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ORGANIZING COEXISTENCE IN EARLY OTTOMAN ALEPPO: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 1518, 1526, AND 1536 *TAHRÎR DEFTERIS* AND THE 1536 *QANUNNAME*

1. THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF OTTOMAN *TAHRÎR DEFTERI*

The study of Ottoman *Tahrîr Defteri* (cadastral registers) began in the 1950s thanks to the work of Ömer Lütfi Barkan (1902–1979), one of the founding fathers of Ottoman historical studies.¹ Barkan, a native of Edirne,² studied at Strasbourg University at the end of the 1920s, at the time when historians like Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and André Piganiol were teaching there and were in the middle of important phases of their respective careers. These scholars were making profound changes in the study of history and archival research, teaching new methods and approaches, which were later characterized as constituting the core of the *École des Annales*.³ In this intellectual context, Barkan decided to focus on economic and demographic history, identifying *defTERS* (registers) as precious sources for historical enquiry. During the 1930s, he estimated the population of the entire Ottoman Empire for different periods, using a collection of *Tahrîr Defteri*.⁴ His approach was at first quantitative, with the ambition to build a statistical series out of the analysis.⁵ A contemporary Hungarian historian, Lajos Fekete, also developed a similar approach.⁶

Quite soon, however, these quantitative methods were challenged by other researchers. Those who had promoted them also began to use archival resources differently. The *École des Annales* itself evolved in the direction of embracing more diverse approaches. The writing of history came to have a greater focus on the use of archival resources, to allow multi-sided readings of the evolution of societies. Charles Issawi and Bernard Lewis, among others, participated in these methodological and interpretative debates.⁷ However, with the emergence of historical anthropology and of new trends in cultural, institutional, and social history, the attention dedicated to *Tahrîr Defteri* ebbed: researchers were in search of sources giving them access to dimensions of societies that went beyond just lists and numbers. It was only after the passage of a couple of decades that a new generation of scholars returned to this kind of archival sources, to try out new lines of questioning. Irene Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Nicoara Beldiceanu, for example,

illustrated how the chronology of census elaboration followed of the course of Ottoman conquests.⁸ In these researchers' use of *Tahrîr Defteri*, it was more than a reservoir of quantitative information: the conditions of its production also indicated the organization of the early Ottoman state. Irene Beldiceanu-Steinherr illustrated how the administrative apparatus of the empire grew during the elaboration of the censuses.

During the 1980s, Heath W. Lowry reflected on the methodology of research in Ottoman defterology. He examined all existing works of history that took up the subject, classifying them according to their particular approaches (Barkan/Braudelian, Turkish school, new French school) and proposed a series of conclusions, announcing the potentialities and limits of the *defter*.⁹ Among the most important limits he evoked was the impossibility of creating global quantitative studies and the fact that the quality of the *defter* is inconstant, depending greatly on place and time.

More recent studies, probably for this reason, are careful when using this type of source. However, in spite of the limitations Lowry listed, historians did not abandon these precious sources. In the 1990s, Bekir Kemal Ataman returned to the subject, with reflections on the value of the *Tahrîr Defteri* as a source for demographic history, warning against methodological problems such as variations in the definition of a *hane* (*feu fiscal*/hearth/household), the existence of groups of exempted persons, from the military to the *ulemas*, and the existence of certain uncovered areas.¹⁰ Despite these reservations, his work participated in the trend of renewed attention paid by historians to these sources. Ahmet Akgündüz also illustrated this trend¹¹. The focus, however, was almost always on demography, taxation, and economy and never the governance system behind it, the nature of the empire, or its governance of the diversity of the population. In spite of the growth in interest for these entries and issues in the profession, it appears that historians are discouraged from addressing such issues with the data of the *Tahrîr Defteri*, as if the warnings pronounced by the senior scholars of previous decades intimidated them. It was only in the beginning of the present century that the attention returned to *Tahrîr Defteri*, with, for example, Metin Coşgel proposing an innovative method of studying these documents and, most of all, urging researchers to adopt a more optimistic attitude on their use.¹² His approach, however, retains the focus on quantification, using sampling methods.

This article, on the other hand, reflects on the nature of the documents and the administrative and social processes that they embody, to examine how coexistence was officially recognized and institutionally organized during the first period of Ottoman rule in Aleppo, as was done in all Ottoman cities. Here, the goal is more than using the source only in quantitative study but to study the process leading to

its creation and the categories it contains, to retrieve information on the reaction of early Ottoman urban governance to the need to govern diverse populations. The fact of the production of these documents itself can be taken as a sign of how coexistence was conceived and organized under the Ottoman rule.

2. CONTINUITY IN TROUBLED TIMES: ALEPPO IN TRANSITION FROM MAMLUK TO OTTOMAN RULE

Between 1183 and 1260, Aleppo was one of the major cities under the control of a branch of the Ayyubid dynasty. Its population demonstrated communal, confessional, and ethnic diversity. Anne-Marie Eddé has illustrated the strong administrative construction and the stabilization of fiscal categories, practices, and concepts in this period.¹³ The system of governance here had diversity as its object, and it reflected the main principles in Islamic political thought on that subject.¹⁴ Local notables built efficient trade networks in the whole region and beyond.¹⁵ After the short but traumatic period of Mongol occupation, Aleppo, a key city for commerce in the region,¹⁶ was ruled for about 250 years by the Mamluks,¹⁷ a composite group of soldiers and rulers of diverse origins (Caucasian, Circassian, Mongol, Anatolian, African, Balkan, and others).¹⁸ Mamluk power in Aleppo, which had its own complex relationship with the Mamluk state based in Cairo,¹⁹ elaborated the Ayyubid heritage of the city to help stabilize fiscal and population categories. The power structure was negotiated between the Mamluk hierarchy and local notables on the basis of central Islamic concepts regulating governance.²⁰ At the beginning of the 16th century, as the opposition between the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate grew, Aleppo became the object of intense rivalry.²¹

The Ottoman Empire was participating in rivalries with various powers, on a global scale. With such world events as the Spanish conquest of Al-Andalus and the resulting flood of Muslim and Jewish refugees seeking asylum in the North African, Balkan and Middle Eastern cities of the Ottoman Empire, including Aleppo,²² the Portuguese and Spanish attacks on Muslim harbors in the Mediterranean, the reinforcement of Portuguese colonization of various emporia on the coasts of the Indian Ocean, and attempts by the Persians to expand toward the West, the Ottomans felt it necessary to stabilize the core of their territory and to integrate areas that were threatened by other powers.²³ During the battle of Marj Dabiq in August 1516, Khayr Bey, who was ruling the city for the Mamluks, went over to the Ottomans. He had the support of many of the city's notables, who had developed a strong aversion to Mamluk rule.²⁴ Khayr Bey was rewarded for his choice later with the Ottoman

governorship of Egypt. The annexation of Aleppo by the Ottomans thus happened without bloodshed. Many medieval Mamluk administrative categories and practices were confirmed, including the retention of Aleppo as part of the administrative province of Damascus. The practices and categories taken over, however, were reinterpreted in the ideology of the Ottoman imperial framework. The relationships among empire, confessional communities, and local elites were the object of negotiation and codification. During the aftermath of a revolt in 1520 in Damascus against Ottoman rule, headed by the former Mamluk al-Ghazali, Aleppo, whose notables did not join the rebellion, was finally granted the status of provincial capital in 1534.²⁵ Aleppo became a symbol of the extension of the Empire toward the Arab world, with Sultan Suleyman residing in the city on various occasions at different moments of his reign and his military campaigns.²⁶

Many historians have dealt with the installation of Ottoman rule in the city. Very few, however, had access to the *Tahrîr Defteri*, or chose to focus on that kind of archival source. Jean Sauvaget mostly used other sources for his general history of the city.²⁷ Later, he did turn to fiscal issues, as part of work with Robert Mantran, but Aleppo was no longer his main focus at that time.²⁸ Antoine Abdel Nour, in his work on Syrian cities, centered his research on urban morphology and the general organization of urban institutions.²⁹ André Raymond first built his vision of the Ottoman history of the city on the basis of the question of *waqfs*.³⁰ His study of early Ottoman censuses in Aleppo, which he conducted a few years later, provides however important information on the demography and spatial organization of the city.³¹ To estimate the populations of different neighborhoods, Raymond used registers from 1537 and 1584 provided by Adnan Bakhit,³² as well as a report on the state of the city made by the French merchant and consul d'Arvieux in 1683 (who himself probably had access to original archival Ottoman documents and chronicles).³³ Very little information is given however to the production of the documents. Raymond remained very skeptical as for the value of documents like the *Tahrîr Defteri*.³⁴ Charles Wilkins, in his study of Aleppo, includes a chapter on taxation, and underlines the novelty and the extent of the imperial effort to gain precise knowledge of the composition and spatial distribution of the population.³⁵ Little has been said, however, about the process of the establishment and negotiation of the Ottoman practices of governance or on the continuities or changes that took place during this phase. Timothy Fitzgerald recently proposed that Halil Inalcik's analysis of the Ottoman method of conquest and its impact on cities of the Arab world should be revisited.³⁶ In accord with a suggestion of Hamza,³⁷ he pushed for a recognition that it cannot be assumed that everything happened in all Ottoman cities everywhere in the way it did for Egypt;³⁸ Hamza suggested that research on the

chronology and details of the establishment of Ottoman rule in Aleppo be promoted and undertaken.

The present article also intends to take on a similar research posture, with specific attention paid to *Tahrîr Defteri* and the question of the official recognition of the diversity of the population and of the governance of diversity. The existence of a series of early Ottoman *Tahrîr Defteri* indeed allows scholars to reconstruct how the instruments of governance were created, as part of a wider negotiation of the insertion of local society and its diversity into imperial structure. The production of *Tahrîr Defteri* was part of this process.

3. TAHRÎR DEFTERI OF EARLY OTTOMAN ALEPPO

Researchers now have access to a significant set of *Tahrîr Defteri*.³⁹ This is true for Aleppo and for many Ottoman cities and provinces. Access to the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives (BOA) has been made easier. Other *Tahrîr Defteris* have been published, like those of Damascus of 1535 and, recently, Aleppo of 1536.⁴⁰ Halil Sahillioğlu also published a *Tahrîr Defteri* of Damascus in the 17th century.⁴¹ The Aleppo *Tahrîr Defteri* of 1518, 1526, and 1536 are the main sources used in this study.⁴² The 924h./1518 register (n. 93) concerns the entire new district (*livâ*), giving information on population, properties, and *waqfs*. It is a register of the *mufassal* kind; that is, it is detailed.⁴³ It includes 733 folios and apparently once also included a *qanunname*, but this document is not to be found in the rest of the archival sources. The 933h./1526 register (n. 146) also concerns the entire *livâ*. It is also a register of the *mufassal* kind and includes 1,094 folios. Document n. 397, from the year 943h./1536, provides information on the entire new province (which had been reformed in 1534) and it is a *mufassal*, too. It includes 834 folios, some of which, including the first one, have been damaged. A *qanunname* is included. It was not attached to the document but was rather placed inside.⁴⁴

More *Tahrîr Defteri* relating to Aleppo are available in the BOA for the following years and decades,⁴⁵ but here, the choice was made to focus on the first three documents to analyze the specificities of the establishment of the Ottoman rule in the city. Of course, as historians have noted, such documents do not provide a general or all-encompassing vision of demography or of the social or confessional composition of the city. Interpreting them must be done in conjunction with other documents, such as petitions and chronicles.⁴⁶ There are many aspects of urban life that the *Tahrîr Defteri* do not provide access to. Even quantification is sometimes difficult here. However, what the documents do provide is a vision of the process

of the construction of the features of imperial Ottoman governance. So too, they provide precious information on the typology of quarters, number of households, and confessional identity. These are all precious indications not only of the diversity of the surveyed population, but also on early Ottoman governance of diversity.

4. SURVEYS AS INSTRUMENTS OF THE EARLY OTTOMAN GOVERNANCE OF DIVERSITY

The contents of the documents are not the concern of the first level of interpretation that is proposed here; rather, the process that led to their production is the central topic to be explored. Defterology, since its origin in the 1950s, has often had to deal with this. The production of thousands of registers in a few decades is one of the founding undertakings and crowning administrative achievements of the Ottoman Empire during its expansion. Inalcik even rated the production of such registers as a method of conquest.⁴⁷ His vision of the process, based in large part upon the study of registers on 15th century rural Albania and various registers of the 1570s, where instructions were found for inspectors, might however be somehow too centralistic and too focused on the importance of the *timar* system of land tenure.⁴⁸ Lowry criticized this vision and insisted that registers formed the new basis for the fiscal system at the very moment of its redefinition.⁴⁹ In cities, the process, as Inalcik himself acknowledged in a later article on Istanbul,⁵⁰ surely involved negotiations with local notables, confessional communities, and institutions, and had aspects that were more than just of a bureaucratic nature. At stake was more than just the fiscal system. In spite of guiding role of the Sultan and of his administration, the results of the transition, I argue here, were not simply outcomes of a top-down decision. There was instead a process that was rather the result of a posture of dialog between the new rulers and local society, in which the entire governance system was rebuilt, using the role of intermediaries to the recognition of previous privileges. Heritage from the past was examined, and the transformation or adaptation of each piece of it in the new system was the product of a negotiation.

This does not necessarily signify a centralization of the administration. Rather, it implies the establishment of channels of communication between the center and the provinces in the context of a complex new geography, new cultural spheres, and new symbols of power. The novelty, however, was anchored in the frameworks of the recent past, which were mostly from the Mamluk period. The registers were tools that supported, accompanied, and even embodied this process of negotiation, adaptation, and transformation. The counting and classification of the population was

part of negotiations with local elites and of the recognition by the empire of local groups and their privileges and traditions. These privileges had been recognized by former rulers previously and had been the object of previous forms of bureaucratic transcription during the Mamluk period. In other regions, the Ottomans had already had the experience of reconciling such facts on the ground. The groups and collective identities that constitute the categories of the registers were the object of measures of taxation. They were also granted certain privileges, meaning an officially acknowledged specific treatment was granted to each officially recognized category that constituted society. The fact that these groups were categories in the registers made their recognition official. In this process of negotiation and adaptation, the *container* was just as important as the *content*. This feature was an instrument of governance that constituted part of the very nature of imperial governance. The recognition of the existence and privileges of confessional communities and groups, which followed a period of study of the privileges that previously existed and the negotiation of their transfer into a new system, was part of what built the imperial sphere in cities, in direct collaboration with local notables. Thus, it was, at this early stage, part of the nature of the empire itself. For this reason, the registers must be interpreted as instruments of the governance of diversity and not only as traces numerically evoking diversity or as instruments defined by their fiscal function.

The compilation of information for the writing of the *Tahrîr Defteri* was the object of negotiation and mediation. Imperial inspectors had to delegate this task to local civic and confessional authorities. This fact *per se* already constituted the confirmation of their competencies: nothing of an imperial nature could happen in cities subjugated by the Ottomans without the participation of the civic sphere, which the notables were heads of. The empire had no body of civil servants to perform the studies they needed to undertake: its inspectors simply visited the civic institutions, at whose heads the notables stood, and visited confessional leaders. Access to archives and civic or communal chronicles (where all information was consigned) was part of the process of negotiation and of the definition of a new relationship among the bureaucratic, institutional, and political natures.

In rural villages, as Inalcik found, the holder of *timar* was the intermediary, a position that had all the ambiguities of a tax farmer tracking inhabitants and sources of fiscal revenue. In cities, where tax farming was not the rule, counting the population and potential fiscal revenues was undertaken differently. Lowry's study of a very specific, non-urban, context, might support the understanding, from a methodological point of view, of how intermediaries were called on for that task. As Lowry suggested indeed in a very precise study of the 1520 *Defter* on the monasteries of Mount Athos, the compilation of cadastral surveys occurred by

means of dialog with representatives of local communities. Lowry traced the journey of the inspectors on the peninsula, discovering that the order of the monasteries in the *defter* did not follow any logical progression: from this, he drew his hypothesis that counts were brought to the commission by representatives of the various monasteries.⁵¹ By this means, the empire delegated an administrative task while recognizing local communities and institutions' role.

Even where urban situations are more complex than a series of monasteries on a peninsula, such as was the case in Aleppo, the same template could have been followed. Hidemitsu Kuroki's studies on later periods than this study is concerned with confirm the importance of this dimension.⁵²

This may have been how confessional communities participated their enumeration, providing the results to the imperial inspectors in charge of the writing of the *defter*. The evocation by d'Arvieux of the figure and role of the tax collector might be an indication. Although no direct proof of the existence of this function has been found for the 16th century, the form of a *defter* and the compilation of information contained within it suggests that the *muhasil* could have existed. For d'Arvieux, this figure was an employee of the local civic institutions and provided information to the empire.⁵³

The belief that the empire likely had confessional communities participate in their own counting was part of the recognition by the empire of the privileges of communities and of the delegation of competencies on which the whole Ottoman system of urban governance was based. Just as the monks on Athos Peninsula had no interest in minimizing their own numbers, because privileges were attached to the count, confessional communities in Aleppo had no interest in minimizing their presence in the city, as their numbers also formed part of the recognition of their privileges (the privilege of being recognized as a collective body with an autonomous form of self-governance, and the ability to negotiate the fiscal burden).

The 1518 *defter* was thus the result of a negotiation after the seizure of Aleppo by the Ottoman Empire. It was not merely the imposition on the seized city of an imperial administrative order and instrument of an external force. It also represented the negotiated invention of a new kind of instrument that not only listed people and property but also organized coexistence under a new kind of administrative rationality. Of course, the inheritance here of the medieval Islamic system of cadasters, as it was known under the Mamluk, is obvious. There are also other heritages and influences, which both the Mamluk and the Ottomans themselves mirrored (Early Islamic, Roman, and Byzantine). As far as the Mamluks were concerned, the urban chronicles already listed properties and gave information on owners and inhabitants. The *qadis*' justice system also produced *sijill* registers in

which such information was available. The unique character of the *Tahrîr Defteri* however was to list property and inhabitants in a systematic way, introducing new administrative relationships between the inhabitants and the bureaucratic system. Additionally, the *Tahrîr Defteri* transformed diversity into a basic administrative element.

Thanks to the practice of producing the *Tahrîr Defteri*, relationships with the administration became more bureaucratic and were less conceived as a feature of religious tolerance by Muslim rulers. The Ottomans consolidated this approach during their previous experience of seizing cities where non-Muslim elements were dominant, from the Balkans to Anatolia. Even where the Islamic concept of protection (*dhimma*) was a basic moral reference, and in Aleppo, too (line 7 of ANNEX), the administrative practices and the kind of governance of diversity the Ottomans introduced created new distance between Islamic religious concepts and members of non-Muslim communities. This median sphere was embodied by the empire. Even more than general principles, and more than the progressive organization in *millets*, the urban practice of the registers and cadasters organized coexistence in a much more pragmatic way, to accompany the emergence of a new definition of Ottoman imperial ideology. The *Tahrîr Defteri* documents, for just this reason, are a precious source on the nature of the Ottoman urban governance of diversity.

In Aleppo, the transition from the Mamluks to the Ottomans was of course also characterized by episodes of conflict,⁵⁴ and the 1518 *defter* can be read as one feature of the resolution of such conflicts and as part of the invention of imperial *pax ottomana*. Historiography has not yet explored this aspect of the transition from the Mamluks to the Ottomans much, but it is clear that it involved more than one party: the Ottomans did not bring ready-to-use solutions, and their interactions with local realities participated in the construction of imperialism itself.

The second level of interpretation of the production of fiscal and population surveys relates to the presence of a *qanunname* inside the defter of 943h./1536. This code was intended for non-Muslim subjects: "*Sukkân al-balad min re'aya*." It begins with an invocation of the Quran. Suras proclaiming the duty of the Sultan to be righteous are cited in the first paragraph of the *qanunname*.

Inalcik stated that this was an old feature of the Ottoman administration of newly conquered provinces and how under Suleiman, called the lawgiver, or *Qanuni*, this feature developed further.⁵⁶ Ömer Lütfî Barkan's studies, focused on rural economy, might have delayed the attention of scholars from the interpretation of the meaning of the process, as Lowry later showed.⁵⁷ Scholars like Lowry, as well as John Christos Alexander, who studied how Greek lands were integrated into the

empire⁵⁸ or Heather Ferguson, who studied the integration of frontier zones,⁵⁹ have suggested that scholars should pay a renewed attention to the *qanunname*. As far as Aleppo is concerned, the presence of a *qanunname* in the 1518 register shows how far back the formalization of the relationship between the empire and local society happened. The 1536 version shows signs of being the product of renewed negotiation. The use of the term renewal in the text of the *qanunname* confirms the existence of a previous text: “*An yuharrir bihî daftaran jadîdân ve mejmû'an farîdan*” [this *defter* represents a new redaction] (line 19 of ANNEX). Here again we can see that the *qanunname* is not a top-down product or process: it is the result of negotiations through which local privileges were recognized. The counting of the population and of the fiscal base was the occasion of the codification of the relationship between the empire and local communities. This is another central feature of the governance of diversity in the early Ottoman Empire. The recognition of the right of non-Muslims to own property and of the integrity of the propriety of all owners is recorded in the *qanunname*: “The Sultan guarantees the rights of the owners of all parcels,” but he also “supervises the application of the grammar of taxation (*qawâ'id*), which is embodied by the *al-jizya*, *al-kharaj*, and other (*wa ghayr dhalika*) fiscal principles.”⁶⁰ Old medieval fiscal principles were simply pressed into the new framework of the empire. However, the term “other principles” that appears in this document shows that the negotiation is relatively flexible. The *qanunname* includes a formal recognition of previously accepted privileges and methods of taxation. No explicit dimension of hierarchization between confessional communities was included. However, the differential treatment that the communities receive reveals a degree of the conceptualization of difference. This degree is key for understanding the features of governance of what then became the old Ottoman regime.

The third level of interpretation involves analyzing the quantitative data available in the three documents that have been under examination here. Historians have thoroughly gone through the limits of this kind of exercise. Beyond any precautions, the Aleppo documents provide useful information. Even setting aside the difficulty of extrapolations and comparisons, some information indeed can be retrieved. The 1518 *defter* presents a total of 12,366 households for the city of Aleppo (*hane*). On this basis, BOA archivists estimate a total population of about 60,000 people.⁶¹ The city was composed of 70 neighborhoods (*mahalle*). The estimation of the population depends on the factor that is chosen for the number of people in each household and indeed on the very definition of household in this context. Historians have discussed such figures as these for decades.⁶² In the *defter*, the term used for household is *hane* (*feu fiscal*). In total, 580 households (*hane*) are

listed in the original document as non-Muslim. This figure makes up only 4.69% of all households in the city. But Christian households, with the exception of the Armenians, are not included in this count. This has large implications in a city like Aleppo, where the Christian population encompassed many confessions. Even if more questions arise here than answers, much can be learned about the nature of the count: it occurred within each confessional community, each community providing numbers for itself. It is possible to interpret the absence of a specific community known to have been important in the city, as a sign of conflict over its privileges or the outcome of an unfinished negotiation. In the Bahsita neighborhood, 70 Jewish households were counted and 261 in the Yahudiyān neighborhood. The *defter* is silent on the confessional composition of the neighborhoods: whether they were exclusive or mixed. The figures suggest, however, that the first quarter was mixed and the second was much more exclusive. In the Bab al-Nasr neighborhood, 67 Armenian households (*Ermeni*) were counted, 9 in Bahsita, 5 in Cübeyl, 168 in Judayda (101 + 67 *Haymane Ermeni*). Here again mixture and exclusivity can both be derived.

In the 1526 document, the total population fell to 10,462 households. This time, however, certain Muslim households (*Müsülman*) were counted in separate categories. It is not easy to interpret this change. This might correspond to renewed negotiations with specific groups who were earning specific privileges or whose fiscal burden has been redefined. It might also mirror the arrival of new groups. In the Yahudiyān neighborhood, 285 Jewish households were counted, and there were 73 in the Bahsita neighborhood. European (*Efrenç*) Jewish households (*Yehudî*) were also found in this neighborhood, 10 households of them. The creation of this new, separate category of Jews likely corresponded to specific fiscal privileges. In Bab al-Nasr, 86 Armenian households were counted, and 167 in Judayda. Kurds (*Akrad*) are also counted in their own category: 75 households are listed in the Kallasa neighborhood.

The total number of households fell again in the 1536 document, this time to 9,991. Jews were not counted. It is not that they were no longer present in the town. More probably, no new negotiation was conducted to regularize their fiscal status or for the privilege of self-organization as a recognized confessional community. For the Armenians, 82 households were counted in Bab al-Nasr and 161 in Judayda. The Kurds do not appear in the count as such. As with the Jews, this may mean that nothing new was introduced to the governance of their fiscal and communal status since the period of the previous count, 10 years earlier. For the first time Christians appear as such: 27 households in Kizilca. This figure seems extremely low. We can only create hypotheses: was there a conflict on taxation and privileges that was

resolved only for this part of the town? Does “Christian” here only denote a specific community? Here, the document is silent, but the process that led to its production suggests that the survey we have was the result of constantly ongoing negotiations, conflicts, mediations, and resolutions. This reading of the survey documents, as being the result of a negotiation and mentioning only what elements had changed since the previous document, allow us to better understand the lacks: it is not that the surveyors were unable to count or estimate the population. Rather, it was their task to certify a certain state of negotiations between the government and specific groups. Groups or individuals that were unaffected by the new round of negotiations thus were not counted and listed again, as their situation remained the same as in the previous survey. This analytical posture, if verified by further research on Aleppo and other cities, might let historians abandon their frustration regarding with the systematic partial picture that the surveys provide.

CONCLUSION

The study of the three *Tahrîr Defteri* that were produced on Aleppo during its first decades of Ottoman rule suggests a series of provisional conclusions. The surveys show how an early modern bureaucratic system of tackled the question of diversity, constructing categories, modifying inherited categories or practices or leaving them alone, and using the instrument created to implement reformed systems of urban governance on various scales. The basic nature of the system is that it was negotiated between the imperial sphere and local society. Imperiality was a negotiated feature and diversity was part of it. The *Tahrîr Defteri* are both a generalization of imperial Ottoman practice that was observed at the very early stages of the Ottoman expansion, practice that was itself of Byzantine origin, and, as far as cities of the Arab world are concerned, a new form derived from present practice in the medieval art of chronicle writing. These chronicles, indeed, were already used as civic annals registering property and population data. The production of the *defter* of Aleppo most likely occurred in the context of a convergence between those two forms, and thus of a convergence between the imperial apparatus and those local urban institutions that were in charge of chronicles. The novelty here is not the specific content (the urban administration already knew how many members each community was counting and had already used their data on this to calculate fiscal burdens); what is new is the form, which is a sign of an evolution in governance methods: diversity is recognized using an imperial instrument and it becomes a basic feature of the relationship of the empire with local society.

The documents themselves are symbolic of the implementation in the city of new ways of managing diversity. The *Tahrîr Defteris* were in no way merely fiscal documents or population counts. They were signs of a new vision of the city and the result of a negotiations between local elites and the empire to create a reformed urban governance system on the basis of medieval Islamic heritage. Organized coexistence was confirmed to be a founding feature of Ottoman rule. Study of the documents confirms that coexistence was not merely the juxtaposition of different peoples; it was not merely Islamic tolerance or protection; rather, it was an organized system of governance that gave members of different communities access to the basic features of urban life, such as housing, work, religious freedom, justice, charity, and security, as well as to a distinct civic sphere. Ottoman governance of diversity was not a top-down system of the management of differences but rather a system in multiple dimensions that transformed differences into basic features of governance. Karen Barkey has insisted that this is also characteristic of the empire writ large.⁶³ What study of the *Tahrîr Defteri* illustrates is how the process was expressed within the form of constant negotiation and interaction on the local scale. During the following decades and centuries, Ottoman surveys continue to have the function of instruments of administrative and fiscal knowledge on the population and their fiscal resources, while also having the function of instruments of negotiation with established local powers such as urban institutions, confessional communities, guilds, notables, and merchants.

NOTES

- ¹ On the archival turn that followed the opening of the prime ministerial archives of Turkey after World War II, see Leslie Peirce, "Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: the Early Centuries," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19/1 (2004): 6–28.
- ² By Barkan on Edirne, see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Edirne Askerî Kassamî'na Âit Tereke Defterleri (1545-1659)," *Belgeler* 3(1966): 1–479. On Barkan and Edirne, see Hülya Canbakal, "Barkan dan bu yana tereke çalışmaları," in *Türk Tarihçiliğine Katkıları ve Etikeleri Sempozyumu*, ed. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Istanbul, 2011. http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/17249/1/CANBAKAL_BARKAN.pdf
- ³ André Burguière, *L'école des Annales: une histoire intellectuelle* (Paris: O. Jacob, 2006); Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: the Annales School 1929–89* (Redwood: Stanford University Press, 1990).
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- ⁵ Ömer Barkan, "Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'empire ottoman aux XVe et XVIe siècles," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1/1 (1957): 9–36.
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ANNEX:

Edition of the 1536 Aleppo *qanunname* found in the *defter*.

- 1 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
- 2 الحمد لله الذي سخر الانوار و حرك الاكوار بضروب
الادوار
- 3 على عالم الانفطار لابرار النسخة الجامعة جوامع الاثار فما
في العالم
- 4 مرثي بالعيان او غايب مدرك بالاذهان الآ وهو في منشورها
مندرج
- 5 و في دفتر وجودها مرسوم و مندمج فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين
- 6 الاله المنزه عن الجور والحيث و هو أحكم الحاكمين والصلوة
على خير من
- 7 وضع افانين قوانين الايالة و ختم اداب النبوة والرسالة حامي
ذمام اهل
- 8 الايمان و قد افلح المؤمنون و مبيح رقاب ذوى الخسران حتى
يعطوا
- 9 الجزية عن يد وهم صاغرون و على اله واصحابه و لاة الحق
وقضاة الخلق
- 10 وفاتحى الغرب والشرق صلوة دائمة بالعشى والابكار زلفا
من الليل
- 11 و طرفي النهار وسلم تسليماً اما بعد فان خليفة الله في خليفته
و أمينه
- 12 على بزيتة المجتمع فيه شروط الامامه وهو من بيت لا
يزالوا الملك فيهم الى يوم

- 13** القيامة المستحق لما زرت عليه الحافقين الفايز بملك ما بين
المشرقين والمغربيين
- 14** غياث الاسلام ومغيث المسلمين سيد سادات السلاطين
السلطان بن السلطان الملك المظفر سليمان خان خلد الله
تعالى ملكه وجعل الدنيا
- 15** باسرها ملكه لما ان اتاه الله الملك والحكمة وقلده امور هذه
الامة شرفت
- 16** نفسه الشريفة الى عين الكمال الاقدس وزين الجمال الانفس
بالاجتهاد في تفقد
- 17** احوال مملكته وهو المجتهد المصيب وجعل لسكان البلاد
من رعية او في حظ و اوفر
- 18** نصيب فامر اقل خدام عتبه العلية وساحته السنية الفقير الى
الله الولي
- 19** المترصد لفايض فيضه و قربه على أن يحزر به دفتر جديداً
ومجموعاً فريداً
- 20** وبهامي عن قاطعة أن يضام أحد منهم او يظلم او يكلف مالا
عليه او يلزم بما لا يلزم
- 21** و ان يمشي على اقوم منهاج في قواعد قوايم الجزية والخراج
و غير ذلك دقائق
- 22** الفوايد وشرائط الفرايد و لما لم يسعني الا الامتثال و تلقي
الوامر الشريفة
- 23** بالقبول والاقبال بادرت الى فعله ما يليق بخدمة الامامة
واداب عظمة الخلافة.