

## **Circassian Colonization in the Danube Vilayet and Social Integration (Preliminary Notes)**

### **Tuna Vilayeti'ndeki Çerkes Kolonizasyonu ve Sosyal Bütünleşme (Başlangıç Notları)**

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#### *Abstract*

The Treaty of Edirne, concluded in 1829, placed in Russia's hand the coastal area from Anapa to Poti, and the land between the Kuban valley and the region of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki. Expecting new military conflicts with the Sultan, Russia acted to preclude the eventual alliance between the Ottomans and the Circassians. In order to ensure the safety of the Russian trade, towns and quarantine ports, the Russian officials proposed the resettlement of the Circassians inside the Russian territory. However, the preliminary expenditure accounts prepared by a special Resettlement commission evinced as impossible the mass relocation. Conscious of the Russia's highly contestable attempts to conquer the Northwest Caucasus, Prince Baryatinsky regarded the Circassian migration into the Ottoman Empire as an alternative less devastating for the Russian reputation and as a final solution to the year-long conflict. So, for the next 16 years, beginning in the autumn of 1858 onwards, the migration constituted the only reasonable attitude for both parties.

My paper outlines the longer process of the Circassian colonization, economic integration and socialization in the Danube vilayet. It draws on archival sources such as state regulations, newspaper notes, tax registers and examples of the correspondence between the local, vilayet and central Ottoman government. The paper emphasizes the Ottoman efforts to avoid or to limit a mass humanitarian crisis, the free aid, in cash and kind, extended by all Sultan's subjects and later by the already colonized Crimean refugees. It pays attention to the colonization process, the varying material status of the Circassians, their agricultural activity and education. It launches the suggestion that the Circassians'

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adaptation to the new environment was slowed down by the Ottoman attempts to prevent excess budgetary expenditure, to economize a share of their tax revenues or quickly to recompense the offered state aid.

**Keywords:** Circassians, colonization, Danube vilayet, material status, agriculture, education

### **Özet**

1829'da sonuçlanan Edirne Anlaşması, Anapa'dan Poti'ye kadar olan kıyı kesimini ve Kuban vadisi ile Ahıska ve Ahılkelek bölgesi arasında kalan toprağı Rus hâkimiyetine vermektedir. Sultanla yeni askeri çatışmalar bekleyen Rusya, Osmanlılarla Çerkezler arasındaki muhtemel işbirliğini önlemeye çalışmaktaydı. Rus ticaretinin, şehirlerinin ve karantina limanlarının güvenliğini sağlamak amacıyla Rus yetkililer, Çerkezlerin Rusya'nın iç bölgelerine yerleştirilmesini önermekteydi. Ancak, özel bir iskân komisyonu tarafından hazırlanan ilk gider hesapları böylesine büyük bir yer değiştirmenin imkânsız olduğunu açığa vurmaktaydı. Rusya'nın Kuzey Kafkasya'yı zaptetmesinin oldukça şüpheli olacağına bilinciyle, Prens Baryatinsky, Çerkezlerin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na göçünü Rus itibarını daha az zedeleyici ve uzun yıllar süren çatışmayı kesin şekilde çözecek alternatif bir yol olarak addetmekteydi. Bu nedenle, 1858'in sonbaharından sonraki 16 yıl, göç, her iki taraf için de tek mantıklı tutumu oluşturmaktaydı.

Bu çalışma, Tuna vilayetindeki Çerkes kolonileşmesinin, ekonomik bütünleşmesinin ve sosyalleşmesinin uzun sürecini ana hatlarıyla anlatmaktadır. Bu çalışmada devlet nizamnameleri, gazete notları, vergi kayıtları ile yerel ve merkezi düzeydeki Osmanlı idari birimlerinin yazışmaları gibi arşiv belgelerinden yararlanılmıştır. Bu çalışma, daha büyük bir insanlık krizini önlemeye ya da sınırlamaya yönelik Osmanlı çabaları vurgulanmaktadır. Bu çabalar, Sultanın tüm tebaası ve sonrasında, zaten daha önce kolonileştirilmiş olan Kırımli göçmenler tarafından aynı ve nakdi olarak sağlanan ücretsiz yardımları içermektedir. Çalışma, kolonizasyon sürecine, Çerkezlerin değişen maddi statüsüne, tarımsal aktivitelerine ve eğitimine dikkat çekmektedir. Makale, Çerkezlerin yeni çevreye uyum sürecinin Osmanlı'nın aşırı bütçe harcamalarını önleme, vergi geliri paylarını idareli harcama ya da yapılmış olan yardımı çabucak telafi etmeye yönelik girişimleri nedeniyle yavaşladığı tezini ortaya atmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çerkezler, kolonileşme, Tuna Vilayeti, maddi durum, tarım, eğitim

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia commenced favoring the North Caucasus as a key point which ensured its expansion into Central Asia, the free shipping in the Black Sea and the steady prosperity of its trade and agriculture. Though the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774 guaranteed the sovereignty of the Crimean Khanate and delimited the Russian hegemony to the district of Yenikale and Kertch, its gradual encroachment on the Black Sea region prompted Sultan Abdulhamit I to establish the eyalet of Soğucak and to claim his formal authority over the Circassians. His recognition as Circassians' protector was facilitated by the Tatars' migration into the region subsequent to the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 1784<sup>1</sup>. However, the Ottomans failed to deal successfully with the Russia's intrusion into the Northwest Caucasus. The Treaty of Edirne, concluded in 1829, placed in Russians' hand the coastal area from Anapa to Poti, and the land between the Kuban valley and the region of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki<sup>2</sup>. However, its effective government was introduced 35 years later while the period of 1829-1864 was marked by contradictory attempts to subordinate the Circassians<sup>3</sup>.

On the one hand Russia constructed roads and urbanized the region. On the other hand the Russian troops continuously campaigned to displace the mountaineers, to destroy their auls and to burn the crops. The Russian officials sought to antagonize the local leaders by privileging some cooperative Circassians or by unseating any who were unwilling to submit themselves. Besides transferring the local revenues to the central treasury, they aimed to incorporate the regional trade into the Russian commercial rhythms<sup>4</sup>. However, all Russia's efforts appeared to be vain.

Once the Crimean War was over, the Russian officials altered their approach to the Circassians, since they could not rely on the Russia's limited Black Sea navy to blockade the smuggling of weapons shipped from along the Ottoman coast into the Northwest Caucasus<sup>5</sup>. Expecting new military conflicts

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<sup>1</sup> Compare: Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)*, Ankara 1997, p. 63-69.

<sup>2</sup> Akhaltsikh and Akhalkalaki are towns in Georgia.

<sup>3</sup> Nina Kinyapina, Mark Blied, Vladimir Degoev, *Kavkaz i Srednaya Aziya vo vneslney politike Rossii. Vtoraya polovina XVIII-80-e gody XIX v.* [Russian Inner Affairs, Caucasus and Central Asia from the Second Half of 18<sup>th</sup> Century to 1880s], Moscow 1984, p. 3, 15-130; Paul Henze, "Circassian Resistance to Russia", *The North Caucasus Barrier*, Ed.: M. Benningen Broxup, London 1996, p. 74, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Henze, *ibid.*, p. 77; Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, Oxford 2008, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Musa Şaşmaz, "Immigration and Settlement of Circassians in the Ottoman Empire on British Documents 1857-1864", *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, sayı 9, Ankara 1998, p. 332.

with the Sultan, Russia acted to preclude the eventual alliance between both parties. Meanwhile, the Circassians, and in particular the cavalymen of the Shapsugh tribe, undertook onslaughts on the Russian positions. These attacks were qualified by Prince Baryatinsky, a governor-general of the North Caucasus, as an insurgency against the legal Russian government. In order to ensure the safety of the Russian trade, towns and quarantine posts, he mandated Dmitriy Milyutin to advance adequate measures. The Milyutin's memorandum proposed the resettlement of the Circassians inside the Russian territory. Prince Baryatinsky submitted the proposal to Tsar Alexander II and declared his own considerations on the case in a supplementary note. Both blueprints differed in the regions where the Circassians were to be colonized: along the north shore of the Kuban river<sup>6</sup> or along the Don valley. In 1857 Prince Baryatinski and Miliutin shared the notion that only the most rebellious Circassians deserved deportation to the Ottoman Empire<sup>7</sup>.

Both asserted the conviction that the Russia's civilizing mission and its supreme ethic required the creation of suitable environment for the settlers. However, the preliminary expenditure accounts prepared by a special Resettlement commission evinced as impossible the mass relocation. Emphasizing the Circassians' reluctance to abandon their homeland, the Commission members recommended their massacre. Conscious of the Russia's highly contestable attempts to conquer the Northwest Caucasus, Prince Baryatinsky firmly turned down this notion. In the summer of 1858 he regarded the Circassian migration into the Ottoman Empire as an alternative less devastating for the Russian reputation and as a final solution to the year-long conflict<sup>8</sup>. So, for the next 16 years, beginning in the autumn of 1858 onwards, the migration constituted the only reasonable attitude for both parties<sup>9</sup>. It formally ceased in 1874 subsequent to the conclusion of the Russo-Ottoman

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<sup>6</sup> Even in 1863 the Russian officials supported the Baryatinky's proposal to colonize the Circassians along the north shore of the Kuban river. (Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 75).

<sup>7</sup> Mark Blied, *Cherkesiya i Cherkesy XIX veka. Kratkiy ocherk istorii* [Circassia and Circassians in 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A Comprehensive History], Moscow 2011, p. 108, 119; Andrey Epifantzev, *Kavkazskaya voyna, Genotzid, kotorogo ne bylo, Chast 4: Legendy i mify Kavkazskoy voyny* [The Caucasian War and the Claims about Genocide. Part 4: Myths about the Caucasian War], downloaded from the web site: [www.apn.ru/publications/article\\_22049.html](http://www.apn.ru/publications/article_22049.html); David Guthel, "The Circassian Sürgün", *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2003), p. 142-143; Charles King, *ibid.*, p. 94; Walter Kolarz, *Russia and her Colonies*, North Haven, 1967, p. 182; "Takvim-i Vekayi", no. 533, 13 Rabi al-awwal 1272 (23 November 1855).

<sup>8</sup> Mark Blied, *ibid.*, p. 124, 127-128.

<sup>9</sup> There are conflicting views as to whether the Sublime Porte delegated ulemas to persuade the Circassians to immigrate into the Ottoman Empire (Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 75, 78, 81)

agreement prohibiting the Circassians' resettlement without the exclusive permission of the local Russian representatives<sup>10</sup>. However, facing the considerable depopulation of the region, insurmountable in the short term, the Russian officials advanced a couple of motives for their policy. They stressed the leaders' opposite intentions and their obstinacy to comply as an important obstacle for establishing a negotiation body<sup>11</sup>.

Although many essential aspects of the Circassian resistance and migration were sketched out in the past few decades, a comprehensive research is still lacking. It's ascribed to factors such as the diffuse leadership among the Circassians, the absence of a dominant single personality, the actual access to the primary sources in the former USSR and to the Ottoman documents held in the Bulgarian or Turkish archives. Finally, the Circassians' dispersal in Russia, Turkey, Syria and Jordan slowed down their interaction and it restrained their sense of cohesion<sup>12</sup>.

The present paper outlines the longer process of their colonization, economic integration and socialization in the Danube vilayet. It draws on archival materials such as state regulations, newspaper notes, tax registers and examples of the correspondence between the local, vilayet and central Ottoman government. Frequently, the available sources do not specify whether the immigrants belong to the Circassian tribes, Nogays, Abazins or Crimean Tatars<sup>13</sup> who were still abandoning the Crimean peninsula even in the 1860s.

I focus my paper on the region of the Danube vilayet not only on account of the considerable variety of primary sources held at the Oriental Department of the Bulgarian National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius" (NLCM), at the Central State Archives of Bulgaria (CSA) and at the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul (BOA). In the 1860s and 1870s a special Refugee commission served to carry out the Circassian colonization and the development of their public environment in the region. The province was marked by diverse agricultural milieus which benefited the rapid economic integration or predetermined its slow headway. Adhering to the official Ottoman policy, the local government

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<sup>10</sup> Newspaper "Vek", year 1, no. 25, 29 June 1874.

<sup>11</sup> Andrey Epifantzev, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 338; Vladimir Bobrovnikov, "Rossiyskie musulmany posle archivny revolyutzii: vzglyad s Kavkaza i iz Bolgarii" [Russian Muslims: Some notes on the Archives and Primary Sources in Caucasus and Bulgaria after 1989-1991], *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2008), p. 313-333; Paul Henze, *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> For details about the Russia's policy towards the Crimean Tatars, its firmness to expel the Nogays into the Ottoman Empire and the clauses which the Abazins were to keep in order to stay in the mountain compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 71-72, 76, 102-104, 119-121; Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatar*, Hoover Press Publication, 1978, p. 89.

sought to socialize the young Circassians by admitting them to the professional schools (islahhanes).

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Every mass migration evokes the question of whether the process is sanctioned by a particular agreement between the affected countries. K. Karpat points out that in 1856 some Circassians resettled in the Ottoman Empire in accordance to a concluded memorandum. Then, in 1860, Michail Loris-Melikof negotiated the colonization of 40-50000 Muslims in Anatolia and in the Balkans<sup>14</sup>. Considering the Ottoman efforts to reaffirm the Russo-Ottoman friendship by regular newspaper notes and to preclude the smuggling of weapons and ammunitions into the Northwest Caucasus<sup>15</sup>, the Karpat's statement seems to be correct. However, several brief or elaborated notes, published in April – June 1856 in the Bulgarian newspaper “Tzarigradski vestnik”, drew attention to the Circassian determination to fight back. For the purpose of voicing their decision all 315 Circassian notables assembled in Anapa. They authorized a 12-member delegation to petition the Sultan, the French king and the British queen. The appeal to the Sultan declared their obedience and his role as Circassian protector. The petition of 1856 asserted their firmness to defend the liberty of Circassia and to challenge the international indifference demonstrated during the Paris negotiations<sup>16</sup>.

Actually, this notion marked the turbulent future of the region. The frequent referring to the Sultan as “the holy light”, “the guardian of the prosperity”, “the asylum” or “the sovereign” implies the upcoming migration into the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to the A. Epifantzev's suggestion<sup>17</sup>, the petition evinces that the Circassian notables were well aware of the ongoing political deals around. The collapse of the Circassian community developed not as a reasonable consequence of the clash between the mountaineers'

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<sup>14</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Status of the Muslims under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Çerkes”, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden-Brill 2002, p. 653.

<sup>15</sup> BOA, A. MKT. NZD, Dosya 213, Gömlek 58, 11 February 1857; BOA, HR. MKT, Dosya 243, Gömlek 64, 29 June 1858; “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 621, 13 Rabi al-akhira 1278 (18 October 1861).

<sup>16</sup> The Circassians notables regularly petitioned the British queen and the French king. The correspondence between the British ambassador in Istanbul and the minister of foreign affairs imparts that the British government were not willing to engage with the problem either in 1857 or in 1864. (Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 333-334; Newspaper “Tzarigradski vestnik”, year 6, no. 272-273, 14-21 April 1856; no. 282, 23 June 1856).

<sup>17</sup> Andrey Epifantzev, “Prichiny porajeniya adygov v Kavkazkoy voyne” [On the Reasons for the Circassians' defeat in the Caucasian War], downloaded from the web site: [www.apn.ru/publications/article21543.html](http://www.apn.ru/publications/article21543.html).

traditionalism and the Russian modernizing impetus. The Circassians' deliberate decision to abandon their homeland sought to save the ethos and the ethnos.

I doubt that Russia and the Ottomans agreed on the Circassian migration given the Ottoman approach to the tours of the Russian consuls round the Bulgarian villages in 1861. In consistency with the official Russian policy to repopulate the Crimean peninsula<sup>18</sup>, the consuls persuaded some Bulgarian villagers that the colonization of Nogays and Circassians aimed their relocation to the Crimean peninsula and its neighbor area<sup>19</sup>. In order to hinder the Russian agitation, in March 1861 the Sublime Porte dispatched a general order to the valis of Vidin and Rusçuk (Ruse) and to the kaymakams of Tulça, Varna, Hezargrad (Razgrad), Köstence and Şumnu (Shumen). It stated that the immigrants colonized the free and cultivable areas of the Empire and that the Bulgarians themselves should not leave their homeland<sup>20</sup>. In a telegram of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1861 to the governor of Filibe (Plovdiv) the Grand Vizier Kibrızlı Ali Pasha denied the existence of any agreement on mutual resettlement. He stressed that the migrants were arriving not on Ottoman encouragement, but on their own will and with Russia's permission<sup>21</sup>.

Perhaps, my suggestion sounds unconvincing, since there is a high probability of a verbal arrangement. Also, we could theorize whether an eventual Russo-Ottoman agreement exclusively regulated the official Ottoman charge to restrain the military support to the Circassian resistance or it imposed the obligation to summon the most rebellious leaders in Istanbul. For example one of them, Zanoğlu Sefer Bas, was invited to the Sultan in May-June 1856<sup>22</sup>. I build my hypothesis upon the presumption that an official agreement undoubtedly evinces Russia's incapacity to subjugate the Circassians. It erodes its international prestige, as well. The sole legal act, justifying the Ottoman attitude to the Circassian crisis and tolerating the migration into Anatolia and the Balkans, is the Regulation on the New Settlers promulgated in August 1856<sup>23</sup>. With or without a bilateral agreement, beginning in the autumn of 1858

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<sup>18</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1861 the newspaper "Ceride-i Havadis" published details on the Russia's attempts to repopulate the Crimean peninsula by colonizing Christians of various nationalities. The Bulgarians who immigrated into the Crimean peninsula numbered about 12 000 persons (Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 80).

<sup>19</sup> BOA, MVL, Dosya 937, Gömlek 85, 3 November 1861.

<sup>20</sup> Pancho Dorev, *Dokumenti za balgarskata istoriya* [Archival Sources about Bulgarian History], vol. 3, Sofia 1940, p. 404-405; BOA, A. MKT. UM. Dosya 459, Gömlek 3, 4 March 1861.

<sup>21</sup> Pancho Dorev, *ibid.*, p. 421; Newspaper "Dunavski lebed", year 2, no. 59, 14 November 1861; BOA, A. MKT. UM. Dosya 513, Gömlek 88, 5 November 1861.

<sup>22</sup> Newspaper "Tzarigradski vestnik", year 6, no. 282, 23 June 1856.

<sup>23</sup> "Takvim-i Vekayi", no. 562, 15 Shawwal 1274 (19 May 1858); Kemal Karpat, "Ottoman Urbanism: The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of

onwards, both countries organized the shipping of the Circassians. Considering the capacity of its Black Sea navy in 1860, Russia declared readiness to transport about 40-50 000 people. The rest of the migrants would embark on Ottoman vessels.

The contemporary studies outline some motives for the Ottoman attitude to the Circassian colonization in Anatolia and the Balkans. On the one hand K. Karpat suggests that the stable demographic growth and the economic recovery of the deserted regions could be accomplished by encouragement of the migration into the Ottoman Empire<sup>24</sup>. Though unverified, Karpat's view marks an important key point of the Circassian research.

On the other hand the researchers point out the necessity to strengthen the Ottoman military and to suppress the growing national awareness among the different groups in the multicultural empire. In order to secure their control over the provinces, the Ottomans relocated the Circassians to regions such as Dobruca<sup>25</sup> and the Danube shore, or along the Ottoman-Serbian border and the Russo-Ottoman frontier in Anatolia<sup>26</sup>. The newspaper notes and the correspondence between the Sublime Porte and the local government prove the Circassians' engagement in the patrols along the Ottoman-Serbian border, in the combats during the Ottoman-Serbian war of 1876 and in those around Plevne (Pleven) during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878<sup>27</sup>. However, there is no irrefutable evidence of Circassian colonization along the Russo-Ottoman frontier in Anatolia. On the contrary, the Sublime Porte sought to effectuate the Russian demand for a settlement-free zone beyond the region of Erzincan

Mecidiye, 1856-1878", *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden-Brill 2002, p. 205-206.

<sup>24</sup> Kemal Karpat, "Ottoman Urbanism...", p. 205-206.

<sup>25</sup> Compare: Abdullah Saydam, "Tanzimat Devrinde Dobruca'da İskân Faaliyetleri", *Ondokuzmayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7 (1992) p. 199-209.

<sup>26</sup> Nataliya Volkova, *Etnicheskiy sostav naseleniya Severnogo Kavkaza v XVIII – nachale XX veka* [Ethnic variety in the Northwest Caucasus from 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century], Moscow, 1974, p. 220; Kemal Karpat, *The Status of the Muslims...*, p. 653; Georgi Chochiev, Bekir Koç, "Some Notes on the Settlement of Northern Caucasians in Eastern Anatolia and Their Adaptation Problems (the Second Half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Century – the Beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> Century)", *Journal of Asian History*, 40 (2006), 1, p. 81; Marc Pinson, "Ottoman Colonization of the Circassians in Rumeli after the Crimean War", *Etudes Balkaniques*, 8 (1972), 3, p. 71; Charles King, *ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>27</sup> Bulgarian National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius", Oriental Department (NLCM, Or. D.), F. 28, a. u. 409, p. 5, 9; Newspaper "Danube", year 2, no. 125, 13 November 1866; Newspaper "Savetnik", year 2, no. 32, 7 November 1864; Eugene Rogen, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Transjordan, 1850-1921*, Cambridge 1999, p. 67.



and Samsun. It declined the British proposal of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1864 to colonize Circassians in the region of Trabzon and of Erzurum, areas which Britain considered of importance for its geopolitical interests<sup>28</sup>.

Perhaps these motives significantly differ from the Ottomans' actual views on the migration. Since the Circassian migration was not the first mass immigration into the Balkans and the Anatolian region<sup>29</sup>, the Ottoman officials approached the process as a problem of the pure logistics. In those days its success was determined by the effective ship and land transport, the sufficient food supply, quick settlement and socialization of the refugees. Abudullah Saydam emphasizes that the Ottomans sheltered the Circassians, since they were overwhelmed by solidarity with their fate. The Ottoman officials shared the moral conviction that the Sultan was obliged to safeguard them against Russia, since he was a caliph, as well<sup>30</sup>.

As stated by the British consul in Kertch, in the autumn of 1858 a group of 650 Circassians probably were compelled by the Russian combatants to leave their homes<sup>31</sup>. On their way to Istanbul they found it easier to claim they went on a pilgrimage. The consul confirmed his notice in a further report of 15<sup>th</sup> July 1859<sup>32</sup>. In his memoirs Ahmed Cevdet Pasha emphasized that in the fall of 1858 many Circassians and Nogays fled to Istanbul. Expelled from the Kuban valley, they wintered in the Ottoman capital which offered them housing and sustenance. Either intuitively or conscious of the upcoming refugee influx, in the spring of 1859 the Sublime Porte settled the Nogays in the sandjak of Adana and the Circassians – in the sandjak of Ankara and the vilayet of Kütahya. Later, it acted to relocate the Circassians who had arrived in August 1859 and provisionally had been sheltered near to the mosque “Hagia Sophia” in Istanbul<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 101; Georgi Chochiev, Bekir Koç, *ibid.*, p. 81, 83-84.

<sup>29</sup> Ventsislav Muchinov, *Migratziionna politika na Osmanskata imperiya v balgarskite zemi prez XIX vek (do 1878)* [19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman Migration policy and the Bulgarian lands (until 1878)], Sofia 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 96-97.

<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless as early as January 1858 the British consul in Trabzon reported about 50 Circassians, who arrived in the town, his accounts about the Circassians refugees accumulated in the autumn of 1858 (Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 334).

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Isla-Owen, *The First “Circassian Exodus” to the Ottoman Empire (1858-1867), and the Ottoman Response, Based on the Accounts of Contemporary British Observers*, MA Near and Middle Studies, SOAS, London, 2007, p. 19, downloaded from the web site: [www.circassianworld.com/new/history/war-and-exile/1134-the-first-circassian-exodus.html](http://www.circassianworld.com/new/history/war-and-exile/1134-the-first-circassian-exodus.html).

<sup>33</sup> BOA, I. DH. Dosya 420, Gömlek 27766, 3 Djumada al-ula 1275 (9 December 1858); A. MKT. MHM, Dosya 150, Gömlek 19, 24 Djumada al-ula 1275 (30 December 1858); Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*. Haz.: C. Baysun, Ankara 1960, Cild 13-20, p. 89.

As early as 8<sup>th</sup> August 1859 the newspaper “Bulgaria” published a note on the Circassians who had landed in Varna. It stressed that for two weeks the mountaineers of Northwest Caucasus were ferried along the Ottoman Black Sea coast. It put forward that during the next three weeks some of the migrants were colonized in Dobruca. The rest of the migrants was about to embark on the ship “Saun Bahri” which was to ferry them to other Ottoman towns<sup>34</sup>. The note shed no light on the actual subsistence of the refugees, their housing, the access to medical care or the treatment of small pox, typhus and cholera<sup>35</sup>. As far as such details prove the Ottomans’ promptness to handle the migration, they elicit the question as to whether the consuls’ reports about starving people, misery and high mortality rate<sup>36</sup> in the harbor towns highlighted random cases or the everyday calamity.

Several circumstances marked the Ottoman efforts to deal with the migration wave<sup>37</sup>. On the one hand the Circassians’ relocation to the provinces facilitated the temporary lodging of numerous migrants in the capital and the coastal towns such as Trabzon, Samsun, Varna and Köstence<sup>38</sup>. On the other hand the central and local government sought to honor the Circassian notables and ulemas. Since they discharged the duty of imams, clerks, village or quarter mayors and policemen, they serve to represent the local communities, to vouch for their loyalty and to secure the implementation of all orders<sup>39</sup>. However, the most substantial issue encompassed the adequate provision of a beneficial environment and the considerable expenditures on the refugees<sup>40</sup>. In order to avoid or to limit mass humanitarian crisis, the Sublime Porte mobilized all resources, in cash and kind, extended as charity or free aid by all Sultan’s subjects and later by the already colonized migrants. Early in 1860, the newspaper “Takvim-i Vekayi” and the journal “Balgarski knijitzi” noted the establishment of the Refugee Commission under the charge of Hafız Mehmed Pasha, an ex-governor of the vilayet of Trabzon, and a Circassian himself. For

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<sup>34</sup> Newspaper “Bulgaria”, year 1, no. 20, 8 August 1859; Newspaper “Tzarigradski vestnik”, year 10, no. 462, 19 December 1859; BOA, A. MKT. NZD, Dosya 293, Gömlek 27, 20 October 1859; BOA, A. MKT. UM, Dosya 381, Gömlek 2, 30 October 1859.

<sup>35</sup> Marc Pinson, *ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> David Guthel, *ibid.*, p. 156-157; Sarah Isla-Owen, *ibid.*, p. 30-33, 38; Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 127; Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 343-348, 355.

<sup>37</sup> For details about the number of Circassian refugees compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 125, 127, 131, 138-139; Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>38</sup> Marc Pinson, *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> Georgi Chochiev, “Some Aspects of Social Adaptation of the North Caucasian Immigrants in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the XIXth Century”, downloaded from the web site:

[www.abeku.org/datas/users/1-g\\_chochiev\\_immigrants\\_applications.pdf](http://www.abeku.org/datas/users/1-g_chochiev_immigrants_applications.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Cevdet Paşa, *ibid.*, p. 90; Musa Şaşmaz, *ibid.*, 351-352, 360-361.

the purpose of meeting the migrants' daily expenses, the commission raised funds, accumulated aid and distributed it to the refugees. Also, the Ottoman newspaper "Takvim-i Vekayi" reported on the necessity to accommodate a group of migrants in Istanbul until the nearing winter was over<sup>41</sup>. Regarding the remark "nearing winter" and the date of the Bulgarian journal I assume that the Refugee commission was founded in the fall of 1859. Abdullah Saydam points out that the Commission officially was authorized to carry out the Circassians' colonization by a Sultan's decree of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1860<sup>42</sup>.

In August 1860 the commission appointed colonel Nusret Pasha, an inspector of the fortress of Niş, as its representative in the eyalet of Niş, of Vidin and of Silistra<sup>43</sup>. Succeeding the foundation of the Danube vilayet, he was assigned the task of supervising the migrants' colonization all over the new province. Probably, towards the end of 1864, shortly after the Midhat Pasha's arrival, a disagreement between both impelled Nusret Pasha to resign<sup>44</sup>. In November 1865 the Sublime Porte dissolved the Refugee commission with the assertion that the refugees successfully had been colonized. From that time onwards, the Ministry of Police had to solve all elicited problems<sup>45</sup>. However, the unabated migration renewed the idea about a central commission and it was reestablished in July 1866<sup>46</sup>. So, the Refugee commission of the Danube vilayet kept on carrying out its tasks, nonetheless it lost its original structure. It was dismissed in May or in June 1874<sup>47</sup>, subsequent to the conclusion of the Russo-Ottoman agreement on standstill of the migration.

The available sources held at the Oriental Department of the National Library and at the Central State Archives of Bulgaria contain limited information about the colonization carried out by Nusret Pasha<sup>48</sup>. They cast little light on the preparatory measures which guaranteed the regular food supply to the migrants. Perhaps, all initial activities sought to meet the current challenges without complying with an already elaborated draft.

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<sup>41</sup> Journal "Balgarski knijitzi", January 1860, no. 1, part 1, p. 81; "Takvim-i Vekayi", no. 577, 15 Radjab 1276 (7 February 1860).

<sup>42</sup> Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>43</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Vd 1/104; Newspaper "Savetnik", year 1, no. 47, 10 December 1864; year 2, no. 17, 25 July 1864 r.; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicilli-i Osmani*, Istanbul 1996, Cild 4, p. 1279; Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 108, 128.

<sup>44</sup> Newspaper "Turtziya", year 1, no. 28, 26 January 1865.

<sup>45</sup> Newspaper "Vremya", year 1, no 18, 4 December 1865.

<sup>46</sup> Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>47</sup> *Salname-i Vilayet-i Tuna*, Defa 3, 1287 (1870/71), p. 30; Defa 5, 1289 (1872/73), p. 33; Defa 6, 1290 (1873/74), p. 37; Defa 7, 1291 (1874/75), p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> For details about the various activities of Nusret pasha compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 128-129, 138.

As long as they were shipped or transported by carts or by rail to the inside of the Balkans, their subsistence was provided by all inhabitants of the kazas they crossed<sup>49</sup>. The local communities (both, Christian and Muslim) maintained the Circassians in the longer or shorter period between their colonization in a quarter or village and their first harvest<sup>50</sup>. In November 1860 numerous refugees who had arrived in the eyalet centre Vidin were relocated to diverse places inside of the same sandjak or in the kaza of Selvi (Sevlievo), Etropole and Lovça (Lovech). Because of the winter their further colonization was postponed until the spring of 1861. Until the end of August 1861 the population of the sandjak of Vidin regularly supplied crops, beans and lentils to 3955 migrants. They provided hay, straw and firewood, as well. In the same term the dwellers of the mentioned kazas daily delivered a ration of half oka of crops to everyone of the 5050 migrants. Since the extended crops amounted to 757 380 okas, the Ottoman treasury declared it would remunerate only a quarter of the expenses. The rest was regarded as free aid or charity<sup>51</sup>.

In a notification of 17<sup>th</sup> May 1861 the sandjak counsel of Şumnu reminded the local communities to cultivate maize, millet, bean and lentil on behalf of the migrants until they yielded their own harvest. The villagers daily supplied a half oka of flour to the poor migrants, whereas the wealthy refugees met the family expenses by themselves<sup>52</sup>. Referring to an earlier regulation on the refugee colonization the counsel commanded the clerks to oversee the regular food distribution and its repayment<sup>53</sup>.

In February 1863 the sandjak counsel of Vidin sought to provide in advance the necessary sustenance of 6706 Circassian families who were on the way to the region. Since the average family was estimated at 4 persons the population of several kazas, Belogradçik, Berkovça (Brekovitz), Ivraça (Vratza), Adliye (Kula), Lovça, Lom, Rahova (Oryahovo) daily delivered 13 410 okas of maize, or in particular a half oka of crop to every refugee. Its remuneration was listed as a budgetary debt or forthcoming expenditure of 1863/1864 and 1864/1865 fiscal years<sup>54</sup>. In the fall of 1865 further 56 200 okas of wheat were portioned out among the indigent Circassians in the kaza of

<sup>49</sup> “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 629, 21 Radjab 1278 (22 January 1862); Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>50</sup> Примери за предоставената храна, дрехи и отопление се съдържат и в: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 156-157; 162.

<sup>51</sup> Pancho Dorev, *ibid.*, p. 400-401; “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 603, 14 Djumada al-akhira 1277 (28 December 1860).

<sup>52</sup> Abdullah Saydam stresses also that the rich and prosperous Circassians were denied help. They had to build houses, to buy seeds or agricultural implements by themselves and to offer sustenance to their poor compatriots (Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 128).

<sup>53</sup> Central State Archives of Bulgaria (CSA), F. 199K, Opus 1, a. u. 38.

<sup>54</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Vd 1/39, p. 9.

Eskicuma (Tirgoviste) while the Tatars who already had colonized the region allotted from their tithe about 29 500 okas of the crop. The rest, about 26 700 okas, was provided by the local Muslim and Christian population<sup>55</sup>.

Probably, the Ottoman government sought to persuade the local communities to consider the delivered food as charity and to renounce their right of repayment. I build my assertion on the numerous notices published in the vilayet newspaper "Danube". These prized the beneficial attitude of the single endowers or many dwellers. A report of 6<sup>th</sup> June 1865 pointed out the decision of the population in the sandjak of Sofya to regard the food and the heating expenses of 238 000 ghurushes as donation<sup>56</sup>. Perhaps, in August 1865 the benevolent contribution of Hasan effendi, a notable and a mudarris of Şumnu, was inspired not only by the imperatives of Muslim charity, but also by the same governmental policy. He donated 40 okas of wheat to everyone family lodged in the new-founded village of Ali bey near to the town. In the fall of 1866 the Circassians in the village of Bragar benefited from 7160 okas of flour granted by Ahmed bey, a notable of Rahova<sup>57</sup>.

The Ottoman government referred to the refugees as "poor and indigent". However, it did not allude to the diseases and the dangerous road. It drew attention to the varying material status of the Circassians excluding the wealthier migrants from the distributed food aid. Probably, the Circassians settled in the towns and these assisting the local counsels were denied a material support too, since they invested in diverse enterprises or offered funds for different causes<sup>58</sup>.

Maybe, the wealthy immigrants weren't accommodated in the dugouts, cottage tents, huts or small wooden houses built by the local communities near to the towns or to almost all villages. Initiated as early as 1857, the public construction of the migrant houses developed into a common practice within the next years<sup>59</sup>. While the local officials criticized the practice of digging the

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<sup>55</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 1, no. 43, 22 December 1865.

<sup>56</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 1, no. 18, 30 June 1865.

<sup>57</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 1, no. 27, 1 September 1865 r.; year 2, no. 136, 21 December 1866.

<sup>58</sup> CSA, F. 159K, Opus 1, a. u. 66, p. 52-53; NLCM, Or. D. F. 26, a. u. 16195; Newspaper "Danube", year 3, no. 163, 29 March 1867.

<sup>59</sup> In order to lodge the arriving Crimean Tatars, the Sublime Porte dispatched an order of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1857 to the vali of Vidin. It stressed that the dwellers of several kazas such as Zıştovi, Plevne, Niğbolu (Nikopol), Lovça and Selvi were obliged to put up 500 houses in Dobruca and those of the sandjak of Tırnova and İslimiye (Sliven) to build 3300 houses in the same region. Each house cost 500 ghurushes (Pancho Dorev, *ibid.*, p. 362; BOA, A. MKT. UM, Dosya 443, Gömlek 28, 5 Djamada al-akhir 1277 (19 December 1860); "Takvim-i Vekayi", no. 615, 5 Muharram 1278 (13 July 1861); no. 622, 23 Rabi al-akhir 1278 (28 October 1861); no. 640, 22 Shawwal 1278 (22 April

dugouts too close and without orchard plots, the essential issue consisted of the proper location of the housing areas. As far as the government deferred solving the problem, the refugees dwelt in Muslim and Christian houses or in the empty craft shops or khans<sup>60</sup>.

A note published on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1861 in “Takvim-i Vekayi” announced the settlement of 200 migrant households in the town of Kula and of other 270 families in the village of Golyamo Rakoviçe. Both, the town and the village in the eyalet of Vidin, were renamed Adliye and Hamidiye. On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1861 the same newspaper reported on a 350-family village in the kaza of Lom named Izzeddin in honor of Prince Yusuf Izzeddin. While surveying the number of the primary students in the kaza of Lom, a register of 1874/1875 outlined the network of Circassian and Tatar settlements. The registered villages were marked down by their new Muslim name and by their Bulgarian one. It’s worth mentioning the village of Nusretiye, since it was named after Nusret Pasha, the regional official-in-chief of the Refugee commission until the end of 1864<sup>61</sup>. In July and September 1865 the newspaper “Danube” imparted the local endeavors to found Circassian villages in the kaza of Şumnu. One of these was named after its governor (müdür) Ali bey<sup>62</sup>. Perhaps, the efforts to name the migrant colonies after members of the Sultan’s family and the high or middle-ranking officials were patterned on the Sultan Abdulmecid’s initiative of 1854 when he founded the town of Mecidiye and endowed the construction of a mosque and a madrasa<sup>63</sup>. Therefore I regard all similar attempts as an encouragement of the charity towards the development of the settlements’ public environment.

Some evidences allow for the suggestion that the renaming was a constituent of the Ottoman socialization policy towards the refugees. Given this I suppose that the separate registration of the Circassian villages and quarters into the yearbooks served to emphasize their important place in the

1862); Newspaper, “Danube”, year 1, no. 18, 30 June 1865; year 2, no. 65, 17 April 1866).

<sup>60</sup> CSA, F. 199K, Opus 1, a. u. 38; “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 604, 29 Djamada al-akhir 1277 (13 July 1861).

<sup>61</sup> “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 618, 22 Safar 1278 (29 August 1861); no. 622, 23 Rabi al-akhir (28 October 1861); NLCM, Or. D., Vd 2/34, p. 4; Mitko Lachev, Margarita Dobrova, “Uchebnoto delo v grad Lom i Lomsko prez 1874/1875 uchebna godina (spored neizvesten osmanski dokument)” [The schooling in the town of Lom and the kaza of Lom during 1874/1875 school year (in the light of an unpublished Ottoman source)], *Studia in Honorem Professoris Verae Mutafchieva*, Eds. E. Radušev, Z. Kostova, Sofia 2001, p. 266-268.

<sup>62</sup> Newspaper “Danube”, year 1, no. 29, 15 September 1865.

<sup>63</sup> C. J. Heywood, “Medjidiyye”, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden-Brill 2003, vol. 6, p. 972; Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 122.

actual Ottoman settlement network<sup>64</sup>. Since the local clerks mark down their Muslim and Christian names, I assume that the process was related both to the strengthening of the Ottoman identity, recently acquired by the Circassians, and to the trivial quest for an easy or popular village name<sup>65</sup>. Beside the necessity of outlining this “secondary” settlement network, I’m going to elucidate the refugees’ attempts to assist the Ottoman economic growth by cultivating the allotted farm plots and breeding animals.

It might be expected that both, the parcels’ total size and their location, were delineated as soon as the sandjak or kaza officials had determined the approximate number of the families to colonize a certain area. However, in almost all cases the Ottomans didn’t provide the necessary farmland and the agricultural implements in advance. The Regulation on the Refugee colonization of 1861 stipulated that the allotments were to be demarcated either beforehand or during the listing of the migrants into the village registers. While conceding a certain delay of the process it pointed out that all migrant families exceeding the number of the free plots were to be relocated to new areas<sup>66</sup>.

However, in the autumn of 1865 the slow allotting of land sparked tension between the locals and the migrants in sandjak of Rusçuk, Varna and Tulça. It is likely that the problem resulted not only from the legislative framework, but also from the Nusret Pasha’s resignation. Seeking to solve the problem, until the end of November 1865 the clerks distributed a significant number of plots to the refugees in 32 villages in the kaza of Mankalya and in the kaza of Hirsova. However, the nearing winter delayed the process until the spring of 1866<sup>67</sup>. This interruption placed the villagers under the obligation to cultivate crops on refugees’ behalf, as the Christians and the Muslims in the kaza of Zıştovi had done in 1861<sup>68</sup>. No refusal to provide the migrants’ subsistence was reasonable, since the locals’ harvest was endangered by reaping as the Circassians in the village of Husref Pasha (in the kaza of Lom) had done in the fall of 1861<sup>69</sup>. Even worse, the refugees might assemble in crowds and mobs, raid the villagers and plunder their food.

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<sup>64</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Tuna*, Defa 6, 1290 (1873/74), p. 179, 181, 183.

<sup>65</sup> Abdullah Saydam casts light on the colonization of the mezra Teliş, near Plevne. In 1861 about 300 Tatar families and other 200 Nogay households were settled in the region. Since the report of Nusret pasha coincided with the ascension of Sultan Abdulaziz to the throne, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1861, the village was named Aziziye (Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 129, 166).

<sup>66</sup> CSA, F. 199K, Opus 1, a. u. 38; Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>67</sup> Newspaper “Danube”, year 1, no. 35, 27 October 1865; year 1, no. 38, 17 November 1865.

<sup>68</sup> “Takvim-i Vekayi”, no. 614, 21 Dhul al-Hijja 1277 (30 June 1861).

<sup>69</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Vd 4/9.

Even the Regulation of 1856 stated the principle of unlimited land property, the considerable refugee influx evoked modification<sup>70</sup>. In the spring of 1865 the local clerks in the kaza of Ivrača allotted land tracts of between 60 - 100 dönüms<sup>71</sup> to the Circassian families. In Dobruca the parcels of 1011 migrants ranged in size from 60 to 130 dönüms<sup>72</sup>. In 1867-1868 many Circassian families in the kaza of Berkovça were granted parcels under 60 dönüms. For instance, plots of 40 dönüms were distributed to 25 households in the village of Kaliman. Thirteen of all 57 families in the villages of Reşidiye farmed plots of 50 dönüms while the 44 households cultivated plots of 25 dönüms. Parcels of 30 dönüms were distributed to 20 families in village of Hacılar, Latif Aziz and Cuma. Plots of 60 dönüms were allotted to 26 households while 4 families in the village of Latif Aziz farmed parcels of 120 dönüms<sup>73</sup>. It's likely that these 4 families counted to the most honored and influential Circassian households or the large allotments owed to the family structure.

Deliberating on the motives for the parcels' varying size in the kaza of Berkovça, I would emphasize two points: the significant number of the local farmers, about 3400<sup>74</sup>, and the upland, hilly or plain landscape of the region. For example, the kaza of Ivrača was situated in a vast plain, stretching from the hills of the Stara planina Mountains to the middle of the Danube valley. This circumstance favored the larger plots compared to these in the kaza of Berkovça. Therefore the wide and scarcely populated Dobruca plain was conducive to the allotments of over 100 dönüms. As far as the three regions distinguished by the soils and the landscape, I assume that the more or less auspicious agricultural environment of the Danube vilayet and the plots' varying size predetermined the Circassian economic activity. Also, it's worth stressing that the refugees weren't acquainted with the new landscape. Perhaps, they intuitively chose their place.

The process of unequal land allocation was paralleled by unequal distribution of agricultural implements<sup>75</sup>. The kaza officials of Berkovça assigned a plough and a pair of oxen only to 42 households farming parcels over 50 dönüms in the village of Reşidiye, Hacılar, Latif Aziz and Cuma. The

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<sup>70</sup> "Takvim-i Vekayi", no. 562, 15 Shawwal 1274 (19 May 1858); Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>71</sup> One dönüm equaled about 920 square meters.

<sup>72</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 1, no. 35, 27 October 1865; NLCM, Or. D., Vd 5/29.

<sup>73</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Berkovitz 15/2; F. 28, a. u. 300-301, 303-304, 886.

<sup>74</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Bekovskoto selo v navecherieto na Osvobojudenieto (statistichesko izsledvane spored osmanski danachni registri)* [The Villages in the kaza of Berkovça on the eve of Russo-Ottoman War of 1877/78 in the light of Ottoman tax registers], Sofia 1985, p. 26-29, 31.

<sup>75</sup> Compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, 173.



families owning plots of 120 dönüms were equipped with two pairs of oxen<sup>76</sup>. The available sources shed little light on how the rest of the families, 89 households, cultivated their land. The Regulation of 1861 prescribed that the villagers had to be solidary with the migrants. The locals had to deliver ploughs, oxen, hoes and spades to the poor refugees or they were to assist them in the farming<sup>77</sup>. Supposedly, in order to easily raise the oxen, some refugees cooperated with two or three families which weren't supplied with implements. The sources evince that in 1864-1868 the poor Circassians in the kaza of Rusçuk teamed up for farming and shared the expenditure of implements. The wealthier migrants purchased ploughs and oxen on their own initiative<sup>78</sup>. While consigning certain seed volumes from the state depots, the Ottoman officials encouraged the locals to lend crop seeds to the migrants. In order to benefit from further aid, the new settlers partially or completely returned the seed volumes. Some sources point out that in 1860 the Refugee commissioner, Nusret Pasha, donated crop seeds to the migrants in the village of Sanatrana (in the kaza of Vidin)<sup>79</sup>.

The comparison between the allotting of farmland and the distribution of implements or seeds evinces a different approach to both aspects. Even varying in size, parcels were offered to all families, since the process constituted no significant investment. On the other hand the equipping with agricultural tools demanded a considerable state funding. In order to avoid an excess budgetary expenditure, the Sublime Porte upheld a moderate policy by utilizing all accessible local resources in cash and kind.

As soon as the migrants were supplied with land and tools, their communities became, to a large degree, self-sufficient. The Regulation of 1856 guaranteed an initial 6-year term of tax exemption whereas the Instruction on Immigrants' Taxation of 1866 reduced the period to 3 years<sup>80</sup>. Perhaps the later decision owed to the Ottomans' aspiration for quick recompense of the state expenses on the migrants<sup>81</sup>. The Instruction of 1866 defined three groups of new settlers. One of these encompassed the migrants who had been colonized more than three years before. Around 1866 they regularly harvested. Although the migrants of the second group landed on the Ottoman shore more than 3 years before, certain inconsistencies hindered their agricultural activity. The third group included those who had arrived recently and were on the way to

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<sup>76</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Berkovitzza 15/2; F. 28, a. u. 300-301, 303-304, 886.

<sup>77</sup> CSA, F. 199K, Opus 1, a. u. 38.

<sup>78</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 4, no. 334, 4 December 1868.

<sup>79</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Vd 8/40; Vd 96/41, p. 41; Vd 6/119; Newspaper "Danube", year 3, no. 164, 2 April 1867.

<sup>80</sup> BOA, I. MMS, Dosya 28, Gömlek 1220, 25 Dhu al-Hijja 1280 (1 June 1864); Newspaper "Danube", year 2, no. 57, 22 December 1865.

<sup>81</sup> Compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 167-168.

their new settlements. Also, the Instruction of 1866 laid down the expenditure items to which certain shares of the migrant tax revenues were allocated. Allotting a small portion to the taxation clerks' salaries, the tithe, the livestock and estate tax revenues were paid into the Imperial Treasury as the centuries-long practice prescribed.

The migrants enduring some settlement inconsistencies were to deposit their taxes in a particular village account opened at the Refugee commission of the Danube vilayet. The saved amounts were spent on the wages of the colonization officials, the construction of mosques, primary schools and hospitals, on the repayment of the migrant students' expenses at the vocational schools and on social relief. The rests of the annual revenues were to deposit in the Public Benefits Bank (*Menafi Sandığı*)<sup>82</sup>. Next to the discussion on the migrant villages encompassed into each group, the Instruction of 1866 elicits the question as to whether its provisions reestablished already fixed rules or it introduced a new practice.

As far as I have adverted to the migrants' taxation, I would like to sketch out their promptness to pay the tithe, to provide themselves seeds and the crop sufficiency, or eventually to sell an amount of the agricultural surplus on the market<sup>83</sup>. On 24<sup>th</sup> April 1866 the newspaper "*Danube*" reported that in 1865 almost all Circassians in Dobruca yielded more crops than their annual sufficiency<sup>84</sup>. In 1868 many Circassians in the kaza of Rusçuk cultivated orchards and melon fields for the purpose of bartering the products. Nine of the wealthy Circassian landowners went on a pilgrimage<sup>85</sup>. In 1871 eighty one Circassian families in the village of Ihsaniye, Kutloviçe and Hadcılar (in the kaza of Berkovça) harvested some volumes of barley and wheat which rarely sufficed for the annual personal subsistence after paying the tithe and selecting seeds<sup>86</sup>. That's why I presume both crops were traded on the market for other goods. Summing up the totals obtained by their probable sale, I would delineate 8 categories of cash returns (Figure 1, Appendix 1).

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<sup>82</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 2, no. 57, 16 March 1866.

<sup>83</sup> Evgeni Radushev, *Hristiyanstvo i islyam v Zapadnite Rodopi s dolinata na reka Mesta, XV – 30-te godini na XVIII vek*, Chast 1 [Christianity and Islam in the Western Rhodope Mountain and the valley of Mesta river from 15<sup>th</sup> Century to 1730s Part 1], Sofia 2005, p. 49-53; Stefka Parveva, "Agrarian Land and Harvest in South-West Peloponnese in the Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century", *Village, Town and People in the Ottoman Balkans 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Istanbul 2009, p. 91.

<sup>84</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 2, no. 67, 24 April 1866.

<sup>85</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 4, no. 334, 04 December 1868.

<sup>86</sup> NLCM, Or. D., F. 28A, a. u. 219; Berkovitz 15/2; Vd 7/80.

**Figure 1**

Cash returns in ghurushes	Categories	Number of the families
0		16
1-60	Very low	12
61-100	Low	20
101-130	Low-middle	8
131-170	Middle	5
171-250	High-middle	8
252-500	High	10
Over 500	Very high	2
Total		81

The comparison between the categories outlines a 40% share of the households, who earned very low and low cash returns on the yielded barley and wheat. I would refer to them as poor refugees. The second group consists of 13 families with low middle and middle returns. They constitute 16% of the households. Although the families encompassed into the categories of low-middle, high-middle and high returns approximate or equal in number, the large margins of both latter categories decrease the estimated percentages, respectively 10% and 12%, by certain rate. The summarized data prove that many Circassians had scanty cash returns. This circumstance failed to assist their prompt economic integration and to facilitate the eradication of the criminality among them.

In order to provide their annual sufficiency almost all Circassian households in the Northwest of the Danube vilayet cultivated maize (Figure 2, Appendix 2). In 1871 216 families yielded maize in the village of Ahmediye, Hacilar, Ihsaniye, Kutloviçe (in the kaza of Berkovça) and in the village of Sabri Pasha (in the kaza of Vidin)<sup>87</sup>. Seventeen households of the same villages did not plant maize, while 5 families had limited maize volumes after paying the tithe and selecting seeds. The comparison between the rest of the kernel and the minimal annual sufficiency per person (245 kg) shows that the kernel volumes of 15 families solely provided for the sustenance of a single person, while these of 97 households were enough for the annual sufficiency of 2-3 persons. Only a quarter of all families were able to feed 4-6 persons for a year, whereas a 10.5% of the studied Circassians could sustain a family of 7-9 persons by their immense kernel volumes.

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<sup>87</sup> NLCM, Or. D., F. 28A, a. u. 219; Berkovitz 15/2; Vd 7/80; Vd 7/2; Vd 100/18, 16.

Figure 2

Persons fed with maize	Ihsaniye	Ahmediye	Hacılar	Sabri Pasha	Kutloviçe	Total
0	9	3	3	2		17
0,1-0,9		2		3		5
						10%
1-1,9		2		12	1	15
						7%
2-2,9	7	15	1	23	2	48
3-3,9	14	11	1	17	6	49
						45%
4-4,9	9	4	1	10	1	25
5-5,9	8	3		5		16
6-6,9	7	4		1	2	14
						25,5%
7-7,9		7	1			8
8-8,9	1	1		1	1	4
9-9,9		9			2	11
						10,5%
10	1	1				2
Over 10		2			2	4
						3%
Total	56	64	7	74	17	216

This allows for the conclusion that almost two thirds of the families could not provide enough crops for a 4-member household. The Circassians in the village of Ihsaniye, Hacılar and Kutloviçe had to barter the yielded barley and wheat for maize. Those in the village of Ahmediye could vary their diet with rye-wheat bread. Only 4 families in the village of Ihsaniye and Kutloviçe bred sheep and goats. A third of all 64 Circassian households in the village of Ahmediye raised small farm animals<sup>88</sup>. Even partially, the survey evokes the suggestion that the Circassians in the Northwest of the Danube vilayet struggled harder for their survival than to farm for the market.

Also, I would like to cast light on the social stratification of 83 Circassian families in the village of Ihsaniye, Kutloviçe and Hacılar. The analysis is based on the comparison between the crop cash incomes and the persons fed with the kernels (Appendix 3). The chart demonstrates that 6 families had neither cash returns nor maize, and further, 8 households could earn some cash by selling the harvested barley and wheat. Since there aren't any details about the secondary occupations of the family members, for instance soldiers or policemen (zaptiahs), I would refer to these 14 cases as exceptions.

<sup>88</sup> Slavka Draganova, *Kolichestven analiz na ovcevadstvoto v balgarskite zemi pod osmanska vlast ot sredata na XIX vek do Osvobojdenieto* [Sheep Breeding in the Danube Vilayet, 1860s-1870s], Sofia 1993, p. 146, 152, 155.

On the other hand the data define two main groups of Circassian farmers. Both were delineated by two factors: the cash equivalence of the annual maize sufficiency amounting to 92 ghurushes or 185 ghurushes<sup>89</sup> and the maize sufficiency for a 4-member family (980 kg). The main point between both groups are the families realizing crops up to 185 ghurushes and able to feed 3 persons with maize, or the families bartering crops of over 185 ghurushes and able to feed 2 persons with maize.

The second main group encompasses 16 families. It's marked by a slight increase in the cash returns and in the number of the persons fed with kernels. All households are to qualify as rich and very rich. However, only 6 families are to farm for the market. The other 10 families had nothing to worry about their annual maize sufficiency.

The first group encompasses 50 families classified in 4 subclasses:

Poor farmers (13 families) – Since not one of them cultivated barley and wheat, they depended on the yielded maize. In 9 cases the rest of the kernel volumes were not enough for the subsistence of a 4-member family.

Under propertied farmers (16 families) – Since the barley and wheat cash returns slightly varied under and over the maize cash equivalent, the farmers counted on them and on the rest of the kernels for the maintenance of a 4-member household.

Propertied farmers (11 families) - The kernel volumes cultivated by 7 of them were enough for a 4-member family. The other 4 families had to barter some barley and wheat for maize. Beside that, all 11 families had extra amounts of 20 to 80 ghurushes, as well.

Prosperous farmers (11 families) – The cultivated and bartered crops, maize, barley and wheat, sufficed for the annual subsistence of 5 to 6 persons. Regarding the rest of the kernel volumes, 3 Circassians families could be characterized as important farmers. However, the comparison between their cash returns and these in the second main group makes me consider them as further special cases.

The comparison between the subclasses highlights several tendencies. Over 50% of the families highly depended on the rest of the maize kernels and the cash returns. Even propertied and prosperous farmers equal in number, I assume that the refugees yielding cereals enough for a 4-member family were the frequent case, while some of them had the capacity to harvest maize for 5-6

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<sup>89</sup> In the autumn–winter season of 1871/72 the 25.5 kilograms of maize, and in particular the corn on the cobs, were sold for 8 ghurushes. In order to provide 245 kilograms of kernel the Circassians had to purchase 294 kilograms of maize at total cost of 92 ghurushes. (NLCM, Or. D., F. 26, a. u. 217-219; F. 181, a. u. 487).

persons, as well. While the barley and wheat cash returns of the propertied and prosperous farmers helped to secure the families' annual subsistence, the rest of the cash surplus varied between minimal totals, 20 - 80 ghurushes. These facts allow for the conclusion that many of the Circassian families had "wealth" in kind.

Even highly relative, all three surveys clearly state that the Circassian families colonized in the diverse regions of the Danube vilayet differed in their agricultural activities. Probably, the farming and the breeding depended on the cash capitals they had. Contrary to the colonization of wealthy Circassian families in Dobruca, the Northwest of the Danube vilayet housed not so prosperous and even poor households whose male members provided the family subsistence by joining the Ottoman army. This circumstance precluded not only the farming. The partial economic integration influenced their socialization and educational progress<sup>90</sup>, as well.

Shortly before I conclude my preliminary notes, I would like to prove the S. A. Somel's assumption about the Ottoman attitude towards the socialization of the young Circassians. These attempts were implied in the construction of many primary schools (mekteps) at state costs. The investment served to inspire the pupils and their parents with strong religious conviction and respect for the government<sup>91</sup>. However the available sources outline a limited state aid or even a conservative financial approach to the remuneration of the mekteps' expenses. In the 1870s small portions of the migrant tax revenues deposited in the Refugee commission were allotted to recompense two thirds of the teachers' annual salaries (666 ½ or 1000 ghurushes). The other third (333 ½ or 500 ghurushes) was paid by the migrants as they did in the village of Ali Pasha, Bukoviçe, Izzeddin, Nevaşır, Nusretiye and Reşidiye, in the kaza of Lom<sup>92</sup>.

The Instruction of 1866 prescribed that the expenditure on school and mosque construction was allocated on the basis of the Circassian annual taxes deposited in the same commission. However, the actual practice evinces that the commission met only a half of these expenses while the refugees actively facilitated the development of the public environment.

In the summer of 1872 the Circassians in the village of Ahmediye, Feyiz Huda, Ihsaniye and Reşidiye submitted a letter of application for a school construction. They declared the need for remuneration of the builders and of the nails. The Circassians themselves, asserted their will to assist the construction and to deliver materials at an average of 29 864 ghurushes. A year

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<sup>90</sup> Compare: Abdullah Saydam, *ibid.*, p. 176-178.

<sup>91</sup> Selcuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908*, Leiden-Brill 2001, p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> NLCM, Or. D., F. 31, a. u. 757; Mitko Lachev, Margarita Dobрева, *ibid.*, p. 267-268.

later, in July 1873, the commission approved their request and allotted a total of 27 330 ghurushes<sup>93</sup>. Though the Circassians' personal involvement economized a share of their tax revenues, the approach elicits the question of whether they were able to provide the necessary materials by minor barley and wheat cash returns. Probably, they relied on a charitable endower or borrowed money in order to accomplish all public facilities.

However, the outlined stagnant economic environment deterred the Circassian families from enrolling their children at school. Once enrolled, the children quitted the lessons in favor of the practical crafts training or the assisting of the troops. Only the wealthy Circassian families and their representatives at the local government shared the educational goals of the Tanzimat reformers and sought to educate their descendants at the high schools in Istanbul<sup>94</sup>. The orphans had to make their way to a successful social integration by enrolling at the islahhanes in Niş, Rusçuk or Sofya. Once trained as weavers, printers, tailors or tannery workers, the local government favored referring to them as "graduates of the islahhanes" than as immigrants. As mentioned above their expenses at the islahhanes were met by the Circassian tax revenues. In contrast to the negative image of the Circassians, three Circassian children of the vocational schools persistently studied their lessons, showed immense talent for craft and were sent to develop their practical skills in Paris<sup>95</sup>.

In the 1860s and 1870s, due to the Ottoman limited financial assistance to the education or to crucial aspects which slowed down the economic integration, the "Danube" Circassians were not very successful in their socialization into the new imperial environment. Complying with the provision of the Treaty of Berlin and the Dondukov's order of 6<sup>th</sup> August 1878 which expelled them from the Principality of Bulgaria<sup>96</sup>, the Circassians settled anew in Anatolia<sup>97</sup>, Syria and Transjordan.

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<sup>93</sup> NLCM, Or. D., Vd 107/16, p. 127; F. 112, a. u. 3117, p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> NLCM, Or. D., F. 26, a. u. 16195.

<sup>95</sup> Newspaper "Danube", year 1, no. 4, 24 March 1865; year 2, no. 135, 18 December 1866; year 3, no. 202, 20 August 1867; year 5, no. 372, 30 April 1869; NLCM, Or. D., Belogradçik 17/8, p. 6, 19.

<sup>96</sup> Nikolay Ovsyanyy, *Sbornik materialov po grajdanskomu upravleniju i okkupatzii v Bolgarii v 1877-78-79 g.g., Vypusk 5* [Sources about the Russian Civil Government and Armed Control of Bulgaria in 1877-1879, Part 5], St. Peterburg 1906, p. 24; Todor Ikonov, *Protokoli na Berlinskiya kongres* [Protocols of the Congress of Berlin], Sofia 1885, p. 231, 233.

<sup>97</sup> Berat Yıldız, *Emigrations from the Russian Empire to the Ottoman Empire: An Analysis in the Light of the New Archival Materials*, MA at the Department of International Relations Bilkent University, Ankara 2006, p. 34, 48, 53-58, 95-104.

Many contemporary studies present the Circassians as pawns in an international political game of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the available primary sources allow for the conclusion that they consciously chose the dangerous way of the migration from the Northwest Caucasus into the Ottoman Empire. So, they rescued their ethos and ethnos from the Russia's intrusion and its assimilating attitude.

Acting to avoid or to limit a mass humanitarian crisis, the Sublime Porte founded a special Refugee Commission. It mobilized all resources, in cash and kind, offered as free aid by all Sultan's subjects and later by the already colonized Crimean refugees. The Ottoman government often made the local communities consider the extended food, wood and lodging as charity and convinced them to renounce the right of compensation. Emphasizing the varying material status of the Circassians, it excluded the wealthier from the distributed food aid. While allotting free and cultivable areas to the refugees, the local government established a secondary settlement network. Frequently, it named the villages after the members of the Sultan's family and the high or middle-ranking officials. Colonized all over the Danube vilayet, the Circassians enjoyed a more or less auspicious agricultural environment. The varying soils, landscape and plots predetermined their successful or minimal economic activity. Contrary to the Circassians colonized in Dobruca, those in the Northwest of the Danube vilayet had scanty cash returns from their agricultural products. Almost two thirds of the studied families did not harvest enough maize kernels for a 4-member household and had to barter the yielded barley and wheat. This circumstance influenced not only their economic integration, but it slowed down their socialization.

The conservative financial approach to the remuneration of the school expenses and the attempt to economize a share of their tax revenues made the Circassians rely on charitable endowers or borrow money in order to accomplish all public facilities. Even precluding the excess budgetary expenditure or quickly recompensing the state aid, the outlined financial policy failed to facilitate the Circassian adaptation to the new environment, to eradicate or to reduce the criminality among them and to secure their incontestable colonization in the Balkans.



### *Appendix 1*

The tithe registers of three villages (Ihsaniye, Hacilar and Kutloviçe) shed light not only on the number of the barley and wheat sheaves, but also on their average weight. In the village of Ihsaniye and Hacilar a barley sheaf weighed 1.28 kg and this in the village of Kutloviçe – 2.88 kg. A sheaf of wheat weighed respectively 1.92 kg, 2.4 kg and 2.5 kg. After paying the tithe, the villagers selected a 9% of the barley and wheat yield for seed<sup>98</sup>. The family's annual sufficiency depended on a near 80% of the harvest. So, the rest of the barley and the wheat varied between 45 – 265 kg while few families harvested more than 270 kg of both crops.

The daily energy requirement amount to 2700 calories per person or it equals the average energy intake of the Italian and French population during the 1860s and 1870s. There are about 3360 – 3490 calories in a kilogram of barley and about 3500 – 3550 calories in a kilogram of wheat<sup>99</sup>. Everyone needs daily 0.8 kilogram of barley or 0.75 kilogram of wheat to meet the average sufficiency. So, their annual volumes per person amount to 292 kilograms of barley or 273 kilogram of wheat. The comparison between the rest of the barley and wheat volumes and the average annual sufficiency demonstrates that almost all families were unable to feed even one person. This fact makes me assume that the Circassians bartered both crops on the market.

In the autumn-winter season of 1871/72 an Istanbul *kile* of barley (25.5 kg) was sold for 7 ghurushes or every kilogram cost 11 pares. In October 1871 a kile of wheat was purchased for 12 ghurushes and in the winter of 1871/72 it was sold for 14-15 ghurushes. So, every kilogram cost respectively 19 pares and 22-23 pares<sup>100</sup>. Probably, the farmers preferred to delay the bartering until the winter months. Since the snowy and cold weather could hinder them in getting to the market, I presume that the wheat was bartered earlier and at lower price.

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<sup>98</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s the average barley yield per 0.1 hectare was 258 kg. Every farmer needed at least 24 kg of barley seed, or 9% of the yield, to scatter the plots next year. The same proportion was valid for the wheat yield. (Todor Breshkov, *Echemik* [Barley], Sofia, 1951, p. 17-22, 48-49; Pavel Popov, Georgi Koynov, *Pshenica* [Wheat], Sofia 1951, p. 36, 90).

<sup>99</sup> Pencho Penchev, Hristo Krinchev, *Elementarni i optimalni potrebnosti ot sredstva za hranitelni produkti* [Minimal and optimal nutrition and its cash equivalent], Varna 1968, p. 71-72; Massimo Livi-Bacci, *Population and Nutrition. An essay on European demographic History*, Cambridge 2008, p. 31; Robert Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, New York 2003, p. 64, 669.

<sup>100</sup> NLCM, Or. D., F. 26, a. u. 217-219; F. 181, a. u. 487.

### Appendix 2

The tithe registers shed light on the maize yields in 5 villages (Ahmediye, Ihsaniye, Kutloviçe, Hacilar and Sabri Pasha). Since the Ottoman government levied the tithe not on the kernel, but on the total weight of the kernel and the corncobs, every single farmer delivered his portion as corn on the cobs. Once the tax was paid, the family had to shell the kernels from the corncobs which weighted about 20% of the yield. There is no evidence whether the Circassians scattered 2-3 kg of maize seeds in beds all over a 0.1 hectare or sowed 5 kilograms of seeds in rows all over the same area. So, I presume that they needed a larger seed volume. Harvesting an average of 253 kilograms per 0.1 hectare, the farmers had to select 2-3 percent of the kernels for seed<sup>101</sup>. Considering all these details, the annual maize sufficiency is estimate by the method described below:

#### 1. Approximate weight of kernels

The maize yield, A1 (corn on the cobs)	Tithe of the maize yield, A2	The maize volume left, A3 (A1-A2)	The kernels' weight, A4 (A3 – 20% corncobs' weight)
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#### 2. Approximate seed volume estimated in regard of the whole maize yield, A1.

Whole kernel volume, B1 (A1 – 20% of corncobs' weight)	Seed volume, B2 (B1 – 2-3% share of the seed)
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#### 3. The kernels on which a family depended, B3

B3 (The kernel's weight, A4 – Seed volume, B2)
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The comparison between the maize yield (A1) and the kernels left (B3) shows that the rest of the kernel is about 66.6% of the total maize yield. There are about 4000 calories in a kilogram of maize<sup>102</sup>. If everyone daily needs 0.67 kilogram of kernel to meet the average sufficiency, the annual kernel volume amounts to 245 kg.

<sup>101</sup> Todor Mitkov, Georgi Telkiev, *Tzarevictza. Rakovodstvo za krajochnicite po rastenievadstvo* [Maize. A Manual for farmers], Sofia 1961, p. 38, 43.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Ronzio, *ibid.*, New York 2003, p. 169.



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