CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE: POLITICAL AND LEGAL DYNAMICS FROM THE EGYPTIANS TO THE OTTOMAN REFORMS

...May God bless our arms with strength, our landlord with authority, our pocket with earnings, and may God bless the deceased Ibrahim Pasha with compassion.¹

Egyptian Penetration and New Beginnings, 1832–1840

Ibrahim Pasha’s impact on the history of Çukurova, from his short rule of the area between 1832–1840, is perhaps most evident in labor rituals that continued to survive up until the 1920s. Laborers in Çukurova ended each labor day with a prayer that included wishes for Ibrahim Pasha, commonly known as fatiha for his soul:

Respecting the night, awaiting the morning, we pray to Muhammad our prophet, may God damn the devil and bless our arms with strength, our landlord with authority, our pocket with earnings, and may God bless the deceased Ibrahim Pasha with compassion.²

During the first quarter of the 19th century, before the brief Egyptian conquest by Ibrahim Pasha, the area of Çukurova was mainly a site of transhumance. During the 100 years following 1800, this site of transhumance went through a multitude of processes including those of political regimes that transformed it into a region of commercial agriculture. First it was the Egyptian rule of the 1830s that exemplified imperial aspirations in the area, the hallmark of which was simply the extension of agriculture by a colonizing power. Indeed, it was during the reign of Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt,

¹ Laborers’ prayer at the end of each workday, a tradition continued from the 1830s to the 1920s. Hilmi Uran (1924) Adana Ziraat Amelesi, Istanbul, p. 15. The translation is mine. Also see Uran’s Meşrutiyet, Tek Parti, Çok Parti Hatıralarım (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009).
² Uran, Adana Ziraat Amelesi, p. 15. Saying of this prayer was common to all laborers, wage or corvée.
that the changing human geography of Çukurova embarked on the first intense activity toward becoming a productive sedentarized land.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the regime in Cairo organized military campaigns outside the boundaries of the Ottoman province of Egypt under the then governor Muhammad Ali. This expansionist policy took Egyptian armies all the way to Çukurova in 1832, and Muhammad Ali appointed his son as the governor-general of Northern Syria who remained in this post until 1840.

Scholars have argued that the transformation of Çukurova from an insignificant agricultural production to one of agricultural settlements with cotton production can be traced back to this period of Ibrahim Pasha’s rule. It is agreed upon that his rule provided the momentum for the region’s transition to commercialization, but what and how he actually achieved this has not been studied in detail. A closer look at the efforts of Ibrahim Pasha within the context of Muhammad Ali’s policies in Egypt does indeed reveal that imperialistic ambitions had touched upon Çukurova. His son attempted to repeat in Çukurova what the father had done in Egypt.

**Ibrahim Pasha in Çukurova**

I have not done anything in Egypt that the English did not do in India (Je n’ai fait en Egypte que ce que les Anglais ont fait aux Indes). Muhammad Ali is believed to have uttered these words in relation to his ambitions for a larger and independent Egypt. Çukurova may well have been envisaged as part of such an Egypt, colonizing another landscape similar to the Nile Delta. According to the Kütahya agreement of 29 March 1833 between Egyptian and Ottoman forces, the Adana district (muhassıllık) was given to Ibrahim Pasha together with Damascus and Aleppo. Although one of the original aims of the Egyptian conquest seems to have been reaching the forests of Syria, Çukurova and Antalya, obviously these areas, particularly, offered more than timber. It is nonetheless true that Çukurova could serve the Egyptian provi-

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