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Autor: Kaser, Karl

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Pastoral Economy and Family in the Dinaric and Pindus Mountains (14th – early 20th centuries)

Karl Kaser

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans from the middle of the 14th to the middle of the 16th centuries caused significant migration movements of the Christian Balkan peoples. The late medieval feudal states had been successful in transforming pastoralism into sedentary modes of economy on a large scale. Documents prove that during this phase of conquest and after, the remote mountainous zones of the Western Balkans became again densely repopulated and the pastoral economy of sheep and goat breeding was reactivated (Cvijić, 1922: 127–181). The Ottoman system of administration allowed local autonomy and therefore local institutions and patterns of pastoralism took on new vitality, including forms of nomadic long-distance herding. The first aim of this paper is to reconstruct patterns of pastoral economy, social organization and adaptation to the environment in the period of Ottoman domination.

The notion of pastoralism usually involves herding on natural pastures and implies that animal husbandry is economically dominant. Pastoralists derive most of their income or sustenance from keeping livestock in conditions where most of the feed that their livestock eat is natural forage rather than cultivated fodder and pastures (see Galaty and Johnson, 1990; Salzman, Galaty, 1990). To understand the dynamics of pastoral societies we have first of all to consider the environmental framework in which they act. Pastoralists try to identify for their particular environment the optimal combination of location and timing to maximize benefit for the animals: high quality and quantity of pasture, good water, and favorable temperatures (Salzman, 1996: 900). Another factor are the two pastoral strategies for overseeing the livestock; one is the permanent stability of the main residential group, with certain specified individuals going away with the livestock and living away from the main residence. This pattern is frequent in the Mediterranean (see, e.g., Angioni, 1989). The other strategy is coordinated movement of both the residential group and the flock, which is the nomadic strategy. These strategies have an impact but not necessarily a determining function on household and kinship structure and labor division. For this, additional factors have to be considered: the kind of animals the flocks are consisting of, the question of security, the kind of society the pastoralists are in contact with, the persons which the pastoral labor unit consisted of, the relation of pastoral and non-pastoral labor activities of household members, the fitting together of pastoralism with other forms of production, and the capacity to expand the capital resources livestock, pasture and water.

At the first glance there seems to be a pronounced interaction of pastoralism and the existence of both the joint family household in the context of a patrilineal kinship structure and explicit patriarchal patterns. This idea is not new. Todorova describes the highest concentration of joint family households in Western Bulgaria in regions with a large area of meadows and a developed pastoral economy (Todorova, 1990: 18–19). Earlier, Mosely stated that, in general, the joint family had shown a greater viability in the mountainous regions of the Balkans than in the plains (Mosely, 1976*a*: 31). For Filipovic, the "appearance and persistence of the *zadruga* is an institution originated in connection with livestock herding" (Filipovic, 1976: 273). Mitterauer states that the distribution of the joint family households is confined to mountainous, remote regions where a money economy and forms of wage work played a lesser role. He also suggests that a pastoral economy might have promoted the emergence of complex family structures (Mitterauer, 1981: 67–69). Although this relation between pastoralism, family complexity, patriarchy and patrilineality is obvious there is no explanation why complexity, patriarchy and patrilineality should have been necessarily confined to herding areas in the Balkans. Actually this was also the case among the land cultivators of the Eastern European plains. On the other hand in the Rodope mountains in the Eastern Balkans, e.g., pastoralism was conducted without being accompanied by joint families and a patrilineal kinship organization. Such contradictions suggest to analyze in detail the nature of pastoralism in the Western Balkans.

This is why the second aim of this paper is to evaluate the interaction of environment, strategy of overseeing the flock and its impact on family and kinship structure. It focuses on the area which consists of the Southern Dinarics and the Northern Pindus mountain ranges, comprising Montenegro, Albania and Northern Greece. As a result the analysis will suggest to differentiate three types of interaction: (1) the tribal pastoral economy of the Southern Dinarics, (2) the transhumant economy of Southern Albania and (3) the nomadic economy of the Northern Pindus.

Environment and the strategies of overseeing the flock

In this first section two different milieus of pastoralism are going to be differentiated: short and long distance herding. The seasonal migration between summer and winter pastures was economically unavoidable since stabling was not practiced in winter. In the milieu of short distance herding the seasonal migration was conducted within one day, long distance herding could take up to about three weeks.

The Southern Dinarics – in Montenegro and Northern and Central Albania – provided because of its geologic and environmental conditions the ideal environment for short distance herding. The advantage of these milieus was that summer and

winter pastures were territorially connected; the pastoralists thus were not forced to cross other territories. These united territories that comprised the summer and winter pastures of a patrilineage became the economic basis for the emergence of tribal societies.

The Montenegrin and Albanian tribes developed as appropriate economic system a variant of the Alpine farming: the permanent villages of the sheep and goat breeding families were situated in the valleys. In its surroundings the winterpastures and eventually stables for the wintertime were grouped. During the summer the cattle was drown on the close summer pastures. Most of the household members participated in the seasonal migration; it was easy for people to circulate between the summer pasture and the village and to cultivate their portions of land. Several tribes were in the favorable position of being provided with pastures on different geographic levels. In the spring the cattle climbed up step by step and in the autumn down in the opposite direction. On the summer pastures the families had constructed temporary wooden or stony huts. The life in the mountains was hard and full of privations. It was sometimes the case that people and cattle were without water, as the rocks were carstic. To organize sufficient winter meadows was a big problem. In some cases they were too small, or there was surprisingly strong snowfall, or they prepared too less leaves as substitute for grass – people were obliged to kill the livestock (Gopčević, 1880: 419; Steinmetz, 1904: 12; Louis, 1927: 54; Ippen, 1908: 47; Hasluck, 1954: 110–114; Nopcsa, 1910: 25, 29). This demonstrates that the ecological conditions not always were favorable, but the tribal people were fixed to their territories and could not choose better meadows without expelling the families of other tribes. In the second half of the 19th – century the increase of population led to a massive exodus from the Montenegrin tribal areas, since people could not survive any longer on the basis of short distance herding (Kaser, 1996).

In the Pindus mountain ranges, in both the continental Greece and on the Peloponnesus, another variant of short distance herding was practiced, the so called *kalivia*-economy. Sheep and goats belonged to a predominantly field cultivating population. During the winter the flocks were kept close to the villages and during the summer on nearby pastures at higher altitudes. The families or parts of the families accompanied the flocks for this time. In Central and Southern Greece in many cases the flocks were kept on three different levels of altitudes: the village and the fields were situated at an altitude between 800 and 1,000 m above sea level; here the flocks were supplied in the transition periods between winter and summer pastures. The summer pastures were at an altitude of about 1,800 to 2,000 m and the winter pastures in plains little over the sea level (Kaser, 1992*a*: 298). Herding in these regions did by no means result in tribal areas and patrilineal kinship organization.

In the milieu of the long distances the pastoral families were more flexible than in the tribal areas. Here two pastoral systems had developed. In Southern Albania the patrilineal descent groups frequently practiced *transhumance*. The basic problem to solve was that the livestock could not be supplied in both the winter and the summer seasons close to the permanent villages because of climatic and geographical conditions. The solution was to circulate the livestock seasonally without ever coming close to the house of its owner. On the contrary to the milieu of the short distances the household members, except probably one or two men for short periods, did not accompany their flocks. For this purpose shepherds were hired. They migrated together with the flocks independently from the village from winter to summer pastures and vice versa. The distance was usually between 10 and 35 days. The usage of summer pastures was usually for free, for the usage of the winter pastures families had to pay pasture fees (Urban, 1938: 79–92; Louis, 1927: 109; Sestini, 1941: 481–495). This kind of herding was not exactly pastoralism as defined above and had not necessarily an impact on family and kinship structure, since the work was done by hired shepherds. Herding was not the main income, since the families cultivated also fields in their villages.

The nomadic or semi-nomadic economy of Vlachs and Sarakatsans was also practiced in this milieu of the long distances. Seasonal migration of at least several days was unavoidable. The summer pastures of the Vlachs were situated in the Pindus mountain ranges in Northern Greece and Southern Albania, the winter pastures close to the coast, in the plains of Thessaly, Macedonia or Central Albania (the large plain of Myzeqe e.g.). Many Sarakatsans found winter pastures in the Epeirotic plains or in Western Etolia-Arkania.

The semi-nomads usually had their permanent residence in the mountains and constructed temporal huts and tents for the winter period. The full-nomads never constructed permanent villages and houses, but only temporal tents and huts. The construction of the tents was very simple, the length was not more than two and a half meters and the height not more than one and a half meter and the width two or three meters. The Greek people called these nomads *skinites* (tent people). The huts, consisting of branchlets, were more comfortable, much higher, roundly shaped; the construction took several days. Obviously the nomads occupied every year the same summer pastures, which were distributed to them by customary law and free of taxes. For the usage of the winter pastures fees had to be paid (Capidan, 1941: 31; Beuermann, 1967: 175). The last nomads became sedentary not before two, three decades.

The environment of long and short distance herding left room for a variety of herding systems. The question is how households and household formation systems interacted with these environmental and economic constraints.

Two household formation systems

Although the sources for the reconstruction of household formation systems in the Balkans are meager and not very much comparative research has been done so far on this problem, we generally can distinguish three different patterns in the Balkans, two of which are of importance for this paper: the one is concentrated on the areas of the Dinaric mountain ranges from Croatia to Northern Albania, but including also areas of Western Macedonia, Southern Albania and Northern Greece; the other is spread over large parts of the Balkans, including the regions of the Pindus mountain ranges of continental Greece.

1) The *patrilocal, life-cycle complexity system*. This household formation system consists of the experience of a joint family constellation in certain phases of an individual's life. The household ideally underwent the following cycle: the couple had children. The sons married and had their wives come live with them and their parents; daughters had to marry out. The separation and the transmission of property into equal parts among the sons took place upon the death of the father or upon the marriage of all sons. Statistically such societies appear as predominantly nuclear family households with a small proportion of complex households. Ideally, complexity was experienced by most people at two certain points of the life-cycle: in the phase of marriage until the complex household separated, and in late age when sons married in the daughters of law. This pattern was widespread in the rural Balkans, it dominated in Hungary proper (Barabás, 1972: 102–104; Andorka, Faragó, 1983: 294–300; Andorka, Balacz-Kovács, 1987), in Bulgaria, except the northwestern mountainous parts of the country (Todorova, 1993: 127–131), and in continental Greece (Cassia, Bada, 1992: 16–17). Exceptions are to be found among the pastoralists of Northern Greece, primarily among Sarakatsans and Vlachs (Campbell, 1976; Caftanzoglou, 1994), in central and southern (Maina) parts of the Peloponnes (Stahl, 1986: 138–149). Cassia and Bada who investigated household structures and systems of property transmission in Athens primarily in the 19th century argue that then in the countryside, nuclear family combined with neolocality – a system which dominated in the 20th century – was not the cultural norm. In Athens whose population immigrated to a large extent from the countryside, people married patrilocally, and the property transmission and household division took place upon the death of the father or even later. In Athens later this pattern transformed into a strict neolocal and nuclear formation system. Because of the extraordinary role of the Greek capital the new system became generalized (Cassia, Bada, 1992: esp. 42–44).

This system dominated in regions with abundance of land, or in mountainous regions where the capital property consisted of herds and not of land. In many regions of the Balkans there was a relative abundance of land because of the more

relaxed demographic conditions. In the Bulgarian case it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that a shortage of land began to be experienced. And this was because of a beginning demographic transition (Todorova, 1993: 130). In regions with high population density and low abundance of land, but also among the pastoralists of the Western Balkans, the tendency to form household-cycle complex households was stronger.

2) The *patrilocal, household-cycle complexity system*: The basic difference to the first system is that complexity of the household structure was not an individual's experience once or twice in the life course but could be a constellation an individual experienced a whole life. After generations the household was separated. Upon the marriage of the sons, they had their wives come live with them, and the grandsons did the same. The group could thus become quite large. The transmission of property was not related to death or marriage and took place when the household fissioned into several different groups. They shared the property equally according to descendent lines. This pattern was also widespread. It covered regions in Hungary proper, Croatia and Slovakia, most parts of Serbia, Western Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Northern Greece (Kaser, 1995), and variants occurred in the Mani region on the Peloponnes and on larger islands like Crete and Corfu (Cassia, Bada, 1992: 17). The formal structure was similar throughout this area. Household fission and property transfer was usually not part of an individual life-cycle but rather of a more-generation household cycle. Focusing on family ideology this area can be subdivided into two parts and the pattern into two variants, a southern and a northern one. The transitional zone of the two variants ran through Croatia: The northern part of the country, Dalmatia and Hungarian and Slovakian parts belong to one variant, the southern part of the country as well as the rest to another variant. In both of it the principle of equally partible inheritance ruled, but partition was set out for generations because of different reasons. In the northern variant scarcity of land seemed to be the decisive reason because complex household structures were combined with high population density. This is quite obvious in the case of Northern Croatia (especially the Zagorje region north of the capital Zagreb). Population immigrated here during the 16th century from the embattled border zone with the Ottoman Empire to more secure regions in the hinterland, and the result of which was a high population density and scarcity of land. The most practiced strategy to avoid the diminishing of land property by equal partible inheritance was to make the sons to stay together and to avoid fission (Kaser, 1995). From Hungary proper we get a similar evidence. Especially in southern parts of the country in tense populated areas, complex household structures are registered since the 18th century (Andorka, Faragó, 1983; Andorka, Balacz-Kovács, 1987; Széman, 1981).

The southern variant is characterized by a distinctive patriarchal cultural background, a patriarchal variant that Kaser calls Balkan patriarchy (Kaser, 1992): strong blood ties, ancestor worship, patrilineality, patrilocality, marriage by purchase, bloodfeud and patrilineal kinship structure. The economic background was pastoralism, sheep and goat keeping in the remote mountain areas in the Western Balkans.

The most important result of this overview is that both household formation systems were practiced among pastoralists and peasant cultivators. The question that arises is: is there a common reason for the emergence of both systems among pastoralists and land cultivators? The answer is positive. We can consider these two household formation patterns as two variants of one principle – the principle that the property had to be distributed equally among the adult male members of the household. It ruled in most parts of Eastern Europe until the early 20th century (see Kaser, 1998, forthcoming) and was also the underlying principle of both patterns of household formation. The property was considered as exclusively male. It was a decision based on cultural tradition and/or economic consideration how to treat this property. It could strictly be considered as inheritance portion, like in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, then each son received his portion on the occasion of marriage, or it was primarily considered as joint property, then it was equally distributed during the individual's life span or later. The roots of this equal male inheritance and property pattern were twofold: 1) the ecotype of slash and burn economy which was widespread in Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the middle ages, and 2) the ecotype of pastoral economy as practiced in the Western Balkans. Both ecotypes were strongly based upon a male focused labor division, which led to the paradigm of the joint male property and a distinctive patriarchal structure (Kaser, 2000).

The pastoral families always had the option for both the possibilities: to take the death of the father as opportunity to split the household or to continue and to increase the number of household members. The empirical evidence leads us to the assumption that the tendency among pastoralists of the Western Balkans to form out complex households was stronger than to split the household on the occasion of marriage. The decision was an answer to economic and cultural constraints. Fission and fusion can be considered as methods of regulation of the labor force of a household. Herding needed a certain amount of manpower that exceeded the capacity of a nuclear household. Timing of fission depended on how manpower was recruited: If shepherds were hired to regulate the labor demand there was no economic necessity to keep the household large, and fission could take place according to the first pattern. If the household was identical with the labor unit, the necessity to keep the household together grew and household formation according to the second pattern could have been the result.

Pastoralism and the joint family

Household formation systems in the Balkans could have been spread similarly among pastoralists and land cultivators, but the economic function was for both groups completely different. This is also true for the joint family. For peasant cultivators the large family provided the manpower for intensifying the diversity in cultivation, for pastoralists the precondition to enlarge the capital resource, the livestock.

Concerning the pastoral labor organization we have to consider three important points. The first one is the different seasonal organization of activities. For the time on the summer pastures, the larger working units were organized by groups of usually kin related households. This was necessary as in the mountains the animals required large grazing areas which involved a great deal of work. It was impossible, or at least inefficient, for the goatherds and shepherds to serve only their own flocks. Just to take care of a small flock of 200 sheep took the work of four shepherds, who ideally would have been of different ages, between 15 and 50 (Campbell, 1976: 8).

Secondly, a joint family household residence was achievable in the winter season. For this time the large pastoral working unit was dissolved. The winter pastures in the plains could not be used as extensively as in the mountains and the amount of labor was much less than during the summer (except at the time of the birth of lambs and kids in January and February). During the winter time the families took care of their flocks individually. A nuclear family consisting of a married couple and several children could hardly do that. In the winter the Sarakatsans of northern Greece divided their animals into four flocks (pregnant ewes, rams, last season's ewe lambs, goats). The lower limit of labor force was four active adult shepherds and a young goatherd (Campbell, 1976: 19). It made sense to stick together and to build a joint household. One additional argument in this direction is Campbell's observation. According to him the new nuclear families, after having dissolved the former joint family household, still took care of their flocks in common (Campbell, 1976: 88–94).

The third consideration is that in this form of pastoral economy, apparently it was not the correlation between the size of the herd and the need for subsistence which was most important; but rather, the relation between the size of herd and the size of household. The larger a household then the larger the potential labor force, which permitted a larger herd. There is no difference between sheep and goats with respect to the labor required. Observations from the 19th and 20th centuries show that a man was able to herd a maximum of 50 milk sheep or goats. Seen in the context of the entire household, female labor is equal in importance to male labor. In herding, however, men proved to be more important. Labor capacity, in respect to herding, is expressed by a unit system where one unit represents an adult male (over 10 years

of age), 0.5 for an adult female, 0.5 for a eight to ten-year-old boy, and 0.25 for a girl under ten. This model was calculated for the Afghan tribe of Pashtuns in the second half of the 20th century (Glatzer, Bollig, 1983). Campbell's study of nomadic sheep and goat herding in Northern Greece comes to similar results (Campbell, 1976).

We can draw important conclusions from this model: if, as in the case of the Pashtuns, the cultural pattern restricts hiring laborers from outside the family, an increase in the size of the herd is only possible via an increase in the household size. The size of the herd is dependent on the size of the household, and pastoral labor organization puts a emphasis on male labor. Therefore when a male child is born the herd can grow at a much larger rate. This means that a pastoral society can afford sizable households, because by growing in number they can hold a larger herd and thereby increase their material base.

These arguments are being supported by observations of Caftanzoglou. At the beginning of the 20th century one part of the Vlachs of Syrrako, a village in northern Greek province of Epeiros, was counted as permanent inhabitants, many of them were craftsmen and small tradesmen, the other part were pastoralists. The larger and more complex families were found among the semi-nomadic pastoralists, while the permanent inhabitants lived in smaller and simpler households. Thus it is reasonable to assume that the complex structure of the pastoral households was closely linked to the demands of their economy. Since there were no paid workers, the need of their labor organization were mainly met by the manpower available in the larger and complex households (Caftanzoglou, 1994: 83).

The interaction of pastoralism and the family was therefore twofold: The complex or joint household was a precondition for any kind of pastorally centered economy in a society where the primary working unit generally was limited to the group of household members. At the same time, it was the potential of the joint family that enabled the establishment of a pattern that limited the working unit to the size of the household group.

Family, kinship and pastoralism

One of the essential problems of pastoralists is to provide security for the capital resource, the flocks. To achieve security the solidarity of the family members was not sufficient, only the solidarity of a large kinship group could be the appropriate response. The complex family in the Western Balkans became the basic unit for the patrilineal tribal lineages that developed from the 14th century onward. It was flexible enough also to adapt to the bilaterally based kindreds of Vlachs and Sarakatsans.

Patrilineages

Many of the complex family systems in the Balkans can be traced to tribal lineage systems, or more generally, to large kinship agglomerations in the mountainous Dinaric regions. One of the basic structures of Eurasian pastoral societies has been an agnatic kinship ideology centered upon a named male ancestor. His sons were regarded as founders of sub-lineages, and their sons of smaller segmentary lineages. Such lineages in the Balkans, of course, did not simply evolve freely as a natural ecological adaptation to a highland ecology. Rather the mountainous areas were refuge zones beyond the expanding state systems exemplified by the Ottomans. The coming into prominence of these lineage structures reflected a local adaptation to the absence of larger state structures. That these lineages were also functional in an upland ecology was another important conditioning factor. Tribal autonomy, whether in the Balkans or elsewhere as in Central Asia, was never absolute but always relative and sensitive to shifting political and ecological factors. Under conditions of resettlement in valley areas, a patrilineage could become synonymous with all the households of a village, or a specific part of a village. Sometimes the households of a patrilineage could be spread over several villages of a region (Cvijić, 1922: 115–126). The most frequent Balkan type, however, was that forming a quarter of a village *("mahalla")*. Examples occur in both rural central Serbia (Halpern, 1956: 38–39, 312–328 and Halpern, 1967) and in central Bulgaria (Sanders, 1949: 232).

Conditioned by different degrees of generation depth, patrilineages were divided into various kinds of subdivisions. Each unit had different competencies in decision making. In most cases, one can differentiate between minimal and maximal lineages. The minimal lineage consisted of up to three generations. In other cases, a threefold subdivision was common. Serbian ethnographers distinguish, for example, between the house or household as minimal lineage, the broader extended family, including first and second cousins *("porodica")*, as middle lineage, and the brotherhood *("bratstvo")* as maximal lineage and consisting of as many as 13 or 14 generations of agnatically related kin (Djurdjev, 1954: 165–220; Djurdjev, 1965–66: 187–195; Pulaha, 1975: 121–145; Pulaha, 1976: 173–179).

Two types of social structures evolved in this area of the Balkans. In northern Albania and Montenegro, tribal organization emerged. Affirming this similarity in social structure of the Montenegrins and Albanians provides an important insight into the ways in which Balkan societies have been structured. There were some 30 named Montenegrin tribes *("pleme")* in the second half of the 19th century, and more than 60 identified Albanian tribes *("fis")* at the beginning of the 20th century (Durham, 1928: 13–52). Recent historical investigations contend that both the

Montenegrin and the Albanian tribes emerged during and after the Ottoman conquest and were not the direct continuation of older structures (Djurdjev, 1954: 165–220; Djurdjev, 1965–66: 187–195; Pulaha, 1975: 121–145; Pulaha, 1976: 173–179). Where they existed, political authority resided at the level of the tribe. The position of the chieftain was an official rank, its competencies were fixed, and his authority was stressed. Such status tended to reside within a certain family or lineage.

The tribes developed out of pastoral working units, the *"katun"*. These *katuns* were obviously based on blood relationship and were moveable units, migrating from summer to winter pastures. In both the cases the Montenegrin and the Albanian, we can watch parallel developments: before the Ottoman occupation, the Balkan feudal state was well organized enough to push the mentioned *katuns* to leave the mountains and to settle down in the valleys. Written documents show us these settlement processes. But the Ottoman conquest turned these processes into the opposite direction. The *katuns* left the settlements again and pulled themselves back into the secure mountains. Parallel to this throw-back, processes of territorialization began. Territorialization in this context means that public summer and winter pastures were turned into possessions of the *katuns* respectively the out of the katuns slowly emerging tribes (Kaser, 1992a: 144–156).

By contrast, in the south (as was the case in southern Albania and Greece) there developed an alternative organization characterized by the leading role of the lineage segment in political, religious, and economic activities. In Southern Albania too, it means that on the territories settled by Albanians south of the river Shkumbin, there existed still in the 19th and 20th century patrilineally organized descendent groups. Their terminological fixation is not easy because they were tribes and at the same time no tribes. The Albanian ethnography investigated this problem in the recent years and solved the main problems. Here the tribe was called *"fara"* or *"gjeri"* (common thing). The Albanian ethnographers point out that a *fara* community is much more smaller than a *fis* (tribe) community in Northern and Central Albania. But it is given that there is an historical link and a common origin of *fara* and *fis*, but the further development was different. The main difference between *fara* and *fis* is that the relationship between the *fara* members was very loose. The members knew that there existed a common ancestor, but this fact played no relevant role and the names of the ancestors were unknown. This fits into the fact that the *fara* was no exogamous group. Exogamy was limited to a subgroup called *"fis"*. It is confusing, but the North Albanian and the South Albanian *fis* have not very much in common. The South Albanian *fis* consisted of three or four related generations, that means they had a common ancestor three or four generations ago. Beyond the *fis* the *fara* relation became active (Ulqini, 1987: 207–215; Tirta, 1987: 11–27).

The lineage groups did not live on a closed region like the Montenegrin and Albanian tribal societies, they built islands, located on mountains, amidst a farming environment. One center of the lineage organization was the one from the central mountains of Southern Albania shaped Labëria (with the Kurvelesh, Bregdet, Rëze e Tepelenës, Zagori and Lunxherie mountains), a second the so called Himara (southwest Albania), and a third the Suli region, situated far south amidst Greek population between Ioannina and Arta (Ulqini, 1985: 197–222).

In addition, the more isolated these pastoral societies were, the greater their tendency to construct segmentary lineage systems. The Albanian mountain dwellers in southern Albania and northern Greece, through intensive segmentation, lost their tribal organization during the time of the Ottoman occupation (15th century). These lineage segments then became the decisive political, economic, religious and predatory units.

A Balkan patrilineage used a number of important symbols that bound lineage members together (Kaser, 1995: 178–233). There was, for example, the common lineage name derived from the male founder and carried in the name of each male lineage member. Many lineages had origin myths, orally transmitted from generation to generation, which were essentially charters of identity (Hahn, 1854: 183–210; Tomić, 1902: 357–497; Drobnjaković, 1923). Individuals from the oldest extant Balkan lineages can orally trace their ancestors some 13 or 14 generations back to the Ottoman period.

Of great ideological significance was the feast of a patron saint (the *"slava"* or *"feshta"*) thought to be the protector of the lineage. This event can be interpreted as a Christianized form of a pre-Christian ritual celebration of the lineage ancestor and provided the extant patrilineage with a sacred, religious identity (Kaser, 1993: 93–122; Todorova, 1993a: 123–129).

Kindreds

The kindred as social organization was mostly but not exclusively represented in the milieu of the long distance herding. The Vlachs and Sarakatsans together with other ethnic groups[1] represent this kinship category. As mentioned above until several decades they lived a life as nomads or semi-nomads. They represent a rare exception, because almost all pastoral nomads are patrilineal in kinship organization (Galvin,

1 These were, e.g., the Mijaci, Gorani, and Debrani. The Mijaci were about 1920 14,000 people and were located in Northwestern Macedonia (in the valleys of the Radika and Mala Reka and on the Bistra plateau). The Gorani were a very small group and were situated north of the Mijaci. The Debrani lived between the Dibra in the north and the Lake Ohrid in the south. They were divided into 9 subgroups and counted by 1880 about 200,000 mainly Muslim people (Sicard, 1943; Smiljanić, 1925: 23–25, 46).

1996: 861). One possible explanation for this is that Vlachs and Sarakatsans were stronger exposed to the Orthodox church than the other patrilineally based pastoral groups in the Western Balkans.

The decisive differences between the social structure of the tribes and lineage groups on the one hand, and the kindred groups on the other hand, is that the first were lineal and vertical extended and based upon unilateral descent principles; the latter were lateral and horizontal extended and based upon bilateral descent principles. That means that the descent gender relations of the later were equal and characterized by strong relations within the whole collateral kindred. As a peculiar kindred has the descendants of necessarily four couples not related great grandparents as presumption – the two grandparental couples go back to four great grandparents –, was only that siblings group which was central for the kindred to all its members related. All relatives that did not belong to the siblings group were not automatically related to each other and were also members of other kindred groups. Not the descent from a common ancestor but the kindred relationship to the stem family defined the own position (Campbell, 1976: 42).

The personal limits of such a bilateral kindred group is the collateral second cousin. We have to do with a span of collateral relationship that operates with the fact that all those are related who descend from the same four great grandparents. The recognition of the collaterals is increasing, the recognition in decreasing generation limited. The kindred group reorganizes itself in every generation personally. The main effort was to create a kindred federation as big as possible. The means to realize the goal were exogamy rules which did not allow the marriage until the third cousin. 50 or 100 families belonging to the kindred group were not unusual. Kindred meant alliance, security, and friendship in a nomadic milieu full of situations dangerous to life (Campbell, 1976: 38–42, 48–50).

Like the tribal societies and the lineage groups, the kindred groups would have shaped out their organizational structures on the occasion of the Ottoman conquest. The general insecurity of this time put the survival of the nomads in question. Many of us think that nomads are very flexible, at least much more flexible than farmers. This is not true. The survival of these nomads depended on secure summer and winter pastures, and the security for cattle and pastoralists on the usually long way between summer and winter pastures. They had to start the migration at a certain time and to use a certain route, because goats and sheep needed grass along the whole way. To lose the flock or parts of it meant that the physical survival was in question. One indicator for that is that the Vlachs had their permanent residence, before the Ottoman conquest took place, on the plains of Thessaly and Southern Macedonia. During the Ottoman occupation they changed the permanent villages to the summer pasture area on the Pindus mountain where they are until now. The

collective recollection of the folk story about the foundation of the Vlach village Vlaho-Livadhon reports that it was "the fear of brigands" (the brigands were the Ottomans), which caused around the year 1500 the change from the plains into the mountains (Wace, 1971: 145–82). It is no coincidence that the Thessalian monks of this time withdrew themselves on the rocks of Meteora, where they built their fantastic monasteries, inaccessible for enemies.

Conclusion

All these kinds of social organization had as their main aims to ensure protection in a hostile political environment and ensure effective ecological adaptation. The Ottoman Empire was based on an Islamic foundation. Christian family households, tribes (at least a big number), and their lineage groups, were tolerated. But, while enjoying a degree of autonomy, they were subordinate citizens and subject to arbitrary acts of the provincial Ottoman administrators. The lives of these mountain dwellers thus depended on their flocks and their ability to find methods of protecting themselves and their flocks. The migrations from winter pastures to summer pastures could be particularly dangerous. The need for protection and safety was one reason for the intensifying of the construction of joint family households, of extended patrilineages and kindreds. A secondary effect was that under the circumstances of permanent danger a man with his weapons became the dominant symbol of these mountainous societies. This behavior was related to the very strongly developed patriarchy.

The joint family household was the basic element of these large units. But the joint family, like the lineage of which it was a part, underwent fission. The tribal lineages constructed of joint families focused on shared sentiment but residential units in their linkages enabled the larger lineage units to function. This functioning was reinforced by the fact that they all shared a common territory, an extension of the household as a residential unit.

The existence of the joint family was based on preconditions on different levels: from the perspective of labor organization the cultural precondition was that only household members were activated for herding; from the perspective of property transmission the precondition was the equally joint male property which had the potential to divide equally or not to divide and to form complex household constellations. The pastoral labor necessities and the above mentioned cultural precondition was in favor for the latter solution.

It has to be stressed here that it is difficult to explain why, on the one hand, pastoralists of different origins and ethnic composition found similar solutions, like the joint family, and on the other hand resorted to different solutions, like kindred

and patrilineage, and to different economic strategies in similar ecological conditions. Herding did not automatically lead to certain social organization nor did a certain social organization lead to distinctive types of herding. The ecological factor, the milieus of the long and the short distance herding, as demonstrated, were important, but never absolutely decisive for certain economic and social organization. Ways of household formation were another variables that granted flexibility; pastoralists, in forming the best suited family constellation could thus react to economic and political constraints.

The three types of interaction of environment, strategy of overseeing the flock and its impact on family and kinship structure show clear outlines: (1) The tribal pastoral economy of the Southern Dinarics was the result of the milieu of short distance herding and stability of the main residential group; the tribal organization guaranteed security. (2) The transhumant economy of Southern Albania emerged in the milieu of long distance herding; stability of the residential group was given; the terriorially not fixed patrilineal descend group provided security. (3) The nomadic economy of the Northern Pindus also emerged in the milieu of long distance herding, but the residential group moved seasonally; the problem of security was met by extended kindred organizations. This shows the complexity of pastoral societies and their potential to adapt themselves economically, ecologically and socially to the challenges of sheep and goat herding within the political framework of the Ottoman Empire.

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