THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE ANATOLIAN URBAN NETWORK
DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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This study examines the development of the Anatolian urban network during the sixteenth century. The state of affairs as it existed in the second half of the sixteenth century has been regarded as a base. In order to understand the full implications of the spatial and size distributions of the towns and cities which form this network, partial comparisons have been undertaken with the situation as it obtained in the same region during the early part of the reign of Kanuni Süleyman and during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The distribution of urban population among various sizes of settlement is known to vary considerably from one society to another. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a set of underlying forces that bind together and characterize urban networks in different societies. This provides us with a frame of reference for examining the Ottoman urban landscape in Anatolia during the sixteenth century.

Sources

Data on Anatolian urban development during the sixteenth century can be found in the tax registers (tabrir) of the Ottoman Empire. The tabris that form the source material for this study were generally compiled during the reigns of Sultan Selim II and Murad III, that is between about 974/1566-67 and 995/1586-871). In a very few instances


The research that went into this paper was financed partly by a grant from the
the date of the pertinent defter is not known, but since the tahrirs transferred to Ankara almost always belong to the series compiled during those years, there is a strong presumption that the undated registers belong to the same period.

An attempt has been made to encompass all settlements with market dues and with more than 400 taxpaying inhabitants (nefer) registered ². These include both fathers of families and unmarried adult men, termed mürzerrer or caba ³. Assuming that the total population in pre-industrial societies was generally about three to four times as numerous as the adult males in it, this would imply a population of between 1200 and


The map is based upon an outline of Anatolia such as has been published in Modern Orta Atlas (Novara, Istanbul, 1971), 4-9. To locate places not recorded there, use has been made of Ali Tanğlı et al. (ed.), Türkiye Atlası (Istanbul, 1961) and of the map appended to vol. I of: Franz Taeschner, Das anatolische Wegenetz nach osmanischen Quellen, 2 vols. (Berlin 1924-26).

A few places were also located with the help of: Karte des türkischen Reiches in Asien... von H. Kiepert (Berlin, 1853), Spezialkarten vom westlichen Kleinasiern, bearbeitet von Heinrich Kiepert, 15 Blätter, Maßstab 1:250,000, Nouvelle carte générale des provinces asiatiques de l'Empire Ottoman, by Henri Kiepert (Berlin, 1883-4). Still the following places could not be located: Sancak of Hamid, Kara Hamza near modern Mersin, a little market town near Birecik, and Uğurtaş in Menteşe. On the map these have been placed in their approximate location and a question mark has been appended to their names.