

## **“Military” Farms (Askeri Çiftlikler) in the Age of Crisis: Privately Owned Agricultural Estates in the Seventeenth Century Kütahya and Thessaloniki**

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Within the conditions of the demographic crisis of the seventeenth century, privately owned agricultural estates (çiftlik) proliferated in the Western Anatolian and Balkan countryside. In the case of Kütahya, these farms were initially established on the lands that peasants had deserted as a result of the general crisis of the century, specifically because of the subsistence crisis, state violence, and Celali rebellions. In the case of Thessaloniki, peasants were gradually displaced and dispossessed by the “military” farm owners in various ways via land purchases or using force. Peasant indebtedness and subsistence crisis played a major role in this process. In both cases, most of these farms were owned by the already changing and expanding local Ottoman ruling elite. The “military” and honorific titles these new farm owners held referred to their shared social and political privileges. Most of them were no longer functioning as proper “military” body anymore; they remained in the provinces taking care of their estates and other affairs. Their çiftlik had two components. First, the buildings, production tools, and products constitute the mülk part of the estates. Second, the lands attached (tabi) to the estates. The çiftlik also became the subject of buying/selling and inheritance; the mülk part as private property and the land part via title-deeds (tapu). These estates also predominantly engaged in commercial agriculture and produced their own economy towards the end of the seventeenth century. They became a key element of the social and economic transformation in the countryside.