shared this last responsibility with the *voyvoda*).<sup>53</sup>

It is not known why the state refrained from immediately banishing Ali Rüşdi Efendi and contented itself with mere warnings. Maybe it was hoping to exchange leniency for the local notable's compliance, since the use of force caused tension in local life without always having the desired effects. In any case, negotiation was a long-standing governmental practice by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> The individuals who petitioned or were reported to the Porte were in fact bargaining their social and economic status. The Porte was also negotiating its prestige and power. Even though it was not prepared to formally cede portions of its authority to provincial magistrates or non-governmental agents, still it was willing to change a decision or a course of action when presented with new evidence, or to display leniency when it appeared that it served its purposes better than decisiveness did.<sup>55</sup>

One lesson to be learnt from state involvement in the local crises of Karaferye in 1782 is that the Porte was after all still the center of the empire and the authority that was providing the institutional framework for dealing with crises and local antagonisms. Its control over the provinces may have been much weaker than in past centuries, but when an affair failed to be settled informally or at the *kaza* or *sancak* levels, appealing to Istanbul was the natural next step despite the danger of exposing oneself to rapacious officials and high costs. On the other hand, the state was happy to fulfill its traditional role as guarantor of order, because the petitions of its subjects and the reports of its officials were offering it an opportunity to

reconfirm its authority in the context of the minor or major challenges of the late eighteenth century. In other words, access to local offices and tax farms did bring provincial elites and their interests closer to the state, as has been argued convincingly,<sup>56</sup> but the principles of justice and intervention in the name of the *reaya* enabled the state constantly to reconfirm its ties not only with a small proportion but with all of its subjects and to have a sense of control over its provinces in the adverse circumstances of that time.<sup>57</sup> Of course, the basic question is whether the state maintained real power over the provinces or whether it had been reduced to a mere overlord by default until Mahmud II decisively challenged the authority of the *ayans*.

As far as response to local crises is concerned, the overall picture is that central and provincial officials appointed to a case were given a certain degree of freedom of action, but that Istanbul maintained the prerogative of the final check of their acts through their reports as well as through petitions received from any party involved. Besides, it was unrealistic for the state center to expect to be able to check speedily and accurately the truth of every single claim that came from whatever locality in the Balkans or elsewhere, unless that concerned an issue that had been entered in the registers of the central bureaucracy. If not, the central authorities simply lent their prestige to the petitioners by repeating their version of events in a decree. It was eventually the court of justice or the governor who decided the outcome locally. If a party felt that they had been wronged, they maintained the right to appeal anew to the Porte. Depending on the case's weight, the central authorities might decide to appoint a special imperial agent or to dispatch troops. Such a decision stressed the Porte's concern for the case and obviously made local authorities more careful in their handling of it. On the whole, though, the state appears to be putting trust in the existing administrative procedures, which were definitely decentralized in that the decision was not made in the center of the empire. That characteristic of Ottoman administration is of crucial importance, because institutions and procedures had not changed much since the sixteenth century, but the more powerful the local elites, the more active the role they had to play in crisis management and the stronger the pressure they could apply on state officials and representatives. Since the Islamic court of law played a major part in most cases (even when the state had merely issued a warning to someone), it was obviously susceptible to such pressure. Nevertheless, the state kept entrusting it with bringing an end even to crises which obviously concealed deeper enmities and antagonisms.

This (admittedly sometimes excessive) trust in provincial judges arouses some suspicion, which can lead to the opposite argument, namely that the state's attitude should be interpreted as total paralysis of its mechanisms. A weakened central state whose main predicament was the preservation of the privileges of its elite may have been content to issue decrees and devolve authority to officials lower in the hierarchy rather than to spend its energies in resolving local crises, which were not that threatening to the Ottoman way. The higher the number of *fermans* issued for a single case, the stronger the suspicion that the state was unable or indifferent to act effectively and close the case. However, only further research can give more safe indications as to the relationship of the Ottoman state with its provinces in the late eighteenth century and its attitude toward anomalous situations that arose in the periphery and were reported to it. This is particularly true of Ottoman Karaferye, whose systematic study is still in its infancy.<sup>58</sup>

### Notes

1. Veroia is Karaferye's Greek name. The town of Veroia is situated some 60 kilometers west of Salonica in present-day Greece.
2. For a classic account of Ottoman "decline," see Bernard Lewis, "Some Reflections on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire," *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 111-27.
3. Halil İnalçık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 27-52.
4. Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the *Ayans*, 1699-1812," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, ed. Halil İnalçık with Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 637-758.
5. Yuzo Nagata, *Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa ve Âyânlık Müessesesi* [Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Pasha and the Institution of *Ayanship*] (Izmir: Akademik Kitabevi, 1999), 105ff. On the *ayans*, a broad term used to designate the members of the provincial elites of the Ottoman state, see Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Âyânlık* [The *Ayanship* in the Ottoman Empire] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994); idem, "Rumeli'de Âyânlık İle İlgili Bazı Bilgiler" [Some Information Concerning the *Ayanship* in Rumeli], in *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara 11-15 Ekim 1976). Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1981), 1407-16; Yuzo Nagata, *Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa*; idem, *Tarihî Âyânlık. Karaosmanoğulları Üzerinde Bir İnceleme* [The *Ayans* in History. An Investigation About the Karaosmanoğulları] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997); Deena R. Sadat, "Rumeli Ayanları: The Eighteenth Century," *Journal*

- of *Modern History* 44 (1972): 346–63; Gilles Veinstein, “Âyân’ de la région d’Izmir et commerce du Levant (deuxième moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle),” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 20 (1975): 131–47.
6. Tepedelenli Ali Pasha and Osman Pasvanoğlu are the best known among those who challenged the authority of the Porte in the Balkans. On the former see Katherine Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) and the extensive bibliography that the author cites; on the latter, see Deena R. Sadat, “Âyân and Ağa: The Transformation of the Bektashi Corps in the 18th Century,” *Muslim World* 63 (1973): 206–19 and Robert Zens, “Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa and the Paşalık of Belgrade, 1791–1807,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (2002): 89–104.
  7. According to Abraham Marcus’ view, the state remained the center of political power and a stable point of reference for all societal groups in eighteenth-century Aleppo despite the serious challenges to its authority (Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1989], 74). However, from the 1770s onward, the state “steadily lost its control, and the local leaders and power groups increasingly decided the course of events” (*ibid.*, 87).
  8. For instance, an *imam* of Karaferye, who was challenged locally, applied to Tepedelenli Ali Pasha and not to Istanbul in 1812. Ali then issued a decree that resembled those of the sultan so much in style, formulation, and rigor that it did not leave much room for disobedience. Displaying, however, respect for procedures and an awareness of his limits, Ali did not address the decree to the *kadı*, but to a local notable, the *voyvoda* and the *serdar* (KS volume 103/page 14/entry 2 [27 May 1812]). “KS” stands for “Karaferye Sicilleri,” the registers of the Islamic court of Karaferye, kept in the Veroia branch of the General State Archives of Greece.
  9. See Halil İnalçık, “Adâletnâmeler” [Rescripts of Justice], *Belgeler* 2 (1965): 49–52; Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, ed. V. L. Ménage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 176–77, 227–28. See also Boğaç A. Ergene, “On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600–1800),” *Islamic Law and Society* 8:1 (2001): 52–87, on variant definitions of justice by the Ottoman state and seventeenth-century challengers of its authority and on how both sides used their versions of the notion of justice in order to legitimize the perpetuation of a status quo that favored them and promoted their interests.
  10. It is difficult to see to what extent the society’s view of order and the law concurred with that of the state. Marcus has argued that, for the society of Aleppo, order emanated from government authority and the rule of law (Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 73).
  11. Gerber has noted that the *kadı* court and the central government may have developed closer ties in the eighteenth century than before, but that the state

- still refrained from interfering with the legal procedure as such (Haim Gerber, *State, Society, and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994], 43–46). Cf. Ronald C. Jennings, “Limitations of the Judicial Powers of the Kadi in 17th c. Ottoman Kayseri,” *Studia Islamica* 50 (1979): 151–54.
12. On the centrality of the role of the *kadı* in provincial administration and local life, see Gerber, *State, Society, and Law*, 16, 55–57, 181.
  13. For an example of a contract from 1759, see KS 81/232/1.
  14. There are no reliable demographic data for late-eighteenth-century Karaferye. According to Felix Beaujour, the French consul in Salonica and a careful observer, the town was inhabited by 8,000 people, while Salonica, the *sancak* center, had 60,000 inhabitants (Louis-Auguste-Félix de Beaujour, *Tableau du commerce de la Grèce, formé d’après une année moyenne, depuis 1787 jusqu’en 1797*, vol. 1 [Paris: Ant.-Aug. Renouard, 1800], 128). William Leake, a British agent, estimated that around 2,000 families lived in Karaferye in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and noted that 1,200 of them were Greek (William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. 3 [London: J. Rodwell, 1835], 291). Indications from archival sources also suggest that the urban Muslim and Christian communities were of roughly equal sizes; on the other hand, the countryside was inhabited almost exclusively by Christians. The land was the main source of wealth, but crafts (especially the production of towels and bath sets) and commerce were also quite developed.
  15. According to a letter of appointment issued by the *ağa* of the janissaries, the *serdar* was the head of the local janissaries, *cebecis*, *topçus*, and *top arabacıs* of the district, but was also responsible for maintaining public order (KS 82/589/2 [28 February–8 March 1760]).
  16. Both remarks are corroborated by petitions, reports, and registers of the central bureaucracy (mainly the *Rumeli Ahkâm Defterleri* series) kept at the *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* in Istanbul.
  17. For an introduction to the Ottoman court registers see Suraiya Faroqhi, part 3 of s.v. “Sidjill,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). See also Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995), 10–11, for a succinct presentation of the limitations of the *sicil* material. It should always be kept in mind that decrees and other material entered in the court registers reflect, above all, the needs and perspectives of their issuers, and that they should be therefore treated cautiously.
  18. In an undated *ferman* of probably 1777 it was stated that the inhabitants of Karaferye had always been rough (Ioannes K. Vasdravelles, ed., *Historika Archeia Makedonias. B. Archeion Veroias–Naousses 1598–1886* [Historical Archives of Macedonia. II. Archive of Veroia–Naoussa 1598–1886] [Thessaloniki: Hetaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1954], 207–9).

19. It is not clear from the formulation of the decree whether the last-named was also a brother of Ali and Abdullah (*Elhacmehmedağazade Esseyyid Osman Beğ ve Mustafa Ağa'nın oğulları Hafız Ali ve Abdullah Ağa ve diğer Osman Ağa demekle ma'rif kimesneler*). As will be explained below, Osman Ağa is mentioned in only one of the two *fermans* about the incident.
20. Imprisonment was not a standard penalty for murder. According to *kanun*, criminals were imprisoned until the sultan decided on their proper penalty (Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, 301–3). On the other hand, imprisonment and banishment were not unusual penalties for people who had committed what today would have been called political crimes.
21. *Hakk-i abd* (or *hakk adamı*) is a technical legal term denoting the right or claim of a human being as opposed to the right of God (*hakk Allah*). Murder, bodily harm, and damage to property as well as the punishment demanded for them (retaliation, blood money, damages) fall under the “*hakk adamı*” category (Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964], 113, 176–77; Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law*, 204–7). In the Redhouse dictionary, *hukuk-i ibad* is translated as “rights due from man to man” (s.v. “*huqūq*,” *A Turkish and English Lexicon by Sir James W. Redhouse* [Istanbul: Printed for the American Mission by A. H. Boyajian, 1890]). I believe that in the present context the term is best rendered in English as “claims” or “damages.”
22. KS 98/131/2; a simplified Greek translation of this entry has appeared in Vasdravelles, *Historika Archeia Makedonias*, 223–24. It is important to know who the recipients of a decree were, because those were presumably the authorities and individuals that its issuer considered to be legally qualified to handle an affair.
23. Cf. Sadat, “Rumeli Ayanları,” 351; İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 41–42.
24. The phrase *ayan-i vilayet ve zabitan ve iş erleri* is largely formulaic, as it appears in many decrees of that time. Usually the officials who really were expected to play a part in the handling of an affair were singled out and their names were placed before the *ayans* and functionaries in the opening section of a decree.
25. A local *ayan* called Abdurrahman Ağa is known to have been repeatedly *mütesellim* of Salonica from the 1740s at least to the early 1770s (Antonios Anastasopoulos, “Imperial Institutions and Local Communities: Ottoman Karaferye, 1758–1774,” Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1999, 107–8). Eighteenth-century *mütesellims* were often selected from among local notables (İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization,” 31–35).
26. The term *eşkiya* was not reserved for robbers or bandits, but for outlaws in the wider sense. For instance, the janissaries were termed *eşkiya* in the decree concerning the suppression of the corps in 1826 (Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Cen-

- ture,” *Die Welt des Islams* 22 [1982]: 27), and, generally speaking, everybody outside the bounds of legality was called so. Bandits were usually specified in the entries of the Ottoman registers of Karaferye as *haydut eşkiyası* (see also Eyal Ginio, “The Administration of Criminal Justice in Ottoman Selânik (Salonica) during the Eighteenth Century,” *Turcica* 30 [1998]: 201). Gerber renders “*fitne*” as “civil war” and “social disturbance” (Gerber, *State, Society, and Law*, 106, 228).
27. KS 98/143. A Greek translation (with some mistakes) of this entry, too, has appeared in Vasdravelles, *Historika Archeia Makedonias*, 224–25.
28. The *ayans* were included among the addressees of most *buyrulduş* issued by the authorities of Salonica, but were absent from most *fermans*.
29. The meaning is not very clear at this point. The *ilam* was sent initially to a *vekil* and then to the Porte (. . . *kaza-i mezbur naibi mevlana-i mumaileyhin vekilin tarafına vürud edüb bu defa deralियeme irsal olunan bir kır'a ilamından müsteban olmağla* . . .). Could this *vekil* be the former *mütesellim*?
30. Depending on how threatening a situation was assessed to be, the state might express its concern by sending troops to the region. Cf. Anastasopoulos, “Imperial Institutions and Local Communities,” ch. 5 (pp. 91–119). A somewhat modified version of this chapter has been published (unfortunately with some mistakes, mostly in definitions of terms) as “Lighting the Flame of Disorder: *Ayan* Infighting and State Intervention in Ottoman Karaferye, 1758–59,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (2002): 73–88.
31. At least in the sixteenth century, the Porte often had its decrees delivered to their recipients by officials who were experts on the particular topic that the decree was about (J. E. Matuz, “Transmission of Directives from the Center to the Periphery in the Ottoman State from the Beginning until the Seventeenth Century,” in *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Caesar E. Farah [Kirksville, Missouri: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1993], 21).
32. See telling examples of the tenacity of legalism in the Ottoman context in Ergene, “On Ottoman Justice,” 84, and Gerber, *State, Society, and Law*, 114, 138–40.
33. The *ferman* refers to oppression and abuses contrary to the sultan’s will but also to the illustrious sharia (*mugayir-i şariat-i garra*). Even though the state was aware of the undesirable side effects of dispatching officials to the provinces, it did not have any other mechanism of intervention in crises nor any means of preventing their misbehavior. The system relied on the right of the people to denounce such phenomena to the imperial council.
34. KS 98/158/2. Osman Ağa, the fourth member of the group, is not mentioned in this decree.
35. The name of the Islamic judge of Karaferye was never stated in state decrees of the second half of the eighteenth century. Some decrees referred to the *naib*

- of the town and others to the *kadı*. It is not certain that the authorities paid attention to who was actually serving at the time of issuing a decree.
36. The report submitted by the *mubayaacı* to the Porte was called *kaime* in the document. According to Pakalın, this type of document was issued by those higher in rank and sent to those lower in the hierarchy (Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, s.v. "kaime," *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* [Dictionary of Ottoman Historical Expressions and Terms], vol. 2 [Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1951]). However, here the *kaime* clearly followed the opposite direction.
  37. The three men not only had landed property, but also belonged to the aristocracy of the region. They pointed this out in their petition and the central authorities reproduced the term that the three men had used for themselves (*hanedanlade*) in the summary of their petition in the *ferman*.
  38. It was pointed out repeatedly in this section of the document that guilt should be proved in accordance with the sharia.
  39. The usual form of response to a simple private petition was not a *ferman*, but a rather short note on top of the text of the petition, and this is the way both texts were copied in the *kadı's* register.
  40. The 1780s belonged to an era of economic instability and inflation (Mehmet Genç, "L'économie ottomane et la guerre au XVIIIe siècle," *Turcica* 27 [1995]: 177, 180–82).
  41. For large-scale operations against Albanians in 1779, see Nicolas G. Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 30–31.
  42. This incident has been studied and analyzed by Eleni Gara, "Dolophonoi kai Dikastes sten Othomanike Veroia" [Murderers and Judges in Ottoman Veroia (Kara Ferye)], *IMEros* 1 (2001): 113–30.
  43. The *subaşı* was in fact a sort of deputy governor of Karaferye, since he was sitting in for the *voivoda-emin* appointed by the state to supervise its estate in the area.
  44. Cf. Gerber's comments about when the Ottoman state intervened in local affairs in his *State, Society, and Law*, 125–26.
  45. A case from Salonica seems to confirm that not every impressive murder of a powerful individual generated a crisis. Eyal Ginio's account of the incident gives the impression that the murder of a tax farmer and his retinue by their hosts near Salonica around 1740 did not require recourse to the provincial or central authorities until the heirs of the deceased sued the legal representatives of the inhabitants of the *kaza* not for the murder, but for the stolen money that was still missing. The two sides eventually reached a compromise through the agency of the *kethüda* of the governor of Salonica (Ginio, "The Administration of Criminal Justice in Ottoman Selânik," 206).
  46. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, 177, 181; Heyd, *Studies in Old Ot-*

- oman Criminal Law*, 205, 209, 241–42. In late-seventeenth-century Hızırli village near Salonica, the *ehl-i örf* detained a man in whose granary a murdered man was found, and set him free after the payment of a fine (Ginio, "The Administration of Criminal Justice in Ottoman Selânik," 204).
47. Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Life and Death of Outlaws in Çorum," in *Armağan-Festschrift für Andreas Tietze*, ed. Ingeborg Baldauf and Suraiya Faroqhi with Rudolf Vesely (Prague: Enigma Corporation, 1994), 67.
  48. *Ibid.*, 70–72.
  49. See footnote 30.
  50. Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 87–89.
  51. Ali Rüşdi was in earlier years the official *ayan* of Karaferye (KS 85/770/2 [12 July 1765]).
  52. See Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 85, for exile as a penalty for influential local figures who clashed with the state and its representatives or fell from grace, but also for the temporary nature of that measure. See also M. Çağatay Uluçay, "Sürgünler" [Exiles], *Belleten* 15 (1951): 511–32, for the reasons for which one could be banished and many relevant examples.
  53. KS 98/145/2 (30 July 1782).
  54. Cf. Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 189 ff.
  55. Issues connected with the setup of provincial administration were the least negotiable. Marcus has observed that, even though the state put great emphasis on the protection of the *reaya* from abuses, only one of the several petitions that the inhabitants of Aleppo sent to the central government against oppressive governors over the years resulted in the removal of a governor (Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, 98).
  56. See Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics and Society* 21 (1993): 406–11. The late eighteenth century coincides with the crisis of the malikânization process which had contributed to winning provincial loyalties for the state.
  57. Speaking of a seventeenth-century *Book of Complaints*, Gerber stresses the contractual nature of the obligation of the sultan to guarantee conditions of social justice to his subjects (Gerber, *State, Society, and Law*, 154).
  58. The fact that most surviving sources have been issued by the state and its representatives poses another problem, because we only learn the official view on how institutions worked, and cannot assess the importance of informal procedures and behind-the-scenes contacts or confirm the real weight of the *kadı* court.