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INTRODUCTION OF RICE CULTURE IN THE CENTRAL BALKANS (15th AND 16th CENTURY)*

Abstract: The growing of rice followed the route of the Ottoman Empire's expansion towards Rumelia. Soon after the conquest, the first rice fields appeared in the river valleys all over the central Balkans. The most fertile soil along the Velika (Great) Morava, Južna (South) Morava, Nišava, Rasina and Toplica rivers was used for cultivating this "precious grain". Peasants employed in the rice fields enjoyed certain privileges; they had the status of *çeltükçis*. During the 16th century rice growing flourished especially in the region of Niš, in the *nâhiye* of Petruš, district of Paraćin, as well as the Peć *nâhiye* and the region of Banat. Significant quantities of rice were also produced in the Alaca Hisar *nâhiye*, while smaller amounts were registered in several villages in the Rasina valley and in the *nâhiye* of Bovan. Rice fields belonged to *hâss* of the sultans, members of the sultan's family and high officials, and they were under direct control of the central treasury. The administration governed rice fields by the *mukâta'* system. Most of the *mulk* land assigned to rice growing was converted to *vaqf*.

Keywords: rice, *çeltükci*, Balkans, 15th century, 16th century, *Sancak* of Alaca Hisar, *Sancak* of Smederevo, *Sancak* of Skadar.

Rice (*Oryza sativa*) is staple food mainly used in Asia. It is also used by approximately a half of the world's population. Nowadays it is cultivated in almost all areas with a lot of water and warm climate. A commonly accepted view for a long time was that the earliest records of domesticated rice are probably those from southern China, from the Yangtze river valley.¹ However, the latest researches show that the

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¹ M. Nesbitt, *Grains*, The Cultural History of the Plants, Routledge 2005, 56.

domestication of rice took place 8,200–13,500 years ago, in the region of the Pearl river valley in China.²

The Middle East probably acquired rice from South Asia around 1000 B.C.³ In the Near East rice was introduced in the Hellenistic period (from 300 B.C.) and was traded all over the Roman Empire. Archaeological and historical evidence indicates that rice spread slower than most crops, because of its special need for abundant water.⁴ There are several possible routes of introduction of rice into Europe: one of them could be from Persia to Egypt between the 4th and 1st centuries B.C., the other from Greece or Egypt to Spain and Sicily in the 8th century A.D., and the third one from Persia to Spain in the 8th century, and later to Italy between the 13th and 16th centuries. Rice was brought from southwest Asia into the Balkan Peninsula by the Ottomans.⁵

Being one of the basic ingredients of Levantine cuisine, rice was greatly used in daily nourishment of the Ottomans.⁶ The nutritive value of rice is very high. Therefore and due to its lavishness and ease of storage, rice was a strategic ingredient, a staple of immense importance for the nourishment of the Ottoman army in its long campaigns.⁷

² J. Molina, M. Sikora, N. Garud et al., *Molecular evidence for a single evolutionary origin of domesticated rice*, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 108/20 (2011) 8351; X. Huang, N. Kurata, X. Wei et al., *A map of rice genome variation reveals the origin of cultivated rice*, Nature 490/7421 (2012) 497–501.

³ T. T. Chang, *Rice*, The Cambridge World History of Food, Cambridge 2000, 139.

⁴ M. Nesbitt, *Grains*, 56.

⁵ T. T. Chang, *Rice*, 139.

⁶ H. Inalcık, *Rice Cultivation And The Çeltükçi–Re'aya System In The Otoman Empire*, Studies in Ottoman Social and Economic History, London 1985, 113. In the Levant, rice was mentioned more often in the records of the 15th and 16th centuries than later, but that was because the Ottoman state tried to organize its cultivation by assigning duties and setting regulations to safeguard its continued presence. It was not mentioned as frequently later because its production was widespread enough not to warrant organization from above (F. Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550–1870*, Baltimore 2008, 172–173).

⁷ Studies of some campaigns indicate that the Ottoman soldier was generally treated quite well, expecting fresh baked bread (*nân-i azîz* for the Janissaries; *nân-i çift* for the ordinary soldier, the difference being the quality of the ingredients), biscuit when bread was unavailable; a daily meat ration (lamb and mutton) of approximately 200 grams; honey, coffee, rice, bulghur and barley for the horses. R. Murphey, *The Functioning*

There was high demand for rice in Ottoman markets, especially in the city centers that were fast-developing and kept high rice prices.⁸ High quantities of rice were utilized in the sultan's kitchen that influenced the spread of rice production under supervision of the State. Rice was consumed every day in the soup and *pilav* which were made especially during the month of fasting and for feasts, as indicated in books of some imperial hospices. Besides palaces of sultans, rice was used in *kervân-sarâyıs*, *hâns* as one of the main ingredients for food preparation.⁹ Besides, it was a crop often seen in kitchens of small groups of rich people and state landowners, as well as at social gatherings. On the other hand, the food of the poorer classes and the peasantry was bulghur.¹⁰ Later on, as rice expanded it replaced other traditional cereals (like millet and even wheat).¹¹

The production of this "precious grain" followed the path of expansion of the Ottoman Empire westward, towards Rumelia.¹² Besides rice which in the 15th century found in the Balkans a receptive environment in which to flourish, the expansion of the Empire was associated with the spread of maize, sesame and pepper in the 16th, and of tobacco and coffee in the 17th century.¹³ At the same time, due to the redirection of rivers, irrigated

of the Ottoman Army Under Murad IV (1632–1639/1032–1049): Key to the Understanding of the Relationship Between Center and Periphery in Seventeenth Century Turkey (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1979), 130, on the 1639 campaign.

⁸ H. Inalcik, *Rice Cultivation*, 72.

⁹ Ö. Lütfi Barkan, *Şehirlerin İnkişafı ve Teşekkülü Tarihi Bakımından Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İmâret Sitelerinin Kuruluş ve İşleyişi Tarzına Ait Araştırmalar*, İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası 23/1–2 (1962–63) 325, 335, 393.

¹⁰ M. Karagöz, *1193/1779 senesi rüsüm defteri'ne göre Bazarcık–Tatarpazarı'nda pirinç üretimi*, Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 14/1 (2004) 277; B. Masters, *Cuisine. –Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, New York 2008, 165; O. Зиројевић, *Булгур – (не)заборављена намирница*, Сирогојно 2002, 31–44.

¹¹ T. T. Chang, *Rice*, 132–149.

¹² The most often quoted work concerning the early introduction of rice into Rumelia by the Ottomans is Tâc'üt-Tevârih work of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, who was quoted by Hammer and Babinger as well: *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Rumelien*, München 1944, 48, note 51; J. Von Hammer–Purgstall, *Geschichte der Osmanischen Reiches*, I, (reprint) Graz 1963, 167.

¹³ F. Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 262.

fields and new plants, a transformation of landscape took place. The first rice field appeared in Thrace which was known as the “Istanbul’s granary“. Plovdiv and Tatar Pazarcik were the centres.¹⁴

Following new conquering successes of the Ottomans, new territories were annexed to the Empire and in the mid-15th century rice fields started to appear in the river valleys in the central Balkans (at that time the areas of Kruševac, Skadar and Smederevo *Sancaks*). Some researchers believe that during the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans *çeltükçis* were moving together with *akincis*.¹⁵ Testimonies of some travel writers, such as French travel writer Bertrandon de la Broquière who passed through Niš in 1432, confirm that rice was cultivated even before the final Ottoman conquest.¹⁶ A question arises as to whether there was rice culture in this area prior to the Ottoman conquest?

Coming into the new territory, Ottoman *beys* and commanders immediately identified and recorded favorable conditions for the cultivation of rice. Besides climatic characteristics, human resources and arable land that could be converted to rice fields were required.¹⁷ Ottoman authorities had such a system that they would first select areas fulfilling the conditions for growing this culture, and would then perform test productions. If the results were positive, the production expanded. Sometimes the government tried to plant, but the results were not as expected; they would withdraw from production and state that the land would be used for something else. For example, such was the case with the Lika village on the Prizrenska Bistrica river that belongs to Prizren. It was mentioned that there were rice fields previously and now those are mowing meadows.¹⁸

¹⁴ M. Karagöz, *Filibe Kazası Rüsum Defterleri ve XVII. Yüzyılın ikinci yarısında, Filibe–Tatarpazarı–Göbe’de Çeltik Ziraatı*, Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 14/2 (2004) 364. It is well known that the Ottomans settled large groups of Yuruks in rice growing areas in Rumeli: Filipe, Gömülcine, Karasu–Yenicesi and Drama. (H. İnalçik, *Rice Cultivation*, 106).

¹⁵ Ц. Георгиева, *Пространство и пространства на българите XV–XVII С.*, София 1999, 118.

¹⁶ B. de la Brokijer, *Putopis. Putovanje preko mora*, Beograd 2002, 106.

¹⁷ G. Boykov, *Demographic Features of Ottoman Upper Thrace: A Case Study on Filibe, Tatar Pazarcik and Istanimarka (1472–1614)*, Master’s thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara 2004, 19–20.

¹⁸ Т. Катиф, *Оптирни попис Призренског санџака из 1571. године*, Београд 2010, 146.

The reshaping of existing fields and the extension of irrigation and drainage canals were costly and demanded both skills and coordination of efforts.¹⁹ Canals (*nehr-i çeltük*) were made in the fields close to water²⁰ since rice cultivation demands abundant water. The Balkan zone is often called ‘sub-Mediterranean’ due to its climate. The summer months were warm enough for successful cultivation of crops sensitive to cold such as rice, whereas winter temperatures were sufficiently warm for the cultivation.²¹

The most fertile land in the central Balkans was used along the rivers Nišava, Resava, Velika Morava, Južna Morava, Rasina, Lomnica, Crnica, Toplica and some other smaller rivers. People working on rice fields were citizens with a special status, the so-called *çeltükçis*. *Re ‘âyâ* which was once registered as *çeltükçis* could not change their status which was hereditary – the aim was to secure rice production.²² This status was strictly regulated by Ottoman law (*Kânûn-i çeltükçiyân*).²³

Taking into consideration that rice is a labor-intensive crop and its cultivation implied hard work in unhealthy conditions, as well as

¹⁹ D. Smith, *Western Mediterranean Europe: A historical geography of Italy, Spain and southern France since the Neolithic*, London 1979, 207–208.

²⁰ F. Emecen, *Çeltik*, Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DIA), yıl: 1993, cilt: 8, 265.

²¹ W. D. Hütteroth, *Ecology of the Ottoman lands*, The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839, S. N. Faroqhi (ed.), Cambridge 2007, 25.

²² H. İnalçık, *Rice Cultivation*, 103; F. Emecen, *Çeltik*, 265.

²³ Ö. L. Bârkan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zirai Ekonominin Hukuki ve Mali Esasları*, İstanbul 1943, 54; H. İnalçık, *Rice Cultivation*, 1982, 84. (It was formulated in *kânûn-nâmes* like this and the tasks of *çeltükçis* were as follows: “In the time of the census, besides *çeltükçis* there was a sign”. Also, there is following information that rice is a labor-intensive crop. Firstly *çeltükçis* “together with *kürekçis* choose and prepare a plot big enough to take water from the river”, and then soak with water the spot where rice will be cultivated”, then “give their own seed”, and after that “when certain seed is spent, it is looked after and monitored”. “When rice is completely ripe, cultivated rice is harvested by *kürekçis*”, “after harvest let them take care of it” and “let them, according to the custom, get paid as needed for their service”. Ö. L. Barkan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zirai Ekonominin Hukuki*, 205). According to the Law for Kruševac it was regulated that if there was rice or salt in the carriage, it is counted as bulk and two akches were taken (D. Bojanić, *Turski zakoni i zakonski propisi iz XV i XVI veka za smederevsku, kruševačku i vidinsku oblast*, Beograd 1974, 39).

constant care from sowing to obtaining the final product, peasants were avoiding to work in the fields.²⁴ As rice was a crop of great importance for Ottoman authorities, the administration was encouraging peasants by exempting them from the tax called ‘*avâriz*’.²⁵ The once assigned privileges were confirmed, in a new or modified form, by a new sultan or after a new census, and registered into the *defter*.²⁶

Rice cultivation in the central Balkans was basically identical to other parts of the Empire. In dry or upland cultivation, rice is grown on hillsides as a rainfed crop similar to other cereals. In wet or lowland systems, it is grown on irrigated or flooded paddies.²⁷

Çeltükcis were concentrated around rivers and their tributaries. The basic work unit was a group of *çeltükcis*, headed by the principal (*re’îs*). He was supposed to be a person with experience (*çeltük’ilminden habîr*). The principal acquired the seeds from the administration, took care of the cultivation timeline and the rhythm on water canal filling, including the timeline of supplying the administration treasury with the belonging part of the harvest and other details.²⁸ Special care was taken of what plots would be cultivated by rice and experts were deciding on it.

Rice was not cultivated on the same plot every year. Plots were determined prior to harvest. *Sipâhî* or *za’îm* on whose land rice was harvested was informed prior to the harvest in order to prevent

²⁴ In some Ottoman lands, rice cultivation, labor-intensive in character, was carried out on a part-time basis by *göçer evler*, migratory populations who commuted between their summer and winter pastures or by itinerant daylaborers (S. Faroqhi, *Tarsus and the tahrir*, *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 13 (1993) 79).

²⁵ These were benefits like those enjoyed by *derbencis* and members of other social groups exempted from some taxes completely or partially, depending on the significance of the performed duty. (M. Васић, *Становништво крушевачког санџака*, Крушевац кроз векове, Зборник реферата са симпозијума одржаног од 4. до 9. октобра 1971. у Крушевцу, Крушевац 1972, 49–71). H. İnalçık, *Osmanlılarda Raiyyet Rûsumu*, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Toplum ve Ekonomi*, İstanbul 1996, 49; The Law for Niš from 1498, 1516. and 1536. states: “Rice cultivators enlisted in the *defter* do not pay ‘*avâriz*.” (D. Bojanić, *Turski zakoni*, 14, 27, 45).

²⁶ H. İnalçık, *Rice Cultivation*, 103; H. İnalçık, *Osmanlılarda Raiyyet Rûsumu*, 49.

²⁷ M. Nesbitt, *Grains*, 56.

²⁸ H. İnalçık, *Rice Cultivation*, 107–108.

cultivation of anything else on the chosen plot. Subsequently *re'îs* would take the seeds that had to be cultivated right on time and provide all necessary arrangements.

The head of *çeltükcis* had his own notary (*kâtib*) and confidant (*emîn*). They were educated persons. There was certain nomenclature of vocations, such as workers for plot preparation, canal digging, melioration, rice harvesting etc. The basic unit for an area with rice crops was *tohum* (basic meaning: seed, grain). In this case, the term meant the quantity of rice seed to be cultivated in a certain area, while in practice it represented the sowing plot. The amount of *tohum* varied depending on the place and time of sowing.²⁹ Sources show that there were sowing plots of 1, 1.5, 2 and 2.5 seeds.³⁰

The basic measure units used for rice were *mud* and *kile*. Their weight varied depending on the part of the Empire they were used in; however official rice *mud* was 20 rice *kile*, i.e. 256.56 kg.³¹

The distribution of income from rice fields was as follows: 1/10 of the annual harvest was dedicated to *rençbers*³² who paid tax *irgâdiyye*, for workers in the field. Two dozen went to the state which secured the seed, 1/10 for *niyâbet* and *kitâbet*, from which *deştebân* (field keeper) and other servants were paid. Of remaining 6/10, 1/10 went to the state and the rest would be shared in two equal parts between the state and *çeltükcis*.³³ After harvest, rice had to be dehusked to remove the inedible hull (lemma and palea). This was often carried out using a wooden mortar and pestle. The resulting grains are usually eaten as white, polished rice from which the bran has been removed.³⁴ This could be

²⁹ А. Стојановски, *Раја со специјални задолженија во Македонија*, Скопје 1990, 119–120.

³⁰ В. Скарић, *Стари закон о оризиитима*, Гласник Земаљског музеја Босне и Херцеговине 47 (1936) 38–39.

³¹ *Ibidem*. For measure values according to the period and area see: Н. İnalçık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi. Cilt I 1300–1600*, İstanbul 2000, 444; В. McGowan, *Food and Supply and Taxation on the Middle Danube (1568–1579)*, Archivum Ottomanicum I (1969) 165–166; Д. Бојанић, *О српској баитини и соњу у турским законима*, Историјски часопис 20 (1973) 160.

³² *Rençber* is a person doing labor-intensive jobs in agriculture, timber production, on rice fields etc.

³³ В. Скарић, *Стари закон о оризиитима*, 38–39.

³⁴ М. Nesbitt, *Grains*, 56.

done in the mill (*dink*) as well, and *çeltükci* had to pay a certain amount for whitening rice in *dink*.

There was a rice field with two canals in the very vicinity of Niš, in the year 1498. One was water supplied from Jelašnica and Banja, and the other from Prva Kutina. *Çeltükcis* who belonged to Christian *cemâ'at* and who were engaged in these fields lived partly in Banja, and partly in Prva Kutina and Jelašnica. Total 48 *luknos* of rice was cultivated (each *lukno* per Edirne *kile* is 6 *kiles*). *Rençbers* were also allowed to sow. A half was given to the *bey* and a half retained. Except for the seeds, *kürekçis* gave 2/3 of the income to the *bey* and kept 1/3 for themselves. Income from both rivers was 106 *muds* and 13 *kiles*.³⁵ At this time, a bit of rice was produced by *cemâ'at* Tekeci, also in the very vicinity of Niš.³⁶

In the period up to 1516 revenues from Nišava increased by approximately 50%. Income from Nišava registered in 1516 (153 *muds* and 5 *kiles*) testifies that at that time the production had already stabilized and was improved.³⁷ *Çeltükcis* from these fields were inhabited in the nearby villages Donji Bujanj, Donja and Gornja Međurova. They were all Christians.³⁸

The village of Kurvin grad excelled in rice production at the time; more precisely, in *mezra'a* Crna bara that was the seeding point of this town, together with the villages of Banja, Brzi Brod, Prva Kutina, Jelašnica which belonged to Niš, 2 *dinks* were registered for white rice (income for *dink* was 15 akches).³⁹

In the same year, there were no registered *kürekçis* on the Resava river, meaning that rice cultivation was not practiced. Cultivation of rice started in the *kazâ* of Braničevo, on the Resava river, until 1530.⁴⁰

³⁵ М. Васић, О. Зиројевић, А. Стојановски, *Попис Нишког кадилука из 1498. године*, Споменик САНУ 131 (1992) 101.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 100

³⁷ BOA (İstanbul, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Osmanlı Arşivi), TD (*Defterhâne-i Âmire Tahrîr Defteri*) 1007, p. 430.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 539

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 430, 46, 470–471.

⁴⁰ MAD 506 numaralı Semendire Livâsı İcâmât Tahrîr Defteri (937/1530), *Dizin ve Tıpkıbasım*, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Tıpkıbasım, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Yayın Nu: 104, Defter-i Hâkânî Dizisi: XIV (Ankara 2009), p. 31.

Rice fields belonged to the *hâss* of sultans, members of the sultan's family and high officials,⁴¹ and they were under direct control of the central treasury. The administration governed rice fields by the *mukâta* ' system.⁴² Lands devoted to rice cultivation were classified as *mukâta* ', whose revenues were usually collected by ' *âmils* or *emîns*. They constituted a far greater part of rice-growing land than *mulk* and *vaqf* lands.⁴³

Somewhat prior to 1528, the Ottoman Empire confiscated from the Smederevo *sancak-beyi* rice fields on the Nišava river and annexed them to the sultan's *hâss*. At the same time, a larger group of Niš inhabitants were engaged in cultivation of rice fields within the sultan's *hâss*. So was Hacı, the son of Ilyas, engaged in field melioration, Ferhad son of İshak was in charge of notary affairs, and Mustafa Çelebi was the head confidant (*seremîn*). They were also highly educated and respectable persons. Many *çeltükçis* are mentioned in Niš, among which there was one *macûnci*. Ordinary *kürekçis* were also tailors, knitters and manufacturers of *külâhs*.⁴⁴

In 1530, of state seeds 12 *muds* were cultivated, of *kürekçi*'s seed 2 *muds*, and 10 *kiles* of *re'âyâ* seeds. Of that, they harvested 168 *mud* of pure rice (*erz-i sefid* or *pirinç hâlis*). Total income from these fields was 2,253 *mud* and 129 *kiles* of white rice. In the same year, 16 *kürekçis* were registered in the village of Donji Bubanj and 12 *kürekçis* in the village of Donja Međurova.⁴⁵

Later testimonies such as the one by German Jakob von Betzek, a member of the Austrian delegation, who passed through Niš in the second half of the 16th century, also show that rice fields were very prosperous, emphasizing the fertility of this area with many swamps and mud.⁴⁶ A

⁴¹ F. Emecen, *Çeltik*, 265.

⁴² *Ibidem*, 265–266.

⁴³ H. Inalcik, *Rice Cultivation*, 75.

⁴⁴ Д. Бојанић, *Ниш до Великог рата 1683.*, Историја Ниша I, Од најстаријих времена до ослобођења од Турака 1878. године, Ниш 1983, 163–164.

⁴⁵ *MAD 506 Numaralı Semendire Livasi İcmal Tahrir Defteri (937/1530)*, p. 35. The total revenue from these rice fields was 28.384 akches.

⁴⁶ P. Matković, *Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka–7. Putovanje Melchiora Seydliza g. 1556–59. – 9. Itinerari carskoga kurira Jakova Betzeka g. 1564–1573*, Rad JAZU 71 (1887), according to Т. Поповић, *Ниш у делима путописаца XVI–XVII века*, Историја Ниша I, Од најстаријих времена до ослобођења од Турака 1878. године, Ниш 1983, 183.

French anonymous source from a later period (year 1621) notes that on the way out of Niš there was an entrance to a swamp meadow surrounded by mountains where red rice was grown in exuberance.⁴⁷

Besides Niš, rice was cultivated on the Resava river in the Smederevo *Sancak* as well. Rice production on the Resava greatly improved by the year 1536, as shown by the income and a higher number of inhabitants working on rice fields (39 *kürekçis*).⁴⁸ They were all Muslims.⁴⁹ The village of Čeltukči which belonged to Resava had 17 households, with four of them bachelors. Total income was 1,957 akches.⁵⁰

Soon after the establishment of the *Sancak* of Kruševac in 1455, the Ottomans began introducing rice in this area as well, primarily in the vicinity of Kruševac. This fertile area with many river flows seemed an appropriate territory for growing this culture. Seed was handed over to *sancak-beyi*, who collected income from *mukâta* ' of Kruševac rice fields. Authorities ordered the cultivation of 18 *luknos* of rice on one field, but one *lukno* amounted to four Edirne *kiles*. Seed was handed over to *sancak-beyi*, who collected income from *mukâta* ' of the rice fields in Kruševac.⁵¹ The almost insignificant income from these rice fields testifies to the development of rice cultivation at the time.

In the following period the production was extended to the area of Paraćin. In 1516, the same amount was sown around Kruševac and Paraćin. Production in Kruševac was slightly higher than in Paraćin.⁵² In

⁴⁷ Т. Поповић, *Ниш у делима путописаца XVI–XVII века*, 191.

⁴⁸ A spelling error in the document – instead 39, number 38 was written.

⁴⁹ BOA, TD 187, p. 88.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 88–89.

⁵¹ 1 Ra 883 (2 June 1478) it was ordered that income from *mukâta* ' of the rice fields in Kruševac represented *hâss* of *sancak-beyi*. On one rice field 18 *luknos* of rice were cultivated; seeds goes to *sancak-beyi*. Out of that: for Emperor's treasury on 16. Safer 884 (May 9th 1479) from *tahvil* of *Mevlânâ* Muhiyuddin, the *kâdî* of Kruševac. Annual duty of the aforementioned fields was 1,103 akches (Z. Koçak, *Alacahisar vilayeti' ndeki mukataalar (1471–1479)*, Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Cilt: 9, Sayı: 45, Ağustos 2016, 272). However, Edirne's measurement was 18 *okkas* when measuring grains, but it was less for rice and amounted to 9 *okkas* (1 *okka*=1,2828 kg). When we speak about rice, one Kruševac *lukno* was 36 *okkas*, 46.18 kg respectively (Д. Бојанић, *Фрагменти опширног пописа видинског санџака из 1478–81. године*, Мешовита грађа (Miscellanea) 2 (1973) 84).

⁵² BOA, TD 55, p. 4.

1516 the same amount was cultivated in the vicinity of Kruševac and Paraćin; 6 *muds* of state rice, 2 *muds* of *çeltükcis* and 5 *kiles* of rice belonging to *re'âyâ*. Income in Kruševac was a bit higher than in Paraćin (it amounted to 7,500 vs. 6,000 akches in Paraćin).⁵³

Rice fields near Kruševac used water for irrigation from the Rasina and Lomnica rivers in 1530.⁵⁴ The Lomnica emerges from the many streams and does not dry out. That is why it was suitable for growing rice. However, the production on the Lomnica river was several times lower than on the Rasina. Carved into the hills of Jastrebac, with the streams wriggling through the woods, the river of Lomnica consists of many streams that flow down the west steppes of Jastrebac. On the way to the Rasina, where it confluences 6 km south of Kruševac, it flows through the villages of Lomnica, Donji Stepoš, Ravnište and Buce. This Rasina confluent is the richest in water, does not dry even in summer, and was fully used for watering the surrounding plots and gardens. This is why it was very good for rice cultivation.

Income from rice fields on the Rasina were 15,600.00 akches in 1530, and from the fields in Lomnica 9,600.00 akches.⁵⁵ *Çeltükcis* from Rasina cultivated 60 *muds* of state seeds⁵⁶ and 10 *kiles* of seed belonging to *re'âyâ*.⁵⁷ Cultivation on the Lomnica was lesser – 4 *muds* of state rice and 10 *kiles* of rice belonging to *re'âyâ*, which gave approximately a ten times higher income amounting to 9,600 akches (12 akches per *kile*).⁵⁸

Until 1536, rice was introduced in the *nâhiye* of Petruš, Bovan, Kruševac, Zagrlata.⁵⁹ At that time, Paraćin and its surroundings stood

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁵⁴ *167 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet-Rûm-ili defteri (937/1530), II, Vılçırım, Prizrin, Alaca-hisâr ve Hersek Livâları*, (Dizin ve Tıpkıbasım), Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Yayın Nu: 69, Defter-i Hâkânî Dizisi: IX, Ankara 2004, p. 404.

⁵⁵ *167 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet-Rûm-ili defteri*, p. 404. The price of a scoop is 12 akches.

⁵⁶ One *mud* (tur. *müdd/mud*) amounts to 20 *kiles*.

⁵⁷ *167 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet-Rûm-ili defteri*, p. 404.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ BOA, TD 179, p. 66. The Law on rice fields noted that when the uncleaned rice was cleaned in *dink*, it gave the same amount of cleaned rice. (В. Скарић, *Стари закон о оризуштима*, 47).

out with their yields, while Kruševac began to lag behind with production.⁶⁰ Total 51 *kiles* of state seed were cultivated in rice fields in the vicinity of Paraćin, on the Paraćin river, i.e. most likely the Crnica river flowing through the very city, or maybe the Grza river that was also a nearby river.⁶¹ Total income of these rivers was 3,000 *kiles* of pure rice.⁶² According to the *defter* of *re'is* Kasim in the period up to 1570, the production was extended to the Lešje and Velika Morava rivers.⁶³ In that period, the price of rice increased to 25 akches. Although rice field appeared in some other parts, the production was almost the same, amounting to 3,000 *kiles*.⁶⁴

Until 1570 the “New Morava” became a rice river. There is no doubt that it is the South Morava, as it was indicated that it belonged to the *kazâ* of Leskovac.⁶⁵ According to sources, the Toplica was also a rice river, but was not enlisted in the *defter* from this period.⁶⁶

Çeltükçis from this area had an obligation to maintain the irrigation system, consisting of a dam (*band*) and canal (*arg*). This system, necessary for continuous rice cultivation, provided for running water for the irrigation of rice fields in certain time intervals. These dams, made mostly of wood, were prone to damages, especially during the winter period. It was necessary to find a solution for permanent maintenance, since rebuilding expenses were much higher.⁶⁷ In order to survive spring and snow meltdown, the maintenance service was usually performed in autumn, as was the case with the dam and canals in Toplica.⁶⁸

Privileges in the category of *çeltükçis* were reduced in the second half of the 16th century and annulled in time, practically leading to the situation where the status of privileged categories was that of *re'âyâ*. The example of the *çeltükçis* of Toplica shows that they got into a very

⁶⁰ Total 8 *kiles* of state rice was sown and 550 *kiles* of rice produced. (BOA, TD 179, p. 68, 69, 70, 72).

⁶¹ BOA, TD 179, p. 67–68.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 68.

⁶³ BOA, TD 567, p. 24.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 24–25.

⁶⁶ BOA, MMD (*Mühimme Defterleri*) 10, p. 50–51/72.

⁶⁷ H. Inalcık, *Rice Cultivation*, 82–83.

⁶⁸ BOA, MMD 10, p. 50–51/72.

disadvantageous position – they faced a very difficult position in the 16th century. They had to cultivate rice, maintain irrigation systems and pay taxes. This resulted in the relocation of one part of inhabitants, while the other part tried to regain tax benefits. However, the Sublime Porte took this issue into consideration but without the intention to solve it, most likely because the situation in this economic branch was uncertain and variable in terms of income from rice fields on the Toplica.⁶⁹

On the other side, such uncertain and increasingly bad position led to *çeltükcis* becoming careless in performing their duties. Such was the case with *çeltükcis* on rice fields on the rivers in Paraćin. Namely, in 1573 the edict was issued to sell state rice every six months; as of the 25th day of Ramadan, on shopping days ‘*âmils* of rice *mukâta*’ should sell rice. However, local *çeltükcis* neglected shopping days and did not hand over rice to ‘*âmils*. Rice was not sold at the determined price and remained unsold. The administration dismissed *çeltükcis* and the damage that the state suffered due to unsold rice was compensated from *çeltükcis*’ income.⁷⁰

Some *çeltükcis* tried to use their status to secure impunity for crimes and were sometimes supported by *emîns* in these attempts. For instance, on 30 January 1560, the *bey* of Kruševac wrote a letter to the Porte informing them that *kürekçis* of his *hâss* and from villages of some *tîmâr* holders registered as workers on the rivers which irrigate rice fields were offenders to be punished with the death penalty, but were protected by *emîns*. Therefore they kept fighting and severe offenders remained unpunished. After receiving this *hüküm*, the Porte ordered investigation into the whole matter in order to execute punishment under Sharia Law.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Д. Амедоски, *Узгајање пиринча на Топлици*, Зборник радова „Други српско–турски рат 1877/78. године, ослобођење Југоисточне Србије и Беле Паланке”, Белопаланачки зборник 3 (Београд–Бела Паланка 2007) 142–145. The document (BOA, MMD 10, p. 50–51/72) was written on 12 May and sent to the *kâdî* of Prokuplje. Up to the 1570s *çeltükcis* and *kürekçis* of the *Sancak* of Kruševac were Muslims only; a few of them were converts. A group of Christian *kürekçis* was registered for the first time around 1570 in the *kazâ* of Leskovac.

⁷⁰ BOA, KKd (*Kâmil Kepeci Tasnifi Defteri*), 0067, p. 570

⁷¹ Е. Ковачевић, *Muhimme Defteri: Dokumenti o našim krajevima*. Monumenta Turcica, No. 4, Series III, Knjiga 1, Svezak 1, Sarajevo 1985, 31.

Up to the 1570s, *çeltükçis* and *kürekçis* of the *Sancak* of Kruševac were Muslims among which there were some converts. A group of Christian *kürekçis* was registered for the first time around 1570 in the *kazâ* of Leskovac.⁷²

The *kazâ* of Peć which belonged to the *Sancak* of Skadar with its rice fields on the Pećka Bistrica river was another center for rice cultivation in the central Balkans. However, production in this area was very unstable, as evidenced by the constant problems that the Porte had with leaseholders. Namely, fields on the rice river Pećka Bistrica were given to lease on 8 August 1575 for the period of three years, to lessee Memi Dede for 150,000 akches. Due to financial problems and inability to realize the expected revenues, leaseholders were not able to fully meet their obligations, and therefore *mukâta* ' was empty for ten months. In that period there were no parties interested in this *mukâta* '. The administration was forced to calculate and drastically lower the cost of leasing, so as not to run *mukâta* ' empty, as occasionally happened. After certain time, Süleyman son of Ali, 'azâp of the Lješ fortress, showed up and took under lease this *mukâta* ' for the period of three years as of September 1578. Besides the unpaid 50,000 akches, the new lessee paid another 100,000 akches.⁷³ The daily payment of *emîn* of this *mukâta* ' was 8 akches and of the registrar 4 akches.⁷⁴ On 6 September 1578 it amounted 100,000 akches. A sudden leap in leasing of this *mukâta* ' testifies that period of mismanagement ended in 1581.⁷⁵ On 4 September 1581 it amounted to 162,500 akches. It was governed by certain Süleyman and Oruç. In the subsequent period, from September 1584, this *mukâta* ' was taken under lease by the same persons at the same price.⁷⁶

Rice started to be grown in 1572 in Banat, more precisely in some places of the *Eyâlet* of Timisoara. Upon the request of the Timisoara *defterdâr*, in April 1572, the Porte sent an order to the *müfettiş* of Smederevo. According to this order he was supposed to send two experts in the cultivation of rice with 600 *kiles* of seed to Timisoara to be sown

⁷² BOA, TD 567, p. 24–25.

⁷³ BOA, MAD (*Maliyeden Müdevver Defter*) 5684, p. 18.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁷⁶ BOA, MAD 3073, p. 6.

on the selected plots.⁷⁷ The construction of rice mills, as well as complaints of *çeltükcis* testifies that the production of rice would be established in the future and spread to other areas of Banat.⁷⁸

Leases from the rice fields in the *Sancaks* of Kruševac and Smederevo belonged to the *nezâret* of Belgrade, the financial institution in charge of monitoring dealings of Emperor's income in the following *sancaks*: Smederevo, Kruševac, Zvornik and Srem. On the other hand, leases of rice fields in the *Sancak* of Skadar belonged to *nezâret* in charge of Peć and the *Sancak* of Prizren.⁷⁹

Land lease usually lasted for three years (in the subsequent period six years), and therefore lease agreements were concluded for that period. The lessee with the best individual or joint offer could take one or merge several leases.⁸⁰ Such case was with leases of the rice fields in Kruševac and Smederevo *Sancaks* which were merged. The most important rice fields in the vicinity of Niš and Paraćin belonged to this *mukâta* ' , and they were often joined to the income of the *şemhâne* of Smederevo and the Kruševac *Sancak*. During the 1567–1569 period this *mukâta* ' had three lessees due to better offers every year. According to the notes of *Mevlânâ* Bali, the *kâdî* of Belgrade, *müfettiş*, this *mukâta* ' changed three lessees due to better bargains each year. In the first year, the lease for *mukâta* ' was 1,050,000 akches. In the following year the lease increased to 1,060,000 akches and in the third year it amounted to 1,090,000 akches.⁸¹ In the forthcoming period (1573–1575) a three-year lease of this *mukâta* ' increased to 1,999,410 akches. According to the *hüccet* of *Mevlânâ*, two persons were in charge of the mentioned *sancaks* by means of guarantee and jointly. Of this, 1,600,700 akches were

⁷⁷ BOA, MMD 16, p. 207/399, p. 208/400 according to С. Катић, *Кнежевачко Потисје под турском влашћу*, Историја Новог Кнежевца и околине, Нови Кнежевац 2003, 159.

⁷⁸ BOA, MMD 22, p. 345/683, according to С. Катић, *Кнежевачко Потисје под турском влашћу*, 159.

⁷⁹ Besides aforementioned, clerks of *nezâret* were taking care of imperial income from mines, mints, salt pans, customs etc.

⁸⁰ С. Катић, Д. Амедоски, *Закупи београдске и смедеревске скеле и карловачког хаса седамдесетих и осамдесетих година 16. века*, Мешовита грађа (Miscellanea) 32 (2011) 206.

⁸¹ BOA, MAD 654, p. 232.

dedicated to the *mukâta* ' Niš.⁸² In the following three years, i.e. 1576–1578, income from these *mukâta* 's was approximately the same (1,961,000 akches),⁸³ while for the period starting in 1584/85 income of this *mukâta* ' increased to 4,090,256 akches.⁸⁴ Mustafa Hacı Ahmed from the *mahalle* of Hacı Cafer in Prokuplje⁸⁵ was responsible for this *mukâta* ' in 1584. According to 'arz of Derviş Muhiyuddin, the *kâdî* of Leskovac, lessee of this *mukâta* ' through *kefâlet* was Mustafa son of Hasan. The daily salary of the inhabitants engaged in this *mukâta* ' was 83 akches.⁸⁶

As for the prices of rice, they varied depending on supply and demand in the market. At the end of the 15th century, the price of one *kile* in Niš was 10 akches. In the first several decades of the 16th century, the price of one *kile* of rice in Niš and Kruševac was 12 akches, while in Paraćin it was necessary to pay 10 akches for one *kile*. Price fluctuation was more or less the same until the mid 16th century when in the '70s the price significantly increased. This was due to the declining value of akche and penury. Therefore, in the 1570s the price of a *kile* of rice was 25 akches, while in the surroundings of Leskovac the price reached as much as 30 akches. Such trend in price fluctuation was noted in other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well.⁸⁷

The issue of rice field endowment is of particular interest. This tradition was recorded during the time of Sultan Orhan (1326–1362) since *çeltükçis* and rice cultivation were mentioned in two villages he endowed. The issue was noted in the *defter* made during the reign of Mehmed II (1451–1481).⁸⁸

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 248.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 244.

⁸⁴ BOA, MAD 312, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Until the seventh decade of the 16th century this mahalle was called the mahalle of mescid of Cafer son of Şirmerd. (Д. Амедоски, *Градски објекти у Прокупљу у 16. веку*, Просторно планирање у Југоисточној Европи (До Другог светског рата), Београд 2011, 404–405).

⁸⁶ BOA, MAD 1838, p. 110.

⁸⁷ H. Dernschwam, *Istanbul ve Anadoluya Seyahat Günlüğü* (trc. Yasar Önen), Ankara 1988, 336, 339.

⁸⁸ N. Beldiceanu and I. Beldiceanu–Steinherr, *Riziculture dans l'Empire ottoman (XIV^e–XV^e siècle)*, *Turcica* IX/2–X (1978) 15.

Most of the *mulk* land assigned to rice growing was converted to *vaqf* which secured greater safeguards for the founder and his heirs. Many of these *vaqfs* were established as *evlâdiyye vaqfs*.⁸⁹

The fact that rivers and canals for supply were included in *vaqfs* and *mulks* could be related to Sharia legislation arising from desert conditions in the Arabian peninsula where water and land were subjected to ownership – hence exchanges, sale and *vaqf*. Those norms applied in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the Middle East where dependant citizens had to pay to the water provider, in case when some cultures had to be meliorated. There were “*vaqf* rivers” in the Balkans which were used as engine power for mills or for melioration of rice fields.⁹⁰

We found such examples in the *Sancak* of Smederevo. One of them is *vaqf* of Ali *Bey* son of Mihal *Bey* in Niš. In 1516, it was noted that this *vaqif* ordered planting of two *muds* of rice seeds at its expense.⁹¹ In 1530, income from the rice plants of this *vaqf* was doubled, amounting to around 10,000 akches. Income from the rice fields, as well as other income of *vaqf* was intended for its *zâviye* in Niš.⁹²

Another example is the *vaqf* of late Süleyman Paşa, established in Niš as well. Süleyman Paşa ordered planting of rice on *mezra* ‘a Crna Bara belonging to Niš. This land that was a forest once, was taken from the *sipâhî* with the *tâpû*. He dedicated income from these rice fields, amounting to 16,910 akches, to his mosque in Edirne.⁹³

⁸⁹ H. Inalcik, *Rice Cultivation*, 74.

⁹⁰ В. Мутафчиева, *Аграрните отношения в Османската империя през XV–XVI в.*, Османска социално–икономическа история, Избрани произведения, Пловдив 2008, 152–153. According to: И. Найденов, *Оризът като земеделска култура и хранителен продукт в българските земи през ранните столетия на османското владичество (XV–XVII в.)*, Стандарти през средновековието и новото време, Сборник с материали от Първа и Втора научни кръгли маси, Велико Трново 2012, 38.

⁹¹ BOA, TD 1007, p. 535.

⁹² *MAD 506 Numaralı Semendire Livasi İcmal Tahrir Defteri (937/1530)*, 39; С. Катинџ, У. Урошевиџ, *Вакуфи у сумарном попису Смедеревског санџака из 1530. године*, Мешовита грађа (Miscellanea) 36 (2015) 52.

⁹³ М. Васиџ, О. Зиројевиџ, А. Стојановски, *Попис Нишког кадилука из 1498. године*, 16; Çeltük-i Niş tâbi‘-i Çrna Bara nâm mezra‘ada bir mikdâr hâlf ormânluđı merhûm Süleymân Paşa sipâhîden tapu ile alub ormânın açdırub câmi‘ne vakf eylemiş. Mezkr deđirmerler argından kendü harc ile çeltük ekilüp hisse-i mîrî ve

The establishment of rice mills (*dink*) within a *vaqf* was a common practice; there were plenty of such examples throughout the central Balkans.⁹⁴ Within the mentioned *vaqf* of late Süleyman Paşa, rice mills on the Nišava river operated all year long, in the villages of Vrežina, Brzi Brod and Kurvin grad.⁹⁵ *Vaqf* rice mills were all around the *Sancak* of Kruševac, in Kruševac, Prokuplje, Dubočica and Petruš. One of them was the endowment of Firuz Ağa and registered in 1530.⁹⁶

* * *

Rice was cultivated in the Balkans in the subsequent period as well. The onset of the Little Ice Age (roughly from the 1550s to the 1870s) and the fluvial environment it generated brought about possibilities for the cultivation of aquatic crops. Thus, rice and crops that were in need of irrigation, like cotton, became popular.⁹⁷ The organizational capabilities of the Ottoman state previously mobilized to sustain rice culture were no longer needed; rice became enough of a staple so as not to warrant imperial supervision.⁹⁸

Since rice culture involved the landscape of marshes and fens and unhealthy humid air, cultivators had to live with the vicissitudes of such environments such as malarial infestations.⁹⁹ Malaria (*sıtma*) was the reason why some villages vanished. The picturesque example of such village is found in Thrace in the early 17th century. Due to malaria

öşr alınmaz diyü ormânın açdurduğı yerden gayrı yerde dahi ekilmez diyü yazılmış. Hâliyâ vilâyet yazıldıkda hâricde dahi çeltük ekdikleri ma'lûm olub ve tapu ile alınan yerün vakfiyyeti bî-hasbi'ş-şeri' câiz olmadığı sebebden defter-i cedîd 'izz-i huzûr-i saltanata 'arz olındıkda ayrık yerde zirâ'at iderlerse sâhib-i arza öşr virilmiş emr olunmağın sept olındı (BOA, TD 1007, p. 535); С. Катић, У. Урошевић, *Вакуфи у сумарном попису Смедеревског санџака*, 52.

⁹⁴ State did not interfere in the income from rice fields that were in the possession of *vaqf*, it completely belonged to *vaqf*. А. Стојановски, *Раја со специјални задолженџија*, 141.

⁹⁵ BOA, TD 1007, p. 535.

⁹⁶ *167 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet- Rûm-ili defteri*, p. 415.

⁹⁷ F. Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 29.

⁹⁸ N. Beldiceanu and I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Riziculture*, 9–28.

⁹⁹ F. Tabak, *The Waning of the Mediterranean*, 286.

spreading all over the rice fields, the Muslim population of this village was decimated. On the other hand, Christians who lived in nearby mountain villages started to inhabit the meadow, taking over Muslim locations.¹⁰⁰

The imperial authorities tried to control or limit the expansion of rice planting. However, despite their attempts and despite mud and fever during the whole year, some people did not respect the prohibition; they cultivated rice wherever they could. Rice became an alternative to traditional grains and managed to survive.

Conclusion

It is obvious that rice production in the central Balkans was intended for local needs and the administration apparatus exclusively. The quantities were small especially compared with areas where rice cultivation was advanced and brought significant annual income (for example the Plovdiv area).

In the second half of the 15th century the area of Niš excelled. At the same time, 48 *luknos* of rice were cultivated on one of the rice fields in the Niš vicinity, while 18 *luknos* were cultivated in the vicinity of Kruševac. We could conclude that the Ottoman administration still experimented with cultivation in the territory of the Kruševac *sancak*, except for Kruševac, while the production in Niš was already ongoing. In the early 16th century Paraćin excelled as the new center for the production of rice, so in the late 16th century Niš and Paraćin remained the production centres of this grain with highest investments from the administration and highest income.

¹⁰⁰ M. Kiel, *Tatar Pazarçık, A Turkish Town in the Heart of Bulgaria, some brief remarks on its demographic development 1485–1874*, X. Türk Tarih Kongresi, (Ankara 22–26 Eylül 1986), Ankara 1994, cild V, 2567–2581.

Dragana AMEDOSKI

ORTA BALKANLAR'DA PİRİNÇ ÜRETİMİ (15. VE 16. YÜZYIL)

Özet

Doğu mutfağının temel besin malzemelerinden olan Pirinç, Osmanlıların günlük kullanımında da oldukça yaygındı. Rumeli'de pirinç üretimi, Osmanlı Devleti'nin bölgeye hakim olmasıyla başlamış ve zamanla giderek daha da yaygınlaşmıştı. Mevcut kaynaklar ve araştırma eserleri Orta Balkanlar'daki pirinç üretiminin Osmanlı hakimeyetiyle başladığını kanıtlamaktadır. Pirinç üretimi çoğunlukla Büyük Morava, Güney Morava, Nişava, Toplice, Rasina nehirlerinin etrafındaki alanlarda yapılmaktaydı. Bertrandon de la Broquière ve Jakob Betzek gibi seyyahlar eserlerinde bu nehirlerin etrafındaki arazilerin pirinç tarımı için oldukça elverişli olduğuna vurgu yapmaktadırlar.

Devlet, temel gıda maddesi olan pirincin üretim alanını genişletmeyi oldukça önemsemiştir. Bu anlamda mevad durumundaki arazileri şenlendirmek ve tarıma uygun hale getirmek için bu arazileri mülk arazi konumuna dönüştürmüştür. Ayrıca vakıf arazilerinde de pirinç yetiştirilmesini teşvik etmiştir. Osmanlı devleti bu tedbirleri alarak hem pirinç üretim alanlarını arttırmış hem de bu tarım alanlarında mukâta'a sistemini uygulayarak merkezi hazineye gelir sağlamaya çalışmıştır.

Osmanlı Devleti, pirinç üretimi ile meşgul olan reayayı yaptıkları bu hizmet karşılığında birtakım vergilerden muaf saymıştır. Pirinç üretimi yapan reayaya çeltükçü denilmiş ve bu ayrıcalıklı statü babadan oğula geçmiştir. Çeltükçülerin esas görevi pirinç yetiştirmektir. Ancak bazı durumlarda, sulama kanalları ve bentlerinin bakım ve onarım işlerini de yapmışlardır.

Orta Balkanlar'da yapılan pirinç üretimi sadece idarecilerin ve yerlilerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktaydı. Bu bölgede yetiştirilen pirinç miktarı Plovdiv (Filibe) civarında yetiştirilen pirinç miktarıyla karşılaştırıldığında oldukça azdı.

Bölgede yaşanmış olan Küçük buzul çağı ilk dönemlerde, başta pirinç olmak üzere suya ihtiyaç duyan tarım ürünleri için avantajlı bir durum oluşturmuş olsa da zamanla bu alanlar bataklığa dönüşmüş bu da sıtma hastalığına neden olmuştur. Sıtma hastalığının yayılmasını engellemenin yolu bu alanlarda tarımsal faaliyetleri yasaklamaktan geçiyordu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: pirinç, çeltükçü, Orta Balkanlar, 15. yüzyıl, 16. yüzyıl, Alacahisar sancağı, Semendire sancağı, İşkodra sancağı.

Драгана АМЕДОСКИ

ПОЈАВА ПИРИНЧА НА ЦЕНТРАЛНОМ БАЛКАНУ (15. И 16. ВЕК)

Резиме

Пиринач је као један од основних састојака левантинске кухиње био у великој мери заступљен и у свакодневной исхрани Османлија. Производња пиринча је следила пут ширења Османског царства. На основу постојећих извора и литературе, можемо са сигурношћу тврдити да се пиринач узгајао на територији централног Балкана. Велика Морава, Јужна Морава, Нишава, Топлица, Расина некада су биле пиринчане реке. И сведочења појединих путописаца, попут Бертрандона Брокијера и Јакоба Бецека, такође говоре о томе да је у овим областима много успевао пиринач.

Држава је настојала да контролише и прошири простор намењен узгајању пиринча као значајне намирнице, па је охрабривала појединце да оживе опустошену земљу која им је давана у мулковни посед. Пиринач се производио и на вакуфској земљи. Приходи са тих поља издавани су у закуп (*mukâta 'a*).

Султан је групама становништва ангажованим на пиринчаним пољима за службу коју обављају у корист државе одобравао значајне пореске привилегије. Они су имали статус челтукчија који је био наследан. Задатак челтукчија био је да узгајају пиринач, а сходно потреби, одржавали су и систем за наводњавање сачињен од бране и канала.

Ипак, производња пиринча на простору централног Балкана била је ислучиво за локалне потребе и административни апарат. Произведене количине биле су мале, посебно ако се упореде са количинама које су добијане на пример у области Пловдива.

Мало ледено доба које је уследило повољно је утицало на културе које су захтевале доста воде, па и на пиринач. Међутим, појава маларије у мочварним пределима какве је захтевао пиринач, довела је у каснијем периоду до забране узгајања ове културе.

Кључне речи: пиринач, челтукчије, Балкан, 15. век, 16. век, санџак Алаџа Хисар, Смедеревски санџак, Скадарски санџак.