FOREST AND THE STATE: HISTORY OF FORESTRY AND FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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FOREST AND THE STATE: HISTORY OF FORESTRY AND FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

by

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FOREST AND THE STATE: HISTORY OF FORESTRY AND FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT

FOREST AND THE STATE: HISTORY OF FORESTRY AND FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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This dissertation is on the history of forestry and forest administration in the Ottoman Empire from the fifteenth to the early twentieth century, though major part of it is devoted to the nineteenth-century, when forestry was considered a science in and of itself, and the forest came to be seen as a source of wealth, if properly managed and regulated. By discussing the development of rational forestry in the Ottoman Empire, this dissertation aims to show relational patterns of economic, administrative, political, legal, and environmental aspects of Ottoman society. In other words, this dissertation seeks to document and analyze the emergence of rational forest management, the administrative and institutional developments that accompanied it, the process of forest-related codification and the limits to forest management and administration. The forestry practices and policies in the Ottoman Empire manifest that rational forest management, or scientific forestry, could develop in a dominantly agrarian setting, where industrial and technological progress was only in the making. This dissertation argues that the inherent limits and weaknesses of the Ottoman modern statemaking, wrongly equated with ‘centralization’, had a direct impact on the development of forestry. This was a process through which the Ottoman state gradually lost its capacity to control its forests while trying to have firmer grip on them.

Keywords: Forestry, forestry policies, land tenure, property, trade
ÖZET
ORMAN VE DEVLET: OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU’NDA ORMANCILIĞIN VE ORMAN İDARESİNİN TARIHİ
Dursun, Selçuk
Doktora, Tarih
Danışman: Selçuk Akşin Somel
Şubat 2007, xvi+436 sayfa


Anahtar sözcükler: Ormancılık, ormancılık politikaları, toprak rejimi, mülkiyet, ticaret
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. AMD.</td>
<td>BEO Amedi Kalemi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. DVN.</td>
<td>BEO Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. DVN. DVE.</td>
<td>BEO Divan-ı Hümayun Kalemi-Düvel-i Ecnebiyye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. DVN. MHM.</td>
<td>BEO Divan-ı Hümayun Mühimme Kalemi</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. MKT.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. MKT. DV.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi-Deavi</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. MKT. MHM.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Mühimme Kalemi</td>
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<td>A. MKT. MVL.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Mühimme-Meclis-i Vala</td>
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<td>A. MKT. NZD.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi-Nezaret ve Devair</td>
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<td>A. MKT. ŞD.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi-Şura-yı Devlet</td>
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<td>A. MKT. UM.</td>
<td>BEO Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi-Uumum Vilayat</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEO</td>
<td>Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOA</td>
<td>Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. ASK.</td>
<td>Cevdet Askeri</td>
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<td>C. BEL.</td>
<td>Cevdet Belediye</td>
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<td>C. IKT.</td>
<td>Cevdet İktisat</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH. EUM. ADL.</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Takibat-ı Adliye Kalemi</td>
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<td>DH. EUM. THR.</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Tahrirat Kalemi</td>
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<td>DH. MKT.</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi</td>
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<td>HH.</td>
<td>Hatt-ı Hümayun</td>
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<td>HK</td>
<td>Halil Kutluk, <em>Türkiye Ormancılığı ile İlgili Tarihi Vesikalar</em></td>
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<td>HR. MKT.</td>
<td>Hariciye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. DH.</td>
<td>İrade, Dahiliye</td>
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<td>I. HR.</td>
<td>İrade, Hariciye</td>
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<td>I. MM.</td>
<td>İrade, Meclis-i Mahsus</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAD.</td>
<td>İstanbul Ahkam Defterleri</td>
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<td>MD.</td>
<td>Mühimme Defterleri</td>
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<td>MMI.</td>
<td>İrade, Mesail-i Mühimme</td>
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<td>ŞD.</td>
<td>İrade, Şura-yi Devlet</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. OMI.</td>
<td>Ticaret, Nafia, Ziraat, Orman Meadin Nezareti</td>
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<td>Y. A. HUS.</td>
<td>Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı</td>
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<td>Y. A. RES.</td>
<td>Yıldız Sadaret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı</td>
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<td>Y. EE.</td>
<td>Yıldız Esas Evrakı</td>
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<td>Y. MTV.</td>
<td>Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı</td>
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<td>Y. PRK. A.</td>
<td>Yıldız Sadaret Maruzatı</td>
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<td>Y. PRK. BŞK.</td>
<td>Yıldız Mabeyn Başkitabeti</td>
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<td>Y. PRK. OMZ.</td>
<td>Yıldız Orman, Meadin ve Ziraat Nezareti Maruzatı</td>
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**Abbreviations of Hicrî and Rumî Months and Days**

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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Muharrem</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Safer</td>
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<td>Ra</td>
<td>Rebiyyü’l-evvel</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Rebiyyü’l-ahir</td>
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<td>Ca</td>
<td>Cumade’l-ula</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Cumade’l-ahir</td>
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<td>Ş</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>Ramazan</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Şevval</td>
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<td>Za</td>
<td>Zi’l-kade</td>
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<td>Z</td>
<td>Zi’l-hicce</td>
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<tr>
<td>El.</td>
<td>Eva’il</td>
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<td>Et.</td>
<td>Evasıt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Er.</td>
<td>Evahir</td>
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<td>Ka</td>
<td>Kanun-i evvel</td>
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<td>K</td>
<td>Kanun-i sani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>Teşrin-i evvel</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Teşrin-i sani</td>
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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Modern Turkish orthography is used to transliterate Ottoman Turkish words, regardless of their origin. Diacritical marks are used to indicate only ayns (‘) and hemzes (‘). For some well-known place names, English versions are used in spellings (such as ‘Aleppo,’ ‘Lebanon,’ ‘Beirut’ and the like), though there are exceptions to the usage. For the names of institutions, titles, and concepts both the English and Ottoman Turkish equivalents are given.
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to illustrate the interplay of the economic, administrative, political, legal, and environmental processes within the context of the development of forestry and forest administration in the late Ottoman Empire. In other words, this dissertation seeks to document and analyze the emergence of rational forest management and the concomitant administrative and institutional developments, the process of forest-related codification and the limits to forest management and administration. The dissertation concentrates mainly upon nineteenth-century developments, though with an eye to the long-term historical processes of forestry and the history of the relationship between the state and the forest in the Ottoman Empire.

It is widely accepted in the scholarly literature on rational forest management that the latter was an innovation of the modern state coinciding with the first phase of the Industrial Revolution. However, scientific forestry did not follow the same trajectory or exhibit uniformity in the various places and contexts where it developed.¹ Practices and policies varied even within Europe and her colonies. In short, contrary to claims commonly made in the historiography of modern state making in Europe, there is no direct correlation between industrialization and rational forest management. Questioning this correlation requires a comparative focus on the networks and interactions valid for this particular phenomenon in different spatial contexts. For instance, forestry practices and policies in the Ottoman Empire (though perhaps an exceptional case) illustrate that rational forest

management, or scientific forestry, could develop in a dominantly agrarian setting, in which industrial and technological progress was only in the making.

‘Uniqueness’, ‘exceptionalism’, ‘divergence’, ‘rise’, ‘superiority’ and the like have been the catchwords of historiographical discussions in the historiography of the rise of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution. Some historians also identify a distinctive and particular European path in the environmental history of the world by pointing to two institutions, namely the long-term tradition of Verrechtlichung (regulation by law), which provided individuals a ground for resisting the state and the widespread institution of private property. Highlighting the distinctiveness of the European modern state, often characterized—in the footsteps of Max Weber—by the development of rational law and bureaucracy is another way in which the particularities of the West are sometimes stressed. However, Radkau admits that the institution of private property might not have been a success story from an environmental point of view as the property and inheritance rights could be so well established in subsistence economies that the productivity of the soil maintain more effectively. Moreover, if we consider

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4 Radkau, “Exceptionalism,” p. 27.
rational law and bureaucracy in quantitative terms, it is clear that the Ottoman state as well as many other powers experienced a similar quantitative growth, especially in the nineteenth century.

Liberalist and neoliberalist arguments, on the other hand, consider the “self-regulating market” to be the central element of nineteenth century economic development. Central to this thesis is the assumption that a well-regulated market can create the mechanisms necessary for allocating goods and services on its own, i.e. without the interference of the state, if private initiative and commodification of resources are not hindered.\(^5\) In other words, the state should create and protect private property rights and commodification of resources.\(^6\)

There is also an implicit argument in both liberalist and institutionalist accounts of industrial development whereby the state is held responsible for maintaining property rights as a precondition of a market economy. This argument thus implies that if private property rights are not developed enough to create market activity in a particular spatio-economic context, then economic development is unlikely to occur. However, when applied to the ownership rights of forests in the nineteenth century, this approach is highly problematic. Unlike in the case of agricultural land, in which private ownership was considered a necessary precondition for increasing production, state ownership was generally favored for

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\(^6\) For a critique of this approach, see: Bob Jessop, The Future of the Capitalist State (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity, 2002).
Forests. This is clearly seen in nineteenth-century discussions about scientific management of forests.

The common approach to relationships between the state and the peasantry in environmental historiography portrays the former as an autonomous actor that usually restricts the latter’s access rights to public forests by imposing rules and regulations. During the past two decades, many studies on Eurasian and African history have addressed these types of conflicts and contestations between central governments and local people within the context of colonialism and imperialism as historical processes. Focusing solely upon the peasantry versus the state, however, ignores many crucial alliances among different actors that could be revealed by an alternative, and ultimately more fruitful approach that would seek to illuminate the autonomy and capacities of state and other relevant actors in the drama.

Scholars previously focused upon the question of ownership when addressing the relationship between forest use and local customary traditions. This literature centered upon the question of whether local people were the agents of deforestation or the protectors of forests. The concept of ‘tragedy of the commons’ plays a pivotal role in this debate. According to this concept, users of common property (those resources which are not privately owned) generally act in their own self-interest and when not regulated acquire wealth at the expense of other groups. Hardin points out that everyone has an interest in exploiting common resources like grazing lands, fish stocks, and forests. The sum total of these individual actions

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8 The main examples would be the works of subaltern scholars that multiplied after the peasant protests (the Chipko movement) against the India’s Forest Bill of 1982, which limited peasants access to and increased state’s control over public forests. For example, see: Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, expanded ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). For a reevaluation of this literature, see: Rangan, *Of Myths and Movements*.