

THE RICH AND THE POOR: WEALTH POLARIZATION
IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY 'AYNTÂB

by
ZOZAN PEHLIVAN

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APPROVED BY

Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya Canbakal

Mehmet Genç

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alpay Filiztekin

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ABSTRACT

THE RICH AND THE POOR: WEALTH POLARIZATION IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ‘AYNTÂB

Zozan Pehlivan

M.A., History-Sabancı University

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya Canbakal

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Research on wealth distribution contains important referents regarding socio-economic structure. Within this context, this thesis depicts a socio-economic portrait of a town, Ayntâb, on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire during the late eighteenth-century. Accordingly, establishing a correlation between wealth and social status, and honorific titles in particular, from 1775 until 1777, is undertaken by examining a statistical sample drawn from one *tereke defter* [estate inventory] to reveal the complex relationship between social status, wealth, indebtedness, property ownership, and profession.

Quantitative techniques first estimate wealth stages/ranges among titled and untitled inhabitants of ‘Ayntâb in order to identify socio-economic groups and compare decedents’ assets with honorific titles. Analysis of estate inventories enables this writer to then evaluate the distribution of wealth in ‘Ayntâb and many contemporary towns in the Ottoman Empire in a comparative perspective.

Information on deceased’s estates confirms a highly stratified social environment in late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. My analysis corroborates the hypothesis that honorific titles and wealth were closely correlated; however, the possession of a title did not automatically confer wealthy status; socio-economic background was also characteristic determinant. Inequality and polarization in the distribution of wealth were the two common characteristics of the economic portrait of elite/titled holders and commoners/untitled people in these urban centers.

Keywords: ‘Ayntâb; Estate Inventory, Distribution of Wealth; Inequality; Polarization; Social Status; Profession; Commoners; Honorific Titles; *Ağa; Beşe; Molla; Efendi; Seyyid; el-Hâc*

ÖZET

ZENGİN(LER) VE YOKSUL(LAR): ON SEKİZİNCİ YÜZYIL SONLARINDA

‘AYNTÂB’DA SERVET KUTUPLAŞMASI

Zozan Pehlivan

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hülya Canbakal

Servet dağılımı üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, sosyo-ekonomik yapıyla ilgili önemli imalar barındırır. Bu bağlamda bu tez, on sekizinci yüz yıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun çevre bölgesinde yer alan ‘Ayntâb şehrinin sosyo-ekonomik portresini çizmektedir. Dolayısıyla, sosyal statü, servet, borçluluk, mülkiyet ve meslek arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiler ağını meydana çıkarmak amacıyla bir *tereke defterinden* elde edilen istatistiksel modelin incelenmesi yoluyla, 1775’ten 1777’ye kadarki dönemde servet ve sosyal statü, özellikle de unvanlar arasında bir bağıntı kurmaktadır.

Nicel teknikler öncelikle sosyo-ekonomik grupları belirlemek ve mirasları unvanlarla karşılaştırmak amacıyla, unvanı olan ve olmayan ‘Ayntâb sakinlerini servet kademelerine ayırmaktadır. Tereke envanterlerinin analizi, yazara ‘Ayntâb’daki ve aynı dönem Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun diğer bazı şehirlerindeki servet dağılımını, karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirme imkânı vermektedir.

Terekeler hakkındaki bilgiler, on sekizinci yüz yıl sonları ‘Ayntâb’ında hayli katmanlı bir toplumsal yapının varlığını doğrulamaktadır. Yaptığım analiz, unvan ve servet arasında ciddi bir bağıntı olduğu hipotezini desteklemektedir. Fakat, bir unvana sahip olmak, doğrudan zenginlik getirmemektedir; bireylerin ailevi ve sosyo-ekonomik durumları da bu konuda önemli etmenlerdendir. Servet dağılımındaki eşitsizlik ve kutuplaşma, şehir merkezlerindeki elitlerin/unvan sahiplerinin ve avamın/unvanı olmayanların ekonomik portresinde yer alan iki müşterek özelliktir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ‘Ayntâb; Tereke, Servet Dağılımı; Eşitsizlik; Kutuplaşma; Toplumsal Statü; Meslek; Avam; Unvanlar; Ağa; Beşe; Molla; Efendi; Seyyid; el-Hâc

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LISTS OF TABLES AND FIGURES

- Table 1.1. Occurrence of Honorific Titles in Estate Inventories
- Table 1.2. Major ‘*Askerî* Groups
- Table 1.3. Distribution of the title *el-Hâc* among decedents
- Figure 2.1. Distribution of *Terekes* according to religion, title-holding, and place of residence
- Table 2.1. Distribution of Total Assets
- Table 2.2. Distribution of Net Assets (*Mehr-i müeccel* and Personal debts deducted)
- Table 2.3. Distribution of Net Assets (Personal debts deducted)
- Table 2.4. The Identification of Honorifics According to First and Second Titles
- Table 2.5. Average per capita wealth
- Figure 2.2. Distribution of wealth according to the first and second title
- Figure 2.3. Distribution of Different Kinds of Land
- Table 2.6. Distribution of Real Estates
- Table 2.7. Distribution of debt (including *mehr-i müeccell*)
- Table 2.8. Real *Mehr* Amount
- Table 2.9. Distribution of Credits
- Figure. 2.5. Quintile Distribution of wealth among title holders and untitled decedents
- Table 2.10. Craftsmen and Tradesmen of ‘Ayntâb
- Table 3.1. Quintile Distribution of Wealth in Seventeenth and Eighteenth century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb
- Figure 3.1. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories (Late Eighteenth century)
- Figure 3.2. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories (Seventeenth Century)
- Figure 3.3. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories (Early Eighteenth Century)
- Table 3.2. Wealth Disparities in ‘Ayntâb

CONTENTS

Abstract	v.
Özet	vi.
Acknowledgments	vii.
List of Tables and Figures	viii.
Table of Contents	ix.
Introduction	1.
Chapter One. An Introduction to ‘Ayntâb	7.
An Overview of the History of ‘Ayntâb until the Eighteenth Century	8.
Eighteenth Century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb	9.
Economy	11.
Honorific Titles in Ottoman Usage	13.
Historical Background and the Usage of Honorific Titles	15.
Honorable Men of ‘Ayntâb in Late Eighteenth-century	18.
Chapter Two. Analysis of Distribution of Wealth	22.
Wealth	25.
Wealth Differentials among Various Titles	33.
Composition of Wealth	36.
Real Estates	36.
Debt	41.
Real <i>Mehr</i> Amount	43.
Credit	44.
Quintile Distribution of Wealth between Titled and Untitled Decedents	46.
Fluid Correlations between Estates and Wealth	48.
The Rich and Their Fortunes	49.
Professions or Tradesmen and Craftsmen of ‘Ayntâb	52.
Conclusion	55.

Chapter Three. ‘Ayntâbi Wealth in Comparative Light	56.
Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntâb and Other Cities	56.
Quintile Distribution of Wealth in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth century	
‘Ayntâb	57.
A Comparative Analysis of Wealth Disparities in ‘Ayntâb and Kastamonu ..	62.
Reflections of Economic Developments	64.
‘Ayntâb’s Story: Political Instability and Economic Polarization	66.
Conclusion	68.
Bibliography	70.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the distribution of wealth in late eighteenth-century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb, Gaziantep in modern Turkey. The analysis of the correlation between wealth and social status, honorific titles in particular in the period from 1775 till 1777 constitutes the central focus of this thesis. More precisely, the aim of the study is to examine a statistical sample drawn from one *tereke defter* (estate inventory) from the late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb to reveal the complex relationship between social status, wealth, indebtedness, property and profession. Two features of eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb make it a valuable province for a case study. On the one hand, eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb is a typical Ottoman town and therefore the economic findings of this study would be relevant to understand the economic dynamics of everyday life of individuals in that period. On the other hand, despite security problems in its daily life emanating from socio-political struggles among janissaries, the local elite and commoners, the town continued to grow physically and economically until the end of 1770s.¹

The aim of the study is to examine the monetary power of the title holders and try to assess its significance in the establishment and consolidation of socio-economic disparities between the local elite and commoners. With the exception of Canbakal’s study on the seventeenth century ‘Ayntâb,² and Ergene’s work on the eighteenth-century Kastamonu,³ the question of the title-wealth relationship has not attracted the attention of Ottoman historians. Instead of the title-wealth relationship, the research agenda of scholars working on provincial towns was mostly confined with the study of the rise of local powers, the political status of notables, the relationship between elites

¹ For a discussion of the cotton industry in ‘Ayntâb, see Donald Quatert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

² Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: ‘Ayntâb in the 17th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

³ Boğaç A. Ergene & Ali Berker “Wealth and Inequality in the 18th-Century Kastamonu: Estimations for the Muslim Majority,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008), pp.23-46; Boğaç Ergene, “Social Identity and Patterns of Interaction in the Sharia Court of Kastamonu (1740-44),” *Islamic Law and Society* 14 (2007), pp.1-33.

and central administrative government as well as their integration to the centre. However this study will particularly dwell upon mostly neglected issue of title wealth relationship in a comparative manner.

The Sources and Their Limitations

The *tereke defters* or estate inventories comprise one of the crucial sources available to the modern scholarship about everyday life of individuals and social structure of Ottoman society. Estate inventories are records, showing the inheritance of people to their heirs which were kept by the court. Besides being rich source of information about the wealth of the individuals, *tereke defters* provide us with valuable information about the identity, marital-status and family of the decedents as well. At the same time, in *tereke defters* we are able to find detailed information about the property of deceased, such as clothes, kitchen utensils, household furniture and food in the cellar; house, vineyards, orchards, grinders; farms (*çiftlik*) or buildings and means of production like looms in villages and animals; amount of grain and its kinds in stores or in the field, as well as commercial goods and their prices.⁴ In sum estate inventories contain a record of every moveable and unmovable private property of the decedents with prices of each item. There were two main sorts of *tereke* inventories in the Ottoman Empire namely ‘*Askeri Kassam* (Military-administrative) estate inventories and *Beledi* (civic) including peasant estate inventories.’⁵ This study targeted available estate inventories of both peasants and military-administrative group.

Regarding the content of the records, it should be mentioned that all of them start with the name of the decedent’s neighborhood or city and then continue with personal information about the decedents including his/her religious affiliation. The total number

⁴ Barkan, Edirne Askerî Kassamı’na Âit Tereke Defterleri 14545-1659,” *TTK Belgeler* 3 (1966), p.1. Translation belongs to me. “Tereke defterleri; ölenlerin içtimaî menşe’lerine, medeni hallerine ve aile yapılarına ait bilgiler yanında; hayattta buldukları sırada tasaruflarında bulunan her türlü giyim ve ev eşyası ile mobilya ve mutfak takımlarını; kiler mevcudunu; ev, bağ, bahçe ve değirmen ... gibi malları; köylerdeki *çiftlik* bina ve araçları ile hayvan cins ve miktarlarını; anbarlarda mevcut veya tarlalarda ekili tahılın miktar ve çeşitlerini; atölye ve ticarethanelerdeki âletlerle malzemenin ve ticarî malların çeşit ve miktarlarını vermekte ve bütün bu malların tahmînî veya (müzayede ile satışları sonunda) fiilî olarak tahakkuk etmiş olan fiyatlarını ayrı ayrı tespit ve nakletmiş bulunmaktadır.”

⁵Barkan, *idem*. p.4.

of the inventories in Volume 128 is 352, 121 of which belonged to females. However, this study is based on 231 estate inventories that belonged solely to males and the wealth analysis will be carried out with reference to these entries. In general wealth was distributed unequally between the genders in eighteenth-century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb. The women were excluded from the analysis because of two reasons, firstly the amount of the wealth possessed by women were negligible because of the fact that the Islamic law regulating the inheritances systematically exclude women from wealth acquisition. Secondly, the absence of titled women in the probate records. Not only because of the far lower amount of female wealth, but also because of the scope and aim of this study, i.e. examination of the relationship between title and wealth, only male inventories have been taken under consideration in this thesis in order to create a transparent analysis of distribution of wealth among different segments of society.

Despite usefulness of probate records, studies on distribution of wealth using estate inventories indicate some methodological limitations as well. First of all probate records are limited in number and poor in quality.⁶ Secondly, we have almost no information about the characteristics of the people who applied to the court for his/her registration of wealth to be inherited. Hence, the probate records hardly represent the society in which they were kept. Due to this we cannot be sure whether probate records represented all segments of society. Moreover, some scholars pointed out that probate records neither represented indigents nor peasants but they were mostly confined to wealthy people.⁷ The uncertainty that everything owned by deceased was recorded in estate inventory was another problem. Because of these limitations we cannot be certain about the figures in the probate records whether or not they show the actual assets of deceased and also actual distribution of wealth in society. However for obtaining estimation about wealth distribution and living standard of individuals in urban centers, probate records comprise richer source of information compared to most of narratives. In this respect, these records inform us not only about the properties of the inhabitants but they also contain very fruitful information about the consumption habits in ‘Ayntâb. Before

⁶ Hülya Canbakal, “Comparative Reflections on the Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntâb,” *Eurasian Studies*, vol.5 (2008) (forthcoming)

⁷Peter H. Lindert, “Unequal Distribution of Wealth since 1670,” *The Journal of Political Economy*, 94 (1986), pp.1131-1132. For more debates see Canbakal, *Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntâb*.

getting to the thesis outline I shall present an overview of some important studies on different regions of Ottoman Empire which have revealed short term changes in the distribution of wealth among various classes within society.

The question on distribution of wealth has not been a very popular topic in Ottoman studies. Instead of long term changes in the distribution of wealth, Ottoman historians preferred to focus on the short-term economic changes in the various regions of the Ottoman Empire. However, by means of short term comparative studies, we are not able to depict the portrait of socio-economic differences between centre and periphery, besides we are able to obtain very limited information about the dimensions of unequal distribution of wealth in Ottoman society. Despite such deficiencies, some studies on cities and towns in the 'core' and periphery of the Ottoman Empire from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century made use of data regarding the distribution of wealth and wealth components. If the results of these studies are systematically compared with the data of late eighteenth century 'Ayntâb, we can follow differences in the distribution of wealth in these towns. This section of introduction will provide a short description of these results on the basis of data from a few Ottoman towns in the centre and periphery. In the work of Establet and Pascual on Damascus,⁸ Todorov's Balkan Cities,⁹ Gradeva's Rich of Sofia,¹⁰ Canbakal's seventeenth century 'Ayntâb and Ergene's eighteenth century Kastamonu, probate records are major sources to study social and economic history of these urban centers. However, their approach to urban history does not really deal with distribution of wealth and it is that research alone that allows specifically a description of economic and social structures of urban centers. Yet, it is possible to perceive/comprehend the degree of inequality in the distribution of wealth in different towns of Empire. Also the effort of authors to understand the dimension of unequal distribution of wealth in different times and regions of the Ottoman Empire is one of important common points of these historians. A comprehensive distribution of wealth

⁸ Colette Establet and Jean Paul Pascual, *Familles et Fortunes a Damas, 450 Foyers Damascains en 1700*, Damas: L'Institut d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 1994. Cited in Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*.

⁹ Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City: 1400-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Rositsa Gradeva, "Towards a Portrait of 'The Rich' in Ottoman Provincial Society: Sofia in the 1670s," In *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), pp.136-149.

analysis between titled and untitled decedents of late eighteenth century ‘Ayntâb is in the centre of this thesis. As will be seen in the second and third chapter, this study and others show that the inequality of wealth and polarization in wealth were characteristic of these Ottoman towns and cities in seventeenth and in eighteenth century

Outline of the Thesis

The first chapter of this study starts with the urban history of ‘Ayntâb in the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. After a short depiction of the geographical location of this urban center, placed to the near of the border line of Anatolia and Arab peninsula, I focus on the main aspects of urban life, including demographic, topographic and economic characteristics. In the second part of the Chapter 1, I define and examine honorific titles and their historical background in the Ottoman Empire. Then I present a depiction of socio-politic categories of title owners and group divisions that existed among townsmen. This categorization is suitable not only for a systematic wealth analysis of titled and untitled individuals but also reliable for quantitative assessments of the information found in the estate inventories. The third part of Chapter 1 focuses on the means of obtaining honorific titles in eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. Military-administrative, such as *ağa*, *beşe*, *seyyid*, *efendi* or *molla*, and civil, such as *hâcı* & *el-hâc* are the two main categories of titles, to be studied.

Chapter two turns to economic questions and starts with an assessment of the distribution of wealth among titled and untitled individuals in ‘Ayntâb. The composition of wealth is the second point raised in this chapter. The relationship between the title of individuals and their property modes is another point. All moveable assets, such as commercial goods, credits, and means of production, and unmovable property, such as houses, shops, and land are studied. Chapter 2 then focuses on the tradesmen and craftsmen of ‘Ayntâb. As tradesmen and craftsmen of ‘Ayntâb have been categorized according to their professional identities, then the relationship (correlation) between the assets of individuals and their crafts is discussed. This point is also closely associated with social organization and classes. A detailed list of tradesmen and craftsman of ‘Ayntâb constitutes the last part of the Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 examines the quintile distribution of wealth among different classes of ‘Ayntâbi society. Following this discussion, the distribution of wealth in ‘Ayntâb is compared to that of other Ottoman cities, namely Vidin, Ruse, Damascus and Kastamonu in order to observe socio-economic disparities in the periphery and ‘core regions’ of Ottoman Empire in different times. With this comparison, we can follow the parallels and incongruities in the wealth distribution in these towns in the first and second half of seventeenth and eighteenth century. Although periodical and regional differences of ‘Ayntâb, Vidin, Ruse, Damascus and Kastamonu exist, the distribution of wealth these cities are fairly similar or more or less resemble one another: The unequal distribution of wealth between titled and untitled individuals and the existence of highly stratified social and economic environment were the common fate of peoples. At the end of Chapter 3 I attempt to discuss the relationship between political disability and economic polarization in the eighteenth century. This assessment is based mainly on a selection court records from 1729-1820.

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO ‘AYNTÂB

‘Ayntâb, Gaziantep in contemporary Turkey, was one of the significant trade centers near Aleppo in the south eastern part of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century even and more so in the eighteenth century. It was distanced fifty-five kilometers to the Euphrates in the east and one hundred kilometers to Aleppo in the south.¹¹ Because of its geographical place, the town contains the characteristic of many civilizations and cultures, from Ancient Rome, to Byzantium and from Arabs to the Ottomans.

The town of ‘Ayntâb was positioned in the border lines of Anatolia and the Arab peninsula. As with all other frontier zones, the political dependency of ‘Ayntâb changed hands many times among Byzantine, Turcoman states and Mamluks, until its incorporation into Ottoman Empire in the beginning of sixteenth century.¹² Ayntâb was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in August 1516 during the Merçidabık campaign.

Geographically, Ayntâb was located on the very fertile plain of the Aynleben Brook, which was one of the small rivers of the Sacur River.¹³ The town was surrounded by a large number of plains, vineyards, orchards and vegetable gardens. According to Evliya Çelebi the climate of the region was very suitable for agricultural production.¹⁴ Probably, because of these peculiarities Evliya characterizes the town as the “*Arabistan gelinciği*” (the poppy of Arab lands).¹⁵ ‘Ayntâb also had a castle, which is defined by Evliya as Aleppo’s twin, and the city developed around the castle.

¹¹ Hüseyin Özdeğer, *Onaltıncı Asırda Ayıntâb Livası* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi, 1988), p.1.

¹² Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.19.

¹³ Özdeğer, *Onaltıncı Asırda Ayıntâb Livası*, *idem*.

¹⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyâhatnâme*, vol.9 (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1985), pp.48-49.

¹⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyâhatnâme*, *idem*.

An Overview of the History of 'Ayntâb until the Eighteenth Century

The earliest Ottoman sources that can be used to study the social, economic and demographic structure of the town date as far back as 1536. Using these tax records (*tahrir defteri*), Özdeğer argues that there were 9.288 individuals in thirty three neighborhoods of Ayntâb.¹⁶ Each household had five people in this calculation. However this number should not be interpreted as certain. "According to the tax surveys taken in 1536 and 1574, the number of taxable households in urban 'Ayntâb increased from 1.865 to 2.988, which represent about 9.000 taxpayers along with their families in 1536 and 14.400 in 1574."¹⁷ Thus, within thirty one years, the population of 'Ayntâb increased more than 50 %. This picture was not different from the demographic changes in Anatolia in the sixteenth century.¹⁸

When we come to the first half of the seventeenth century a completely different portrait of Ayntâb emerges. The town's socio-economic situation exposed the pressures of the Kara Yazıcı and his military forces in 1599.¹⁹ In 1609, 'Ayntâb this time was hit hard by Canbuladoğlu 'Alî rebellion.²⁰ In the second half of the seventeenth century a large decrease can be observed in the number of tax-house figures, namely from 263 to 228 in 1658-1659.²¹ Hülya Canbakal points out that one of the important reasons behind this decrease might be the negative effects of Abaza Hasan Paşa Rebellion in 1658. Because of this movement, rural life was disrupted and peasants began to abandon their lands.²² During the following period some other revolts and unrest appeared in 'Ayntâb and its vicinity. However, seventeenth century 'Ayntâb should not be seen as remained/stagnant town. From sixteenth to the eighteenth century the town continued its

¹⁶ Özdeğer, *Onaltıncı Asırda Ayıntâb Livası*, p.115.

¹⁷ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁸ For details Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crisis and Change 1590-1699," In *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*, eds. Halil İnalcık & Donald Quatert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 411-623.

¹⁹ "Ve bu esnâda kal'a-i Urfa'da mahsûr olan siyâset olunan Hüseyin Paşa yoldaşı isyan u tuğyân iden seffâk-i bî-pâk Kara Yazıcı la'in yanına cem' olan eşkiyâ ile fırsat düşürüp kal'adan çıkup, dürûzî tâ'ifesine iltica itmege can atup giderken Serdar Sinan Paşa-zâde Mahmet Paşa hazretleri yarar leşker ile ta' kib eyleyü ve önün bağlayup, muhalif yerde Ayntab sancağına yetişup, muhkem ceng-ü aşup olup" Tarih-i Selânikî, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (İstanbul: Edabiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1989), 2:863

²⁰ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.28.

²¹ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.29.

²² Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, *idem*.

economic and industrial growth by means of internal and external economic and social dynamics. This situation was also discussed by Evliya Çelebi, who visited ‘Ayntâb first in the first half of the seventeenth century 1648 and then in the second half of century namely 1671-72. As we learn from his accounts, Ayntâb had grown, with more mosques, and khans built in the city. He states that there were ‘8.067 *toprak örtülü ev*’ (houses) in the thirty two neighborhoods of the town.²³ For understanding social and economic life in the late seventeenth century, the accounts of Evliyâ Çelebi are important references. According to Evliya there were twelve public baths (*hamam*), two Grand Bazaars (*bedestan*), one saddlery (*saraçhane*) and 3.900 shops in the city centre.²⁴ Furthermore, Evliyâ wrote that every house had not only fountains (*şadırvan*) and pools (*havuz*) but also gardens (*bahçe*).²⁵ Probably the houses which Evliya visited was the houses of upper class or (elite) of Ayntab. Indeed, in Canbakal findings “court records indicate that not all but most of houses and certainly the elite dwellings.”²⁶

Eighteenth Century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb

In general, the architectural design of an urban space offers significant clues to the social, economic and religious structure of a place. With this phenomenon in mind, this chapter of the thesis attempts to depict social, economic, and demographic portrait of the eighteenth century ‘Ayntâb through a topographic survey.

From the sixteenth to eighteenth century, the number of neighborhoods increased regularly in the town. In the first half of the eighteenth century, fifty four neighborhoods with different names were located in various regions of ‘Ayntâb.²⁷ An analysis of the names of quarters may help us understand the social and political characteristics of the urban spaces during this time. First of all, most neighborhoods were named according to the major economic or industrial craft activities such as *boyacı*, *kürkcian* or *bostancı*.

²³ “... *Ve ayntab şehri 32 mahalle ve 8067 toprak örtülü evlerdir.*” Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, 9:49

²⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyehatname*, *idem*.

²⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyehatnâme*, *idem*.

²⁶ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.29.

²⁷ Hüseyin Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab Şehri’nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durumu,” Ph.D diss., (Istanbul University, 2000), Chapter 2.

Religious identity was another factor in the topography of ‘Ayntâb, as much as at least one non-Muslim quarter existed in the first half of eighteenth-century.²⁸ Of course, topography or place names are not always indicators of such logic but sometimes do offer important references about cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious portrait of regions. In this respect, a short topographic surveys of the ‘Ayntâb neighborhoods would give us clues about the social and cultural composition of the town. For instance, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries most of the names of neighborhoods derived from personal, family or tribal names, such as *Sefer Paşa*, *Hızır Çavuş*, Molla Ahmet, *Musulluloğlu*, and *Kılıçoğlu*.²⁹ According to Canbakal findings Musulluzades was an Ayan family in seventeenth-century ‘Ayntâb³⁰ and maybe Kurb-ı Musulluzade was developed by the members of a community of tribal origin which may have migrated from Mosul voluntarily or immigrated according to the state ‘settlement policy’³¹ in that period. It can be interpret that, local elements became one of major actors on the shaping of institutional structure of the town. According to Canbakal’s findings, ‘Ayntab’s population was higher than 14,000 at the end of seventeenth century. Nevertheless, Hüseyin Çınar estimates that the town population increased approximately 40 % namely 20,000 in the first half of eighteenth century. However, because of the nature of the sources, all estimates remain speculative about the actual population of the town.

The eighteenth century as a whole should be seen as a building of Ayntâb by the local elite. Most of the khans, small colleges (*medrese*), mosques (*mescit*), and religious foundations (*vakf*) were built by the local elite in the eighteenth century. For instance, Gergerizade Halil Çavuş, Ebubekir Bey, Aparzade Hâcı Mehmed, Hüseyin Paşa Complex, Ayşe Bacı, Seyyid Ahmet ibn Seyyid Ebubekir, and Nuri Mehmet Paşa Mosques.³² “Furthermore, the number of colleges (*medrese*) almost doubled between 1713-1729 along with the building of Ahmet Çelebi (1713), Nakîb (1726), Ayşe Bacı

²⁸ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” p.53.

²⁹ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” *idem*.

³⁰ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.52.

³¹ We know that Ottoman state followed a settlement policy on nomadic or disobedient tribes in order to take them under the state authority. For more information Yusuf Hallaçoğlu, *XVIII. yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun iskân siyaseti ve aşiretlerin yerleştirilmesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

³² Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” pp.56-61.

(1722) and Basmacızâde (1728-1729) colleges....”³³ It can be claimed that, two important points stand out in this picture. On the one hand, in the first half of the century, the economic wealth of ‘Ayntâb’s people increased; on the other hand, probably wealthy persons of the town need to symbolize their economic power by means of religious structures. It seems that the local elites attempted to symbolize their economic power in the public spaces of the town.

Economy

Despite changes in the Ottoman administrative system from seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century,³⁴ the town maintained its status as a sub-province (*sancak*).³⁵ As a sub-province, probably it was influenced by socio-economic and socio-politic dynamics of Empire. Probably, in parallel with economic development in the beginning of the eighteenth century³⁶ in the Ottoman Empire, an economic and physical growth could be observed in the town. Indeed, both the rise of cotton export’ and increase in the number of neighborhoods from forty-five in 1687 to fifty-two in 1735³⁷ evidence this growth.

Not only significant physical growth but also an economic one could be observed during the period. Because of its geographic position as a part of Aleppo’s hinterland,³⁸ and the absence of customs duty,³⁹ merchants and traders began to visit the ‘Ayntâb market in the seventeenth and also in eighteenth centuries for realizing their economic activities instead of paying high customs duties in Aleppo.⁴⁰ Because of this situation, the popularity of ‘Ayntâb among merchants expanded. Another important reason behind the economic growth of ‘Ayntâb was the reorientation of Aleppo in regional transit trade which increased the commercial importance of ‘Ayntâb. Accordingly:

³³ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.32.

³⁴ For more see the evaluation of Çınar about the status of ‘Ayntâb in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the Ottoman Empire.

³⁵ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” p.74.

³⁶ Mehmet Genç, “XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Savaş,” *Yapıt*, 49, (1984), pp.52-61.

³⁷ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, *idem*.

³⁸ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” p.283.

³⁹ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab,” p.365.

⁴⁰ The sending of *Emr-i Şerif* in August 1702, from centre to the governors and judge of Aleppo and to ‘Ayntâb naibi and mütesellim about the prohibition traders because of they went to Ayntâb instead of Aleppo and therefore they did not pay any taxes to state. in Çınar, p.365.

When Aleppan Economy had to reorient itself from transit to regional production and the export of cotton goods in the first decades of eighteenth century ‘Ayntâb became the most prominent beneficiary of this shift.⁴¹

The ‘Ayntâb fabric named *acemî* was exported to Marseilles through Aleppo.⁴² All these were indicators of the growth in Ayntab’s exports.⁴³ Within the eighteenth century, ‘Ayntâb *acemî* dominated all local regions as well as *Maraş*, the administrative center of the province.⁴⁴ Equivalent to these developments, as will be clear below, the Ottoman administration attempted to rejuvenate state authority both in politic and economic side. With the novelty of *Damga-i Kirpas* in 1702⁴⁵ the state aimed to standardize the quality of ‘Ayntâb *acemî* and to collect more taxes. *Damga* as a novelty was abolished three times in 1703, 1729, and 1730 but at the end it was re-established in 1734 and sustained for a long period. Obviously the development in ‘Ayntâb textile industry could be analyzed in connection with the growth in exports. For instance Fukasawa observes that ‘Ayntâb cotton exports to Marseilles increased about 99 % from the 1730s till 1777.⁴⁶ In reality, this situation was the evidence of growth of cotton production in ‘Ayntâb at that time.

Although the international export trade of Aintab had fallen away at the end of the eighteenth century, the city’s textile industry remained prominent, now focused on the Ottoman market. In the later 1850s, a great number of Aintab inhabitants worked in weaving, dyeing as well as leather tanning.⁴⁷

Another important strength of the town was its commercial agriculture, which contributed to ‘Ayntâb’s economy in various ways. As we mentioned earlier, the town was convenient for agricultural production. Perhaps, grapes were one of the important commercial productions in agriculture, as we know that climate condition was favorable for viticulture and also most of townsmen have had vineyards, orchards and vegetable

⁴¹ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.32.

⁴² Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayntab,” p.284.

⁴³ Katsumi Fukasawa, *Toilere Et Commerce Du Levant, D’adep â Marseille*, (Paris, 1987). Cited in Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayntab,” *idem*.

⁴⁴ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, *idem*.

⁴⁵ Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayntab,” pp.287-8.

⁴⁶ Katsumi Fukasawa, *Toilere Et Commerce Du Levant, D’adep â Marseille*,(Paris, 1987). Cited in Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayntab,” p.284.

⁴⁷ Quatert, *Ottoman Manufacturing*, p.102.

gardens in the periphery and in villages of the town in the end of eighteenth century. According to Evliya Çelebi there were 70,000⁴⁸ vineyards in ‘Ayntâb in the late seventeenth century. Despite a large amount of vineyards Evliyâ Çelebi did not discuss wine production in the first and second half of the seventeenth-century. But we know that wine was produced in sixteenth-century ‘Ayntâb.⁴⁹ Also according to Canbakal’s findings, a long lasting variety of grapes was exported to Europe via Aleppo for wine-making.⁵⁰ Perhaps, because of grape exports, wine-production was not widespread among the townsmen of ‘Ayntâb. Nevertheless, this does not indicate the absence of wine production in the region. Indeed, an example from the late eighteenth century court records corroborates the existence of wine-producers in ‘Ayntâb: “Beforehand Christians and Jews produced wine and drank it in public space, but nowadays Janissaries have also begun to produce wine and consume it ...”⁵¹ In this respect, it can be surmised that wine was produced in ‘Ayntâb; however we cannot be sure if wine was produced just for local or for export.

Honorific Titles in Ottoman Usage

As a symbol of social identity, honorific titles such as *master*, *sir*, *bey*, *efendi* etc. were important in all pre-modern societies, from Europe to the Ottoman Empire. Because of the absence of surnames, titular honors were important ‘social markers’⁵² for shaping

⁴⁸ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyehatnâme*, p.49.

⁴⁹ Özdeğer, *Onaltıncı Asırda Ayıntâb Livası*, p.131.

⁵⁰ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.38.

⁵¹ “Şehrimizde oturur Yahudi ve Hristiyanlar eskidenberi şarap basıp açkça içmektedirler. Ehli İslamdan Yeniçerler ve başkalarında buna alıştıklarından, Şarabı önce Yahudi ve Hristiyanlardan tedarik ederlerken şimdi kendileride basmağa başlamışlardır...” cited in Cemil Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Şer’i Mahkeme Sicillerinden Örnekler*, vol.4, (Gaziantep: Gaziantep Kültür Derneği, 1966-1970), p.86. Translation belongs to me.

⁵² Norman H. Daves, “Titles as Symbols of Prestige in Seventeenth-Century New England,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol.6, no.1 (Jan., 1949), pp.63-89.

individual status within society.⁵³ Thus honorific titles are important instruments that shape the social and political status of individuals.

The present section will discuss the meaning and significance of various official, civil, and religious honorific titles in the late eighteenth century. After a short introductory section on the historical usage and application of certain honorific titles in the Ottoman Empire, such as *ağa*, *beşe*, *molla*, *efendi*, *seyyid* and *el-hâc*, the rest of the chapter evaluates the honorific titles in eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb.

Before discussing the existence of various titles in Ottoman society, I should mention briefly the two social and political groups, ‘*askerî* and *re’aya*. The tax free, military-administrative ‘*askerî*⁵⁴ included bureaucrats, army, officers of the court, and ‘*ulemâ*; the second, tax-paying *re’aya*,⁵⁵ included merchants, artisans and peasants. These two major groups differed in political and economic terms.⁵⁶ Over time ‘*askerî* ‘estate’⁵⁷ enlarged; moreover in the eighteenth century social and economic differences between ‘*askerî* and *re’aya* estates became blurred. In this study, I adhere to İnalçık’s basic definition and not go into the debates on the identity of eighteenth-century ‘*askerî* estate in the Ottoman historiography.

⁵³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, (eds) John B. Thomson, (translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), p.70.

⁵⁴ Halil İnalçık, “The Nature of Traditional Society: Turkey” In *Political Modernization in Turkey and Japan*, eds. Robert Ward and Dankward Rostow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p.44.

⁵⁵ Halil İnalçık, “The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600.” in Halil İnalçık and Donald Quatert. Eds. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914* (Cambridge.1994), p.16.

⁵⁶ Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the eve of modernity : Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York : Columbia University Press, c1989.), p.64-65; Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1650-1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p.24 ; Suraiya Faroqhi, “Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation 1570-1650,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol.34 (1992), pp.1-39.

⁵⁷ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman town*, Chapter 2.

Historical Background and the Usage of Honorific Titles

Etymologically *ağa* means ‘elder brother’, and ‘chief’ or ‘master’.⁵⁸ As we discussed above, in the Ottoman context, the title *beşe* and *ağa* referred to the members of the military-administrative class. According to Harold Bowen the title *ağa* “... was given to many persons of varying importance employed in the government service, for the most part posts of a military, or at least a non-secretarial, character, being contrasted particularly with *efendi*.”⁵⁹ Also Gustave Bayerle argues that it “... was given to senior officers or officials in the military and in the Topkapı palace, especially; the commanders of the janissary corps and the Cavalry Troops of the Porte.”⁶⁰ The meaning of title *ağa* changed over time. For instance, in the nineteenth century the term had quite a different meaning: it was “used for illiterate officers.”⁶¹ However, Abraham Marcus observes that, in eighteenth-century Aleppo the title was also given “to government officials, tax farmers and merchants.”⁶² Thus it seems that the meaning of the title *ağa* changed over time as the military changed socially and institutionally.

In the same way, Bowen emphasizes that after the abolition of the janissary corps, the title was given to the illiterate officers while the literate officers were defined as *efendi*.⁶³ Apart from *ağa*, *beşe* is another common military title in the probate records. According to some historians, *beşe* was used in order to define low level members of the corps in the middle of the seventeenth century.⁶⁴ Boğaç Ergene, who has examined the use of titles extensively, also considers *beşes* and *ağas* as part of the military-administrative class.⁶⁵

⁵⁸“Agha,” EI, vol.1, (Leiden:Bril, 1991), p. 245.

⁵⁹ “Agha,” *idem*.

⁶⁰ Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Beks and Efendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 1997), p. 2.

⁶¹“Agha,” EI, vol.1, (Leiden:Bril, 1991), p. 246.

⁶² Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity*, p.71.

⁶³ “Agha,” EI, *idem*.

⁶⁴ Cited in Tülüveli, “Honorific Titles in Ottoman Parlance: A Reevaluation,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 11 (2005), pp. 17-28.

⁶⁵ Boğaç A. Ergene, “Social Identity and Patterns of Interaction in the Sharia Court of Kastamonu 1740-44,” *Islamic Law and Society* 14 (2007) p.13.

The second group titles, which had a religious character, used in the Ottoman Empire, *Molla* and *efendi* meant “master.” They were equivalent of the Arabic “*mevla*”⁶⁶ or “*seyyid*”⁶⁷ in the pre-Islamic sense. *Molla* meant Muslim scholar and member of the ulemâ; it also was used as an alternative term for teachers.⁶⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi has shown that teachers in colleges (*mollas*), whether in office or retired, were members of the ‘*askerî*.’⁶⁹ A second religious title was *efendi*, which was “a title for educated people, especially for scribes.”⁷⁰ In the fifteenth century Aşıkpaşazede used *efendi* as a title of Kadıasker Çandarlı Halil; in this case *efendi* was the title of a very high officer.⁷¹ Bernard Lewis also explains that the title “became increasingly common in Ottoman usage, as a designation of members of the scribal and religious, as opposed to the military classes.”⁷² Fuat Köprülü too argues that in the second part of fifteenth century *efendi* was used for educated men of the *ilmiye*.⁷³ From fifteenth century onwards *çelebi* took the place of *efendi*.⁷⁴ However, as far as I observed in the eighteenth century estate records of ‘Ayntâb, the title *efendi* was also used by ‘Ayntâbis at that time, therefore we cannot claim that *efendi* disappeared entirely in the Ottoman Empire after the fifteenth-century.

On the other hand, Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj indicates that in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the title *efendi* was also given to the sons of pashas.⁷⁵ Furthermore, “in the nineteenth century it was utilized to indicate the princes of the Ottoman dynasty.”⁷⁶ Thus the meanings and importance of titles were not historically fixed. As “a preacher of religious morals”⁷⁷ at the same time, *şeyh* referred to the “head of a

⁶⁶ “Mevla”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8, pp.163-164.

⁶⁷ “Efendi,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10, pp. 455-456.

⁶⁸ Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs and Efendis*, p.111.

⁶⁹ Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance*, p.151.

⁷⁰ Bayerle, *idem*.

⁷¹ Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*,

⁷² “Efendi,” *EI*, vol.2, p.687.

⁷³ Fuat Köprülü, *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri* (İstanbul, 1986), p. 192.

⁷⁴ “Efendi,” *Diyanet İşleri İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.4, pp.132-133.

⁷⁵ Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Ottoman Vezir and Pasha Households 1683-1703:A preliminary Report,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, (1974), p.441

⁷⁶ Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs and Efendis*, p.44.

⁷⁷ Bayerle, p.141. *idem*.

religious order or a guild in general”.⁷⁸ As a signs of personal status and identification, *molla* and *efendi* were major titles used by the ulemâ or religious intellectual class in the social order of Ottoman Empire.

In the Islamic era *seyyid* meant “the descendants of the prophet.”⁷⁹ Because of their religious identity both in Ottoman and pre-Ottoman era, *sadat* (plural of *seyyid*) were given important social, political, and economic privileges.⁸⁰ By reason of these socio-economic advantages, claims of descent from the prophet Muhammad increased in some periods in history. For instance in the last fifty years of the seventeenth century the number of *sadat* increased more than one half in ‘Ayntâb.⁸¹ The reasons behind this demographic enlargement of descendants of the Prophet are debated. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, for instance, comments that “with the claim of religious nobility, as a social and political power, *sadat* took over a significant position within Ottoman Empire. Also they used their social and religious prestige vis-a-vis ordinary people.”⁸² The title *seyyid* was the most difficult one to define their status in the Ottoman society. There’s no agreement among historians on the legal status of *sadat* in the social structure of the Ottoman Empire. For instance Boğaç Ergene⁸³ defines the title *seyyid* not in the ‘*askerî*’ group but in a category of civil (religious) titles. On the other hand Ömer Lütfi Barkan⁸⁴ and Hülya Canbakal⁸⁵ maintain another possibility. According to their findings *sadat* were members of the ‘*askerî*’. They based this claim tentatively on seventeenth century *fermans*. In this respect, I, even though I don’t have an eighteenth- century definition of ‘*askerî*’, consider *sadat* within the military-administrative group.

The title *hâcı* was given to those who performed the *hâc*, *i.e.* had been to Mecca for pilgrimage.⁸⁶ There were two versions of this title in the Ottoman Empire, while in the

⁷⁸ Bayerle, *Pashas, Beks and Efendis*, p.141.

⁷⁹ Bayerle, *Pashas, Beks and Efendis*, p.136.

⁸⁰ Rüya Kılıç, *Osmanlıda Seyyidler ve Şerifler* (İstanbul:Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), pp.79-110.

⁸¹ Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman Town*, p. 138; Hülya Canbakal, “*Status Usurpation and the Ottoman State 1500-1700*,” Unpublished article.

⁸² Barkan, “Edirne Askeri Kassamına ait Tereke Defterleri,” p.8. (Translation belongs to me)

⁸³ A. Boğaç Ergene & Ali Berker. “Wealth and Inequality.”

⁸⁴ Barkan, “Edirne Askeri Kassamı,” *idem*, p.12-14.

⁸⁵ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.65.

⁸⁶ “Hâcı,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5/1 (MEB, 1997), p.25.

early sixteenth century *hâcı* was more popular, in the seventeenth century it was replaced with *el-hâc*, however, *hâcı* did not disappear completely.⁸⁷ Indeed, estate inventories of this study provide evidence that *hâcı* & *el-hâc* were both used by ‘Ayntâbis in the late eighteenth century. *Hâcı* title was neither a military-administrative nor a religious intellectual title; only it was a civil title. According to Suraiya Faroqhi pilgrimage to Mecca was very costly, therefore, probably, “the *hacıs* by and large constituted a particularly wealthy section of urban population ...”⁸⁸ However, we cannot assume that all decedents who have the title *el-hâc* & *hâcı* have actually performed the pilgrimage. This estimation seems very high; for this reason, some historians argue that these titles were not always representing true pilgrimage.⁸⁹ Indeed the wealth of all *el-hâcs* was not high; moreover the asset of some *el-hâcs* was less 100 *gurûş*, this proportion was under the wealth amount, which suggested by Establet and Pascual to mark people with modest means as you will see in detailed in the next chapter.

“Honorable” Men of ‘Ayntâb in the Late Eighteenth Century

The title *seyyid* was one of the most popular titles and held by nearly 20 % of the decedents in late eighteenth century ‘Ayntâb. Hülya Canbakal relates the increase of *seyyid* with the decreasing of *çelebi* title in the late seventeenth century Ayntâb and determinates that

... The titles *çelebi*, denoting high morality, erudition, noble descent and wealth, and *efendi* referring to religious scholars and functionaries, declined in popularity while the title *seyyid*, referring to religious and highest aristocracy, rose in a way that more or less matched the decline in *çelebi* and *efendi*.⁹⁰

Thus secular *çelebi* title, it would seem, began to be transformed into the religious and aristocratic *seyyid* title in the late seventeenth century ‘Ayntâb. Perhaps complete

⁸⁷ “Hâcı/el-Hâc,” IE, vol.3.

⁸⁸ Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance*, p.18.

⁸⁹ Faroqhi, *Men of Modest Substance*, *idem*.

⁹⁰ Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman Town*, p. 138.

absence of the *çelebi* title in the estate inventories of this study was a result of this transformation.

Table 1.1. Occurrence of Honorific Titles in Estate Inventories *

TITLES	NUMBERS
<i>Seyyid</i> ⁹¹	39
<i>Molla</i> ⁹²	12
<i>el-hâc</i> ⁹³	51
<i>Şeyh</i>	1
<i>Efendi</i> ⁹⁴	2
<i>Ağa</i> ⁹⁵	5
<i>Beşe</i> ⁹⁶	13
TOTAL	123

* First and second titles included

The most common title in ‘Ayntâb registers was *el-hâc/hâcî*. According to Canbakal finding’s about 35 % of decedents with title in ‘Ayntâb had the titles *el-hâc & hâcî*⁹⁷ in the late seventeenth century. However in the last quarter of eighteenth century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb, this rate was about 22 %.⁹⁸ In fact about 27 % of *hâcis* had already more than one ‘*askerî*’ title. Although, “*el-hâcs* normally entailed no specific attribute, lineage or

⁹¹ Includes *seyyid el-hâc*, *seyyid ağa*, *seyyid el- hâc efendi* and *seyyid molla*

⁹² Includes *molla beşe*

⁹³ Includes *hâcî* and *el-hâc*.

⁹⁴ Includes *seyyid efendi*.

⁹⁵ Includes *el-hâc ağa*, and *seyyid ağa*.

⁹⁶ Includes *molla beşe*.

⁹⁷ Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.138

⁹⁸ According to Suraiya Faroqhi about 10 % of Ottoman population made pilgrimage in sixteenth century in various regions. Suraiya Faroqhi, “Anatolian Townsmen as Pilgrims to Mecca: Some evidence from XVIth –XVIIth Centuries,” in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps, Reconstre de l’école du Louvre*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: 1992), pp. 309-325.

service associated with ‘*askerî*’ status ... they were used by ‘*askerîs*’ too, and sometimes without the accompaniment of any ‘*askerî*’-specific title.”⁹⁹

‘*Askerî*’ Titles

- Military Titles: *Beşe* and *Ağa*
- Religious (intellectual) titles: *Molla*, *Efendi*, *Şeyh*
- Descendants of the Prophet: *Seyyid*

Table 1.2 Major ‘*Askerî*’ Groups

Religious Officials and Scholars	Descendants of the Prophet <i>Sadat</i>	Military Janissaries	TOTAL
15	39	18	72

According to Table 1.2, more than thirty percent of the decedents were a member of the ‘*askerî*’ estate in the late eighteenth century. This is close Canbakal’s findings concerning to late seventeenth-century ‘Ayntâb, namely that 35.80 %, of court users. It can be interpreted that the number of ‘*askerî*’ decreased in late eighteenth century if we consider comparing with seventeenth century ‘Ayntâb.’¹⁰⁰ However, be that as it may resulted from the particularity of estate inventories of this study.

⁹⁹ Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.138.

¹⁰⁰ For more discussion see Halil İnalcık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire 1600-1770,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, VI, (1980).

Table 1.3 Distribution of the title *el-Hâc* among decedents

<i>el-Hâcs</i> Scholar Origin	<i>el-Hâcs</i> Janissary Origin	<i>el-Hâcs-Sadat</i> Origin	<i>Hâcis/el-Hâcs</i>	TOTAL
2	4	8	37	51

Table 1.3 indicates that the social, economic and demographic structure of the urban center was more complicated than the basic categorization of titled and untitled decedents. In reality ‘Ayntâb society was constituted by various socially differentiated groups which becomes apparent when we consider the portraits of all *el-hâcs* that.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

In general, the property amount is one of the important indications to classify social and economic status of individuals within a society. However, it is not the only descriptive fact: symbolic assets such as political and religious titles and honorifics, too, are important factors which influence class structure. Thus in this chapter, I firstly attempt to examine wealth levels and inequalities between decedents with and without titles, then identify their real estate & personal belongings, and finally, present an overview of the economic disparities among the inhabitants of late eighteenth-century Ottoman 'Ayntâb. Secondly I discuss craftsmen and tradesmen of Ayntâb and their wealth assets in the eighteenth century. Professions and crafts are particularly revealing in what they can tell us about the social and economic characteristics of the decedents.

Figure 2.1 indicates the large disparity of wealth among the inventories studied. I have first categorized the probate inventories according to religion, presence or absence of an honorific title, and rural-urban residence. Muslims number 210 out of 231 probates and 108 belong to men with an honorific title. Urban-rural difference is much sharper: 94 % of the probate records belong to decedents urban residence and only 6 % have rural residence. Also, the number of decedents without honorifics in rural areas, 9 in 14, is higher than decedents with honorifics, 5 in 14. (Fig.2.1). Clearly, the percentages of non-Muslim and rural *tereke*s (estate inventories) were low, but we should remember that these numbers did not necessarily represent demographic reality of the town. As with non-Muslim figures, rural inventories were also few in eighteenth-centuries 'Ayntâb. Of course, one has to be mindful that the probate records do not contain information on all those who died in 'Ayntâb in this period; the *kadı* (judge) recorded only those cases in which the heirs of decedents applied to the court.¹⁰¹ In fact, Peter Lindert emphasizes that from the early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth

¹⁰¹ Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City 1400-1900* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 1983), p.128.

century England probate inventories represented nearly one fifth of the decedents.¹⁰² This observation of Lindert is important to put forward an idea about general trends in different societies.

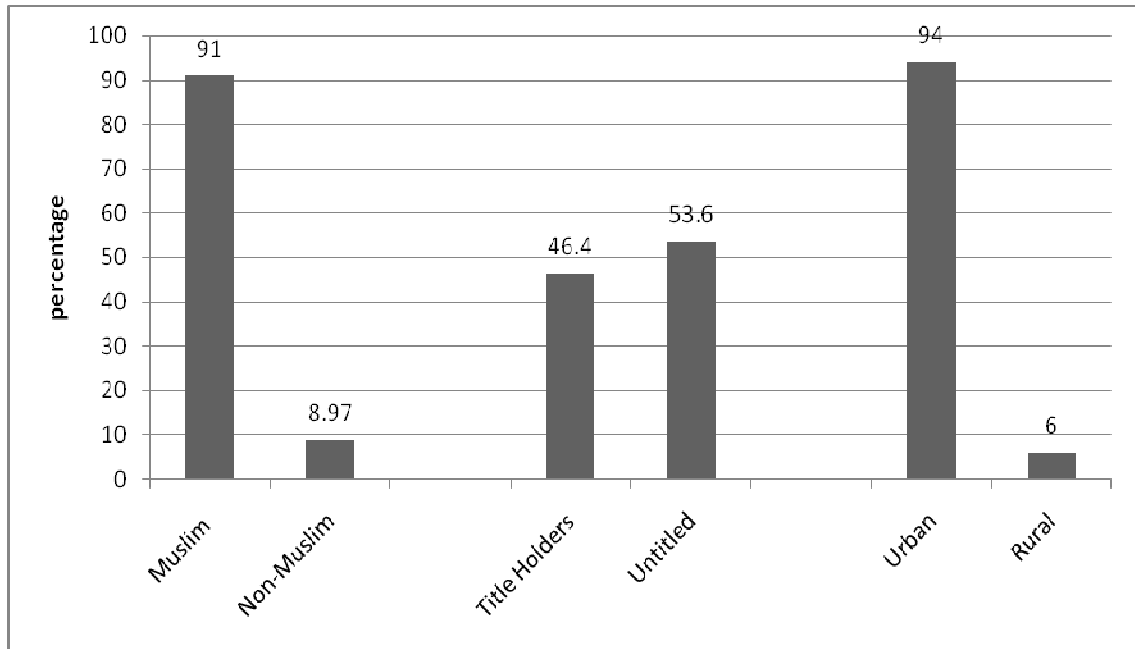


Figure 2.1. Distribution of *Terekes* according to Religion, Title-holding, and Place of Residence

Another phenomenon in Figure 2.1 is the fairly equal distribution of the inventories between decedents with title (46.40 %) and those without title (53.60 %). A few points can be made about this situation. As a symbol of social prestige and status, title was an interwoven part of personal identity. Throughout the entire register, whatever honorifics the decedents possessed were noted in the probate records. Officially¹⁰³, individuals could not choose their own title or determine the way people call them, for example, as *beşe*, *ağa*, *molla* or *efendi*. However, Barkan also points out that, although honorifics were given according to official or social status; many non-elite people fabricated ‘*askerî*’ titles, such as *beşe*, in order to benefit from the advantages.¹⁰⁴ Because of this,

¹⁰² Peter H. Lindert, “Unequal English Wealth since 1670,” *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 94, No. 6, (Dec., 1986), pp. 1127-1162.

¹⁰³ Because we know that some people chose their own titles and used them unofficially. Ömer Lütü Barkan, “Edirne Askeri Kassamına ait Tereke Defterleri 1545-1659,” *TTK Belgeler III, Ankara*, 1966, pp-4-6.

¹⁰⁴ Barkan, “Edirne Askeri Kassamına ait Tereke Defterleri,” p.5.

sadat were required to certify their elite status by presenting legitimate witness in the *imperial nakib-ül-eşraf*. For instance, a great deal of the *seyyids* (plural *sadat*) appealed to the imperial *nakib-ül-eşraf* in Istanbul in order to indicate that they belonged to the local elite of ‘Ayntâb in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ The names of the deceased were written as a rule after their honorific titles. Even when the deceased themselves had no titles, if the parents had one that would be indicated. For example, Mehmed ibn Mehmed Beşe.¹⁰⁶ It seems that in the assignment of honorifics, the familial background of decedents had a significant role to play. The deceased, who lacked a title but was the child of an elite family, was recorded with his/hers parent’s titles in the probate registers, such as Emin ibn Ahmet Ağa.¹⁰⁷ While the title *seyyid* was automatically transferred from parents to children, such as Seyyid Hüseyin ibn Esseyid Mehmed such transference was not automatic in all cases; for example the title of *Hâcı* or *El-hâc* did not pass from father to son, as in the case of Arap Ahmed ibn El-hâc Ali.¹⁰⁸ By reason of those I need to divide untitled people in two sub-categories, namely decedents with father honorifics (FH) and totally untitled decedents or commoners (F). Thus it can be easy to interpret the relationship between family background of decedents and their asset.

The measurement of wealth on the basis of estate inventories is quite complicated task. Throughout in this study, I present three different calculations of total wealth for each inventory. The first comprises all assets in the inventory without any subtraction from the total, such as the court fees or debts of the decedents. The second calculation reflects wealth after personal debts (*deyn*). The third figure reflects wealth after all personal debts, including *mehr*, are deducted. These different calculations seek to provide a fuller picture of the monetary relations of decedents and their economic activities in the market.

¹⁰⁵ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, pp.126-7.

¹⁰⁶ Son of Mehmed Beşe (*Beşe*, as military title)

¹⁰⁷ Reg# 128/110c, *şevval* 1190/1776.

¹⁰⁸ Reg# 128/, *zilhicce* 1189/1776.

Wealth

According to my data set, between 1775 and 1777 the average value of the recorded probates was 694 *gurûş*. The range of estate values was between 26 *gurûş* and 13,020 *gurûş*, and the standard deviation of my sample was 1,363 *gurûş*, that is five times the size of median estate value, namely 261 *gurûş*.

What do these values (numbers) indicate about economic life of late eighteenth century Ayntâb? Before getting to infer the economic meaning of this value, I want to mention the nonstandard formation of the Ottoman measurement system. Of course the differences between the formation of central and local measuring practices caused the emergence of some complexities. In the last quarter of eighteenth century, for instance 1 *kile* was equal to 80 *okka*¹⁰⁹ in the province of ‘Ayntâb and Urfa or equal to 4 *kile* of İstanbul, in other words 1 *kile* was equal to 102.50 kilos in 1770s.¹¹⁰ Based on Zeynel Özlü’s findings about the second half of the eighteenth-century,¹¹¹ the price of 1 *kile* of wheat in 1775-1776 was 6-6.50 *gurûş*, thus the average estate was appeal (worth) about 10,944 kilos of wheat (106 *kile*), 27,360 kilos of corn, 15,135 kilos of bulgur, 14,227 kilos flour. Also the same sum of money could have bought 12 mules, 29 *bargirs*, 14 horses, 20 mares, 8 camels or 210 sheep.

Wealth in late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb was unequally distributed. While the average wealth per estate was 694 *gurûş* all estates considered, there was a large discrepancy between estates of decedents with titles and those without titles. The average wealth of decedents with titles was 1,069 *gurûş*, and those without a title owned 364.87 *gurûş*. Thus, the value of average wealth held by a decedent with honorifics was more than three times as great as that held by a decedent without honorifics. At the same time, there was an enormous difference between the largest and smallest estates. The largest estate amounted to 13,020 *gurûş*, the smallest, 26 *gurûş*. Incidentally, the poorest of all decedents, Mustafa Beşe ibn Mustafa, who had an estate of 26 *gurûş*, also possessed an

¹⁰⁹ One *okka* was 1.282 kilograms or 400 *dirhem* cited in Encyclopedia of Britannica Eleventh Edition, 1911.

¹¹⁰ MAD 19549/S.3 I indebted to Mehmet Genç give me this reference/data. For more discussions about Ottoman Metrology see Halil İnalçık, “Introduction to Ottoman Metrology,” *Turcica XV*. (1983), pp.311-342.

¹¹¹ Zeynel Özlü, *XVIII Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Gaziantep* (Gaziantep: Uğur Matbaası, 2004), pp.223-233.

honorific title, which indicates that the possession of a title did not automatically indicate wealth status. The second poorest man, however, had no titles and was only marginally better off, and left behind an estate of 27 *gurûş*. Among title holders, the wealthiest man, Seyyid el-Hâc Mustafa Efendi ibn el-Hâc Ebubekir Efendi, had three important honorifics and owned 13,020 *gurûş*. He held three civilian titles as did his father, but Seyyid el-Hâc Mustafa Efendi ibn el-Hâc Ebubekir Efendi was, additionally, a *seyyid*, probably on his mother's side. Despite his large wealth, no reference exists to his professional pursuits, thus his economic status in society remains unclear. Among untitled decedents, the wealthiest estate belonged to a non-Muslim coppersmith. Decedents without honorifics constituted, on the whole, more than 53 % of the *tereke* population but they held no more than 28 % of the total wealth. (Table 2.1) it should be borne in mind that high assets of extreme cases elevated the wealth average of probate records. Although this situation cause some methodological problems, however for developing a distribution of wealth analysis, average values of estate inventories is very important.

When we look at the median of probate records a slightly different picture appears. While the median of all probate records and median estate of decedents with title was 261 *gurûş* which is higher than the wealth bracket of 250 *gurûş*, suggested by Establet and Pascual to mark people with modest means,¹¹² the median estate of the untitled was 191 *gurûş*. This situation can be interpreted that half of commoners or untitled decedents in 'Ayntâb lived in poverty. (Table 2.1) The polarization of wealth becomes more evident when quintile or percentile groups of estates are considered.(Table 2.1) First of all the wealth average of wealthiest 25 % of the estates was five times higher than the 25 % poorest. Secondly within same title group wealth polarization could be enormous. For example the wealthiest 25 % of the *seyyids* estates was seven times larger than the poorest 25 % of the estates. The polarity within the wealthiest and the poorest estates of *el-hâcs* was lower than *seyyids* namely five times. (Table 2.1)

¹¹² Colette Establet and Jean Paul Pascual, *Familles et Fortunes a Damas, 450 Foyers Damacains en 1700*, Damas: L'Institut d'Etudes Arabes de Damas, 1994. Cited in Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*.

	Mean Estate Value (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Estate Range (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median Wealth (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Number of Decedents	Share in Total Assets	Share in total Probate Records
<i>Ağa</i>	2,682	532-6613	532	892	5,040	5	6 %	2%
<i>Beşe</i>	726	26-3,803	160	180	620	13	5 %	5%
<i>Molla</i>	665	140-3,500	194	313	544	12	4 %	5%
<i>Efendi</i>	6,660	300-13,020	300	6,660	13,020	2	6 %	1%
<i>Şeyh</i>	219	219	219	219	219	1	0	0%
<i>Seyyid</i>	1,311	65-13,020	169	371	1,225	39	24 %	16%
<i>El-hâc</i>	1,376	32-13,020	251	510	1,295	51	33 %	21%
Total Decedents with Title¹¹³	1,069	26-13,020	190	261	973	108	72 %	47%
Father with Honorifics (FH)	582	71-2,443	200	360	701	18	7 %	8%
Father without Honorifics (F)	328	27-3,507	97	173	334	105	21 %	45%
Total Decedent without Title	365	27-3,507	105	191	359	123	28 %	53%
TOTAL	694	26-13,020	135	261	610	231	100 %	100

Table 2.1 Distribution of Total Asset

¹¹³ Some titles are counted twice for some decedents had multiple titles.

Table 2.1 indicates the correlation between titles and wealth. Decedents without honorifics whose fathers did have honorifics constitute an interesting category. These individuals were nearly twice as rich as decedents whose fathers did not have honorifics: 582 *gurûş* and 328 *gurûş* respectively. It is noteworthy that wealth was transferred from parents to children while most titles did not. In this respect we can argue that, family background was very important for the economic power of individuals. (Table. 2.1) The minimum wealth among decedents with honorifics and those without honorifics was 26 & 27 *gurûş* respectively. However, among the untitled whose fathers possessed a title, the smallest estate was 71 *gurûş*. Also, the maximum wealth of the completely untitled (commoners) and semi-titled (father with honorifics) decedents was not commensurate. While the maximum wealth of purely untitled decedents was 3,507 *gurûş*, the semi-titled decedent, Kılıç Ahmet ibn El Hac Ali who was the biggest creditor, among all decedents, had exactly 2,442 *gurûş*.¹¹⁴ The polarity of wealth among untitled decedents becomes more evident in the percentile groups of estate. The wealthiest 25 % of the estates of untitled decedents was more than three times larger than the poorest 25 %. (Table 2.1) It can be interpreted that polarization in wealth did not consider title status; somehow rather it existed among all segments of ‘Ayntâb society. Consequently, the correlation between wealth and title also becomes apparent in the wealth of untitled decedents, but it was not an absolute correlation as we see in the above examples. (Table 2.1)

As demonstrated in the probate records unequal distribution of wealth and economic polarization was characteristic of the late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. Furthermore, polarity and inequality in wealth distribution were not limited to the titled-untitled differentiation but existed also within each specific group of decedents. For example while the median of *seyyid* estates was 371 *gurûş*, the average asset of the wealthiest 25 % of the *seyyid* estates was 1,225 *gurûş*. It would seem that the wealth gap among *seyyids* was very large. It is possible that the high wealth average of the *seyyids* was due to the high assets of the wealthiest. (Table 2.1)

¹¹⁴ Many textile goods, such as fabrics and cloths, constituted the greater part of his inventory. Perhaps he was a merchant, and most credits would be the payment for those textile goods.

The figures above reflect the total value of the assets of the inventories. Net wealth that was eventually distributed among heirs was less than the total wealth. In addition to the registration fees, debts owed by the decedents was also deducted from the gross total. If we consider all debts together, ‘personal debts’ [*deyn*] and ‘postponed bride money’ [*mehr-i müeccel*],¹¹⁵ entries which we encounter in most inventories, the wealth average of the decedents slightly decrease. For instance, the average wealth of decedents with honorifics fall from 1,068 *gurûş* to 1,041 *gurûş*, and the average wealth of the untitled decedents fall from 365 *gurûş* to about 346 *gurûş*. (Table 2.2) the biggest decrease is observed in the poorest 25 % of the *el-hâcs* estates: when *deyn* and *mehr* deducted from their total assets their wealth decrease from 251 *gurûş* to 201 *gurûş*. (Table 2.2) by that way we can claim that the *mehr-i müeccel* amount of *el-hâcs* was higher than both other title holders and commoners. Probably the high economic status of *el-hâcs* account for this situation. Because we know that in Islamic Shari Law high status males should marry females from upper part of society. Consequently the *mehr* of women from high society was higher than *mehr* of common women. (Table 2.2)

¹¹⁵ “*Mahr*” IE, New Edition, vol.6, (Leiden: Brill, 1991). “According to Muslim *fikh* books, marriage is a contract (‘*akd*’) made between the bridegroom and the *wali* of the bride. An essential element in it is the *mahr* or *sadak*, which the bridegroom binds himself to give the bride. The marriage is null without a *mahr*. The jurists themselves are not quite agreed as to the nature of the *mahr* some regard it practically as purchase-money ... or equivalent for the possession of the woman and the right over her, so that it is like the price paid in a contract of sale; while other jurists see in the *mahr* a symbol, a mark of honour or a proper legal security of property for the woman.”

	Mean Value of Net Asset (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Range (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Number of Debtors	Number of decedents
<i>Ağa</i>	2,621	333-6,310	532	892	5,040	1	5
<i>Beşe</i>	703	9-3,803	62	170	620	3	13
<i>Molla</i>	657	141-3,500	194	288	537	2	12
<i>Efendi</i>	6,654	287-13,020	287	6,654	13,020	1	2
<i>Şeyh</i>	219	219	219	219	219	1	1
<i>Seyyid</i>	1,286	13-13,020	148	371	1,038	9	39
<i>El-hâc</i>	1,340	2.50-13,020	202	458	1,278	12	51
Net Asset of Decedents with Title*	1,041	2.50-13,020	170	340	973	25	108
FH	566	71-2,201	40	360	241	2	18
F	308	8-3,507	83	166	319	21	105
Net Asset of Untitled Decedents	346	8-3,507	94	190	337	23	123
Total	671	2.50-13,020	129	251	563	48	231

Table 2.2 Distribution of Net Assets (*Mehr-i müeccel* and Personal Debts deducted)

*Some titles counted in double.

Its noteworthy that ‘postponed bride money’ constituted a considerable amount in the fortunes of decedents. The high *mehr* in the inventories of title holders is particularly notable. In that point, some significant questions come to mind.

Was there a relationship between the quantity of *mehr* and titles? Why, furthermore, was the amount of the *mehr* of a title holder much more than that of the *mehr* of a decedent without title? The answers to these questions should be sought in traditional Islamic law. According to Islamic tradition, an honorable man should marry an honorable woman; the *mehr* amount is shaped by the woman’s status. So, honorable men who often married daughters of title holders were required to pay higher amounts of *mehr*. The minimum amount of *mehr* among title holders for example was 50 *gurûş* as opposed to 10 *gurûş* among untitled decedents. The effect of *mehr* should not be underestimated: because of the high rate of *mehr*, Şerbetçi Hâcî Hüseyin became the poorest among all decedents. Despite his assets, a house and a textile shop, he left only 2.5 *gurûş*; 65 *gurûş* *mehr* constituted a large part of his 80 *gurûş* debt. The minimum wealth of a decedent without honorifics, Hüseyin ibn Mustafa, was 8 *gurûş*; his *mehr* also constituted his entire debt. The largest *mehr* that of *El-hâc* Mehmed ibn *El-hâc* Hüseyin, was thirteen times as large as the smallest *mehr* of Mehmed ibn Cullahcı Yusuf Oğlu: 130 *gurûş* & 10 *gurûş* respectively. To sum up, *mehr* played an important role in the wealth of all male decedents, irrespective of their social or political distinctions. (Table 2.2)

If we exclude bride money and focus on personal debts alone, this complex picture changes greatly. First of all, the poorest, Hüseyin ibn Mustafa, left only 8 *gurûş* and had no title. Therefore, the status of the poorest shifted from title holders to untitled decedents. Furthermore, the average wealth of title holders decreased from 1,068 *gurûş* to 1,049 *gurûş*, while the average wealth of the untitled decedents, including those whose father had titles decreased less, never more than 13 *gurûş* in a single case. To examine personal debts separately is important because the former often allow us to trace the economic activities of the decedents with honorifics. In other words, title holders had a much larger amount of debt than did untitled decedents. This may be due to the fact that the former were commercially more active. (Table 2.3)

	Mean Value (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Range (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Share of ¹¹⁶ Total wealth
<i>Ağa</i>	2,621	333-6,310	532	892	5,040	6,70 %
<i>Beşe</i>	707	26-3,803	77	170	620	4,70 %
<i>Molla</i>	664	141-3,500	194	308	544	4
<i>Efendi</i>	6,654	287-13,020	287	6,654	13,020	6,80 %
<i>Şeyh</i>	219	219	219	219	219	
<i>Seyyid</i>	1,293	13-13,020	148	371	1,076	26 %
<i>El-hâc</i>	1,349	32-13,020	211	458	1,278	35.60 %
Total Decedents with Title*	1,049	13-13,020	170	360	973	72 %
FH	568	71-2,201	200	360	701	21 %
F	315	8-3,507	97	169	328	7 %
Total Untitled Decedents	352	8-3,507	105	190	341	28 %
TOTAL	678	13-13,020	130	260	580	100 %

Table 2.3 Distribution of Net Assets (Personal debts deducted)

¹¹⁶ Some titles counted in double

Wealth Differentials among Various Titles

As seen in Table 4 below, the title of *seyyid* and *hâcî & el-hâc* were the two most common honorifics among all titles in this estate register. As an ‘*askerî*’ title, *beşe* and *ağa*, amounted to 7.70 % of the total while *seyyid* probates constituted 17 % of the *tereke* population. The rate of non-‘*askerî*’ elites such as *hâcî & el-hâc* probates constituted 22 % in contrast to the high number of ‘*askerî*’ titles. While the total amount of decedents with honorifics was 46.36 %, the percentage of decedents without honorific was 53.64 %. (Table 2.4)

	Numbers	Percentage in Total Probates
<i>Ağa</i>	5	2.10 %
<i>Beşe</i>	13	5.60%
<i>Molla</i>	12	5 %
<i>Efendi</i>	2	0.80 %
<i>Seyyid</i>	39	17 %
<i>El-hâc</i>	51	22 %
<i>Seyh</i>	1	0.40 %
Decedents with honorific titles*	108	46.40 %
Decedents without honorific titles	123	53.60 %

Table 2.4. The Identification of Honorifics According to First and Second Titles

*Some titles counted in double.

Seyyid and *el-hâc* were the wealthiest title holders in all and their wealth was about the same. Without any subtraction, the average wealth of an *el-hâc* was 890 *gurûş*, that of a *seyyid*, was 873 *gurûş*. The biggest reduction is seen at the wealth of *el-hâcs* when *mehr* and debt are deducted from total wealth, namely from 890 *gurûş* to 856.78 *gurûş*. The highest *mehr-i müeccel* rates were paid specifically by *el-hâcs*, thus suggesting their status as the most prestigious of the elites. (Table 2.5)

Decedents listed by the first honorific title	Number and percentage of probates		Average wealth per person (<i>Gurûş</i>)		
	94	43,3	Series 1: Gross assets	Series 2: Personal debts deducted)	Series 3: Net Assest (mehr+debt deducted)
<i>Ağa</i>	2	0.90 %	712	712	712
<i>Beşe</i>	12	5.50 %	778	762.50	761.31
<i>Molla</i>	11	5.10 %	707	706	698.60
<i>Efendi</i>	1	0.50 %	300	287	300
<i>Şeyh</i>	1	0.50 %	219	219	219
<i>Seyyid</i>	30	13.70 %	873	855	847.38
<i>El-hâc(hâci)</i>	37	17.10 %	890	869	856.70
Decedents with no honorific title	123	56.70 %			
FH	18	7.79 %	581.80	568	566
F	105	45.50 %	327.70	315	308

Table 2.5. Average per capita wealth

Despite the subtraction of debt, the wealth amount of *el-hâcs* is 869 *gurûş*; when *mehr* too is deducted, wealth average is reduced by nearly 34 *gurûş*. Nevertheless, the existence of dissimilar groups within untitled decedents changes this standard picture. Debt is a major factor in the decrease of wealth of purely untitled decedents. Without subtraction of any debt, the average wealth of purely untitled decedents is 327 *gurûş*, but this ratio is reduced to 315 *gurûş* after reduction of debts; nevertheless, the sharpest discrepancy appears when all debts, including *mehr* are deducted from total wealth. (Table 2.5)

As a member of the '*askerî*' group, the per capita wealth of *beşes* and *ağas* was close to one another. Except for the first series, i.e gross assets, about 62 *gurûş*, the difference between the wealth of *beşes* and *ağas* was 50 *gurûş*. The difference between the wealth of *efendis* and *mollas* appears remarkable: 300 *gurûş* & 700 *gurûş* respectively. These titles were used by educated people or scholars. Although this sharp distinction is very noticeable, the difference here may be incidental because the sample size is very small; therefore its important to avoid a sweeping generalization here. The same situation also applies to the *şeyh* title: there is only one *şeyh* in the entire register; hence one cannot tell how representative this probate is. (Table 2.5)

Decedents with the title *el-hâc* or *hâcî* were the wealthiest. Although they represented 22 % of inventories, they held 33 % of the total wealth. The same situation was true also for *seyyids*: though they represented approximately 17 % of the inventories, they held about 24 % of the wealth recorded in the register. Although, *seyyids* and *el-hâcs* constituted less than 40 % of the inventories, because all dual title holders are counted twice, *seyyid*, *el-hâc* or *hâcî* held more than 50 % of the total wealth. The correlation between the number of titles and the size of wealth is another important observation. Thus, for example, despite the fact that the wealth of *el-hâc* or *hâcî* is 33 % of total wealth, when *el-hâcs* and *seyyid el-hâcs* are considered jointly, they held 54 %. The wealth percentage of *ağas*, *beşes*, and *efendis* was under 10 % and their degree of wealth was about the same. Even though decedents without honorifics constituted 53.24 % of the inventories, their inventories represented 21 % of the total wealth. Thus, wealth polarization between decedents with honorifics and those without appears undeniable. (Figure 2.2)

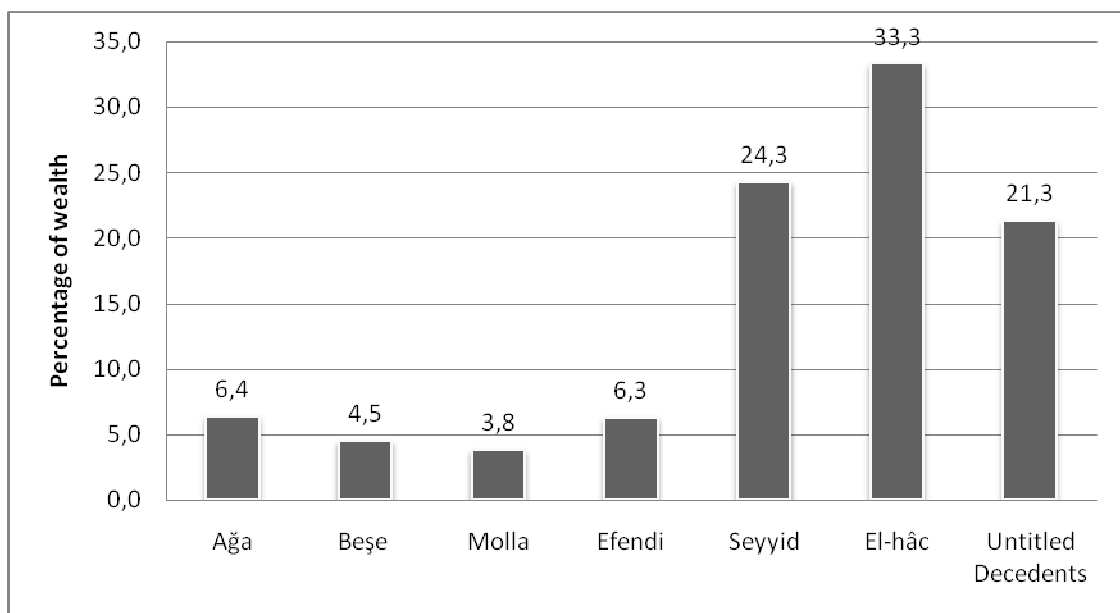


Figure 2.2. Distribution of wealth according to the first and second title¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Because of small wealth amount of one şeyh I have not incorporated him to in this chart.

COMPOSITION OF WEALTH

Real Estates

Real estates included different kinds of estates, such as shops, workshops, houses, granaries, mills, water mills and also lands that were *mülk* (private ownership) mainly vineyards, orchards, trees and vegetable gardens. Before getting to the distribution of real estates in the town, an explanation about the composition of Ottoman Land system is necessary. In general Ottoman lands are divided into four main categories, which are *miri* state land), *mülk* (freehold), pious endowment land (*vakf*) and wastelands (*mevat*).¹¹⁸ Ottoman legal system makes a distinction not only between arable and non-arable lands but also “the ownership of trees and the ownership of lands on which they grow.”¹¹⁹ In this respect;

Ottoman practice accorded with the rules of *hanafî* law. In dealing with cases where a person erects buildings or plants trees on another person’s land, the *hanafî* rules also start from the premise that the ownership of the land does not necessarily entail ownership of its trees or buildings. A landowner does not, therefore, automatically acquire the possession of trees or buildings which another person has planted or built on his ground.

Consequently, property right of individuals over the land was limited by the law in the Ottoman Empire. Legally arable lands could not be converted to *mülk* therefore individuals could not inherit these lands to his/her heirs but inherited their possession. Because of distinction on the property and possession rights of individuals over the arable and non-arable lands in the Ottoman land structure, I denoted these different modes of land in different categories. As far as I observed in the probate records there was little arable lands in the inheritance of decedents, in this context the lands, such as *bağ* (vineyard), *bahçe* (orchard), or *ağaçlık* (trees), should be read in the category of non-arable lands. In this respect, 99.50 % of the lands in the probate records comprised

¹¹⁸ Halil İnalçık, “The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600.” in Halil İnalçık and Donald Quatert. Eds. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914* (Cambridge.1994), pp.139-140.

¹¹⁹ Colin Imber, “The Status of Orchards and Fruit Trees in Ottoman Law,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 12 (1982), pp.763-774. Reprinted in ANALECTA ISISIANA XX, Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law* (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 1996), pp.207-216.

orchards, vineyards, and vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Although land is evaluated within real estates in this study, because of the multiplicity of landed property and its economic contributions to the assets of decedents, before getting into a discussion of the real estates in town, I would examine the kinds of land in the probate records and attempt to discuss the relationship between land ownership and title. After that I will analyze land within the composition real estates that existed in the town as will be seen in Table 2.6.

The category of land that is assessed here included arable fields (*tarla*) vineyards (*bağ*), gardens (*bahçe*), vegetable gardens (*bostan*), orchards (*ağaçlık*) and fruit trees (*meyva ağaçları*) in the inventories. Land analysis is based on aggregation of all these assets. A detailed investigation will furnish the distribution of these different kinds of land among decedents, but primarily an analysis of the unified land average will help to understand the very large discrepancy between the titled and the untitled. Thus, the average value of land held by a decedent with honorifics was seven times as large as that of land held by a decedent without honorifics: namely 228.88 *gurûş* & 30.47 *gurûş* respectively. The land average for all decedents was 123.23 *gurûş*. It is remarkable that more than 90 % of non-arable land was owned by decedents with honorifics, and landed property accounts for a large part of the total wealth of title holders. Except arable fields, such as *tarla*, 50 % of all kinds of non-arable land was held by decedents with honorifics, especially by *seyyids* and *hâcıs* & *el-hâcs*. Nearly 50 % of vineyards were in the hands of *sadat*, then *el-hâcs* followed with 30 %. Thus the ownership of vineyards was dominated by *sadat*. The rate of decedents without honorifics was 2 % among vineyard owners. The allocation of the vegetable gardens resembled that of the vineyards. Also, all gardens were held by decedents with the title *el-hâc* or *hâci*. (Fig.2.3.) *El-hâcs* owned more than 50 % of the vegetable gardens while 45 % was owned by *seyyids*, and less than 10 % by *beşes*, *mollas*, and untitled people. *El hâcs* held 50 % of the orchards, and then *seyyids* followed with 30 %. Untitled people held little more than 10 % of orchards. The ownership of vineyards, orchards, and fruit trees indicates the domination of title holders, particularly of the *seyyids* and *el-hâcs*, over agricultural production. As agricultural production constituted the backbone of all pre-industrial economies, controlling it naturally brought great economic power. Thus, the ownership of

agricultural resources must have augmented the influence of the title holders within the economic system of ‘Ayntâb. (Fig.2.3)

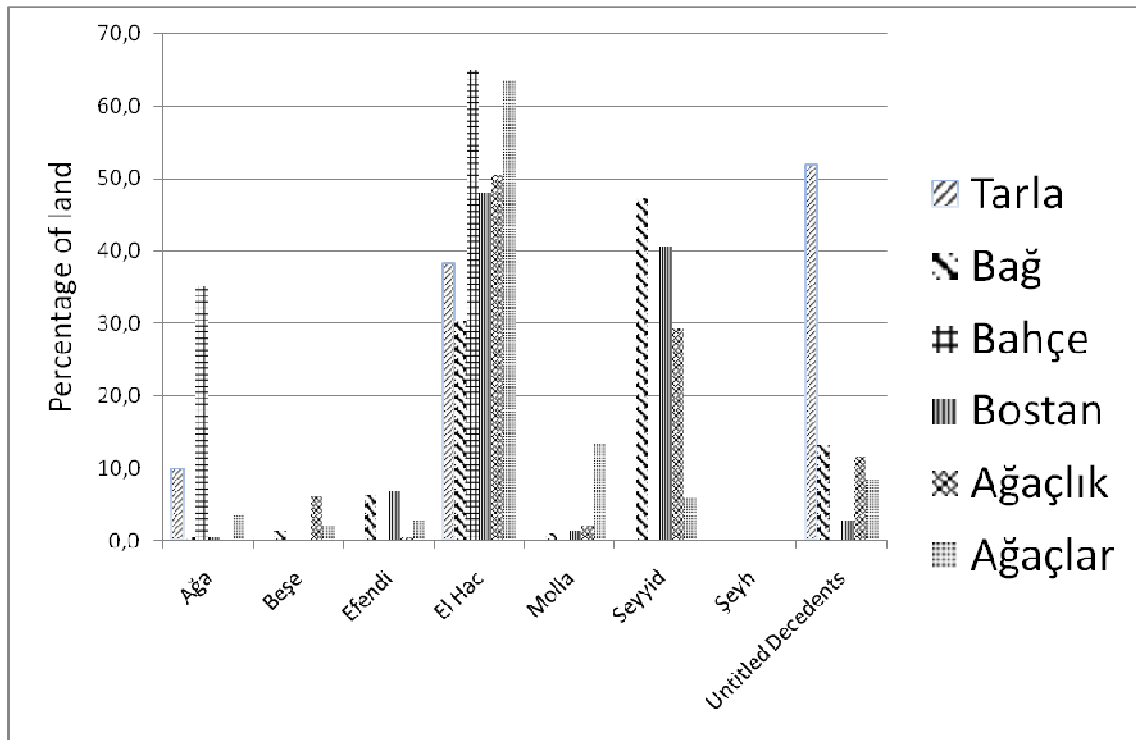


Figure 2.3 Distribution of Different Kinds of Land

Real estates constitute an important portion of wealth in ‘Ayntâb probate records, namely 45 % of the total wealth. The distinction between titled and untitled individuals was also evident in real estate ownership. When the real estate average of all estate inventories was 314 *gurûş*, which was higher than an average-sized house, 212 *gurûş*, in the town, the mean of decedents with title was 490 *gurûş* as opposed to 160 *gurûş* to mean of the untitled. Note that the medians of both groups are much lower than the average, namely 162.50 *gurûş* and 100 *gurûş* respectively. The polarity or inequality becomes more evident in percentile representation. (Table 2.6) Thus, the real estates in the top 25 % was six times larger than the real estates of bottom 25 %, namely 300 *gurûş* versus 50 *gurûş* respectively. Moreover, the real estate of bottom 25 % was three times smaller than the average-sized house. Table 2.6 in addition demonstrates the existence of polarity both between the titled and untitled, and within title holders and

untitled individuals. For instance the top 25 % of the real estates of the title holders is five times larger than the group in the bottom. The position of untitled decedents in the distribution of real properties in the bottom is not so different from the situation of title owners in the bottom. The domination of title holders in the real estates resembles the picture of distribution of wealth in the town, mainly 73 % of real estates in the urban were held by title holders. (Table 2.6)

	Mean Value of Real Estates (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Range in Real Estates (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median of Real Estates (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentage of Real Estates
<i>Ağa</i>	540	255-1,290	315	380	445	4 %
<i>Beşe</i>	220	0-753.50	50	150	250	4 %
<i>Molla</i>	390	90-1,750	155	275	309	6 %
<i>Efendi</i>	2,733	190-5,717	190	2,733	5,717	7 %
<i>Şeyh</i>	219	219	219	219	219	0
<i>Seyyid</i>	671	0-6,934	64	116	548	36 %
<i>El-hâc</i>	587	0-5,717	103	200	600	41 %
Total Decedents with Title*	490	0-6,934	80	162.50	430	73 %
FH	295	0-1,208	73	150	300	7 %
F	137	0-1,208	34	87	200	20 %
Total Untitled Decedents	160	3-1,208	39	100	214	27 %
TOTAL	314	0-6,934	50	128	300	100 %

Table 2.6 Distribution of Real Estates

*Some titles counted in double.

Debt

While the average of personal debt, including mehr of the decedents, with honorifics was 118 *gurûş*, this rate decreased to 101*gurûş* among the untitled. Also debt of semi-untitled decedents was higher than that of the purely untitled or commoners, namely 141 *gurûş* & 94 *gurûş*, respectively. The debt of decedents with title in the percentile 25 % was higher than the same group of untitled decedents, specifically 50 *gurûş* versus 35 *gurûş*. Moreover, about 60 % of debts in the town was held by decedents with title. It can be surmised that monetary relations were more developed among title holders than untitled individuals of the probate records. Probably high *mehr* rates, such as 100 or 130 *gurûş*, of title holders had a big role in this picture. In addition *mehr* average of decedents with title was 60 *gurûş*, for untitled individuals this portion was 51 *gurûş*. Commoners and semi-titled decedents had 97 *gurûş* & 141 *gurûş* average wealth respectively. To sum up nearly 21 % of the probate records was indebted and despite the close number of titled and untitled indebted individuals, 25 versus 23 decedents, their debt amount was different from each other. (Table 2.7)

	Average Nominal Debt Value (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Range in nominal Debt (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median of Nominal Debt (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Number of Debtors	Percentage of Nominal Debt
<i>Ağa</i>	303	303-303	303	303	303	1	5 %
<i>Beşe</i>	100	93-110	95	96	103	4	5 %
<i>Molla</i>	50	50-50	50	50	50	2	
<i>Efendi</i>	13	13-13	13	13	13	1	0
<i>Şeyh</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Seyyid</i>	109	30-298	50	75	150	9	17 %
<i>El-hâc</i>	152	14-370	73	127	202	12	31 %
Total Debtors with Title	118	13-370	50	90	155	25	60 %
FH	141	40-241	90	141	191	2	1 %
F	97	7.50-340	35	50	150	21	39 %
Total Untitled debtors	101	7.50-340	38	50	164	23	40 %
Total	110	7.50-370	40	78	160	48	100 %

Table 2.7. Distribution of debt (including *mehr-i müeccell*)*

*Nominal value of debts and number of debtors counted

Real Mehr Amount

The *mehr* amount of decedents with the title *el-hâc* was highest one, 70 *gurûş*. The *mehr* average of *seyyids* and commoners was closed, namely 51 *gurûş* versus 51.79 *gurûş* respectively. Despite high religious prestige of *seyyid*, the *mehr* average of *el-hâcs* was higher than *sadat*'. It can be interpreted that social status of decedents gains more popularity when economic wellbeing and religious prestige joined in a body. (Table 2.8)

	Real <i>Mehr</i> Amount (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Number of Decedents	<i>Mehr</i> Average (<i>Gurûş</i>)
<i>Ağa</i>	0	0	0
<i>Beşe</i>	40	2	20
<i>Molla</i>	90	2	45
<i>Efendi</i>	0	0	0
<i>Şeyh</i>	0	0	0
<i>Seyyid</i>	255	5	51
<i>El-hâc</i>	420	6	70
Total debtors with Title*	805	16	50.31
FH	40	1	40
F	725	14	51.79
Total Untitled debtors	765	15	51
Total	1530	30	51

Table 2.8 Real *Mehr* Amount

*Some titles counted in double.

Credit

Not surprisingly, title holders appear as the main creditors in the inventories: nearly 90 % of the total credit recorded was given by decedents with honorifics, whose credit average was 695 *gurûş*. The untitled decedents' credit average was 239 *gurûş*. Furthermore, decedents with untitled fathers had only on average 168 *gurûş* credit in their estates, while decedents 'semi-titled' through their fathers had given nearly four times as much credit, namely 692 *gurûş*. Perhaps we could infer from this that the

‘semi-title’ ones had more complex economic relations. The economic strength of decedents with titles and ‘semi-titled’ ones seen together against the poverty of untitled decedents reveal the marked degree of wealth polarization among the ‘Ayntabi people. (Table 2.9)

	Mean in Credit (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Credit Range (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 25 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Median in Credit (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Percentile 75 % (<i>Gurûş</i>)	Number of Creditors	Percentage in Total Credit
<i>Ağa</i>	1,948	48-3,118	48	2,677	3,118	3	12 %
<i>Beşe</i>	713	73.50-2,300	58	272	928	4	6 %
<i>Molla</i>	226	75-529	75	75	302	3	1 %
<i>Efendi</i>	2,939	2,939	2,939	2,939	2,939	1	6 %
<i>Şeyh</i>	8	8	8	8	8	1	0
<i>Seyyid</i>	642	2.50-2939	55	155	499	24	29 %
<i>El-hâc</i>	980	3-4,038	70	450	1.471	19	37 %
Total Creditors with Title	695	2.50-4,038	50	157	565	55	90 %
FH	692	56-1,849	114	172	1,010	3	6 %
F	168	5-621.50	29	100	199	19	4 %
Total Untitled Creditors	239	5-1,849	35	108	205	22	10 %
TOTAL	543	2.50-2,939	49	124	467	77	100 %

Table 2.9 Distribution of Credit

Quintile Distribution of Wealth between Titled and Untitled Decedents

Overwhelmingly, 80 % of wealth in the top was constituted by decedents with honorifics. Also the polarization of wealth between those with and without title was obvious. The wealth in the middle and upper middle range was equally shared by decedents with and without honorifics. The rate of decedents with honorifics in the bottom was not very high as was rate as of the untitled decedents, but the number of title holders in the top were nearly three times as great as those title holders in the bottom. (Fig. 2.4)

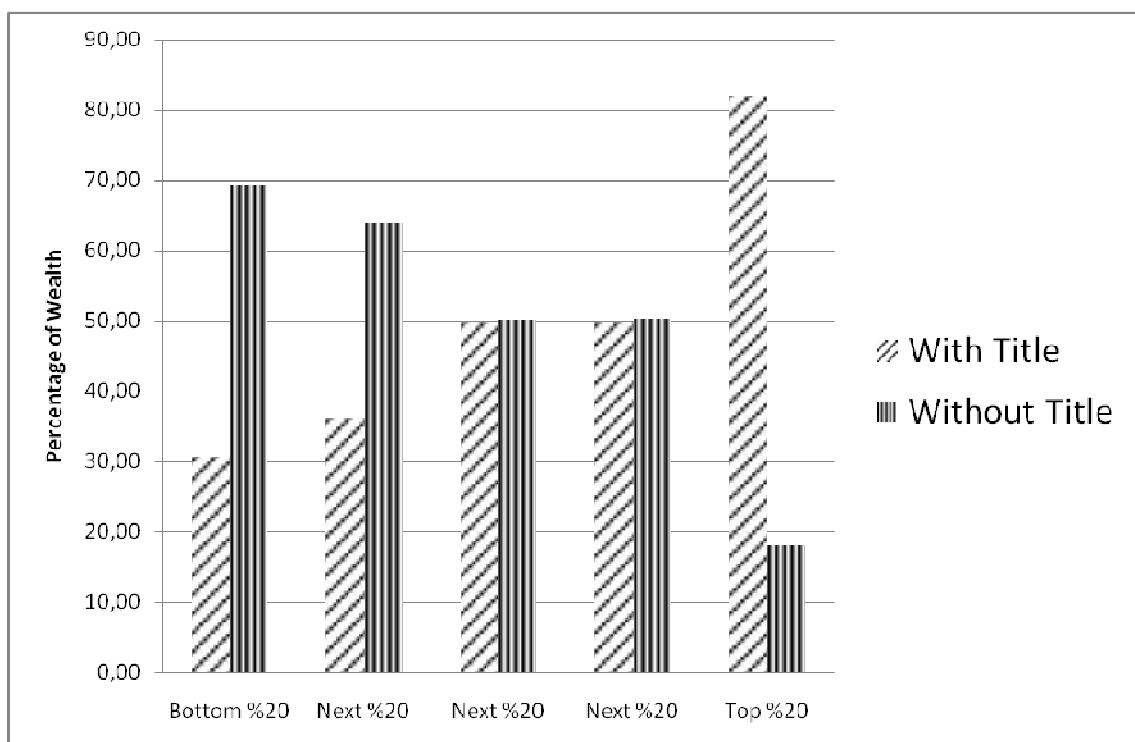


Figure 2.4. Wealth comparison between Decedents with honorifics and without honorifics

First of all, in looking at the graph in Figure 2.5 from bottom to top, the rate of decedents without honorifics decreased dramatically. Although, they constituted 70 % of wealth in the bottom, in the top this proportion was less than 30 %. Interestingly, decedents without honorifics constituted 50 % of the middle and upper middle range of wealth; thus, the economic position of those in this range was quite healthy. Interestingly enough, more than 30 % of the wealthiest was comprised of *el-hâcs*, 15 %

of wealth at the bottom was also held by them. In terms of the middle, the amount of wealth of *el hâcs* and *seyyids* in the bottom and upper middle was similar, that is to say, 12 % and 18-20 % respectively. The amount of wealth held by *seyyids*, however, was distributed more equally than was the wealth of *el-hâcs* in the scale. While *el-hâcs* concentrated at the top, *seyyids* were in the middle. Nor did any *ağas* or *mollas* exist in the bottom. (Fig.2.5)

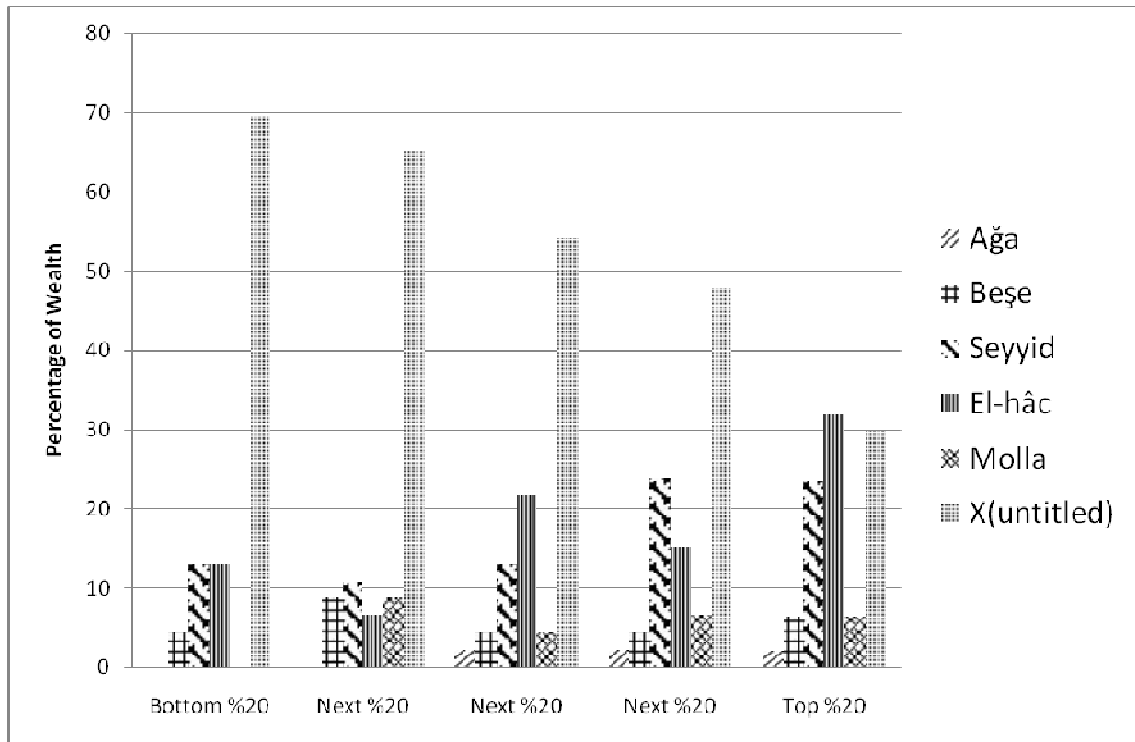


Figure. 2.5. Quintile Distribution of wealth among title holders and untitled decedents

This study does not allow me to say whether people had title therefore they had wealth or they had wealth and therefore they won title. However, I observe a strong relationship between title and wealth in these probate records in the late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. However the possession of a title did not automatically indicate wealth status. Indeed as we observed in the probate records, one fourth of title owners live under the 200 gurûş, which remarkably less than the wealth range of 250/300 gurûş suggested by Establet and Pascual to identify individuals in middling group. Moreover, the wealthy group was very small; once more by Establet and Pascual’s criterion, only 16 % of decedents who were recorded in estate inventories in the late eighteenth-

century ‘Ayntâb belonged to this category. This number is same with Canbakal findings on the late seventeenth-century ‘Ayntâb.¹²⁰

More than half of the wealthy probates, those above 1,000 *gurûş*, belonged to civilian notables, such *hâcı* or *el-hâcs*; the remaining, to members of the ‘*askerî*¹²¹ (both military, such as *ağas*, *beşes*, and religious notables such as *sadat*, *molla* and *efendi*). Thus, civilians constituted the majority among the wealthy with their estate average of 1,375 *gurûş*. However, higher up the scale of wealth (2,000 *gurûş* and above), the division between civilians and ‘*askerî* grew. About two thirds of the ‘richest’ probates belonged to the members of the ‘*askerî*; the title of *sadat* was particularly dominant among the wealthiest. In other words, financial strength of the ‘*askerî* became more pronounced as one moved up the wealth scale.

Fluid Correlations between Estates and Wealth

Nevertheless, ‘*askerî* status did not confer wealthy status automatically as vast discrepancies of wealth can be observed within the ‘*askerî* group in general. While the wealth average of ‘*askerî* was 1,175 *gurûş*, the estate average of *sadat* within the ‘*askerî* class was higher, namely, 1,311 *gurûş*. Thus *sadat* constituted the majority of the wealthy within the ‘*askerî* group. The high wealth average of the ‘*askerî* should not mislead the reader however; a substantial portion of the group (35.29 %) left behind smaller amounts than even the middle group of decedents, whose wealth amounted to 250-300 *gurûş* by Establet and Pascuals account. Thus, for example, some janissaries, such as Mustafa Beşe ibn Mustafa, who left behind only twenty six *gurûş*, were among the poorest of all decedents.¹²² Although *sadat* held less than 20 % of the inventories they constituted about half of the wealthiest. However *sadat* existed also among the poor. Indeed the majority of them left behind amounts smaller than the estate average of the ‘*askerî* and *sadat*. For example, Seyyid Mehmed ibn Seyyid Mehmed’s estate amounted to only sixty four *gurûş*.

¹²⁰ Hülya Canbakal, “Comparative Reflections on the Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntab,” *Eurasian Studies*, vol.5, 2008, (forthcoming)

¹²¹ The term ‘*askerî* has no direct translation in English. Although the conventional definition is “soldier”, the term was used in Ottoman society not only for state officers, soldiers but also religious notables, such *sadat*, and teachers.

¹²² Reg# 128/117, *şevval* 1190/1776.

‘Askerî differed not only among themselves in terms of wealth, status, and lifestyles of decedents but also in either quantity or quality from the non-*‘askerîs*. For example, “residential grandeur appears as an important symbol of social status representing economic wealth.”¹²³ Thus for instance, about one third of Seyyid Hidir’s wealth was invested in a 1,000 *gurûş* house;¹²⁴ on the other hand, the two-hundred sixty *gurûş* estate of Seyyid El-hâc Ali ibn Esseyid Hamdi was largely invested in a 100 *gurûş* house.¹²⁵ This picture was not so different for non-*askerî* estates either. While the estate of Kazancı Mikdad veled-i Agob¹²⁶ was invested in a residence of 800 *gurûş*, that amount was nearly four times as large as the average value of residences in ‘Ayntâb at that time, namely 212 *gurûş*. Likewise, el-Hâc Osman ibn İbrahim,¹²⁷ a title holder had only a twenty-*gurûş* house. In general in 70 % of the inventories which contain houses, the value of residence was less than that of the average residence in Ayntâb.

The Rich and Their Fortunes

While Mustafa Beşe ibn Mustafa was the poorest man in Ayntâb in those years, the wealthiest, Seyyid El-hâc Mustafa Efendi whose fortune amounted to 13,020 *gurûş*, was also a member of the *‘askerî* group. Seyyid Mustafa Efendi had a wide range of investments, including rural and urban property as well as commercial undertakings and money lending. He owned twelve vineyards and five vegetable gardens and orchards in the city and in various villages, six shops and a share in another, a dye-house, a grape press [*ma’sara*], and commercial amounts of wheat, grapes and honeybees. He also owned the most expensive house: its value recorded in the probate register studied, amounted to 2,500 *gurûş*. He also left 2,939 *gurûş* in the form of uncollected credit from seventy two people; the amounts owed varied from 5 *gurûş* to 300 *gurûş*. Mustafa Efendi was not only wealthy but also a good investor; he rented a loom in the village Düllük and had more than 1,700 *gurûş* in rental income, including the rent of an orchard and some other estates. Moreover, he had an extensive and valuable collection of religious books. The substantial amount of his income originated from diverse activities

¹²³ Ergene, A. Boğaç. “Social Identity and Patterns of Interaction in the Sharia Court of Kastamonu 1740-44,” *Islamic Law and Society* 14 (2007), pp.1-33.

¹²⁴ Reg# 128/97, *zilhicce* 1189/1776.

¹²⁵ Reg# 128/94, *zilhicce* 1189/1776.

¹²⁶ Reg# 128/122, *şevval* 1190/1776.

¹²⁷ Reg# 128/49, *rebî ‘ü’l-evvel* 1189/1775.

such as credit bearing and entrepreneurship; debtors of Mustafa Efendi were in diverse occupations, apparently unrelated to any commercial activity. Because there was no reference to commercial goods in his inventory, it would appear that these were not business-related debts, but direct cash loans. Mustafa Efendi was thus possibly the most important creditor in ‘Ayntâb. Several vineyards and orchards in various villages may have been acquired through outstanding credit accounts.¹²⁸

Seyyid Mustafa ibn Esseyid Haydar followed Seyyid El-hac Mustafa Efendi in terms of financial wellbeing: Seyyid Mustafa’s wealth amounted to 6,707 *gurûş*. He had extensive real estate: one wood repository, seven vineyards, two vegetable gardens, two orchards, and ‘commercial amounts of wheat’¹²⁹ and owned a share of house which amounted to 500 *gurûş*. Also his considerable stock of farm and pack animals, including several cattle, mules, mares, and colts suggests that Seyyid Mustafa was involved in regional or long-distance trade or transportation. Furthermore Mustafa Efendi like Seyyid El-hâc Mustafa Efendi was involved in money-lending; Mustafa Efendi left 5,455 *gurûş* in uncollected debt from many people and villages.¹³⁰

Seyyid Mustafa was followed by el-Hâc Ebubekir Ağa in terms of diversity of wealth. His investments included: a house and more than five shops (a grocery store, ironworks, a blacksmith shop [*nalbant*] and share of a dye-house), one grape press, one cauldron, and large commercial amounts of wheat which amounted to more than 300 *gurûş*. Ebubekir Ağa, too, was one of the main creditors in ‘Ayntâb; he left 3.228,9 *gurûş* in uncollected credit due from forty eight individuals and villages, each owing amounts between 3 to 200 *gurûş*.¹³¹

Examining the investments of these three decedents, all of whom were members of the ‘*askerî*’ group and had more than one honorific title, would help us understand the broad and varied picture of the major economic activities in Ayntâb in that period. For title owners, land was a common sign of wealth. Land supplied cereals or grapes, olive and its derivatives like soap or raw materials for the textile industry. More importantly, apart

¹²⁸ Reg. # 128/156, *cemâziyü’l-evvel* 1190 / 1775.

¹²⁹ In this analysis wheat which cost was more than 50 *gurûş* is taken as a commercial production.

¹³⁰ Reg. # 128/274, *recep* 1191 / 1777.

¹³¹ Reg. # 128/289, *şevvâl* 1191 / 1776.

from land, entrepreneurial skills had a crucial role in the wealth registers of ‘elites.’ To conclude, land was the main source of wealth in most cases, yet non-agricultural investment, too, played an important role.

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, not only wealth in general but also land polarized decedents with honorifics and without titles. The majority of decedents without honorifics did not hold land; land therefore was not an important source of wealth for the wealthy decedents without titles. In fact some examples from our probate inventories evidenced this observation. Kazancı Mikdad veled-i Agop, one of the non-Muslims of ‘Ayntâb is a case in point. Kazancı Mikdad veled-i Agop was the wealthiest man among decedents without honorifics and his wealth amounted to 3,507 *gurûş*. He had a house worth 800 *gurûş*, and owned commercial goods, including copper, a large number of grape presses, a significant amount of sheet metal, copper bowls [*Bakır tas*, 17]), basins [70 *legençe*], and so on. Like others of the wealthy title holders, he also left 188.50 *gurûş* in uncollected credit; the amounts owed varied between 18.50 *gurûş* & 130 *gurûş*. It would appear that his debtors owed him business related debts, unlike the debtors of Seyyid Mustafa or El-hâc Ebubekir Ağa; the former involved not direct cash loans but business goods, such as copper or a boiler.¹³² Unlike Seyyid Mustafa or El-hâc Ebubekir Ağa, Kazancı owned no land and many other individuals like Kazancı Mikdad veled-i Agop had large investments without ownership of land or real estate. Thus landholding was not of equal significance for all decedents.

Beside members of the ‘*askerî*’ group, some civilians also had a wide range of investments that could include commercial goods. El-hâc Mustafa ibn El-hâc Mehmed for example owned a shop in a tannery [*Debbaghane*], four vineyards, and one orchard; he had commercial goods resulting from orchard crops, such as raisin, walnut, and their derivatives, honeybee, honey and mules as well as a house which amounted to 900 *gurûş*. Commercial goods were thus the primary form of El-hâc Mustafa’s wealth. He also had 581 *gurûş* in uncollected credit. Unlike the case of Kazancı Mikdad veled-i Agop, its not clean whether El-hâc Mustafa’s debtors were business-related or not.¹³³

¹³² Reg. # 128/122, *şevvâl* 1190 / 1775.

¹³³ Reg. # 128/154, *rebî’ü’l-âhur* 1190/1775.

Professions or Tradesmen and Craftsmen of 'Ayntâb

Profession, along with significant socio-political symbols such as civil, official and religious honorifics or privileges that define social positions, is an important criterion that gives clues about social and economic stratification in a society. The main point of this section is to depict the relationship between craftsmen and their wealth amount. Generally, the craft of decedents was rarely specified in the estate inventory records studied there; therefore, establishing a linkage between craftsmen and economic welfare is quite difficult. However, despite the absence of direct references to the decedents' profession, the estate inventories themselves hold some information about craftsmen and their socio-economic situation. Of course, such information derived from probate records cannot be verified as certain; nonetheless, it offers a rough sample about the distribution of crafts among decedents. Therefore, because of the lack of direct information regarding artisans and their crafts, I will attempt to extrapolate such information from the property modes of the deceased craftsmen and tradesmen. The main aim of this analysis, thus, is to measure the wealth of the craftsmen & tradesmen and to describe whether a strong correlation existed between wealth and professional. When we compare the assets of different professional groups a meaningful picture appears. First of all, assets in the non-service sectors, such as transporters and merchants, were higher than in the service sector. The wealth average of non-service sector, included transporters and merchants was 2,102 *gurûş*, this portion decreased to 637 *gurûş* in service-sector including bread makers, tailor and butcher. Especially the assets of the probable transporters and merchants were the largest among the wealthy decedents of non-service sector. Weavers were the poorest among the craftsmen in the probate records. Their asset average, 474 *gurûş*, was four times lesser than the probable merchants and traders or nearly half that of the decedents in the service sector. Although they constituted the poorest individuals among craftsmen and traders, their wealth average was higher than untitled decedents, namely 375 *gurûş* as opposed to 327 *gurûş*. In this respect craft or profession was an important factor on the amount of wealth in that period. Moreover, rather than being local entrepreneurs these weavers were probably poor workers of 'Ayntâb cotton industry. A general depiction of the distribution of wealth between craftsmen and non-craftsmen would help to indicate the economic status of craftsmen.

Although craftsmen/tradesmen constituted 41 % of probate records, they held 54.34 % of the total wealth in the town. More than half of the total assets registered in the probate records were held by them. Thus the wealth average of this group was 926 *gurûş*; if we look at non-craftsmen, we see a much lower wealth average, 523.36 *gurûş*. Furthermore, professional decedents were unequally divided between titled and untitled craftsmen and the wealth of craftsmen with honorifics was more than twice as large as that of untitled craftsmen, namely 1,410 *gurûş* & 483.20 *gurûş* respectively. Non-Muslims were numerically a minority among all decedents but constituted nearly 14 % of the craftsmen; moreover, they specialized in crafts which required hand skills instead of high capital, as in the case of some professions, such as transportation, apparently held by Muslims. While the average wealth of Muslim craftsmen was nearly 951 *gurûş* that of non-Muslim craftsmen was about 743 *gurûş*. If we consider the socio-economic position of ‘Ayntâbi craftsmen, in terms of criteria suggested by Establet and Pascual, about two fifth of the 231 decedents studied belonged to ‘upper class. These included bread makers, coppersmiths, painters [*boyacı*], weavers, dressmakers, and textile dealers as well as, in all probability, transporters.

Weaving [*Cullahcılık*] was one of the main crafts in eighteenth century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb, which had a ‘sophisticated cotton industry’.¹³⁴ Just about 18 % of probate records had a loom [*Cullah tezgahı*] or cotton gin [*çırçır*]. More than 60 % of the looms and gins we have encountered in the register belonged to decedents without honorifics. It seems that, untitled people constituted major labor force of cotton production, and probably they were poor craftsmen working mainly for large dealers rather than being dominant actors in the cotton trade. Title holders, too, participated in this line of production. Those gins and looms probably were often rented out rather than used for productive purposes by the title holders themselves. For instance, the entrepreneurial spirit of some elite individuals, such as Seyyid Abdulrahim ibn Mehmed who rented a loom to a person in the Dülük village,¹³⁵ could be explained in this context.

¹³⁴ Quatert, *Ottoman Manufacturing*, p.153.

¹³⁵ Reg. # 128/110A, *Ramazân* 1190/1776.

All probable transporters and wheat [*hinta*] traders¹³⁶ were Muslim and had at least one honorific title. The following two important questions should be answered in this depiction. The first one is why a great deal of transporters was *sadat*, who were also members of the ‘*askerî*? The second: why did only Muslim decedents dominate the wheat trade? Of course many responses can be generated to all these questions, but this study merely attempts to provide general answers to these questions and does not have the capacity to offer details. Firstly, ownership of camel, horse, or donkey necessitated a high amount of capital; so the *sadat* were the wealthy men and invested in these animals for use in long distance trade. However in this point another important question come out. *El-hâcs* also were wealthy men, why did they not participate in transporting activities? Probably tax exemptions of *sadat* holding animals encouraged them to undertake transportation.¹³⁷

Crafts and trades	With Title	Without Title	Muslim	Non-Muslim	TOTAL
Service Sector	11	11	16	6	22
Craftmen [<i>çiftçi</i>]		1	1		1
Weaver[<i>cullahcı</i>]		3	2	1	3
<i>Bedastancı</i>		1	1		1
Tanner [<i>Debbağcı</i>]	3	2	5		5
Possible Professions					
Weaver[<i>cullahcı</i>]	15	24	36	3	39
Merchant	1	2	2	1	3
Textile Dealer	4	2	4	2	6
Transporter	8	5	12	1	13
Wheat [<i>Hinta</i>] Trader	4	1	5		5
TOTAL	46	52	84	14	98

Table 2.10 Craftsmen and Tradesmen of ‘Ayntâb

In the number of craftsmen, there was a well-balanced situation between titled and untitled decedents. In the types of crafts, titled and untitled decedents were polarized in

¹³⁶ Decedents who owned wheat/ *hinta* which’s value was 50 gurûş and more evaluated in this category.

¹³⁷ I would like to thank Mehmet Genç for drawing my attention to this possibility.

some specific crafts or arts, such as the monopoly of Muslims in transporting and tanner(ing).¹³⁸ Indirect information of the probate registers used gives sufficient data to make this claim. In general, textile dealers, and transporters had honorifics, salt sellers, dairymen, ironsmiths, bread makers and bakers did not have honorifics. Their wealth average was also very different. For instance while the wealth average of textile dealers and transporters was 2,344 *gurûş*, this amount decreased to 402 *gurûş* among bread makers, tailors, dairymen, butchers, weavers and seller of salt sweets and [*halvah*]. In this respect, the different social and economic characteristics of Muslims and non-Muslims are also noticeable in the business properties of the individual estates. Muslim title holders either owned lands and shops of greater value or interested works which necessitated the existence of high capital. So it can be said that in the late eighteenth century high capital was handled by the Muslim elite and they were not dominant in service sector but were major actors in the local market of the town.

Conclusion

The distribution of wealth in late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb was extremely unequal and polarized among various segments of society. The analysis has revealed that disparities of wealth existed not only between elites/title holders and commoners/untitled decedents but also within each specific group in late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. Also this study has confirmed that title and wealth, for the most part, were closely correlated. Yet the possession of a titled did not automatically indicate wealth status. If we consider the share of total wealth as depicted in the percentile of estates, the dimension of wealth polarization become more evident. Namely the assets of the wealthiest 25 % of the estates were at least four times larger than the poorest 25 %. As will be seen in the next chapter, this situation was not peculiar to ‘Ayntâb alone. In addition polarization and inequality in the distribution of wealth were two common features that define the economic portrait of the people in these urban centers. To sum up, the debates about socio-economic inequalities in Ottoman society would benefit considerably from quantitative studies of wealth.

¹³⁸ According to Mehmet Genç, the monopoly of Muslims in Tanner, as a complicated and difficult work, was an important reference to the Akhi tradition in Anatolia which was based on suffer.

CHAPTER 3

‘AYNTÂBI WEALTH IN COMPARATIVE LIGHT

Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntâb and Other Cities

One of the aims of this study is to examine not only the economic facts of ‘Ayntâb in late eighteenth century but also to think how it contributes to our understanding of Ottoman urban centers. The parallels and dissimilarities between the findings of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire literature and the figures of this study are below.

Studies on the eighteenth-century Ottoman economic system are not many and we do not know much about the standards of the economic welfare of individuals in the different regions of the empire. Accordingly, eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb, too, has received very little attention in this regard. Nevertheless, the findings of Canbakal on seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ayntab, Nikolai Todorov for Balkan cities,¹³⁹ Boğaç Ergene for Kastamonu, and Establet and Pascual for Damascus¹⁴⁰ provide preliminary information necessary to compare levels of assets at that time although regional and other differences existed among Vidin, Ruse, Damascus, Kastamonu and ‘Ayntâb. The aim of this analytical comparison is to understand the distribution of wealth in five different regions, ‘Ayntâb and Damascus from the periphery and Vidin, Ruse and Kastamonu from the ‘core region’¹⁴¹ of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, despite the dissimilar purchasing power of money and inflation rate in early eighteenth-

¹³⁹ Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City 1400-1900*, (London : University of Washington Press, 1983), p.158.

¹⁴⁰ Collette Establet and Jean-Paul Pascual, “Families et Fortunes a Damas, 450 Foyers Damacains en 1700”, cited in Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.90

¹⁴¹ “The ‘core region’ of the Ottoman Empire included western as well as sections of Central Anatolia in the east, and the Aegean Seashore of Rumelia in the west.” Suraiya Faroqhi, “Coping with the Central State, Coping with the Local Power: Ottoman Regions and Notables from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *The Ottomans and The Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, eds. Fikret Adanır & Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp.351-381.

century Damascus and late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb, to give a general idea of the living standard in that era, I would use the wealth criteria of Establet and Pascual for early eighteenth-century Damascus.¹⁴²

Quintile Distribution of Wealth in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth century ‘Ayntâb

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, wealth was distributed very unequally in the late eighteenth-century Ottoman ‘Ayntâb. The extent of this polarity becomes more evident in the quintile groups of estates. (Table 3.1) When the poorest 20 % of estates held merely 1,9 % of the total wealth, the wealthiest 20 % held about 72 %; thus the wealthiest and the next quintile group held 85,88 % of the assets that were recorded in the probate register from 1775 to 1777. On the other hand sixty percent of the probate records shared/held less than 15 % of the total wealth. This situation is not peculiar to the late eighteenth-century ‘Ayntâb. If we compare the share of total wealth in late eighteenth and seventeenth century ‘Ayntâb, nearly same picture come out. The most noticeable change is seen in the wealth amount of wealthiest 20 %, while the wealthiest 20 % held nearly 76 % of total wealth in the seventeenth century this rate decreased to about 72 % in the late eighteenth century at least in probate records of this study. Despite decreasing of the wealthiest at the top, in fact the huge distinction between poorest 20 % and wealthiest 20 % continued. Therefore it should not be interpreted that in the eighteenth-century wealth was distributed more equally than in the seventeenth century, because polarity and inequality in distribution was a continual fact in the town. (Table 3.1)

¹⁴³ Based on Canbakal findings, Hülya Canbakal, “Comparative Reflections on the Distribution of Wealth in ‘Ayntâb,” *Eurasian Studies*, vol.5 2008, (forthcoming)

	17 th -Century 'Ayntâb ¹⁴³	18 th -Century 'Ayntâb
Bottom 20%	1,64	1,99
Next 20%	3,34	4,38
Next 20%	5,44	7,73
Next 20%	15,01	14,09
Top 20%	75,90	71,79

Table 3.1 Quintile Distribution of Wealth in Seventeenth and Eighteenth century Ottoman 'Ayntâb

Inequality in distribution of wealth was not peculiar to urban centers in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. For instance Canbakal observes that the distribution of wealth in Ayntâb was more unequal than Vidin in the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Because of their common geographical, social and economic elements I will compare the economic portrait of 'Ayntâb with Kastamonu instead of comparing with Vidin in the Balkan peninsula.

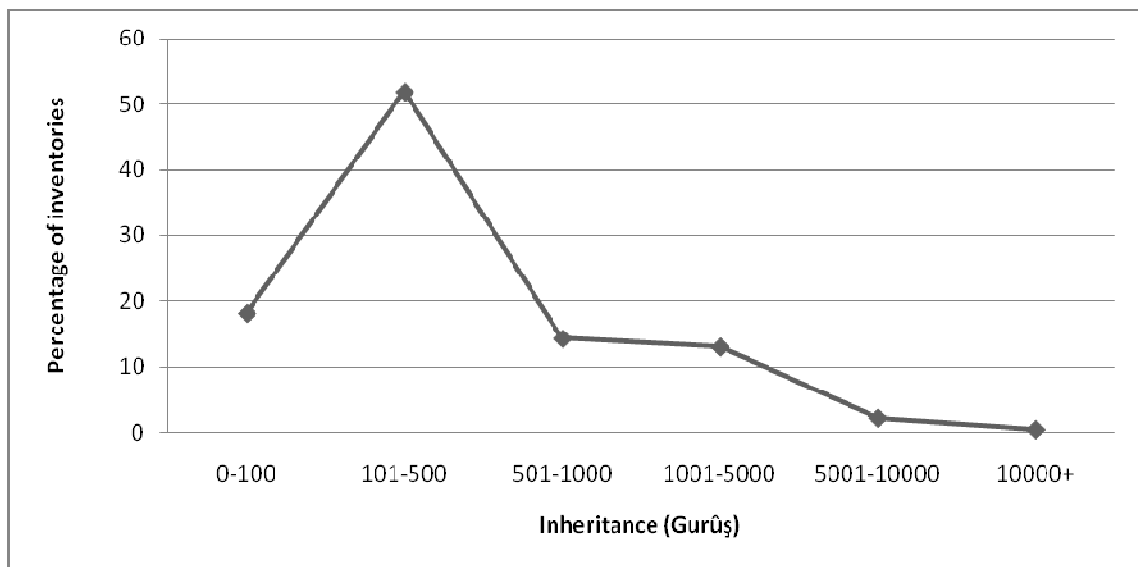


Figure 3.1. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories (Late Eighteenth century)

¹⁴³ Based on Canbakal findings, Hülya Canbakal, "Comparative Reflections on the Distribution of Wealth in 'Ayntâb," *Eurasian Studies*, vol.5 2008, (forthcoming)

¹⁴⁴ Canbakal, "Comparative Reflections," *idem*.

Canbakal's figures on the seventeenth-century probate inventories which are based on fewer data base than mine reveal a different pattern except the same rates of inventories in between 100-500 *gurûş*. The rate of decedents in this wealth category increased about 5 % in the late eighteenth century. (Figure. 3.1; Figure 3.2) Accordingly economic wellbeing of the deceased increased if we compare seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'Ayntâb. However it does not mean that wealth polarization began to disappear at that time. Indeed, as indicated in Figure 3.1, the analysis of probate records, the estates of the wealthiest 10 % of the deceased were on average as much as seventy six times the value of the poorest 10 % (3851:50,30 *gurûş*). Çınar's study of the first half of eighteenth-century probate inventories on the other hand reveals a similar pattern to the figures of this study. (Figure 3.1; Figure 3.3) According to the late eighteenth-century probate records, the estates above 5000 *gurûş* in late eighteenth century were fewer than estates from seventeenth century. (Figure 3.1; Figure 3.2). On the contrary, the rate of decedents whose wealth range was 501-1000 *gurûş*, suggested by Establet and Pascual to define the middle and upper middle wealth group, was larger than in same grouping in the seventeenth century. However it does not mean that polarization in distribution of wealth in 1770s becomes less than the previous century. Let's remember that these settings are based on the sample probate records which do not give the actual number of all who died.

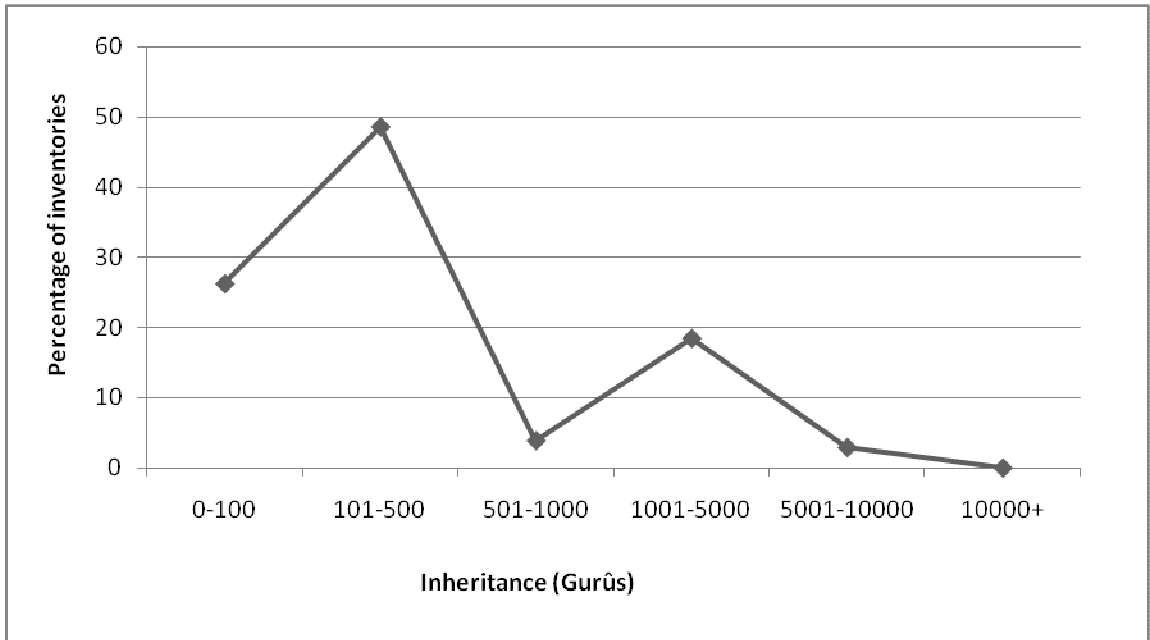


Figure 3.2. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories* (Seventeenth Century)¹⁴⁵ [*Includes female inventories]

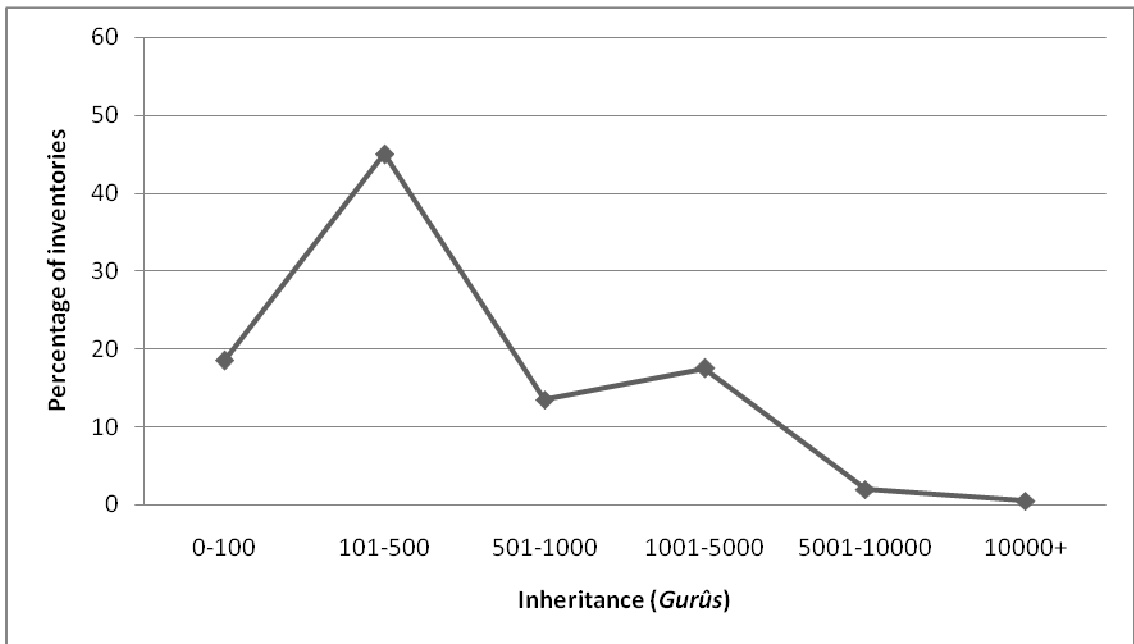


Figure 3.3. Distribution of Wealth According to Probate Inventories* (Early Eighteenth Century)¹⁴⁶ [*Only males]

¹⁴⁵ Based on Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.91.

¹⁴⁶ Based on Çınar, Çınar, "18. Yüzyılın ilk Yarısında Ayıntab Şehri'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Durumu," p.168.

Although different socio-economic conditions existed in late eighteenth century 'Ayntâb and in early eighteenth century Damascus, the criterion of Establet and Pascual would be relevant for this thesis for obtaining an idea about wellbeing of individuals in Ottoman Empire in this century. If we were to use this criteria suggested by Establet and Pascual for the first part of the eighteenth-century Damascus, that is, take 1000 *gurûş* as the minimum amount to be considered wealthy¹⁴⁷, thus as much as 15,56 % of the deceased in 'Ayntâb could also be considered as wealthy. On the average, this wealthy group left behind 2926 *gurûş*. Those who had under one hundred *gurûş* constituted less than one fifth of the probate population and left behind 66,26 *gurûş* on average.

This sharp distinction between richest and poorest does not imply the absence of middle group. Again following Establet and Pascual, if an estate of 250/300-1000 *gurûş* could be taken to represent people of modest wealth, ie., a middle 'class's then 38 % of the decedents belonged to this category. This contrasts with Canbakal's findings regarding seventeenth century 'Ayntâb.¹⁴⁸ While her findings suggest the weakness of a middle group, eighteenth-century Ayntab appears to have a sizable middle group, with even an 'upper-middle' group, about 14 % of the deceased had 500-1000 *gurûş*¹⁴⁹ and belonged to upper-middle class. In fact, the asset of individuals was main criterion to determine the socio-economic classes of decedents. Nevertheless, in order to determine class criterion, some scholars either investigate tax status or assess other socio-politic factors such as privileges or professions that have impact on the social and economic status of individuals.¹⁵⁰ In 'Ayntâb textile dealers and transporters would be included in the

¹⁴⁷ Establet and Pascual, "Families et Fortunes a Damas," *idem*.

¹⁴⁸ Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, pp. 90-91.

¹⁴⁹ Canbakal, *idem*.

¹⁵⁰ For instance, Abraham Marcus identifies three social classes: 'lower class' commoners, 'middle class' officials, or professions and 'upper class' wealthy people in eighteenth century Aleppo. Furthermore, Marcus assumes that professions and tradesmen were members of the 'middle class' which

"occupied more respectable professions and the more lucrative trades. They included merchants, businessmen, master craftsmen, skilled professionals, *ulama*, officials, and tax farmers. Most members of the city's high-status groups fell into this category. In levels of wealth they ranged from moderately comfortable to the affluent, although they included some poorer men.... They owned their homes and often their shops, and enjoyed surplus capital which they invested in real estate, in shares of urban and rural tax farms, in public offices, in moneylending, in trade and gold. They were often tax

wealthy class with 2,344 wealth average, but on the other hand the wealth average in the service sector and weavers was 402 *guruş*. Thus, according to Establet' and Pascual's¹⁵¹ suggestions 'Ayntâbi craftsmen, would be evaluated within the 'upper class' or wealthy individuals, not middle class.

A Comparative Analysis of Wealth Disparities in 'Ayntâb and Kastamonu

As we have seen in the second chapter, distribution of the inventories between decedents with title (46.4 %) and those without title (53.6 %) was fairly equal in these registers under consideration. According to the classification used in this study the category of title holders comprised either members of the military-administrative group, such as *beşes ağas*, and descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (*seyyids*) or civil elite namely pilgrims to Mecca (*hâcıs*). Even, if we exclude the civic title *hâcıs*, to observe the actual number of 'askerî group in the town, from the category of title holders, the military administrative class still constitutes 31.16 % of the probates. This is close to Canbakal's findings concerning late seventeenth-century 'Ayntâb, namely that 35.80 %, of the court users were 'askerîs.¹⁵² As for Boğaç Ergene's study of Kastamonu in the first half of the eighteenth century, Ergene used a different classification.¹⁵³ While I consider all except the title 'hâcıs' as 'askerî¹⁵⁴ Ergene describes only the members of the military and religious class as askerî.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore he argues that *seyyid* and *hâcıs* were both important religious markers and indicators of economic status,¹⁵⁶ and takes *hâcıs* and *seyyids* in the category of decedents without title. Despite this difference,

exempt or benefited from other privileges" Marcus, *The Middle East on the eve of modernity*, pp.66-67.

¹⁵¹ Collette Establet and Jean-Paul Pascual, "Families et Fortunes a Damas, 450 Foyers Damacains en 1700", cited in Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.90

¹⁵² Canbakal, *Society and politics in an Ottoman Town*, *idem.* p.31.

¹⁵³ Boğaç Ergene & Ali Berker, "Wealth and Inequality in the 18th Century Kastamonu: Estimations for The Muslim Majority," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 40 (2008), pp.23-46.

¹⁵⁴ According to a seventeenth century firman, descendants of the Prophet (*seyyids*) were members of the military-administrative class. Therefore I have counted *seyyids* in the category of *askerî*. However it should be noted that the definition of askerî estate was changed in many times in Ottoman Empire, therefore we cannot claim the definition askerî group which defined in this firman is valid also in late eighteenth century. For more information see Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town*, p.65.

¹⁵⁵ Ergene & Berker, "Wealth and Inequality," pp. 30-33.

¹⁵⁶ Ergene & Berker, "Wealth and Inequality," p.34.

Ergene's figures would help us make a useful comparative wealth analysis for two Ottoman *sancaks* which are located in different regions of the empire.

As we observed in 'Ayntâb in the second half of eighteenth century, wealth was distributed also unequally among members of Kastamonu society in the first half of same century. While in Ayntâb, between 1775 and 1777, the average value of estate inventories was 694 *guruş*, in the first half of the century, in Kastamonu, the average estate size was 759.20 *guruş*. These figures are relatively close to each other. Further, in comparison to peace conditions of first the half of the eighteenth century, the fiscal and political crisis of the late eighteenth-century Ottoman world may have affected the economic conditions of the 'Ayntâbis represented in probate records. This may be one of the reasons why the average estate in Ayntâb was smaller.

Table 3.2 divides the data of this study into five wealth groups. These five rows divide 231 estate inventories into 20-percentile groups according to estate size, from poorest to richest. Since I analyzed the extent of wealth disparity in the beginning of second chapter; here I shall only compare income distribution in 'Ayntâb and Kastamonu. The biggest difference is observed between the average estate value of the richest and the poorest groups in the two towns, namely, the average estate value of the wealthiest was more than twenty one times the mean estate value of the poorest in 'Ayntâb. (Table 3.2) the difference between the wealthiest and the poorest in Kastamonu for the first half of the 1770s was larger, namely the mean estate value of the wealthiest was nearly thirty times the value of the poorest (2,424.80 & 71.60 *guruş*).¹⁵⁷

In the sense of title-wealth relation, except for the high wealth average of decedents without title, namely 754.7 *guruş*¹⁵⁸ in Kastamonu, the wealth distribution in Ayntâb and Kastamonu was strikingly similar (1068 *guruş* for title owners in 'Ayntâb 1,081 and 1,044.50 *guruş*¹⁵⁹ for military and religious title owners in Kastamonu). Probably the higher wealth average of decedents without titles in Kastamonu emanates from different categorization. I take *seyyids* and *el-hâcs* as title holders, Ergene examines them in the category of untitled decedents.

¹⁵⁷ Ergene & Berker, "Wealth and Inequality," p.28

¹⁵⁸ Ergene & Berker, "Wealth and Inequality," p.30

¹⁵⁹ Authors separately measure the average estate value of military and religious title owners.

	Number of Decedents	Mean Estate Value (<i>guruş</i>)	Range (<i>guruş</i>)	Percentage of Total Wealth Owned
Poorest 20 %	46	70.5	26-105.5	1,99 %
Next 20 %	46	148.75	106-197	4,38 %
Next 20 %	46	260.25	200-335	7,73 %
Next 20 %	46	461	350-755	14,09 %
Richest 20 %	47	1550	800-13020	71,79 %

Table 3.2. Wealth Disparities in ‘Ayntâb

Reflections of Economic Developments

‘Ayntâb had an active market economy between 1775-1777. The traces of this dynamic market system can be followed in the overall compositions of estates. Widespread textile production was the most important evidence of this situation. As noted earlier, about 17 % of the untitled decedents had a *cullah tezgahı* (loom) or *çırçır* (cotton gin) or both. Without a doubt, cotton production in ‘Ayntâb did not start suddenly in that period. Indeed, Donald Quataert as well as Hüseyin Çınar suggest that Ayntâb was significant cotton producer in Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁶⁰ When we look at the distribution of fixed capital goods or means of production, such as looms, gins, grape presses (*ma’sara*), mulberry cauldrons (*dut kazanı*), beehives, cauldron of leather (*debbag kazanı*), and commercial goods between titled and untitled adults, a meaningful picture comes into view. Probably because of the necessity of capital, about 64 % of the means of production was owned by title holders. In all probability, these individuals leased these means of production to other people. On the other hand, about 55 % of the commercial goods, such as large amount of raisin, walnuts, wheat, was owned by untitled adults.

¹⁶⁰ Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Çınar, “18. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Ayıntab Şehri,” *idem*. pp. 280-288.

The high number of animals used in transportation such as camels, mules and horses, suggests the existence of a developed long distance trade network. In this sense, the distribution between the titled and untitled was fairly equal (48.70 % & 51.30 %). However 75.40 % of the small cattle raising economy reflected in the probate registers was held by untitled individuals. On the other hand, title holders were the main creditors of the town; about 80 % of credit in ‘Ayntâb was in their control. This figure demonstrates the existence of both a dynamic market system and a developed trade network in those years in ‘Ayntâb.

Although there has not been common agreement over the economic progress of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century and economic historiography has been under the domination of two different perspectives. According to Mehmet Genç, Ottoman industry constituted to grow until the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and after that it ceased to grow.¹⁶¹ In that point, it can be said that social, economic, and politic changes in such broad Ottoman lands can not be experienced everywhere at the same time. Therefore Genç’s thesis of ‘fiscal decline’ should not be totally disregarded in order to understand the social and economic dynamics of this era.

On the other hand, Şevket Pamuk argues that the Ottoman economy grew from the seventeenth till nineteenth century.¹⁶²

The Ottoman state and society showed considerable ability to adapt to changing circumstances in Eurasia from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. The central bureaucracy managed to contain the many challenges it faced with pragmatism, flexibility, and a tradition of negotiation to co-opt and incorporate into the state the social groups that rebelled against it. The Ottoman state also showed considerable flexibility not only in military technology, but also in its fiscal, financial and monetary institutions. Despite wars and internal conflicts from the 1770s through the 1830s, the Ottomans managed to regroup and survive into the modern era with a strong central state and many of their central institutions

¹⁶¹ Mehmet Genç, “A Study of the Feasibility of Using Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Financial Records as an Indicator of Economic Activity,” in *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 345-373.

¹⁶² Şevket Pamuk & Süleyman Özmucur, “Real Wages and Standards of Living in the Ottoman Empire 1489-1914,” *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 62, No.2, (Jun., 2002), pp. 293-321.

intact, while many of their contemporaries in both Europe and Asia collapsed.¹⁶³

As we see in the above paragraphs, a developed cotton industry and lively market economy existed in the late eighteenth century 'Ayntâb. Nonetheless, we cannot claim that either Genç or Pamuk are mistaken over the analysis of economic situation of Ottoman Empire. To sum up, without knowing the economic situation of Ayntâb in early nineteenth centuries, we can not draw a satisfactory analysis on the certainty of these ideas because our limited data base is a major obstruction to this situation.

'Ayntâb's Story: Political Instability and Economic Polarization

In 'Ayntâb, the first and the second half of the eighteenth century were a noteworthy period of crisis due to the Iranian and Russian wars as well as internal conflicts and revolts in the town. Thus, the eighteenth century was a century in which, it seems, both wealth and poverty increased in 'Ayntâb. My observation below is mainly based on Cemil Cahit Güzelbey's selection of court records from 1729-1820.¹⁶⁴ According to these selections 'Ayntâbis lived under very un-peaceful conditions both in the first and second half of the eighteenth century. Political instability, revolts and conflicts within the elite were characteristic of this period.

According to these selections until the beginning nineteenth century, about 50 revolts were realized in different regions of the town. Janissaries, *seyyids*, nomadic tribe leaders and some craftsmen such as weavers (*cullahçı*) were the main actors in these revolts or conflicts at different times. But in general all these social conflicts emanated from the economic interests as well as the distribution of socio-politic power. A few examples would be revealing to understand social, economic and political situation and the major actors of the town in this era.

In 1735, about 1000 *cullahs* and their families attacked the office of the Şehrekusti *voyvoda* (local governor) Hacı Mehmed Ağa, broke the windows and other objects and also set free about 10 prisoners kept in the prison in the building.¹⁶⁵ Probably this event arose because of tax increase in cotton cloth. In 1748, janissaries reacted against

¹⁶³ Pamuk & Özmucur, "Real Wages and Standards of Living," pp. 293-321.

¹⁶⁴ Cited in Güzelbey, *idem*.

¹⁶⁵ 2 muharrem 1148 (25 May 1735), cited in Güzelbey, *idem*. pp.17-18.

taxation,¹⁶⁶ and in 1777 *serdengeçtis* entered Ayntâb and attacked Naip, Voyvoda, Hasan Ağa, Battalzade Sadık Ağa, Komalakzade Abdurrahman, Kethüdazade Hasan Efendi with 200 *sadat* to kill them and then plundered their houses and moveable properties. Furthermore, they killed Muhsinzade Ömer Ağa and his 10 men.¹⁶⁷ We can prepare a long list of such events as these. These events allow us to pose some important questions about the socio-economic situation of the town in that period, not only in the context of conflicts among the elite but also of the tensions between the elite and commoners. The first one did *sadat* and janissary conflicts occur frequently because of conflicts of interest or were there other reasons? The second question is: why were most of revolts led by title owners or members of famous households, such as Basmacızades in the town?

¹⁶⁶ “*Yeniçeri zümresiden Dülüklü oğlu Hacı Ömer 1156 yılından beri mali gücü sebebiyle Serdar olup kendine bağlı adamlar çoktur. Bundan ötürü adamlarının vergilerini ödetmemekte, devlet emirlerinin yerine getirilmesini engellemektedir...*” cemazi-ul evvel 1161 (May 1748), cited in Güzelbey, idem. p.54.

¹⁶⁷ 1190 (January 1777), cited in Güzelbey, idem. p.73.

CONCLUSION

The present study has attempted to analyze the distribution of wealth among different segments of 'Ayntâbi society. Honorific titles have been the major criteria to compare assets of the local elite and commoners. If we want to understand the performance of Ottoman urban society during the late eighteenth century, the property kinds provide us with evidence concerning economic stratification on the basis of wealth.

The portrait of 'Ayntâb is noteworthy as it indicates the economic superiority of Muslims continued until the beginning of nineteenth century. Among the possible sources of urban wealth, the most obvious ones were landholding, money-lending, manufacturing and commerce. The ownership of non-arable lands, such as vineyards, orchards or vegetable gardens, and money-lending seem to have been centralized in the hands of title owners. As for, crafts such as bread making, ironworks, tailoring, baking and cotton weaving were handled by untitled individuals. The assets of 'Ayntâbis appear have formed according to their economic activities. Indeed the economic fortunes of title owners and poverty of untitled decedents corroborate this situation. Ultimately, unequal distribution of wealth and an economically stratified social environment appear as the main characteristic features of 'Ayntâb during the late eighteenth century.

In comparative light, there were not large differences between 'Ayntâb estates and other Ottoman cities in the 'core regions' or periphery. In 'Ayntâb, Vidin, Damascus as well as Kastamonu, wealth was distributed unequally. Polarization is the keyword to explain the distribution of wealth in different regions of the Ottoman Empire both in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All numbers and depictions about economic structure provide that 'Ayntâb had a continual urban growth process from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and there was no reference with regards to the traces of an economic crisis. However as far as it is observed, in late eighteenth-century 'Ayntâb the consumer price index decreased about two and a half when we compare the consumer price index of Kastamonu in the first half of 1740s and 'Ayntâb in late eighteenth-century by the reference of prices and wages in Istanbul.¹⁶⁸ It can be interpreted that there was a devastating economic crisis in the Ottoman Empire in those forty years.

¹⁶⁸ Pamuk & Özmucur, "Real Wages and Standards of Living," p.301.

It is important to note that I have not been able to analyze and to define three factual points during the period studied here. The first one is the absence of female wealth in my analysis. On the one hand the wealth of women was low; this situation lowers the general wealth averages in the town. Furthermore, it obstructs to follow the wealth amount of decedents with title and without it. Since the central question of the present study is to understand title-wealth relationship and since the number of titled females was very limited, I have avoided to count the assets of females in the study.

I think, the most important lack of this thesis is the absence of a comparative wealth analysis between late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries 'Ayntâb. Because of the absence of data about distribution of wealth in early nineteenth-century 'Ayntâb, I could not follow the real changes in the assets of individuals.

Despite limited time and place, some inferences of the present study would be relevant for future research in the field of Ottoman history. First of all, the close relationship between assets of individuals and their honorific title(s) can be compared in different regions and in different times. By that way, we can examine the stability or changeability of economic power and social status of title holders in long term processes. Secondly the extent of polarization in wealth can be analyzed from the sixteenth till the nineteenth century. We observe that economic polarization in 'Ayntâb more or less continued from the seventeenth until the eighteenth centuries. Was it the case in other urban centers of the empire or was that situation peculiar to 'Ayntâb? The answer of this question is very important to understand the influence of economic change on various segments of society. The third one parallels the previous point. Despite janissary revolts and internal struggles among local elites and commoners, how did the town continue its economic development? Furthermore can we claim that all these conflicts and revolts arose from the distribution of resources? The answers of these all questions would hopefully be revealed in future research.

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