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*Religion, politics and ethnicity in Cyprus  
during the Turkokratia (1571-1878)*

*Introduction*

THIS PAPER examines the relationship between religion, ethnicity and politics in Cyprus during the *Turkokratia* (1571-1878), the period of Ottoman rule. Its major thesis is that in the pre-industrial framework of Ottoman rule in Cyprus neither religion nor ethnicity were major sources of conflict in a society composed of two ethnic groups (Greeks and Turks) and following two monotheistic faiths (Christianity and Islam) in marked contrast to the recent history of Cyprus. In broad outline it closely parallels Gellner's thesis (1983) that nationalism is a by-product of industrialization, extensive education literacy and geographical and social mobility, and it seeks to show that the major cleavages in Cyprus were mainly intraethnic rather than interethnic.

This article seeks to go beyond this viewpoint, however, in two significant aspects. It shows that in pre-industrial, agrarian, pre-national polities more attention must be given first to the political economy of interstitial institutions such as the Church in the case of Christianity (or the clerisy in Islam), and second to the way religion and intermarriage, including the complementarity of different property transmission systems, regulate relations between groups.

In his work on nationalism Gellner has noted that in agro-literate societies 'the only stratum which can in any sense be said to have a cultural policy is the clerisy. Sometimes [...] its policy is in effect to create a complementarity and mutual interdependence between itself and the other orders. It seeks to strengthen its own position by making itself indispensable, and the complementary roles it ascribes to itself and to the laity, far from requiring its own universalization, formally preclude it' (1983 : 16).

A major feature of Ottoman rule was its reliance on local power structures, such as the Orthodox Church, to collect taxes on its

behalf and function as a counterweight to the *muhassil* (Governor), the Porte's representative. The Church was thus a partner of the Turkish rulers, mediating between them and the peasantry, whom it quite often oppressed by virtue of this role. In the traditional situation this did not lead to conflict between the two religions or ethnic groupes *qua* groups, although other cleavages were certainly present. More importantly the intimate involvement of the Orthodox Church in the administration of the island had profound effects on Cyprus political economy and ultimately on the progress of Greek nationalism. Various observers (e.g. Clogg 1976, 1982) have noted that the Church certainly benefited from this accommodation. Yet the impression is one of venality which is certainly important in explaining cleavages in Greek society, but bypasses the significant economic effects in the countryside. The large church estates which dotted the Cypriot countryside during the *Turkocratie* were a direct effect of the development of export oriented agriculture and of the privileged political position of the church enshrined in the *millet* administrative system.

In Cyprus, as in other parts of South Eastern Europe, the benefits of such indispensability were not totally unequivocal. Apart from permitting the Greeks to enter trade (which somewhat softened the harsh realities of Greek low social and legal status), the Ottomans permitted Greek women to intermarry with them and both men and women could also convert to Islam. In many cases especially in the countryside, the Church was unable to patrol its borders effectively and prevent migration from the flock. As in Western Europe (Goody 1983) peasant matrimonial strategies often conflicted with official Church dogma, further exacerbating tensions between the grassroots and the Church hierarchy.

Greek-Ottoman intermarriage of a specific type was also assisted by the coexistence of different property transmission systems. In this paper I take the view that in analysing intergroup relations it is important to move beyond a consideration of their political and legal frameworks. The way religions define group membership including the regulation of marriage and the transmission of property, is equally significant. The essential similarities between Christianity and Islam should not disguise the fact that they regulate social relations and marriage differently. In Cyprus, as in other parts of the Middle East, religious camouflaging enabled subject groups to migrate from their faith and move upwards, especially when the ruling group's religion possessed an ascribed legal superiority. Although the subject Orthodox Church could not patrol its borders

effectively and was unable to apply spiritual and temporal sanctions effectively, the specific features of the receiving religion should not be overlooked. In matrimonial matters, in contrast to Christianity which insisted on the Orthodoxy of both partners, Islam permitted Muslim men to take Christian wives, thus offering some degree of social mobility to subject individuals.

Different systems of property transfers (Christian dowry, Islamic brideprice) and marriage patterns, themselves codified by religion, encouraged this one-way upward flow of Greek Orthodox women into the Islamic ruling group. It thus makes little sense to concentrate solely on the formal politico-legal statuses of religions faiths and their effects on intergroup relations; the way religious regulate certain basic social institutions such as marriage and the family, permit or restrict movement from the faith, are equally important. Although such movement was possible because Christians were a subject people, Islam was much more elastic in these matters; cross-cutting ties of ambiguous ethnicity linked the two communities.

Under British rule (1878-1960) relations between the two ethnic and religious groups changed. The Turks lost their ascribed legal superiority and became a political minority. Apostasy and/or intermarriage, two traditional avenues of social mobility for the Greeks, which had been ineffectively resisted by the Church, ceased to be followed; religious boundaries (especially Greek Orthodox) became more rigid. Cross-cutting ties were discouraged, the Church was able to patrol its borders more closely and both communities competed for the same state resources. The Greek community under the political leadership of the Orthodox Church agitated for *enosis* (union with Greece), an ideal largely formed through the historical experiences of the Church under the *Turkocratia*.

#### *Church and Ottoman administration*

Four political and economic effects can be discerned from the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus: the transformation of the demographic composition by the introduction of a relatively small Turkish ruling group (Papadopoulos 1965); the political emergence of the Greek Cypriot Orthodox Church as an essential part of the Imperial *millet* administration both as a tax-collecting agency and political representative of the Greek *rayah* (flock); the growth of large monastic estates and *chiftliks*, latifundia-type farms producing staples for European markets; and finally an ethnic division of labour between

Greeks and Turks, the former entering the illegal trade in staples in association with European merchant-consuls, whilst the Turks concentrated on land ownership and administration.

The Ottoman theory of the State, the 'circle of equity' placed the military at the centre of society. All land and goods belonged to the Sultan who could dispose of them at will to ensure the well-being of his subjects. According to the theory without the State there could be no justice, the promotion of Islam would be leaderless, subject to the anarchy of tribalism; without justice the subjects could not prosper (Shaw 1976). The military, essential to maintain the State and promote justice, had to be maintained through taxes. This theory clearly excluded 'producers from political participation and rulers from economic concerns' (Gellner 1981: 75) yet it was to be transformed in practice. Instead it enabled the 'natural representatives' of the subject-producers to exercise an essential interstitial role in government machinery often with a good deal of ambiguity. Conversely, rulers, far from being excluded from economic concerns, were involved in financial matters often to the exclusion of matters of political representation.

Soon after the Ottoman conquest the Orthodox Church was restored its properties which it had lost to the Latin Church during the Lusignan and Venetian periods (Hill 1952) (1). The classic prebendal system of *ziamet* (prebendal) allocation to *sipahis* was abandoned and tax-farming established. As Governors lost many of their prebendal incomes they 'were placed in the hypocritical position of finding their own quasi-legal sources of revenue, including the tax-farming option, and of maintaining the large revenues increasingly necessary for their own survival' (McGowan 1981: 58). Insecurity of tenure in Cyprus, as elsewhere in the Ottoman empire, obliged such men to rely on local groups which possessed the resources, skills, manpower, status, and knowledge of local affairs necessary to identify tax-payers and collect revenues on their behalf. The Cypriot Church filled these conditions admirably. The arrangement was also encouraged by Constantinople probably for opposite reasons. The Sublime Porte recognized Churchmen as the natural representatives of their people not only because of the relatively privileged status of Christianity as a Religion of the Book in Islam, but also because they

(1) Given the length of the intervening period it is certainly questionable whether the Orthodox Church knew what it had lost to the Latin Church. It is probable that the Orthodox Church simply received

the property previously held by the Latin Church; the claims of continuity with the past may well have had nationalist implications, as Gellner (1983) has pointed out.

were a useful counterweight to local governors in whose hands were theoretically centralized all administrative and military matters. Government through tax-farming was a recognizably risky business due to its ultimately deleterious effects upon already depleted regions; if taxes were too harsh the population ceased to cultivate or fled. A semblance of political representation could be maintained by permitting local populations to petition Constantinople as ultimate arbiter.

It was a strategic concession with ambiguous benefits because, to adapt Gellner's metaphor, the sheepdogs were also wolves. In Cyprus as is described for other parts of the Ottoman empire, 'the scribal class [...] was implicated in the deliberate obfuscation of fiscal records, this being the simplest and most effective means by which the powerful could arrange to have their temporary holdings illegally converted into something resembling absolute property, or into permanent pious estates with themselves as beneficiaries' (McGowan *ibid.*: 58). Whilst the governor required the Church machinery to collect taxes, the latter clearly benefited from the arrangement. It could appeal to Constantinople on behalf of its flock to restrict a governor's rapacity, or inversely to safeguard its own resources from peasant depredations. The fulcrum of this configuration were the peasantry, overtaxed and often, together with the monasteries, preyed upon by the military whose pay was frequently in arrears and whose loyalties to the Governor were uncertain. Numerous accounts refer to the overtaxed condition of the peasantry, paralleled in other parts of the Empire.

The eighteenth century Greek Cypriot historian, Cyprianos, perceptively interpreted the allocation of responsibility for the collection of (Greek) taxes to the Church in political terms: 'the Porte, wishing to curb in some degree the rapacity of the authorities, to save the rayah from perishing [...] and to inspire some little hope into the poor creatures still left, probably thought it politic to recognise the Archbishop of Cyprus [...] with his three suffragans, as guardians, in a way, and representative of the rayah' (*Excerpta, op. cit.*: 353). The Church's relationship to secular authorities and the inhabitants it represented was radically transformed. With respect to the former their position was strengthened; the Archbishops 'often appeared boldly in person before the Grand Vezir, stating their complaints and asking for a diminution of the taxes paid by the rayah'. In restricting the rapacity of lower level officials the Church could be very successful.

For example, a long-standing case involved a *sipahi* from Lefka village and Kykos Monastery was settled to the Church's favour in 1786. The *sipahi* had insisted on grazing his animals in the Monastery's pasture lands and the Monastery finally petitioned Constantinople. The petition stated that the *sipahi* had threatened: 'give to me for the grazing of your animals in these grazing grounds a sum of aspra. If you do not give them to me, by God, I shall impose upon you another tax by title deed' (*Othom. Engraf.*; Doc 13, p. 230), by which he meant that should the monks not accede to his request he would have falsified records to show that they had more land under cultivation and thus liable to even higher taxes. This was a standard method utilised by *sipahis* (whose *ziamet* allocations had been reduced) to extract more income.

More circumspection was required in dealing with the Governor. The relationship can best be described as an uneasy alliance. Mariti, who resided in Cyprus for 20 years, noted that 'the poor subjects might very often be saved from oppression if their Archbishops were not from policy, and sometimes personal interest, ready to lend themselves to the exactions of the Muhassil, so that they are often abandoned by the very person who ought to take their part' (1769 : 10).

Initially the task of tax evaluation was assumed by the Dragoman or Greek interpreter in the Government palace. His functions were 'to take a census of the inhabitants with a valuation of their property, to assign the amount of tax payable by each, to draw a budget for each year [...] and having the right of direct access to the Sultan which made him a veritable thorn in the flesh of the Turkish Governor' (Hill, *ibid.* : 17). The Dragoman was usually chosen by the Bishops or notables (Hill, *ibid.* : 16), most had been educated in the monasteries and some could trace close affinal or kinship links to highly placed Churchmen (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 369), a very powerful combination. In 1792 it was observed that the Dragoman 'has entire power over the Governor who cannot read and must perforce believe what the Dragoman tells him' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 369). By 1806 he had become 'the most powerful, as well as probably the wealthiest, person in Cyprus' (Hill, *ibid.* : 104) (2). The rise of Dragoman power was resented by the military garrison which, together with the Turkish civilian population, rose in revolt in 1804. The objects of their attack 'were not their immediate officers so much as the Muhassil

(2) Perhaps nothing brings out more forcefully their rise in stature and importance, as well as their religious origins, than their portraits. That of Dragoman Haji Joseph in 1776 is an icon showing a diminutive figure with his family surrounded by the *Panayia* in an almost cosy domestic scene.

By 1804 the portrait of Dragoman Hadji Georgiakis Kornesios is done in secular European style, the religious iconography has disappeared. There is one figure of the Dragoman who is holding a diploma with the Sultan's cipher (Hill : pl. v, vi).

and the Archbishop and Dragoman, who were suspected, perhaps justifiably, of acting in concert with him' (Hill, *ibid.* : 104). The immediate cause of the revolt was a rumour of the shortage of food-stuffs, possibly due to corn being illegally exported (see below). The Dragoman escaped the attack on his house, hid in the house of a friendly Turkish family, and reported to Constantinople. The Bishops then borrowed 30,000 piastres from the European Consuls to ship troops to Cyprus and restore order (Hill, *ibid.* : 106-7).

As the Church had become a political institution, the prizes for incumbents of the Archbishopric increased, although they ultimately cost high Churchmen their lives in 1821. Intrigue within the Church was common, bidding for the post became established practice, the customary *douceur* for appointment being 100,000 aspers (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 470), and it is possible that factions developed linking highly placed Churchmen and Turks over appointments as occurred in Mainland Greece (Clogg 1976 : 21-2). By 1814 the Archbishop had usurped the authority of the Dragoman, with whom conflict had emerged; 'from the humblest situation of an obscure deacon he raised himself, by extraordinary means, to the episcopacy : he borrowed immense sums of money from the rich, which he lavished on the poor; securing in this manner the votes of his creditors, that they might be repaid, and those of others in expectation of future reward' (Kinnier, *Excerpta, op. cit.* : 416). The Church then assessed each village's share of the taxes which it collected through its *grammatikoi* (clerks) and monks (Jenness 1962 : 58). Some of the former entered trade (Jenness 1962 : 59).

The indispensibility of a scribal group entrusted with the assessment and collection of taxes depends partly, but not exclusively, upon its ability to maintain its monopoly of local knowledge. In 1806 a perceptive traveller, Don Domingo Badie y Leblich ('Ali Bey'), noted that :

these princes of the Church receive the imposts assessed on the community so as to pay to the Turkish government its annual claim, and to share with it a kind of monopoly. The Government has never succeeded in learning how many Greeks there are on the island. They own to a total of 32,000 souls : but well-informed persons raise this number to a 100,000. Last year a commissioner was sent to make an exact enumeration of the Greek families, but he was 'got at', loaded with gold, and went away—his task unfulfilled. This handling of the taxes brings enormous gains to the spiritual heads of the people, who suffer in silence lest a worse evil befall them (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 396).

The enormous gains Ali Bey refers to were not solely in crude cash for the Church acquired large properties. Figures for the total amount of and held by the Church during any period of Turkish

rule are unavailable but they may be calculated with some certainty. By 1909 the Church (sees, monasteries, churches) owned a total of 222,296 Donums (29565.3 hectares) or 5.3 % of total agricultural land (Christodoulou 1959 : 74). Yet the area of land under cultivation had been increasing during the latter nineteenth century, due to a rise in population and less onerous taxation. In the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the total area under cultivation was much lower. In 1844 the French Consul estimated the area under crops as 61,300 hectares, and the total amount of farm land, reckoning a one to three year fallow, at some 180,000 hectares, or about one-fifth of the island's land surface (Jenness, *ibid.* : 65). As the Church's holdings have remained static since then, they must thus have amounted to 16.4 % of the total agricultural land in 1844. Together with Evkaf and large estates (*chiftliks*), which likewise remained static since the latter nineteenth century, all large estates therefore amounted to 23.3 % of total agricultural land in 1844. In earlier periods, with lower population and a smaller cultivable land area, the percentage must have been much higher (3).

Parallél processes occurred in other Ottoman-ruled Greek islands; in Mykonos 'le clergé grec figurait en 1620 parmi les plus grands propriétaires. Le recensement turc de 1670 montre que dans les six îles de l'ancien duché de Naxos, la richesse du clergé grec était encore plus marquée' (Slot 1982 : 107). The church acquired properties in three ways : (i) through the transfer of many properties held by the Catholic Church in Venetian times, (ii) through bequests, (iii) through the transfer of land by peasants to escape usurpation by Ottoman officials. Christodoulou has suggested that 'some of the property of the Latin Church passed to Moslem religious institutions, but some may have found its way back to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Ottoman Government showed respect to the Orthodox Church whose property was as privileged as the Vaqf property' (*ibid.* : 72) (4).

(3) Kykkos monastery also possessed holdings in European and Asiatic Turkey, even in Tiflis in the Causasus (Jenness, *ibid.* : 58 n. 2), though how it acquired these is unclear. Luke (1921 : 185-191) gives details on a correspondence between the British Consul at Beirut and the Patriarch of Antioch over a Cephalonian captain who became a Monk at Kykkos and was sent by the Abbot on 'several journeys into Asia on the business of the convent and later transferred to Tripoli in Syria to watch over its interests in those parts' (p. 186). The nature of this business is unknown but it may well

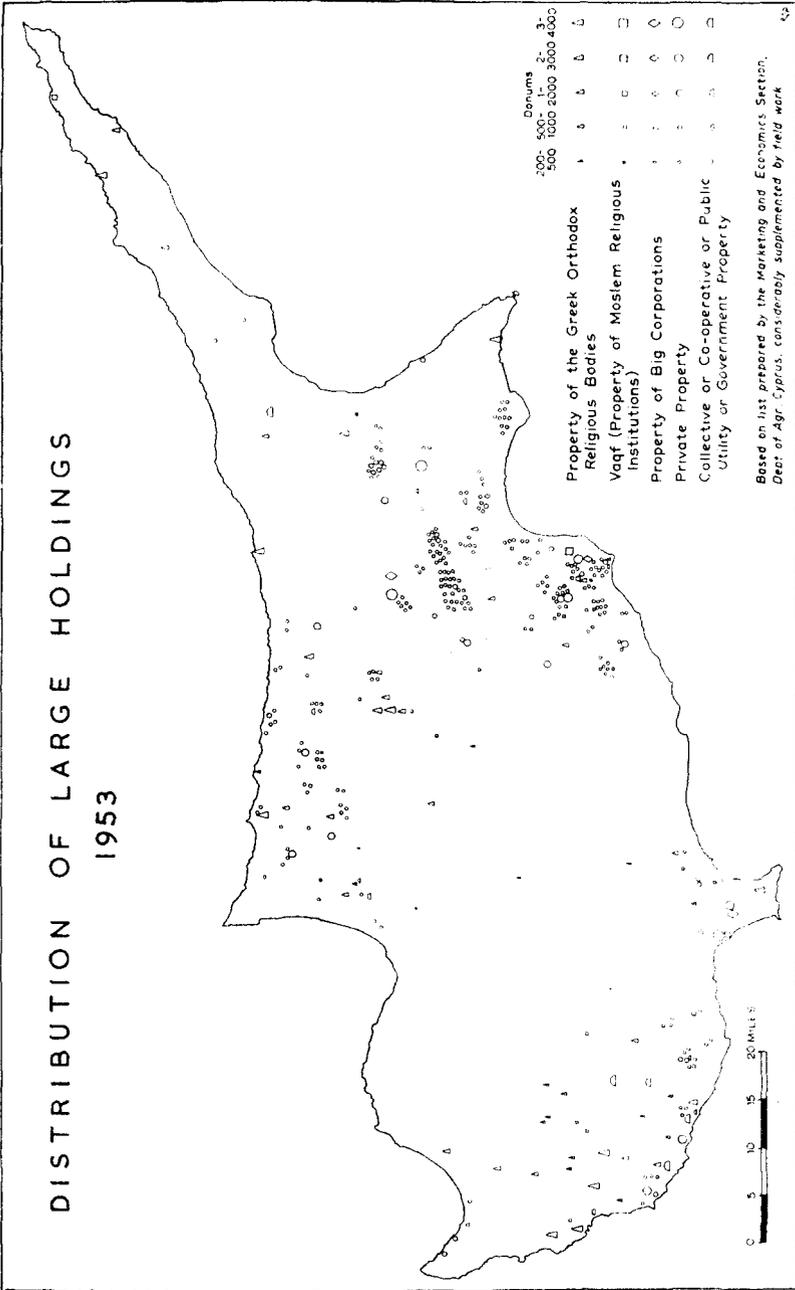
have been trade given the monk's previous occupation.

(4) Indeed the Ottomans regarded Church property as *vaqf*. The Imperial Berat issued in 1866, Section xx, specified that : 'All the *vaqf* possessions of the churches which are under the Archbishop's jurisdiction, vineyards, gardens, farms, fields, pastures, farms, holy wells, mills, flocks, and other ecclesiastical property, are entirely under the lordship and control of the said Archbishop, and no one may interfere with them' (*Excerpta* : 472).

By the early seventeenth century 'Christians redeemed nearly all the monasteries from those who had seized them, and much of the Church land as well. Churchmen of position left money for masses for the repose of their souls, or bestowed it by way of gifts' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 350). A more disparaging account from 1815 noted that the priests 'strip the poor ignorant superstitious peasant of his last para, and when he is on his deathbed, make him leave his all to their convent, promising that masses shall be said for his soul' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 449). These legal privileges were recognized in the Imperial Berats; Christians could leave up to one-third of their properties to the Church which could be 'exactd from the heirs through a court' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 473).

Apart from indubitable religious sentiments, practical reasons motivated peasants to donate their lands. Population decline in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the flight of many from the land, and heavy taxes concentrated properties under the control of the monasteries which, consisting solely of producers, could more easily pay taxes than large peasant families. Furthermore, the reduction of *sipahi* incomes and the lack of central control encouraged brigandage and the forceful eviction of peasants from their holdings to create illegal *chiftliks* (large estates). Many *chiftliks* were eventually transformed into *vaqf* or *habous*, pious foundation land which could not be sold, alienated or sequestrated. These estates produced cotton and corn and a thriving illegal trade in the latter developed. Christodoulou notes that 'both the Greek Orthodox Church and Evqaf amassed large properties from donations. The Church received donations from pious people but received also grants from people who feared the envy of officials and usurpation. Once the properties passed into the name of the Church or monastery they were safe. The Evqaf received large donations from the Royal Family, from wealthy landowners and from people who feared usurpation or feared that their heirs might dissipate the property' (*ibid.* : 72).

Although land granted to the Church was still subject to taxation (especially tithes), as was *vaqf*, it was protected from usurpation. It is a striking fact that many of the large Church holdings were located close to *chiftliks* indicating that the processes were parallel (see map). Transfer merely required the oral depositions of two Greek witnesses. The original owner would farm the land during his lifetime but it would eventually be claimed by the Monastery. Thus, paradoxically, the very process which led to the creation of *vaqf* and *chiftliks* by the dispossession of peasants resulted in the emergence of large Church holdings. Inevitably, monasteries were



SOURCE : C. CHRISTODOULOU, 1959 : 79.  
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involved in conflicts with heirs. A mass of documents at Kykkos monastery records the, mostly successful, petitions by the Abbots and monks to Constantinople to enjoy the uninterrupted use of their lands (*Othom. Engraf., op. cit.* : 1973). One typical case (Doc. 24, p. 145) in 1815 forbade the intervention of the heirs into the wills drawn up by Greeks who had donated their land to the 'Patriarchs, monks, churches and monasteries. These [wills] have absolute force insofar as they are in accordance with the depositions of Greek witnesses and the commands of Holy Law'. The judgement concluded : 'You are to forbid the high-handed acts of the heirs of those who bequeathed land'.

Other documents indicate that churchmen were as equally liable to appeal against the actions of the Greek subjects they were supposed to protect, as against Ottoman officials. Kykkos Monastery was continually involved in litigations with various villages; thus in 1780 'some Christians (people were identified by their *religion* not their ethnicity) named Helen and [...] inhabitants of Milikouriou, Tsakistras and Kampou set foot into the landed property and vineyards, snatched and plundered objects and furniture to the value of 200 grosha' (*Doc. 18, ibid.* : p. 127). The judgement was cautious and the *cadi* was ordered to 'examine the case on the spot (*epi topos*), and to be frank and lenient', possibly because the case may have involved some clerical peccadillo. Grazing rights were a continual source of friction. In 1786 the inhabitants of Pentayias, Elias and Aspromeriti claimed rights to grazing grounds also claimed by the Monastery 'in opposition to Ancient Law, claiming : "We also shall henceforth graze our animals with you"' (*Doc. 19, p. 129*). As the appeals were lodged by the Monastery, which were judged by the Sultan or Vazir after consultation with the tax register (a matter in which the Church could had influence), and finally as privileges *ab antiquo* could easily be claimed but hardly be substantiated, it is not surprising that most judgments favoured the Church.

There is scant evidence on the sentiments of ordinary folk, but Cyprianos, a Churchman writing in 1788, complained that his misguided countrymen blamed the Church for their misfortunes :

The people had an evil habit of not ascribing their misfortunes to the proper source, nor the increase of their debts to the insatiate and heartless greed of the governors, but thoughtlessly laid the blame on their spiritual fathers and chiefs : and this not only now, but from old [...] Many refuse to lend a helping hand to those whose love had prompted them to risk their lives for their compatriots (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 365).

By 1806, at the height of their power, churchmen were afforded a good deal of public respect :

The Greeks are extremely submissive and respectful towards their bishops : in saluting them they bow low, take off their cap, and hold it before them upside down. They scarcely dare speak in their presence. It is true that for this community of slaves the bishops are rallying points. It is through them that it preserves some kind of existence, that it suits the people to give their prelates political importance, such as even the Turks allow them, judging by the deferential and respectful manner which they observe towards the bishops. These, on their part, parade in their houses and followers a princely luxury; they never go out without a crowd of attendants, and to ascend a flight of stairs they must need be carried by their servants (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 396).

The Church was also involved in trade. Mouzelis (1978 : 159) has argued that the 'formalistic and secular character of the Greek Orthodox Church was relevant to the development of Greek Commerce'. In 1745 it was observed that the bishops 'move from place to place as traders' (Drummond : 280), and Kykkos Monastery possessed camels, the main beast of heavy transport for traders (*Othom. Engraf.*). By 1814 Kinneir observed that :

The Governor and Archbishop deal more largely in corn than all the other people of the island put together; they frequently seize upon the whole yearly produce, at their own valuation, and either export or retail at an advanced price; nay it happened more than once during the war in Spain, that the whole of the corn was purchased in this manner by the merchants of Malta, and exported without leaving the lower orders a morsel of bread (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 414).

It is hard to disagree with Hill that 'whatever view we take of the responsibility of the Bishops, there is no disguising the fact that the amount extorted from the island must have risen by something like 50 %' (*ibid.* : 101). Such concentration of power provoked the inevitable resentment of local Governors. The Greek war of Independence (1821-8) provided the pretext for the brutal massacre of the Church hierarchy. The massacre had three effects. First, the *enosis* ideal, which appears to have been practically non-existent prior to 1821, emerged partly but not exclusively as a result of the bloodshed. Henceforth security from Ottoman rapacity was to be increasingly sought in a union with Greece. Second, Churchmen became martyrs for a political cause for which they originally had ambivalent feelings. It is widely accepted that the Archbishop and Churchmen in Cyprus were not prepared to do more than give financial support to the *Philike Heteria* in Greece; nor had they planned any insurrection (Koumoulides 1971; Mitsidou 1971). The massacre had its origins in the contradictions of an outpost of the Ottoman empire which had permitted an uneasy dyarchy between Governors and Churchmen.

The 1821 events itself generated the belief that justice in an Ottoman world was impossible, and it legitimated the ideal that this could only be pursued through some form of union with a liberated Greece. The symbolism of a religious martyrdom in the pursuit of an ideal and the martyrdom of religious men exercised a strong hold on popular imagination and was to be adroitly exploited by Makarios.

A final effect of the 1821 events was the political emergence of the European consuls stationed on the island, and the entrusting of tax-farming to lay Greek-Cypriots, who engaged in the interstices of trade left by the former or who often worked with them. During the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries a new elite had emerged open to new European ideas and influences and they rapidly filled the economic vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Church from tax-farming and trade. The Church never recovered its economic dominance following the 1821 events, but it achieved an added political identity and dimension which was to influence the aspirations of the new elites.

*Production and trade : development of Ottoman chiftliks  
and Greek mercantilism*

Ottoman prebendalism was 'inherently contemptuous of bourgeois-commercial utilitarianism' (Weber), and subject Christians and Jews rapidly filled such niches, initially in conjunction with European traders and eventually independently.

European interest in the Levant trade initially centred on cotton and silk; later wheat, wool and hides were in high demand (McGowan, *ibid.*). Consulates were established in Aleppo with satellite establishments in Cyprus (Luke, *ibid.*). Most of this trade was shared by English, French and Dutch merchants. In 1735 the three main exports from Cyprus were Wine, Silk and Cotton (Jenness, *ibid.*). By the end of the eighteenth century, production of cotton declined, hastened by the new and rising European demand for wheat in which a thriving illegal exportation developed. By 1815 it was reported that Cyprus could export enough corn to load sixty or seventy vessels; in good years it shipped as much as 300 or 350,000 bushels of wheat to Europe and Turkey. In 1875 648,000 bushels were exported to England, Belgium and France (Jenness 1962 : 69).

Trade in primary products, uneven though it was, had two consequences. First it led to the appropriation of peasant holdings by Ottoman officials and their concentration into large estates, *chiftliks*

producing for external markets. Second, an ethnic and complementary division of labour emerged as Greek Cypriots attached to European Consulates entered the mercantile middleman business and eventually tax-farming.

McGowan has suggested that at least three elements were involved in *chiftlik* formation : (i) a sudden and compelling commercial motive, (ii) wholesale collaboration by agents of the State, (iii) the participation of townsmen of means in the process (*ibid.* : 60). The process parallels *latifundia* creation in Sicily (Blok 1974) where robber barons forced peasants off their lands and into agrotowns. One difference was that as Ottoman territories theoretically belonged to the Sultan, connivance by officials, scribes, etc., was necessary to create private property usually disguised as *vaqf* (pious estates). Dispossession was of two types : by force, the use of armed men or bandits and included 'voluntary abandonment because of intolerable conditions' (McGowan, *ibid.* : 65). Banditry was the physical armature of this process. The effects were neither short-term nor circumscribed. Withdrawal of prebends, reduction of *sipahi* incomes, retarded pay led to more pillaging and usurpation; hence larger *chiftliks*, and a greater demand for Church 'protection'. Production in the small peasant sector plummeted and grew in the large-estate sector. Another was titular dispossession, more common in Cyprus where labour power was scarce; this 'left the cultivator in place but generally imposed new and harsher conditions upon him' (McGowan, *ibid.* : 66), mainly but not exclusively due to the debt cycle. Leake, who travelled in Northern Greece in 1835, noted that the process had the following steps : high taxation, leading to borrowing at usurious interest rates, inability to pay both taxes, loans and interest, and finally sales of whole villages to high officials for relief (Clogg, *ibid.*; 1976 : 11).

*Chiftliks* were a conqueror's type of farming (Braudel 1973 : 725); concentrated in the well-watered lowlands they produced cotton and cereals for the market. In Cyprus they 'have almost invariably a perennial source of water; in some cases they have the best land in the area' (Christodoulou, *ibid.* : 76). *Chiftlik* owners were called 'dragons of the water' because they were granted water rights : 'Imperial Firmans conferred large water rights on favourite persons or groups. All the rivers of Cyprus which have ample supplies of water, especially a summer flow, have been so allocated : Kouris, Dhiarrizos, Ezuzza, Khrysokhou, Solia, Marathasa; in the case of the first four all the water was given to private individuals' (Christodoulou, *ibid.* : 89), i.e. Ottomans. The last two were given to the Church.

Apart from these transformations of the previous prebendal system, many *chiftliks* emerged in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Exact figures are unavailable but in the Paphos district, for example, 3 *chiftliks* out of 4, amounting to 8,982 donums or 76 % of the total Paphos *chiftlik* area, date from this period. Most of these new *chiftliks* were concentrated in the Paphos and Larnaca lowlands, had a perennial source of water, and were close to the main ports. They were created mainly by usurpation, such as seizure, occupying land abandoned due to flight, overtaxation and debt, or by receiving land from villagers in return from tax collectors (often one and the same person), or finally in return for relief from deliberate terror and harassment (McGowan, *ibid.* : 136). The last was a favourite tactic as shown by numerous village petitions (5), and was still being practiced in 1806 when Ali Bey noted that : 'property is only respected when the owner is stronger or better protected than the spoiler. One frequently sees a wretched Greek villager ousted by a Turk who enters into possession of his patrimony. To avoid these odious vexations many natives place themselves under the protection of some European consul, who is allowed to grant this favour to a certain number' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 397).

According to the 1909-29 General Survey of Properties, 69,210 donums were registered as *chiftliks*, making 1.6 % of the then total agricultural land. As these did not include the original prebendal domains, the total area must have been higher during the Ottoman period ; Christodoulou notes that 'dissolution and subdivision has been going on for decades if not centuries' (*ibid.* : 76). In addition many lands registered as *vaqf* (24,826 donums) were in reality disguised private property. In 1878 it was noted that the Evqaf registers were in a neglected state and 'all interests and wants were subordinated to the greed of the Ministry of Evqaf, at Stamboul, and the grasping wants of trustees' (Seager, quoted in Christodoulou, *ibid.* : 75). As private property had been legally recognized after the 1839-56 *Tanzimat* reforms, it would be reasonable to expect that some *vaqf* found its way into private ownership and administration. Finally the area under cultivation was much less due to a lower population, probably 180,000 hectares including fallow (Jeness, *ibid.* : 65), giving a definite 7 % and a probable 10 to 15 % of the total agricultural land.

A second consequence of trade with Europe was the emergence of many Greek Cypriots who entered the middleman business, attaching themselves to European Consulates as agents, interpreters and mid-

(5) Othoman, *Engraf* : 1973, p. 113.

dlemen. Various privileges were attached to these posts such as exemption from taxes. As Braude and Lewis point out, this warrant 'had the effect of removing its recipient from the status of a *dhimmi* to something approaching the status of a resident foreigner' (*ibid.* : 28). Many eventually entered trade, especially in the ports of the Middle East dealing in goods such as carobs, timber, etc., in which Europeans showed scant interest. By the late seventeenth century it was reported that 'there are rich and influential individuals among the Greek Cypriots, but not being allowed to carry weapons they devote themselves to trade. They carry oil, cheese, and other goods to Tripoli and other ports in Syria, but do not make long voyages' (Jenness, *ibid.* : 59, quoting Mas Latrie : 111, 586). By 1807 Cypriot merchants had established thriving businesses in Syria (6) and Lissassol (7), even attempting to separate themselves from the Consulates to whom they were attached (Luke, *ibid.* : 146). By the beginning of the nineteenth century only one English merchant remained in Cyprus who 'had to contend with the united phalanx of Levantines, who had no inclination to admit a competitor in trade [...] Much of the trade is contraband, particularly corn; and it is necessary to keep on good terms with the *aga* and officers employed at the custom-house by presents, the best and only means of ensuring favour in any competition with Levantines' (*Excerpta, op. cit.* : 420). After 1821 many Cypriots, who had adopted European lifestyles (8), assumed Greek nationality in order not to pay taxes and entered trade as well as for protection (9), a practice which troubled Ottoman authorities (10).

Not surprisingly such men were well-placed to enter the tax-farming business after it was removed from the Church's control. Tax-farming, credit and marketing reinforced each other; that such business was lucrative is demonstrated by their opposition to attempted tax-reforms in the late nineteenth century (11). In 1878 there were numerous reports of a debt-ridden peasantry (12) which assumed alarming proportions by the early twentieth century.

The first stirrings of Greek nationalism date from this period. The connection between the rise of mercantilism and nationalism has been noted in many parts of the Mediterranean (Schneider and Schneider 1976; Hansen 1977). Mercantile elite formation in Cyprus parallels similar processes in Sicily and Catalonia. In all three cases local groups could maintain and reproduce themselves either by

(6) Luke, *ibid.* : 137-8.(7) *Excerpta* : 392.(8) *Excerpta* : 405.(9) Luke, *ibid.* : 166-7.(10) Luke, *ibid.* : 169.(11) Luke, *ibid.* : 203.(12) Luke, *ibid.* : 229.

creating their own power domains which resisted the expansion of the Modern State (as the Mafia did in Sicily), or by monopolising access to local resources and the circulation of essential commodities and basic foodstuffs. Such activities required 'friendship coalitions' dominated by landed and commercial interests, such as the Sicilian Mafia and Graeco-Turkish interest groups. According to P. Schneider, the friendship coalition is 'an outcome, and adaptation to a basic structural problem typical of early mercantilist colonies' (1972 : 256), namely the organization of critical economic activities in the countryside where State institutions are lacking. By contrast to Northern Europe, the development of the State in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean did not precede, or proceed concurrently with, the market. Rather, market forces penetrated the periphery earlier than State institutions. Their particular characteristic was that they did not provide the basis for a cohesive internal political organization; by contrast, because of external economic links, they eventually limited the expansion of State power by creating discrete power domains possessing their own cultural codes for organization such as the Mafia and *omerta*.

Ideologies (such as nationalism) and cultural codes can therefore also be seen as idioms utilized to organize internal coalitions (Cohen 1974) and resist external threats. Yet the precise relationship between nationalist sentiments and mercantilism in Cyprus, as in Greece, appears more ambiguous and has not been sufficiently explored. Clogg has suggested that members of the Greek *Philiki Etairia* were 'overwhelmingly failed merchants or bankrupts, men who had failed to make the grade in the fiercely competitive world of the Greek mercantile diaspora [...] The established and wealthy Greek merchants of the mercantile diaspora for the most part wanted nothing to do with the society' (1976 : xvii). Certainly an 1831 letter by 'Greek Citizens' in Cyprus to the Consul of Russia complaining of the withdrawal of their privileges as Greek nationals mentions 'certain individuals whose interest lies in pandering to the boundless greed of the Governors' (Luke, *ibid.* : 167), suggesting that there were wide divergencies of opinion, sentiment and interest among the Cypriot mercantile elite.

#### *Interethnic relations*

It is worthwhile to discuss relations between Greeks and Turks during the *Turkocratia* because they assume an over-riding importance

in the twentieth century and because they have been the subject of confused debate.

It is well known that the Ottoman *millet* system administered subject peoples according to their *religious* beliefs, rather than their *ethnicity*. The boundaries of the two did not necessarily coincide, religion being a qualitatively wider category in classifying people than their ethnicity. It is an indication of the complexity of this problem of definition that the categories of ethnicity, religious belief, language, etc., have themselves changed across time according to different usages. Yet we are talking about a period where ethnicity was pre-nationalist, and where a shared language and a common feeling for a distinct cultural past were probably considered to have been less important in the creation of an ethnic identity than they were to assume in the twentieth century. Indeed in this period of highly restricted literacy, spoken Greek Cypriot was probably more heavily admixed with Turkish words than in this century.

Legal status, meaning religious status, is the key to understanding relations between Greeks and Turks during this period. Whilst both groups possessed 'natural' differences in language, dress, marriage customs and geographical origins, differences in religious beliefs and practices were critical. The two groups were fixed in a relationship according to an immutable law which specified their respective, and different, rights, duties and privileges. Evidently the Divine *Sharia* favoured the Turks as the ruling group because they were Muslim, but it would be a mistake to assume that the Greeks viewed this as unnatural, at least prior to the end of the eighteenth century. The Ottomans were initially welcomed because 'they hate the Latins more than the Turks' and the Church certainly benefited from its political responsibilities. Indeed it was commonly believed in the Greek world that the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire 'came about by Divine Providence as a punishment for the Christian Empire's manifold sins and so that the Ottoman Empire might act as a shield for the Orthodox Church against the taint of the Latin heresy' (Clogg 1976 : xiii), and messianic oracles foretelling liberation had much currency among the Greeks. Until the nineteenth century it was probably believed that if liberation were to be obtained at all it would be through Divine intervention, rather than through human effort.

This doctrine of *ethelodouleia* 'voluntary submission to the powers that be, which the leaders of *Millet-i Rum* manifested with the Ottoman authorities' (Clogg 1982 : 191), should be approached in terms of Weber's sociology of motives : 'very frequently the "world images"

that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest. "From what" and "for what" one wished to be redeemed and, let us not forget "could be" redeemed, depended upon one's image of the world' (1970 : 280).

From the perspective of the Ottomans, religious practice defined membership of a particular group and legal status; they jealously guarded their outward signs of privilege. The Greeks for their part laboured under too many ascribed legal liabilities to construct an ethnic identity in the modern sense as based upon language, etc. Indeed in a pre-industrial age of restricted literacy (and even linguistic camouflaging) these components were either unusable or could hardly be perceived as the 'natural' basis of this identity. Rather, Greek ethnic identity was formed mainly through the Church and the family, in short through religious ritual *practices* and the ritual of social relations. The fact that both Greeks and Turks had prophetic religions with exclusive claims to Divine Truth undoubtedly fixed the boundaries of both groups but did not prevent movement upwards.

Apart from joining the Church hierarchy (which could be expensive), or consular attachment (which required literacy usually in Turkish and European languages rather than necessarily Greek), three main means of social mobility were available to ordinary Greeks : through (i) religious conversion, (ii) intermarriage, and (iii) through adopting the customs, dress, deportment, language of the ruling class. Religious conversion had the greatest advantages for the poor : lower taxes and greater protection in the courts. It was particularly common in times of war between Turks and Christians during which religious tensions rose (Vryonis 1975). Analytically two types of conversion should be distinguished. First, complete apostasy (meaning the adoption of Islam, Turkish names, etc.) was usually consolidated by marriage with the ruling dominant groups and resulted in complete absorption over a number of generations (Karpát 1982 : 147). Because of its nature it was an individual strategy, probably an urban phenomenon, and certainly determined by the accessibility of safe legal redress. Indeed, 'Muslim society was at all times accessible by religious conversion and conversion was usually welcomed. Absorption is the most immediately apparent among the Christian aristocracies of Asia Minor and the Balkans' (Vryonis, *ibid.* : 146).

The second type of conversion was crypto-Christianity, i.e. the public adoption of Islamic practices whilst following Christian rites

in the secrecy and privacy of the home. Such converts were known as *linovamvakoi* (half linen, half cotton) and were well established until the early twentieth century (Luke, *ibid.*). This type of apostasy seems to have been collective and whole villages were involved. Most of the words used to describe this common phenomenon in many parts of the Ottoman empire 'reflect ambivalence, though in some cases they are geographical in nature' (Vryonis, *ibid.* : 145). We know little of the conditions which led to it, though distance from administrative centres as well as resident *sipahis* may have been critical. As it was often collective and ambiguous, absorption was minimal; certainly collective complicity and village endogamy probably limited the effectiveness of marriage as a means of social mobility as in the first type. It was motivated by a desire to mitigate the effects of taxation, etc., rather than as a means of social mobility. Absorption was quicker when religious conversion was combined with intermarriage. There is little information on the latter's extent but the nature of the exchange seems clear : Greek women (rather than Greek men) moved upwards through marriage or concubinage with Turks. Religious, economic, and legal reasons encouraged this flow. Similar processes occurred in other Greek islands such as Naxos (Slot, *ibid.* : 107). In terms of religion, 'when one examines Islamic and Christian law in matters of intermarriage, it would seem that Islam was more elastic in both *theoria* and *praxis*' (Vryonis, *ibid.* : 142-3). Canon Law insisted on the Orthodoxy of both partners; Islam permitted men to take non-Muslim wives so long as the male progeny remained Muslim, whilst non-Muslim men could not take Muslim wives. Islam was geared towards expansion through men's marriages.

Different systems of property transmission undoubtedly aided this process and contractual concubinage, known as *Kepin*, between Muslim males and non-Muslim females, could relieve Christians of the burden of the dowry. Women were 'free to return to the Christian community and re-marry at the end of the contractual period' (Vryonis, *ibid.* : 143), and although it is doubtful to what extent return to the Christian fold was possible, Mariti writing in 1769 says that 'the women are long-lived, and often re-marry when they are already great-grandmothers' (1769 : 57)—women may have been in short supply or the bonds of marriage were less permanent. According to Vryonis, the practice 'was so prevalent that the Patriarchs made repeated attempts to halt it. In the Ottoman period the institution of *Kepin* enjoyed certain advantages in the eyes of the poor Christians which helped offset its disadvantages. In Orthodox

marriages the bride's father had to pay not only a dowry (which remained in the bride's name), but also the *trachoma* or an outright gift to the groom. But in giving his daughter to a Turk he was freed from paying these ruinous sums and received, in addition, a bride-price from the Turkish groom. The children of such a union stayed, in general, with the father' (*ibid.* : 143) (13).

It is somewhat doubtful whether the system worked as smoothly and efficiently. Although Greek men gave their daughters some sort of dowry, little is known as to its type and value, and there have been suggestions that until recently the *groom* among Greek Cypriots supplied the house and furnishings (Loizos 1975; Surridge 1930) although women certainly inherited. What seems fairly certain is that among Turkish Cypriots 'the portion the wife brings her husband is little or nothing' (Mariti 1769 : 57), the husband paying the bride-price. The system thus favoured the movement of women rather than men, for a Greek Christian desiring a Muslim wife would not only forfeit a (Greek) dowry, but had to adopt Islam and pay bride-price.

By the mid-eighteenth century it was observed that 'Mahometan men very often marry with the Christian women, and keep the fasts with their wives' (*Excerpta* : 269) (14). But interethnic marriage and especially concubinage could cause conflict where women were secluded and honour values highly prized. Many villages have myths linking the two communities in conflicts over women, especially over Turk capture of Greek brides. There are two references to religious conversion in the nineteenth century. In 1815 it was observed that : 'many professed Moslems are in secret Greeks, and observe all the numerous fasts of that church. All drink wine freely, and many of them eat pork without scruple in secret, a thing unheard of in Turkey. They frequently marry the Greek women of the island, as their religion permits a Turkish man to marry an infidel woman, though to guard against an abandonment of Mahometanism, it forbids a Turkish woman to marry an infidel' (*Excerpta* : 447). By 1867 a considerable number of converts to Islam were recorded :

The clause engaging that the free exercise of his religion [a reference to the *Tanzimat* reforms] shall be permitted to every one is also far from being carried out. There exist here scattered throughout the island some 5,100 persons who are Musulmans in name only, some of whom apostatized from Christianity in order to save their lives during the Greek Revolution, when a reign of terror prevailed here,

(13) The institution of *Kepin* was particularly prevalent in the early stages of Ottoman expansion.

(14) The 'fasts' could equally have been Muslim or Christian.

while others are the offspring of the illicit amours of Greeks and Mussulmans, who are always forced to adopt the religion of the dominant race. Some of the latter are bona-fide Mussulmans, but a great many are Christians at heart, but are obliged publicly to acknowledge the Prophet, and can only secretly testify their adherence to Christianity. There can be no doubt that, if there was perfect toleration in religion, these persons would gladly emancipate themselves from the thralldom of their position. *Report of the English Vice-Consul* (Luke, *ibid.* : 222-223).

'Illicit' these 'amours' certainly were—from the perspective of the Orthodox Church though not according to Muslim law. Indeed initially many Christians resorted to Muslim *Kadi* courts 'to escape the more rigid stipulations of their own religious law in such matters as marriage, divorce, and parenthood rights [...] In the eighteenth century the Greek patriarchate had to take serious measures to prevent the latter practice, as a result of which the infiltration of Islamic and customary law was being seen in such areas as marriage and dowry practices' (Inalcik 1982 : 437). As Gellner has observed : 'clerisies in agro-literate societies cannot properly dominate and absorb the entire society' (1983 : 17). Once their powers were reinforced the Bishops could apply sanctions equally against marriages within the prohibited degrees of kinship, as against those who married outside the faith, including the denial of a religious burial (*Excerpta* : 473).

In addition, ethnic differences tended to become obscured through Greek adoption of the customs, dress, and language of the Turks further up the social hierarchy (*Excerpta* : 268). As the Ottomans considered it beneath them to learn the language of a subject people many Greeks learned Turkish. Inevitably to distance themselves the Turks relied on their legal privileges : 'The Turks are so jealous of the power of Christians here that they will not suffer them to buy any black slaves or others that are Mahometans, which former are frequently brought to Egypt and sold to the Turks' (*Excerpta* : 269).

Not surprisingly with the growth of Greek economic power, collective action by ethnic groups *qua* ethnic groupes was exclusively Turkish aimed at preserving their privileges. For example, in legal conflicts between Muslims and Christians legal evidence was weighted in theory against the latter. In practice Turkish privileges were eroded (15).

(15) 'All the members (of the courts) are open to bribery, and the rich Christian suitor is often more than a match for his poor Mussulman adversary. The civil disabilities, too, under which the Christians

lie are materially mitigated by the important circumstance that they are the wealthiest class in the island, being the principal land-owners, and, in trade no less than in agriculture, possess a pre-eminence over the

There are no cases of Greeks acting as a group. Even Turkish action is limited to military rebellions against central authority and, in 1804, to an insurrection protesting the influence of the Greek Dragoman (but not directed against the Greeks). Indeed the major social distinction is between urbanites and countrymen, and Archimandrite Cyprianos expresses no surprise at collective mob action by Greeks and Turks protesting a rise in taxes in 1764 as a result of which the Governor was killed and his palace ransacked.

### *Conclusion*

As in the other parts of the Mediterranean in the pre-nationalist period (e.g. the Maghreb), the only social group with a cultural policy, i.e. the clerisy, could not totally dominate the entire society insofar as matrimonial and religious practices were concerned. Duby and Goody (1983) have also shown that in Northern Europe matrimonial practices often departed significantly from Church dogma, whilst in the Maghreb the traditional disdain Moroccan *Ulama* reserved for tribesmen was as much due to religious reasons as class ones. In all cases the critical feature which determined the Church's or clerisy's response to such heterodoxy was primarily the nature of its relationship to the governing elite. In Cyprus, as in other parts of South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East during the Ottoman period, religious camouflaging and matrimonial unorthodoxy often went together partly because of the ambiguous interstitial position of the Church, the relative elasticity of Islam on matrimonial matters (in comparison to Christianity), and finally because of the complementarity of two different property transmission systems. Relations between the Church hierarchy and its grass roots, already strained by its tax collecting role, were further exacerbated by unorthodox religious and matrimonial practices which the Church attempted to stop. Similar processes occurred in Lesbos (Papataxiarchis 1985) and other Ottoman controlled Christian lands. The major social cleavages in Cyprus were intraethnic rather than interethnic.

Mahomedans. Enjoying thus the many advantages which accrue from the possession of superior wealth [...] they are not infrequently able to induce the local councils to accept their evidence against Mahomedans. This is especially the case in places where the latter are few and poor, and dependent, it may be, on the Christians for their means

of living. In such cases it may truly be said that the Christians get justice for themselves, and in spite of the spirit of the institutions provided for that purpose by Government' (*Report of Vice Consul in Cyprus, 1867*; quoted in Luke, 1921 : 219-220).

Finally in the post-Ottoman nationalist period, Greek-Cypriot historiography, heavily influenced by the Church's role in education, has presented the *Turkocratia* as a period of religious persecution (Mitsidou 1971; Persianis 1978) as well as emphasizing the Church's role in keeping alight the flame of Hellenism. To what extent was this correct? The question is of more than academic interest for the way how the past was viewed decisively influenced subsequent relations between the two communities.

There is no doubt that Cyprus suffered serious decline during the Ottoman period. Governors were appointed for short periods and were more interested in extracting as much revenue as possible to make their bid pay. There was no investment in the infrastructure and the Island was probably in a worse state in 1878 than when the Turks captured it from the Venetians. Greeks and increasingly Turks were heavily taxed, and the settlement pattern of Greek villages reflected the desire to be distant from the urban Ottoman-dominated centres (Drury 1979). Violence was common, life insecure especially for the Greeks. Yet this was not primarily a *religious* persecution; indeed these conditions were common to most Ottoman-controlled territories, Christian and Islamic. It was rather an attempt by a ruling group to extract as much surplus as possible from a subject agrarian population. Ottoman administration lacked a salaried scribal class of functionaries and was obliged to rely on tax-farming. Oppression was arbitrary, discrete and individual, which probably contributed to greater uncertainty. The late eighteenth century historian, Cyprianos, called Cyprus an 'unhappy island' because in an uncertain world justice could only be obtained by petitioning Constantinople over the heads of local administrators, at great risk to the plaintiffs. Clearly religion was used to justify oppression on the ground, as it were, but it had no place in the Ottoman theory of the State and Society, the Circle of Equity, as formulated in Constantinople.

Due to the contradictions of Ottoman administration, the Greeks were as likely to have been oppressed by their Churchmen as by the Turks. Political recognition of the Orthodox Church offered ambiguous benefits to the Greeks. Yet because the Ottoman state operated within an Islamic conceptual and legal framework which created the *millet* system and gave it coherence and legitimacy, the specific nature of Islam should not be overlooked. Entry to the ruling group was possible through intermarriage, conversion, or recruitment for specific State tasks, a common occurrence in the Ottoman world. In contrast to later nationalistic periods, the relationship between

religion and language was less clear-cut; there were Greek-speaking Muslims in Anatolia, Cyprus, Crete, etc.

Religion was no impediment to collective mob action by urban Greeks and Turks, and to the formation of factions linking highly placed Greek and Ottoman officials. Yet in the countryside the two communities lived largely separately; 'the norm was that of the ethnically homogeneous village and, in the exceptions, heterogeneity was usually achieved by residential separation rather than integration, (Drury, *ibid.* : 3). The Greeks were pushed out of the most productive land to the mountains by 'the Turk who is always a friend of plain and running waters' (Perrot 1864), the origin of *Chiftliks*, and the largely residential separation in the countryside probably limited contact between the two groups. Inevitably with the development of commerce which the Greeks readily entered, exposure to new European ideas, the growth of nationalism in Greece, and equally significant, Turkish atrocities (especially in 1821 when the Governor, through a ruse, massacred the Archbishop, his Bishops, monks and Greek notables), the Greek Cypriot elite became more aware of their legal disadvantages, and of the dangers to life and limb in a nationalistic world. *Enosis* promised them a dignity and security lacking in Ottoman Cyprus (Loizos 1976). As on previous occasions they turned to the Orthodox Church for leadership, and religion remained a potent force, though with a modified significance, in relations between Greeks and Turks in modern Cyprus\*.

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