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CHILDREN AND YOUTH COERCED DISPLACEMENT: A HISTORY OF POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN STATE AND PROVINCIAL A'YĀN'S FAMILIES

Abstract

This article offers a new perspective on children and youth's coerced displacement in the context of the Ottoman Middle East and highlights their potential as a social group to inform studies of children, kinship, and family vis-a-vis the state. Using *iltizām* contracts, I argue that the Ottoman state prioritized its stability and economic interests and turned a blind eye to promises it made to ensure the "well-being" of young Ottoman subjects. The contracts recorded around the mid-eighteenth century document an institutionalized practice by the state to remove and incarcerate young and minor males associated with the families of *multazims*, or tax farmers, who generally hailed from the class of provincial notables, or *a'yān*, to persuade the latter to render payment of taxes. Although *multazims* appeared to be indifferent to the fate of their castaway children, evidence suggests that *multazims* took advantage of geopolitical changes toward the last quarter of the eighteenth century to avoid the incarceration of their children, as the practice completely disappeared at that time. This article also attempts to approach the question of whether this forced displacement of children represents a form of mobility, in comparison to other forms of children's mobility, like the *devşirme*, and explores what this meant for the expansion, or retraction, of the state power and its governing policies.

خلاصة

تقدم هذه المقالة منظوراً جديداً حول التهجير القسري للأطفال والشباب في سياق الشرق الأوسط خلال الفترة العثمانية، وتسلط الضوء على إمكاناتهم كمجموعة اجتماعية لإعلام الدراسات حول الأطفال والقرابة والأسرة في مواجهة الدولة. باستخدام عقود الالتزام، أقدم الجدلية بأن الدولة العثمانية أعطت الأولوية لاستقرارها ومصالحها الاقتصادية وغضت الطرف عن الوعود التي قدمتها لضمان "رفاهية" الرعايا العثمانيين الشباب. توثق العقود المسجلة في منتصف القرن الثامن عشر ممارسة مؤسسية من قبل الدولة لإزالة وسجن الذكور الصغار والقاصرين المرتبطين بعائلات الملتزمين، أو المتعهدين بجمع الضرائب، الذين ينحدرون عموماً من طبقة الأعيان، لإقناع الآخرين بدفع الضرائب. على الرغم من أن الملتزمين بدوا غير مبالين بمصير أطفالهم المنبوذين، إلا أن الأدلة تشير إلى أن الملتزمين استغلوا التغيرات الجيوسياسية نحو الربع الأخير من القرن الثامن عشر لتجنب سجن أطفالهم، حيث اختفت الممارسة تماماً في ذلك الوقت. تحاول هذه المقالة أيضاً تناول مسألة ما إذا كان هذا النزوح القسري للأطفال يمثل شكلاً من أشكال التنقل، مقارنة بأشكال أخرى من تنقل الأطفال، مثل الديفشيمة، وتستكشف ما يعنيه هذا بالنسبة لتوسع أو تراجع سلطة الدولة وسياساتها الحاكمة.



INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1994, I reluctantly took a tour of the Citadel of Tripoli, in modern-day Lebanon, for the first time in my life, although I am a native of the city. My reluctance did not emerge out of thin air; the citadel, erected around 643–645 CE upon the Arab conquest,¹ had been a dungeon for the larger part of its history. During the Civil War in Lebanon (1975–1990), it was an off-limits detention and torture gulag used by various military factions.² I had an eerie feeling when I began to descend to the underground detention cells as all the anecdotes I had heard over the years about the notorious history of the citadel rushed to my mind. One such story which had terrified me, and other children, was about a snake that hid below the dungeon and occasionally got out to drink from the Abu Ali River flowing at the foot of the citadel.

Years later, my tour of the citadel came to mind when I encountered sources describing, rather than a gigantic snake, evidence of children themselves incarcerated in the citadel's gloomy depths. The *iltizām* contracts recorded in the *sijillāt*, the registers of the Ottoman shari'a court of the province of Tripoli, reveal that young male relatives of, or associated with, *multazims* (tax farmers) were systematically incarcerated in the city's citadel around the mid-eighteenth century. These minors from elite families remained in captivity for at least a year, until the *multazims* fulfilled all *iltizām* (tax farming) commitments to collect taxes and render them to the state.

By the mid-seventeenth century, the Ottomans began transitioning away from the *timar* system,³ initially adopted in some of their Arab provinces, notably Syria and the province of Mosul, toward *iltizām* or tax-farming. According to Jane Hathaway, tax-farming involved the state delegating tax collection responsibilities and had been prevalent in various parts of the Muslim world since at least the ninth century. Although tax farmers could potentially exploit the system by retaining profits in excess of their pledged collected amounts, this method remained a robust means of tax collection well into the nineteenth century.⁴ The tax farming contracts as historical sources are very rich. They include details about the various administrative divisions within an Ottoman province, especially the *nāhiya*, and how their different sizes affected the amount of taxes to be collected each year; the fluctuation of the price of silk; and the *iltizām* system and families that monopolized the *iltizām* privileges.

These valuable economic aspects are not the only insights offered by these contracts. They also conjure evidence of internal displacement in the Ottoman context. They highlight the practice of separating minor boys from their families, incarcerating them, stripping them of their personhood, and using them as *rahn* (pawns), a form of guarantee for payment of taxes to the provincial government. Some of the incarceration sites, as further expounded below, were not geographically far from where some of the male relatives of *multazims* originated. Yet, their imprisonment could still be considered a form of temporary displacement. The contracts are thus laden with details relevant to the study of children's mobility, contribute to the field of childhood studies, and shed light on the development of state policies and changes within the state administration.

These *iltizām* contracts, particularly the changing use of children as *rahn* in the eighteenth century, as will be explicated below, trace one of the central and perennial concerns of Ottoman governance: the mobility of the empire's subjects.⁵ Though the Ottoman state took advantage of some forms of migration and mobility, continuous, unregulated, or uncontrolled movement disrupted the daily activities and state affairs in large parts of the empire. The government's great interest in settling various social groups which roamed the empire also emanated from an effort to essentially tie them to the land, engage them in cultivation, and collect more taxes from them.⁶ Furthermore, the contracts document an increased interest on the part of the state with the stability of the remote *nāhiya* and the endorsement of a policy referred to in the sources as the policy of *istimāleh* (win over by persuasion or lobbying) of the *ahāli* or *ra'īya* (the people or the subjects of the empire) which constituted granting concessions to affected subjects and providing them with service and protection to gain their allegiance.⁷

How does the incarceration of young boys fit into the policy of *istimāleh* and broader trends in Ottoman state engagement with children and youth? Using evidence from the *sijillāt* of the shari'a court of Tripoli, I show that the Ottoman state's concern with its social and political stability and economic interests consequently led to its forsaking the promises it routinely made, especially in cases related to personal disputes, to ensure "*al-haz al-awfar wa al-ghibta al-rājiha*" (the greatest fortune, happiness, and ultimate unbounded joy) of its young Ottoman subjects.⁸ Only toward the mid-1760s did other issues, which needed to be addressed with assistance from the *multazims*, force the Ottoman government to abandon the practice of incarcerating the *multazims'* minor relatives in return for their support in implementing its plans and policies.

These issues included the reconstruction of the countryside in the aftermath of Bedouins' attacks, the protection of roads and passersby, and the safety of livestock. Most importantly, the state sought the return and resettlement of those forced to leave their villages in order to resume cultivating the land, a top priority for the Ottoman government.⁹ According to Resat Kasaba, "Beginning in the final decades of the 18th century, Ottoman administrators made greater efforts to forcibly settle nomadic pastoralists in order to better identify the population and increase the amount of cultivated land."¹⁰ It must be noted here that, as Donald Quataert demonstrates, the economy of the Ottoman Empire remained overwhelmingly agrarian throughout its history and the state's main income came from land or from taxes on agricultural exports.¹¹ Intriguingly, bargains struck with the *multazims*, as a component in the larger project of stabilizing the province and sedentarizing Bedouins, may have influenced Ottoman policy toward the *multazims'* children. That is, the broader effort to control the population and even to curb subjects' mobility had the additional effect of reducing the state-endorsed displacement of minors previously practiced within the *iltizām* contracts.

This issue of forced displacement likewise sheds light on some legal aspects of parenthood practices. I show elsewhere that, in the early modern period, Tripolitan parents cared for the well-being of their children and acted accordingly to provide them with the best living conditions. *Multazims*, as male parents or relatives, may have shared the same propensity to care for children.¹² Yet, *multazims* also showed some willingness to subject children to harsh living conditions under the custody of the state. In fact, this article takes on this ambivalence towards the forced familial separation and relocation of boys. It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that *multazims* capitalized on the geopolitical changes to evade the practice of incarcerating their minor male relatives. This initiative on the part of *multazims*, which the state was receptive to, coincided with policy changes at the central administrative level.

This article thus captures intersections among the history of displacement and mobility, the history of kinship and the family, and the history of childhood in Ottoman Tripoli. It explores the internal displacement of "elite" children in order to consider what the practice and its abandonment reveal about eighteenth-century Ottoman governing practices. I explore what this forced displacement by state, family, and clan members, lest the latter lose tax-farming contracts, meant for the expansion or retraction of state's power, and offer a new twist to an old historiographical concept, inculcated in the Ottoman field, of decline and stagnation. I challenge the validity of the decline

theory and argue that, rather than declining, the Ottoman state changed and adapted to meet specific political, military, and financial challenges.

THE STATE OF THE FIELD

By drawing its primary source material from eighteenth-century Tripoli, this article aims to contribute to both the histories of children and youth and to the social history of the early modern Middle East by framing the pawn system as a type of displacement that can be read alongside other child-specific displacements. It explores a peculiar kind of forced migration, contributing to the literature on other forcibly mobile age-specific groups such as the *devşirme*, in which a considerable number of Christian children, young men, and young women were enslaved, brought to the Ottoman capital, and forced to convert to Islam.¹³

In her foreword to *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire*, one of the most recent volumes on Ottoman childhood studies, Suraiya Faroqhi highlights the importance of focusing on children to understand how Ottoman society functioned.¹⁴ According to Colin Heywood, one of the pioneers in the field, "Historians of childhood have in fact been rather thin on the ground for a long time. As late as the 1950s, their territory could be described as 'an almost virgin field.'" ¹⁵ Nonetheless, the study of childhood is gaining momentum.¹⁶ In 1960, Philippe Ariès published *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*,¹⁷ which was acknowledged by many historians as the "starting point of the history of childhood and . . . the first work to historicize childhood, to plant the idea that childhood was not a natural or universal phenomenon, but one that varied in the way it was understood and experienced according to period and place."¹⁸ Though Ariès was considered the father of the modern history of childhood and the first to lay down the foundations for the field, he faced harsh criticism regarding his denying the existence of the concept of childhood before modernity.¹⁹ Moreover, his assertion that medieval society did not have an idea of childhood was entirely discredited by many experts, who also questioned his sources.²⁰

Ariès's focus on the more modern periods is echoed in studies of Ottoman children and youth. Benjamin Fortna notes that in recent years, the history of childhood has expanded dramatically in scope and sophistication.²¹ Yet a quick review of the literature on children and youth history shows that "the field's geographical coverage has remained heavily skewed toward the West"²² and is still underdeveloped in the context of the Middle East. Fortna also indicates that even when contributions to the field focused "on the ways in

which childhood was imagined and experienced on the eastern fringes of Western Europe, in the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Arab Lands," their interpretations were limited to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³ This neglect of the earlier period resulted from a scarcity of sources as well as an underutilization of available sources.

Scholars are thus more attracted to the periods that accompanied the age of Tanzimat until the First World War because the modernization efforts on the part of the Ottoman state, which saw the education of children as a sign of advancement, resulted in the establishment of institutions and schools which produced multiple types of sources by and for the children. Fortna's work offers one example of such scholarship. In *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire*, mentioned earlier, contributors looked past these benchmarks, expanding their research to the period between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries and exploring topics related to children and displacement.²⁴ Nonetheless, on the whole, urban centers like Istanbul received more attention than other cities within the empire, a shortcoming that this article attempts to rectify.²⁵

Debates in this field are still emerging. We have many more questions than answers. One question pertains to the nature of the sources available to researchers and their potential to access the lives of children. The sources I use in this research for example are official state-issued documents, which often require careful analysis to uncover details about the lives of children. Other debates revolve around the concept of childhood itself and how societies perceived children in various times and places. The happiness of children and the attention parents and states give to their well-being, the foci of this article, are other areas of inquiry whose study, as Heywood puts it, is not a hopeless task but a difficult one to achieve.²⁶ As a historian of children and family, the particularities of the form of mobility and displacement that emerge in the *ilitizam* contracts complicate a story of a unified early modern childhood.

Nazan Maksudyan indicates that "the general weakness of Ottoman/Turkish childhood studies is their neglect of the historical activities of children as a part of social, economic, and political processes."²⁷ She criticizes the tendency in historical and cultural studies to overlook childhood as an important area of analysis, mainly because it is perceived, legally and biologically, as a phase of dependency. For that reason, children are often disregarded as historical actors.²⁸ This article thus benefits from the productive shift in the field which, according to Sarah Maza, has been emerging from writing the history *of* children alongside writing history *through* children.²⁹ Moreover, this study of children and childhood offers, in the

words of Maksudyan, “a new angle of observation, that of children, into unexplored or even previously explored fields of study” and rectifies the notoriety of historical writings which tend to ignore children, their history, and their presence in the unfolding of social life and social change.³⁰

THE DEFINITION OF CHILDHOOD AND THE LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs rightfully note that in the context of Ottoman culture and society, no general definition of childhood can cover fully early modern to modern times. Moreover, the history of children and the concept of childhood are both heterogenous within Ottoman society and specific to Ottoman lands, rather than a simplistic framework originating in the West.³¹ As far as the legal status of children, Faroqhi explains that the latter are, by definition, human beings with very limited contact to the state apparatus. They were unable to speak for themselves in any official procedure and needed a representative to speak on their behalf. Children who were underage could not turn to the courts to complain of mistreatment or exploitation.³²

An age-based determination of children is also problematic. Within Islamic shari'a law, distinguishing between a *qāsir* (child) and a *bāligh* (adult) proves difficult because classification is tied to biological changes, physical appearance, and number of years since birth. For boys, *bulūgh* (coming of age) was manifested by a deep voice, facial hair, and puberty. According to Heywood, “Following Islamic law, the legal age of majority in the Empire came with puberty and sexual maturity, which could set in as early as the age of nine or as late as fifteen.”³³ Heywood adds that this age blurriness was not unique to the Ottoman world, as “boundaries between childhood, youth, and adulthood in the Ottoman Empire were, as everywhere else, vague and fluid before the efficient registration of births.”³⁴ In the case of the sources used here, there were some references in the contracts to a male who was *khāli al-'izār* (has no facial hair) to specifically point out his young age, but this nomenclature was not consistent.

It is important to note here that, according to the *sijillāt*, some individuals tried to renounce their legal classification as minors, or vice versa, in matters related to inheritance or property management so as to gain autonomy over their financial interests. In a dispute over the sale of a property, one of the litigants could not prove himself to be “old enough age wise” and consequently lost the legal status to go forward with a sale transaction that he just executed and which the court proceeded to annul.³⁵ There is no evidence to indicate that the elite minor males in question here even attempted to appeal to the court to

escape incarceration. Moreover, cases of custody from Tripoli show the court's effort to bring evidence to determine the age of children, often to keep them longer under the custody of a female relative because "it is in their best interest,"³⁶ in line with a tradition upheld by the Hanafi law, as Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik also points.³⁷

Unlike these cases of custody, age determination is not critical in cases of *iltizām* contracts. If anything, some cases point to imprisonment with a male's own free will, as we see with Salhab Agha's brother 'Uthman, described below. Classified as a *murāhiq* (adolescent) in the contract, 'Uthman would have had the right to decide his own fate, though we cannot assume that he was at liberty to resist the patriarchal hierarchy within the family and escape incarceration.³⁸ Phrases signifying signs of adulthood ("his appearance indicates that he attained the age of puberty" [*hay'atuhu tahtamilou al-bulūgh*]) or youth ("young without facial hair" [*al-shāb al-khāli al-'izār*]) were sometimes included within the text, implying that the court personnel inspected these children; however, this was not uniformly recorded.³⁹ We can speculate that this neglect of age determination, and other detailed physical descriptions, further manifests the nonchalant attitude of the legal system toward this category of younger Ottoman subjects. However, as I explain later in this article, this absence of descriptive details of age and appearance may emerge from the reality that the legal status of the mobility of these elite boys, in comparison to the *devşirme* boys for example, was temporary.

The silence of the children is one area where the limitations of the *sijillāt* as historical sources for childhood studies become clear. After all, as Kayhan Elbirlik notes in her discussion of court records, some of the elements that are likely the most intriguing for the historian are commonly left out of the court cases since they are not legally relevant. Moreover, it is undoubtedly challenging to discern emotional motives behind *multazims*/parents' actions in the absence of sources similar to the ones used in Kayhan Elbirlik's case study of Sünbülzade Vehbi's advice manuals. Such a source, which could offset the methodological limitations of the shari'a court records by providing an insightful depiction of parenthood and the emotional bond between a father and his son, could not be identified thus far in the case of Tripoli.⁴⁰

THE PRICE OF *ILTIZĀM* CONTRACTS: DISPLACEMENT OF ELITE MINORS

In 1751, Hasan Barkat appeared in the shari'a court of Tripoli to execute a new *iltizām* contract with the deputy of Sa'd al-Din Pasha, the governor of Tripoli. According to the contract, Hasan received the right

to collect the taxes of Hillat Oubin in Safita, a *nāhiya* that was under the administrative jurisdiction of the province of Tripoli but currently located in modern-day Syria. To guarantee the contract, Hasan, a *multazim* frequently mentioned in the Tripoli shari'a court registers, then put (*waḍa'a*) his cousin Junayd in the Citadel of Arwād off the Syrian shore, with the permission of the boy's father. Junayd, whose age was not mentioned, was to be held in custody until the following year when Hasan fulfilled the *iltizām* commitment to render the taxes to the provincial treasury.⁴¹

On the same day, al-shaykh Salhab Agha ibn al-shaykh Shadid al-Nasir also appeared at the shari'a court of Tripoli. He received the *iltizām* contract to collect the taxes of the *nāhiya* of Akkar. In return, he put (*waḍa'a*) his brother 'Uthman, an adolescent/teenager (*al-murāhiq*), and his nephew Khodr, a minor (*al-qāsir*), to be held in custody in the Citadel of Tripoli until the contract was fulfilled. While 'Uthman came of his own free will and permission, and the permission of the rest of his and Salhab's siblings ("*bi ithnin minhou wa min Salhab wa min baqiyat ikhwatihī*"), Khodr was held in custody with permission from his father because he was a minor. When the *iltizām* contract was signed, Mustafa Agha, the *dazdār*⁴² of the Citadel of Tripoli, took custody of 'Uthman and Khodr. He pledged to keep them under his protection and not to surrender them to anyone without personal permission from the governor of Tripoli Sa'ad al-Din Pasha.⁴³

In 1755, Hasan Barakat, mentioned above, returned to court for the execution of new *iltizām* contracts. In this instance, a number of other tax farmers were also listed with a note explaining that they acted collectively to levy the taxes from Anfeh, a coastal town south of Tripoli, and part of the taxes of al-Askala, where the port of Tripoli was located. The tax farmers agreed to leave a boy named Isma'il ibn Muhammad (it is not clear if he was related to any of the tax farmers), with permission from the boy's father, since he was a minor, in the custody of al-hajj Dib ibn al-hajj Muhammad al-Khayyāt.⁴⁴ Upon the conclusion of another of Hasan's *iltizām* contracts, he agreed to leave his own three sons to be "incarcerated" at the Citadel of Tripoli. He also agreed to the incarceration of three additional boys, with permission from their legal guardians because they were minors, though no names or ages or any further details were provided for them.⁴⁵

As *multazims*, Hasan and Salhab contributed to the *iltizām* system, which undergirded the collection of taxes in the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years. Stefan Winter finds a number of *iltizām* contracts recorded in the shari'a court registers of Tripoli starting in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Qasim al-Samad also suggests that the *iltizām* system existed in Tripoli and the neighboring provinces

starting in the last third of the seventeenth century and survived at least until the Egyptian expedition in 1832.⁴⁷ Though *iltizām* contracts were annually executed between *multazims* and representatives of the state, and recorded in the registers of shari'a courts across the empire, their practice and significance were not the same everywhere.⁴⁸

For example, Winter explains, in Ottoman Syria and in accordance with the Hanafi jurisprudence, eighteenth-century *iltizām* contracts increasingly required a pecuniary (*kafāla bil-māl*) as well as a corporal (*kafāla bil-nafs*) guarantee.⁴⁹ Winter adds that this practice emerged from the Hanafi doctrinal concept of guarantee in person (*kafāla bil nafs*), and those incarcerated, which he also labeled as "*rahn*," comprised sons and wives of *multazims*. The author highlights that the practice was abandoned at the beginning of the eighteenth century because the Hamāda lords, the most influential *multazims*, often descended to the city of Tripoli and liberated their family members.⁵⁰ Intriguingly, when the practice of incarceration resurfaced toward the mid-eighteenth century, as the sources indicate, there is no evidence that female relatives of *multazims* were ever included in the contracts in the period under study. Such discrepancy highlights, perhaps, how ideas of boyhood, childhood, and gender- and age-based familial roles found their way into *iltizām* contracts.

In the case of Tripoli, the collection of contracts recorded around the mid-eighteenth century thus documents an institutionalized practice of incarcerating young and minor males associated with the families or clans of *multazims*, who generally hailed from the class of provincial notables or *a'yān*, to lure the latter to render payment of taxes. Year after year, *multazims* came to the court to renew or sign new *iltizām* contracts with the representative of the Ottoman state, whether the governor or one of his deputies, in the presence of the qadi and scribes. *Multazims* voluntarily, at least as the contracts repetitively imply, turned in their male minor relatives to be held in captivity in the dungeons of the Citadel of Tripoli and the Citadel of Arwād, the latter located in modern-day Syria. It is worth noting here that the terms "put" (*wada'a*) and "incarcerated" (*habasa*) were used interchangeably in the contracts; the use of the two words was not consistent, which suggests that it could be related to the scribe's preference rather than the severity of the act of holding a minor in confinement.

Aside from the state's use of the citadels to incarcerate minors, the registers also indicate that few residences of Tripolitan figures, such as al-hajj Dīb ibn al-hajj Muhammad al-Khayyāt and Muhammad ibn al-shaykh Mustafa, were also used for imprisonment.⁵¹ The sources do not clarify who Dīb or Muhammad were and what connection they

might have had to both the *multazims* and the state; nevertheless, they do reveal that they were residents of the city of Tripoli who were entrusted over the years with the custody of the minors who were not sent to the citadels of Arwād or Tripoli to be incarcerated. We can only speculate that these men were known public figures who were trustworthy, but the registers do not provide any clarification about them.

With few exceptions, the signing of *iltizām* contracts took place around the same time each year; they may have been signed simultaneously in the same court session because they were recorded in the registers on the same page in chronological order.⁵² The contracts indicate that the minor males were to stay in custody until all installments of taxes were paid, a period of one year. Nevertheless, more research is needed to determine if returning *multazims* left their minor children/relatives in custody more than one year. Hasan Barakat, for example, appeared multiple times in court to renew his *iltizām* contracts, but it is difficult to confirm if he was using the same or different minors each time as guarantee for payment of taxes.⁵³

Within the thousands of pages of the shari'a court registers from Tripoli in the fifty-year span between 1750 and 1800, children and youth are present in all types of legal cases. Careful review of the material reveals three main categories of cases pertaining to children: (i) cases related to personal status disputes including *talāq*, *haḍāna*, *wisāya*, *nafaqa*, and *tarika*; (ii) cases related to the appointment of minors, mainly boys, to different *wazīfas* (job or occupation) within the waqf system in masjids, hammams, and madrasas; and (iii) cases related to *iltizām* contracts.

References to children could be reasonably anticipated in personal status, real-estate and properties' transactions, disputes over inheritance, and waqf-related cases. However, the presence of children forced into displacement, as the cases of *iltizām* contracts document, was unexpected. What was surprising about the coercion of the *multazims'* children is the fact that their treatment is inconsistent with their social status or the prominence of their elite families. However, by contextualizing this practice we begin to understand the centrality of mobility to state policies and how the governance of various social groups and their mobility influenced the experiences of young Ottoman subjects. I mentioned earlier Kasaba's discussion of Ottoman efforts to mobilize and or settle various nomadic tribes to maintain the stability of the empire. Similarly, there is no shortage of children who found themselves coercively mobilized and left to face precarious circumstances to cater to state interests.

The work of Yahya Araz, who discusses young girls who were employed in domestic service in late Ottoman Istanbul, indicates that the government regulated the mobility of these girls. The state sought to make sure they were not taken advantage of, to spare them grievances, and to specify how much of the fee paid for their work would be kept by their custodian. However, Araz adds, these girls continued to be vulnerable to abuse, suffered isolation from their families, and were restricted in their mobility once they were living with their employers. Nonetheless, the government did not seek to end the practice because it served the interests of the girls' impoverished families who collected some of their wages; it solved Istanbulites' need for cheap domestic help at a time when slavery was partly in decline; and it took poor girls off the streets easing the burden on the government.⁵⁴

Yilmaz gives us a glimpse into a different category of children, that is the *devşirme*, which she considers as a form of state-controlled and pre-modern enslavement. For centuries, Yilmaz explains, the Ottomans levied the children of their Christian population and uprooted them from their towns and villages to put them in the service of the state. In fact, the author argues, that there was a consciously developed policy toward selecting "proper bodies" depending on the state's needs and the duties assigned to these levied boys. This intent is evidenced by the meticulous recording of their physical traits at the time they were levied.⁵⁵

The *iltizām* contracts do not reveal much about the circumstances of the captivity of the elite young males described in this article. We might assume that they fared better than the domestic servants or the levied *devşirme*, given their elite status. However, it is clear that their mobility and separation from their families were justified by the fact that they served simultaneously the interest of their families and their employers/captors. Adding the example of young elites from Tripoli to discussions of child- and youth-specific displacement within the Ottoman Empire allows us to consider how the social role performed by each, and in turn, the presumed duration and nature of their mobility, factored in how the sources invoked each category of children. In the case of the domestic servants, and more so in the case of the *devşirme*, one-way mobility, and, in the case of the latter, permanent displacement contributed to the more extensive details provided in archival records, which were essential for the state's control over their bodies and whereabouts. The absence of such details in the case of *multazims'* relatives points to the fact that the mobility of this category was, in the eye of the state, always temporary.

On a different note, the “presence” of children in *iltizām* contracts is used figuratively because the children were not necessarily physically present in the court every time a case was deliberated. Nonetheless, we can assume that they sometimes came to the court in person, accompanied by their legal guardian(s). In-person attendance was undoubtedly necessary in some instances because these minor males were surrendered to a state representative at the conclusion of the *iltizām* agreement. *Multazims* often agreed to the incarceration of their own minor sons as well as that of the sons of their extended family members and clan, with permission from the respective minors’ legal guardians. They also agreed to the incarceration of minor children of the inhabitants of the *nāhiya* where the taxes were to be collected, taking them away, even if temporarily, from their families and communities.

HOSTAGES OF FAMILY AND STATE

In the case of elite minor males, there is much the *sijillāt* do not reveal, such as a tangible portrayal of the circumstances of their displacement. For example, the life of Khodr, the minor nephew of al-shaykh Salhab, must have been drastically impacted when he was incarcerated at the citadel of Tripoli, away from his parents, even if he was not made aware of the story of the snake that hid underneath the citadel. Another difficult situation occurred when brothers and cousins, who presumably lived under the same roof, were separated when they were sent to different imprisonment sites. The sons of Hasan Barakat, all minors, were locked down in three separate locations: one in the Citadel of Tripoli, two in the Citadel of Arwād, and one at the residence of another Tripolitan figure, ‘Abdi Bashi.⁵⁶ The absence of an explanation for why these siblings were separated highlights another limitation of the *sijillāt*.

The *sijillāt* leave many additional questions unanswered as well, including whether those related to the duration and sanitary conditions of incarceration or to whether governors, qadis, or *multazims* ever took into consideration the minors’ age and potential proximity to their family’s residence in determining an appropriate “pawn” and incarceration site. Incarceration of Tripolitan minors at the Citadel of Arwād, for example, must have limited their family access and visitations. Aside from access to the citadel itself, the journey between Tripoli and the island of Arwād is arduous, even by today’s standards. A visit during the winter would have been particularly dangerous, as the journey from the coastal line to the island would have been interrupted by winter storms. In such cases, the displaced minors of Arwād were further isolated from their families. As mentioned earlier, official sources preserve many aspects of childhood and

children's lives, though not all related to the inner lives of families, as this task is, admittedly, not easy to discover. Nonetheless, these traces within the *sijillāt* beckon historians to consider the potential experiences of young people separated from their social orbit.

The *sijillāt* provide ample evidence to show that the Ottoman legal system reinforced shari'a rules pertaining to personal status cases including custody, guardianship, alimony, and right to income from religious endowments. In those cases, minors' best interests superseded other considerations simply because, I argue, the state's own interests were not at stake. The state, represented by the court, advocated for children, irrespective of gender, especially those who fell victims of family disputes or were subjected to traumatic circumstances as a result of divorce or loss of one or both parents. The courts adjudicated in their best interest, seeking for them *al-haz al-awfar wa al-ghibta al-rājiha*.⁵⁷ This benevolent attitude contrasts with the court's treatment of the minor male relatives of *multazims*, who were also Ottoman subjects, as the contracts turned a blind eye to the minors' "greatest fortune and unbounded joy." Contrary to the two categories of cases involving children in personal status disputes and waqf employment, the emphasis on keeping elite minor relatives of *multazims* in a safe place had less to do with their protection and well-being, and more with the need to keep them in custody until the person who voluntarily left them incarcerated in the first place fulfilled his *iltizām* commitment. Moreover, the cases make it clear that they were not to be surrendered to anyone but the representatives of the state.⁵⁸ They were effectively the state's hostages.

As for the families of these elite minors, these *iltizām* contracts reveal the reluctance of their male relatives to stand up for them as they became victims of displacement and were forced into incarceration because, I would argue, *multazims* prioritized their tax-farming contracts. *Multazims* only intervened and expressed their interest in their minor relatives when the latter were subjected to extreme circumstances threatening their safety or lives. By the time Dahir walad Yousef appeared in the court in April of 1752, his son, Sarkis (his age is not specified), had been in the Citadel of Tripoli for three years, as his father failed to remit all the amount of taxes he committed. Dahir, a *zhimmi multazim*, negotiated the transfer of Sarkis from the citadel to the custody of al-shaykh Muhammad Ra'ad and Shadid ibn Yousef who promised to protect him (*yahfazāhu*) and surrender him to the state representative upon request.⁵⁹ In theory, *multazims* were aware of the state's need for their services and consequently knew they had leverage. The state took advantage of the *multazims'* interest in collecting taxes, because it was a lucrative business, and imposed on

them the stipulation of leaving their boys in custody until the *iltizām* was fulfilled.

What sources might add details to historians' understanding of the incarcerated minors' experiences? One possible resource is the *shikayat defterleri*—collections of complaints, grievances, and petitions from the provinces that made their way to the central government in Istanbul, sometimes referred to as *muhemet defterleri*. It may be that a tax-farmer became concerned about the safety and well-being of his incarcerated minor sons, nephews, or other members of the extended clan, and consequently escalated the issue to the central government. Whether this ever happened—and admittedly, the odds are very slim given the notables-state complex relationship and mutual interests⁶⁰—we do not know. But if such an event did occur, the records of *shikayat defterleri* could provide another layer of data and different perspectives to inform our understanding of this aspect of the history of forcibly displaced children.⁶¹

These minor elite males were thus caught between family and state; children from Tripoli and surrounding *nāhiya* were indeed Ottoman subjects but not always subjects of concern.⁶² This state practice to incarcerate young and minor males and displace them to maintain a strong grip on *multazims* and force them to fulfill their tax-farming commitments manifests one aspect of Ottoman governance. This governance rested on the cooperation of the many countryside communities that enabled the function and expansion of the Ottoman Empire.⁶³

FREEING UP THE ELITE MINORS: A SHIFT IN STATE PRIORITIES
In 1778, As'ad Barakat appeared in the shari'a court of Tripoli to execute a new *iltizām* contract to collect the taxes of Hillat Oubin in the *nāhiya* of Safita.⁶⁴ Unlike the contracts of a generation prior, As'ad's contract did not commit to the incarceration of any male relatives. Instead, As'ad, who was none other than the son of Hasan Barakat and a victim of incarceration himself,⁶⁵ pledged to protect the *ahālī* or the residents of the *nāhiya*, as well as those who were traveling through the region, and to maintain the stability of the countryside. As'ad, once a victim of displacement, incarceration, and separation from his family, became a *multazim* himself.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that the phenomenon of incarcerating *multazims'* minor relatives disappeared toward the end of the eighteenth century. It might be suggested that individuals subjected to harsh prison conditions were motivated to spare other minors from enduring the same fate as they did, though this is a very speculative argument. However, I would argue instead that the

abandonment of the practice had less to do with the *multazims* and more with the change of governance at the central administration level. The shift in practices of *iltizām*-prompted incarceration must be contextualized with reference to conditions in Greater Syria more broadly, including provincial approaches to managing the population's mobility. The present study builds on scholarship that has dismissed the view of the Ottoman government as an unchanging monolith in favor of a conception that suggests institutional adaptation for the sake of meeting specific political, military, and fiscal challenges.

Early in the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire sustained massive defeats on the European frontier and navigated a disaster in which thirty thousand pilgrims died on the Damascus-Mecca route in Bedouin attacks. The Bedouin threat to the pilgrimage routes symbolized a challenge to the sultan's legitimacy and power. Quataert argues that this challenge signaled an urgent need to ratify the prestige of the state, which translated into revitalizing the administration of Damascus, strategically situated on the hajj route. Consequently, in 1708, the Ottoman government appointed a new governor to the province of Damascus from the local *a'yān* al-Azm family with strong local connections to provide the necessary manpower and military presence to protect the pilgrims.⁶⁶

In order for the Ottoman government to supplement the efforts to protect the hajj route without added burden to the central treasury which, at the time, already suffered from a chronic deficit, it recommitted the resources of Homs and Hama from Tripoli to the province of Damascus. Khaled Ziadeh points out that this administrative reconfiguration devastated Tripoli as a province.⁶⁷ Control over the southern part of the province had already weakened as a result of a long struggle with Fakhr al-Din II.⁶⁸ A succession of members from the 'Azm family, the same family as the governors of Damascus, served as governors in Tripoli. A struggle with the more powerful neighboring governors ultimately led to the annexation of the province, first to Damascus and then to Acre, around the end of the period under study.⁶⁹ More power ultimately went to the local notables, especially after 1750, as the Ottomans gave provincial governors more discretion and increasingly relied on notables as intermediaries with the populace. Notwithstanding this power struggle, shared financial benefits continued to bind together the benefits of the central and provincial authorities throughout the eighteenth century.⁷⁰

More recently, Ali Yaycıoğlu also shows that during the age of revolutions between 1760 and 1820, the Ottoman Empire experienced a series of institutional shakeups, political crises, and popular

insurrections.⁷¹ Yaycıoğlu argues that during this period, the provincial communities became active participants in provincial governance and politics. These participatory mechanisms were promoted by the central administration to facilitate taxation, governance and public finance, and ultimately contribute to the imperial order.⁷² This article thus captures a moment of provincial empowerment, though that should not be perceived as central power retraction, and a time of political fragmentation on the Ottoman provincial level; it also delves into a period of major administrative and economic changes which culminated with the dissolution of Tripoli as a province, its degeneration as an urban center, and its demotion from a provincial to a regional capital. Regional and international geopolitical tensions on one hand and the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy on the other hand prompted the processes that would bring such watershed moments in the history of the Tripolitan province.⁷³ These major changes and volatile circumstances translated into population mobility and displacement in the countryside, ultimately necessitating an intervention of local notables, including *multazims*, on behalf of the state to restore stability. Central and provincial governors' dependency on the *multazims* constituted an opportunity for the latter to impose their own conditions, which included avoiding using children as guarantee for their contracts.

Resat Kasaba points out that the fluidity and indeterminacy of Ottoman society gave the empire an advantage in earlier parts of its history. Nomadic and other mobile groups played a central role in the expansion, organization, and administration of the Ottoman Empire in the early parts of its history.⁷⁴ Kasaba explains that the Ottomans used the policy of *istimāleh*, mentioned earlier, which aimed to win over people while helping consolidate the power of local chiefs.⁷⁵ However, by the end of the seventeenth century, it had become clear to the Ottomans that flexible borders and imprecise identities no longer served them well. According to the author, "A key component of this shift in priorities was a growing interest on the part of Ottoman officials in counting, registering, and ultimately settling the nomadic and other itinerant groups within the borders of the empire."⁷⁶

Around 1763, the *iltizām* contracts started to allude to the "safety of the *nāhiya*, the happiness of the *ra'īya* (the imperial subjects) and their *istimāleh*, and the safe passage of travelers through the region." At that same time, *multazims* were no longer committing to the incarceration of their minor male relatives. This shift, which coincided with the age of revolution that Yaycıoğlu discusses, meant that, by 1763, the Ottoman government had other concerns which needed to be addressed, including a devastated countryside whose inhabitants,

livestock, and passersby were terrorized, and the need to guarantee the safe return of the “displaced,” to the countryside.⁷⁷ Although the continuous inflow of taxes was important, the registers suggest that the state placed equal value on stability and peace in the provinces’ hinterland.

Another possible explanation for the change in young elite incarceration is the rise of the local notables, or *a’yān*, whose “efflorescence resulted in no small part from the spread of the life-tenure tax-farm (*iltizām*).”⁷⁸ However, this ascendance and triumph of the *a’yān* by the end of the eighteenth century must not be interpreted, as many historians have, in terms of decentralization or decline on the part of the central government; rather, the Ottoman state was “working to meet specific challenges.”⁷⁹ We should always remember that Cemal Kafadar questioned almost three decades ago if the Ottoman Empire even declined. According to Kafadar, aspects of political, social, military, and economic changes were all lumped under an umbrella of decline. One of critical points declinists always neglected, was “this small yet indispensable notion of relativity” in defining what decline even meant.⁸⁰

The *multazims* remained dependent on the Ottoman administration to grant or deny them the renewal of *iltizām* contracts. Yet, these contracts reveal the state’s adaptation to changing circumstances. It abandoned the forced relocation and incarceration of minors in response to the need for the *multazims* to continue not only with the collection of taxes but more importantly to do so in such a way as to facilitate resettlement and maintain peace and stability in the countryside. *iltizām* contracts thus corroborate Jane Hathaway’s reframing of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century “as a polity whose administration went through cycles of greater and lesser centralization as a result of rational strategic and economic choices.”⁸¹ Moreover, *iltizām* contracts convey how the Ottoman polity forced some of its subjects to stand still while allowing or encouraging others to be forcibly displaced, marooned from their families, and confined away – notwithstanding their legal or biological age or their purported well-being.

CONCLUSION

Using the proceedings of *iltizām* contracts, and particularly the practice of incarcerating the minor male relatives of *multazims* to guarantee those contracts, this article traces the intersection between the study of children, forced displacement, and the power struggle between (elite) family and state. This indicates that the histories of children and youth have the potential to inform an array of studies. Nevertheless, the field

of children and childhood history is still in its infancy. There is an urgent need for studies which cover the wide geographical span of the Ottoman Empire, utilize a variety of primary sources, and focus on different time periods before we can lay the foundations for future directions.

This article demonstrates that the nuances of the state's endeavor to maintain the unbounded joy of its younger subjects hinged on its financial interests and political stakes.⁸² The Ottoman legal system reinforced shari'a rules pertaining to personal status cases to maintain social stability; it advocated for children, irrespective of gender, especially those who were subjected to traumatic circumstances. It often sought to adjudicate in their best interest. However, *iltizām* contracts, which were routinely executed between *multazims* and representatives of the state, indicate that the latter turned a blind eye to the "greatest fortune and unbounded joy of children" when it conflicted with its interests. *Iltizām* contracts represent the manifestation of the state's exercise of power and its unconcern with the "happiness" of children. Children in Tripoli, the city and the province, were still Ottoman subjects, but their well-being was not a state priority.

Attempts of parents to care for their minor children, which were obvious in cases related to personal disputes and appointment to *wazifas*, within the waqf system or religious apparatus, were less evident when it came to *iltizām* contracts that hinged on the incarceration of minor males. Nevertheless, the latter were still on the mind of their relatives. *Multazims* were aware that the state needed their services and consequently agreed to leave their children in incarceration, knowing that they had the leverage to guarantee their safety. Whenever possible, they negotiated for their release or better circumstances for their captivity, as demonstrated by the release of Sarkis walad Dahir from the Citadel of Tripoli, discussed earlier in this article. Though we might not be able to delve into the emotional bonds between a father and his son, which are more obvious in sources like the advice manuals of Sūnbūlzadeh, yet we can still capture nuances of concerned parents.

The adoption of incarceration of minor males as a coercive strategy to control *multazims* was fading away by the end of the period under study. The complete absence of the phenomenon of incarcerating minor and young male relatives of *multazims* by the 1780s is just as revealing as the initial practice itself few decades earlier. This shift reflects the adaptive strategies of the eighteenth-century Ottoman state. The state was amenable to abandoning the practice as long as the *multazims* continued to collect taxes and used their local influence to

safeguard the countryside and ensured the resettlement of the *ahāli*.⁸³ The state and local *a'yān* were both willing to adopt different strategies and make some concessions to protect their mutual financial interests.

In conclusion, despite the limitations of the *iltizām* contracts in providing detailed descriptions of children, their experiences of displacement, and their own roles in and responses to their incarceration, the contracts do have much to offer to Ottomanists, those interested in early modern mobility and history in general, and scholars of children and childhood. They not only encourage historians to further explore and refine our understanding of child-specific forms of mobility and displacement but they also provide an intriguing example of how mobility, and in particular the mobility of young people, contributed to the unfolding of major changes within Ottoman governance in the provinces.

NOTES

¹ Umar Tadmuri, *Tarikh Tarabulus al-Siyasi wa al-Hadari* (Tripoli: Dar al-Iman, 1978), 90.

² Many of the stories about the history of the citadel of Tripoli and its underground detention cells used by the rulers of Tripoli from the Crusaders to the Ottomans were narrated by Shaykh Kamil Baba. See Kamil Baba, *Tarabulus fi al-Tarikh* (Tripoli: Jarrous Press, 1995). I witnessed firsthand the transfer of the command of the citadel between the different militia groups (Jund Allah and Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islamiyyah or the Islamic Unification Movement), and starting in 1986, the Syrian army who used it as a detention center and a strategic location to oversee the strongholds of the predominately Sunni quarters in Abou Samra and al-Tabanah. Early in the 1990s and after the Ta'if Accord, the Lebanese Army were stationed in the citadel, probably because it continued to be a strategic location, but opened it to the general public.

³ A *timar* was a land grant that the sultan, or his bureaucracy, offered to the cavalymen, who were in his service, to pay for their warfare expenses by collecting taxes from the peasants while at the same time ensuring the cultivation of that land. See Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1800* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁴ Hathaway, *Arab Lands*, 50.

⁵ Resat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

⁶ Kasaba, *Moveable Empire*, 83.

⁷ Reda Rafei, "Legal Practices and Their Implication for Women and Children in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Tripoli: A Social and Economic Perspective" (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 2023), 243.

⁸ The phrase *al-haz al-awfar wa al-ghibta al-rājiha* was frequently invoked in the registers in cases pertaining to personal status disputes including divorce, custody, alimony, and guardianship where the court took every measure to ensure that young children's interests were taken care of.

⁹ Rafei, "Legal Practices," 243.

¹⁰ Kasaba, *Moveable Empire*, 12.

¹¹ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹² Rafei, "Legal Practices," 242.

¹³ Kasaba, *Moveable Empire*, 46–47.

¹⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Foreword," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire From the 15th to the 20th Century*, eds. Gülay Yilmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), xv.

¹⁵ Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

¹⁶ Heywood, *History of Childhood*, 5.

¹⁷ Philippe Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Plon, 1960).

¹⁸ Colin Heywood, "Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary – and an Epitaph?," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 341–65.

¹⁹ Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 4.

²⁰ Heywood, "Centuries of Childhood," 360.

²¹ Benjamin C. Fortna, ed., *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

²² Fortna, preface to *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire*.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Gülay Yilmaz and Fruma Zachs, eds., *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire: From the 15th to the 20th Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

²⁵ Heywood, *History of Childhood*, 3

²⁶ Heywood points that one of the main concerns for historians like Philippe Ariès, Edward Shorter, and Linda Pollock was to know how parents felt about their children in the past. Heywood, *History of Childhood*, 6

²⁷ Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children*, 8.

²⁸ Nazan Maksudyan, "A New Angle of Observation: History of Children and Youth for Ottoman Studies," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3, no. 1 (May 2016): 111–14.

²⁹ Sarah Maza, "The Kids Aren't All Right: Historians and the Problem of Childhood," *American Historical Review* 125, no. 4 (October 2020): 1261–85.

³⁰ Maksudyan, "New Angle of Observation," 112.

³¹ Yilmaz and Zachs, *Children and Childhood*, 1

³² Faroqhi, "Foreword."

³³ Colin Heywood, "Ottoman Childhoods in Comparative Perspective," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire: From the 15th to the 20th Century*,

eds. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 33.

³⁴ Heywood, "Ottoman Childhoods," in *Children and Childhood*, 32.

³⁵ *Sijillāt al al-mahkama al-shar'iyya fi Tarāblus* (Tripoli Shari'a Court Registers [hereafter TSCR]) Dār al Fatwa, Tripoli City Hall, TSCR 23-1-51-1; see also TSCR 14-1-9-1.

³⁶ TSCR 15-4-17-2.

³⁷ Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik focuses on this aspect of Hanafi practice in her discussion of female custodians after divorce in her dissertation. See Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik, "Negotiating Matrimony: Marriage, Divorce, and Property Allocation Practices in Istanbul, 1755–1840" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013).

³⁸ TSCR 12-3-47 (147)-2.

³⁹ TSCR 15-5-47-2; TSCR 19-1-4-1; TSCR 19-3-26-2.

⁴⁰ Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik, "The Emotional Bond between Early Modern Ottoman Children and Parents: A Case Study of Sünbülzade Vehbi's 'Ideal' Child (1700–1800)," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire: From the 15th to the 20th Century*, eds. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 130.

⁴¹ TSCR 12-3-47 (147)-1.

⁴² A military title usually bestowed upon the citadel's commander.

⁴³ TSCR 12-3-47 (147)-2.

⁴⁴ TSCR 14-5-9-1.

⁴⁵ TSCR 14-5-11-1.

⁴⁶ Stefan Winter, "Le rôle du kafil (garant) dans la gouvernance locale selon les contrats d'affermage fiscal à Tripoli au XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle," *Islamic Law and Society* 23 (2016): 399.

⁴⁷ Qasim al-Samad, *Muqarabat fi Tarikh Lubnan al-Hadith* (Beirut: Dra Sa'ir al-Mashriq, 2016), 16.

⁴⁸ Winter, "Le rôle du kafil," 394.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 409.

⁵¹ TSCR 14-5-9-1.

⁵² The signing of *iltizām* contracts and payment of taxes followed the Ottoman fiscal year (*sana mārtiyya*).

⁵³ TSCR 14-2-54 (113)-1; TSCR 14-2-55 (114)-1; TSCR 14-2-56 (115)-2.

⁵⁴ Yahya Araz, "Rural Girls as Domestic Servants in Late Ottoman Istanbul," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire: From the 15th to the 20th Century*, eds. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 196.

⁵⁵ Gülay Yılmaz, "Body Politics and the Devşirmes in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: The Conscripted Children of Herzegovina," in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire: From the 15th to the 20th Century*, eds. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 258.

⁵⁶ TSCR 14-2-54 (113)-2.

⁵⁷ Rafei, "Legal Practices," 219. Cases pertaining to personal status disputed or employment within the waqf system capture the meaningful role women played in the livelihood of their minor relatives, a role that is completely absent in the predicament that *multazims'* minor relatives were subjected to. The implication of women's absence would undoubtedly impact the gender dynamics within Ottoman society, but this is beyond the scope of this study.

⁵⁸ Examples are the following cases: TSCR 14-5-6-1, TSCR 14-5-9-1, TSCR 14-5-9-2, and TSCR 14-5-11-1.

⁵⁹ TSCR 12-5-45-3. There is no information on the two men and whether they were to keep the boy under their supervision in their private residence until his father fulfills his commitments.

⁶⁰ The relationship between *a'yān* and the central government is a subfield of Ottoman history which received a lot of attention from scholars who produced a large number of publications, including Cemal Kafadar, Jane Hathaway, Douglas Howard, Linda Darling, and Cornell Fleischer, to name a few.

⁶¹ One example of what these documents include is that of the Kayseri women who appealed on their families' behalf in Istanbul. For details, see Ronald Jennings, "Women in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 18, no. 1 (January 1975): 62.

⁶² TSCR 12-3-47 (147)-2.

⁶³ Kasaba, *Moveable Empire*, 9.

⁶⁴ TSCR 23-1-21 (21)-1.

⁶⁵ Qasim al-Samad points that some of the influential families had a monopoly over *iltizām* contracts and were able to transfer these contracts in perpetuity to their descendants' generation after generation. Among these families were the Hamadah and the Shihabi princes who could even sway governors to grant them the larger *iltizām* contracts (which consisted of more than one *nahiya* or *muqata'a*). See al-Samad, *Muqarabat*, 23.

⁶⁶ Quataert, *Ottoman Empire*, 110.

⁶⁷ Khaled Ziyada, *al-Soura al-Taqlidiyya lil Mujtama' al-Madīni* (Tripoli: Lebanese University Press, 1983), 22.

⁶⁸ At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the ambitions of Prince Fakhr al-Din II of the Druz Ma'an clan to expand the territories under his rule in Mount Lebanon and his continuous encounters with the local powerful families of Tripoli, especially the Sayfah clan, resulted in an economic setback for Tripoli. This power struggle enticed Prince Fakhr al-Din II to attack Tripoli on multiple occasions, wreaking havoc in the province, which ultimately led to the contraction of its territories and a massive decrease in the population. Fakhr al-Din convinced members of the Maronite community, especially those working in silk, to sever their ties to the province and resettle in the Ma'an principality to improve their production of silk, in high demand among the European merchants. The Ma'an clan first entered the modern day Lebanon in 1120 when the Seljuk governor of Damascus ordered them to settle in the central slopes of Lebanon to harass the Crusaders. The Sayfah clan were of Kurdish origin and resided in the

plain of 'Akkar to the north of Tripoli. See Philip K. Hitti, *A Short History of Lebanon* (London: McMillan, 1965), 158.

⁶⁹ By 1887, Tripoli was annexed to the province of Beirut.

⁷⁰ With the turn of the nineteenth century, the sultans reversed this course of policy and began to amass power at the center and build a more centralized political system that sought greater control over day-to-day life in the provinces. See Quataert, *Ottoman Empire*, 102.

⁷¹ Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

⁷² Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 117.

⁷³ Khaled Ziadeh, *Al-Sourah al-Taqlidiyya*, 24. The boundaries of the province of Tripoli changed many times but was generally divided into five sanjaks or administrative units: Tripoli (the city), the in-land towns of Homs, Hama, al-Salamiyyah, and Jabla. Each of these towns were also divided into *mahallas* or *hāras* which were administrative units equal to a quarter and was self-governing. In 1666, there were 26 *mahalla* in Tripoli; by 1739, the number dropped to 24.

⁷⁴ Kasaba, *Moveable Empire*, 14.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁷ TSCR 18-1-22 (39)-1.

⁷⁸ Jane Hathaway, "Rewriting Eighteenth Century Ottoman History," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, no. 1 (June 2004): 29-53.

⁷⁹ Linda Darling, "Ottoman Fiscal Administration: Decline or Adaptation?," *Journal of European Economic History* 26, no. 1 (1997): 157-79.

⁸⁰ Many historians used the rise of the notables in the Ottoman provinces as an indication that the state was losing power and declining. For a detailed discussion of this aspect of the historiography that mistakenly interpreted changes in the ottoman administration in term of decline rather than adaptation, see Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4 (1997-1998): 30-75. See also Darling, "Ottoman Fiscal Administration."

⁸¹ Hathaway, "Rewriting," 46.

⁸² The attitude of the state will change in the age of institutional intervention in the lives of children in the post-Tanzimat era.

⁸³ Hathaway, "Rewriting," 46.