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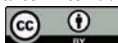
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STATE-MAKING IN THE OTTOMAN PERIPHERY: TANZIMAT REFORMS IN THE SANJAK OF BAYEZID IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Erdal ÇİFTÇİ

Mardin Artuklu University, Vocational Higher School, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, 47060, Istasyon, Artuklu, Mardin, Türkiye
e-mail: erdalciftci@artuklu.edu.tr

Hakan KAYA

Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Faculty of Letters and Science, Department of History, 04100, Merkez, Ağrı, Türkiye
e-mail: hkaya@agri.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The Ottoman centralization process, which began in the early nineteenth century, attempted to homogenize various administrative, judicial, and societal aspects of the state and life. In the Empire's eastern peripheral regions, the system of indirect rule, governed by local hereditary dynasties, prevailed but gradually came to an end. The shift towards an imperial-national direct state sphere necessitated the implementation of new regulations and institutions in these outlying regions. This paper explores the application of centralization reforms in the hereditary sanjak of Bayezid, located on the Ottoman eastern frontier adjacent to the Iranian and Russian Empires during the mid-nineteenth century. The state-making efforts did not merely involve the removal of local dynasties; it also entailed the multifaceted imposition of state rules and structures, establishing direct governance across various domains. This study examines how these new regulations were implemented, both successfully and to a limited extent, in Bayezid during the 1850s and 1860s, the initial decades of the reform period in the region. Additionally, the paper challenges the prevailing literature by arguing that not all hereditary dynasties resisted the reforms aimed at establishing a direct state sphere.

Keywords: Ottomans, Kurds, periphery, reforms, administration

LA CREAZIONE DELLO STATO NELLA PERIFERIA OTTOMANA: LE RIFORME DEL TANZIMAT NEL SANGIACCATO DI BAYEZID A METÀ DEL XIX SECOLO

SINTESI

Il processo di centralizzazione ottomano, che cominciò all'inizio del diciannovesimo secolo, cercò di omogeneizzare vari aspetti amministrativi, giuridici e sociali dello stato e della vita. Nelle regioni periferiche orientali dell'impero, il sistema di governo indiretto, retto da dinastie locali ereditarie, prevalse, ma gradualmente si avviò

al tramonto. Il passaggio a una sfera statale diretta imperial-nazionale necessitava dell'aggiunta di nuove regolamentazioni e istituzioni in queste regioni periferiche. Questo contributo esplora l'implementazione di riforme centralizzate nel sangiacato ereditario di Bayezid, collocato sulla frontiera orientale dell'impero, adiacente agli imperi iraniano e russo, durante la metà del diciannovesimo secolo. Le azioni di consolidamento dello stato non comprendevano solo la rimozione di dinastie locali; comportavano anche l'imposizione multiforme dei regole statali e strutture, stabilendo un governo diretto su vari domini. Lo studio esamina come furono implementate queste nuove normative, con successo seppur in misura limitata, a Bayezid durante gli anni '50 e '60 dell'Ottocento, i primi decenni del periodo di riforme nella regione. Inoltre, l'articolo contesta la letteratura prevalente, sostenendo che non tutte le dinastie ereditarie resistettero alle riforme volte a stabilire un controllo statale diretto.

Parole chiave: ottomani, curdi, periferia, riforme, amministrazione

INTRODUCTION¹

The Bayezid Sanjak² derives its name from its central city, Bayezid, situated at the confluence of the Ottoman, Iranian, and Russian empires. It is characterized by fertile landscapes, such as Eleşkirt and Diyadin, nourished by the Murat River. The region was home to a heterogeneous population, consisting of both settled communities and powerful nomadic tribes, and is marked by harsh winters and mild summers, offering suitable pastures. The region was ruled by a local Kurdish dynasty under Ottoman control from the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century, with its sphere of influence at times extending to northern Lake Van in the south, Hınıs and Tekman in the west, Iranian Maku in the east, and the domains of Kars sanjak in the north. Similar to their earlier resettlement of tribes in the Balkans, the Ottomans promoted the settlement of the Süleymani Kurdish tribal confederation, originating from the Diyarbakir region, in their traditional summer pastures as a strategic measure to defend the region against Safavid incursions. As the most powerful clan among the Süleymanies, the chiefs of Bisyan strengthened their influence, eventually becoming the hereditary rulers of Bayezid sanjak until the mid-nineteenth century (Çiftçi, 2018; Kaya, 2020).³

- 1 We would like to thank Metin Atmaca for his valuable feedback and suggestions, and Tolga Korkusuz for his assistance in creating the map.
- 2 A sanjak was a main administrative district in the Ottoman Empire, part of a hierarchical system of governance, positioned between an *eyalet/vilayet* (province) and a *kaza* (sub-district).
- 3 The only exception to this was the appointment of Çeçenzade El-Hac Hasan Ağa, the steward of the Erzurum governor, during the extraordinary period of the war years from 1821 to 1823 with Qajar Iran. (BOA, HAT 764/36069,1236/1821).

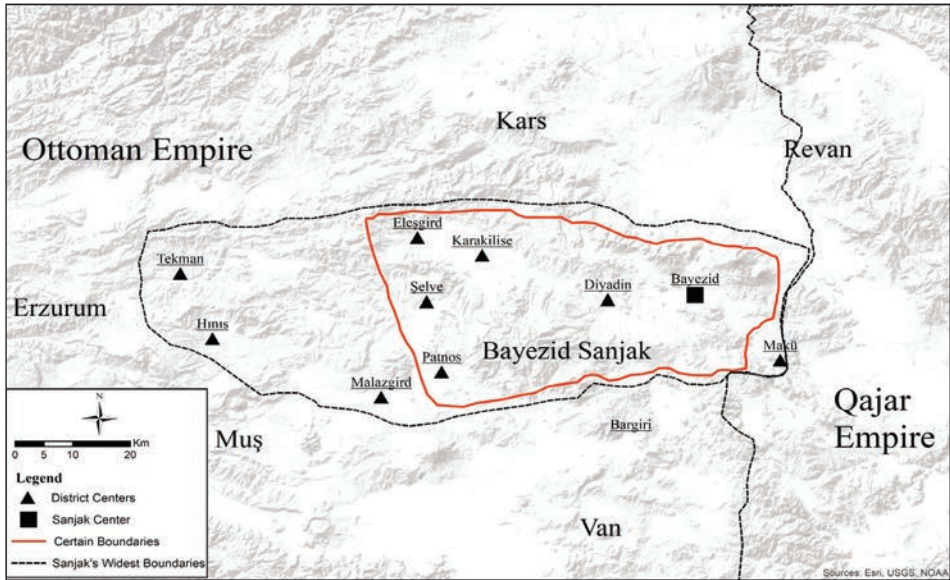


Fig. 1: Boundary of the Bayezid Sanjak in the early nineteenth century.

The Ottomans applied their flexible and negotiable administrative approach, which played a significant role in the establishment of the dynasty, particularly in remote regions, with Bayezid being one of them (Agoston, 2003).⁴ Şeref Khan, the hereditary ruler of Bidlis and a chronicler, does not refer to the rulers of Bayezid but to the Süleymani tribal confederation, which, after conflicting with their emirate in Silvan, resettled in Bayezid, making sense since the sanjak of Bayezid was only recently established when Şeref Khan wrote his book in 1596 (Şeref Han, 2016). The Ottoman eastern provinces, particularly those located along the Safavid border, were under indirect rule during the early modern period, characterized by the terms *hükümet* and *yurtluk/ocaklık* sanjaks, which have been studied less until more recent times (Alanoğlu, 2022; Bayraktar, 2015; Atmaca, 2013; Kaya, 2018; Çiftçi et al., 2022; Özok-Gündoğan, 2022). Bayezid was one of the *yurtluk/ocaklık* sanjaks where the Ottomans ensured the administration by the local hereditary dynasty, unless no heirs remained. The central government rarely maintained registers and lacked precise knowledge of the revenues of the sanjak, but it held the authority to redistribute some fief revenues to others (BOA, KK. d, Nr. 266, 1633, 88–92; Ayn Ali Efendi, 2023, 51, 88, 140; Sofyalı Ali Çavuş, 1992, 15, 32–34; Çelebi, 2009, 326). Ottoman archives contain limited sources from the early modern period, suggesting that the local dynasty managed the administrative, judicial, and fiscal structure under the

4 For an example from Ottoman Albania showing how Ottoman rule enhanced the privileged status of Albanian tribes in the early modern period, cf. Kola (2017).

oversight of the centrally appointed provincial governors in Erzurum. Most sources focus on taxes paid to the imperial treasury, security concerns with neighboring empires and nomadic tribes, and intra-dynastic conflicts. Beyond that, the Ottomans did not closely monitor the internal administrative, fiscal, and judicial structures of the sanjak, nor did they attempt to penetrate it, as sources provide no details on these sanjak's inner matters.

This study examines how the system of this indirect rule ended around the mid-nineteenth century in Bayezid and how the Ottomans, through the Tanzimat (reform, reorganization) policies, transitioned the sanjak into direct rule as part of their modern imperial state-making process (Barakat, 2023, 2–10).⁵ The term “state-making” is broad in scope, as it encompasses the standardization of state rule throughout the empire, including the Bayezid sanjak, which has not been studied specifically. This article will focus on these aspects of the imperial state-making process in relation to the Bayezid sanjak, located in the Ottoman eastern periphery, including the benefiting from and eventual elimination of local dynasties, the homogenization of administrative rule, infrastructural reconstruction, control of wandering groups, the introduction of new taxes, customs, and quarantines, as well as the border-making process and its patrols (Ateş, 2013, 34). This paper will discuss how these processes were applied and their success or limits in the context of one Kurdish hereditary dynasty, in Bayezid, during its early stages, and how they became effective after three centuries of indirect rule.

This study aims to contribute to the literature by providing an additional example to further elaborate on the ongoing discussion regarding how reform reached to the edges of the Ottoman Empire as well. The implementation of the Tanzimat in these hereditary sanjaks has mostly been discussed by focusing on the uprisings of the locally powerful Kurdish dynasties (Çadırcı, 1997; Gencer, 2010). It was suggested that these groups fiercely protected their fragile autonomy, a statement that is accurate for some powerful *hükümet* sanjaks of Cizre, Müküs, Baban and Hakkari (Eppel, 2008). However, this study focuses on a different example: the last ruler of Bayezid, who did not oppose the reforms and instead embraced a gradual implementation of centralization. Rather, the central government supported him for his earlier Tanzimat practices, a period we refer to as the transitional phase, which continued until his forced abdication in 1849. In addition, this was not unique to Bayezid's case; many Kurdish hereditary rulers played a similar role, serving as hereditary yet centrally appointed leaders, symbolizing both the old order and the new reformist rule during the late 1840s.

The first section will analyze this period, along with the developments during the first half of the nineteenth century that led to the sanjak's decline into poverty. Secondly, it will examine how the multi-faceted process of state-making unfolded in the domain of this peripheral sanjak during the first two decades following the elimination of hereditary rule, which was itself a part of the homogenizing the administration process. This study will also explore the extent to which the sanjak's multiple spheres, its sub-districts and tribal areas, confronted the reforms. This discussion will show

5 For a discussion on the “modern imperial-state making process” in southern Syria, western Jordan, and eastern Palestine, cf. Barakat (2023).

Table 1: Some of the last hereditary Kurdish rulers in the Ottoman East with centralized titles before their exile.

Place	Last Ruler	Title	Time	Exiled to	Sources
Bayezid	Behlül Paşa	Kaymakam	1845–49	Erzurum	See this article
Baban	Abdullah Paşa	Kaymakam	1847–51	Istanbul	(Atmaca, 2013,176)
Palu	Abdullah Bey	Müdür	1845–50	Tekirdağ	(Alanoğlu, 2017, 334, 339)
Bohtan	Izzeddin Şir Bey	Mütesellim	1847–48, 1849–50	Istanbul, Mosul	(Atmaca, 2022, 360; Ögün, 2010, 54–60; Kardam, 2011, 363)
Hakkari	Nurullah Bey	Müdür	1847–49	Crete	(BOA, C.DH. 51/2540, 1263/1847)
Muş	Şerif Bey	Kaymakam, Müdür	1845–48	Diyarbakir, Damascus	(Duman Koç, 2018, 136, 153, 156)

that the Tanzimat’s approach in the Bayezid sanjak was both negotiable and coercive at times. Rather than being solely top-down, these reform practices were sometimes requested by the local rulers or by council members similar to some other Ottoman provinces (Köksal, 2015, 107–108). It will be argued that the state-making process was not a sharp beginning or end but a prolonged period of gradual implementation, shaped by the local responses, sometimes blending the old with the new, lasting until the empire’s end; thus, this study focuses on the earlier stages of the process.

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION IN THE BAYEZID SANJAK: THE LAST HEREDITARY RULER OF THE “DYNASTY OF ENFORCEMENT AND CONTROL” AND REFORM

By focusing on specific hereditary sanjaks in the Ottoman East, it highlights the tension between a modernizing central government and local hereditary rulers who resisted reforms, leading to conflict and rebellion. However, this interpretation tends to overgeneralize the situation, as the first requirement for implementing the reforms in the environment was to reach a consensus at local level as well (Findley, 2014, 210). Many hereditary rulers negotiated the implementation of Tanzimat reforms, though some resisted and some not, within their sanjaks during this transitional period in second quarter of the nineteenth century, with the application

of new regulations often shaped by local responses (Duman Koç, 2018, 97–110, 136–150; 2021; Çiftçi, 2022a; Özok-Gündoğan, 2022, 20, 132–156; Alanoğlu, 2017, 342). Rather than a well-defined policy, the Tanzimat was applied on an ad-hoc, case-by-case basis. While most reactionaries were exiled, some were not, and those deemed compatible with the reforms took on roles in implementing them through a mix of old and new practices. Some Kurdish dynasts continued to serve under centralized Ottoman rule, both in their own regions or in other Ottoman sanjaks, such as the members of the Bohtan and Baban Emirates, which resisted the reforms at the beginning (Atmaca, 2013, 176). Bayezid was one such sanjak, where its last hereditary ruler, Muhammed Behlül Paşa, held power. During his tenure the new regulations began to be implemented, spanned from the 1830s to 1849, and his status underwent a transformation as the region transitioned toward the direct rule. However, this transformation was flexible and gradual, with the last ruler being incorporated into the direct rule of the imperial state-making process. This section will examine how Bayezid responded to the reforms, with a focus on the last hereditary ruler and the socio-political conditions of the sanjak in the first half of the nineteenth century, prior to the implementation of the Tanzimat.

Muhammed Behlül Paşa was described as a member of a dynasty characterized by its “enforcement of authority and control” (*zabta ve rabta muktedir hanedan*) over the population, notables, and tribes of the region (BOA, İ. MVL 34/609, 1257/1841). Since his ancestors was in rule in Bayezid since the sixteenth century, this gave power and legitimacy to him controlling the masses. His temporal loyalty and compatible nature stemmed from his sanjak’s relative vulnerability to military incursions, in contrast to other powerful hereditary rulers in the Ottoman East. Thus, despite occasional dismissals from his post and periods of captivity as a prisoner of war, he maintained authority over Bayezid over three decades, spanned from 1814 to 1849.

Muhammed Behlül was most likely born in one of the sub-districts of Bayezid, as his father, Mahmud Paşa, was appointed to the administrative posts of Hınıs or Tekman in the early nineteenth century by Behlül’s grandfather, İshak Paşa, who was one of the most prominent and influential figures of the dynasty, constructed one of the finest palaces in Ottoman territories, a symbol and spatialization of the accumulated power and prestige inherited from his ancestors (BOA, C.DH. 187/9309, s.d.). Wagner describes the monumental palace after his visit to Bayezid:

The deserted palace of Bajasid is one of the handsomest in the Turkish empire, and surpassing in solidity the Seraglio of Stamboul. Even in its present ruinous condition, it offers quite a royal appearance, with its cupolas, columns, and walls of red marble. (Wagner, 1856, 63)

His father, Mahmud, was the last powerful figure of the dynasty; however, his son, Muhammed Behlül, lacked comparable influence and ultimately became a salaried official within the Ottoman bureaucracy and lately dismissed from power



Fig. 2: The palace of the hereditary dynasty of Bayezid, completed in the late eighteenth century, has been restored at its current site (photo by: Erdal Çiftçi, 2014).

in 1849 (BOA, MVL 32/30, 1265/1849; İ.MVL 160/4616, 1265/1849; Brant & Glascott, 1840, 422). Behlül's rule was extraordinary, as he fought in three wars—the 1821–1823 Ottoman-Iranian, the 1828–1829 Ottoman-Russian, and the 1853–1855 Ottoman-Russian—during which he was captured and exiled to Tehran and Tbilisi, only to be reinstated after each captivity (Averyanov, 2010, 109). In 1849, Behlül was compelled to undergo forced settlement in Erzurum with his entire family, as the Tanzimat reforms gradually led to the dismissal of most hereditary rulers.

Behlül's uncle, who ruled Bayezid from 1806 to 1814, was replaced due to fabricated accusations of mental illness from Erzurum, with Behlül assuming his position after a compulsory payment of 300 purse piasters to the provincial treasury (BOA, HAT 1364/53898, s.d.; HAT 481/23548, 1229/1814). Although no conflicts occurred during the transfer of office in Bayezid, Behlül's uncle allied with the Iranians and launched several attacks on the city, which were suppressed before he surrendered to Erzurum, where he died under suspicious circumstances (BOA, HAT 796/36910, s.d.; HAT 1314/51224, s.d.). Behlül's rise to power, facilitated by the amount he offered and approved by the governor of Erzurum, followed a common practice during this period, where dynastic members who made the highest bid and maintained strong

relationships were granted power in Bayezid. Up until 1820, limited data suggests that Behlül maintained his hereditary status, with no intervention from the central government, indicating that hereditary rights were upheld at the local level.

The year 1820 marked a significant turning point for the Bayezid Sanjak, as it never regained its previous prosperity. Intra-dynastic conflicts persisted, compounded by the Iranian wars of 1821–23 and the Russian wars of 1828–29, during which the population of the city and surrounding villages dwindled, and its monumental infrastructure, including the palace and castle, were destroyed. This time a member of the dynasty, ruler of Eleşkirt, Abdulhamid Paşa, was supported by the governor of Erzurum in 1820 and a high amount of payment paid the local bureaucracy 500,000 piasters receiving debt from tribal chiefs and Iranian Khan of Revan (BOA, KK.d. 4832, 1239/1824).⁶ Same fabricated causes were instrumentalized by governor of Erzurum, Hüsrev Paşa, to take Behlül from power that the latter had secret relations with the Iranians and Iranian tribes (BOA, HAT 826/37443, 1233/1818). The situation escalated disorder in the sanjak, particularly with the governor of Erzurum receiving payment from Abdulhamid Paşa to appoint him to Bayezid, which led the Iranians to begin raiding Ottoman lands in 1820. (BOA, HAT 825/ 37413, 1235/1820; HAT 783/36618, 1239/1824; İnalçık, 1999, 42). Both sides engaged in conflict through their tribal allies, such as the Zilan and Sepki tribes, to whom each dynastic member was connected by marital ties, with each side accusing the other of killings, pillaging, and kidnappings (BOA, HAT 1/18,1235/1820; Koç, 2020, 64, 84). In addition, the local clergy supported their respective factions, with the clergy of Bayezid backing Behlül and accusing his rival, while the clergy of Eleşkirt supported Abdulfettah Paşa and denounced Behlül. However, after attempting to buy some time, Behlül Paşa peacefully vacated his post and eventually settled in Erzurum (BOA, HAT 1/18, s.d.; HAT 826/37436, 1236/1821; HAT 764/36069, 1236/1821).

Between 1821 and 1824, Bayezid was under Qajar occupation. Although the governor of Erzurum removed Behlül from power, he was sent with a small force hopefully to organize resistance against the Iranians but switched sides, complying with the Qajars and being taken to Tehran as a war captive for about a year (BOA, HAT 795/36863, 1238/1822). In 1824, the Ottomans reinstated him as ruler of Bayezid again. However, during the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–29, Behlül was captured by the Russians and taken as a war captive, while the Russian forces destroyed the city's infrastructure, caused a plague, and deported Armenian craftsmen and villagers upon retreat. These wars, along with escalating tribal banditry, severely damaged the city's economy and stability.⁷ In 1834, after a raid on an Iranian caravan traveling along the Silk Road trade route that passed through Bayezid by the Celali tribe, which

6 Repairing three castles in Bayezid after the Iranian war of 1821–23 cost 130,000 piasters, which shows that a payment of 500,000 piasters is quite high (BOA, HAT 904/39702, 1240/1825).

7 “Since the Bayezid sanjak is also ruined and devastated, it is of no benefit to me [...] the Bayezid sanjak is completely destroyed” (BOA, HAT 782/36598, 1239/1823).

nearly sparked an Ottoman-Iranian war, Behlül lost his independence, and Bayezid came under the control of the governors of Erzurum (Brant & Glascott, 1840, 422). Although Behlül remained as the ruler of Bayezid, he was now responsible for transferring 80,000 piasters annually to Erzurum as a tax collector, a role he himself offered his resignation in 1842 (BOA, İ.DH 59/2938, 1258/1842). It was the first step of Tanzimat's influence that hereditary rule in Bayezid was intervened and their hereditary status was decreased to a tax collector in practice.

The application of Tanzimat in Bayezid was a long process of gradual application. Sometimes returning to the traditional hereditary rule was possible, therefore, the 1830s and 1840s should be addressed as a transitional period both indirect and direct rules were switched or co-existed. What we can see on the case of Bayezid that Behlül was a quite negotiable member of the dynasty, open to the new rules. Although he wanted to preserve his hereditary rights, he did not resist, as the central government depended on his cooperation, particularly in maintaining order and enforcing the new tax rates, as well as in the formation of the sanjak's council. Therefore, it still needed a dynasty of enforcement and order (*zabta ve rabta muktedir hanedan*) to implement direct state sphere in practice, therefore, when Behlül offered his resignation in 1842, it was not accepted, his hereditary rights were restored between 1842–45. The governor of Erzurum, therefore, rejected taking Behlül Paşa from his post explained the cause:

The method of governance in that region is based on those whom they regard as their associates and of the same kind, whom they consider part of the ancient dynasty (hanedân-ı kadim), according to the clear indication of rank and necessity. Since the procedures of his change and alteration are not easily understood among the tribes and clans, it would inevitably lead to a disruption of the administrative order. (BOA, İ.MVL 34/609, 1257/1841)

These references show that the prestige and power of hereditary rulers, particularly over the tribes of the region, necessitated the empire to retain the last hereditary ruler during this transitional period.

In 1838, during the British consul to Erzurum Brant's visit to Bayezid, a battalion was already long before established in the city, likely in 1835, as an extension of Tanzimat reforms (Brant & Glascott, 1840, 421). However, the battalion commander was under Behlül's orders, had no power and faced numerous obstacles, according to his own account. Brant likely referred to the Third Battalion of the Anatolian Army's Sixteenth Regiment, as their monthly pay was problematic, and they were permanently stationed in the sanjak's center (Çakaloğlu, 2001, 51). Texier also mentions that the Ottomans stationed an imperial battalion in Bayezid's center to suppress any possible uprisings. However, he notes that the Kurds were not intimidated by them, rendering the soldiers largely ineffective (Texier, 1842, 130–132). While details are scarce, by 1842, at least 600 imperial soldiers were stationed in Bayezid, receiving a monthly payment of 16,000 to 18,000 piasters (BOA, C.AS. 423/17531, 1257/1842;

ML.MSF.d. 3032, 1257/1842; ML.MSF.d. 3153, 1257/1842; ML.MSF.d. 2882, 1257/1842). This was a new development in the transitional period, as the sanjak had previously lacked permanent imperial army presence; instead, hereditary rulers relied on allied tribal cavalry for their security. Therefore, it can be asserted that security issues were the first area where Tanzimat practices were implemented in Bayezid during the transitional state-making process in the sanjak.

By 1845, when the new administrative rule was set to be implemented in Bayezid, the region had already been under war-torn, dire, unstable, and economically devastated conditions similar to some Ottoman provinces (Anderson, 1984, 325). Several travelers have described this situation in their accounts; in 1838, when Brant visited the city, he describes that:

It is now in a most dilapidated and ruined state, the bazars are wretched and ill supplied, and the place does not wear the appearance of commercial activity. The people appear an uncouth and ill-disposed race, and have contracted the rude manners of the Kurd tribes by which they are surrounded, and with which they are in constant contact. (Brant & Glascott, 1840, 418–419, 428)

According to Brant, the sub-districts of Bayezid—Eleşkirt and Diyadin—were similarly affected, being under the rule of Behlül’s brother and son, and shared the same dire conditions. Carl Ritter similarly depicted the conditions in the center of Bayezid in 1843, noting abandoned houses, a deserted market, dirty streets, and a diminished population of around 200 Armenian Christians and 300–400 Kurdish Muslims, caused by wars, banditry, and plague. Despite its nominal dependency on Erzurum, Ritter observed that Behlül still maintained a form of independence in practice since as Ottomans also described “being in a state of dispersion, it was unable to govern the officials, viziers, and military commanders sent from outside (of sanjak)” yet (BOA, HAT 783/36618, s.d.; Ritter, 1843, 338–348). Therefore, the Ottomans addressed Behlül as “the dynasty of enforcement and control” and continued to reappoint him to the post (BOA, İ.MVL 34/609, 1257/1842).

The earthquake in Mount Ararat in 1840 further worsened the conditions in Bayezid, causing numerous fatalities and damaging most of the houses and the palace (Karakhanian et al., 2004, 207–212). According to Wagner, who visited Bayezid in 1847, Behlül Paşa had to leave his magnificent palace and settle in a regular house. He provides important information that the Tanzimat reforms were beginning to be implemented in Bayezid with the establishment of a council:

He [Behlül] was seated on his divan, surrounded by Turks and Koordish chiefs. The whole audience-chamber was filled with armed men, including some moustachioed Koords of really terrible aspect, who might have stood models for Salvator Rosa. Behlül Pacha was an insignificant thin man of fifty, lacking Turkish grandeur and Oriental tact, even observable in Koords. (Wagner, 1856, 61)

In 1845, as part of the Tanzimat reforms' centralization efforts, local councils were established in several hereditary sanjaks in the Ottoman East as well, including Bayezid and its provincial center, Erzurum.

Bayezid's provincial center, Erzurum, was incorporated into Tanzimat reforms in 1845, with the appointment of a marshal and a treasurer (*defterdar*), the establishment of a provincial council, and the implementation of income registrars (*temettu*) (BOA, İ.MVL 64/1224, 1261/1845; A.DVN. 12/5, 1261/1845; İ.DH. 97/4852, 1261/1845). The Governor of Erzurum was instructed to oversee the control of tribes, the security of the borders, passport controls, and demographic registers. In neighboring and other provincial centers, such as Erzurum, Van, and Trabzon, there was significant resistance to the new Tanzimat regulations, particularly due to the government's policy of confiscating land grants revenues of *sipahis* on behalf of landowners (Çiftçi, 2022a; Pinson, 1975, 104, 116–117).⁸ However, no collective resistance was encountered in Bayezid, likely due to the hereditary ruler's strong control over the population (BOA, C.DH. 299/14948, 1261/1845). Same year an Ottoman document summarizes the transition period to the Tanzimat rule in Bayezid "the Bayezid sanjak was annulled as a *yurtluk ocaklık*, and in return, it was enacted with the request and consent of its administrator (Behlül Paşa), with a salary being provided" (BOA, BEOAYN.d. 392, 1261/1845, 145). Behlül, rather than resisting the formation of the council, on the contrary accepted his role as a salaried official, responsible for collecting and transferring taxes to the central treasury. Behlül no longer retained his previous legitimate rights to control the sanjak's administration and receive its revenues; instead, he became a salaried official, receiving a monthly 6,000 piasters (BOA, ML.MSF.d 6628, 1261/1845; Çadırcı, 1997, 614). In contrast to other hereditary rulers, such as Emin Paşa of Muş and those in Cizre, Hakkari, and Mahmudi, Behlül did not resist the process similar to rulers of Palu, Eğin, Çermik (Alanoğlu, 2017, 342).⁹ Though he did not go to this assignment, he was even appointed as *kaymakam* of Van to suppress the revolt against the Tanzimat reforms (BOA, İ.MSM. 49/1231, 1261/1845). As part of this new homogenizing administrative-judiciary restructuring, the sanjak of Bayezid was headed by him, who served as *kaymakam*, along with a judge (*naib*), a mufti, a treasurer, a chief scribe (*mal ve tahrirat kâtibi*), seven elected Muslim members, and one or two representatives of the Armenian community (*kocabaş*).¹⁰ In fact, a local traditional council already existed in

8 "The *sipahis* and the holders of fief of Van will be easily converted into cavalry soldiers of the organized forces, and they will be tasked with performing their duties and training according to their fiefs" (*Van'ın sipahi ve erbab-ı tımarı berice suhuletle süvari-yi asâkir-i mansureye tebdil olunub tımarına göre edây-ı hizmet ve talime mübâşeret ettirileceği*) (BOA, HAT 718/34245).

9 Although some hereditary rulers resisted the reform, other family members of these hereditary rulers continued to stay in power as mediator for some more years as well.

10 The concept of the council was very similar to how the Tanzimat reforms were intended to be implemented (cf. Akiba, 2009, 190; BOA, ML.MSF.d 6628, 1846).

Bayezid, as Pierre Amédée Jaubert, who jailed in the palace in 1804, noted that Behlül's father, Mahmud, was surrounded in his court by clergy and tribal leaders, who engaged in discussions and decision-making on matters concerning the sanjak (Jaubert, 1821, 32). Therefore, while the council itself was not a new phenomenon, the difference this time was the appointment of some officials from outside the province, and the council's role now represented direct control and governance by the central government, albeit with the Tanzimat reforms applied only to a limited extent. Armenian representatives in the local council were also not a new phenomenon in the sanjak, as the treasurers of sanjak rulers were often Armenians who likely participated in the divan during the period of hereditary sanjak administration. The two sub-districts (*kaza*) of the sanjak, Eleşkirt and Diyadin, continued to be administered by *müdürs*, Behlül's son and brother, each receiving a monthly payment of 1,000 piasters as well. A doctor was paid 1,000 piasters, while twenty police (*zabtiye*) officers received 20 piasters each in the sanjak center. Other salaried officials included the treasurer, chief scribe, accountant, and treasurers for sub-districts (*sandık emini*) (BOA, ML.MSF.d 6628, 1262/1846). While the treasurer and scribes were appointed from outside the sanjak, the elected Muslim members were mostly from the local clergy or notables, as indicated by their seals, which lacked names.

During the period of 1845–49, the annual total tax assigned to Bayezid ranged from 140,000 to 180,000 piasters, which Behlül and the new local council were responsible for transferring to the provincial center—double the amount Behlül had to pay between 1835 and 1842 (BOA, ML.MSF.d 6628, 1262/1846; C.ML. 579/23765, 1268/1851). However, later sources suggest that these amounts were often not properly collected, and their records were sometimes not submitted. As a salaried hereditary official with exclusive rights to collect the tithe, Behlül faced no competition in bidding, and in 1847, the imperial center was informed that much of the revenue was spent on the sanjak's expenditures in response to taxation requests.¹¹ Population and income registers were not conducted in Bayezid as in some other provincial centers, even after the post-Behlül era. This was due to the predominance of nomadic tribes and the region's strategic position, known as a "sensitive" (*nazik*) region, prompting the Ottoman government to avoid provoking the local population. In addition, in 1848, a locust invasion struck the city of Bayezid, further decline its demographics and revenues (BOA, MVL 28/2, 1264/1848; A.MKT 142/8, 1264/1848). Consequently, security concerns took priority over the new order's financial issues in the sanjak, and the matter was negotiated on the issue. However, the revenue collected was transferred to the provincial center after 1845, and the hereditary rule officially lost its financial control over the sanjak's income. This was a key development in making a direct state-sphere in the region during the transitional period.

11 Behlül received the auction for tithe collection in 1848 for around 105,000 piasters, which was a substantial raise from 80,000 in the previous years (BOA, A.MKT. 115/85, 1264/1848; İ.DH. 175/9407, 1264/1848).

By benefiting from the discourse and rationale of Tanzimat, some council members of Bayezid secretly complained Behlül Paşa and his son to the provincial center, accusing them of acting against the rules of Tanzimat in late 1848. According to their accusations, Behlül exchanged posts with his son—formerly the ruler of a sub-district of Bayezid—who, without official approval, assumed control of the sanjak center. They arbitrarily appointed unqualified favorites to the council and dismissed anyone questioning their decisions. Tribes were over-taxed for their wintering and fodder taxes and some tribes even escaped to Iranian lands. The accusations also included claims that over-taxed villagers were subjected to forced labor, and that bribery was widespread within the sanjak administration. When Armenian villagers from Arzab (Sağlıksuyu) mentioned the exemption from taxation granted by the Sultan due to the locusts, Behlül's son responded, "I will do it, let your sultan ask me" and they were beaten by the Paşa's Armenian treasurer (*sarrafa*), Bedros, and sent back to their villages. The judge (*kadı*) of the city was also accused of bribery and corruption, acting against not only Tanzimat reforms but also Sharia law (BOA, MVL 30/30, 1265/1849; MVL 227/30, 1265/1949; İ.MVL 148/4199, 1265/1849; A.MKT. 197/57, 1265/1849; A.MKT.MVL 13/45, 1265/1849). The governor of Erzurum emphasized the necessity of removing them from office, as old habits die hard: "Since they will not abandon their ancient customs; and, whenever they find the opportunity, they will begin committing various injustices and acts of oppression against the people and tribes" (BOA, MVL 227/30, 1265/1849). Although Behlül denied the accusations of over-taxation, his son acknowledged the drudgery, and bribery was regarded as a customary practice for receiving presents, while some tribal chiefs were accused of having corrupt habits during their escape to Iran. Although the accusations were made in late 1848, the investigation continued for nearly a year. Upon confirmation by the Governor of Erzurum and the Marshal of Anatolia, Behlül was removed from his post, and his entire family, along with his men, were peacefully relocated to the provincial center in Erzurum. Although the accusations were dismissed, Behlül and his entire close family were not allowed to return to Bayezid. During his time in Erzurum, he became involved in political affairs and even participated in the Crimean War (1853–55), during which he was captured for the third time. He resided in Erzurum for the remainder of his life, until his death, receiving a monthly stipend of 3,000 piasters in recognition of his older hereditary rights over the sanjak revenues, which had been appropriated to the imperial treasury (BOA, A.MKT. 197/57, 1265/1849; A.MKT. MVL 13/45, 1265/1849; MVL 32/30, 1265/1849; MVL 229/36, 1265/1849; İ.MVL 160/4616, 1266/1850).

The year 1849, marking the exile of the last hereditary ruler despite his salaried position, represents a significant shift in the long-term process of making direct state formation in the Bayezid sanjak; however, the transitional period already introduced new administrative, financial and security regulations to the region. Although the new rules initially needed the hereditary ruler, their

implementation was hindered by the persistence of old habits, ingrained over three centuries of administrative rule. The following section will show that the process of making an imperial direct state sphere in Ottoman Bayezid was a lengthy one, continuing after 1849 with many obstacles; however, during the first two decades in 1850s and 1860s, this process was overseen by centrally appointed sanjak rulers and council members.

MAKING DIRECT STATE-SPHERE IN THE PERIPHERY: THE SANJAK OF BAYEZID IN THE 1850S AND 1860S

Direct administration without any intermediaries commenced in Ottoman Bayezid after 1849, and from that year onwards, no intermediary role was attributed to the Bayezid's hereditary dynasty. Although this marked a significant administrative shift in Bayezid, the transitional period appears to have prevented the emergence of a power vacuum within the administration of the sanjak.¹² The Ottoman archives contain numerous documents from 1849 onward, indicative of the commencement of direct rule in the sanjak. Prior to this date, the scarcity of documents points to the period when the local hereditary rule dominated the sanjak. This evidence illustrates that Bayezid further came under the direct control of Ottoman rule, without dynastic intermediaries. This section examines how the early two decades of direct rule were practiced and pursued in Bayezid and its domain. Initiated by Behlül Paşa, this gradual process over time signified a broader phenomenon of territorial state formation in Bayezid. It not only involved the dismissal of hereditary dynasts but also encompassed a multifaceted application of various practices. Therefore, this section will examine how the local council, under the central appointment of sanjak ruler, attempted, succeeded, or failed in the application of administrative and fiscal policies in the environs of the Bayezid sanjak during the early decades.

The first centrally appointed ruler of the sanjak was a local noble from a sub-district in Erzurum, followed by an officer from the Anatolian Army, who were both appointed as deputy sanjak ruler (*kaymakam vekili*) to Bayezid in 1849. However, since it was against the Tanzimat reforms for a soldier to hold a bureaucratic post, Feyzullah Bey was centrally appointed to the sanjak and became the first centrally appointed *kaymakam* (sanjak ruler) in 1850 (BOA, İ.MVL 160/4616, 1266/1850; HR.MKT. 34/19,1266/23, 1850). Following this date, sanjak rulers were centrally appointed and regularly changed approximately every two to four years. In some cases, they were dismissed from their posts due

12 Some scholars argue that following the elimination of hereditary rulers a power vacuum emerged in the region, while others contend that the transitional nature of the period prevented such a development. In this context, each case warrants specific consideration. For instance, during the rule of Bayezid and Palu, the transitional implementation of the Tanzimat reforms prevented the emergence of a power vacuum, whereas in some regions, the religious elite, particularly the class of sheikhs, rose to power (Özok-Gündoğan, 2022, 170–173; Klein, 2011, 60, 77, 140; Atmaca, 2013, 80, 171, 181, 189).

to abuses of power or a desire for reassignment to other sanjaks. The Armenian community also sought to leverage the Tanzimat discourse, requesting the reappointment of Bayezid's deputy *kaymakam*, as under his rule, some Armenian families had returned from Iran and Russia to settle in Bayezid, following the suppression of tribes. (BOA, MVL 116/85, 1852; MVL 228/1, s.d.; HR.MKT. 27/12, 1849; Ueno, 2013, 99). However, this request was not applied due to the Ottomans' pro-tribal policy as it will be elaborated below. Sanjak rulers continued to preside over the local council of Bayezid sanjak, while scribes and elected local members (*aza*) occasionally changed over time. Two local Armenian representatives remained in their posts but frequently missed meetings for unknown reasons. In 1858, the Patriarch in Istanbul requested the appointment of a local Armenian, Bedros, to the council, indicating that the presence of local community representatives was not a smooth process. Ali Kemali Efendi was addressed as *mutasarrıf* in 1868, following the 1864 provincial regulation, after being appointed as *kaymakam* in 1867 (Salnâme-i Devlet, 1868, 105).

However, the judge (*naib*) and mufti of Bayezid consistently retained their positions in the 1850s despite the frequent turnover of *kaymakams*. This suggests that the two clerics likely established power and prestige in the sanjak long before the reform councils, which were predominantly established during the Tanzimat period, similarly as in other regions (Findley, 2014, 209). Hacı Efendi, the sanjak judge who often acted as deputy sanjak ruler, held the position until at least 1857, although his appointments were not regularly recorded (Salnâme-i Devlet, 1857, 67). However, the position of the Bayezid judge was merged with that of the judge of Erzurum from the same year (*Erzurum'a mülhak*) (BOA, A.MKT. MHM. 110/60, 1273/1857). Most likely, their appointments were made from Erzurum during this period, until 1867, when Ali Rıza Efendi was centrally appointed as Judge of Bayezid (Salnâme-i Devlet, 1858, 75). The direct appointment of the judge began just before the implementation of the 1864 provincial regulations. Until the full application of these regulations in 1867–68, there were gradual changes in the governance of the sanjak, with most official positions, particularly scribes, being appointed incrementally according to state and provincial yearbook records.

The sub-districts of the Bayezid sanjak, namely Eleşkirt, Diyadin, Karakilise, Tutak, Hamur, and Patnos, were governed by *müdürs* until 1868 when they became *kaymakams*. While Eleşkirt and Diyadin consistently maintained their status as *kazas*, the others occasionally attained *kaza* status or were downgraded to village governance. Rulers of these sub-districts were appointed by the *kaymakam* of Bayezid as old habit during the reform age, received a monthly salary, and were supported by a few police officers acting as *zabtiyes*; however, no scribes were appointed to the sub-districts until 1861. Therefore, the administration in the sub-districts remained relatively non-bureaucratic until the mid-1860s, and their rulers sometimes faced accusations of corrupt governance (BOA, A.MKT.UM. 488/45, 1277/1861; A.MKT.UM. 31/55, 1266/1850; A.DVN

65/67, 1267/1851). The rulers of sub-districts were often tribal chiefs or local notables, while the central administration of the sanjak was primarily staffed by outsiders, although less powerful posts within the sanjak administration were also open to locals. For example, Ali Ağa, the sanjak's population registrar, was a notable figure (BOA, A.MKT.NZD 158/54, 1271/1855; A.MKT.UM 25/12, 1266/1850; İ.MVL 222/7492, 1267/1851; İ.DH. 301/19061, 1270/1854; İ.DH. 340/22401, 1272/1856).

The Tanzimat reforms announced by the Ottoman central government were not immediately applied in the sanjak, but were implemented several years later. For instance, the application of the 1858 land registry could only be implemented after 1861, when a scribe was appointed upon the request of the council from below (BOA, A.MKT.NZD. 321/86, 1276/1860; A.MKT. NZD. 372/18, 1278/1861). In the same year, the council still repetitively forced the central government to receive authorization for making a government building, a courthouse and barracks for soldiers. As mentioned above, the 1864 provincial regulations were implemented in Bayezid after 1868 as well. While the central government primarily directed the Bayezid council to implement tax increases and provide quotas for drafted soldiers, the local council mostly sought authorization for an increased budget to cover its bureaucratic functions and essential needs. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1850s, fewer people were paid directly by the government, despite continuing their jobs; for example, some clergy who had been compensated during the time of the hereditary rulers remained unpaid. As was the case throughout the empire, the most problematic aspect of implementing the reforms in Bayezid was the economic difficulties (BOA, MVL 626/22, 1278/1862; MVL 234/70, 7 ZA 1266/1850; Findley, 2014, 186).

One of the most significant challenges in consolidating Bayezid as a state entity was its tribal-dominated population. The tribes residing in the sanjak were predominantly nomadic and militarized, with their cavalry forces frequently poised to switch allegiances in response to increased impositions or encroachments on their autonomy. The Council of Bayezid sought to settle and tax the tribes by leveraging the authority of tribal chiefs, attempting to secure their loyalty through monthly payments, the bestowal of ceremonial robes, and the granting of decorations and titles (BOA, İ.MVL 160/4616, 1265/1849; MVL 241/4, 1267/1851; MVL 331/105, 1268/1852; A.MKT. UM. 592/95, 1278/1862). The Council of Bayezid, unable to afford the cost of expensive robes, occasionally had *kaymakams* cover the expenses from their own revenues (BOA, A.MKT. UM. 59/44, 1267/1851). Moreover, some of these tribal chiefs were appointed as *müdür* of sub-districts (*kazas*) in an effort to consolidate control (BOA, MVL 239/46, 1264/1848; MVL 241/6, 1267/1851; A.MKT.UM 47/75, 1267/1851). Since the early 1850s, tribes were administratively represented by their chiefs, with the tribe director (*aşiret müdürü*) serving as an intermediary between the sanjak administration and the tribal subjects, including tribes such as Zilan, Celali, Heyderan, Ademanlı, and Sepki (BOA, İ.HR 61/2959, 1266/1850). This

represented a shift toward the expanding state sphere in dealing with the tribes, a role previously managed by the hereditary rulers. The settlement policy was secondary in Bayezid, as the primary focus was on securing the loyalty of the tribes and ensuring their alignment with the Ottoman side. For instance, many tribes fled to Iranian territories when Behlül was deposed, spurred by rumors that the new regime would exile the chiefs as well (BOA, İ.MVL 160/4616, 1265/1849). As both the Iranian and Russian governments implemented similar policies, all parties were in a race to secure the loyalty of the tribal populations. Despite the limited success of settlement efforts and conscription of the tribes, they continued to pay their animal, wintering, grazing, and fodder taxes, albeit with delays and limitations (BOA, A.AMD. 18/46, 1266/1850). During this period, tribal chiefs acted as street-level bureaucrats, serving as tribe director who officially represented the Ottoman state, particularly in handling border disputes with the Iranians (BOA, A.MKT.UM. 21/9, 1266/1850; MVL 582/29, 1275/1859.). However, until the Hamidian period in the late nineteenth century, tribe-state relations remained fragile and fluctuated over time. Tribes, unable to secure loyalty to the state, would have struggled to graze and winter their herds in Ottoman lands, illustrating how the state imposed subjecthood on these nomadic societies. This “Ottomanness,” as an imperial subjecthood, marked the expanding reach of the state within this frontier sanjak.

Establishing an imperial border was a significant territorialization process within the framework of the Tanzimat reforms. Defining a clear-cut boundary for the Sanjak of Bayezid in relation to the Iranian and Russian empires was one of the key challenges faced by the council during this period as well. The local hereditary dynasty had not established a fixed boundary but instead relied on fluctuating markers to demarcate the sanjak’s borders. The Ottomans suggested that the Iranian region of Maku and its environs had been granted to Iranian Cafer Khan by Behlül Paşa’s father, Mahmud Paşa, as part of a dowry when he married the khan’s daughter, highlighting that the sanjak’s boundaries were not fully under the control of the central government during the hereditary rule of the local dynasty (BOA, İ.HR. 65/3194, 1266/1850). Establishing the boundary of the Sanjak of Bayezid effectively meant defining the borders of the Ottoman state, particularly in light of ongoing territorial disputes with the Iranian Maku khans, who sought to expand their influence over the region and its tribal populations to control and collect their taxes.¹³ After the abolition of some other hereditary Kurdish dynasties in the region in 1847, the Ottoman and Qajar Empires signed the Treaty of Erzurum in the same year, agreeing to establish clear boundaries between their territories. By the 1850s, representatives from both states worked along the entire border, from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf, to implement and enforce these

13 In 1850, the Iranian Khan of Maku collected taxes in the region near Bayezid, around Mount Ararat. Cf. notes on Fig. 3 for further details.

demarcations. As part of this process, the Council of Bayezid was responsible for defending the sanjak's territories from Iranian encroachments, especially in the northern and southern regions of Bayezid, in Tanbat and Kızıldize, which involved commissioning engineers to survey and delineate the boundaries while also providing financial support and security for these efforts. Two engineers were requested from the Imperial Engineering School to draw maps of the sanjak, which illustrates their deployment to the region (cf. Fig. 3) (BOA, İ.HR. 65/3194, 1266/1850; HR.MKT. 33/80, 1266/1850; ML.MSF.d. 9719, 1270/1854). To push the Iranians and their tribal allies back from these two villages, some chiefs of the Celali tribe were settled there to protect the disputed lands, and when Tozo Ağa was killed in an attack on Kızıldize village, his son assumed responsibility for defending the area (BOA, İ.HR.75/3634, 1267/1851; A.MKT. UM. 592/95, 1278/1862; Koç, 2020, 214–215).¹⁴ The establishment of both the sanjak and imperial boundaries intersected and were applied during the same period when direct rule was enforced. As part of the efforts to create a state sphere, security forces became more effective, though still insufficient to prevent cross-border defections.

One of the key reforms was conscription, whose rules evolved over time, with the 1846 Regulation for Drawing Lots (*Kur'a Nizamnamesi*) representing an attempt by the Tanzimat government to regulate and increase the number of conscripted soldiers (Zürcher, 1998, 440; Çadırcı, 2008, 65–87). The practice of drawing lots to conscript soldiers was not implemented in the Sanjak of Bayezid until 1860 due to the region's strategic location and the dominance of its tribal population. This conscription also excluded the tribes in the environs of the Bayezid sanjak, and an attempt in 1858 led many “horrificed” tribes to flee across the borders, seeking refuge in the Iranian and Russian empires, as reforms were not easygoing, especially for the tribes. However, an exemption fee (*iane-i askeriye*) was collected from the Armenian settled population; for instance, in 1856, a total of 80,000 piasters was collected for 2,832 individuals (BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 139/20, 1275/1858; A.MKT.MHM. 218/85, 1277/1861; C.DH. 183/9102, 1272/1858). A battalion remained stationed in the center of the Bayezid Sanjak, with police forces (*zabtiye*) deployed in both Bayezid and its sub-districts. In 1853, the police force numbered fifty, having previously been twenty during Behlül's tenure, though a subsequent request was made to increase it to eighty (BOA, MVL 338/26, 1270/1853). In cases where problems arose in sub-districts, with few *zabtiyes* and officers from the central sanjak or provincial center were temporarily assigned to these areas (BOA, MVL 355/62, 1274/1857). Under these circumstances, the center of the sanjak remained relatively safe; however, travel between the sanjak center and its sub-

14 According to Koç, the Iranians also allied with other Celali clans, and in fact, separate Celali clans clashed in Tanbat and Kızıldize to capture these territories for their respective allied states, demonstrating that the tribes acted as proxies on behalf of their imperial allegiances.



Fig. 3: Drawing the boundary of the Sanjak of Bayezid in 1850 for the first time also meant defining the imperial boundary as well (BOA, İ.HR. 65/3194, 1266/1850).

districts remained hazardous, with the situation unchanged from the 1840s. A record from 1853 indicates that any area located thirty minutes away from the center of Bayezid by horse was considered unsafe (BOA, A.MKT.MVL 60/15, 1269/1853). To address this issue and manage border crossings, a field commander (*kır serdarı*) was appointed during the summer months, when nomadic tribal movements and banditry intensified. In the 1850s, an elected member of the Bayezid council was assigned to this role, accompanied by thirty-five *zabtiye* officers (BOA, MVL 354/104, 1274/1857). As mentioned above, the Bayezid council was therefore compelled to negotiate with the tribal chiefs, because security between the city center and its sub-districts—particularly near the borders—could not be maintained without the involvement of the tribal leaders, especially the tribe director (*aşiret müdürü*). Thus, during the 1850s and 1860s, while the sanjak center was more effectively controlled by centralized security forces, its surroundings were still managed with these tribal street-level bureaucrats as intermediaries. During the Hamidian era, security was further enforced through the deployment of Hamidian tribal cavalry units, which, in practice, exacerbated the situation (Klein, 2011).

Making a state sphere in Bayezid required improved roads, as the Silk Road from the Iranian Tabriz passed through Bayezid, reaching Erzurum, Trabzon, and Istanbul. The primary concerns during this period were the safety of traders, who were frequently attacked by tribes, and Russia's redirection of trade to its Black Sea ports (BOA, A.MKT.43/29, 1262/1846). As the Ottoman road network deteriorated throughout the nineteenth century, the renewal of this trade route became increasingly critical, with the Reform Act of 1856 underscoring the imperative to address this pressing issue (Özkan, 2014, 194). The British consul in Erzurum warned that the Ottomans should renew their roads between Trabzon, Erzurum, and Bayezid, as an annual 30,000 *lira* could be received from taxes on European products traveling to Iran via this route (BOA, MVL 56/43, s.d.). Despite numerous requests for road renewal and progress, improvements were seldom achieved. In 1851, there were requests to repair some bridges in western Bayezid, requiring three purses and 8,000 piasters, but no sources confirm that this work was carried out (BOA, A.MKT. MVL 42/25, 1267/1851). Although the Erzurum–Bayezid route also required approximately a thousand purses of piasters for renewal (BOA, A.MKT.43/29, 1262/1846; A.AMD 82/58, 1274/1858), most attention was directed toward the more mountainous Erzurum-Trabzon road. As a result of budget constraints, the deteriorating condition of the Erzurum-Trabzon route, and competing requests from the sanjak or province, little progress was made on the Bayezid trade route during the 1850s and 1860s.

Establishing a quarantine in Bayezid was essential, as it was one of the main trade routes in the Ottoman Empire, aimed at controlling the spread of probable epidemics during the period of centralization. From the 1830s, Sultan Mahmud II led the establishment of quarantines throughout Ottoman territories to effectively control the spread of infectious diseases (Sarıyıldız, 1994, 334; Atmaca, 2020). The Ottomans established numerous quarantines along the borderlands, with Bayezid tasked with monitoring epidemics in Iran (Panzac, 2011, 230). Although it is believed that a quarantine was established in Bayezid in 1840, it appears that this may have been a temporary measure, implemented only during the occurrence of an epidemic in the region (Çalışkan, 2020, 5, 9). In 1850, an order was given to establish a quarantine in Kızıldize village, located in the Bayezid region. However, until its construction was completed, the “governor’s mansion”—most likely the ruined palace of Bayezid—was to be used as the quarantine center for the Bayezid sanjak (BOA, A.MKT.MVL 31/83, 1266/1850). By 1858, it seems no permanent building had yet been constructed for the quarantine. It was reported that the tents of soldiers were being borrowed for this purpose, despite a quarantine having already been established in the 1852 (BOA, ML.MSF.d 9544, 1268/1852). Trade caravans were required to wait up to ten days at the Bayezid quarantine, but since the Russians did not impose similar waiting periods on traders, it was noted that caravans might prefer to use the Russian route, leading to periods when the quarantine measures were not

enforced (BOA, HR.MKT 219/39, 1274/1857; İ.MVL 387/16905, 1274/1858; İ.HR. 173/9430, 1276/1859; Kaya & Pulat, 2022, 44). In certain years, the Iranians opposed the establishment of a quarantine in Kızıldize village due to territorial claims, but the Ottomans, maintaining control, proceeded with its implementation.(BOA, HR.MKT. 242/4, 1274/1858). In 1861, a director (*karantina müdürü*) and a doctor were paid a monthly salary. By 1863, the Kızıldize quarantine had been established, and payments were also initiated for a scribe and some guards (BOA, ML.MSF.d 16799, 1280/1863). As can be seen, the establishment of a quarantine took place during this period, with its full functionality developing gradually, and its creation being linked to tribal intermediaries and border issues.

During the early modern period, no imperial customs duties were levied in Bayezid as it was under the local hereditary rule. All traders passing through the region paid the local hereditary rulers as well, with the revenues belonging them (BOA, A. DVNSAHK.ER.d. 4, 1177/1764, 326). Imperial customs duties were imposed under direct administrative control in the region, specifically in provincial centers, Erzurum and Trabzon. The origin of the first customs duties applied in Bayezid remains unclear, but it most likely began with the establishment of the quarantine in the Bayezid sanjak in 1850s. Customs duties were not collected here; instead, commercial goods were inspected and sealed before customs duties were imposed at the provincial center in Erzurum, which was further inland within the Ottoman Empire. Regarding customs duties, Bayezid did not function as a customs point until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, though sanjak authorities played a role in safeguarding the duties to be collected in Erzurum during this period (Pulat, 2024, 327).

The entry of the Tanzimat reforms into the Bayezid sanjak can be regarded as tantamount to the allocation of taxes, aside from its administrative restructuring. The collection of taxes in Bayezid increased, but it was often inefficiently implemented, with delays and amounts falling short of the designated targets, while being more closely monitored by centralized authorities and subject to negotiation regarding expenditures and unforeseen occurrences. As noted earlier, the last local hereditary dynast assumed the role of a tax collector, responsible for collecting the tithe (*öşür*) and some other taxes, but appointed individuals at his discretion to serve as tax-farmers (*deruhdeci*) for other taxes (BOA, MVL 25/33, 1264/1848). In 1852, according to the Bayezid council, the first appointed *kaymakam*, Feyzullah Bey, collected 500 purses (250,000 piasters) in taxes over two years following the dismissal of the last hereditary ruler, a feat that was emphasized as a success (BOA, MVL 253/71, 1268/1852). Similar to the dominance of the Damascus council members over the auctions they controlled, after Behlül Paşa's removal from Bayezid, most of the tax collectors, primarily local notables from Erzurum, came from outside the region (Thompson, 1993, 462). The various types of taxes in the sanjak were awarded to the highest bidding tax farmers through auction. It appears that the Erzurum

provincial administration conducted the necessary auctions for the Bayezid sanjak in a top-down manner in some years. In 1857, Rıza Bey, and in 1859, Hacı Nuri Bey, both notables from the province of Erzurum, were granted the rights to collect taxes (BOA, ML.VRD.d 2944, 1274/1857; ML.VRD.d. 3203, 1277/1860). In 1860, the Marshal of the Anadolu Army secretly informed the rulers of Erzurum that another notable, Hacı Ali Bey from Erzincan, had offered an additional thousand piasters to secure the tax-farming rights, competing against three associates in Erzurum. The marshal ordered the bidding process to be bypassed, suggesting the possibility of corrupt practices (BOA, A.MKT. MHM. 217/1, 1277/1861). It can also be observed that tax collection rights were allocated belatedly, as Armenian goldsmith Vatinis received the rights to collect cattle taxes for the year 1863, five years after the designated year, since taxes for any given year could be collected several years later (BOA, MVL 648/86, 1280/1863). Collecting cattle taxes from tribes was particularly problematic, as many tribes, like the Celali and Sepki in 1864, defected to Iran or Russia to avoid taxes. As a result, Vatinis was unable to pay the promised amount, and the assigned taxes were not properly collected in the Bayezid sanjak. Similarly, taxes for guild licenses (*esnaf tezkiresi*) were not enforced in Bayezid, as the region was considered “sensitive” in the 1850s (BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 145/87, 1275/1859).

Some other significant modernizing and centralizing practices related to communication technology and education were implemented in the Bayezid sanjak at a later stage than in the central provinces of the empire. Telegraph lines were first established in the Ottoman Empire in 1855 during the Crimean War to facilitate communication between its allies, with the network initially expanding in the European provinces of the empire (Lewis, 2018, 7). One of the important provisions of the 1856 Reform Act was to enhance communication with the provinces and sanjaks, but this objective was not achieved in Bayezid until the late 1860s. Sources indicate that the first telegraph lines in Bayezid were established in 1868, connecting the sanjak to the provincial centers of Erzurum and Van (BOA, İ.HR. 232/13714, 1285/1868). Rıza Efendi was appointed as the first telegraph director in Bayezid in 1868, together with a clerk, who had been working at the provincial telegraph center and was also assigned to this position in Bayezid (BOA, A.MKT. MHM. 426/59, 1285/1868). The telegraph network, which significantly expanded the state’s presence in the region by reducing communication and orders, once requiring several days of travel between the provincial center and the sanjak, to just a few minutes, became effective in the 1870s.

One of Tanzimat’s centralizing missions occurred through establishing modern imperial schools, imposing a centralized curriculum throughout the empire, along with the delay caused by the initial inability to break the religious institutions’ traditional monopoly over education (Findley, 2014, 184). Until the late 1860s, the Bayezid sanjak lacked centralized educational

institutions, with education primarily provided through traditional Islamic madrasas or mosques for the Muslim population, and through churches and monasteries for the Armenian community. In 1858, the council of Bayezid reported to the Ministry of Endowment (*Evkaf Nezareti*) that since the dismissal of Behlül Paşa in 1850, the madrasas, mosques, and their scholars, preachers, and janitors in Bayezid had not been receiving payment (BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 125/83, 1274/1858). This indicates that Behlül Paşa personally covered the monthly stipends for these institutions during his tenure, but following his dismissal, some of the traditional Muslim education in the sanjak lost its funding. In 1862, the *kaymakam* of Bayezid, noting the region's "deprivation of civilization" and widespread illiteracy, proposed establishing a secondary school (*rüşdiye*) in the sanjak center, to be funded by local notables for construction and supported by the sanjak's treasury for monthly salaries. A modernizing and pragmatic approach, the *kaymakam*'s extraordinary efforts emphasized that educating the population would lead to increased agricultural productivity and, consequently, a doubling of tax revenues for the imperial treasury. However, the Supreme Council of Education in Istanbul rejected and postponed the offer, citing too few students and the absence of traditional primary schools (*sıbyan mektebi*) in the sanjak (BOA, A.MKT.UM. 549/74, 1278/1862; MVL 626/52, 1278/1862).

Even in the provincial center of Erzurum, the first secondary school was established in 1864 with the support of local "people of wealth" (*ashab-ı yesar*) (BOA, MVL 682/58, 1281/1864). The first modern centralized school in Bayezid, a secondary school (*rüşdiye*) established in 1868, was built with the support of local "people of wealth and devotion" (*ashab-ı yesar ve hamiyet*), a teacher, a local from Erzurum, was appointed, and annual expenses were covered by 1,000 piasters, with monthly payments of 650 piasters for the teacher and 83 piasters for a janitor (BOA, İ.ŞD. 4/222, 1285/1868). Similar schools were not established in the sub-districts until the mid-1880s. Not only in the 1850s and 1860s, but throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, modern centralized schools in the sanjak did not function properly due to Bayezid's limited budget, which led most appointed teachers to prefer relocation (Kurt, 2015; Çiftçi, 2022b, 173–198). Although not documented by the imperial bureaucracy due to their old-fashioned nature, madrasas, mosques, and Christian churches and monasteries continued to dominate educational practices in the sanjak alongside the emerging modern schools during the era of imperial state-making. Therefore, while it is not possible to categorically define the entirety of the Tanzimat reforms (Lafi, 2017, 57), there was a hybrid system in Bayezid's education, blending the old with the new. Similarly, according to the 1871 yearbook of Erzurum, there were thirty-one Muslim and eleven Christian traditional primary schools (*sıbyan mektebi*), seven mosques, and thirty-one churches in the environs of the sanjak (*Salnâme-i Vilayet-i Erzurum*, 1871, 149). Although this yearbook shows no madrasas

in the sanjak, another yearbook recorded eleven madrasas in only one sub-district of Bayezid, Tutak, at the century's end, indicating that the traditional educational system persisted in the sanjak's environs and that modern schools were less effective (*Salnâme-i Nezaret-i Maârif-i Umumiye*, 1898, 819–820). By the century's end, there was only one modern secondary school in the Bayezid center, while the sub-districts of Eleşkirt and Tutak each had one secondary school, and the other sub-districts of Diyadin and Karakilise each had one primary school. Despite the limited progress and influence, this still constituted a notable advancement in the state's efforts to expand its sphere in centralizing and modernizing the education system in the peripheral regions of Bayezid.

CONCLUSION

Bayezid, as a peripheral sanjak adjacent to the Iranian and Russian Empires, underwent centralization and imperial state-building in the late 1830s, under the last hereditary ruler, whose status reinforced the state's authority. This process transformed the hereditary ruler's status into that of a salaried official, and his authority in the sanjak enabled the smooth implementation of early Tanzimat reforms, without significant unrest, despite similar upheavals in neighboring provinces. However, it marked a significant threshold, as, after 1849, no local dynast was deemed legitimate in administrative posts during the era of centralization, thus ending nearly three centuries of uninterrupted hereditary Kurdish dynastic rule. Hereditary rulers are typically seen as reactionaries, yet the case of Bayezid presents a contrasting perspective, consistent with the approach taken in developing studies. The expansion of direct rule was not limited to administrative and fiscal transformations, as the final section particularly highlights. The state's commitment to centralization reflected broader facets of integrating peripheral regions into the imperial national framework.

Additionally, it was not solely a top-down imposition of new rules; often, the implementation was shaped by requests or responses from local appointees, such as in the case of education, requesting scribes and engineers and the construction of buildings. In addition, conscription and taxation of the tribes were not mandated by central authorities, but resistance often led to exemptions and postponed or annulled taxes. Although not always a linear process, centralization in the first decades of the second half of the nineteenth century evolved gradually across various aspects. At times, it functioned more effectively, but in many instances—particularly in the case of Bayezid—it remained delayed and non-functional. The examples discussed—administration, security, tribes, quarantine, borders, taxation, education, communication, and roads—were all interconnected elements that represented and necessitated the Ottoman central government's state-making practices. Although this process is primarily

discussed in the early decades in mid-nineteenth century, it extended beyond the scope of this article. It continued even after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, though not often in a linear or progressive manner, but through fluctuating practices. The fluctuating successes and intermittent setbacks during this period of reform highlight the complexities of transforming a traditional, decentralized system into a more unified and modern imperial state. Compared to more central regions and the provincial center of Erzurum, the example of Bayezid sanjak illustrates that the centralization process expanded over time, starting in the imperial center, then extending to the sanjak center, and eventually reaching the sub-districts within the sanjak. However, at times, the same rules were established simultaneously in both the provincial and the sanjak center.

IZGRADNJA DRŽAVE NA OSMANSKI PERIFERIJ: TANZIMATSKE REFORME V SANDŽAKU BAJEZID SREDI 19. STOLETJA

Erdal ÇİFTÇİ

Univerza Mardin Artuklu, Višja poklicna šola, Oddelek za arhitekturo in urbano načrtovanje,
47060 Istasyon, Artuklu, Mardin, Turčija
e-mail: erdalciftci@artuklu.edu.tr

Hakan KAYA

Univerza Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University, Filozofska in znanstvena fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino,
04100 Merkez, Ağrı, Turčija
e-mail: hkaya@agri.edu.tr

POVZETEK

Osmanski procesi centralizacije in izgradnje države, ki so se začeli v zgodnjem 19. stoletju, so si prizadevali različne cesarske prakse standardizirati v poenoten upravni okvir. Tranzicijo k cesarski izgradnji države so izvajali z uvedbo novih predpisov in institucij. Pričujoči članek raziskuje aplikacijo centralizacijskih reform v dedni kurdski provinci Bajazid sredi 19. stoletja, ki je ležala na vzhodu Osmanske države in je mejila na Iransko cesarstvo in Rusko carstvo. Prizadevanja države, ki je pri uveljavljanju tanzimatskih reform v Bajazidu v 30. in 40. letih 19. stoletja sprva imela koristi od sodelovanja z dednim vladarjem, so naposled privedla do odstranitve lokalnih dinastij in vsilila neposredno državno oblast nad različnimi ravni uprave. Študija prouči obseg in učinkovitost teh reform v Bajazidu v 50. in 60. letih 19. stoletja, dveh formativnih desetletjih uvajanja reform v regiji. Članek je razdeljen na dva glavna dela. Prvi del izpodbija prevladujočo zgodovinsko naracijo, ki pogosto predpostavlja enoten odpor dednih dinastij do centralizacijskih reform, pri čemer izpostavlja primer zadnjega dednega kurdskega vladarja, čigar družina je vladala sandžaku Bajazid od konca 16. do sredine 19. stoletja. V nasprotju s splošnim prepričanjem, je ta vladar v 30. in 40. letih 19. stoletja izvedel več reform, vključno z ustanovitvijo novega sandžaškega sveta, namestitvijo cesarske vojske v mestno središče ter se sam preobrazil v plačanega državnega uradnika. Tisti čas je opredeljen kot prehodno obdobje, za katero je značilno sobivanje tradicionalnih in modernih elementov. Sprememba v upravi province tudi ni povzročila oblastnega vakuumu, saj dedna oblast ni bila odpravljena nenadoma in z nasiljem. Drugi del članka je osredotočen na 50. in 60. leta 19. stoletja, po odstranitvi in preselitvi zadnjega dednega vladarja Bajazida v provincialno središče zunaj sandžaka. Nadaljevanje prizadevanj za izgradnjo države v tistem obdobju je vključevalo vrsto postopnih, a vztrajnih ukrepov, vključno z imenovanjem zunanjih uradnikov, urejanjem meja s sosednjimi cesarstvi, prizadevanji za spreminjanje plemenskega prebivalstva v zveste podanike, s povečanim obdavčenjem, poskusi posodobitve prometne infrastrukture, vzpostavitvijo karantenskih postaj, uvedbo telegrafske komunikacije in ustanovitvijo sodobnih državnih šol. Analizirane so kompleksnost, celovitost in omejenost tega razvoja.

Ključne besede: Osmani, Kurdi, periferija, reforme, uprava

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- BOA-A.MKT.NZD.** – Nezaret ve Devair Evrakı.
- BOA-BEOAYN.d.** – Babialı Evrak Odası Defterleri.
- BOA-C.AS.** – Cevdet Askeriye.
- BOA-C.DH.** – Cevdet Dahiliye.

- BOA-C.ML.** – Cevdet Maliye.
- BOA-DVNSAHK.ER.d.** – Erzurum Ahkam Defterleri.
- BOA-HAT.** – Hatt-ı Hümayun.
- BOA-HR.MKT.** – Hariciye Mektubi Kalemi.
- BOA-İ.DH.** – İrade Dahiliye.
- BOA-İ.HR.** – İrade Hariciye.
- BOA-İ.MSM.** – İrade Mesail-i Mühimme.
- BOA-İ.MVL.** – İrade Meclis-i Vala.
- BOA-İ.ŞD.** – İrade Şura-yı Devlet.
- BOA-KK.d.** – Kamil Kepeçi Defterleri.
- BOA-MKT.** – Mektubi Kalemi.
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