
BOĞAZICI ÜNİVERSİTESİ DERGİSİ

Beşeri Bilimler — Humanities

Vol. 6 — 1978

THE SALE OF SLAVES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE : MARKETS AND STATE TAXES ON SLAVE SALES, SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Alan W. Fisher ^a

ABSTRACT

Slaves were bought and sold in markets throughout the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th century. Both large and small provincial cities, as well as İstanbul, had their esir pazarı, from Kefe in the Crimea, to Serbian, Anatolian and Arab cities. Provincial Kanunnames, mukataa records, and other Ottoman archival sources provide a good deal of information about the characteristics of such sales and the merchants who participated in this slave trade. These records also illuminate the role of the government in regulating such trade. The government set tax rates on sale, import and export, and transit transactions; established procedures for insuring equity and 'quality control;' and oversaw the operations of the slave merchants guild. Accounts by contemporary foreign tourists and official representatives give some insights into the characteristics of the markets in a few Ottoman cities while that of Evliya Çelebi describes the market in İstanbul itself. On the basis of both Ottoman and foreign sources, I have examined the workings of these markets and the governmental regulatory procedures in operation during these two centuries.

Our knowledge about slavery and slave systems in various parts of the world and at various times of its history has taken a quantum leap in the past thirty years. New historical interest in black America, Africa, various aspects of European and Asian imperial relations, all have required new methods of research and enormous investments of scholarly energy and inquiry. One of the benefits of this activity has been a new interest in slavery and its many different manifestations throughout the world.

^a Prof. Dr., Dept. of History, Michigan State University.

Marxist historians have shown the necessity of rewriting much of what we thought we knew about social classes in the ancient world; Charles Verlinden has shown us that slavery in Europe, and especially in its southern regions, continued to exist as a viable social and economic system well into the early modern period; recent analyses of pre-colonial African history have pointed to the conclusion that slavery there was not a European or imperial invention; even for the lands of south east Asia we now possess a great deal of information about pre-modern slavery.

How strange it is then that the subject of slavery and the slave trade in the Ottoman Empire is still at an embryonic level. For not only did a large proportion of slaves used in southern Europe, Africa and the Far East pass through this region as trade commodities, slaves were used extensively within the Empire itself. Part of the problem, I suspect, derives from the fact that until the past thirty years, our knowledge of Ottoman history was at such a primitive level, that of Lybyer, Gibb and Bowen, *et al*, that considerations of Ottoman social classes, economic structures, and sub-governmental life were relatively impossible to formulate.

At the present time, I am in the process of preparing a study of slavery and the slave trade in the Ottoman Empire, and find that source materials are plentiful enough, perhaps overly so, to allow such a study to be made, even on the level of our studies of slavery in Africa and East Asia. In this article, I wish to present some of my early findings concerning one part of this subject, that of the markets and the governmental regulation of the sale of slaves. As I hope to show with this essay, the trade in slaves was not unique to Istanbul; and the obvious conclusion will be that the use of slaves could therefore not be exclusively that of the government and its officials.

Slaves were bought and sold in the Empire in special markets called **esir pazarı**, located in most of the towns and cities of the state. These markets were most usually incorporated within the larger general market of the town, often comprising just a section, sometimes occupying their own building (**esir hanı**) adjacent to the market. It seems that only in Istanbul and Kefe (in the Crimea) were the slave markets self-contained units located some distance from the other city markets. In this essay I shall discuss the trade in slaves in these Ottoman areas, concentrating on the markets and their operation and the forms of government regulation of this trade through taxation and judicial procedure.

The most common form of information which scholars have been able to find, to date, about the slave trade in the Ottoman Empire concerns the markets themselves, and especially the one in the capital of Istanbul. This is true because of the vast amount of non-Ottoman source material found in travel accounts of Westerners who visited the Empire. It seems that there were certain "tourist attractions" which every visitor left compelled to see - today they are Topkapı Palace, the museum of St. Sophia, and the Blue Mosque; during the Ottoman period, it was the slave market of Istanbul.

Because of this fact we know more about the nature and the functioning of the Istanbul slave market than of any others in the Empire. This is in a sense unfortunate, for it is clear from the descriptions as well as from our knowledge about the role of slaves in the Ottoman capital, that this market was not necessarily similar to

those in other cities. Few of the slaves sold in Istanbul had other than domestic destinations - most were purchased for use in the harems of the elite or as personal servants; none seem to have been bought for use in either agriculture or industry.

Yet it is worthwhile, to provide some of the descriptions which the foreign 'tourists' gave, as the physical appearance of the market, the internal organization of its activities, likely provided a model for those in the provinces since it is known that almost all other urban institutions in Istanbul were studiously copied in provincial towns and cities even if their actual functions differed.

The origins of the slave market are not known from Ottoman sources, though it is likely that its location near the large *bedestan* or covered market meant that it occupied an area where the former Byzantine slave market had stood. Charles White, on the basis of hearsay evidence during his stay in Istanbul during the early nineteenth century, described its founding by Mehmet II in this way :

The Yesir Bazary (Esir pazarı - slave market) was established there by Sultan Mehmet II. During the first ten years after 1453, slaves were sold only in the streets. The market was started in these circumstances. Mehmet II on horseback passed by the street obstructed by slaves and dealers. His horse accidentally killed a female slave with a child in arms. The Sultan was much moved and ordered a regular market built under the supervision of his officers.¹

The earliest description of the Istanbul slave market which has come to light is that by Nicolas de Nicolay, prior to 1526. He wrote of the "Bezestan" thus :

There they sell an infinite number of poor Christian slaves of all ages and of both sex, in the same manner in which they sell horses. For those who wish to purchase a slave examine their eyes, their teeth, and all parts of their bodies. The slaves are displayed completely naked so that the purchaser may more easily determine their faults and imperfections. It is a pitiable and lamentable thing to observe. I went there three times; once I saw in one corner of the market, a Hungarian girl about 13 or 14 years old, not very beautiful, who was finally sold to an old Turkish Merchant for the price of 34 ducats.²

In 1573, Philippe du Fresne-Canaye visited Istanbul, and gave in his account of his voyage information similar to that presented by Nicolay: "At the small Bezesten are sold slaves of both sexes and from all parts of the world. Those who are to be sold may not be covered with any clothes; their faces must be free of all paint or powder. Prospective purchasers are permitted to examine them as closely as they wish including their 'secret parts.'³ For both Nicolay and du Fresne-Canaye, the most interesting aspect of the Istanbul slave market was the nudity of the merchandise and the methods used by buyers to examine the slaves. As 'tourists' neither seemed interested in the economic procedures of the marketplace, nor do we learn much about the actual physical nature of the market itself.

The Englishman, William Lithgow, visiting Istanbul in 1610, was especially taken with the slave market. He wrote :

"I have seen men and women as usually sold here in markets, as horses and other beasts are with us. The most part are Hungarians, Transylvanians, Carindians, Istrians and Dalmatian captives, and of other places besides, which they can overcome. Whome, if no compassionate Christian will buy or relieve; then must they either turn Turk or be addicted to perpetual slavery." Lithgowh related an experience that he had with a French sea captain who was in Istanbul for a couple of weeks; they both decided to "redeeme some poor Christian slave from Turkish captivity. Friday came, and he and I went to Constantinople, where the Market of the slaves being ready, we spent two hours in viewing and reviewing five hundred males and females. At last I pointed him to have bought an old man or woman, but his mind was contrary set, showing me that he would buy some virgln, or young widow, to save their bodies undeflowered with Infidels. The price of a virgln was too dear, for him being a hundred duckets, and widows were fare under, and at an easier rate; when we did visit and search them that we were mindfull to buy, they ware stipped starke naked before our eyes; where the sweetest face, the youngest age and whitest skin was greatest value and request. At last we fell upon a Dalmation widow, whose pittiful lookes and sprinkling tears struck my soul almost to the death for compassion: whereupon I grew earnest for her releaf and he hielding to my advice, she is bought and delievered unto him, her price 36 ducats."⁴

This description of a slave purchase does nothing to substantiate the claim by the author to have been primarily interested in freeing some Christians from captivity; indeed, there are numerous other instances in travel literature of Europeans purchasing slaves in Istanbul and taking them back to Europe, not as freemen, but as servants or worse.⁵

Baron Wratislaw, who himself was an Ottoman 'captive' for a few years in the early 17th century, did not hesitate to paint the market and its practices in a lurid light: Describing a new 'shipment' of slaves by sea, he writes:

"In the morning the Turks led away the tithe of the captives which belonged to the emperor and sent the rest to the Aurat (Avrat) bazaar for sale. There one buys the mother, another the child, another a boy, another a girl. In this market in one place sit old men, in another young men of ripe age, in another place boys;... whoever wishes to purchase a captive leads him into one of the separate rooms, which are built on the market place, strips him naked, inspects all his limbs, and if he likes him, buys him."⁶

Far more useful descriptions of the slave market exist than those of the travellers mentioned above. Often these are found in the memoirs of Europeans who lived in Istanbul in either the Sultan's service or as representatives of their governments abroad. While not the earliest account, that of Robert Withers, from the first decade of the seventeenth century, gives more information about the market than any other before him.

"The Turkes may buy of all sorts of slaves of every religion, and use them as they please (killing onely accepted) which the Christians and Jewes

there may not doe; for they have libertie only to buy Christians and Jewes. There is for this purpose in Constantinople a bezisten, that is, a common publike market, where every Wednesday there are bought and sold slaves of all sorts, and every one comes freely, to buy for their severall uses; some for nurses, some for servants, and some for their lustfull appetites; for they which make use of slaves for their sensualitie cannot bee punished by the justice, as they should bee if they were taken with free women, and with Turkish women especally. These slaves are bought and sold, as beasts and cattle are, they being viewed and reviewed, and felt all about their limmes and bodies, as if they were so many horses, then they are examined of what countrey they are, and what they are good for; either for sewing, spinning, weaving, and the like; buying sometimes the mother with the children, and sometimes the children without the mother, sometimes two or three brothers together, and againe, sometimes taking the one and leaving the rest, using no termes of love, regard, or honestie, but even as the buyer or the seller shall thinke, will best turne them to profit. Now when there is a virgin that is beautifull and faire, shee is held at a high rate, and is sold for farre more than any other; and for securitie of her virginitie, the seller is not onlye bound to the restitution of the money (if she prove otherwise) to him that bought her; but is for his fraud fined at a summe of money. In the bezisten there sitteth an eemeen, that is, a customer (customs official), who receives custome of the buyers and sellers which amounteth to reasonable summe in the space of a yeere."⁷

Although it is likely that alterations were continuously made in the market's physical structure, Charles White's description of the building itself as it looked in the 1830s does not disagree in any detail with earlier less vivid descriptions.

"It is entered by a large wooden gate, from 8 am to mid-day, except Fridays when it is closed to purchasers. This gate is guarded by a Capiji (Kapıcı) whose duty it is to watch persons passing to and fro, and to give alarm should slaves attempt to escape. This is nearly impossible as the chambers or cells are locked up soon after mid-day and the laws relating to the abstraction or harboring of runaway slaves are harsh. Its interior is an irregular quadrangle; its southern extremity is in ruins and serves as a receptacle for filth and rubbish. In the center is a detached building. Its upper portion contains lodgings for the slavedealers, and underneath are cells for the ajamee (apprentice slave dealers). Attached to it is a coffehouse and near it is a halfruined mosque. Around the three habitable sides of the court runs an open colonnade, supported by wooden columns, and approached by steps at the angles. Under the colonnade are platforms, separated from each other by low railings and benches. On these, dealers and customers may be seen seated during business hours smoking and discussing prices.

Behind these platforms are ranges of small chambers, divided into two compartments by a trellice work, raised about three feet above the ground. The rest serves as passage and cooking space. The front portion is generally tenanted by black, and the back by white slaves. In the chambers are found only females. Those to the north and west are for the second-hand negresses (arab), or white woman (boiaz) and for slaves who have

been previously purchased and instructed, and are sent to be resold, perhaps for a second or third time. The hovels to the east are reserved for newly imported negresses, or black and white women of low price. The platforms are divided from the chambers by a narrow alley on the wall side of which are benches, where black women are exposed for sale. This alley serves as a passage of communication and walk for the dellal (brokers or criers) who sell slaves by auction and on commission. In this case the brokers walk around, followed by slaves, and announce the price offered. Purchasers, seated upon the platforms, then examine, question, and bid, as suits their fancy, until at length the woman is sold or withdrawn... Underneath these galleries are ranges of cells, or rather vaults, infectiously filthy and dark. These on the right are reserved for second hand males; the furthest and worst being destined for those who from bad conduct, are condemned by the Kihaya (kethuda) to wear chains, a punishment inflicted upon women as well as men in aggravated cases; such as theft, outrageous conduct, contempt of decency, maltreating their companions in captivity, attempting to set fire to the building, and other offences committed within the walls. The central cells and those on the east side are reserved for male slaves newly imported.⁸

It is interesting that not all of the Europeans who viewed the proceedings in the Istanbul slave market were upset by what they saw. In this regard, Louis Deshayes who visited the market in 1621, did not condemn the sale of slaves there; indeed, he noted that Christians such as himself were discriminated against by the Ottoman authorities by not being permitted to purchase slaves themselves. He did admit that often Christians were able to find an Ottoman 'friend' to conduct the purchase for them.⁹

One Englishman who visited Istanbul in the 1830s wrote in his memoirs that "We took the slave market in on our road home, where, however, we saw none of the disagreeable objects which such a name usually conjures up in the imagination from the descriptions one hears of slavery in other parts of the world. The countenances of the poor women here expressed nothing of that extreme dejection at being torn from their country and their friends..."¹⁰

Miss Pardoe wrote of her trip in 1836:

"there is nothing either to distress or to disgust in the slave market of Constantinople... no wanton cruelty, no idle insult is permitted; the slaves, in many instances select their own purchaser from among the bidders.... The Negroes only remain in the open court, where they are squatted in groups, until summoned to shew themselves to a purchaser; while the Circassians and Georgians, generally brought there by their parents at their own request, occupy the closed apartments, in order that they may not be exposed to the gaze of the idlers who throng the court. ...They made their odious bargain seriously and quietly; and left the market, followed by the slaves whom they had purchased, without one act of wanton cruelty, or unnecessary interference."¹¹

From our knowledge of other Ottoman markets (hans), combined with the information provided above, we can make a good estimate of the nature and size

of the Istanbul slave market. Unfortunately, though, neither it nor even its foundations survive today.

A leading Turkish architectural historian, E. H. Ayverdi, gives the following information about the Istanbul slave market: "The Esir Pazarı hani was located beside the mosque of Atik Ali Paşa, in the Tavuk pazarı (Chicken market). It was originally built on the foundations of a home of someone called Süleyman Paşa. Nothing of it remains today."¹² He does not venture to give a description of its physical characteristics. Apparently, soon after its official closing in 1849, it was either torn down or was consumed in one of the numerous fires in that part of the city.

A large han, located near the present-day Vezir hanı, Esir pazarı was completely enclosed by a wall composed of a number of cells in two stories. It was in these cells that the slaves for sale were housed. In the center of the han, originally there had been a small mosque and fountain (similar to the arrangement in the **Kuzey han** in Bursa). Beside the mosque a large platform for display of slaves to be auctioned stood. The han was entered through one gate, apparently closed at all times except in the morning hours. At the gate was a small office where the **pazar emini** (director of the market) served his functions.

We know almost nothing of the actual operations of the han from its early period; one may presume, however, that slaves would not be kept in the han for long as the turnover seemed to be regular.

Charles White, again, gives a glimpse of the actual operation of the **esir pazarı** in 1830 :

When weather permits, the newly imported black females are called forth, mats spread in front of the central building and are seated unveiled in groups and lines to await purchasers. The dress of these poor creatures, mostly young girls from 10 to 15 years of age, consists of red striped cotton handkerchief twined round the head, a pair of coarse linen drawers, and common arab or egyptian linen abba (wrapper) which serves as veil and robe. Some wear brass anklets and bracelets riveted on the leg or arm.

The chambers to the north and west are occupied by second-hand slaves. When black women are thus resold, their value often increases, because they have generally been instructed in domestic duties, especially culinary art, for which purpose they are employed in all families where male artists do not form a part of the household. But the value of white women generally decreases from 20 to 40 % as no one parts with a female of this color unless from profligate motives or incorrigible defects....

The slave receives two piasters per day for maintenance, and from 7 to 30 per month for lodging, which latter sum is paid to the kihaya. The dealer receives a small percentage and the dellal a fee, amounting together to about 5 %. Slaves, especially females, are usually sent well clothed by their owners, in order to set them off to better advantage; but purchasers must return all articles, except the veil, as law only directs that he should receive his purchase decently covered.

The bazar is under strict regulations and severe internal scrutiny. It has its sheikh, kihaya, and vekil, its brokers, watchmen, and police, and is a

vakıf attached to the mosque of Mohammed II [actually to Aya Sofya]. All merchants besides rent for lodging themselves and the slaves, pay a trifling head tax on each slave to that mosque. These men are little respected. The greater part are Arabs, whose countenances are as mean and forbidding as their trade is execrable. Newly imported white slaves are never sent to this bazar. On landing from Circassia, whence they arrive in small coasting vessels, by tens or twenties, under the charge of Circassian conductors, they are landed at Tophane where the merchants of that country take up their abode, and may be seen lounging about the coffee houses in that quarter. Hither the Turkish dealers proceed and purchase on speculation.

Later White writes :

"In due time, my Turkish companion, affecting a desire to purchase, said he wanted to see the dealer's stock. The latter rose, after a short time returned. Presently, the door curtain held back, and in glided a string of eleven girls, who placed themselves in line before us. Of these, only three were remarkable for personal attractions. They had all large feet, red and bony hands, strong features, and coarse complexions.... They wore a small flat fez, encircled by bright colored handkerchiefs on their heads, a veil of coarse muslin thrown over these....

They appeared neither bashful nor disturbed at our close inspection, yet nothing forward or immodest in their manner. Their exposure was a matter of course.¹³

Two other European accounts of the same period corroborate White's description. First, an anonymous author of a travel diary wrote "the bazaar forms a hollow square with little chambers, about fifteen feet each way around it, in which the slaves belonging to the different dealers are kept. A large shed or portico projects in front, under which and in front of each chamber is a raised platform, with a low railing around it where the slave merchants sit and gossip."¹⁴

And secondly, Spencer in 1839 described the "bazaar for the sale of female slaves" thus: "a large quadrangular court, two stories high, surrounded by a portico, with a gallery above; each story contains a range of small cells similar to those in a monastery. The ground floor is for the blacks; the one above for the beauties of Circassia, Georgia, and Greece."¹⁵

As with almost all trades in Ottoman Society, that of slaves was conducted by merchants who were organized in an officially organized guild. The most important source of information about the slave dealers guild in Istanbul is found in the account by Evliya Çelebi, an Ottoman gentleman who left a ten-volume travelogue describing most of the parts of the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the seventeenth century.¹⁶ He says that the Esir pazarı was operated by a guild of slave dealers (Esirciyan) which numbered in his day about 2000. Of these, most were watchmen, gatekeepers, apprentices, with only thirty-nine actual slave dealers approved by the government. Interestingly, seven of the thirty nine were women. In addition to these thirty-nine, there were seventeen registered 'hawkers' (Esirci dellalları). Evliya also mentions the

market officials in charge of maintaining decorum and order, called the *esnaf-ı emanet-i esirhane*, which he says included one *ağa*, four hundred *nefer*, a *kethüda*, *şeyh* and *çavuş*.

The market contained, according to *Evliya Çelebi*, some three hundred wooden rooms (the cells mentioned by *White* and others). Beside the heavy iron gates of the market was the office of the *Esirhane emini* (the 'emean' mentioned by *Withers*), whose duty it was to oversee the collection of the governmental tax on the sale of slaves. His income in the mid-seventeenth century was five *Kese* (each approximately 500 *kuruş* - each *kuruş* in turn worth 80 *akçe*, for a total of 200,000 *akçe*). At a tax of 100 *akçe*s per slave, his salary alone required the sale of 2000 slaves a year. Other officials included the *Esirciler kethüdası* (the *kahya* of the European accounts - the steward of the slave dealers guild) and the *Çavuş* (in charge of maintaining the market's security force.)

Robert Mantran and others have claimed that all of the members of this guild in *Istanbul* were Jews, after a mention of that by *Evliya Çelebi*.¹⁷ Yet a list of the dealers and 'hawkers' from the mid-seventeenth century shows all of these two categories to have been Muslims.

Males

Uzunyusuf Mahallesinden Yakub Çelebi; Damadı Ali bin Kurd; Nailbend Mahallesinden Anahtarçı Ali Bey; Kocamustafapaşada Hacıhatun Mahallesinden Seyyid Mehmed bin İbrahim; Samanveren Mahallesinden Ahmed Çelebi bin Ramazan; Cezeri Kasım Mahallesinden Kasım bin Mustafa; Mahmud Paşa Mahallesinden İbrahim bin Ahmed; Mahmud Paşa M. Veli bin Hasan; Hüseyinağa M. Kaymakioğlu Veli; Dayahatun M. Ahmed Mirza; Tatlıkuyu M. Topal Mehmed Dede; Mahmud Paşa M. Hıdır bin nayet; Deyahatun M. Ali bin Yakub; Camımurad M. Hüseyin bin Hacı Hasan; Mahmud Paşa M. Mehmed bin Abdullah; Fırzağa M. Seyyid Mustafa bin Nasuh; Mahmud Paşa M. Ahmed bin Mahmud; Mahmud Paşa M. Mehmed bin Abdülkerim; Mahmud Paşa M. Mehmed bin Mustafa; Mahmud Paşa M. Muharrem bin Hasan; Mahmud Paşa M. Ahmed Bey in Mustafa; Tophaneden İbrahim bin Mehmed; Süleymaniyeden Kastamonulu Bodur Ali; Emir Buhari M. Ahmed bin Ali; Odalarbaşından Abdi bin Ali; Tophanede Tomtom M. Hacı Mehmed bin Hüseyin; Kürkçübaşı M. Hasan bin Mehmed; Haticesultan M. Hamza bin İbrahim; Çakırağa M. Hacı Abdülkadir bin Mustafa; Küçükayasofyadan Süleyman Beşe; Balabanağa M. Muharrem bin Mustafa;

Female dealers :

Süleymaniyeden Alime Hatun; Valide Hanımından Amine Hatun; Etmeydanında Fırzağa M. Hamamcıkızı Safiye; Denizhamamı M. Rukiye Hatun; Soğanağa M. Fatma Hatun; Eminbey M. Saim Hatun; and Sofular M. Hayri Hatun.

Hawkers :

Muradpaşadan Ali bin Veli; Sediboy M. İsmail Çelebi; Nuridede M. Hacı Hasan bin Mustafa; Peykhane M. Baba Safer; Mahmud Paşada Çeşniğir Oda-

larından Karıoğlu Safer; Hasaneferdi M. Arnavud Hasan; Kurdağa M. Hamza bin Abdullah; Cezerikasım Paşadan Mustafa bin Mahmud; Yayla Yokuşundan Mustafa bin Mehmed; Langadan Hamza bin Abdullah; Langadan Bayram bin Abdullah; Kabasakal M. Safer Beşe bin Gedik Ali Beşe; Kabasakal M. Hacı Hasan; Kabasakal M. Kastamonulu Ali Beşe; Kabasakal M. Hacı Mustafa; Gedikpaşadan Siyavuş bin Abdullah.¹⁸

Examining this list, one finds some interesting facts. First, of the slave dealers themselves, none were non-Muslims and only one appears to have been a convert to Islam (the one with the patronymic Abdullah). In addition, two had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Nine lived in the quarter of Mahmud Paşa, which is located adjacent to the Covered Bazaar and beside the han of the ragpickers. It is approximately 1/2 kilometer from the location of the *esir pazarı*. One was a derviş, (the Dede). Only two lived in oTphane where, presumably, the Circassian and Russian slaves were unloaded and first processed. Of the hawkers, five were converts to Islam and three had made the pilgrimage; one was an Albanian and so identified. Four of the 17 lived in the quarter of Kabasakal, which was located just adjacent to the *esir hane*.

A number of Ottoman governmental decisions concerning the operations of the slave market in Istanbul have come to light which give glimpses into the operations of the market and the slave dealers guild and also into some of the problems which both it and the government were facing at the time. One of these, dealing with prostitution in the slave market, reads :

"Some unseemly men and women have appeared and have mixed in with the Istanbul slave dealers. These learn of people who want to sell their male and female slaves, take their slaves on commission, and bring them to the slave market. They make certain arrangements before the auction with some bachelors. These come to the market in the guise of customers, bid very high prices for the agreed-upon slaves. After the auction is over, the bachelors ask for a trial period, to check on the slave's abilities; they leave a deposit and take the slaves to their homes.

After a few days of using them, the bachelors give the slaves a few things as gifts, then take them back to the seller, saying they did not want them. They forfeit the deposit, which in reality thus turns out merely to have been a fee for a middleman for prostitution.

Some slave hawkers also, in the above mentioned manner, bring their slave girls to auction, pretend to sell them and turn them over to bachelors, who in turn eventually forfeit deposits given. The slave hawkers then fake back their slave girls. The honest slave dealers have made these complaints to the *Divan-i hümayun*. In a *ferman* addressed to the Istanbul *kadı* it is ordered that this dishonesty be forcefully stopped."¹⁹

In 1595, an edict was issued which attempted to reform some 'unsuitable' practices among the slave dealers :

"Slave dealers are hereby prohibited from applying either white face paint or rouge to slave girls, and may not cover the girls up with excessive clothing."

And : "Any clothing that appears on any slaves, male or female, must be given to the buyer along with the slave."²⁰

An important edict was issued in 1604 by the Kadı of Istanbul concerning the slave trade :

"It has been learned that slave dealers have come to the Sultan's court city (Istanbul) and have been selling slaves to Jews and Christians, have been selling slaves to the ambassador of the Şah of Iran, to Jews, Christians and Kızılbaş in the Bedistan; some of these slave dealers have been women; even some members of the class of Sipahi and Janissary have been dealing in slaves and sending these slaves to other countries; it is important that the security officials stop all of these practices and evict such unseemly persons from the slave market. It is prohibited that anyone from either Sipahi or Janissary classes and other non-registered dealers be allowed to sell in the slave market. And further, it is prohibited that any slaves be sold by anyone to Jews, Christians or Kızılbaş. Forthwith the Kethüda of the Bedestan is given the authority to investigate these practices, and to rectify the situation."²¹

In the same year, the Istanbul Kadı also tried to tighten up the regulations concerning the locations where slaves could be sold in Istanbul: saying that only in the slave market, and under the close scrutiny of the government officials could any legal sales of slaves take place. The edict indicated that the purpose of this law was both to ensure that no Muslims would be sold as slaves and that the government would not lose any of its expected income from taxes on such sales. The edict indicates that the matter had been originally raised by the slave dealers guild. The latter claimed that unauthorized individuals were trying to sell slaves in Istanbul who did not belong to the guild. They were thus cheating the government of its tax income and were committing various frauds in selling "defective" and "doctored" slaves to unsuspecting customers at "bargain rates."²²

That the new regulations were more difficult to enforce than issue is apparent from the fact that again in 1634, the guild complained to the government about the same practices occurring. The new complaint charged that people who were not members of the guild were trying to sell in Istanbul individuals who were 'free born', even Muslim, to unsuspecting purchasers.²³ Finally, in 1636 the Kadı of Istanbul issued a new decree ordering that another investigation be made of the general question of slave trade in the capital city. It had "come to his attention" that slaves were being sold in many quarters of the city, without government control, and that unsuspecting purchasers were obtaining slaves who were legally entitled to free status. But it was also known to the government that the officially registered slave dealers were misbehaving too - the illegal practices of hiding slaves' defects through "rouge and face paint, excessive clothing" etc. was all too common a practice. It was no doubt a result of the investigations following this Kadı's orders that brought about a reorganization of the guild, the 'weeding out' of unseemly members, undertaken in 1641.²⁴

This reorganization of the slave dealers guild was made at the beginning of the reign of Sultan İbrahim under orders of the Kadı of Istanbul. According to this reor-

ganization, a list was made of the dealers, their place of residence was inscribed on government registers (the list above comes from this source). The text of the reorganization points out some more problems that the guild was experiencing :

"There are more than one hundred male and female slave dealers. However, among them are some tricksters, unsuitable characters, and bankrupt individuals. Especially among the female slave dealers one finds that the majority are not honest. These latter charge exorbitant prices and even sell Muslim slave girls. They allow the ambassadors of Poland and Moldavia and other rich individuals the use of the slave girls [as prostitutes]. These individuals have been evicted from the slave dealers guild. The honest and pious slave dealers who remain number 33 male, 8 female slave dealers and 19 slave hawkers. All of these will be mutually responsible for the upholding of the regulations. Henceforth if any one acts in an illegal manner, all will be held jointly responsible."²⁵

But the situation seemed to be unsolvable by such regulations. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century (up to the official closing of the market in 1849), edicts by the government continued to appear which dealt with the very same violations. In 1714, an order was issued which apparently recognized the inevitability of non Muslims' buying and owning slaves, and issued a set of taxes which should be collected by the government for such purchase and ownership.²⁶

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the government made one last effort to stop the sale of slaves to non-Muslims, especially to foreigners. It was prohibited (in an undated document, but from the mid-century) to sell such slaves either to Jews, Christians, or Frenks.²⁷

Outside of Istanbul, the slave market far which the greatest amount of evidence has surfaced is that of Kefe in the Crimea.²⁸ Here, as in Istanbul, a large number of foreign travellers viewed the proceedings and many left written accounts of what they saw. The most complete account is by Mikhail Litvin, who saw Kefe in the late sixteenth century, and who described the city as "a monster which drinks our blood," that is, a place where many of his co-nationals and co-religionists were sold as slaves.²⁹ Litvin reported that every Crimean town gave over a portion of its central market to the sale of slaves. The slave merchants represented a variety of nationalities and included Turks, Jews, Greeks, and Armenians.³⁰

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, when France became interested in the Crimean question and in relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Jesuit missionaries and official consuls were sent to the court of the Crimean Khan and to the Ottoman town of Kefe, to examine, report on, and to attempt to influence a change in the slave traffic there. They left considerable memoir literature and official reports to the government which have been well examined by G. Veinstein.³¹

The vast bulk of the information they provide concerns the sale of slaves in the Crimea. The picture they paint of the market and its commodity is a bleak one indeed. Here it is clear that the ultimate destination of most of the slaves was neither domestic service nor harem work, but either agricultural labor or galley service

as rowers. The facilities in the vast market complex in Kefe were set up to handle much larger numbers than the market in Istanbul; slaves were 'housed' in large warehouses, and were sold in bulk.

Corroborating these impressions by foreigners, official Ottoman documents which mention the slave market in Kefe discuss problems which do not occur in those dealing with the Istanbul market. Many are requests, orders, or decrees demanding an increase in the supply of these slaves, the need for ever increasing numbers for the Sultan's navy, encouragement to both Crimean Tatars and Çerkes from the Caucasus to intensify their efforts at increasing the supply, and so forth. One interesting such decree, from 1586, to the governor of Kefe province, requests him to ease customs and other formalities for a ship coming from Sohum in the Caucasus bearing many "much needed slaves." The captain, Seydi Reis, is to be treated royally, and his cargo processed 'without delay.'³²

Other towns in the Crimea had their slave markets too, as Litvin had indicated. Azak (Azov), Taman, Kerc, Gözleve, and Anapa all served as primary ports for the export of slaves; many went from there on to Kefe for further sale, though there is evidence that some shiploads were sent directly to Istanbul.³³

The French medical advisor to the Crimean Court at the beginning of the 18th century, said of Temruk: "here Greeks, Arminians, Jews sell all slaves coming from Circassia."³⁴

Documents giving us only tantalizing hints about the slave markets in other centers of the Empire include an order to the governors of the provinces of Bursa, Edirne and Salonika in 1559 to make sure that all government taxes were being collected in their cities' slave markets;³⁵ one to the governor of Bolu province in central Anatolia to make sure that slaves originating from Kefe and Tatar sources were in fact not Muslims at the time of their enslavement;³⁶ a decree in 1590 to the governor of Tiflis in Georgia to make an investigation into that city's slave market to see if "any of the local population were being illegally enslaved" by greedy local merchants;³⁷ and one directed to the governor of Gallipoli on the Dardanelles demanding that hawkers in the local slave market "operate according to the laws and pay the required taxes; if they do not, they should be expelled from the market."³⁸

One sees in the account of the Vakıf supporting the mosque of Davud Paşa in Istanbul, the income in the mid 18th century from the slave market in Üsküp (Skopje). It amounted to 20,000 akçes.³⁹

On one occasion, a ship from France ran aground near Ağrıboz; the unfortunate sixteen crewmen were immediately seized by the local governor and sold in that town's slave market for the governor's own profit. The reaction of the government to this event was only that the governor was responsible himself for sending the 'customs' tax to Istanbul which was due for this "importation of slaves."⁴⁰

The markets of Cairo and Alexandria likewise were apparently booming slave markets; here there were black slaves as well as whites from Russia and the Caucasus. One Joseph Pitts saw the market in Cairo in 1685 and described it thus :

"a particular place where a market is held twice a week for the selling of Christian slaves which are brought by merchants from Turkey and were taken mostly by the Tatars. They are for the most part only women and children, for the men slaves are generally kept in Turkey for the service of the gallees. These slaves brought here to be sold are most of them Muscovites and Russians, and from those parts, and some of the Emperor of Germany's country. The boys, whose heads are shaved, when they stand in the market have a lock of hair, one part under their caps, the other hanging down their cheeks, to signify they are newly taken and are yet Christians. Although women and maidens are veill'd, yet the chapmen have liberty to view their faces and to put their fingers into their mouths to feel their teeth, and also to feel their breasts. Further it is sometimes permitted by sellers in a modest way to be search'd whether they are virgins or no." 41

A quite different sort of documentary evidence about the slave markets in the Ottoman Empire comes from the fact that all transfers of property between individuals were closely regulated by the government. The economic system itself was a highly complex one whose main features were determined both by the strictures of Islamic law and the practicalities of administering a huge empire. The former emphasized the rights and needs of the community as a whole; the latter took cognizance of the fact that the Empire comprised a number of communities each having different pre-Islamic and pre-Ottoman patterns of development and traditions, and each representing often quite different economic and demographic resources.

Thus we find Ottoman provinces subject to Empire-wide economic regulations and participating in an Empire-wide market system defined and regulated by officials in the capital; yet at the same time, each of the provinces operated socially and economically as a unit subject to laws and practices unique to that area. That conflicts arose between these two potentially incompatible concepts and patterns of organization was inevitable; yet the great strength of the Ottoman system derived at least in part from the success which central administrators had in overcoming these conflicts - that is until the end of the seventeenth century when the Empire in all of its areas showed measurable evidence of decline.

A further complicating factor arose from the fact that not all of the Ottoman provinces enjoyed the same political relationship to the central government; indeed, a case could be made for the proposition that every province had its own special relationship with Istanbul. For example, in Egypt, the administration was shared between representatives of a local dynasty which had long preceded the Ottoman conquest and governors sent directly from Istanbul; the Crimean Khanate never was completely absorbed by the Empire and its Khans maintained most of the trappings of sovereignty well into the eighteenth century; the Danubian principalities were 'vassal' states, not provinces; Tunis and Algiers maintained their own separate administrations and were only loosely tied to the center; even Istanbul itself was administered as a 'province' with its own governor and administration separate from that housed in Topkapı Palace.

The Ottoman legal system which permitted this combination of central power and provincial separatism was defined by a series of law 'codes' called by the Ottomans

Kanunnames. These 'codes' which were issued by various Ottoman Sultans were general in nature and set basic standards for economic and social practice.⁴² In addition to these laws concerning practices expected throughout the Empire, each province or *eyalet* of the Empire was given its own special **Kanunname**. These, while not incompatible with the Empire-wide codes, contained laws which took into account local peculiarities - differing economic structures and different pre-Ottoman legal traditions. Soon after each area was first conquered and transformed into an Ottoman province, a census was made to provide the central administration with important social and economic data upon which it could base its administrative reorganization. Often bound together with these censuses, called **Tahrir defterleri**, was the new **Kanunname** pertaining to that province.

From an examination of these **Tahrirs** and **Kanunnames**, many of which still exist for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one may determine those areas of the Empire in which the slave trade flourished, its nature and in a general way its extent. It is not surprising that those areas which had specialized in the slave trade prior to the Ottoman conquest can be seen to have continued in that specialization, for the Ottomans did not try to make major economic changes in the newly conquered territories. The slave trade occurred primarily in the province of Kefe which comprised the southern shore of the Crimean peninsula as well as the region around Azov; in the Arab provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; in the major trading cities of the Balkan provinces; and in Istanbul itself. Though a small amount of slaves seem to have been bought and sold in the vast majority of Ottoman towns too.

From examinations of many of the existing **Tahrir defters** one can find that there were a number of different taxes collected on the slave trade in varying amounts according to the province. The most complete information on taxes on the slave trade comes from the **Tahrir defters** for Kefe, two of which have survived from the sixteenth century.⁴³

Among the taxes collected in Kefe were the following: general import tax (customs-gümrük) of 210 akçes per slave, half to be paid by the seller, half by the merchant buyer; this tax was only 200 akçes if the slaves were imported from Taman'; and it was lowered to 75 akçes if the slave was under the age of seven. In addition, a tax called the 'adet-i tesyin (for a slave 'covered with a skull cap') of twelve akçes; a tax of the 'tower' of two akçes per slave (this tax was also levied on sheep at the rate of 1 akçe per eight sheep, and on cows at the rate of 1 akçe per two cows); a dock tax (resmi köprü) of 27 akçes per slave unless the slave was imported from Kerç or Taman'; a cartage tax (dellaliye) of 34 akçes per slave (of which 20 went to the treasury, 10 to the hawker, and 4 to the pious foundation of the mosque of Kasım Paşa in Kefe).

Other taxes on slaves in Kefe province included the following: slaves imported to Kerç from Taman', Azak or "tatar country" were charged at the rate of 32 akçes per slave; slaves sold in Taman' whose destination was Kefe were charged at the rate of 38 akçes per slave of which 34 came from the buyer and four from the seller; and finally, slaves exported from Kefe and sent to Taman' were also charged at the rate of 38 akçes per slave.⁴⁴

For two other provinces the Kanunnames give quite a lot of information about taxes on the slave trade, that of the port of Akkırman in the province of Silistre (1569) and of the province of Bagdad, from 1580.

The portion of the kanunname from Akkırman dealing with slaves reads as follows :

"For a slave, who has a title deed, arriving from Kefe or Gözleve (In the Crimea) a customs tax will be charged. For slaves who have attained puberty, the tax will be 78 akçes; for those between the age of 7 and puberty, 39 akçes; and for those under the age of 7, 20 akçes. In addition to this there will be no other taxes charged, such as the damga (official), miyancik (intermediary), resmi köprü (dock tax) or resmi mühür (seal tax). In the case of a slave arriving who lacks a title deed and whose owner does not wish to sell him, an import tax is collected. For a slave who has achieved puberty, 193 akçes; for one between the age of seven and puberty, 93 akçes, and for one under the age of seven, 47 akçes. If such a slave, lacking a title deed, is to be sold, the tax will be collected for the one who has attained puberty at the rate of 203 akçes, for the slave between 7 and puberty, 100 akçes; and for the slave under the age of seven, 47 akçes. Beyond these taxes no others will be collected. Slaves arriving at Akkırman port from the lands of the Tatars will be taxed thus: puberty and over 215 akçes; between the age of 7 and puberty, 103 akçes and under the age of 7, 51 akçes. After the collection of all of the above taxes, those slaves going on to a further destination by land will be taxed at the rate of 24 akçes for those of puberty and 12 akçes for those not having attained puberty as a dock tax (resmi-köprü). Slaves which will be sold in the market in Akkırman will be taxed thus: a market fee (bac-ı pazar) of 4 akçes per slave will be paid by the purchaser. At the Akkırman port an emin resides beside the han (market). He will not collect anything from slaves coming from Kefe or Gözleve, but if they come without a title deed, he will collect for a slave who has attained puberty a damga of 160 akçes and for one between the age of 7 and puberty, 80 akçes, and from a slave under the age of 7, 40 akçes.⁴⁵

A shorter and less complex set of taxes on slave trade is found in the kannunname of Bagdat from the year 1580. It reads, in a section entitled "Male and Female white and black slaves" as follows: "White male and female slaves who arrive into the city are taxed for the government at the rate of 80 akçes and for the local official 4 akçes; and for black male and female slaves 40 akçes for the government and 4 for the official. If these slaves have no title deed, an additional 1% damga and 4 akçes for the official are collected."⁴⁶

From the above Tahrir entries, and from many others, one may see that a variety of taxes were collected; and the amounts collected varied greatly from one province to another. They fall into three basic categories: an import tax or customs, called at times gümrük, and others pencik; a transit tax, for slaves passing through the jurisdiction, called in some cases the bac-ı ubur and others resmi geçüd; and finally a market tax called the bac-ı pazar. In only the cases of Kefe and Akkırman was I able to find examples of the resmi köprü (or dock tax), or the dellaliye (or cartage tax) applied to slaves. What is remarkable is that there were few Tahrirs that have been

studied which do not have some taxes on the slave trade in at least one or two areas within a province's jurisdiction; the trade seems to have been extremely widespread throughout the Empire.

The following lists of localities which have provisions for the collection of one or another of these taxes on the slave trade may be used for two purposes: to notice the varying amounts and taxes collected; and to show at least a sampling of the areas within the Ottoman Empire where the slave trade existed.⁴⁷

Location	Date	Amount
Abatı	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Adana	1572	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Akça Kazanık	late 15th century	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Ağatabolu	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Ağrıboz	1569	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Anbolu	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Aydın	1623	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Ayuraca	1568	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Babadag	late 15th century	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Bana (Danube)	1586	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Basra	1551	20 akçes seller/ 20 akçes buyer
Bohu	1528	8 akçes seller/ 8 akçes buyer
Bosna	1516	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Çatalca	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Çirmen	late 15th century	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Erzurum	1591	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Ezdin	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Feth-i İslam (Danube)	1586	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Göncü pazarı	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Gula	1566	5 akçes per slave
Hacı Ali oğlu pazarcığı	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Hasköy	late 15th century	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Hurpısca (Agros Orestikon)	Kanuni	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Ianitsa Vardar	late 15th century	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
İç İl	1584	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer

İskenderiye	1529	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
İskenderiye	1570	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
İskenderiye	1582	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
İnebahtı	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
İstefe	1569	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Ivraca (Vratsa)	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Izvoznik	1548	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Karaferiye	Kanuni	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Karaman	1583	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Karnabad	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Kestirye (Kotor)	Kanuni	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Klisini	1574	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Komotini	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Konya	1583	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Lofça	1568	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Musuru	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Nigbolu	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Niş	late 15th century	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Nova Zagora	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Pervadi	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Rados	1650	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Salna	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Sarajevo	1530	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Sarajevo	1542	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Sarajevo	1565	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer with additional 8 akçes if buyer is foreign
Semendire	1536	25 akçes seller/ 25 akçes buyer
Semendire	1559	25 akçes seller/ 25 akçes buyer
Serfice	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Silistire	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Sidrekapısa	1478	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Sulu	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Şam (Damascus)	1548	30 akçes per slave
Şumuni	1568	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer

Tekirdağ	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Tırhala	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Tırnova	1568	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Uskub	15th century	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer
Uskub	16th century	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Vidin	Kanuni	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Visale	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Yaba	1569	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Yanbotu	1613	4 akçes seller/ 4 akçes buyer
Yenice Vardar	Kanuni	2 akçes seller/ 2 akçes buyer

transit taxes (bac-ı ubur or resm-i geçüd): these indicate that the town or area in question was a point for transit trade in slaves.⁴⁸

Location	Date	Amount
Buda	1551	20 akçes per slave
Cankırman	1591	6 akçes per slave
Diyarbakir	1518	150 akçes per white slave, 120 akçes per black slave
Diyarbakir	1540	50 akçes per white slave, 25 akçes per black slave
Erzincan	1516	150 akçes per slave
Feth-i İslam	1586	25 akçes per slave
Hersuve	1591	20 akçes per slave
Kara Harmanlık	1591	20 akçes per slave
Kığı	1552	25 akçes per slave
Mardin	1518	33 akçes per slave
Mardin	1526	50 akçes per white slave, 25 akçes per black slave
Mardin	1540	50 akçes per white slave, 25 akçes per black slave
Mardin	1567	50 akçes per white slave, 25 akçes per black slave
Niğboju	1568	20 akçes per slave
Orsova	1586	25 akçes per slave
Rahve	1568	20 akçes per slave

Safed	1555/6	10 akçes per slave
Sarajevo	1530	2 akçes per slave
Tolça	1591	20 akçes per slave
Vidin	Kanuni	20 akçes per slave

Customs taxes (gümrük or pencik): Indicating the initial entry point for slaves into the Ottoman economic region. It is interesting that Kefe, which was a provincial administrative center *within* the empire, did not apparently collect such taxes, while Akkırman did collect a gümrük tax on slaves coming from Kefe, albeit a token sum of 1 akçe.⁴⁹

Location	Date	Amount
Akkırman	Kanuni	1 akçes per slave
Bayburt	1516	50 akçes per slave
Basra	1551	48 akçes per slave imported by sea
İnebahtı	1569	10 akçes per slave, plus 4 % if owner a zimmi
Mardin	1540	10 akçes per slave
Mardin	1567	27 akçes per slave

Unfortunately, similar local tax codes for İstanbul itself have not come to light, though from individual documents dealing with changes in the local tax structure, one may find some scattered information.⁵⁰ What this Kanun information tells us about the slave trade and slavery is that it was widespread—there were few provinces where it did not occur, perhaps none. And the taxes do not seem to have been uniform throughout the Empire.

Another form of evidence on taxes paid on the sale of slaves comes in the series of registers (**mukataa**) containing records of the assignment to individuals of the right to collect various forms of taxes. These records do not give information about the tax rate, but indirectly may provide information about the numbers of slaves sold. Combined with the information in the Kanun-names about rates of tax, the costs of acquiring these mukataas are useful. For example, if a mukataa in any given year was worth a sum of 10,000 akçes, it is reasonable to assume that at least that much money would have been collected for that mukataa in that year.

The **mukataa defter** for Şam eyaleti (Damascus province) for the years 1562-1566 indicates that the mukataa for the collection of the tax on the slave market (bac pazar-ı üsera) amounted to 27,670 akçes per year. The Tahrir defter for Damascus, from the same period, indicates the tax on an individual slave sale to be 30 akçes paid by the seller. Thus one could assume that the total number of slaves sold in the Damascus slave market to exceed 922 per year; indeed it is likely that it was at least double this figure and closer to 2000 per year.⁵²

In the late 15th century, the **mukataa** for the collection of the tax on the sale of slaves and horses in the market in Edirne amounted to 415,000 akçes. There is no way to separate these two items from the document: however, a separate **mukataa**, for the chief steward of the slave portion of that market netted between 3300 and 3800 akçes per year between 1519 and 1528.⁵³

The Tahrir defter for Basra vilayet for the year 1551 gives us both the tax rate on individual slave sales and the **mukataa** for the tax collections in the Basra slave market. The **mukataa** amounted to 11,131 akçes while the tax was 20 akçes per slave. The total of slaves sold in a year thus would be at least 550.⁵⁴

For Buda, from the year 1562, we have the following interesting figures: the transit tax levied at the rate of 20 akçes per slave, while the total collected (or at least assigned) for that year was 40,000 akçes: a total of 2000 slaves in transit. Of course it is important to realize that Buda was on the frontier and captives from border skirmishes would likely have passed through the Buda jurisdiction on their way east. The total sum collected on the market tax on the sale of slaves was only 9000 akçes however for the same year. It is interesting to note that these taxes were levied on the inhabitants living in the Mahalle-i yahudiyân der dahil-i Kale-i Budin: the Jewish quarter within the citadel of Buda itself.⁵⁵

In the cases of Safed and Bursa, figures are available for the **mukataas** on the markets, including that of slaves, but are totals and do not distinguish the slaves from other merchandise. Thus the totals are not helpful for an indication of the amount of slave traffic.⁵⁶

Finally, the **mukataa** for the collection of the customs tax on imported slaves (the pencik) for İstanbul, for the year 1589, assigned incidentally to a Jewish merchant, amounted to more than 100,000 akçes; though since we do not know the rate of pencik for that year, it does not help us to determine the number of slaves involved.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, only a handful, barely a sampling of the available **mukataa** defters have been examined to date. There are more than 8000 such defters in various classifications in the Ottoman archives; none are identified as containing only certain types of **mukataas**. Thus, an examination of them all would be necessary before one could use them to their fullest potential to answer the question of how many slaves there were and how many were sold in the Ottoman Empire. Obviously, such a task would require several lifetimes.

One interesting sidelight to the operation of the slave market in İstanbul, and the income derived from the sale of slaves there has emerged from the large collection of registers called Maliyeden Müdevver in the Ottoman archives. This register shows that a portion of the ultimate governmental income derived from the market's operations went to support the pious foundation of the imperial mosque of Aya Sofya. This indicates that in all likelihood the property on which the market was first built by Sultan Mehmet II belonged to the vakif of that mosque. The register, dating from the year 1609, enumerates the income for the mosque for the previous year, and includes that part deriving from the operation of the slave market. The officials of the mosque whose salaries came from this source are also listed (a total of thirty eight officials with a total income of 4,974 akçes.)⁵⁸

What this smattering of documentary evidence tells us is that slave markets could probably be found in virtually all of the Empire's cities and provincial centers. However, the numbers of slaves involved, the size of the slave dealing guilds and merchant class, the widespread use of slaves even in non-urban areas is difficult to determine. Despite this, Mantran's statement, that the category of slave "was not often found in official documents because of their lack of civic personality" is obviously not correct.⁵⁹

NOTES

- 1 Charles White, *Three Years in Constantinople; or Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844* (London, 1845), vol. I, pp. 279 - 80.
- 2 Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les Navigations, Peregrinations et Voyages faicts en La Turquie* (Anvers, 1526), pp. 114 - 5. See also Clarence Pouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520 - 1660)*, (Paris, 1938), p. 215, for the effect of Nicolay's account upon European readers.
- 3 (Philippe du Fresne - Canaye), "Le Voyage du Levant de Philippe du Fresne - Canaye (1573)," in *Recueil de Voyages et de Documents*, vol. XVI (Paris, 1897), pp. 95 - 6; the editor believes this in fact may be taken from Richter, *De Rebus Turcarum*, p. 65.
- 4 William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrica* (Glasgow, 1906), pp. 122 - 3.
- 5 For example, Gilles Fermandel, *Le Voyage d'Italie et du Levant* (Rouen, 1664), pp. 349 - 50, in 1630; R. P. Jehannot, *Voyage de Constantinople pour le rachept des captifs* (Paris, 1732), pp. 138 - 42; and in the nineteenth century, B. Poujoulat, "Constantinople. Les mosquées. Le bazar des esclaves," *Revue de l'Orient de l'Algérie et des colonies* 2nd series, V (1849), p. 378.
- 6 A. H. Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz* (London, 1862), p. 101.
- 7 Master Robert Withers, "The Grand Signior's Serraglio," in *Purchase His Pilgrims*, vol. IV (Glasgow, 1905), pp. 391 - 4.
- 8 Charles White, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 279 - 82.
- 9 Rouillard, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
- 10 G. L. Dawson - Damer, *Diary of a Tour in Greece, Turkey, Egypt and the Holy Land* (London, 1841), p. 120.
- 11 (Miss) Pardoc, *The City of the Sultan; and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836* (London, 1837), vol. II, pp. 299 - 300; other brief descriptions are found in L'Abbé Pierre, *Constantinople, Jerusalem et Rome* (Paris, 1860), vol. I, p. 58; Marmont, *Voyage du maréchal duc de Raguse* (Paris, 1837), vol. II, pp. 29 - 30; Albert Smith, *A Month at Constantinople* (London, 1851), pp. 174 - 5; and Hrand D. Andreasyan, *Polonyalı Simeon'un Seyahatnamesi 1608 - 1619*, (Istanbul, 1964), p. 9.
- 12 E. H. Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimârisinde Fatih Devri* vol. IV (Istanbul, 1974), p. 579.
- 13 Charles White, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 283 - 4, 286 - 9.
- 14 *Incidents of Travel in Greece, Turkey, Russia and Poland* 7th ed., vol. I (New York, 1875), pp. 236 - 9.
- 15 Edmund Spencer, *Travels in Circassia and Krim - Tartary* (London, 1839), vol. I, pp. 154 - 7.
- 16 Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, vol. I (Istanbul, 1896), pp. 563 - 4. See also Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1962), p. 458, and Eremya Çelebi Kömürçüyan, *Istanbul Tarihi: XVII. Asırda İstanbul* (Istanbul, 1952), pp. 61 - 2, 295.

- 17 Mantran, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 458. See also Gilles Fernel, *Observations curieuses sur le voyage du Levant* (Rouen, 1668), p. 350, who states this as well. The author of *Incidents*, *op. cit.*, p. 239, reports that in 1838 the slave dealers were "principally Jews." But Snezhka Panova, "Trgovska i finansova deinost na evreite na Balkanite prez XVI - XVII v.," *Istoricheski Pregled* XXIII/3 (1967), p. 39, who provides a list of Jewish trading communities all across the Balkans and the types of goods they dealt with, mentions no slaves at all.
- 18 "Esir," in *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. X (Istanbul, 1971), p. 5273.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 5271.
- 20 Başbakanlık Arşivi (Istanbul), Mühimme Defter LXXIII, №768 (1595), p. 349; this was again issued in 1680. See Mantran, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
- 21 Ahmet Refik, *Hicri On Birinci Asırda İstanbul Hayatı* (1000 - 1100), (Istanbul, 1931), pp. 25 - 6. Earlier instances of laws prohibiting sales to non - Muslims are mentioned in "Esir," *op. cit.*, for the years 1559 and 1570. Also Mühimme Defter III, №774 (1559 - 60), p. 257, where one cannot sell slaves to Jews, Frenks or Christians.
- 22 Refik, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- 23 Başbakanlık Arşivi (Istanbul), Kâmil Kepeci, defter №178, p. 34.
- 24 Refik, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 - 5.
- 25 "Esir," *op. cit.*, pp. 5273.
- 26 Ahmet Refik, *Hicri On İkinci Asırda İstanbul Hayatı* (1100 - 1200) (Istanbul, 1930), pp. 50 - 51, where the tax to be collected is increased seven times and is to be taken by the customs officials of Üsküdar and İstanbul.
- 27 Çağatay Uluçay, *Harem II* (Ankara, 1971), p. 13, (from Topkapı Sarayı Arş. D. no. 1511.)
- 28 For a more complete exposition of this market, see A. Fisher, "Muscovy and the Black Sea Slave Trade," *Canadian - American Slavic Studies* (1972), and A. Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, 1979), chpts. 3 and 4.
- 29 M. Litvin, "Izvyechenie," *Memuary otnoshlshchesia k istorii luzhnoi rusi*, vol. I (Kiev, 1890), pp. 4 - 38; see also M. N. Berezkhov, "Russkie plenniki i nevoi'niki v Krymu," *Arkheologicheskii s'ezd : Trudy*, vol. VI (Odessa, 1911), pp. 342 - 71.
- 30 Berezkhov, *op. cit.*, p. 358; and Litvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 21.
- 31 Gilles Veinstein, "Missionnaires jesuites et agents français en Crimée au debut du XVIIIe siècle," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* X/3 - 4 (1969), pp. 414 - 58; see also Cengiz Orhonlu, "Kefe," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition) vol. IV, pp. 868 - 9.
- 32 Mühimme Defter LXII, №119 (1586), p. 52; also Mühimme Defter VI, №624 (1564), pp. 29 - 30; XXIII, №248 (1573), p. 122; XXIII, №295 (1573), p. 145; and LXVIII, №116 (1590 - 1), p. 60, all to the governor of Kefe to encourage the Çerkes to supply more slaves; LXXII, №198 (1593 - 4), p. 101, to the governor of Kefe to encourage the Tatars to do the same.
- 33 M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas - Elleri'ni Fethi (1451 - 1590)* (Ankara, 1976), p. 65; and Mihnea Berindei and Gilles Veinstein, "Reglements de Süleyman Ier concernant le liva de Kefe," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* (1976) p. 66.
- 34 "Voyage de Crimée en Circassie par le pays des Tartares Nogais, fait l'an 1702 par le sieur Ferrand," in *Nouveaux memoires des missions de la Compagnie de Jesus dans le Levant*, vol. I (Paris, 1715), p. 116.
- 35 Mühimme Defter, III, №887, p. 303.
- 36 Mühimme Defter, III, №1577, p. 535; copy sent also to the governor of Bursa.

- 37 Mühimme Defter, LXVIII, №5, p. 3.
- 38 N. Beldiceanu, *Les Actes des premiers Sultans* (Paris, 1960), p. 134.
- 39 Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 876.
- 40 Mühimme Defter, LXVIII, №188 (1590), p. 74. There were sixteen such captives.
- 41 Joseph Pitts, "An Account by Joseph Pitts of His Journey From Algiers to Mecca and Medina, c. 1685," in William Foster (ed), *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1949); as Hakluyt Series II, vol. 100, pp. 15-16.
- 42 For a discussion of the Kanunnames of the Empire as a whole, see H. İnalcık, "Suleiman the Lawgiver and Ottoman Law," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol. I (1969), pp. 105-38; and Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law* (Oxford, 1973), ed. V. L. Menage.
- 43 Başbakanlık Arşivi (Istanbul), Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri №214 and 370. See Berindei and Veinstein, "Reglements," *op. cit.* The best discussion of the value, and limitations, of the Tahrirs as sources for demographic history is in Heath W. Lowry, "The Ottoman Tahrir Defterleri as a Source for Urban Demographic History: The Case Study of Trabzon (ca. 1486-1583)," (unpub. Ph. D. Diss., U.C.L.A., 1977), pp. 248-311.
- 44 Kızıoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 71; Berindei and Veinstein, "Reglements," *op. cit.*, pp. 70-80; M. Berindei and G. Veinstein, "La Tana - Azaq de la présence italienne à l'emprise ottomane (fin XIIIe - milieu XVIe siècle)," *Turcica VIII/2* (1976), p. 159; Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri №370, ff. 268a-268b; one very interesting register containing the Kanunname and financial data for the port of Keçe in the late 15th century (Kamil Kepeci Defterleri №5280 Mükerreri) is currently being prepared for publication by H. İnalcık: pp. 2-9 concern the slave trade.
- 45 Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri №483, p. 18; here it is useful to note that the terms *kebir*, *sağır*, and *gayet sağır* often appear in the kanuns relating to the age of slaves. But only in this one is an exact definition of these terms given. *Kebir* refers to a slave who has attained puberty (obviously the ages would differ between male and female); *sağır* refers to a slave between the age of seven and puberty; *gayet sağır*, a slave under the age of seven who has been weaned. No provisions appear to have been made for separating a mother and a nursing child.
- 46 Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri №102, as recorded in Hadiye Tunçer, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Toprak Hukuku, Arazi Kanunları ve Kanun Açıklamaları* (Ankara, 1962), p. 252.
- 47 Abant: Tunçer, p. 238; Adana: Tunçer, p. 244; Akça Kazanık: Bistra Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia na gradskoto stopanstvo prez XV-XVI vek.* (Sofia, 1972), p. 167; Ağatabolu: Tunçer, p. 234; Ağrıboz: Tunçer, p. 321; Anbolu: Tunçer, p. 232; Aydın: Tunçer, p. 291; Ayuraca: Tunçer, pp. 143-4; Babadağ: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 211; Bana: M. Berindei, M. Kalus-Martin, and G. Veinstein, "Actes de Murad III sur la region de Vidin et remarques sur les kanun ottomans," *Südoest-forschungen XXXV* (1976), p. 55; Basra: Tapu ve Tahrir Defterleri №282, pp. 3-4 (my thanks to Mark Epstein); Bolu: O. L. Barkan, *XV ve XVI ncı Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zırai Ekonominin Hukuki ve Mali Esasları*, vol. I, *Kanunlar* (Istanbul, 1943), p. 32; Bosna: Barkan, p. 400; Çatalca: Tunçer, p. 312; Çirmen: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 166; Erzurum: Tunçer, p. 174; Ezdın: Tunçer, p. 331; Feih-i İslam: Berindei, "Actes," pp. 50-1; Göncü pazarı: Tunçer, p. 217; Gula: Barkan, p. 139; Hacı Ali Oğlu Pazarcıođu: Tunçer, pp. 219-20; Hasköy: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 167; Hurpişça: M. Sokoloski, "Pet zakoni za pazarite taksi i ushurot od vremeto na Sulejman Velichestveni," *Institut za natsionalna istorija, Glasnik*, vol. II/1 (Skopje, 1958), p. 298; İanitsa Vardar: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 161; İç İl: Tunçer, p. 263, and Barkan, p. 48; İskenderiye: Branislav Durdev, *Kanuni i Kanun-name za Bosanski, Hercegovacki, Zvornicki, Kliskli, Glogorski i Skadarski Sandzak* (Sarajevo, 1957), pp. 178-80, 185; İnebahtı: Tunçer, p. 310; İstefe: Tunçer, p. 325; İvraca: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 205; Izvornik: Durdev, p. 111, and N. Beldiceanu, "Actes de Süleyman le Législateur concernant les mines de Srebrenica et Sase," *Südoest-Forschungen XXVI* (1967), pp. 17-18; Karaferiye: Sokoloski, p. 305, and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*, p. 161; Karaman: N. Beldiceanu and I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur la province de Qaraman au XVIe siècle* (Leiden, 1968), p. 32; Karnabad: Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanlia*,

- p. 212; Kestiryë : Sokoloski, pp. 301-2, and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 162; Klisini : Durdev, p. 125; Komotini : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 166; Konya : Beldiceanu, *Recherches*, p. 39; Loçca : Tunçer, p. 145, and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 206; Musuri : Tunçer, p. 231; Niğbolu : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 179; Niş : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 136; Nova Zagora : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 167; Pervadi : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 210, and Tunçer, p. 229; Rados : Barkan, p. 339; Salna : Iozef Kabrda, "Zakonopolozhenie ob Amfisse," in A. S. Tveritinova (ed), *Vostochnye istochniki po istorii narodov iugo-vostochnoi i tsentral'noi evropy* vol. I (Moscow, 1965), p. 226; Sarajevo : Durdev, pp. 39, 67, 90-2; Semendire (1536) : Tapu ve Tahrir Defter \approx 187, p. 10; Semendire (1559) : Tapu ve Tahrir Defter \approx 316, p. 3 (thanks to Bruce McGowan); Serfice : Sokoloski, p. 303, and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 163; Sidrekapsa : Beldiceanu, *Les Actes*, p. 185; Silistire : Tunçer, p. 193; Sulu : Tunçer, p. 218; Şam : Barkan, p. 223; Şumunu : Tunçer, pp. 146-7, and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 209; Tekirdağ : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 167; Tırhala : Tunçer, p. 267; Tırnova : Tunçer, p. 145; and Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 207; Usküb : Tsvetkova, "Vie Économique de villes et ports Balkaniques aux XVe et XVIe siècles," *Revue des études Islamiques* XXXVIII/2 (1970), p. 280; Vidin : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 172; Visale : Tunçer, pp. 328-9; Yaba : Tunçer, p. 212; Yanbolu : Tunçer, p. 237; Yenice Vardar : Sokoloski, pp. 307-8.
- 48 Buda : L. Fekete, *Die Siyaqat-Schrift in der türkischen Finanzverwaltung* (Budapest, 1955), vol. I, p. 231; Cankırman : Tunçer, p. 209; Diyarbekir : Barkan, pp. 137, 147; Erzincan : Barkan, p. 183; Feth-i İslam : Berindei, "Actes," pp. 51-2; Hersüve : Tunçer, p. 213; Kara Harmanlık : Tunçer, pp. 214-5; Kiğı : Tunçer, p. 246; Mardin : Nejat Göyünç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Mardin Sancağı* (İstanbul, 1969), p. 127, and Barkan, p. 162; Niğbolu : Tunçer, p. 135; Orsova : Berindei, "Actes," pp. 54-5; Rahve : Tunçer, p. 137; Safed : B. Lewis, "Studies in the Ottoman Archives, I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XVI/3 (1954), p. 497; Sarajevo : Durdev, p. 40; Tolca : Tunçer, p. 210; Vidin : Tsvetkova, *Prouchvanila*, p. 172.
- 49 Akkırman : Tunçer, p. 209; Bayburt : Tapu ve Tahrir Defter \approx 60, p. 142; Basra : Tapu ve Tahrir Defter \approx 282, pp. 3-4 (thanks to Mark Epstein); İnebahtı : Tunçer, p. 310; Mardin : Barkan, p. 162, and Tunçer, p. 278.
- 50 See for example, Mantran, *op. cit.*, p. 507, where the tax on slaves disembarking at the port of Galata in İstanbul, the *resm-i pencik* is discussed. See also Kâmil Kepeci Defter \approx 5211, pp. 12-13 (1699), where fines are levied on sellers who try to avoid paying the *resm-i pencik*.
- 51 Başbakanlık Arşivi (İstanbul), Maliyeden Müdevver Defter \approx 4175, p. 19.
- 52 The *mukataa* for Damascus is found in Maliyeden Müdevver Defter \approx 4175 (1562-6); the Damascus Kanunname is in Barkan, p. 223.
- 53 M. Tayyib Gökbiğın, *XV-XVI Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası* (İstanbul, 1952), pp. 90-1, 111.
- 54 Tapu ve Tahrir Defter \approx 282, pp. 3-4, 12.
- 55 Gyula Kaldy-Nagy, *Kanuni Devri Budın Tahrir Defteri (1546-1562)*, (İstanbul, 1973), pp. 11-12, 15.
- 56 For Safed, the annual tax income for the markets, between 1553 and 1557, was 5700 akçes, Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 495; and for Bursa, in 1487, the *mukataa-ı kapan ve bazar-ı şehir ve bazar-ı esiran ve ber mucib-i defter-i kahane* was 230,633 akçes, H. İnalçık, "Bursa: XV. asır Sanayi ve Ticaret Tarihine dair Vesikalar," *Belleten* XXIV/93-6 (1960), pp. 56-7.
- 57 Maliyeden Müdevver Defter \approx 3247 (1589-90). If the *pencik* was 25 akçes as in other areas, the total number of slaves would have been 4000; another *mukataa* defter for the *pencik* paid in the ports of İstanbul, Galata, Üsküdar, and Bursa, is unfortunately undated: Maliyeden Müdevver Defter \approx 21,115.
- 58 Maliyeden Müdevver Defter \approx 6864, pp. 2, 8, 12. Of course, in the taxes on slave sales in Kefe, we noticed a small portion collected for that city's pious foundation of the mosque of Kasım Paşa. Aya Sofya's income was likely collected in the same fashion. Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 579, citing a "Ayasofya Muhasebe Defter" of 1491, indicates that the mosque received an income from the Esir Pazarı Hanı of 7300 akçes in 1489, of 21,033 akçes in 1490, and 13,750 akçes for the first five months of 1491. From an unnamed source, Ayverdi says this income was 50,000 akçes in 1519.
- 59 Mantran, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞUNDA ESİR TİCARETİ : ESİR
PAZARLARI VE ESİR SATIŞLARINDA DEVLET VEGİLERİ,
BAZI ÖN YARGILAR

ÖZET

Onaltıncı ve onyedinci yüzyıllarda Osmanlı ülkesinin her köşesindeki esir pazarlarında esir ticareti sürdürülmekteydi. İstanbul'un yanı sıra Kırım'da Kefe'den Rumeli, Anadolu ve Arap bölgelerine kadar büyük-küçük tağra şehirlerinde esir pazarları bulunmaktaydı. Sancak kanunnameleri, mukataa kayıtları ve diğer Osmanlı arşiv kaynakları hem esir ticaretinin hem bu ticareti yürüten tüccarlara özellikleri hakkında önemli bilgi sağlamaktadır. Arşiv kayıtları esir ticaretinin düzenlenmesinde devletin rolünü de aydınlatmaktadır. Devlet satışlarda, ithal-ihraç ve transit işlemlerinde vergi oranlarını saptıyor; satıcıların haksız rekabetini ve alıcıların aldatılmasını önleyecek yönetmelikler hazırlıyor; esir tüccarları loncasının işleyişine nezaret ediyordu. İncelediğimiz devirde Osmanlı ülkesine gelen yabancı gezginlerin yazdıkları ya da yabancı resmi görevlilerin raporları bazı Osmanlı şehirlerindeki pazarların özellikleri hakkında ipuçları sağlamakta, öte yandan Evliya Çelebi seyahatnamesinde İstanbul esir pazarını anlatmaktadır. Makalede, bu yüzyıllarda esir pazarlarının işleyişi ve devletin düzenleyici rolü hem Osmanlı belgelerine hem yabancı kaynaklara dayanarak incelenmektedir.