



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Negotiating nature : ecology, politics, and nomadism in the forests of Mediterranean Anatolia, 1870-1920

Akgul Kovankaya, B.

Citation

Akgul Kovankaya, B. (2019, December 19). *Negotiating nature : ecology, politics, and nomadism in the forests of Mediterranean Anatolia, 1870-1920*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85163>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85163>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/85163> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Akgül Kovankay, B.

Title: Negotiating nature : ecology, politics, and nomadism in the forests of Mediterranean Anatolia, 1870-1920

Issue Date: 2019-12-19

Scientification of Forestry: Laws, Institutions, and Discourse

Forest reclamation is a crucial matter to us... Anatolia is an infinite treasure in that respect. To date, however, it has not been possible to attain the desired benefits from this treasure due to the shortcomings of existing laws... With the emergence of the opportunity to manage our forests in a proper manner... our money that is going out would remain within our country - a treasure of trees.¹

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, after two decades had passed since the 1870 Forest Regulation codifying forestry rules according to scientific principles came into force, the Ministry of Forests, Mines, and Agriculture (*Orman ve Maâdin ve Ziraat Nezâreti*) and the Ministry of Finance (*Mâliye Nezareti*) were regularly informed of illegal tree cutting in the western Taurus Mountains. According to a petition dispatched by Ezanzâde Mustafa in 1892, the treasury lost a significant amount of money

1 From an interview with the Minister of Trade and Agriculture. See C.S., "Ticâret ve Zirâat Nâzırıyla Mülâkat," *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 1 (8 Şubat 1331 [21 February 1916]): 8-9.

because of widespread felling of trees in *mirî* forests in Hamidâbad, Teke, and Burdur without official permission.² This complaint started a long process of investigation that significantly influenced timber merchants and forest workers, including Tahtacı groups.³ According to a report submitted by the Teke subprovince to Konya province in February 1893, 25,000 “trespassers” in Teke who subsisted on the cutting, production, and transportation of timber experienced deep economic hardships and were faced with “severe poverty” due to prohibitions imposed during the course of the investigation.⁴

Yet some years earlier, it was common practice for local people to cut trees from these forests without a license. The use of the forest for essential needs was almost free. This practice was based on centuries-old rights recognized by the state. *Cibâl-i mübâha* was the most widespread category that insured these rights.

Toward the turn of the century, by removing the category of *cibâl-i mübâha* from the forest regime, promulgating mandatory procedures for tree cutting and transport, and creating new crimes and penalties, the Ottoman administration restricted free access to state forests. The general logic of this new period can be captured in the widespread examples of criminalization, as characterized by the terms “thief” and “trespasser,” in the aforementioned statement that refer to “unauthorized users” according to newly created legal norms.

In this period, the struggle among the government, local officials, contractors, merchants, peasants, and nomadic groups over forests and forest products deepened and extended over a wider area. The 1870 Forest Regulation was introduced in this context. It was an attempt to gain stricter, more centralized control over forests. At least in theory, the Forest Administration became responsible for forest management, traditional privileges were diminished, and local actors as well as the Imperial Shipyard lost their influence. The Forest Regulation and the codes that followed brought about a new

2 BOA, BEO, 97/7205, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310 [9 October 1892].

3 The details of this investigation are discussed in Chapter 5.

4 BOA, İ.HUS, 9/15, 3 Şaban 1310 [20 February 1893]; BOA, İ.HUS, 9/18, 4 Şaban 1310 [21 February 1893].

classification of forested areas, new definitions of forest crimes, and new forms of punishment - thereby creating new “trespassers.” On the other hand, due to limits on the technical capacity of the government, certain types of free access continued.

In order to gain control over natural resources and the people who used them, all modern states have divided territories into political and economic zones and determined how and by whom these could be used by defining certain rules.⁵ This chapter presents a legal and institutional framework to describe the path the Ottomans followed. Within this scope, I first describe initial attempts at “rational” forestry, the impact of the 1858 Land Code and 1861 Forest Bill on the forestry regime, and the efforts to institutionalize the forestry system. Then I discuss the main articles of the Forest Regulation with a special focus on the abolishment of *cibâl-i mübâha*, new procedures to obtain tree cutting licenses, penalties for forest crimes, and the forms of free appropriation of forest products.

§ 4.1 Initial Attempts Toward a “Rational” Forestry: Bureaucratization of Forest Management

The nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire witnessed a gradual change in the forestry regime. The capability of the administration to regulate *mirî* forests was enhanced in the Tanzimat era (1839-1876) and thereafter, mainly through legal and institutional reforms made in the second half of the century. Until this period, forest income had not been considered an important source of revenue. The annual tax revenue from forests never exceeded 25,000 liras.⁶ For the first time, forests came to be seen as an important source of national wealth (*menba-i servet*). Increasing demand from Europe⁷ and the Ottoman

5 Vandergeest and Peluso, 385-387.

6 "Ormanlarımız," 18; "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 88.

7 Dursun, 96.

provinces⁸ for timber and the need for additional income for economic recovery necessitated by wars and reforms led to the commercialization of forest products. In response to the increasing local and global struggle over forest resources, the Ottoman administration developed monitoring techniques to control the provision and transportation of forest products. With the employment of European experts in the imperial forest bureaucracy and visits of Ottoman foresters to France,⁹ the Ottomans clarified the principles of *fennî ormancılık* (scientific forestry): Direct and increased state control, systematized knowledge of land, products, and labor, rational exploitation of human and natural resources, and the provision of a sustainable yield for the state treasury.

Early attempts to rationalize Ottoman forestry sought to increase the revenue of the government. Economic concerns were more overarching than ideas of conservation.¹⁰ As a reflection of this general mentality, one of the first steps that the Tanzimat government took to organize forestry was to issue a decree in 1841 imposing taxes on firewood, coal, and timber provided from *mirî* forests. According to this law, which remained in force until the mid-1850s, the tax rate on timber provided from *mirî* forests for domestic consumption was ten or twenty percent, depending on the diameter of the lumber. If timber was obtained for the purpose of export, the tax burden for firewood and wood charcoal rose to fifteen percent and reached twenty-five percent for the export of timber. It was still forbidden to cut trees from forests reserved for the needs of the Shipyard.¹¹

Another turning point related to the tax regime was the attempt of the government to abolish the *iltizâm* and adopt a *muhasıllık* system based on the collection of taxes by *muhasıls*, salaried officials appointed by the central

8 Mikhail, "Anatolian Timber and Egyptian Grain: Things that Made the Ottoman Empire," 278.

9 Diker, 25.

10 Hande Özkan, "Cultivating the Nation in Nature: Forestry and Nation-Building in Turkey" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013), 5.

11 Çağlar, 55-56.

government, instead of private individuals.¹² The new system remained in force only about a year. According to this system, *koru muhassılları* were responsible for collecting forest taxes on behalf of the government. Directors and officers were additionally assigned to certain regions where forest products were vitally important. These public servants were informed by the central government about the level of taxes to be collected on the types of tree felling other than those for the purpose of meeting the vital needs of villagers. Forest officials were tasked with locating wooded areas that had the potential to provide the proper types of timber for the needs of the Arsenal and Shipyard, with confiscating and selling illegally-supplied forest products via tenders, and inspecting timber merchants who were willing to obtain and sell timber and firewood to domestic and foreign customers.¹³

The first year of the Tanzimat saw the foundation and abolishment of the *Orman Müdürlüğü* (Forest Directorate), a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade. The main concern of this institution to establish an efficient taxation system for forestry. It had no agenda pertaining to conservation.¹⁴ Forest directors were responsible for maximizing revenues from provincial forests. Most were sent to the coast, which constituted the main imperial trade centers from which a vast amount of timber and firewood was exported.¹⁵

Even though revenues from forests increased after the establishment of the Forest Directorate, this institution only survived for about a year. It is

12 For the tax collection practices in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and their broader social implications, see Halil İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler," in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu: Toplum ve Ekonomi* (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993); Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012); Nadir Özbek, *İmparatorluğun Bedeli: Osmanlı'da Vergi, Siyaset ve Toplumsal Adalet (1838-1908)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2015). For a recent contribution to the debates on the making of modern fiscal states as well as tax farming in the late Ottoman Empire, see Nadir Özbek, "Tax Farming in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Institutional Backwardness or the Emergence of Modern Public Finance?," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49, no. 2 (2018): 219-245.

13 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, vi-vii.

14 *ibid.*

15 Çağlar, 54.

usually argued in the literature that the discontent of the people with new taxes collected on timber, firewood, and charcoal wood obtained from *cibâl-i mübâha* forests was the primary reason that the Directorate was so short-lived.¹⁶ It was abolished in 1841, the *muhassılık* system was abrogated in 1842,¹⁷ and *iltizâm* system was restored. The practice of assigning *cibâl-i mübâha* forests to *mültezims* continued.¹⁸

During the 1850s, Ottoman bureaucrats took new steps to control forested areas and maximize forest revenues. Official documents demonstrate that it was widespread practice among peasants to set forests on fire to clear *cibâl-i mübâha* lands and turn them into their private property. An edict dated 1853 forbade cultivators from removing trees without permission or damaging *mirî* forests and turning them into private real estate. To prevent the disruption of the work of the Imperial Arsenal, those who wanted to clear land for cultivation, were to obtain a license according to the relevant codes (*kânûnnâme*) and instructions (*tâlimatnâme*). *Cibâl-i mübâha*, pastures, evkaf lands, and the forests adjacent villages and towns could not be cleared. Those who harmed or burned forests and trees needed by the Imperial Arsenal would be punished according to the Penal Code.¹⁹ Offenders who insisted on cutting trees from these forests could be punished with penal servitude, a punishment to which those who committed crimes like attempted murder, theft, fraud, slander, and imposture were subjected.²⁰ It was more likely, however, that the administration would just appropriate their products. For example, in 1868 the permission of two timber merchants was revoked and their timber was seized because they interrupted the construction activities of the Imperial Shipyard by felling trees from Kaz Mountain forests outside areas specified by their contracts.²¹ Another document submitted to

16 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 234.

17 *ibid.*

18 Yiğitoğlu, 11.

19 BOA, A.MKT.UM, 121/86, 1269 [1853], in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 172-173.

20 *ibid.*, iv-v.

21 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 422/21, 12 Cemâziyelâhir 1285 [30 September 1868].

the governor of the subprovince of Kocaeli in 1879 instructed that Hacı Paşa was to be prevented from felling trees and producing timber in the town of Saray situated in İzmit subprovince as this area was assigned to the Shipyard.²²

As a result of considerable losses to the Ottoman treasury during the Crimean War, natural resources became even more important as a source of revenue. Forests were one of the most important resources, and the first condition for managing this potential boon for the treasury efficiently was to establish a forest bureaucracy supported by “scientific” knowledge. According to a memorandum from 1856, the collection of taxes depended on the employment of officers who knew forestry science (*koru fenni*). After discussions in the High Council of the Tanzimat, all embassies were informed about this need. Finally in 1856, the Ottoman state invited two French commissioners: Louis Tassy and Alexandre Sthème.²³ These experts were employed to teach forest preservation methods and revenue maximization to the scientific foresters of the future.²⁴

The first tasks Tassy and Sthème carried out were to inspect and measure forests in Istanbul and Sinop²⁵ and to help establish the *Orman Mektebi* (Forestry School) in 1857.²⁶ Since the primary condition to be accepted to the program run by these experts was the ability to speak French, the first generation of Ottoman foresters were chosen among the students of the *Mekteb-i Harbiye* (Military School) and *Hendesehâne-i Berriye* (Naval Engineering School) and the officers of the *Erkân-ı Harbiye* (General Staff College). In other words, those who would be the first to be taught “forestry science” in the Ottoman Empire were soldiers who had graduated from these schools.²⁷

22 BOA, CB, 2909, 1296 [1879], in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 152-153.

23 BOA, İ.MVL, 16327, 1273 [1857]; BOA, A.AMD, 78/28, 1273 [1857]; in *ibid.*, 154-159, 174-175; Bricogne, 3.

24 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, vii.

25 BOA, İ.MVL, 16518, 1273 [1857], in *ibid.*, 160-165; Bricogne, 6.

26 Yücel Çağlar, *Türkiye Ormanları ve Ormancılık* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1992): 57.

27 BOA, İ.MVL, 16327, 1273 [1857]; BOA, A.AMD, 78/28, 1273 [1857]; in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 154-159, 174-175.

According to the memorandum concerning the establishment, admissions, curriculum, and disciplinary rules of the Forestry School, its aim was to train officers in forestry science. The period of study was two years and the quota for each class was twenty students. The courses were on forestry science, the demarcation and mapping of forests, the establishment of guard buildings and transport vehicles, animals of prey, pest insects, and the utilization and administration of forests.²⁸ The first task of the graduates of the Forestry School was to explore and investigate certain *mirî* forests in Rumelia and Anatolia with Tassy.²⁹ The Forestry School was united with the Halkalı *Yüksek Zirâat Mektebi* (Agricultural College) and then separated from it in 1909.³⁰ In addition to the Forestry School, the Forest Gendarmerie School (*Orman Jandarma Mektebi*) and the Forest Operations School (*Orman Ameliyat Mektebi*) were established in 1915.³¹

During the following years, groups of French experts continued to visit the Ottoman Empire. According to Çağlar, these foresters, except for Tassy, focused on measuring exportable forest products. Bricogne investigated the Gavurdağı forest and the forests of Konya and Edirne, whereas Simon measured the Bosna-Saray forests. Chervau was interested in forests of the province of Thessaloniki, and Godchaux investigated the Kazdağı forests. They were involved in technical and administrative processes related to the auctioning of these forests.³²

Another prominent undertaking of the French foresters was the mapping of imperial forests. Yiğitoğlu assumes that the work of these foresters was based on information gathered from two sources: The map prepared by the geographer Heinrich Kiepert in 1844 and the French experts' reports and estimations on the forests of Ottoman Empire. In 1890, the Ministry of Finance attempted to produce statistics on forests. Additional statistical data on the

28 BOA, İ.OM, 1201/650, 1327 [1909] in *ibid.*, 222-231.

29 *ibid.*, ix.

30 Yiğitoğlu, 12.

31 Çağlar, 70-71.

32 *ibid.*, 60.

forests was published in 1897 by the Ministry of Trade and Public Works.³³ A further statistical study on the forests of the Ottoman Empire was prepared in 1907, which was an updated version of the French experts' study with the inclusion of additional information provided by local foresters.³⁴ These statistics were published in 1910.³⁵ According to these statistics, the extent of forests in the empire was 8,803,765 hectares, which meant that forested lands constituted 9,66 percent of the total surface area of the empire.³⁶ Ottoman forest officials also did cadastral surveys and mapped contested lands at various times in order to demarcate disputed forest tracts.³⁷

French and English experts who worked in the Ottoman Empire also founded a forestry commission. The commission was active between 1856 and 1876. They advocated for the investigation of forest assets, establishment of a forestry school, and adoption of a forestry code.³⁸ The duties of the commission were to examine the financial condition of the empire, remodel laws pertaining to taxes and financial administration, and restore order and regularity in the state bureaucracy. They proposed budgets, regulated their employment, and strongly urged that the acts of the administration be publicized. According to a report of the commission, the natural wealth and resources of the country were not exploited to its best advantage: The forests of the Ottoman Empire produced 150,000 francs, or not more than £5000, per

33 Dursun, 291.

34 Yiğitoğlu, 40.

35 Dursun, 291; Çağlar, 71.

36 Dursun, 291. According to an article published in 1884 in *Orman ve Maâdin Mecmuası*, the first official journal on agriculture and forestry in the empire, the estimated area of Ottoman state forests was 80 million *dönüm*. ("Ormanlarımız," 18.) Five years later, another article was published in the journal. According to it, the forested area of the empire was 85,955,192 old *dönüm* or 34,382,080 new *dönüm*. "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihiyye," 86. Old *dönüm* was approximately equivalent to 919 square meters. New *dönüm* was equal to 2,500 square meters.

37 In 1907, forest inspector Karabet Efendi conducted a field survey of the forests of Giresun, Sinop, and Adapazarı, exploring and mapping these forests located in Northern Anatolia. His trip began on May 25 and ended on December 20. BOA, ŞD, 540/4, 6 Cemâziyelevvel 1327 [26 May 1909].

38 Yiğitoğlu, 11-12.

annum, whereas in Greece, which was scarcely one-fifth the size of the European part of the empire, forests yielded annually 270,000 francs, or £10,800.³⁹ According to the European experts, in order to increase the timber yield, the Ottomans should encourage private enterprise.⁴⁰

In 1861, to realize this and protect the interests of the administration, the government prepared forest specifications that consisted of articles defining the conditions of forest concessions and contracts. These specifications included terms such as the obligations and privileges of applicant persons or companies.⁴¹

One attempt by the Ottoman administration to increase the level of utilization and the tax revenue from the land was the issuance of the Land Code. The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 was a regulation to increase the productivity of land and maximize tax revenue by codifying land law. It required landowners to register their land and obtain an official deed. The code gave registered deed holders the right to bequeath and sell land. Some researchers claim that this reform encouraged private possession of land, though that was not the main intent of the Ottoman administration.⁴² This code also included articles related to the property regime in forests. Most of these were inherited from previous laws and practices. According to Articles 30, 91, 92, 104 and 106, for example, title owners had the right of disposition of trees on their lands. Products obtained from *cibâl-i mübâha* forests and coppices (*bal-talık*) that were reserved for the vital needs of the residents of villages and

39 TNA, FO, 424/19, 1861.

40 TNA, FO, 424/24, 1861.

41 Dursun, 451-456.

42 For discussions on the Ottoman Land Code of 1858, see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi," in *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi* (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1980), 291-375; Çağlar Keyder, "Giriş: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Büyük Ölçekli Ticari Tarım Var mıydı?," in *Osmanlı'da Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Ticari Tarım*, ed. Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998); Huri İslamoğlu, "Property as a Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858," in *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, ed. Roger Owen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

towns could not be taxed or privatized.⁴³ These provisions exemplify continuity before and after the bureaucratization of forestry.

Article 19, in particular, had a significant impact on the utilization of forest products. According to the regulation, those who privately held property with forested land were allowed to convert it into cropland. However, in practice, not only privately-registered lands but also those reserved for the Shipyard and Arsenal, pastures, *vakıf* lands, and wastelands were transformed into cropland. Furthermore, not only title-owners but also users not possessing deeds justified the clearing and burning of forests with reference to this article. This was one of the reasons for deforestation throughout the empire in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

§ 4.2 Codification of Forest Laws: New Forms of Taxation, Crime, and Punishment

Three years after the issue of the Land Code, the Forest Bill, written and proposed by Tassy, signaled a new period of governance and created the basis for the Forest Regulation of 1870. According to this bill, *mirî* forests would be managed by the *Meclis-i Meâbir* (Council of Public Works), a sub-department of the Ministry of Trade headed by Tassy at the time.⁴⁵ The Forest Bill of 1861 was also one of the first attempts in the Ottoman Empire to restrict customary rights over *mirî* forest resources. It prohibited cutting trees in *mirî* forests except in extraordinary circumstances or when there was a proof of a special endowment granted by the sultan. According to the bill, apart from the *mültezims*, people who wished to cut trees from *mirî* forests were to pay a price equivalent to half of the value of the tree in the nearest market after subtracting the cost of cutting, processing, and transferring and other fees.⁴⁶ Furthermore, forests were placed under the supervision of in-

43 Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, viii.

44 *ibid.*, iix.

45 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 157.

46 Dursun, 242-243.

spectors who had graduated from the Forestry School and under the control of a forest cavalry and guards. Inspectors were responsible for keeping records of the labeling, cutting, transportation, and sale of trees as well as prosecutions and penalties. Village headmen were to inform the administration about the number and kinds of animals villagers graze; and inspectors determine the duration and the location of their pasture. The bill imposed penalties and prison sentences for forest crimes.⁴⁷

The Forest Bill of 1861 also regulated licensing of the rights for individuals to extract forest products from *mirî* forests. Accordingly, these people were to prepare a petition addressed to the head official, which included information on the species, quantity, and approximate volume of timber that was to be cut and proved that the applicants were able to pay the price of these trees. When a forest inspector received such a petition from the head official, he could grant permission for contracts of up to 1,000 *kuruş*. The head official was allowed to grant licenses for contracts between 1,001 and 5,000 *kuruş*, and the Ministry of Trade for contracts up to 100,000 *kuruş*. The government could give permission for larger contracts.⁴⁸

Licenses for cutting included the name, title, and address of the person. Logging and removing timber from *mirî* forests without a license or outside the boundaries stipulated by the license was fined. Forest inspectors tagged trees with a special mark before their removal. The Bill of 1861 and the Regulation of 1870 also included regulations on the methods of determining the trees suitable for cutting and removal from the forests.⁴⁹ After forest inspectors prepared receipts of the species and quantity of trees that they had marked for protection or for felling, they presented it to the contractors. The contractors were to retain the written approval of the forest guard to fell trees and pay attention to the receipt prepared by the inspector. Forest inspectors had to register the number and species of the trees felled and send the re-

47 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 235.

48 Dursun, 256-257.

49 *ibid.*, 251. See also M.N., "Orman Islâhâtı," *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 12 (5 Mayıs 1332 [18 May 1916]): 5.

ceipts to the district governor for the imposition of taxes and dues to be paid before the timber or charcoal was removed from the forest.⁵⁰ The administration's purpose in establishing a relatively complicated procedure was to eliminate the local actors and gain direct control over forests by bureaucratizing the process of resource extraction.

In 1862, Tassy proposed another bill specifying the procedures for the removal of trees from *mirî* forests according to methods of tax farming (*iltizâm*), contracting (*taahhüd*), and concessions (*imtiyâz*).⁵¹ This bill regulated the liabilities of contractors, the taxes, and the cutting, transportation, and sales procedures for forest products. The area from Kuşadası to İskenderun and Varna province were chosen as pilot areas.⁵²

The main purposes of Tassy's bills were to increase tax revenue and preserve forests from uncontrolled exploitation. It is not clear how local actors reacted to these precautions, but bureaucrats themselves approached these procedures cautiously. The opposition of the chief of the navy to the expansion of the regulation proposed by Tassy throughout the empire based on his concern that the provision of timber needed for shipbuilding would become more difficult exemplifies this tension.⁵³ Ottoman bureaucrats placed particular importance on strategies oriented towards the maximization of productivity and tax revenues instead of those that promoted forest conservation.⁵⁴ This was the same for the forest reformers. The focal point of *Orman Umûm Müdürlüğü* (General Directorate of Forestry), the first institution charged with regulating forests formed after the abolishment of the Directorate of Forestry, was the monopolization of revenue collection from forests on behalf of the central administration.⁵⁵

50 Dursun, 256.

51 Çağlar, 57.

52 Koç, "Osmanlı Devleti'ndeki Orman ve Koruların Tasarruf Yöntemleri ve İdarelerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma," 158.

53 Çağlar, 58.

54 Franz Heske, *Türkiye'de Orman ve Ormancılık* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Coğrafya Enstitüsü, 1952), 29.

55 See İnalçık, "The Yörüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," 343-345.

This fiscal approach was best reflected in the Forest Regulation of 1870, one of first undertakings of the General Directorate of Forestry. This code is usually considered a turning point in the history of forestry in modern Turkey due to its impact on the management of forests during the following decades. In 1936, some sixty-five years after the enactment of the regulation, Yiğitoğlu defined it as the starting point of Turkish forest legislation.⁵⁶ The regulation and the instructions issued afterwards were significant attempts to establish a formal forest management system by defining the conditions for the utilization and commercialization of products obtained from *mirî* forests. The introduction of this regulation reflected the concern of the government and the Forest Administration to maintain a uniform body of legal rules to be applied throughout the empire.⁵⁷

The articles of the regulation⁵⁸ can be briefly categorized into four thematic groups: The demarcation of forests, tree removal rules, the preservation of forests, and penalties for forest crimes.

The first article classified forests into four categories: State-owned forests, *vakıf*-owned forests, private forests, and communal coppices assigned to towns and villages. Since the Land Code of 1858 had determined the status of private forests, the Forest Regulation included no provisions on them. With the Forest Regulation of 1870, “*mirî* forest” was replaced by “state forest,” and the terminology of *cibâl-i mübâha* forests and forests reserved for the Shipyard and Arsenal were dissolved within this category.⁵⁹ Removal of the *cibâl-i mübâha* category from the forest regime had a deep impact on rural life in the Ottoman Empire. Cutting from state forests was prohibited except under certain circumstances specified by the provisions of the Regulation.⁶⁰ People who benefitted from state forests were obliged to pay tax.⁶¹

56 Yiğitoğlu, 46.

57 Dursun, 16.

58 See Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 242-247.

59 Yiğitoğlu, 9.

60 Dursun, 251.

61 *ibid.*, 282-283.

The second article of the regulation concerned the detection and demarcation of *mirî* forests. Measuring and recording forests was crucial because the first condition for implementing the provisions defined on paper was to clarify the blurred boundaries among territories and to precisely define the legal status of each. Bricogne, a French expert employed in the Ottoman Empire, once complained that forests in the Ottoman Empire were not yet demarcated and classified.⁶² It was therefore not possible to properly investigate these undocumented, unplanned, and unmapped - or in the terms of James Scott, "illegible" - forests.

According to Article 4 of the regulation and an additional protocol to the regulation, forest products obtained from state, *vakıf*, and private forests for the needs of the Arsenal and Shipyard would be managed by the Forest Administration. The administration was responsible for the provision, transport, and sale of these products. As mentioned before, not all members of the bureaucracy approached this positively. The military bureaucrats were cautious about the increasing authority of the Forest Administration over natural resources since they lost their rights to forests that had been reserved for the needs of the navy and army.

Another important provision was a tender and guarantee system mentioned in Articles 11 and 12. These rules were particularly related to tree removal for commercial use. Products obtained to be sold in local markets or to be exported were to be contracted with open tenders. Only trees that were investigated and marked could be contracted. The regulation produced a system based on systematic felling under the immediate supervision of inspectors assisted by a regular staff of clerks whose duties were to regulate the quantity of trees felled for export and local consumption and to supervise the operations of charcoal burners.⁶³

Despite the general trend of commodifying forests, certain free grants of timber were still recognized by the regulation. For example, the traditional right of tree removal from coppices assigned by the state for the vital, non-commercial needs of each village continued. These coppices could not be

62 Bricogne, 7.

63 TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

converted into private property and could be used for commercial purposes only on the condition that permission was obtained and certain fee was paid.

Articles 5 to 9 as well as 17 and 18 regulated the utilization of state forest products by local people. Article 5 divided tree removal from state forests into three categories. The first was the removal of forest products for basic activities such as housing, agriculture, and heating. According to the regulation and ensuing instructions, villages that did not have a coppice were allowed to cut trees in *mirî* forests for construction, manufacturing, and farming implements, for their own subsistence, and for burning into charcoal. The regulation allowed villagers to cut trees from state forests for these vital needs for free provided that they obtained a license from forest officials. The second type of tree removal from state forests was the provision of large-scale forest products for commercial use. The article levied a tax on these forms of utilization. The third type was the free provision of forest products removed from a state forest to be sold in the market. Villagers were allowed to sell wood and charcoal at the local market on the condition that they used their own means of transportation. However, if they attempted to sell wood and charcoal at another market to use someone else's means for their transferring, they were obliged to pay a fee and conform to the other provisions specified for merchants.⁶⁴ It was still legal to collect fallen trees, though collecting stone or soil or mining without a license were considered crimes.

An instruction issued on 18 May 1871 defined further conditions for the free grant of timber, wood, and charcoal to peasants, for whom forest products constituted a supplementary resource, and to forest peasants, whose subsistence depended on forestry. According to the instruction, the council of each village without a coppice was to petition forest officials each year before March. A voucher indicating the amount of timber, wood, and charcoal that villagers needed was to be attached to the petition. The officials would then determine the boundaries of the land and the time period for logging and charcoal burning and would mark trees according to "scientific principles and methods." Before felling began, peasants needed the permission of

64 Dursun, 243.

the forest guard who would supervise the cutting of trees. When the felling of trees was complete, the village council had to sign the voucher and present it to the forest guard who would then give it to the inspector. At the end of the year, the inspector was to inform the chief inspector (*sermüfettiş*) of the province about the total volume of felling.⁶⁵

Like peasants, forest-villagers who lacked a coppice or grove were only allowed to sell the forest goods they produced at local markets using their own means of transportation. Similarly, they had to position the local government annually concerning their population, the amount and species of trees they wished to cut from *mirî* forests, in which markets they planned to sell them, and what means they would use for transportation. The result of an investigation of the subprovincial council overseen by the forest inspector would then be evaluated by the governor, who, in line with the opinion of the chief inspector, would accept or decline the application. If accepted, the forest official would mark trees suitable for cutting and supervise their felling, charcoal burning, and their transport. At the end of each year, the forest official sent registers of the species and numbers of felled trees to the chief inspector who then sent them to the central forest administration. Free grants mentioned in the instruction applied to timber and charcoal for the needs of village inhabitants, not to forest products that were to be transferred to towns, cities, and ports and then sold to merchants or sawmills.⁶⁶

Continuing communal rights of villagers to free grants of wood from *mirî* forests constituted an exception in the process of the commodification of forest products. Due to the importance of tax revenues obtained from rural production, this practice was regulated instead of prohibited. The free grants of wood from *mirî* forests were only legal under certain conditions.

The continuity of some such rights can also be interpreted as a way to outmaneuver the possible resistance of local people to the implementation of the regulation. Due to increased taxation and stricter conscription, discontent in the countryside deepened. In these conditions, the abolishment of centuries-old rights over natural resources was even more radical; it could

65 *ibid.*, 246.

66 *ibid.*, 247-248.

upset the “moral economy”⁶⁷ of the villagers. The administration was careful not to abandon all forms of free appropriation.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the regulation restricted the unlimited usage of forests in two ways. First, it imposed a tax on tree removal for commercial purposes. Second, it allowed peasants and forest workers to remove only those trees that were approved by the “scientific” foresters. The administration pursued this strategy to solve the dilemmas of controlling the reaction of the rural population and maximizing revenues.

The second half of the regulation listed forest crimes and penalties. Those who peeled the bark from a tree, obtained firewood or stone from a *mirî* forest without a license, or cut more trees than their licenses permitted were to pay a fine or be imprisoned. The amount of the fine depended on the volume and species of the trees. Grazing in prohibited areas in *mirî* forests without a license was also prohibited. Those who committed this crime were to pay a fine. Their logging equipment and animals could be seized in certain circumstances. Setting a fire was considered a serious crime that could be punished by a lifetime penal servitude.

67 “Moral economy” is a term widely used by various eighteenth century writers. See Norbert Götz, “‘Moral Economy’: Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects,” *Journal of Global Ethics* 11, no. 2 (2015): 148-151. This term became popular after E. P. Thompson’s 1971 article on food riots in eighteenth-century England. Thompson’s “moral economy” refers to a series of traditional customary rights within a subsistence economy including the right to resist against unjust prices. In reaction to increasing prices in this period, English peasants resisted landlords and other market forces. It was the shared norms of a “moral economy” that brought the peasants together. See. E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, no. 50 (1971). About five years after the publication of this article, James C. Scott used the term to explain peasant behavior in the riots in Vietnam and Burma in the 1930s. According to Scott, the central theme of the collective peasant protests in this period was “subsistence ethics” or “moral economy,” a set of norms that stemmed from the concern for livelihood in the peasant economy and that assigned certain duties to elites to secure economic justice. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

68 Koç, “1870 Orman Nizamnamesi’nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar,” 242; Diker, 25.

The forest instructions of 1874 and 1876 regulated the taxation of timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from all types of forests and the procedures for obtaining a license. Accordingly, there were two kinds of forest taxes. The first was the *orman hakkı* (forest right) - collected on timber, firewood, and charcoal sourced from state and *vakıf* forests. A certain amount was taken from the price of such trees sold in auctions. However, the inhabitants of villages located close to forests were to pay both the *orman hakkı* and a *pul resmi* (stamp tax) for the trade-oriented timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from state and *vakıf* forests.⁶⁹ The tax usually depended on the distance between the forest and the market to which the timber was transported.⁷⁰ Inhabitants of forest villages were exempt from taxes on products they removed from state and *vakıf* forests for their households, for necessary construction, and for any agricultural implements. The forest administration issued a mandatory transportation certificate (*mürûr tezkeresi*) for timber, firewood, and charcoal extracted from state and *vakıf* forests.⁷¹ The second type of forest tax was on products extracted from private forests and coppices reserved for villages and towns. This tax was divided into two categories: The *öşr* (tithe), which was ten percent of the price collected on any kind of timber, and a *pul resmi*, twenty or forty *para* on firewood and charcoal extracted from private forests and coppices. A tithe certificate (*öşr tezkeresi*) was provided for the timber sourced from private forests and village coppices.⁷² Forest officials (*orman memurları*) were granted with the authority to seize forest products that were obtained without a license or in violation of the license. Tax officials (*rüsûmât memurları*) and local municipal police (*zâbıta*) were in charge in the absence of forest officials.⁷³

69 Dursun, 274-276.

70 See TNA, FO, 195/2134, 1902.

71 Dursun, 276-278.

72 *ibid.*, 278.

73 *ibid.*, 274-278.

§ 4.3 Forestry Reforms in the Context of a Nationalizing Economy

The Young Turk era (1908-1918) was characterized by strong nationalism, both cultural and economic, that gradually shifted from an Ottomanist to a Turkist, Islamic emphasis - especially by dramatic events such as the loss of Salonica in 1912 in the Balkan Wars as well as the First World War, which made it possible to abolish the capitulations, establish new customs tariffs, and almost completely eliminate non-Muslim from the economy.⁷⁴

Given the condition of a closed, nationalizing economy, forests became even more important in terms of their economic benefit. They began to be seen as a driving force behind the formation and development of the national economy. This agenda necessitated major legal and institutional reforms. The legislative efforts enacted during the Second Constitutional Period to regulate the forestry and insure centralized control over forests laid the foundation for the reforms, discourses, and practices related to forestry in the early republic.⁷⁵

One of first bills proposed in the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) after the 1908 Young Turk revolution was the Forest and Pasture Law.⁷⁶ The main purpose of this regulation was again to increase revenues from forests for the administration. According to the first version of the 1870 Forestry Law, all trees to be extracted were to be marked and recorded by

74 Zafer Toprak, "Nationalism and Economics in the Young Turk Era (1908-1918)," in *Industrialisation, Communication et Rapports Sociaux en Turquie et en Méditerranée Orientale*, ed. Jacques Thobie and Salgur Kançal (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 259-262.

75 In this period, forests not only became crucially important, but were also loaded with a "depoliticized" representation that would crystallize in the early Republican era. In her dissertation on forestry in modern Turkey, Özkan reveals that "forestry has been considered a technical issue, thereby delineating ecology as detached from politics" and "the depoliticization of forestry has functioned as a governmental tool in the high-modernist project of nationalism." See Özkan, 9. For a similar discussion, see Sezai Ozan Zeybek, "Fennî Ormancılığın Keçiler ve Köylülerle İmtihani: Sömürge İmparatorluklarından Ulus Devletlere Orman Koruma," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 137 (2016): 146.

76 Diker, 23.

foresters. This regulation invited greater government control over *mirî* forests; however, it remained in force for a relatively short time and was changed in 1895. The provisional instruction bound to the Forest and Pasture Law revived this regulation. It also limited free grants of forest products. Each family of a forest village was assigned ten *dönüm* of land and allowed to remove no more than five to ten trees and fifty to hundred *kantar*⁷⁷ of firewood under the supervision of the administration.⁷⁸ In the same year, as a complementary measure, the Forest Administration issued a warning addressed to the inhabitants of villages and towns. It brought about restrictions on the utilization of state forests and coppices that had been reserved for villages and towns, and it expanded the scope of the authority of foresters.⁷⁹

During this period, as a result of the increasing cultural and economic influence of Germany especially during World War I, German and Austrian experts were invited to the empire.⁸⁰ In 1914, Hermann Veith, an engineer from Austria, was employed as consultant. His task was to introduce Austrian forestry methods and apply them to the Ottoman Empire.⁸¹ Together with German and Austrian-Hungarian experts, he formed a forestry management committee.⁸² The first management plan was prepared by this committee in Adapazarı/Hendek in 1916 and 1917.⁸³ In 1917, Veith proposed a draft that obliged that all state forests be run according to scientific management

77 The relationship of the units of measurements used in the late Ottoman era was as follows:

1 *çeki* = 4 *kantar* = 176 *kıyye* = 225,789 kilograms

78 Bingöl, 117.

79 Çağlar, 67.

80 Yiğitoğlu, 13; Çağlar, 66.

81 Niyazi Acun, *Ormanlarımız ve Cumhuriyet Hükümeti'nin Orman Davası* (Ankara: Recep Ulusoglu Basımevi, 1945): 16.

82 Diker, 24. See also C.S., 9.

83 Çağlar, 71.

plans.⁸⁴ The provisions proposed in this draft came into force that same year in a law entitled “Procedures for the Scientific Management of Forests.”⁸⁵

§ 4.4 Deforestation as a Founding Narrative of the Struggle Against “Zones of Anomaly”

Modern governments were interested in forests for various reasons. First, they contain rich natural resources, the constant supply of which became even more vital with industrialization. By making large areas of land available for settlement, forested lands also played a significant role in regions where the land-to-labor ratio favors the latter. In addition to these economic concerns, control over forests was of capital importance since these remote lands were home to poor populations that were often seen as a threat to order.⁸⁶ Forests are difficult to monitor and govern, so they constitute “zones of anomaly,” that is, as a combination of local people and the forest landscape, a less “legible” space compared to others surrounding it.⁸⁷

The Ottoman government enacted several legal regulations to incorporate these remote areas and control their products and inhabitants. The main strategies of the Ottoman government were to prohibit or limit the usage of forests by local communities and impose new duties on the extraction of forest products. Officials and experts legitimized these policies by developing a “science discourse” that excluded local practices. The narrative of “deforestation by local communities” was one of the assertions of this discourse. This rhetoric functioned as the ideological basis for government intervention in

84 İsmail Eraslan, “Türkiye’de Orman Amenajmanının 128 Yıllık Tarihsel Gelişimi,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Orman Fakültesi Dergisi* 35, no. 1 (1985): 16.

85 Niyazi Acun, *Ormanlarımız ve Cumhuriyet Hükümeti’nin Orman Davası* (Ankara: Recep Ulusoğlu Basımevi, 1945), 16.

86 Nicholas K. Menzies, “Strategic Space: Exclusion and Inclusion in Wildland Policies in Late Imperial China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992): 719.

87 K. Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests: Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 65.

forests and masked the role of the intensification of commercial lumbering in the destruction of forests.

One of the common themes in the official reports and the literature on Ottoman forest policy favoring state intervention in forests for the sake of scientific management was “the destruction of forests by local communities.” Such narratives of deforestation operated as the justification for the relatively radical policies of the government - foremost among which were the abolishment of customary rights and the removal of nomadic groups from the forests. The image of devastated forests at the hands of unregistered nomadic groups⁸⁸ served to justify the surveillance and domination of forested lands and forest products by Ottoman bureaucrats. Highlanders, the inhabitants of the “zones of anomaly,” needed to be subjected to the discipline of the administration because they were considered responsible for the destruction of natural resources counter to the interests of the national treasury.⁸⁹

In this discourse, Tahtacı communities constituted a primary threat to the ideal of fiscal and scientific forestry. According to scientific foresters, the Tahtacı used forest sources in a “parasitic,” and “inefficient” way. A report sent by the General Assembly of Adana Province to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 21 January 1918 claims that “incompetent” forest management had caused the unrecoverable destruction of young cedar and pine trees. The report held three local populations responsible for deforestation in the province: Tribes pasturing their sheep and goats in and nearby forests, Tahtacı groups lumbering illegally, and villagers setting fires to clear land. The report also claimed that Adana, a province where forest revenues were one of the most important sources of income, would be deprived of forests if no precautions were taken against the irreversible damage and disaster being brought

88 See Davis, 133, 304, 359; Fayet, “Orman Islahatı,” *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, no. 7 (28 Mart 1332 [10 April 1916]): 4; Diker, 21; Bricogne, 8-9, 100-101. See also TNA, FO, 424/122, 1880.

89 Similar discourses were simultaneously used in other countries. As Tamara L. Whited depicts, a fear of deforestation occupied the collective imagination of officials in nineteenth-century France. They justified their position in the struggle between peasants and the state by claiming that the state’s intervention in the forests was the only way to prevent natural catastrophes and maintain the “public’s” interests. See Tamara L. Whited, *Forests and Peasant Politics in Modern France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 2.

by the herders and Tahtacı. It also underlined that the scarcity of forests would cause low rainfall, which would negatively affect agricultural productivity. According to the General Assembly of Adana Province, in order to solve this problem, herders and the Tahtacı needed to be removed from the forests. The General Directorate of Forestry proposed the same in its letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 17 June 1918: The *miri* forests of Adana needed to be purged of the Tahtacı communities.⁹⁰

However, contrary to the discourse of the administration and the experts that the main reason for deforestation was the customary rights of local, mainly nomadic populations, the clearance of trees for agricultural purposes, monotype lumbering for military purposes,⁹¹ the tax farming system,⁹² the commodification of forests, and the settlement of nomadic groups and *mu-hacirs* were the main causes of deforestation in Anatolia. Linking deforestation to the allegedly destructive influence of nomadic groups was related to the new ideological construction of property. This discourse legitimized the removal of nomads from centuries-old homes and the functionalization of their labor.

As described in Chapter 2, transhumance and nomadic wood artisanship was an integral part of socioeconomic life in the Taurus Mountains. The proposed expulsion of nomadic and semi-nomadic populations from the forests by the General Assembly of Adana Province, which remained a plan,

90 BOA, DH.İ.UM.EK, 111/38, 15 Ramazan 1336 [24 June 1918]. Some contemporary studies also regard the Tahtacı as responsible for deforestation. According to Wagstaff, the activities of specialist groups living in the forests, like the Tahtacı, were one of the reasons for the depletion and destruction of forests in Asia Minor. See John Malcolm Wagstaff, *The Evolution of Middle Eastern Landscapes: An Outline to A.D. 1840* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1985), 69.

91 Yiğitoğlu, 11. Because their transportation was easier, forest products needed by the Imperial Shipyard and the Imperial Arsenal were always obtained from forests located along the coasts. And along these coasts, only certain types and sizes of trees were removed. Moreover, a large number of felled trees were left in to rot in the forests since more trees were cut than needed. Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 241-242.

92 Dursun, 45.

would have meant a radical change to social organizations and cultural adaptations at the local level that had evolved for centuries, shaped by physical, biological environment and local power relations. The transition from the conception of the forest as a habitat to the new perception of the forest as a source of commercial wood was a vital transformation for local people.⁹³ Since scientific forestry defined the forest as “a closed system” and “relegate[d] non-commercial timber species, animals and human inhabitants as external to the production process”⁹⁴ - and since the development of modern fiscal forestry was related to concern for making land taxable -, temporary and permanent inhabitants of the forests and their inherited forms of utilization were not seen as integral parts of local society. They were irrelevant factors to be eliminated. Stray lands, which were important resources for peasants and nomads in rural districts, had to be restricted or evacuated to guarantee the “efficient” and “rational” use of forest. Communities living in forests or using forest resources as a part of their subsistence strategy were barrier to the “ideal forest.”

A further possible consequence of the expulsion of local communities from forested lands was to lose experimented methods for forest preservation. High modernist planning therefore made forests more vulnerable to “natural” disasters.⁹⁵ The existing cutting practices of local forest people were not simply concerned with extracting the maximum amount of forest products; woodcutting groups who lived in the mountains also applied sophisticated methods to conserve the forests, which were their means of living after all.⁹⁶ According to the Tahtacis and other nomadic and semi-nomadic communities, the forest was simply a space where they lived and earned a living. Their flexible, centuries-old conservation systems were more complex than

93 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 13.

94 Lanz, 100.

95 Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, 19-22.

96 Daniel James Klooster, "Toward Adaptive Community Forest Management: Integrating Local Forest Knowledge with Scientific Forestry," *Economic Geography* 78, no. 1 (January 2002): 52-53.

often thought. These preservation techniques usually took a religious form. They, for example, never cut the “mighty” trees - the oldest and largest - which were considered to be holy. They just pruned them. They prayed and sometimes sacrificed animals to the “mighty” trees. Indeed, self-imposed restrictions on tree cutting constituted an important element of the religious practices of the Tahtacıs.⁹⁷

From the viewpoint of the administration, on the other hand, the function of forests was related to a superior goal: The interests of the empire. Conservation was equated with the elimination of obstacles - non-taxable humans, animals, and vegetation - with modern techniques that did not take local practices under consideration. Despite some articles in the Forest Regulation of 1870 and later instructions related to forest protection and afforestation,⁹⁸ almost all provisions made by the administration to conserve forests involved prohibiting and limiting utilization by local people.

However, in practice, the forest policy of the Ottoman government was not simply based on the establishment of control over forest resources by excluding local populations from forested areas. The labor of the Tahtacıs was beneficial, and their centuries-old experience in the timber crafts was needed. In other words, they were needed for the commercial exploitation of the forest since there were no technologies that could replace the labor, skills, and expertise of the Tahtacıs. The Ottoman government sought to restrict resource extraction by local communities as a strategy of exclusion, but they also employed this valuable, cheap source of labor. In certain circumstances they allowed the Tahtacıs and other nomadic and semi-nomadic groups to settle in and around forests but linked them to the central authority by making them more visible and controllable. The officials and experts of the Ottoman Empire were aware that controlling labor to extract products from the forest was as vital as fiscalizing forestry.⁹⁹

97 McNeill, 93.

98 See Çağlar, 65, 72.

99 According to Peluso, the control of access to forests has three components: control of land, control of species, and control of labor. Nancy Lee Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 17.

The approach to forest labor of Fayet, an Austrian expert employed as a consultant in the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture, exemplifies this position. Undergirded by examples from Germany and Austria-Hungary, he argued in one of his articles that appeared in *İktisadiyyat Mecmuası*, a journal published during the last two years of World War I to propagandize statist economic policies, that woodmen living in forests who had for centuries earned their livelihood from the wood arts were of vital importance and needed to be kept within the boundaries of the forest in order to guarantee its efficient exploitation.¹⁰⁰

Due to increasing population pressure toward the turn of the century, it was not always possible for the Tahtacıs to stay in the forests. One of the factors that created this pressure was the flow of *muhacirs* to the empire. Despite the resistance of the Forest Administration, many *muhacirs* who migrated to the Ottoman Empire from Russia in the years following the Russia-Ottoman War (1877-1878) and from the Balkans after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) were settled in or near forested lands.¹⁰¹ Timber needed by the *muhacirs* for the construction and heating was exempt from forestry taxes. There are several documents in the Ottoman archives about this practice. For example, 12,000 pine girders used to build houses in Antalya for *muhacirs* from Crete were exempted from taxation in 1900. Likewise, it was decided not to collect any taxes on timber from the forests of Eskişehir for the construction of houses in Ankara where *muhacirs* were to be settled. Another document dated 1901 also concerns tax exemptions on the provision of timber for the construction of houses for *muhacirs* to be settled in Ankara.¹⁰² The policy of settling *muhacirs* in or near forests caused such a high degree

100 Fayet, 3.

101 See Dursun, 339-343.

102 BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 508/13, 29 Şaban 1317 [2 January 1900]; BOA, İ.OM, 591/341, 1319 [1901] in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 204-205.

of deforestation¹⁰³ that the government began to resettle these groups in other places more suitable for agriculture in order to prevent the destruction.¹⁰⁴

As a government policy implemented long before the arrival of the *mu-hacirs*, forest clearance to provide farmland was usually tolerated. As areas for cultivation expanded, tax revenues rose.¹⁰⁵ Deforestation was primarily caused neither by pastoral nomads nor Tahtacı communities but by communities that settled upon the encouragement of the central government. There were many wandering communities in Anatolia involved in the lumbering craft for centuries but such an extensive destruction was never observed in the Taurus forests until the late nineteenth century. Deforestation and upland erosion on the southern coasts of Anatolia had been modest until that time.¹⁰⁶ What intensified the human pressure on the Taurus were not the “arbitrary” activities of nomads but their gradual settlement.¹⁰⁷ In this period, forests declined in quantity and quality, and the most important reason for this situation was the expansion of cropland.¹⁰⁸ In short, ecological problems arose in the late nineteenth century when pastoral nomads and Tahtacı communities had to abandon their traditional occupations and began to adopt new subsistence strategies. It was not nomadism but the permanent settlement of pastoral nomads and peripatetics and expansion of cultivation that caused deforestation.¹⁰⁹ The clearing of forests for new grasslands by big

103 Yiğitoğlu, 9, 13; Acun, 17.

104 Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 96. For a general warning from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, see BOA, DH.HMŞ, 13/22, 1327 [1909] in Batmaz, Koç, and Çetinkaya, 1, 98-99. For another document related to the resettlement of the *mu-hacirs* that had damaged *mirî* forests of Hüdâvendigâr province to more suitable locations, see BOA, A.MKT.UM, 326/55, 1275 [1858] in *ibid.*, 176-177.

105 Koç, "1870 Orman Nizamnamesi'nin Osmanlı Ormancılığına Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Notlar," 240-241.

106 McNeill, 94.

107 *ibid.*, 287.

108 J. R. McNeill, *Something New Under The Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (London: Alan Lane The Penguin Press, 2000), 229.

109 McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, 288, 344.

dairy farmers and the utilization of forest products for shipbuilding and the mining industry were further factors that caused rapid deforestation.¹¹⁰

One reason for the devastation of forests was the damage caused by tree peeling for commercial purposes.¹¹¹ Even though the Forest Bill of 1861 and the Forest Regulation of 1870 enforced certain restrictions on peeling tree bark, practices at the local level were inconsistent. According to a document dated 1863, officials collected taxes on pine barks that was obtained from the mountain forests of Izmir and exported abroad.¹¹² Archival records also include correspondence among administrative units that discuss the scope of the prohibition on tree bark peeling.¹¹³ These official records express the confusion of the administration and bureaucrats about this practice as well as indicate how valuable tree barks was commercially. Even though many applications for tree peeling were rejected,¹¹⁴ a vast amount of pine bark was illegally exported from the southern coasts every year.¹¹⁵

The most important reason for the growing human imprint on forests was massive commercial lumbering. As shown in Chapter 3, given the growing demand for timber in the Middle East - especially during the construction of the Suez Canal - and in the rest of the world, Mediterranean Anatolia

-
- 110 Dursun, 33, 339; Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920*, 26.
- 111 BOA, DH.MKT, 1712/48, 8 Şaban 1307 [30 March 1890].
- 112 BOA, MVL, 643/93, 11 Receb 1279 [2 January 1863]; BOA, İ..MVL., 485/21961, 28 Zilkade 1279 [17 May 1863].
- 113 Some examples are as follows: BOA, DH.MKT, 1734/121, 4 Zilkade 1307 [22 June 1890]; BOA, DH.İ.UM, 93.1/1.47, 10 Receb 1333 [24 May 1915].
- 114 Andonaki applied for the provision of 10,000 *kantar* of tree bark from Silifke forests. The Administrative Council of Adana Province rejected his application on the grounds that it would damage the forests. BOA, DH.MKT, 318/26, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1312 [14 December 1894].
- 115 In 1881, 65,000 *kantar* of bark were illegally exported from the Antalya coast. See TNA, FO, 424/132, 1882. Ottoman officers discovered 532 *kıyye* of pine bark in a Greek ship that approached the Manavgat coast. BOA, DH.MKT, 1354/114, 9 Şevval 1303 [11 July 1886]. In 1892, officials accosted several ships full of pine bark along the Anamur and Kızılkilise coasts. BOA, DH.MKT, 2034/82, 4 Cemaziyelahir 1310 [24 December 1892]; BOA.DH.MKT, 2027/6, 13 Cemaziyelevvel 1310 [3 December 1892].

became a trading hub for timber due to its vast forests and numerous ports. This development heightened pressure on the Taurus forests.¹¹⁶ Commodification of forests starting in the mid-nineteenth century encouraged local notables to build sawmills on *cibâl-i mübâha* land.¹¹⁷ Though commercial use was forbidden, the administration liberalized the forestry regime due to its urgent need for financial resources.¹¹⁸ During the Tanzimat period, *mültezims* grew considerable wealth from forests.¹¹⁹ They contributed to deforestation by overexploiting *mirî* forests.¹²⁰ It was also a general trend in certain regions that *cibâl-i mübâha* lands were assigned to local rich people.¹²¹

§ 4.5 Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this chapter was to depict the major legal and institutional changes that Ottoman forestry underwent from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

The new legal framework projected by bureaucrats and experts stemmed from severe financial problems that the Ottoman government faced during the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result of an increasing need for new revenues, forests came to be seen as vital sources of income. The purpose of introducing a series of institutions and uniform procedures was to eliminate local actors and bring forests under the control of the government.

This chapter revealed that there was hesitation and disagreement about the new procedures at the central level. Ottoman bureaucrats were cautious about the proposals put forward by foreign forestry experts who had been invited to the empire. The main reason for the conflict was concern that reg-

116 McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: An Environmental History*, 2, 287.

117 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 87.

118 Diker, 22.

119 Çağlar, 51.

120 Diker, 25.

121 "Memâlik-i Mahrûsa-yı Şâhâne Ormanları Hakkında Mâlûmât-ı Târihhiyye," 87; "Ormanlarımız," 18.

ulations oriented toward preservation would prevent the utilization of forests. Moreover, bureaucrats deliberated on how to limit customary rights without causing social disorder and without diminishing tax revenues. Instead of abolishing all forms of free use of the forests, Ottoman bureaucrats preferred to maintain some old practices.

This chapter also demonstrated that the “deforestation threat” was a rhetorical device that emerged in the nineteenth century to legitimate the curtailing of the rights to use forests for small-scale trade and the vital needs of local communities. The abolishment of centuries-old rights such as *cibâl-i mübâha*, however, did not prevent deforestation; on the contrary, forests were destroyed more after the introduction of the Forest Regulation. Contrary to the “deforestation by nomads” discourse, the main factors that led to the deepening destruction of the forests were the settlement of pastoral nomads, peripatetics, and *muhacirs* in or near forests as well as the intensification of commercial lumbering. The clearing of forests for the purposes of both settlement and cultivation and the massive removal of trees for industrial purposes created increasing pressure on the forests.

