

**An Ottoman Census Register  
for the Area of Serres of 859 H. (1454—1455)?  
A Reconsideration of the Date of Composition of Tahrir Defteri TT 3**

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*(In memory of my friend and colleague Vančo Boškov)*

In a recent publication, Heath Lowry, the American ‘defterologist’ (who may himself have coined this term) presents his colleagues with new data for the extent of taxation under *Sultan Mehmed II* in a district of Eastern Macedonia<sup>1</sup>). If correct, their implications are no doubt of great importance.

Lowry’s primary sources are two Ottoman tax registers covering large parts of Macedonia, both compiled during the second reign of *Mehmed II the Conqueror* (1451—1481). The later of the two *defters* is the ‘detailed’ Tahrir Defteri TT 7, of 1478. The second register on which the author based his investigations is the equally ‘detailed’ Tahrir Defteri TT 3. Its date of composition, according to Lowry, is the year 869 H. (1464—1465)<sup>2</sup>).

Although Lowry, by comparing the data provided by TT 7 and TT 3, noticed various ‘striking’ and ‘sudden’ changes over a period of just thirteen years (like a threefold increase in the Muslim population of the investigated village between 1465 and 1478)<sup>3</sup>), he does not appear to have questioned the validity of the dates attributed to his basic sources: only TT 7 seems clearly dated, while the ‘detailed’ Tahrir Defteri TT 3 is certainly not.

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<sup>1</sup>) Heath W. Lowry, Changes in Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The Case Study of Radilofo, in: A. A. M. Bryer and H. W. Lowry (eds), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*. The University of Birmingham, Centre for Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek, Birmingham, 1986, pp. 23—37 (hereafter cited as Lowry, Changes).

<sup>2</sup>) Lowry, Changes, p. 24, n. 2. Also H. W. Lowry, Portrait of a City: the Population and Topography of Ottoman Selânik (Thessaloniki) in the Year 1478, *Diptycha* 2 (Athens, 1980—1981), pp. 254—294, esp. p. 256 and n. 9 (this article will henceforth be cited as Lowry, Portrait).

<sup>3</sup>) Lowry, Changes, p. 29—31.

Lowry's recent article is not the first in which the Ottoman Tahrir Defteri TT 3 has been used. Several other studies on various aspects of early Ottoman Macedonia also rely, partly or wholly, upon this important document, and many more conclusions drawn from the evidence of TT 3 have already been published<sup>4</sup>). The *defter* itself has only recently been made available, albeit as a translation into Macedonian, with no facsimile of the text<sup>5</sup>). Not surprisingly, therefore, this publication has passed unnoticed by many Ottomanists, and continues to do so.

Unfortunately, TT 3 has not been preserved as a complete copy<sup>6</sup>). The initial pages of the document, which must have shown the date of composition<sup>7</sup>), are missing, together with several pages at the end, leaving the *defter* without the usual dating. Nevertheless, in the catalogues of the Başbakanlık Arşivi, TT 3 is described as dating from the year 869 H. (1464—1465), a fact reported by I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr and N. Beldiceanu in an article published as early as 1971<sup>8</sup>). The passage in TT 3 which had been used to justify this dating was referred to by N. Beldiceanu in a later article: a list of *voynuks* from the district of Nevrekob drawn up by the *kadı* of Siroz (Serres) in 869 H. (1464—1465) on pages 120f., right in the middle of the *defter*. N. Beldiceanu drew attention to this entry as the clue to the date of composition of the whole Tahrir Defteri TT 3 ("Donc le registre a été écrit au cours de cette année de l'hégire"<sup>9</sup>). Since this apparently solved the problem of dating the document, he continued to describe

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<sup>4</sup>) Compare the following examples (in chronological order): N. Beldiceanu and I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Un Paléologue de la région de Serres, *Byzantion* 41 (1971), pp. 5—17 (hereafter cited as Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Paléologue); M. Sokoloski, Serskiot vilaet vo XV vek, *Glasnik INI* 18,3 (Skopje 1974), pp. 107—125; N. Beldiceanu, Margarid: un timar monastique, *Revue des études byzantines* 3 (1975), pp. 227—255 (hereafter cited as Beldiceanu, Margarid); N. Beldiceanu, Le timar dans l'État ottoman (début XIV<sup>e</sup>—début XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle). Wiesbaden 1980 (hereafter cited as Beldiceanu, Timar); A. Stojanovski, Gradovite na Makedonija. Skopje 1981 (hereafter cited as Stojanovski, Gradovite).

<sup>5</sup>) A. Stojanovski (ed.), Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod. Opširen popis defter od XV vek. Tom 4, Skopje 1978, 412 pp., 1 map (hereafter cited as Stojanovski (ed.), Turski dokumenti).

<sup>6</sup>) Başbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul, section 'Tapu ve Tahrir'. A description of the document can be found in: Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Paléologue, pp. 5—7 (plates I and II between pp. 16 and 17 show the facsimile of pp. 206—209 of TT 3); Beldiceanu, Margarid, pp. 228f. (with a facsimile of pp. 267—271 of TT 3 on pp. 253—255); Lowry, Changes, p. 24, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup>) Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Paléologue, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>) Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>) Beldiceanu, Margarid, p. 228.

it as from 1464—1465<sup>10</sup>) — except once when (no doubt by oversight) he gave the year 1462—1463<sup>11</sup>). The first to question the dating of 1464—1465 was, to the best of my knowledge, Stojanovski, the translator of TT 3. In his introduction to the publication of 1978, he emphasized the fact that the handwriting of the list of *voynuks* differs considerably from the rest of the surrounding text which, in addition, is also isolated by at least one blank page in either direction. His conclusion, therefore, is that TT 3 as a whole cannot be dated by this unconnected entry — with no certainty whatsoever that it was drawn up at the same time as the *defter*<sup>12</sup>).

Stojanovski was at first inclined to believe that the register could not be earlier than 1476, but in an afterthought dismissed this idea as hardly convincing because of the closeness of this date to that of another census executed in roughly the same area (1478), and because of the fact that the dated list of *voynuks* in TT 3 looks like a later addition where the respective pages had been left blank, rather than an entry around which the rest of the *defter* was then arranged. Unable to offer a solution to the problem, Stojanovski finally described TT 3 as ‘not dateable for the time being’<sup>13</sup>). In a later publication, however, he came back to the earlier date, but expressly stated his uncertainty as to the reliability of the ‘established’ date by describing the *defter* as being ‘from about 1465’<sup>14</sup>).

To sum up: since all the arguments so far advanced for the dating of TT 3 have been shown to be invalid, the *defter* still has no date. This is a serious matter, for any deductions to be drawn from this important document will necessarily depend on the date attributed to it. It is unfortunate that respected Ottomanists have been so cavalier with this source<sup>15</sup>), for it is of

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<sup>10</sup>) Beldiceanu, Timar, pp. 17, 18, 23, 39, 42, 44, 58, 76, 78, 100; N. Beldiceanu and I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Recherches sur la Morée (1461—1512), *Südost-Forschungen* 39 (1980), pp. 17—74, esp. p. 66; N. Beldiceanu, II. À propos des registres de recensement ottomans TT 70 et TT 403, *Byzantion* 55 (1985), fasc. 1, pp. 409—412, esp. p. 411, note 5.

<sup>11</sup>) Beldiceanu, Timar, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup>) Stojanovski (ed.), Turski dokumenti, pp. 8, 24.

<sup>13</sup>) ‘(...) Spored toa, posočenata 869. godina ne može da bide merodavna za datiranje na celiot defter, pa zasega toj mora da ostane nedatiran.’ Op. cit., p. 24, n. 2a.

<sup>14</sup>) Stojanovski, Gradovite, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup>) Other *defters* of the area have, however, received more attention from the same scholars. There is a rather polemical ‘exchange of views’ between N. Beldiceanu and H. W. Lowry on the date of composition of TT 403: N. Beldiceanu, A propos de deux registres de recensement des monastères du Mont Athos, *Byzantion* 52 (1982), pp. 496—499; H. W. Lowry, Polémique à propos d’un compte rendu paru dans *Byzantion* LII (1982), pp. 115—135 (sic!); I. Response, *Byzantion* 55 (1985), pp. 403—408; N. Beldiceanu, II. À propos des registres de recensement ottomans TT 70 et TT 403, *ibidem*, pp. 409—412; H. W. Lowry, III. The Last Word?, *ibidem*, p. 413f.

considerable significance for related Balkan and Byzantine disciplines too. But most important, it concerns what has come to be regarded as one, if not *the*, central issue of Ottoman Studies — ‘defterology’.

Although TT 3 cannot be dated precisely, it is certainly not ‘undateable’. The *defter* offers references to the names and then status of officials whose careers are otherwise recorded, and to *vakıf* villages which are independently documented, thus making it possible to infer an approximate date for its composition. By applying the traditional rules of circumstantial evidence I will demonstrate below that the ‘established’ date of composition of TT 3 of 1464—1465 is impossible, and that a date ‘later than 1476’ is absurd.

TT 3 must be examined in the context of the earliest Ottoman Tapu Tahrir records preserved for the area of Serres, i.e. those compiled during the second reign of *Mehmed II* (1451—1481). Apart from TT 3 itself, these have been assumed to consist of TT 7 and MM 525. According to the catalogue of the Başbakanlık Arşivi dealing with the Tapu ve Tahrir records, the *defter* TT 7 is to be dated 883 H. (1478—1479). It forms a substantial section of a *mufassal*, or ‘detailed’, *defter*, which covers a good deal of Southern and most of Eastern Macedonia (Yenice-i Karasu, Drama, Zihna, Keşişlik, Siroz, Nevrekob, Kaloyan, Temürhisar, Selanik; 646 pp. in all)<sup>16</sup>). Our *defter*, TT 3, is also a ‘detailed’ register, covering most, but not all, of the territory described in TT 7<sup>17</sup>). N. Beldiceanu, assigning to it the date 869 H. (1464—1465), described it as belonging to a ‘middle survey’ of the area in question, thus making it intermediate between the later TT 7 and an even earlier survey represented by the *defter* MM 525<sup>18</sup>).

MM 525 is a ‘summary’, *icmal*, register which N. Beldiceanu, suggesting in 1975 that it was ‘rédigé après 1454’, claimed to be all that survives of the first survey of the area in question undertaken during the second reign of *Mehmed II*<sup>19</sup>). However, in 1980 he listed MM 525 as ‘Registre abrégé de recensement de la Macédoine orientale (1443/44—1454)’, thus defining it as an *icmal* defteri which, being updated over a decade, would have been in use for at least ten years *before* 1454<sup>20</sup>). According to this revised dating,

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<sup>16</sup>) Lowry, *Portrait*, p. 255 and n. 7; Beldiceanu, *Margarid*, p. 229f., gives a description which is different from the former by adding Qavala and Sidre-qapsa and leaving out Kaloyan. For the latest account see Lowry, *Changes*, p. 24, n. 2a.

<sup>17</sup>) For example, Selanik (Thessaloniki) does not figure in TT 3. The area covered by TT 3 is shown by the map of identified settlements given in Stojanovski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti*.

<sup>18</sup>) Beldiceanu, *Margarid*, pp. 228—230.

<sup>19</sup>) *Ibidem*, p. 229.

<sup>20</sup>) Beldiceanu, *Timar*, p. 100. M. Sokoloski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod. Opširni popisni defteri od XV vek. Tom 2*,

MM 525 was in fact drawn up under *Murad II* and thus has no connection with the first survey undertaken in the second reign of *Mehmed II*. This means in effect that we can safely ignore MM 525 in connection with *Mehmed II*'s first survey — assuming that we accept N. Beldiceanu's latest conclusions with respect to its date.

The only remaining document which may reflect this first survey of *Mehmed II*'s second reign is to be found in the archive of the monastery of St John Prodromos on Mount Menoikeon, near Serres<sup>21</sup>). Here a *firman* for the monks of St John, issued on 26 April 1460, which seems to have survived in a Greek translation only<sup>22</sup>), quotes in some detail from a *τεφτέρι*, clearly a *mufassal* Tahrir Defteri for the area of Serres in official use at that time, which Zachariadou suggests had resulted from the 'general land-census which took place in Rumili in 1455'<sup>23</sup>) — i.e. the date attributed to the first survey of *Mehmed II*'s second reign.

Let us return now to TT 3. To begin with, I should like to comment briefly on Stojanovski's tentative attempt to date the Tahrir Defteri TT 3 to the period 'after 1476'. In a footnote to the introduction of his translation, he refers to page 232 of the *defter* where one of the two beneficiaries of the *timar* registered there, or, perhaps, his father, is described as '*kuloğlu* of the late *Süleyman Paşa*'. Stojanovski identifies this dignitary with (*Hadim*) *Süleyman Paşa*, *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli, who was dismissed in 1476 after failing at Lepanto, and argues that TT 3 cannot therefore be earlier than 1476: 'Nous ne possédons pas de données relatives à l'année de sa mort, mais cela signifie que l'année 1476 est le "terminus post quem", pour dater notre source'<sup>24</sup>). Quite clearly, he was unaware of the fact that *Hadim Süleyman Paşa* lived at least until 1494<sup>25</sup>). The *terminus ante quem non* would thus be the year 1494, not 1476, and TT 3 would be later than the last census of the area carried out under *Mehmed II*. It is obvious that Stojanovski's sug-

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Skopje 1973, pp. 7, 15 describes an 'abbreviated' Defter No. 525, evidently this same *icmal*, as including the area of Köprülü (Titov Veles), with notes from as early as 1446, while Beldiceanu remarks: 'La partie conservée concerne Temürhisar, Nevreqob, Qaloyan et Istefanya': Margarid, p. 229. About the characteristics of 'abbreviated' *defters* see H. Šabanović, Krajište Isa-Bega Ishakovića. Zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine. Sarajevo 1964 (hereafter cited as Šabanović, Krajište).

<sup>21</sup>) E. A. Zachariadou, Early Ottoman Documents of the Prodromos Monastery (Serres), *Südost-Forschungen* 28 (1969), pp. 1—12 (hereafter cited as Zachariadou, Prodromos).

<sup>22</sup>) Ibidem, p. 7f.

<sup>23</sup>) Ibidem, p. 7, n. 47, quoting H. İnalcık, *Suret-i defter-i sancak-i Arvanid*. Ankara 1954, p. XVIII, note 80. Compare Beldiceanu, Margarid, p. 229, n. 18.

<sup>24</sup>) Stojanovski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti*, p. 24, n. 2a.

<sup>25</sup>) H. Reindl, *Männer um Bāyezīd*. Eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bāyezīds II. (1481—1512). Berlin, 1983, p. 43f., n. 41.

gestion that the above 'late' *Süleyman* should be identical with *Hadim Süleyman Paşa* does not offer a solution. Who then was the 'late *Süleyman Paşa*'? I will not pursue here the suggestion that it could have been *Orhan*'s son who died some time before his father, probably in 758 H. (1356—1357)<sup>26</sup>), although the context would not absolutely exclude this possibility<sup>27</sup>).

Thus, within twenty-five years, three fresh surveys of Eastern Macedonia and adjacent districts are said to have been undertaken by *Mehmed II* after the fall of Constantinople<sup>28</sup>) — a figure which appears high, but is in conformity with accepted data<sup>29</sup>).

In search of a firm *terminus ante quem non* we must go back to the early years of the second reign of *Mehmed II*. *Halil Paşa*, who was executed in July 1453 soon after the capture of Constantinople<sup>30</sup>), is described as 'deceased' on page 252 of the *defter* (= Stojanovski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti*, 225; in the text hereafter cited as St.). So TT 3 cannot be earlier than July 1453 (equivalent to *Receb* 857 H.). Nor can it be earlier than 858 H. (1454), for the village of Meryan/Miryani is mentioned as part of the *vakıf* of *Turhan Beg*<sup>31</sup>), which was only founded in that or, perhaps, in the first month of the following year (see p. 238 of the *defter*; = St. 214)<sup>32</sup>). *Saruca*

<sup>26</sup>) I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I*. Monachii, 1967, p. 117 and n. 16 (hereafter cited as Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches*).

<sup>27</sup>) The relevant entry on p. 232 of TT 3 runs as follows: 'Timar of Barak and *Yusuf*, son of *Musa* from Biga (*Bigalu*); taken over from his father. He is *kuloğlu* of the late *Süleyman Paşa*. They are in the possession of a *berat* of the late *hüdavendigâr* (= *Murad II*), according to which they jointly occupy (the *timar*), and alternately go on campaigns.' Stojanovski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti*, p. 209. There is a remote possibility of an identification of the 'late *Süleyman Paşa*' with *Orhan*'s son, but only if the attribute '*kuloğlu* of the late *Süleyman Paşa*' refers to *Yusuf*'s father, *Musa Bigalu*. It is interesting to note that there is a tradition according to which *Orhan*'s son *Süleyman* died in the vicinity of Biga, the 'place of origin' of *Yusuf*'s father *Musa*. İ. H. Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*. Vol. I. İstanbul n.d. (1971<sup>2</sup>), p. 31.

<sup>28</sup>) Beldiceanu, *Margarid*, p. 230.

<sup>29</sup>) Beldiceanu, *Timar*, p. 75; D. Bojanić, *Fragmenti jednog zbirnog i jednog opširnog popisa Vidinskog sandžaka iz druge polovine XV veka*. Poseban otisak iz *Miscellanea* 2. Beograd, 1973, p. 6f. (hereafter: Bojanić, *Fragmenti*).

<sup>30</sup>) İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*. Ankara 1974, p. 83.

<sup>31</sup>) *Miryânî* was part of the *vakıf* from the very beginning: M. T. Gökbilgin, *XV—XVI asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa livası; vakıflar — mülkler — mukataalar*. İstanbul 1952, p. 342 (hereafter cited as Gökbilgin, *Edirne*).

<sup>32</sup>) Gökbilgin (op. cit.) gives the year 858 H. (1454) as the date of *Turhan Beg*'s *vakfiye*, whereas Uzunçarşılı dates it to *Muharrem* 859 H. (22 December 1454—20 January 1455), but without giving further evidence. İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*. Vol. I. Ankara 1982<sup>4</sup>, p. 578. *Turhan Beg* is like-

*Paşa*, like *Turhan Beg*<sup>33</sup>) referred to as ‘*merhum*’ or ‘deceased’ on pp. 337 and 365 of the *defter* (= St. 289, 308), was still alive in 858 H. (1454)<sup>34</sup>); at least, it would seem, until *Cumaziyülevvel*, the fifth month of the Muslim year, beginning 29 April 1454<sup>35</sup>).

As far as I can see, there is not a single entry in TT 3 which would suggest a *terminus ante quem non* of later than 858 H. (1454) or, perhaps, 859 H. (1454—1455).

On the other hand, TT 3 must be earlier than 8 *Zilkade* 886 H. (29 December 1481): The village of Handaka/Hendeke/Hinka situated in the *vilayet* of Keşişlik (Gökbilgin’s ‘Fidāke?’), is registered in the *defter* as part of the *mülk* of the deceased *Saruca Paşa* (on pp. 337f.; = St. 289). Handaka finally ceased to be the *mülk* of *Saruca Paşa* after its incorporation into this Pasha’s *vakıfs* on 29 December 1481<sup>35a</sup>). *Pavlo Kurtiçoğlu Hamza* who appears in TT 3 as being in the possession of a *timar* in the vicinity of Nevrekob (pp. 82f.; = St. 96) is recorded as deceased in a *defter* entry of *selh-i Cumaziyülula* 871 H. (7 January 1467)<sup>36</sup>). The *subaşı* of Siroz (Serres), whose name is given in TT 3 as *Doğan Kurtçu* (p. 156; = St. 155), may well be identical with the *Doğan Kurtçu* who had been *yenicheri ağası* under *Murad II* for at least seven years<sup>37</sup>). He is unlikely to have died much later than 866 H. (1461—1462) when he established several *vakıfs* for his new foundations of a mosque and a *zaviye* in Edirne<sup>38</sup>). But while *Doğan Kurt-*

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ly to have died soon after the date of his *vakfiye*; however, his name is mentioned in a *defter* of 859 H. (1454—1455) without the attribute ‘*merhum*’, ‘deceased’: H. İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar I*. Ankara 1954, p. 145f. and n. 45 (quoting MM 167), (hereafter: İnalçık, *Fatih*). From the absence of a ‘*merhum*’ we cannot, however, conclude that he must still have been alive by then.

<sup>33</sup>) TT 3, page 238; Stojanovski (ed.), *Turski dokumenti*, p. 214.

<sup>34</sup>) This is the date of *Saruca Paşa*’s *vakfiye* as given in Gökbilgin, *Edirne*, pp. 248, 251: *tārīḥ-i vakfiye sene semān ve ḥamsin ve semānemī’e* = 858 H. (1454).

<sup>35</sup>) Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches*, p. 138, n. 14. On *Saruca Paşa* see P. Wittek, *Ein Brief des Kaisers Johannes VIII. an den osmanischen Wesir Sarığa Pasha vom Jahre 1432*, *Byzantion* 21 (1951), pp. 323—332; F. Babinger and F. Dölger, *ein Auslandsbrief des Kaisers Johannes VIII. vom Jahre 1447*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 45 (1952), pp. 20—28.

<sup>35a</sup>) Gökbilgin, *Edirne*, 140, n. 135. The reading as ‘Hinka’ is Stojanovski’s. For the pre-Ottoman form of the toponym see G. Ostrogorski, *Serska oblast posle Dušanove smrti*. Beograd, 1965, 46, 65, 66, 118 (‘Handak’).

<sup>36</sup>) Šabanović, *Krajište*, p. 107.

<sup>37</sup>) İnalçık, *Fatih*, p. 117 and n. 223. *Umur Beg veled-i Doğan Kurtçu*, the son of the former *yenicheri ağası Doğan Kurtçu*, was *emin* of the *hass* of Selanik (Thessaloniki) in 893 H. (1487—1488). Gökbilgin, *Edirne*, p. 153.

<sup>38</sup>) Gökbilgin, *Edirne*, pp. 224—228.

*cu* does not seem to provide us with a firm *terminus ante*, another well-known figure from the time of *Murad II* does: *Mara Branković*, the widow of that sultan and daughter of the Serbian *despot George Branković*<sup>39</sup>). Literary as well as documentary evidence show that the *Despina Hatun*, as *Mara* used to be called in Turkish, was granted extensive ownership of land in the area of Serres after she had fled from Serbia in consequence of the death of her father and finally her mother on 3 May 1457<sup>40</sup>). Two entire villages were given to *Mara* as her *baştina*, both situated south of Lake Takhinos in the vicinity of Serres. The villages in question are Ježevo, a former bishopric (today Daphni), and Mravinci<sup>41</sup>). Although both settlements can be easily identified in TT 3 as Izova and Muravnica in the *vilayet* of Siroz (pp. 243 and 265; = St. 218f. and 234f.), there can be found no mention of *Mara Branković*, or a *Despina Hatun*, or the *Carica* as she was called in the Slav lands<sup>42</sup>). Instead, the villages are listed as belonging to two ‘ordinary’ *timars* held by Muslim *sipahis*<sup>43</sup>), and it is interesting to note that Izova had been passed on as a *timar* from father to son for three generations<sup>44</sup>). As to the date of this grant, it is generally accepted that Ježevo and Mravinci were assigned to *Mara* while she was staying in Edirne in the confines of the royal court of her stepson, *Mehmed II*, from May 1457<sup>45</sup>).

<sup>39</sup>) Recent work on *Mara Branković* includes: R. Ćuk, Povelja carice Mare manastirima Hilandaru i Sv. Pavlu, *Istorijski Časopis* 24 (Beograd, 1977), pp. 103—116 (hereafter cited as Ćuk, Povelja); R. Ćuk, O hronologiji pisama carice Mare upućenih Dubrovniku, *ibidem*, pp. 285—288; V. Boškov, Mara Branković u turskim dokumentima iz Svete Gore, *Hilandarski zbornik* 5 (Beograd, 1983), pp. 189—214 + 7 plates (hereafter: Boškov, Mara).

<sup>40</sup>) F. Babinger, Ein Freibrief Mehmeds II., des Eroberers, für das Kloster Hagia Sophia zu Saloniki, Eigentum der Sultanin Mara (1459), *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 44 (1951), pp. 11—20 + 2 plates, esp. p. 13f. (hereafter cited as Babinger, Freibrief); F. Babinger, Witwensitz und Sterbeplatz der Sultanin Mara, *Ἐταιρεία Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, vol. ΚΓ’ (1953), pp. 240—244 (hereafter: Babinger, Witwensitz).

<sup>41</sup>) Ćuk, Povelja, pp. 106f. and 113f. The latter village, which today does not exist anymore, is said to have been most likely situated near Lake Takhinos: *Op. cit.*, p. 106, n. 13. It had belonged to the *katepaníkion Strymónos*: Γ. Ι. Θεοχαρίδου, *Κατεπανίγια τῆς Μακεδονίας*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1954, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>) For the names of *Mara Branković* in Turkish and Slavonic texts and documents see Boškov, Mara, p. 195—197.

<sup>43</sup>) Ježevo/Izova (with 81 households) is listed as the *timar* of *Umur b. Yakub* with an annual income of 10.304 *akçe*. Mravinci/Muravnica (with only 12 households, but additional income from a *dalyan* [fishery]) figures as the *timar* of *Is-mail* with an annual income of 3.408 *akçe*. It is noted, however, that the *timar* had recently been added to Avrethisar.

<sup>44</sup>) The timariot is said to be in the possession of a *berat* issued by the ‘late *hüdavendigar*’ (= *Murad II*).

<sup>45</sup>) Babinger, Freibrief, p. 13; Ćuk, Povelja, p. 107; Boškov, Mara, p. 190.

Babinger gives the year 1459 as the most likely date for her departure from Adrianople and her final settling down in Ježevo, her 'Witwensitz' until the end of her life in 1487<sup>46</sup>).

Ježevo and Mravinci, *Mara's bastina* (freehold property) at least until May 1466 when she gave both villages to the monasteries of Chilandar and St Paul on the Holy Mountain<sup>47</sup>), cannot possibly have been any longer in the possession of Muslim timariots by — at the very latest — the beginning of the year 1460. The respective entries can therefore only be earlier than this. This *terminus ante* appears to be confirmed by documentary evidence. As mentioned earlier, a *firman* of 26 April 1460 from the archives of the monastery of St John near Serres contains a detailed enumeration of the properties of that monastery, no doubt a quotation from a *mufassal* Tahrir Defteri of the area. The Greek text first lists a mill in Serres (ὁ εἰς Σέρρας ἕνας μύλος), then three gardens (καὶ τρεῖς παχτσέδες), then six vineyards in Zihna (καὶ ἕξ ἀμπέλια εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν τῆς Ζίχνας), finally a linseed oil-press (καὶ εἷς πεστερχανὲς) and a saffron culture (καὶ σαφραλήκι), both without location<sup>48</sup>). The equivalent passage of TT 3 (p. 270, compare fac-

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<sup>46</sup>) Babinger, Freibrief, p. 14; Babinger, Witwensitz, p. 241. In Daphni, there are architectural remains associated with *Mara Branković*: '... ergab sich nun, daß sich bei der Gemeinde noch stattliche Reste des Landhauses oder der Burg der Mara (pyrgos tis Maros) erhalten haben und in einer Entfernung von etwa 20—30 Metern abseits davon leider geöffnete, also geplünderte Gräber aus der gleichen Zeit. (...) Im Volksmunde hat sich die Überlieferung erhalten, daß sich das Grab der Mara 40 Schritte vom Pyrgos entfernt befinde und bisher noch nicht entdeckt worden sei.' Ibidem, p. 244. Recent excavations in the 'Pýrgos tis Kyra-Máros' (for photographs of the remains see plates 147—149 of the archaeological report cited below, and A. E. Vacalopoulos, *History of Macedonia, 1354—1833*. Thessaloniki, 1973, p. 120) have revealed three phases of occupation: A hoard of 48 Austrian and Ottoman silver coins dates the third and latest phase to the middle of the 18th century. Finds of early post-Byzantine pottery (16th—17th centuries) in the next deeper layers allow a rough dating of the second phase, whereas finds from the stratum immediately above the first floor of the Tower do not seem sufficient to suggest a date for the first and earliest phase of occupation. According to the archaeological report, the Tower of Mara cannot be earlier than the late Palaiologan period. It is not unlikely to date into the third quarter of the fifteenth century: X. Μπακιρτζής, Πύργος της «κυρα-Μάρως», in: *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 33 (Athens, 1978), pp. 316—318 and plates 147—149. I owe this reference to the kindness of my colleague *Archie Dunn*, Birmingham.

<sup>47</sup>) The original deed of gift, issued in Ježevo on 21 May 1466 by *Mara Branković* herself, has been preserved in the archive of the monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos. It is published in Ćuk, Povelja, p. 113f. (with facsimile). By May 1466, *Mara* had already received as many as three *berats* by *Mehmed II* confirming her property in Ježevo and Mravinci: ibidem, p. 113, line 17.

<sup>48</sup>) Zachariadou, Prodomos, p. 7f.

simile in N. Beldiceanu, Margārid, 255) not only lists precisely the same items, but also has the same sequence. Wherever the Greek text has a word for ‘and’ (καὶ), the *defter* begins a new small entry: a mill in the city of Serres (*āsīyāb der şeh̄r-i Sīrōz*), three gardens (*bōstān kıt̄ca 3*), six vineyards in the city of Zihne (*bağ der şeh̄r-i Zih̄ne kıt̄ca 6*), finally a linseed oilpress (*bezīrhāne*) and a saffron culture (*za‘firān*), both without location. The closeness of the above Greek text to this Persian-Ottoman register entry is further symbolized by the parallelism of expression (τὴν πολιτείαν τῆς Ζίχνας, against *der şeh̄r-i Zih̄ne*) and by the fact that the Greek text keeps, but misspells, one of the termini technici used in the *defter* (i.e. *pesterchanes* for *bezirhane*)<sup>49</sup>. Most striking, however, is the omission of topographical details in both texts — in precisely the same way and in precisely the same place: there is no location given, in either text, for the oilpresses and the saffron culture; and with regard to the three gardens, the Greek text is as silent about the location of these properties as the *defter*<sup>50</sup>.

It was Zachariadou who first assumed that the *firman* of 26 April 1460 is quoting a Tahrir Defteri. There is no reason to assume other than that this Tahrir Defteri is in fact TT 3.

We now have enough evidence to propose a new chronological context for TT 3. This can be summarized in five points:

1. the list of *voynuks* dating from 869 H. (1464—1465) is by no means acceptable as providing the date of composition of TT 3 as a whole;
2. the year 869 H. (1464—1465) is certainly not the date of composition of TT 3 in its entirety;
3. it follows that TT 3 contains chronologically heterogeneous material;
4. there is no justification for Stojanovski’s tentative dating of ‘later than 1476’;
5. TT 3, in its main parts, was compiled at a date between 858 H./1454 M. (when *Turhan Beg* and *Saruca Paşa* were clearly still alive) and the beginning of 1460 (when *Mara Branković* was already well established in Ježevo).

This proposed dating makes it impossible to maintain the idea that TT 3 was the result of the so-called ‘middle survey’ of Eastern Macedonia, the very existence of which now seems questionable. On the other hand, it allows us to place this *defter* into one context with a whole series of surveys

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<sup>49</sup>) The Greek translator obviously read ‘te’ instead of ‘ya’, thus arriving at *bezter* > *pester* rather than the correct *bezir*. In the *defter*, p. 270, it is clearly written as *bezīr*.

<sup>50</sup>) N. Beldiceanu is wrong when he believes that the *firman* published by Zachariadou would locate the gardens in Serres (Beldiceanu, Margārid, p. 238, n. 86). In fact, Zachariadou’s summary (Zachariadou, Prodrōmos, p. 7) could be understood as placing the gardens in Zihna.

of Balkan territories executed around 1454—1455, including such neighboring districts like Kosovo, Southern Serbia, Northern Macedonia, and Thessaly<sup>51</sup>). Indeed, the characteristics of TT 3 fit perfectly well into those defined by N. Beldiceanu himself as pertaining to the *defters* which resulted from the surveys of the year 859 H. (1454—1455)<sup>52</sup>).

I therefore propose that the Tahrir Defteri TT 3 contains the result of the *first* survey of the area of Serres undertaken during the second reign of *Mehmed II*, and is, except for certain parts, the supposedly lost ‘detailed’ *defter* drawn up shortly after the fall of Constantinople.

This new chronological placing of TT 3 has both more immediate as well as wider implications. To begin with, N. Beldiceanu’s account of the sequence of events in which the monks of the monastery of St John were gradually deprived of their property would need revision<sup>53</sup>). As soon as we accept the idea that the description of the *vilayet* of Serres in TT 3 antedates the *firman* published by Zachariadou, a problem which N. Beldiceanu failed to explain ceases to be a problem. Without offering a plausible explanation, he noticed that the *firman* “se limite à mentionner les biens du monastère” (in Serres and Zihna) without containing any references to the much more important property of the monks in the surrounding countryside<sup>54</sup>). The answer, it seems to me, is as follows: Several villages which had been the monks’ property in the time of *Murad I* and *Bayezid I* and still in 1412 as well as (probably) in 1419<sup>55</sup>) had become a *timar* in the possession of the monks already before 1460 (as reflected in TT 3)<sup>56</sup>), and may have been given to Muslim timariots already by 26 April 1460 (when the *firman*, accordingly, confines itself to the enumeration of some monastic property in Serres and Zihna). From later evidence it is clear that the villages in question remained in Muslim hands, and that the monastic property shrunk even further — to one mill, one garden, and one vineyard in

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<sup>51</sup>) İnalçık, Fatih, pp. 145—158, 165; Beldiceanu, Timar, p. 99f.

<sup>52</sup>) ‘Les registres qui concernent des recensements entrepris en 859 H. (1454/55) suivent d’assez près les dispositions légales du Code [de lois coutumières de *Mehmed II*, M.U.]’ Beldiceanu, Timar, p. 18. In footnote 24 on the same page he says that ‘Le registre TT 3 ne présente pas de différences notables avec la loi du Code coutumier de *Mehmed II*.’ Compare *ibidem*, p. 16f.

<sup>53</sup>) Beldiceanu, Margarid, pp. 233—235, 241f.

<sup>54</sup>) *Ibidem*, p. 234.

<sup>55</sup>) Zachariadou, Prodomos, pp. 3—7; Beldiceanu, Margarid, p. 233f.

<sup>56</sup>) Beldiceanu, Timar, p. 43: ‘Un registre du début du règne de Mehmed II (1451—1481) mentionne le timar des moines du monastère de Margarid (...).’ I was, however, unable to find such a *defter* from the early reign of *Mehmed II* which would support my view in the work referred to by the author, i.e. Chapter XIV of N. Beldiceanu, *Le monde ottoman des Balkans (1402—1566)*. Institutions, société, économie. Londres, 1976 (which is Beldiceanu, Margarid, reprinted here together with Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Paléologue).

TT 7<sup>57</sup>). The sequence of events would now indicate that the monastic *timar* came to an end more than a decade earlier than N. Beldiceanu believed<sup>58</sup>).

Equally, with regard to Lowry's Case Study mentioned at the very beginning of this contribution, the remarkable findings presented in that article, in particular those of a 48.44% increase in the amount of *akçe* collected from the *vilayet* of Keşişlik between 1465 and 1478 (equivalent to a 'real' increase in the tax burden of 31.83%)<sup>59</sup>), now need re-interpretation — on a different time scale and, accordingly, a different exchange rate of the *akçe*. Not just thirteen, but possibly twenty-three or twenty-four years have elapsed between the two surveys of Keşişlik as represented by the *defters* TT 3 and TT 7, a period nearly twice as long as was thought. During this period the value of the *akçe* as compared with the gold currency (*florin*) must have undergone an even further reduction than the drop from  $\frac{1}{40}$  *florin* in 1465 to  $\frac{1}{45}$  *florin* in 1478. The implications of this are obvious and do not need to be discussed in detail here.

Finally, the case of the Tahrir Defteri TT 3 raises a more general question: How reliable are the dates attributed to some of our *defters*? The fact that there is an immensely large corpus of such 'census registers', but only a small number of specialists, has imposed awesome responsibilities upon the pioneers who started classifying, dating, and interpreting this unique source. They are not to be blamed for their mistakes. But we cannot afford to perpetuate their errors, given the high expectations of our neighboring disciplines from this new and promising branch of Ottoman Studies\*).

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<sup>57</sup>) Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Paléologue*, p. 11 and n. 1.

<sup>58</sup>) '(...) la confiscation des villages constitués en timar monastique, apparaît comme un fait accompli en 1478/79. Il n'est pas exclu que l'opération ait lieu à l'occasion de la réforme foncière qui débuta en 1472.' Beldiceanu, Margárid, p. 242.

<sup>59</sup>) Lowry, *Changes*, p. 26.

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