

# *Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar* –Holding Ottoman Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century– Part II, Including the Seventeenth Century

Linda T. Darling\*

*XVI. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında İcmal Defterleri, Nasihatnameler ve Timar Sahibi Osmanlı Eliti –II. Kısım, On Yedinci Yüzyıl–*

Öz ■ Bu çalışma *timar* sistemi üzerine Osmanlı Araştırmaları dergisinin 43. sayısında yayımlanmış olan makalemi tamamlayıcı mahiyettedir. On altıncı yüzyılda *timar* sistemi hakkındaki ilk makalede yer almayan bazı bilgiler ilave edilmiş ve on yedinci yüzyıldaki *timar* sistemi ele alınmıştır. Makale aynı zamanda eyalet kayıtlarında yer almayan *timar* meselesini incelemektedir. *İcmal defterleri* kullanılarak 1580-1632 yılları arasında eyalet kayıtlarından çıkarılan *timarların* miktarları tespit edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Zira bu *timarların paşmaklık* veya *ocaklık* olarak harem kadınlarına ya da devlet hizmetinde bulunanlara verilmiş olmaları muhtemeldir. Eyaletlerdeki *timarların* sayılarında herhangi bir azalma olmadığı aksine sayıların arttığı gözlemlenmektedir. Ayrıca on yedinci yüzyıldaki *timar* sahiplerinin özellikleri incelenmekte ve *timar* sahiplerinin oğullarının on altıncı yüzyıldaki uygulamalara benzer şekilde aynı oranlarda *timarlar* kazandıkları gösterilmektedir. On yedinci yüzyılda sarayla ilişkili kişilerin *timarları* azalırken saray dışındakilerin *timarları* artmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *İcmal defterleri*, *timar* sistemi, seçkinler, ordu, ecnebler, gerileme

The present study serves as an addendum to my article in a previous issue of this journal, which gave figures from the *icmal defterleri* on *timar* awards in the sixteenth century. This addendum carries the story into the seventeenth century and adds data on the sixteenth century that was not in the previous article. The earlier article showed that contrary to what we have been told by the writers of advice literature (*nasihatnameler*), the social groups from which recipients of provincial (*eşkinici*) *timars* were drawn did not change around 1580.<sup>1</sup> Further research

\* The University of Arizona.

1 Linda T. Darling, “*Nasihatnâmeler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Ottoman Timar-Holding Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century,*” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 43 (2014), pp. 193-226.

confirms that conclusion; as we shall see below, the proportion of provincial *timars* going to sons of *timar*-holders in the late seventeenth century was almost the same as in the late sixteenth century. The previous study also found that, according to provincial records, despite the complaints of the advice writers about the excessive awarding of *timars* to “outsiders” (*ecnebiler*), in fact the sons of *timar*-holders, palace and provincial military and administrative personnel, retainers of the great men of state, and the sons of nobodies received *timars* in the same proportions before and after 1580, which was thought to be the turning point in the history of the *timar* system. It found that a change did occur earlier, around 1560, when the percentage of sons of *timar*-holders decreased on average; this change however was quite small, only a few percentage points down from the average (although considerably lower than the highest point; the specific figures given in my previous article are revised below using more registers).<sup>2</sup> The change did not involve palace personnel or great men’s retainers, as the advice writers thought; it was the sons of nobodies who benefited. Moreover, this change occurred in some provinces and not in others; it was not an across-the-board transformation. The number of sons of nobodies receiving *timars* tended to rise during and immediately after major military campaigns, after which it returned to its normal level (and in the late sixteenth century the Ottomans were often at war). *Timars* awarded on the battlefield went to those who had distinguished themselves in the fighting; these were usually officers’ retainers, palace military men, and volunteers from the *reaya*, almost never the sons of existing *timar*-holders, who were usually not on campaigns and thus absent from campaign *timar* registers.

The supposed change in *timar*-holders’ origins is usually linked to the employment of hand-held gunpowder weapons and the growth in the role of infantry soldiers as opposed to cavalry.<sup>3</sup> My article also investigated other infantry-based changes in military practice that contributed to the growth of infantry, in particular the rise of siege warfare and the Ottomans’ skill in capturing the new star fortresses that were being constructed in the region beginning in the mid-sixteenth

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2 According to Douglas Howard’s figures, a major change in *timar* recruitment took place between 997/1588 and 1019/1609, when the number of sons of *timar*-holders gaining *timars* in the province of Aydın dropped from 43 to 2 (Douglas A Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System and Its Transformation, 1563-1656,” doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1987, p. 132, no. 69). This change does not appear in most provinces (see Table 3 in Darling, “*Nasihatname*ler,” p. 221).

3 Halil İnalçık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), pp. 283-337.

century. The relative decrease in the importance of cavalry did not reduce Ottoman military prowess, and *timar*-holders still participated in the fighting. Ottoman artillery and trench warfare against the new Italian trace, which employed *timar*-holders as well as infantry, were widely feared in Europe, which was undergoing the same transition away from warfare by mounted cavalry. Scholars have demonstrated that the gunpowder and guns of the Ottomans were not, as previously believed, inferior to those of the Europeans.<sup>4</sup> All these results highlight the need to reassess the stereotypes of Ottoman “decline” that we have inherited from previous generations of writers and scholars and to examine the archival record in detail to understand what was actually happening.

The previous article concluded that any change in the sixteenth-century *timar* system was not simply the wholesale corruption of the system, since in the provinces it continued much the same as it had always done. That conclusion, however, omitted from consideration *timars* that were not listed in the provincial registers. The advice writers complained about *timars* granted to harem women as *paşmaklık*, absorbed into the sultan’s *has* and farmed out for cash, or awarded to military and administrative personnel as private property (*mülk*), heritable *timars* (*ocaklık*), or retirement pensions (*arpalık*). Because the existing *icmal defterleri* did not refer to these *timars*, they were initially left out of the analysis. However, it is important to discover exactly how large a problem these *timars* actually posed. Since the provincial *timar* registers described the situation in the provinces rather than in the capital, they did not list such awards, so these non-provincial assignments must be uncovered another way. This study does not track down these *timars* individually (a different project involving the *timar rużnamçe defterleri* and other sources) but uses the *icmal defterleri* by themselves to uncover the dimensions of the problem for the empire as a whole.

Authors of *nasihatnameler* described the problem of non-provincial *timars* as immense and terrible; in their view awarding *timars* to people who did not fight and did not send fighters to the army in their place weakened Ottoman military power, and awarding *timars* to people against the specifications of the regulations, *kanunnameler*, overturned the good order of the Ottoman state. On those grounds, one such award would be almost as bad as many, but their works give the impression that indeed these illegal awards numbered in the hundreds, if not thousands. Attempts to quantify the problem by comparing figures on the

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4 Gabor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005).

number of *timars* in the empire relayed by writers such as ‘Ayn ‘Ali (1609), Koçi Bey (1630), and ‘Ali Çavuş (copy date 1653) have proved to be problematic.<sup>5</sup> ‘Ayn ‘Ali, as head of the *timar* registry (*emin-i defter*) of the empire, is thought to have compiled his *Kavanin-i Al-i Osman* (Regulations of the Ottoman Dynasty) from the last set of surveys made in the 1570s-1590s.<sup>6</sup> Koçi Bey, writing in 1630, appears to have largely copied ‘Ayn ‘Ali’s figures.<sup>7</sup> The *risale* of ‘Ali Çavuş, on the other hand, has been analyzed as a scribal manual of the *timar* registry compiled prior to ‘Ayn ‘Ali’s work and used by him as a model.<sup>8</sup> Comparing these works, therefore, cannot answer the question whether the number of provincial *timars* actually decreased or by how much.

The expansion of the Janissary corps and the creation of mercenary units of infantry, *sekban* and *sarıca*, generated problems of banditry and unrest not covered by the *kanunnameler*, and we know in general how these were handled.<sup>9</sup> We have not, however, yet looked at what happened to the *timar*-holders, nor have we sought to determine the dimensions of the problem in the Ottoman imperial landscape, in other words, its geographical as well as its administrative shape: how widespread or how localized were these problems? The *icmal defterleri* can help us fill that gap, giving us a more finely tuned understanding of the scope of change in the *timar* system while calling into question the horror story told by the advice writers. *Timar* bestowal registers (*ruznamçes*) and inspection registers (*yoklamas*) may give more details on individual *timar*-holders, but neither type of register includes all *timar*-holders in a region; the first lists only those who received *timars* or increases to their *timars* in a particular period, and the second lists those who did or did not show up for a particular campaign, whereas the *icmal defterleri* list all *timar*-holders in a specific province. This and the previous article therefore employ these registers to gain an overview of changes in the *timar* system.

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5 Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System,” p. 151.

6 Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Timar,” *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 12, p. 289.

7 Kunt, p. 102; Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System,” p. 149.

8 Douglas A. Howard, “From Manual to Literature: Two Texts on the Ottoman *Timar* System,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 61 (2008), pp. 97-98. Hezarfen’s figures from the mid-seventeenth century do not separate the provincial *timars* from those of fortress garrisons; Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telbîsü’l-Beyân fî Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, Sevim İlğürel (ed.), (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1998), pp. 116-39.

9 Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1994).

Our ability to discern the size of the problem through this source is limited by two things. One is the survival pattern of the *icmal defterleri*: ideally we should be able to examine two registers from the same province separated by a period of several decades, for example, one from the early and one from the late sixteenth century or one from the mid-sixteenth century and one from the early seventeenth. These registers should cover the same geographic area, the same *livas* and *nahiyes*. The documentation for very few provinces meets these criteria, and for a closer look at the problem in a particular area they must be supplemented by other sources not examined here. The other limitation is created by the very breadth of the present survey, which made it impossible to compensate for errors in counting or discrepancies between what was included in Ayn 'Ali's list and those of the *icmal defterleri*. Time limitations also prevented checking the geographical coverage for all of the registers used in this portion of the article, so these results must be considered tentative in the absence of detailed local studies of more limited application. Nevertheless, they do cover the surviving records of the whole empire and are sufficient to raise questions on issues that we have until now taken for granted.

### How Great Was the Decline in Provincial *Timars*?

Thus far, our estimation of the decrease in provincial *timars* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been based largely on hearsay evidence. Scholars who have studied the "reform" or closure of the timar system in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have dismissed the intervening period as one of decline.<sup>10</sup> Metin Kunt has emphasized the derivative nature of most counts of *timars* in Ottoman literary sources and the need for performing new tabulations from the archival registers themselves.<sup>11</sup> The few studies of single provinces that extend

10 See Yücel Özkaya, "XVIII. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Timar ve Zeâmetlerin Düzeni Konusunda Alınan Tedbirler ve Sonuçlar," *Tarih Dergisi*, 32 (1979), pp. 219-54 and plates pp. 959-77; Nathalie Clayer, "Note sur la survivance du système des *timâr* dans la région de Shkodër au début du XXe siècle," *Turcica*, 29 (1997), pp. 423-31; Hatidža Čar-Drnda, "Remnants of the *Timâr* System in the Bosnian *Vilâyet* in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10.1/2 (Fall 2004), pp. 171-74; Nenad Močanin, "Defterology and Mythology: Ottoman Bosnia up to the *Tanzîmat*," *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10.1/2 (Fall 2004), 189-97. None of these studies employs actual *timar* registers.

11 İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, (New York: Columbia University Press 1983), p. 102.

into the seventeenth century have produced figures showing a decrease in the number of *timars* in those provinces, but they do not agree with each other. In the province of Aydın, studied by Douglas Howard, the last *icmal defteri* of the province from the year 981/1573-74 contained 623 *zeamets* and *timars*. The next complete figure, obtained from the “very thorough” general inspection of 1042-43/1632-34, listed only 298 *zeamets* and *timars* in Aydın, a decrease of 52 percent.<sup>12</sup> This drastic decrease seems to confirm the advice writers’ complaints, but it does not hold true in other provinces. Vidin, as examined by Muhsin Soyudoğan, had 221 *timars* and *zeamets* in 1580, but experienced only a 10 percent decline in their number between 1580 and 1626, after which (with the exception of a spike in 1632) there was a slow but steady fall until 1104/1692, when the *timar* system was abolished in Vidin.<sup>13</sup>

The *icmal defterleri* reveal a still greater variety of circumstances in other provinces.<sup>14</sup> There are fifteen provinces (*livas*) which have *icmal defterleri* in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) spanning the period around 1580; the registers in Tapu ve Kadastro in Ankara or the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia are not examined here. Table 1 lists the numbers of provincial *timars* in the BOA registers for these provinces. These figures indicate that over the time spanned by these registers, the number of *timars* and *zeamets* awarded to provincial holders declined in only six of the fourteen provinces, stayed much the same in three, and increased in six. In the province of Haleb, where the advice writer Mustafa ‘Ali worked, the number of provincial *timars* and *zeamets* seems to have decreased very early, going from 314 in 1524 to 327 in 1550 but dropping to 193 in 1565.<sup>15</sup> According to ‘Ayn ‘Ali, however, who wrote in 1609, there were 368 *timars* and *zeamets* at the end of the sixteenth century, which suggests that the figure from

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12 Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System,” pp. 152, 158.

13 Muhsin Soyudoğan, “Reassessing the *Timar* System: The Case Study of Vidin (1455-1693),” (doctoral dissertation, Bilkent University, 2012), p. 221.

14 The figures in the *icmal defterleri* may be a little high, because they include additions to *timars* and *zeamets* as well as the original core *timar* (*kılıç*), but they should be comparable to each other; ‘Ayn ‘Ali’s figures, used below, contain only the core (*kılıç*) *timars*. Evliya Çelebi also provides a count from the mid-seventeenth century, but his figures include the men-at-arms (*cebelüs*) attached to the *timars*, so the number of actual *timars* cannot be determined from this source; Evliya Çelebi, *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the Seventeenth Century*, Joseph von Hammer (trans.), (London: Oriental Translation Fund 1834), pp. 101-5.

15 TT125 931/1524; TT271 957/1550; TT544 973/1565, a damaged register; of the 193 visible entries, only 183 are legible.

1565 was a mistake, an anomaly, a partial record, or a merely temporary condition. Mora also appears to confirm the stereotype with an even more drastic decrease from 552 in 1520 to only 224 in 1632.<sup>16</sup> Between those dates, according to ‘Ayn ‘Ali, *timars* in Mora rose to 700 near the end of the sixteenth century, making the fall even more dramatic. Karesi seems to adhere to this pattern as well, with 288 *timars* and *zeamets* in 1511 and only 195 in 1632.<sup>17</sup> *Timars* and *zeamets* awarded to provincial people in Teke decreased after first rising, but to a much lesser extent, going from 259 in 1521 to 288 in 1568 and then to 221 in 1632.<sup>18</sup> Between the last two of these dates ‘Ayn ‘Ali provides a figure of 264, indicating that the number fell much more gradually than in Mora.<sup>19</sup> Trabzon followed a similar pattern, growing from 355 *timars* and *zeamets* in 1515 to 401 in 1584, but here ‘Ayn ‘Ali provides a figure of 369 for the end of the century, indicating a lesser fall that still remained above the original figure.<sup>20</sup> Kocaeli likewise experienced a fall much smaller than its original rise, with 200 *timars* and *zeamets* in 1530, 232 in 1595, and 224 in 1602.<sup>21</sup>

Not all provinces, however, experienced a drop in *timars*. The number of *timars* and *zeamets* awarded in the province of Budin remained basically the same between 1560, when they numbered 138, and 1580, when there were 137.<sup>22</sup> ‘Ayn ‘Ali does not enumerate the *timars* of Budin and there are no later *icmals* in the archive, so what happened after 1580 is still unclear. In Erzurum, where there was a later count, the number of provincial *timars* and *zeamets* was 332 in 1539 and 333 in 1632.<sup>23</sup> ‘Ayn ‘Ali lists a figure of 2275 for the late sixteenth century, but on the basis of the *icmals* it can be seen that this figure must include a very large number of fortress garrison (*muhafaza*) *timars*, which are not counted in this

16 TT390 926/1520; TT756 1042/1632.

17 TT89 917/1511; TT756 1042/1632.

18 TT107 927/1521; TT471 976/1568; TT756 1042/1632. All of these are my counts; the totals in the registers cannot be trusted. One register in which I counted 31 *zeamets* and 372 *timars* (total 403) claimed to have 23 *zeamets* and 419 *timars* for a total of 464 (if the figures are true, the correct total would be 442). I did not include the *has*.

19 Figures from ‘Ayn ‘Ali are taken from “‘Ayn ‘Ali’ nin Kavânin-i ‘Âl-i Osman’ i,” Ahmed Akgündüz (ed.), *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tablilleri*, (Istanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1996), vol. 9, pp. 52-61.

20 TT53 921/1515; TT603 992/1584.

21 TT425 926/1520 in the catalog but 937/1530 in the register; A.{DFE.d.67 1004/1595; TT732 1011/1602.

22 TT329 968/1560; TT590 988/1580.

23 TT197 946/1539; TT755 1042/1632.

study; thus, although between those dates the provincial *timars* may have risen or fallen, overall their number was essentially unchanged. In Kastamonu the number of *timars* dipped only slightly, from 599 in 1582 to 589 in 1632, and ‘Ayn ‘Ali lists 594 between those dates.<sup>24</sup> Instead of declining or even remaining the same, the province of Bosna displayed growth in the number of *timars*; from 112 in 1539 and 216 in 1565 it seems to have mushroomed to 732 in 1602.<sup>25</sup> Hersek also, which had 226 in 1528, ended with 408 in 1602.<sup>26</sup> Akşehir and Manisa experienced growth as well; the first went from 101 provincial *timars* and *zeamets* in 1520 to 137 in 1583, and the second went from 82 in 1521 to 127 in 1572.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, none of these provinces’ *timars* were counted by ‘Ayn ‘Ali, and they do not appear in the 1632 *yoklama* register. Bolu had an even odder trajectory: from 541 *timars* and *zeamets* in 1565 it dropped to 348 in 1583, but subsequently it more than rebounded, reaching 664 in 1632.<sup>28</sup> *Timars* and *zeamets* in Paşa *livası* also dropped at first, from 541 in 1542 to 357 in 1566, but adding together the *timars* in two partial registers for 1628 yields 964.<sup>29</sup>

Overall, no general pattern can be discerned from these figures, but clearly Mustafa ‘Ali’s complaint cannot be generalized to the whole empire. Even if the outsider problem is genuine and its magnitude is significant, it still seems to have affected only certain provinces and not others. Why would the *timars* of Haleb, Karesi, Trabzon, and Mora be especially attractive to outsiders, while those of

24 TT601 990/1582; TT756 1042/1632.

25 TT5m 883/1478; TT18 890/1485; TT193 946/1539; TT553 973/1565; TT728 1011/1602. Some of the growth in 1602 seems to have come from awarding a greater number of smaller *timars*; the *timars* in 1565 were larger. The *icmal* of 1106/1694 lists 413 *timars*, so the figure went back down, but not all the way; A.{DFE.d.189.

26 TT150 935/1528; TT728 1011/1602. In the *icmal* of 1106/1694 Hersek had 197, so the number seems to have dropped considerably after 1602, bringing its pattern more into line with that of Teke; A.{DFE.d.189.

27 TT371 926/1520; Mehmet Akif Erdoğan, “Akşehir Sancağındaki Dirliklerin III. Murat Devrindeki Durumu ve 1583/991 Tarihli Akşehir Sancağı İcmal Defteri,” *OTAM*, 1, no. 1 (June 1990), pp. 127-62. TD102 927/1521; TD258 980/1572, both in Feridun M. Emecen, *XVI. Asırda Manisa Kazâsı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989).

28 TT86 973/1565; TK584 991/1583; TT756 1042/1632.

29 TT217 949/1542; TT212 974/1566; A.{DFE.d.82 and 81 1038/1628. This says nothing about the size of the *timars*. At first glance, as the number of *timars* increased their size seems to have decreased, even in the sixteenth century. This might account for the decrease in the number of *cebelüs* noted by the advice writers. In the nineteenth century there were *timars* made completely out of cash resources; see, for example, MAD 11429 1279/1862.



Bosna, Kastamonu, and Manisa were not? Why did the number of *timars* mushroom in Paşa, Hersek, and Bolu but not in Budin, Erzurum, and Teke? And would our understanding of these problems be different if we had data from all the provinces rather than just fifteen of them?

### Did the Number of *Timars* Actually Decline?

The above figures on numbers of *timars* clearly demonstrate that the Ottoman provinces had a variety of different experiences with their *timar* systems in the period after 1580. No single generalization can cover them all. Whatever it was that the advice writers were complaining about, it affected different parts of the empire differently, and no blanket statement about “the decline of the *timar* system” can describe it. It is this variety, the fact that in different provinces the *timar* system behaved differently, that is the Ottomans’ true experience, and that is what our textbooks and lectures should communicate. This variety of results also reinforces the danger of relying on (over-)generalizations in the *nasihatname* for our analysis of what was happening to the Ottoman state in the post-Süleymanic period. Every one of their statements must be checked against the documents in order to see the actual state of affairs. That does not mean that we should merely lay those texts aside; rather, we need to discover why the authors wrote as they did and what they meant by their statements.

For example, it is possible that the early decline in *timar* numbers in Haleb province really does reflect the rise of the problem of outsiders about which Mustafa ‘Ali was so agitated in 1580, a situation which may have occurred later in some other provinces. On the other hand, it may be that Haleb’s early decline was due to some other cause, such as the transformation of *timar* land to *vakıf* or the farming of its revenues, and that Mustafa ‘Ali invented the accusation of the provincial governor’s corruption for personal reasons.<sup>30</sup> Or the ostensible decline could be a product of differences in recording or register preservation; is the 1565 register complete? If so, what happened to those properties and why did they appear as *timars* in ‘Ayn ‘Ali’s report a few decades later? Detailed comparisons of the registers and provincial studies tracing the movement of property over time from one form to another would help explain why we see a drop in *timar* numbers in some provinces and a rise in others, while still others seem unaffected by change.

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30 Was the provincial governor whom Mustafa ‘Ali served in 1580 the same person who presided over *timar* awards in 1565? Ordinarily provincial governors had shorter terms. There is definitely something suspicious about Mustafa ‘Ali’s accusation.

They also might reveal important information about provincial conditions, the lot of the peasants, and the shift of wealth from the military-administrative class to a commercial or financier class.

When the *timars* in these fifteen provinces are added up, the gains unexpectedly outweigh the losses. If only the provinces with sufficient extant *icmal* documentation were in question, we would not be talking about a decline at all but an increase. There were obviously parts of the empire that experienced no decline, and other parts in which *timar* decrease was visibly only a local phenomenon, with increases occurring in neighboring territories. There were apparently problems in recording that may have given rise to fears of a real decrease in *timars*. But there were also some provinces where land and revenue were taken out of the provincial *timar* system for other uses, although we cannot yet see a geographical pattern for this practice. That would demand a number of intensive studies of provincial land use. The number and assignment of fortress garrison *timars* also need to be studied.<sup>31</sup> It would be interesting if the provinces with the greatest declines in provincial *timars* were also those with the biggest Celali problems; if that proved to be generally the case, we would have to revisit the question of causation in the Celali issue.

The increase of garrison troops in the seventeenth century, many of whom were recompensed by *timars*, undoubtedly contributed to the anxiety over the provincial *timars*. The registers of Erzurum in the seventeenth century, for example, contain nothing but *timars* allocated to garrison troops. The rise of urban garrisons and the strengthening of frontier fortresses on east and west diverted an unknown portion of the *timar* stock to their support and, as we have seen in the case of Bosna, vastly increased the number of *timars* while at the same time reducing the role of provincial *timar*-holders in the empire's defense and maintenance. It also appears to have decreased the average size of a *timar*. Rather than a decline of the *timar* system, however, what we see here is its repurposing to serve the needs of an empire with a stable frontier, an infantry army, and an urbanizing society that was undergoing climatic and economic change and the consequent unrest. As my previous article concluded, this revised *timar* system needs to be studied in its own right, as a replacement for an outdated socioeconomic formation, not as a symptom of imperial decay.

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31 A beginning has been made by Soyudoğan, pp. 192-95.

### Who Were the Ottoman *Timar*-Holders in the Seventeenth Century?

The assumption among scholars has been that a revised (or “declining”) *timar* system benefited a different social group than the one whose efforts had initially conquered the empire’s territories. My previous article determined that in the later sixteenth century the sons of *timar*-holders did receive fewer provincial *timars* than they had earlier, but the turning point was around 1560, not 1580, and the level of decrease was small. Did this trend continue into the seventeenth century? The current article analyzes recipients of seventeenth-century *timars* in the same way that recipients of sixteenth-century *timars* were analyzed in my previous article. They are categorized as sons of *timar*-holders; members of the central government with *ghulam* background such as palace cavalry, Janissaries, or *çavuşes*; members of the central administration, provincial officials, followers of great men, and those with neither a father’s name nor an official title in the register. A new category is added for those identified as retired, who received the *timar* as a pension. In addition to the handful of seventeenth-century *icmal defterleri* surviving in the archives, the article includes some additional registers from the late sixteenth century that were not used in my previous article. Data from registers for both periods are summarized in Table 2.<sup>32</sup> Additions to the list of provincial *icmal defterleri* can be found in Table 3, which omits most registers for *timars* of garrison troops only.

In the seventeenth century, as stated above, the sons of *timar*-holders appear to have received *timars* at much the same rate as in the late sixteenth century, but that rate was underestimated in the previous article. The new averages are 42 percent of *timars* going to the sons of *timar*-holders before 1560 (unchanged), 39 percent between 1560 and 1600 (adding registers counted for this article and moving the 1602 Bosna register to the seventeenth century), and 38 percent for the

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32 The registers employed in this section of the article are A.{DFE.d.67 Kocaeli 1004/1595; A.{DFE.d.81 Paşa 1038/1628; A.{DFE.d. 82 Paşa 1038/1628 (the relationship between these two registers is not clear; register 82 appears to begin at the beginning, while register 81 begins in the middle of things in a different hand than register 82 but continues in the same hand after a few pages); A.{DFE.d.170 Kars, etc. 1104/1692; A.(DEF.d.189 Bosna, Hersek, Kilis, İzvornik 1106/1094; A.{DFE.d.209 İnebahtı 1115/1703; TT613 Trabzon 992/1584; TT730 Van, Muş, Adilcevaz, Bitlis 1011/1602; TT732 Kocaeli 1011/1602; TT735 Hüdavendigâr 1027/1617-18; TT765 İç İl, Ala’iye 1046 (in the catalog) 984/1576 in the register; TT837 Kars 1104/1692. See Darling, “*Nasihatnameler*,” p. 202, for the criteria for the charts and for the justification for determining the identities of *timar*-holders by the recording of father’s names in the *icmal defterleri*.

seventeenth century as a whole. The averages for the early and later parts of that century are 38 percent and 37 percent respectively, although the numbers are irregular. The area around Kars, for example, where only 18 percent of *timar*-holders had a father's name listed in the register (and half those names were Abdullah), is more than balanced by Inebahtı, where 69 percent of *timar*-holders had a father's name in the register.<sup>33</sup> In the provinces that are represented twice in the lists, the percentage of sons of *timar*-holders decreased slightly in every case: in Kocaeli from 61 percent in 1595 to 54 percent in 1602, in Bosna from 45 percent in 1602 to 37 percent in 1694, and in Paşa from 60 percent to 53 percent in the same year of 1628, for an average decrease of 7 percent. The fact that the overall average decline was only 3 percent indicates that the percentages must have increased in a number of other provinces for which documentation is lacking. The lowered amounts are still large, but the decreases may have been felt more strongly than their size would warrant, since a vulnerable group may be sensitive to even the smallest change. In addition, there is a gap of about six decades in the middle of the century, from 1628 to 1692, where complete *icmal defterleri* could not be found and where other sources have not yet been investigated.

Some interesting patterns can be seen in the data on *timar*-holding social groups other than *timar*-holders' sons. In addition to the five non-Muslim *timar*-holders in the Bosna register of 1602, there were only two other names that might be non-Muslim. One appears to be Peter, even to having dots in the right places, and is found in the register of Trabzon for 992/1584, so still in the sixteenth century. The other looks like Qıstas/Kostas, a Greek name, and comes in the register of Hüdavendigâr for 1027/1617.<sup>34</sup> All the rest appear to be standard Muslim or Turkish names; the naming practices of the *timar*-holding class appear to have been remarkably unoriginal. It was, therefore, apparently in the seventeenth century rather than the sixteenth that the Christian *timar*-holders really disappeared. Nonetheless, in the Paşa register of 1628 there was a disproportionate number of "ibn Abdullahs," as well as several *timar*-holders marked "new Muslim" (*müslim nev*).<sup>35</sup> Even in the 1694 Bosna register, two of the awardees may have had Christian fathers.<sup>36</sup>

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33 A.{DFE.d.170 1104/1694; A.{DFE.d.209 1115/1703.

34 TT613 Trabzon 992/1584; TT735 Hüdavendigâr 1027/1617.

35 A.{DFE.d.82 1038/1628.

36 A.{DFE.d.189 Bosna 1106/1694; the fathers' names were both Abdullah, but since there were also Abdullahs who held provincial *timars* in Bosna, these fathers' names may not have been code-words for non-Muslims, as they sometimes were in the *timar* system.

The proportion of palace military and civilians, administrative and scribal cadres, and provincial military and governing personnel supported by the *timar* system actually decreased over time and, except for the provincial personnel, dropped to zero in the later part of the seventeenth century. In addition, *timars* recorded as given in *arpalık* to personnel out of office or to people who had retired (*teka'ud*) ranged between zero and 3 percent of the total, all in the later part of the century.<sup>37</sup> In the sixteenth century these groups all together had held an average of 16 percent of the *timars*, but in the seventeenth century the average was only 7 percent. Breaking the period down, in the later sixteenth century (1560-1660) the average was 15 percent, in the early seventeenth century (1600-1628) it was 12 percent, and in the late seventeenth century (1692-1700) only 2 percent. So far it is impossible to see what happened in the intervening periods; for the mid-seventeenth century there is only one complete (? having a beginning and an end) register, which covers Mosul in 1058/1648. This register contains no palace personnel, but it is a small register and may not include all the *timar*-holders in the province of Mosul.<sup>38</sup> The highest percentages of *timar*-holding officials appear in 1563, 1565-6, the Malta campaign register, 1595, 1602, and 1628, confirming that more awards were made to this group during time of war.

These figures pose a problem for the understanding of Ottoman history based on the complaints in the *nasihatnameler*. There appears to be no ground whatever for Mustafa 'Ali's complaints in 1581, although those of Koçi Bey in 1630 seem somewhat better justified as long as his account of its causes is ignored. Even in the early sixteenth century, when the complaints about outsiders obtaining *timars* through patronage and corruption were being formulated, their basis was already diminishing, and in the seventeenth century, when they became a constant theme, a portion of the problem itself disappeared almost completely. Palace personnel, retainers of the great, and provincial officials formed a rapidly diminishing proportion of *timar*-holders recorded in the provincial registers, and as we have seen, the number of *timars* subtracted from the register totals to be awarded outside the province was much less than we have been led to believe. If the outsiders of the complaints were official personnel of any kind, then the complaints appear to be largely unfounded. Some official personnel may have gained *timars* by stratagems and bribery, but not enough to alter the system or to cause serious problems for the empire. The case is different for *sancakbeys* and *beylerbeys*, as Metin Kunt has

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<sup>37</sup> *Arpalık* goes back to early times; the 926/1520 register for Kocaeli, TT425, listed over six *timars* given in *arpalık*.

<sup>38</sup> A.{DFE.d.109.

shown; an increasing number of those top positions were being awarded to people from the palace and the retinues of great men, but the same is decidedly not true for ordinary *timars*.

But perhaps the complaints are not really about official personnel, but about the “riffraff” of the system, the sons of nobodies. Here the advice writers appear at first to be on more solid ground; the proportion of sons of nobodies receiving *timars* definitely increased. This was, however, not a sudden rise due to corruption in 1580 but a gradual increase over centuries of time. In the fifteenth-century registers examined their portion of *timars* was 23 percent, in the early sixteenth century 28 percent, in the later sixteenth century (1560-1600) 38 percent, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century 45 percent, and in the late seventeenth century it rose to 52 percent. These figures, of course, are based on the assumption that the provision of the father’s name in the register indicates that the father was also a *timar*-holder. It is possible that the scribes of the *timar* registry grew more careless in later years and did not bother to record the ancestry of many of the *timar*-holders in the *icmal defterleri*. This comforting idea is contradicted by the care taken in the new *tahrirs* that were made in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>39</sup> The identities of these “sons of nobodies” must be checked through other sources. In the small amount of research that has already been done, Howard found in a register from 1610 that *timars* were granted to campaign veterans, petty officials and sons of officials, and men from the households of administrative personnel, while Soyudoğan did not examine the *timar*-holders of Vidin but stated on the basis of advice literature that they must have been retainers of important officials.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, if the *icmal defterleri* are correct, the sons of nobodies—whoever they were—gained increasing numbers of *timars* from the very beginning. This validates the early sixteenth-century complaints about this problem but contradicts their notions about its cause; the number of

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39 Fariba Zarinebaf, John Bennet, and Jack L. Davis, with contributions by Evi Gorogianni, Deborah K. Harlan, Machiel Kiel, Pierre A. MacKay, John Wallrodt, and Aaron D. Wolpert, *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century*, Hesperia Supplement 34 (N.p.: American School of Classical Studies at Athens 2005); Elias Kolovos, “Beyond ‘Classical’ Ottoman *Defterology*: A Preliminary Assessment of the *Tahrir* Registers of 1670/71 concerning Crete and the Aegean Islands,” Elias Kolovos, Phokion Kotzageorgeis, Sophia Laiou and Marinos Sariyannis (eds.) *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History: Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander*, (İstanbul: İsis Press 2007), pp. 201-35.

40 Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System,” p. 174; Soyudoğan, p. 222 and n. 59.

*timar*-holders' sons did not significantly decline, although the *timars* granted to palace and official personnel decreased in number.

In the previous article, the years when sons of nobodies held the greatest percentage of *timars* were identified as 1565, 1568, and 1583. In the registers used for the current article, the peak years for sons of nobodies were 1584, 1602, and 1692. These dates are consistent with the observation that sons of nobodies tended to obtain *timars* on the battlefield or in the aftermath of major wars. Confirmation is provided by the high proportion of sons of nobodies, over 60 percent, who held *timars* in Kars and Bosna-Hersek during the War of the Holy League (1683-1699) and the fact that the figure dropped back to 30 percent in 1703. It is also possible that Kars and Bosna, as frontier provinces, had a higher proportion of sons of nobodies, while as inner provinces Paşa and İnebahtı held fewer. Unfortunately, this generalization does not hold for dates earlier than 1690; during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the places with the highest proportion of sons of nobodies included Aydın, Manisa, Karahisar-i Şarki, Akşehir, and Beyşehir. The lowest figures, in turn, could be found also in Aydın and Manisa, and in Haleb (ironically), Tırhala, Erzurum, İç İl, Bolu, and Diyarbakır.

The appearance of a large number of registers dated 1104, 1105, and 1106 is quite significant. These years occurred during the War of the Holy League and are part of a general inspection (*teftiş*) of the *timar* system at that time. A number of those registers, in particular those for 1105/1693, are blank; that is, they have the *timars* listed and described, but no names of *timar*-holders appear, and some do not even seem to have room for a *timar*-holder's name to be written in. Such registers may have been prepared for an inspection that never took place, or they may indicate that although the *timar* system survived in theory in that province, there were no actual *timar*-holders.<sup>41</sup> The role of *timar*-holders during that war has yet to be studied, but these registers suggest that it was not unimportant. All of the *timars* in those registers were awarded to men who were probably combatants, including provincial officers, and the proportion awarded to sons of nobodies increased significantly. These *timars* were probably being awarded to men who had distinguished themselves on the battlefield, suggesting either that at that time the *timar* system still held some of its original meaning or that an attempt was made to restore it.

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<sup>41</sup> Among the provinces with this kind of register are Arabgir A. {DFE.d.172, Karahisar-ı Sahib A. {DFE.d.173, Avlonya A. {DFE.d.174, Üsküb A. DFE.d.175, Paşa A. {DFE.d.176, Sığla A. {DFE.d.842, and Malatya A. {DFE.d.206.

## Conclusion

The conclusions of this examination remain tentative; the study of the *icmal defterleri* so far has overthrown a number of well-established ideas but has produced more questions than firm answers. These registers do show that the outsiders in the *timar* system about whom advice writers such as Mustafa ‘Ali and Koçi Bey complained were not in fact a major problem for the Ottoman Empire. The sons of *timar*-holders were reduced over time, but only by a few percentage points. Sons of nobodies apparently increased in the *timar*-holding ranks, but how many of them were unacknowledged retainers of high officials is a matter of guesswork. They are not labeled as retainers, but the fact that some retainers were labeled invalidates the idea that their status was being disguised. Certainly there was a scramble for *timars*, since the military population was increasing and the available *timars* were not, and bribery may well have determined which of the potential candidates was successful or on occasion have admitted men with no military record, but it does not seem from these registers to have altered the composition of the group of *timar*-holders as a whole; the increase in the number of garrison *timars* had a much greater effect. Men from the palace, protégés of viziers and provincial governors, and other officials—at least those labeled as such—formed a diminishing proportion of *timar*-holders over time, and this is undoubtedly related to the *timar* system’s declining role as a system of governance. Some *timars* were taken out of the provincial registers and presumably granted to people who would not serve in the provincial army, such as palace women or retirees, but this occurred only in certain provinces at certain times and does not seem to have had a major impact on the *timar* system as a whole. These *timars* appear to have been restored to the system, quite possibly in the “reform” of 1632, which was also—not coincidentally—the time when the monetary system restabilized after the “price revolution” and inflation was reduced.

The relative balance between decreases and increases in the number of provincial *timars* over time suggests either that not many *timars* were available for award to outsiders or that their award to outsiders was a temporary stopgap in a time of deficit financing. The fact that in the provinces studied the increases in the number of provincial *timars* were greater than the decreases means that the real issue causing anxiety to the writers of *nasihatnameler* was not the size of the provincial cavalry. All the rhetoric linking *timar* awards to military victory may be so much wasted breath. The great loss of opportunity by *timar*-holders’ sons was a false alarm, as their share of *timars* did not decrease significantly. The writers’ real concern was more likely who received the *timars* taken out of the provincial



system rather than who did not. If so, this would tend to confirm the interpretation of the *nasihatnameler* as representing a factional conflict within the elite, but perhaps not one between *timar*-holders and officials but rather within the official class itself.

Thus, with respect to the identity of recipients of provincial *timars*, the *icmals* contradict the assertions in the *nasihatnameler* about the corruption of the *timar* system, since the later recipients were not very different from those of the earlier period. With respect to the numbers of *timars* being awarded to provincial versus non-provincial personnel, they tend to support the factional rivalry interpretation of this period, although not very strongly, since the number of *timars* awarded outside the system was smaller than the increase in *timar* numbers within the system. Instead, they suggest that *timars* awarded to non-military and palace personnel were not an immense or fatal problem; in many cases such awards may have been a pragmatic solution to inflation and monetary disruption rather than a signal of the moral decay of the empire. With respect to *timars* awarded to sons of *timar*-holders versus sons of nobodies, the *icmal defterleri* reveal a gradual transformation over a period of centuries, not a sudden change at a particular point that could be attributed to individual corruption. The identities of these non-sons of *timar*-holders, and the extent to which the *timar*-holding “class” was transformed by the infusion of such men, are problems that remain to be investigated. In the seventeenth century, however, the *timar* system clearly remained an integral part of the empire’s functioning and social life, although its role and significance had greatly changed.

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PART II, INCLUDING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

**Table 1. Dates of Registers and Numbers of Provincial *Timars***

PLACE	Early Sixteenth Century	Middle Sixteenth Century	Late Sixteenth Century	Early Seventeenth Century	Late Seventeenth Century
Akşehir	1520 101		1583 137		
Avlonya	1506 331	1559 539			
Aydın	1527 492			1632 308	
Bolu	1530 491	1565 541	1583 348	1632 664	
Bosna	1539 112	1565 216		1602 732	1694 413
Budin		1560 138	1580 137		
Erzurum	1539 332		'Ayn 'Ali 2275 (?)	1632 333	
Haleb	1524 314	1550 1565 327 193	'Ayn 'Ali 368		
Hersek	1528 226		1602 408		1694 197
İç İl	1536 175+	1576 645			
Karesi	1511 288			1632 195	
Kastamonu		1582 599	'Ayn 'Ali 594	1632 589	
Kocaeli	1530 200		1595 232	1602 224	
Manisa	1521 82	1531 90	1572 127		
Mora	1520 552		'Ayn 'Ali 700	1626 224	
Paşa	1542 541	1566 357		1628 964 (2 partial)	
Teke	1521 251	1568 288	'Ayn 'Ali 264	1632 221	
Trabluşşam	1520 206	1565 297 (partial)			
Trabzon	1515 355	1584 385/401	'Ayn 'Ali 361		

**Table 2. *Timar*-Holders in the Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries**

YR H/M	PLACE	TIMARS	FATHR LISTD	%	GHU- LAM	ADM	PRV	FOL	RET	NO F NOT
984/ 1576	İçel	645	564	87	2	2	5	1.6	0.5	6
984/ 1576	Ala'iye	91	13	14	0	0	2	7	0	55
992/ 1584	Trabzon	385	33	8.5	10	1	4	1	0	71
1004/ 1595	Kocaeli	232	143	61	11	3	4	3	0	16
1011/ 1602	Bosna	1698	764	45	5	0	3	0.1	0	44
1011/ 1602	Van, etc.	406	40	10	4	0.5	2	0	0	78
1011/ 1602	Kocaeli	224	121	54	12	4	5	0.5	1	18
1027/ 1618	Hüdaven- digâr	909	53	6	3	0.7	2	0	0	76
1038/ 1628	Paşa	623	377	60	7	1	2	0.3	0.2	27
1038/ 1628	Paşa	319	170	53	14	1.5	2	2	1	25
1104/ 1692	Kars, etc.	414	76	18	0	0	0	0	0	64
1104/ 1692	Kars	706 (247 vacant)	0	--	0	0	0	0	0	78
1106/ 1694	Bosna	413	154	37	2	1	1	0	0	60
1106/ 1694	Hersek	197	66	33	0	0	3	0	0	59
1106/ 1694	Kilis	164	62	38	0	0	2	0	0	52
1106/ 1694	İzvornik	235	69	29	0	0	4	0	0	62
1115/ 1703	İnebahtı	164	113	69	0	0	4	0	1	30

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**Table 3. Additions to List of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century *İcmal Defterleri***

DATE H/M	REGISTER NO.	STATUS	PLACE
926/1520	TT371*	online	Karaman, Akşehir
926/1520	TT390*	online	Mora
926/1520	TT421*	online	Trablusşam
926/1520	TT425	online	Bolu, Kocaeli
926/1520	TT438	icmal & mufassal	Kütahya, Bolu
935/1528	TT150	online	Hersek
943-44/1536	TT188*	ruznamçe	Beyşehir, İç İl, Akşehir
945/1538	A.{DFE.d.23	partial	Hersek
946/1539	TT193*	online	Bosna
954/1547	KK330	top part missing	Rumeli
960/1553	A.{DFE.d.36	online	Adana
968/1560	TT329	online	Budin
968/1565	TT548*	partial	Trablusşam
973/1565	TT553*	online	Bosna, Kilis
973/1565	TT86	online	Bolu
976/1568	TT1110	not digitized	Arabgir
977/1569	A.{DFE.d.46	partial	Sirem
984 (catalog 1046)	TT765*	online	İç İl, Ala'ie
986/1578	TS.MA219	online	Niğbolu
II. Selim	TT1112	not digitized	Kırkkilise
III. Murad	TT1108	not digitized	Paşa
III. Murad	TT1109	not digitized	Musul
992/1584	TT613*	online	Trabzon
996/1588	TT1111	not digitized	Vize
1000/1591	MAD209	online	Kars, Ardanuç
1001/1592	TT638	online	Szigetvar
1003/1594	TT680	garrison	Gelibolu

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1004/1595	A.{DFE.d.67*	online	Kocaeli
1011/1602	TT730*	online	Van, Muş, Adilcevaz, Bitlis
1011/1602	TT732*	online	Kocaeli
1027/1617	TT735*	online	Hüdavendigâr
1038/1628	A.{DFE.d.81*	partial	Paşa
1038/1628	A.{DFE.d.82*	partial	Paşa
1044/1634	TT760	garrison	Erzurum
1052/1642	TT779	garrison	Kıbrıs
1058/1648	A.{DFE.d.109	online	Mosul
1069/1658	A.{DFE.d.116	partial	Maarra
1070/1659	A.{DFE.d.119	no names	Karahisar-i Sahib
1100/1688	A.{DFE.d.157	no names	Batum
1101/1689	A.{DFE.d.162	garrison	Sivas
1104/1692	A.{DFE.d.170*	partial	Kars, etc.
1104/1692	TT836	ruznamçe	Selanik, Ağrıboz, Tırhala
1104/1692	TT837*	online	Kars, Kağızman, Geçivan
1104/1692	TT839	online	Kağızman, Geçivan
1105/1693	TT842	no names	Sığla
1105/1693	KK469	teftiş	no place listed
1105/1693	A.{DFE.d.172	no names	Arabgir
1105/1693	A.{DFE.d.173	no names	Karahisar-i Sahib
1105/1693	A.{DFE.d.174	no names	Avlonya
1105/1693	A.{DFE.d.175	no names	Üsküp
1105/1693	A.{DFE.d.176	no names	Paşa
1106/1694	A.{DFE.d.189*	first pages missing	Bosna, Kilis, Hersek, etc.
1107/1695	TT854	online	Üsküp, Köstendil
1114/1702	A.{DFE.d.206	no names	Malatya
1115/1703	A.{DFE.d.209*	partial	İnebahtı
*=used in article			

Abstract ■ This paper is an addendum to my article on the *timar* system in a previous issue of this journal, carrying the story into the seventeenth century and adding data on the sixteenth century that was not in the previous article. It considers the question of *timars* not listed in the provincial registers, employing the *icmal defterleri* to determine how many *timars* disappeared from the provincial registers in the period 1580-1632, presumably because they were awarded to personnel such as harem women and officials as *paşmaklık* or *ocaklık*. It observes no decline in the number of provincial *timars* in that period, rather an increase. It also surveys the identities of seventeenth-century *timar*-holders, finding that the sons of *timar*-holders received *timars* in the same proportions as in the late sixteenth century. It was the people of the palace whose access to *timars* decreased in the seventeenth century, while that of the sons of nobodies increased.

Keywords: Summary register, *timar* system, elite, military, outsider, decline

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