

## The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 10 (2013)

Responding to Economic Crises in Historical Perspective, nineteenth and twentieth centuries

The *H*istorical Review  
La Revue *H*istorique



VOLUME X (2013)

Section de Recherches Néohelléniques  
Institut de Recherches Historiques / FNRS

Section of Neohellenic Research  
Institute of Historical Research / NHRF

### Watchtowers, Mastic Contraband and Rural Communities in the Aegean Archipelago under Ottoman Sovereignty

*Dimitrios G. Ierapetritis*

doi: [10.12681/hr.312](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.312)

#### To cite this article:

Ierapetritis, D. G. (2013). Watchtowers, Mastic Contraband and Rural Communities in the Aegean Archipelago under Ottoman Sovereignty. *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 10, 219–254. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.312>

WATCHTOWERS, MASTIC CONTRABAND AND  
RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE AEGEAN ARCHIPELAGO  
UNDER OTTOMAN SOVEREIGNTY\*

*Dimitrios G. Ierapetritis*

---

ABSTRACT: The construction of watchtowers on the islands of the Aegean Archipelago was common practice for Western peoples in the context of a systematic effort to provide military protection for agricultural areas and the populations of their rich commercial colonies. After the weakening of these colonies and the arrival of the Ottomans, the watchtowers, known as *viglae*, continued to operate, as they were closely associated with the socio-economic, everyday life of the region's residents. Using the case study of the community of 21 mastic-gathering villages (Mastihohoria) of south Chios, this article aims to: a) investigate the main and secondary objectives of the Ottoman administration in maintaining the operation of the *viglae*; b) study the system of operation of the *viglae* during the period of Ottoman rule; and c) explore the maintenance of *viglae* during this era. This article is based on qualitative research, as it studies documents found primarily in archival material, such as notarial acts, communal decisions, and correspondence between members of the Ottoman administration and community representatives, as well as other historical, travel and geographical resources.

---

*Introduction*

Since the end of the fourteenth century, the Christian peoples of the Mediterranean reinforced the fortifications protecting the local populace against raids by both Turkish and Christian pirates and corsairs. Such raids led to the building of fortresses, expanding interception and protection lines, creating infrastructure and systems of observation, as well as systems for alerting the local population and the forces stationed further inland. In terms of this development, the Venetians, the Genoese, the Knights of St John and other Western forces constructed special guard posts, watchtowers known as *viglae*, on the shores of the Mediterranean, in order to survey the coastline and the broader sea area.

---

\*The present article is based on research conducted for my Ph.D. thesis, *Η συμβολή της τοπικής οργάνωσης των Μαστιχοχωρίων Χίου στη διαχείριση του χώρου κατά την περίοδο 1566-1866 της Οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας* [The contribution of local organisation of the Chios mastic villages in the management of space during the period 1566-1866 of Ottoman sovereignty], Department of Geography, University of the Aegean, Mytilene 2007.

The Latin origin of these watchtowers is obvious, since when examining the etymology of the word *vigla* we see that it is Byzantine,<sup>1</sup> coming from the Latin *vigilia*,<sup>2</sup> translated as guard post, observation post or “watchtower on a high position dominating the local area”.<sup>3</sup> However, one should not overlook the existence of similar fortifications during Byzantine<sup>4</sup> and ancient times (cf. ancient *fryktoría*: beacons,<sup>5</sup> etc). Coastal watchtowers, some of which survive to this day, have been recorded in Greece, on Samos,<sup>6</sup> Santorini,<sup>7</sup> Mykonos,<sup>8</sup> Amorgos and other islands of the Cyclades,<sup>9</sup> Euboea,<sup>10</sup> Rhodes,<sup>11</sup> Ikaria,

<sup>1</sup> E. Koukou, *Οι κοινοτικοί θεσμοί στις Κυκλάδες και την Τουρκοκρατία* [Community institutions in the Cyclades during Ottoman rule], Athens: Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece, 1980, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondingly for the verbs, *viglaro* from *viglare* (*vigilare*).

<sup>3</sup> “*vigla, viglaro, viglatoras* (βίγλα, βιγλάρω, βιγλάτορας)”, in I. Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν της Νέας Ελληνικής γλώσσας* [Modern Greek language dictionary], Vol. I, Athens 1952, p. 793. (Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.)

<sup>4</sup> K. P. Matschke, “Research Problems Concerning the Transition to Tourkokratia: The Byzantinist Standpoint”, in F. Adanir and S. Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: Discussion of Historiography*, Vol. XXV, Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 100; I. E. Peppas, *Μεσαιωνικές σελίδες της Αργολίδος, Αρκαδίας, Κορινθίας, Αττικής* [Middle-age pages of Argolida, Arcadia, Corinth, Attica], Athens 1990, pp. 269-271.

<sup>5</sup> The term *fryktoría* comes from the noun *fryktos*, meaning torch or brand. Such torches were lit by the *fryktoroi* on special stations in order to transmit news.

<sup>6</sup> J. Georgirenes, *The Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos and Mount Athos*, London 1678, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> P. Katsipis, “Τα καστέλια και η προστάτις των Αγία Θεοδοσία, βίγλες και γουλάδες, καταφύγια” [The castles and their protector St Theodosia, watchtowers and defensive towers, hideouts], in M. A. Danezis: *Σαντορίνη* [Santorini], Athens 1971, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> P. G. Zerlantis, *Σύστασις του κοινού των Μυκονίων* [Incorporation of the Mykonian Community], Ermoupolis 1924, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Koukou, *Οι κοινοτικοί θεσμοί*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> A. E. Vakalopoulos, “Η θέση των Ελλήνων και οι δοκιμασίες τους υπό τους Τούρκους” [The position of the Greeks and their trials under the Turks], *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους. Ο ελληνισμός υπό ξένη κυριαρχία (περίοδος 1453-1669)* [History of the Greek nation: Hellenism under foreign rule (period 1453-1669)], Vol. X, Athens 1974, p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> K. Nosov, *The Fortress of Rhodes, 1309-1522*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2010, p. 39; D. Dimitropoulos, “Τοπωνύμια και μικροτοπωνύμια στα νησιά του Αιγαίου. Όψεις της αντοχής της σήμανσης του τόπου στο χρόνο” [Names of places and localities on the islands of the Aegean: views on the perseverance of marking a place through time], *Πληθυσμοί και οικισμοί του ελληνικού χώρου. Ιστορικά μελετήματα* [Populations and settlements in the Greek area: historical studies], Athens 2003, p. 80.

Mytilene, Kalymnos, the Ionian Islands, Crete,<sup>12</sup> Antikyra<sup>13</sup> and Cyprus,<sup>14</sup> as well as in the broader Mediterranean area, such as in the regions of Istria, Dalmatia and Albania,<sup>15</sup> Sicily,<sup>16</sup> Naples,<sup>17</sup> Malta,<sup>18</sup> the Algarve,<sup>19</sup> Cartagena, Sardinia, Corsica, Valencia,<sup>20</sup> Barcelona<sup>21</sup> and elsewhere.

The *viglae* on the islands of the Aegean during Ottoman rule served the purpose of allowing constant observation of the sea<sup>22</sup> and raising alarms to inform the village inhabitants. During the day such alarms were either smoke signals,<sup>23</sup> shots fired<sup>24</sup> or bells,<sup>25</sup> whereas at night fires or lanterns were used.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> F. Braudel, *Η Μεσόγειος και ο μεσογειακός κόσμος την εποχή του Φιλίππου Β' της Ισπανίας* [The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world at the time of Philip II], Vol. II, transl. K. Mitstotaki from the French, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Athens: MIET, 2002, p. 574.

<sup>13</sup> P. Lock, "The Frankish Towers of Central Greece", *The Annual of the British School of Athens* 81 (1986), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> A. H. S. Megaw, "The Arts of Cyprus, B: Military Architecture", in H. W. Hazard (ed.), *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. IV: *The Art and Architecture of the Crusader State*, Madison 1977, p. 196.

<sup>15</sup> Braudel, *Η Μεσόγειος και ο μεσογειακός κόσμος*, p. 574.

<sup>16</sup> G. Fatta and V. Rinaldo, "Constructive Characters of XVIth Century Guard Towers on Sicilian Coasts", *Protection and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Mediterranean Cities*, Proceedings of the 5th International Symposium on the Conservation of Monuments in the Mediterranean Basin, Seville, 5-8 April 2000, Lisse: A. A. Balkema, 2002, p. 567.

<sup>17</sup> Braudel, *Η Μεσόγειος και ο μεσογειακός κόσμος*, p. 581.

<sup>18</sup> C. Stephenson, *The Fortifications of Malta, 1530-1945*, The Militia of Malta, Vol. XIV, Oxford: Osprey, 2004, p. 139.

<sup>19</sup> V. Coutinho, "Maritime Fortifications in the Algarve and Political Military Strategies in Portugal and Morocco (XII-XVIII Centuries)", *Conference Proceedings Euromed Heritage II*, 6-8 November 2003, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> J. M. Moreno "From Industrial Activity to Cultural and Environmental Heritage: The Torre Vieja and La Mata Lagoons (Alicante)", *Boletín de la A.G.E.* (2008), p. 315.

<sup>21</sup> D. J. Kagay, *The Usatges of Barcelona: The Fundamental Law of Catalonia*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> A. Krantonellis, *Η ιστορία της πειρατείας στους πρώτους χρόνους της Τουρκοκρατίας, 1390-1538* [The history of piracy in the first years of Ottoman rule, 1390-1538], Athens: Estia, 1985, p. 449.

<sup>23</sup> N. Belavilas, *Η αστική και αγροτική μορφολογία στις περιηγητικές και χαρτογραφικές πηγές* [The urban and rural morphology in the traveller and cartographic sources], in P. N. Doukelis (ed.), *Το ελληνικό τοπίο. Μελέτες ιστορικής γεωγραφίας και πρόσληψης του τόπου* [The Greek landscape: studies in historical geography and appreciation of place], Athens: Estia, 2005, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Vakalopoulos, "Η θέση των Ελλήνων", p. 85.

<sup>25</sup> Katsipis, "Τα καστέλια", p. 122.

<sup>26</sup> K. N. Kanellakis, *Χιακά ανάλεκτα, ήτοι συλλογή ηθών, εθίμων, παροιμιών, δημοδών ασμάτων, ανιγμάτων, λεξιλογίου, ιστορικών και άλλων χειρογράφων, χρυσόβουλλων, σι-*

Additionally, the *viglae* provided information to the inhabitants of the villages concerning the origin and exact number of vessels suspected of piracy.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the guard of the *viglae* had to announce immediately to the representatives of the Ottoman administration the arrival of ships along the coastline under their jurisdiction, as well as their place of origin and their destination. In some areas, in fact (for example, Samos), should the information about the arrival of a ship be provided to the Ottomans by someone other than the guards in charge, then the *viglae* guards would be, according to a seventeenth-century author, punished with 500 strikes with a stick to the heels of their feet,<sup>28</sup> thus proving that any neglect on the part of the guards was strictly punished.<sup>29</sup> The guards that manned the *viglae* were called *viglatores*, and their numbers varied from area to area. One *viglatoras* is mentioned in one place, two of them in another, and elsewhere one during the day and two during the night.<sup>30</sup> According to the available information, the *viglatores* usually remained at their posts throughout their entire lives, and in addition to their salaries they also benefited from tax exemptions and various other advantages.<sup>31</sup> The cost of the wages of *viglatores* was covered by the communities alone, while some places (such as Euboea) paid a special tax, a *vigliatiko*,<sup>32</sup> for this reason. As these colonies waned in might, the *viglae* continued to be operational, since they were closely related to the socio-economic, everyday life of the inhabitants of the countryside.

The present article uses the 21 mastic-gathering villages of south Chios (for a general map, see fig. 1) as elements of a case study, with the following objectives: a) to investigate the main and secondary aims of the central administration for maintaining and operating the *viglae*; b) to study the system of operation of the *viglae* during the Ottoman period; and c) to examine the conditions for maintaining the *viglae* during this period. It is based on qualitative research, as it studies documents that have been drawn mainly from archival material, such as notarial acts, community decisions, and correspondence between members of the Ottoman administration with the community, as well as other historic, travel and geographical sources.

---

γυλλίων, κ.λπ. [Analekta of Chios, being a collection of mores, customs, proverbs, popular songs, riddles, vocabulary, historic and other manuscripts, stamps, sigilia, etc.], Athens: Chios Imerologio, 1983, p. 454.

<sup>27</sup> Krantonellis, *Η ιστορία της πειρατείας*, p. 449.

<sup>28</sup> Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Koukou, *Οι κοινοτικοί θεσμοί*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Koukou, *Οι κοινοτικοί θεσμοί*, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> Vakalopoulos, “Η θέση των Ελλήνων”, p. 85.

Concerning the archival material used, I investigated 73 notarial acts, including the entirety of the notarial acts of the Chios mastic villages (Mastihohoria) for the period in question, which are kept in the Korais Public Central Historic Library of Chios, and part of the notarial acts kept in the General State Archives (GSA) of the Prefecture of Chios. A sample study was used to support the results of the examination of these acts. It was considered useful and sufficient to make three “sections” in the period under examination, studying a sample of the notarial acts kept in the GSA. Specifically, for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notarial acts were selected that were redacted during the 40-year period between the '30s and the '70s of each century (1730-1770, 1830-1870). Concerning the seventeenth century, all of the available notarial acts were studied, which contained notary deeds registered during this century, since the number of acts that fall within the 1630 to 1670 period is too small and insufficient to provide reliable results. Especially concerning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a database was created containing all of the existing acts from the 21 mastic villages that fall within the 40-year period under examination, specifically 63 and 73 acts for each century respectively. The data were then sorted into alphabetical order, and time of commencement of the acts. Finally, the assurance of the necessary randomness was achieved via the selection of a statistical sample (1/5). In total, 125 notarial acts were studied.

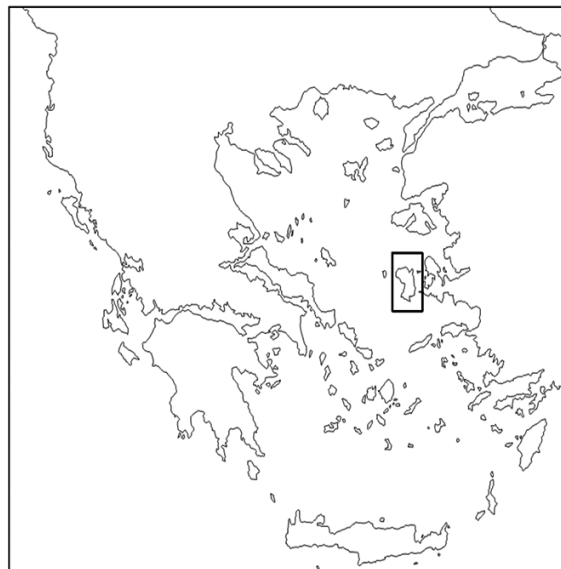


Fig. 1. The island of Chios in the Aegean Archipelago.

## Raisons d'Être of the Watchtowers over the Centuries

### 1. Piracy in the Aegean Archipelago

Piracy was long a recurrent phenomenon on many shores of the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>33</sup> The stony soil and aridity of the region encouraged poorer inhabitants to try their luck at sea. In addition, the many islands scattered across the sea provided safe harbour and concealment. However, pirates were not always simply outlaws. The Ottomans in the mid-fourteenth century, when they first reached the shores of the Mediterranean, drew on the skills of pirates. Due to their lack of proper naval and maritime knowledge, they engaged mostly Greeks<sup>34</sup> to carry out raids against various enemies.<sup>35</sup> The Ottoman pirates in cooperation with Byzantine leaders would attack Latins, who had occupied much territory, especially in the Aegean Islands, the Morea and the coastal areas of Greece, Macedonia and Thrace.<sup>36</sup> Following the conquest of Gallipoli (1354), the long Ottoman rule over the Aegean Sea began. During the first years, the peninsula was used as a naval base for the raids of the Ottoman navy against the islands of the Aegean Sea. Besides, following the fall of Constantinople (1453), the process of imposing Ottoman rule over the Aegean Sea started. The first step was forcing the Latin dynasties that controlled the islands to levy a tribute to the Sublime Porte. The tribute was followed by their annexation to the Ottoman State, either by capitulation or by military conquest. In the meantime, the Aegean Islands were often raided by the Ottomans, usually in order to increase the tribute.

It has been argued that during the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth, piracy was not an absolute Ottoman practice but rather a universal Mediterranean phenomenon. Seamen and merchants from Spain, France, Holland, Italy and England were involved in such activities in the Mediterranean.<sup>37</sup> After the Ottoman loss at Lepanto (1571), the Ottomans proved to be ineffective in the

---

<sup>33</sup>E. C. Semple, "Pirate Coasts of the Mediterranean Sea", *Geographical Review* 2/2 (1916), p. 134, American Geographical Society, article stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/207388>.

<sup>34</sup>Among these was H. Barbarossa, a Greek convert from the island of Mytilene who began as a raider for the Ottomans, eventually took the fight to the Western Mediterranean and in 1533 became admiral-in-chief of the Ottoman navy; see M. Green, "The Ottomans in the Mediterranean", in V. H. Aksan and D. Goffman (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 148.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>H. Inalcik and D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 376.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

struggle against this Western piracy. Pirates sent by the Knights of St John, the Knights of St Stephen from Pisa, the Spanish viceroys in South Italy and Sicily and others swarmed into the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>38</sup> As a result, the inhabitants of the Anatolian coasts or the Aegean and Ionian Islands lived under the permanent threat of such people. While the defence of the Ottomans' domain, on a day-to-day level, mainly aimed at protecting inhabitants and ships of coastal settlements against pirates, coastlands were at risk.

Prominent among the pirates threatening Ottoman coasts were the Maltese Knights of St John, who claimed religious sanction for their attacks upon Ottoman subjects. They presented themselves as “defenders of Christianity”, attacking as much against Ottoman Christians as against Muslims, arguing that Christians who had accepted the protection of the sultans or collaborated with them should also be punished.<sup>39</sup> The phenomenon continued far longer in the Eastern than in the North-Western Mediterranean, occasionally even to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

## 2. The Mastic Monopoly and the Period of Watchtower Construction

The Genoese conquered Chios in 1346 and established a kind of chartered company, the Mahona, which took over the government of the island and laid the foundations for the systematic exploitation of the island's profitable resources. The Mahona revitalized the marble industry, as well as the cultivation of mastic, a particularity and exclusivity of Chios, the trade of which was more profitable than anything else,<sup>41</sup> and established a tightly controlled monopoly.<sup>42</sup>

Chios mastic (*μαστίχα*) is the transparent substance, also named “tear”, which flows from the mastic trees that grow in southern Chios. Its odour is slightly balsamic and pleasant, while the taste is astringent. The mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) belongs to the Anacardiaceae family.<sup>43</sup> It thrives exclusively

---

<sup>38</sup> Green, “The Ottomans in the Mediterranean”, pp. 114-115.

<sup>39</sup> S. Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around it*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004, p. 122.

<sup>40</sup> W. D. Hütteroth, *Ecology of the Ottoman Lands*, in K. Fleet, S. Faroqhi and R. Kasaba (eds), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, Vol. III, p. 32.

<sup>41</sup> R. Di Tucci, *Il soggiorno di Sampiero Corso a Scio*, Livorno 1933, p. 418.

<sup>42</sup> P. Freedman, “Mastic: A Mediterranean Luxury Product”, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, special issue: Mediterranean Reflections: Studies in Honour of David Abulafia (Part II), 26/1 (2011), p. 100.

<sup>43</sup> T. Savvidis, *To μαστιχόδενδρο της Χίου* [The mastic tree of Chios], Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 36-37.



in the ground of the mastic villages of Chios, with particular growth on thick and calcareous soil.<sup>44</sup> It grows very slowly, reaching full growth between the 40th and 50th year. It starts producing mastic in the 5th year, reaching an average yield of more than 320 grams from the 12th year on, and eventually a maximum yield of 1 kilo. Its age reaches 100 years, with recorded cases of some trees reaching 200 years.<sup>45</sup>

The important benefits drawn by the mastic monopoly urged the Genoese to adopt and implement an administration system, which greatly simplified the processes of harvesting, promoting and trading the product. Many writers of the local history of Chios of that period have referred to the fact that the Genoese State granted special treatment to the inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages.<sup>46</sup> In particular, P. K. Hopf noted that, “[...] during the Genoese rule the mastic producers (*masticarii*) enjoyed a better fate than the rest of the villagers on Chios [...]”.<sup>47</sup> Katlas also referred to the tax exemptions of the mastic producers and noted that the tobacco tax (a per capita tax) did not apply

---

<sup>44</sup> S. G. Vios, “Σχίνος ο μαστιχοφόρος και η μαστίχα” [*Pistacia lentiscus* and mastic], *Περιοδικόν του εν Χίω Συλλόγου Αργέντη* (1938), p. 96.

<sup>45</sup> I. Perikos, *Η μαστίχα της Χίου* [The mastic of Chios], Chios 1990, p. 13. The mastic tree requires diligent cultivation and care. The collection of mastic is divided into two phases, scoring and gathering. The scoring (called “kendima” or “kendos”) is the process required to extract mastic from the mastic tree bark, and it takes place from July until August. After some preliminary processes, the scoring begins, where twice weekly the cultivator scores each tree, from the trunk to the branches, at a distance of approximately 20 centimetres, with a special tool called a “kenditiri”. After this procedure, a resinous substance starts to flow, in the form of a tear; it is the mastic, which takes various shapes as it falls on the ground and dries after 15 days. Often, the mastic does not drop to the ground immediately, but rather hangs down from the point of piercing, resembling a long crystal, which the cultivators call “kandilera”, meaning candelabra in Greek. The scoring procedure lasts throughout the following 5 to 6 weeks, at the end of which period it is interrupted to allow for the last mastic tears to dry. The first gathering period is concluded at that time, and the second and final one begins. Some of the cultivators do not interrupt gathering, thus making no distinction between gathering periods, but they continue and conclude the scoring, leaving the gathering of the mastic tears for the end.

<sup>46</sup> P. P. Argentis, *Chios Vincita, or The Occupation of Chios by the Turks (1566) and their Administration of the Island (1566-1912)*, Cambridge 1941, p. 276; E. Y. Kolodny, “Χίος. Πρόσφατη εξέλιξη και πληθυσμιακή διάρθρωση ενός νησιού ναυτικών” [Chios: recent developments and population structure of a naval island], *Revue Géographique des Pays Méditerranéens* 8 (1969), Greek transl. A. D. Magganas, in *Χιακή Επιθεώρησης* (1972), p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> K. A. Sgouros, *Ιστορία της νήσου Χίου, από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι του 1700 μ.Χ.* [History of the island of Chios, from ancient times until AD 1700], ed. P. P. Argentis, Chios 1937, p. 160.

to them.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Zurich mentioned that in 1428 the island's *podesta* (commissioner) L. Giustiniani promised tax exemptions and reductions to any Genoese who wanted to live on Chios, get married and cultivate a *masticaria* (a district where mastic was produced); this fact supports the idea that the main reason for providing special privileges to mastic producers was motivating them to remain in their homes so that adequate labour forces for the cultivation and harvest of the product could be ensured.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of administration during the Genoese rule, Chios was divided into 12 districts. The central administration as well as the judicial supervision of Chios was controlled by the *podesta*, who was always chosen by the Republic of Genoa.<sup>50</sup> Just below him there were the 12 *gubernatores* (governors), who were in charge of the 12 districts. The *gubernatores* were appointed by the *podesta* and were supervised and controlled by him. The *podesta* himself depended on them in some way, since he could not decide important issues alone without prior consultation with the deputy governors. Such deputy governors were called *protogerontes* (senators), as well as *logariastilae* (auditors), and they normally did not serve for longer than four months. The name *logariastilae* refers to deputy governors of districts producing the valuable product of mastic. It probably relates to their duties to collect the annual revenues that were then handed over to the government.<sup>51</sup> There were four *masticarias*,<sup>52</sup> all located in the south and south-west of the island. Apart from their administrative duties and the collection of revenues, the *logariastilae* acted as judges with a limited jurisdiction, probably similar to that of a justice of the peace or a magistrate, whereas the island's *podesta* was authorized to decide about more important offences or crimes. As regards the administration of the districts, the *logariastilae* supervised the chiefs, the so-called *kodespotes* (landlords) or

---

<sup>48</sup>K. M. Katlas, *Η Χίος υπό τους Γενονησίους* [Chios under Genoese control], Chios Library, Part 1, Athens 1908, pp. 138-140.

<sup>49</sup>N. Zurich, "Τα προβλήματα του Γενοβέζικου αποικισμού στη Χίο το 14ο αιώνα και ο σχηματισμός μιας Λατινοβυζαντινής κοινωνίας" [The problems of the Genoese colonization in Chios in the 14th century and the formation of a Latin-Byzantine society], *Χιακή Επιθεώρησης* 5/13 (1967), p. 21.

<sup>50</sup>J. I. Manatt, *Aegean Days*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1914, pp. 321-322.

<sup>51</sup>A. Vlastos, *Χιακά, ήτοι ιστορία της νήσου Χίου από των αρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι της έτει 1822 γενομένης καταστροφής αυτής παρά των Τούρκων* [Chiaka, the history of the island of Chios from ancient times until 1822, the year of the Turkish massacre], ed. N. K. Chaviaras, Chios 2000, pp. 153-155; A. Sarrou, "Περί του Χιακού πολιτεύματος" [On the Chian regime], *Μεσαιωνικά Γράμματα* 1/2 (1931), p. 125.

<sup>52</sup>Zurich, "Τα προβλήματα του Γενοβέζικου αποικισμού", p. 27.

*protogeroi*<sup>53</sup> who acted as representatives of each village. The subordinates of the *logariastilae*, as well as those under the authority of the *protogeroi*, were the so-called *paroikoi*, the leaders of each family.<sup>54</sup> Along with the *logariastilae* there were also other authorities involved, which supported the work of collecting and promoting this valuable product. The mastic secretary (*scriba masticis*) was responsible for recording and controlling the weight of the mastic, as well as for its delivery to the shareholders of the Mahona. In the beginning the secretary was one of the shareholders; later, however, he was a notary from Genoa. According to Katlas, the mastic secretary used to have special Mahona agents under his orders, who were known as “*Officiales saper recollectionemen masticis*”, that is, responsible for the collection of the product.<sup>55</sup> Of particular interest are the notes of Katlas concerning the existence of a separate authority consisting of employees (the so-called *perequisitores*) whose main task was the control of departing ships to ensure that “they had not loaded any mastic to be smuggled abroad”.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, a system of international trade for mastic was introduced, according to information provided by N. de Nicolay. Specifically, after the mastic was collected, the Genoese governors of Chios distributed the quantity produced each year among four ministers: the first minister was ordered to

<sup>53</sup> Vlastos, *Χιακά*, p. 156.

<sup>54</sup> Sarrou, “Περί του Χιακού πολιτεύματος”, p. 126.

<sup>55</sup> It should be noted here that the mastic quantity collected annually was predefined in order to avoid over-harvesting of the trees, which would also lead to price reduction of the product, which was normally sold at a particularly high price. If the collected quantity was greater than the predefined one then any excess quantity was kept in warehouses for the next year or was immediately burnt. See Katlas, *Η Χίος υπό τους Γενουησίους*, p. 149.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* Regarding the mastic contraband, the Genovese conquerors imposed strict and inhuman penalties on those who participated in such smuggling activities. With regard to these penalties, Katlas mentioned that he who stole 10 liters or less would be punished with a fine of 1 to 6 hyperpyra per ounce or would be subjected to flagellation and ear cutting, should he not be able to afford the fine. He who stole 17 to 25 liters would be stigmatized; he who stole 25 to 40 liters would have his nose cut off; he who stole 40 to 50 liters would have his nose and ears cut off; he who stole 50 to 100 liters would, aside from the cutting-off of nose and ears, be stigmatized; he who stole 100 to 200 liters would have, aside from all the above-mentioned, his eye gouged or his hand or leg cut off according to the commissioner’s wishes; he who stole more than 200 liters would be hanged. Furthermore, a death sentence would be inflicted upon the one who, having already once been punished for theft, was again arrested for stealing 100 liters or upon the perpetrator of a double theft of 50 liters. Said penalties would also be inflicted on the person selling the stolen goods, sometimes even harder ones, whereas the plaintiff was compensated corresponding to the stolen quantities; *ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

supply the whole Greek territory; the next one, the West, that is, Italy, France, Spain and Germany; the third one was to distribute his allotment to all of Asia Minor; and the fourth one to Syria, Egypt and Barbary (the cities of North and West Africa). These four ministers had underlings who distributed the mastic to each main state under their jurisdiction.<sup>57</sup> The greatest part of the quantity produced came from the central storehouse, the Casa del Mastic, located in the city of Chios, and the two smaller storehouses in Genoa for the West and Rhodes for the East.<sup>58</sup> The markets of Rhodes, Cyprus, Egypt, Syria, Armenia, the Middle East and Greece absorbed two-thirds of production, while the West barely managed to consume one third.<sup>59</sup> This is corroborated by the invaluable information provided by Hopf, who mentioned that at the end of the fourteenth century the average annual quantity of mastic traded by the Mahona rose to 434 kandar (100 *libres* of gold), of which 120 kandar were sent to the countries of the West, 114 kandar to the ports of Armenia, Cyprus, Rhodes, Syria and Egypt, and 200 kandar to the ports of the Middle East and Romania, which included those of Greece, Constantinople and the Crimea.<sup>60</sup> G. Pistarino recorded that in 1410 a specific quantity was defined as the maximum allowed to be exported annually to the international markets, rising to no more than 114 kandar to Syria and Egypt, 206 kandar to Turkey and Romania and only 120 kandar to the European markets. Pistarino offered valuable information on the main European markets for mastic in Barbary and Italy (Sicily, Calabria, Puglia, Marques, Tuscany and Lombardy). He also mentioned that Genoa was the largest European market, from where mastic was then transported to Sicily, Catalonia, Ceuta, Oltremonte, Paris, Bruges and London.<sup>61</sup> More specialized information was provided by Argentis, who added that in 1431 mastic was sent to Mallorca and Cadiz, while during the period from 1448 to 1497 small quantities were sent to Flanders, Gaeta and Tripoli,

---

<sup>57</sup> P. P. Argentis and S. P. Kyriakidis, *Η Χίος παρά τους γεωγράφους και τους περιηγητές από τον ογδόο μέχρι τον εικοστό αιώνα* [Chios as described by geographers and travellers of the eighth until the twentieth century], Athens: Estia, 1946, p. 62.

<sup>58</sup> G. Pistarino, “Ο Χριστόφορος Κολόμβος στο νησί της Χίου. Το πρόβλημα της μαστίχας, Αιγαίο: Χώρος πολιτισμού από τον Όμηρο στον Κολόμβο” [Christopher Columbus on the island of Chios: the problem of mastic, Aegean: cultural space from Homer to Columbus], *Πρακτικά Δ' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Χίου για την Ιστορία και τον Πολιτισμό του Νησιού* [Proceedings of 4th international congress of Chios for the history and culture of the island], Chios 1993, p. 84.

<sup>59</sup> W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge*, Vol. II, Paris 1885, p. 290.

<sup>60</sup> P. P. Argentis, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese and their Administration of the Island (1346-1566)*, 3 vols, Cambridge 1958, p. 484.

<sup>61</sup> Pistarino, “Ο Χριστόφορος Κολόμβος στο νησί της Χίου”, p. 84.

Sicily, Barbary, Bruges, London, Little Armenia, Valencia, Malaga, Tortosa and other cities in Spain, Ancona, Orange, Tunis, Venice and Naples.<sup>62</sup>

The Genoese governors of Chios proceeded to the urban organization of the island's small and unfortified settlements into neighbourhoods within the walls of castles,<sup>63</sup> which used the exterior wall of dwellings as the external side of the city wall, since these dwellings were placed in an unbroken row, and they were built with a labyrinthine street network with a tower at the centre of the settlement (see fig. 2).<sup>64</sup> Additionally, while reinforcing the castle organization of the mastic villages, as well as of other coastal settlements on Chios, they constructed *viglae* in order to survey the coastline and the broader sea area. F. de Coulanges, in 1856, mentioned about the *viglae* of Chios that, "[...] the Genoese had organized a system of watches on each of these towers and a *viglatoras* was standing guard there day and night, and from there, as soon as a signal was given about any suspicious ship, the forewarned villagers either took up arms or escaped within their village [...]".<sup>65</sup>

Chronologically speaking, according to Vlastos this happened in 1440, shortly after the siege of Chios by the Venetians (1431). This siege led to the decision to spend 400,000 *scudi* to build walls, castles and watchtowers on hills close to the coastline.<sup>66</sup> Argenti mentioned that in 1454 the Genoese also decided to erect strong walls and watchtowers around the town of Chios.<sup>67</sup> The main aim was protection from piracy, as well as from raids from the neighbouring Ottomans and Venetians. Moreover, according to Katlas, *viglae* were constructed by the Genoese also to protect the mastic monopoly via the suppression of the greatly widespread contraband and to control and avert the emigration of the citizens of the area, who were necessary for the cultivation and collection of the valuable mastic.<sup>68</sup>

Research shows that the number of *viglae* that existed and were operational on Chios rose to 24, of which 10 were located on the south coast of the island,

---

<sup>62</sup> Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese*, pp. 487, 508.

<sup>63</sup> Sgouros, *Ιστορία της Νήσου Χίου*, p. 221.

<sup>64</sup> Kolodny, "Χίος", p. 14; Zurich, "Τα προβλήματα του Γενοβέζικου αποικισμού", pp. 20-21.

<sup>65</sup> F. de Coulanges, *Η νήσος Χίος, ιστορικό υπόμνημα* [Mémorial on the island of Chios], transl. from the French *Mémoire sur l'île de Chio*, K. Choreanthi, Athens 1977, p. 175.

<sup>66</sup> Vlastos, *Χιακά*.

<sup>67</sup> Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese*, pp. 422-423.

<sup>68</sup> Katlas, *Η Χίος υπό τους Γενουησίους*, p. 158.

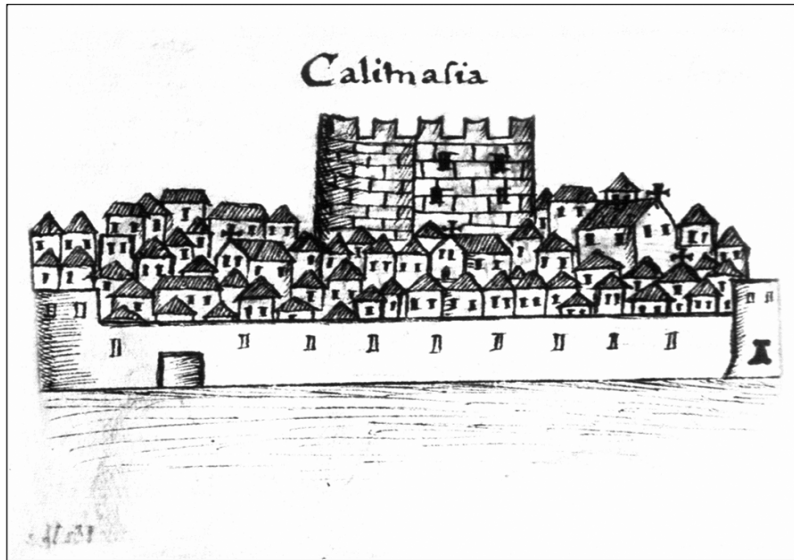


Fig. 2. Depiction of the castle organization of the Kallimasia community, from F. Lupazzolo, *Breve discorso e ipografia dell'isole dell'Arcipelago*, Scio [Chios] 1632.

in the broader area of the mastic villages (see fig. 3).<sup>69</sup> As regards the technical specifications of such coastal watchtowers, it was ascertained that the average diameter of a typical *vigla* was 7.5 m and its height was approximately 12 m. It consisted of a cylindrical trunk with a round, cylindrical base, a room approximately 8 m above ground covered by a semi-cylindrical or lowered dome, which created the attic. The room had trapezoidal windows ending in narrow holes. A small opening connected the attic with the room underneath. A ladder that could be pulled up or a rope ladder was used to get up to the *vigla*.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> M. Vournous and G. Kizis, "Οι βίγλες της Χίου" [The watchtowers of Chios], *Conference on Communication and Transportation in the Pre-industrial Period*, 11th Symposium on History and Art, Monemvasia Castle, 23-26 July 1998, Athens 2001, p. 52.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

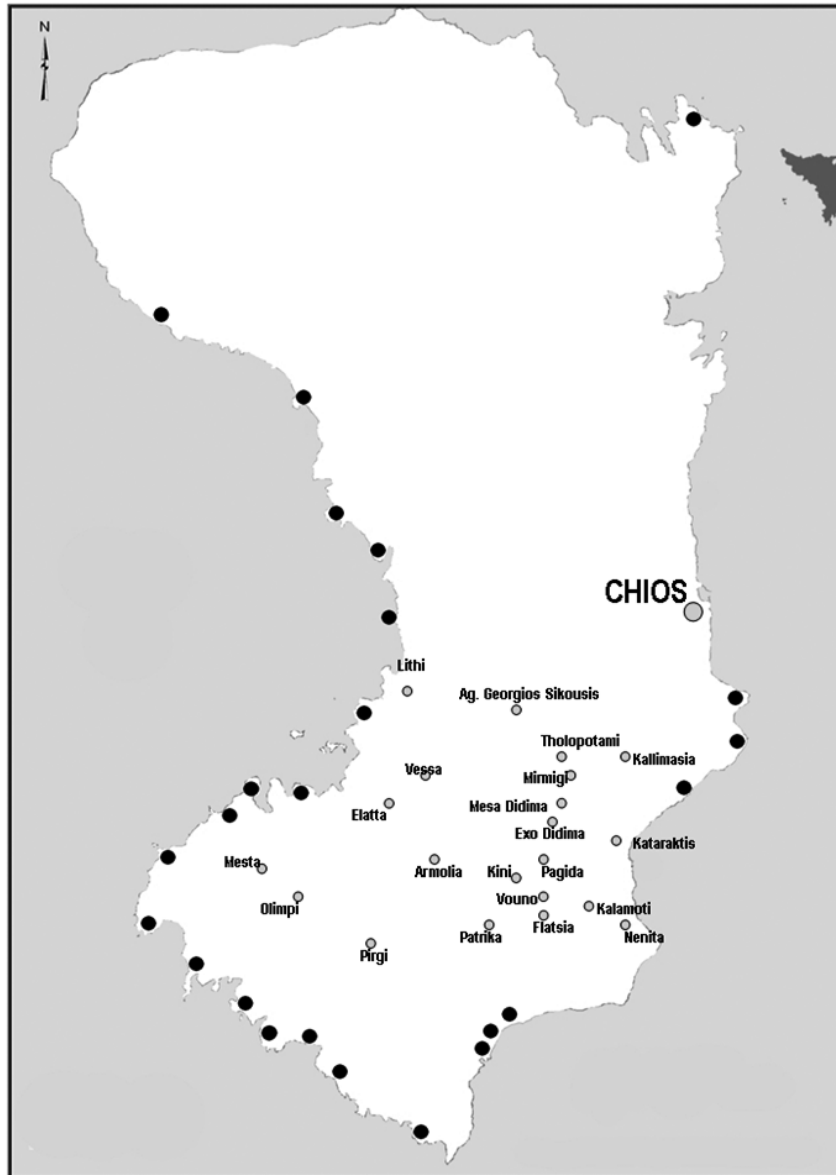


Fig. 3. The system of 24 coastal watchtowers was developed mainly in the broader area of the 21 mastic villages of Chios. After M. Vournous and G. Kizis, “Οι βίγλες της Χίου” [The watchtowers of Chios], *Conference on Communication and Transportation in the Pre-industrial Period*, 11th Symposium on History and Art, Monemvasia Castle, 23-26 July 1998, Athens 2001, p. 52.

*The Ottoman Mastic Monopoly: Consequences on the Economy and Administration*

The Genoese period (1345-1566) came to its end when the island was conquered by the Ottomans, and Chios gradually became known by its Ottoman name, Sakiz Adasi – the island of mastic.<sup>71</sup> This identification of Chios by means of mastic clearly denotes the high rank that mastic enjoyed among the island's profitable resources. Characteristically, Pagidas mentioned in his treatise about mastic: "The Turks did not differentiate Chios from mastic. Both were called 'Sakiz'. For the Turks, mastic and Chios were connected very closely."<sup>72</sup> During the period of Ottoman rule, as it was during Genoese sovereignty, mastic was found in every known market in the East and West as one of the Ottoman monopolies.<sup>73</sup> The exported quantity of mastic was transported in crates from Chios directly to the international markets. J. Somer recorded in 1641 that "mastic is sent from Chios in small crates, to India and Italia".<sup>74</sup> A few years later, in 1688, O. Dapper from Holland recorded the strong presence of mastic and other products from Chios on the international trade scene, and such trade served English and Dutch interests.<sup>75</sup> During the whole of the seventeenth century, the best-quality mastic was sent to Constantinople, as noted by an anonymous traveller.<sup>76</sup> There are indications that during the eighteenth century the transportation of that valuable good was made over the sea to the markets of the West and to other cities important to international trade, such as Constantinople for the Eastern markets and Marseilles for the Western markets. For the period 1711-1712, M. O. Eneman made a list of the

---

<sup>71</sup>F. W. Pauli, "Die Insel Chios in Geographischer, Geologischer, Ethnologischer und Kommerzieller Hinsicht, Vortrag", *Gehalten in der Geographischen Gesellschaft zu Hamburg* (5 May 1881), p. 1; A. Testevuide, "L'Isle de Chio (Turquie d'Asie). Le Tour du Monde", *Nouveau Journal des Voyages*, 2nd series (1878), p. 366; W. Tomaschek, "Zur Historischen Topographie von Kleinasien in Mittelalter", *Sitzungsberichte der Kais Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien* (1891), p. 20; A. Stavridis, *Εγχειρίδιον πολιτικής φυσικής και εμπορικής γεω-γραφίας του Οθωμανικού Κράτους* [Treatise on the political physics and commercial geography of the Ottoman State], ed. B. I. Anastasiadis and S. Karavas., facsimile, Mytilene: University of the Aegean, 1996, p. 89.

<sup>72</sup>G. Pagidas, *Η μαστιχοφόρος σχίνος και η μαστίχη* [*Pistacia lentiscus* and mastic], Chios 1948, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup>D. G. Ierapetritis, "The Geography of the Chios Mastic Trade from the 17th through to the 19th Century", *Ethnobotany Research & Applications* 8 (2010), pp. 156-158. Available at: [www.erajournal.org/ojs/index.php/era/article/view/372/277](http://www.erajournal.org/ojs/index.php/era/article/view/372/277). Accessed: 19 August 2010.

<sup>74</sup>Argentis and Kyriakidis, *Η Χίος*, p. 1432.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 541-542.



European markets to which the product was exported: “[...] every foreigner shall be supplied with mastic, which is transported to Italy, England, Holland and elsewhere”.<sup>77</sup> Mastic was sold on the European markets during the following decades of the eighteenth century as well. The English traveller Mailhows noted that in 1750, “[...] the greatest part of this medicine which is used in Europe comes from the produce of this island [...]”.<sup>78</sup> Mastic reached the markets of the West via Marseilles<sup>79</sup> in crates. During the nineteenth century, according to F. Rougon, the valuable product of mastic was “[...] offered for trade throughout the Orient, from Algeria to Russia”.<sup>80</sup> Its transportation to the markets of the West, and mainly the French markets, took place via Thessaloniki and Trieste.<sup>81</sup> By 1900 Izmir had become the main transportation hub, through which mastic was shipped to the markets of both the East and the West. Mastic was shipped from Izmir to France, the United States, England, Austria, Russia, Holland, Spain, Belgium, Italy and back to Greece.<sup>82</sup>

The mastic trade provided the Ottoman State with both an important source of income and some other advantages. The conditions for this were created with the issue of the first *ahdname*<sup>83</sup> and the accord of special privileges to the inhabitants of the mastic villages. Thus, during the early years of Ottoman occupation the annual income from mastic was above two million *akças*, while during the same period the total revenues from other Chian sources was only

---

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1586.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 733-736.

<sup>79</sup> C. de Philibert and A. de Philibert (eds), “Mastic”, *Dictionnaire portatif de commerce*, Vol. V: I-M, Copenhagen 1761, p. 371.

<sup>80</sup> F. Rougon, *Smyrne, situation commerciale et économique des pays compris dans la circonscription du consulat général de France (vilayets d’Aidin, de Konieh et des îles)*, Paris 1892, p. 497.

<sup>81</sup> Bourvilles, unpublished letter dated 29 July 1881, Certificate de l’origine, M.E.R.F Archives, No. 3, Ms.. Cf. General State Archive [hereafter GSA], Chios Prefecture Archives, 1881, p. 173.

<sup>82</sup> M. M. N. Verney and G. Dambmann, *Puissances étrangères, dans le Levant en Syrie et en Palestine*, Paris 1900, p. 641.

<sup>83</sup> *Ahdnames (ahitnâme)* were bilateral agreements concluded between the sultan and the chief of a state or nation that accepted the sultan’s protection. Such agreements had a political or economic nature and were more or less like today’s international treaties or agreements. In the beginning the term was used in battlefields and referred to agreements made between officers in charge or commandants after a battle (N. Sarris, *Οσμανική πραγματικότητα. Η δογματική διοίκηση* [The Osman reality: the systemic listing of structures and operations], Athens: Arsenides Publications, 1990, pp. 437-438).

above one million *akças*.<sup>84</sup> Table 1 presents the revenues, other than customs, collected from Western Anatolia during the years 1604-1607. The government revenues from mastic, which in the years 1605, 1606 and 1607 amounted to 2,292,000 *akças*, 2,195,650 *akças* and 2,035,000 *akças* respectively, indicate that mastic production was the mainstay of the economy of Chios.

Table 1

Revenues other than customs collected in Western Anatolia  
between 1604 and 1607 in *akças*

Dues	03/05/1604 – 03/05/1605	03/05/1605 – 03/05/1606	03/05/1606 – 03/05/1607
Cizye <sup>a</sup>	910,000	971,418	971,418
Inheritance	83,959	30,200	44,470
Cera'im <sup>a</sup>	146,462	59,341	53,370
Mastic <sup>a</sup>	2,292,000	2,195,650	2,035,000
Ihtisab <sup>a</sup>	130,000	115,000	113,000
Raw silk	180,000	180,000	200,000
Lumber	110,000	110,000	110,000
Land and sheep	85,000	80,000	80,000
Evkaf of Piyale Pasha	3000	3000	3000
Beans	6000	10,000	8000
Total	3,946,421	3,754,609	3,618,258

<sup>a</sup> The cizye (head tax on non-Muslims), the cera'im (fines), the mastic and the ihtisab (market revenue) all refer to Chios alone.

Source: Başbakanlık Arşivi, Ibnülemin (maliye) 640, in D. Goffman, *Ismir as a Commercial Center: The Impact of Western Trade on an Ottoman Port, 1570-1650*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Chicago, 1985, p. 171.

<sup>84</sup> D. Goffman, *Ismir as a Commercial Center: The Impact of Western Trade on an Ottoman Port, 1570-1650*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, University of Chicago, 1985, p. 170.

Concerning the total income of the Ottoman Porte from the exploitation of mastic near the end of the seventeenth century, Du Mont mentioned:

Not a year passes that more than a thousand crates are not collected, weighing 300 litres each, the value of which exceeds 200,000 ducats. This would be enough to make the inhabitants of Chios rich, were it allowed them to sell the mastic to foreigners; however, it is not them that benefit from it, but the sultan.<sup>85</sup>

Reports from the same period raise the income of the sultan from mastic, in various currencies, to 80,000,000 ducats (or 18,000 *sultaniedes* for O. Dapper, 24,000 *tsekinia* per year according to B. de Moconys and 200,000 *scudi* according to C. Magni).<sup>86</sup>

The high demand for mastic in combination with the monopoly system of exploitation adopted by the Ottoman State created the necessary conditions for mastic contraband to boom. Mastic in the parallel market was in some cases sold for even half of the standard purchase price, according to foreign visitors to Chios.<sup>87</sup> Despite the comparatively low price of illegally traded mastic, the profit margin remained high enough to lead enough locals and foreigners to break the law. Studying the available sources by travellers, we see that even the noted representatives of consulates were not absent from this illegal trade, according to W. Wittman in 1803. More specifically, Wittman referred to the then British consul on Chios who, “[...] told us where he bought a quantity of mastic which [he] then sold in Constantinople but because the sale was discovered [the] consul submitted to abuse and the very hefty fine of 8000 *piastres* [...]”.<sup>88</sup>

The Porte was thus faced with the ever-increasing demand for mastic on the one hand, as shown above, and the unbeatable smuggling on the other, which will be analyzed below. The Ottoman State was forced to take measures to protect this valuable product in the interest of its own profit. Consequently, the restructuring and the gradual strengthening of the institution of *viglae* as a mechanism and a means to protect the mastic monopoly was included in its priorities.

For administrative purposes, Chios was incorporated into the *eyalet* (province, a subdivision of the Ottoman Empire) of the islands of the White Sea (Aegean Sea). The *eyalet* of the White Sea, which was established in 1534,

---

<sup>85</sup> Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xíos*, p. 188.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 427, 199-200.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1779.

was further divided into sanjaks<sup>89</sup> and was controlled by the *kapudanpaşa* (the admiral of the Ottoman fleet). The *kapudanpaşa* was the representative of the sultan and was responsible for enforcing law and order. The *mutesellim* (district governor), who was initially called a *sanjakkbey*, was in charge of the sanjak.

The *mutesellim* was the military commander of Chios, since he was responsible for the defence of the island and controlled all the guards. Furthermore, he was in charge of all shipments arriving at customs and collected the taxes from the *gerontes*, which were then sent to Constantinople. Next to the *mutesellim*, the *qadi* was involved in the administration of the island; as a senior judge, a *qadi*'s main task was enforcing the laws. The *qadi* decided in cases of disputes between Ottomans, and later also between Christians if they chose to refer to the *qadi*; he ratified the election of the *gerontes* of the communities on Chios by issuing special *hojets* and provided title deeds for the sales of real estate. The vice-*qadi* was called a *naib* and was also a judge, but with more restricted jurisdiction.

All the large islands of the Aegean Sea were districts of the Ottoman State. All major ports and strategic fortresses had authorised officers working in the customs and tax collection; with guards at the ports to ensure the safety of the islands, commissioners, seamen working in shipyards and even captains ready to protect any small neighbouring islands.<sup>90</sup> The Sublime Porte, in an attempt to maximize the state benefits from the exploitation of mastic, put the 21 mastic villages of south Chios<sup>91</sup> under special governance. These belonged, as did the mastic crop, to the sultan's mother (the *valide sultana*)<sup>92</sup> and were administratively directly dependent on the Seraglio, surpassing the state administrative authorities and the structures of the Chios sanjak. The administration of these villages was handled by the *agha*<sup>93</sup> of the mastic, or

---

<sup>89</sup> A sanjak (in Turkish *sancağ*) was a medium-seized administrative division of the Ottoman State, which was a subdivision of the early Ottoman *eyâlet* and the later Ottoman *vilâyet*.

<sup>90</sup> C. Küçük, *A Short History of the Period of Ottoman Sovereignty of the Aegean Islands*, The National Committee for Strategic Research and Studies, Research Project Series 1/2002, Ankara 2002, p. 31.

<sup>91</sup> The 21 villages were Armolia, Pyrgio, Mesta, Flatsia, Kalamoti, Kallimasia, Ekso Didyma, Mesa Didyma, Ag. Georgios Sykousi, Katarraktis, Koini, Mermigion, Pagida, Patrika, Vessa, Elata, Nenites, Tholopotamion, Vouno, Lithio and Olympoi.

<sup>92</sup> K. Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 137.

<sup>93</sup> J. Galland in 1754 recorded that these villages, "[...] are governed by an *agha*, who yearly rents this income in Constantinople, and is also not under the usual jurisdiction for the island" (Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xios*, p. 699).

*sakiz-emin*, who was at the same time the lessor of the mastic tax and who had “absolute power over [the villages] and nobody has the right to intervene in his works”.<sup>94</sup> The issue of the *ahdname* by Mahmud I in 1740 acted as a reminder for the existing ban of tax-collection tours “of *qadis* and *naimbs* in the mastic villages, unless they had previously been invited”.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, the *ahdname* stated that visits of the Ottoman representatives to the villages were prohibited, unless there was an invitation by the district governments. Later on, the imperial firman (decree) issued by Osman III in 1755 was another attempt to safeguard the privileges granted to the inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages by the “old” *ahdname*. In particular, it was prohibited to impose any new taxes and customs other than the mastic and the per capita tax, as these had been defined after the census of 1720. Still, Osman III accepted an annex providing for the payment of the *ispence* tax by the inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the above also ratified the “old” obligation of the mastic producers to sell the rest of their harvest only to the party imposing this mastic tax, whereas the producers had the right to demand that the mastic be bought at the usual market price. The buyer was not entitled to suggest any price that was lower than the standard price and thus could not take advantage of the special relation between buyer and seller. At the same time, the Ottoman State granted even more privileges to the inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages.<sup>97</sup> This is witnessed by a reference made in a saved imperial firman of Osman III (6-17 May 1755):

According to an *ahdname*, the *rayas* [(non-Muslim) subjects] of the twenty and one mastic villages have been appointed since the capitulation of the island as administrative officers for the management of the island’s mastic; they have been released from all other taxes except the per capita tax and are only obliged to give to the State 20,020 okas of mastic annually.<sup>98</sup>

Another similar reference is found in a firman issued by Mahmud II (1835): “[...] the imperial firmans bearing the Emperor’s signature and defining that the *rayas* of the mastic villages on Chios have been freed from the obligation

---

<sup>94</sup> C. V. Mavropoulos, *Τουρκικά έγγραφα αφορώντα την ιστορίαν της Χίου κατά μετάφρασιν* [Turkish documents concerning the history of Chios in translation], Athens 1920, p. 218.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>96</sup> G. Kontogiorgis, *Κοινωνική δυναμική και πολιτική αυτοδιοίκηση. Οι ελληνικές κοινότητες της Τουρκοκρατίας* [Social dynamic and local government: the Greek communities during Ottoman rule], Athens: Nea Synora AA Livanis Editions, 1982, pp. 445-451.

<sup>97</sup> Argentis, *Chius Vincita*, p. 277.

<sup>98</sup> Mavropoulos, *Τουρκικά έγγραφα*, pp. 211-212.

to pay taxes to the government – both in times of peace and in times of war – have been lost [...]”.<sup>99</sup>

The respective *ahdname*, which was issued for the inhabitants of the mastic villages shortly after the capitulation of the island, was probably destroyed during the devastating events that followed the Chian revolt against the Ottoman conquerors in 1822 and led to the massacre and depopulation of the island. Unfortunately, the lack of this *ahdname* does not allow me to make a complete presentation of the special privileges. In an attempt to determine these special privileges, I have made a synthesis of the available information from travel guides and of data arising from later state documents and firmans.

The inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages had been released from all taxes that the rest of the inhabitants of Chios had to pay. Their only obligation was paying a per capita tax and contributing 20,020 okas<sup>100</sup> of top-quality mastic, the so-called *margarokokkos*, to the state annually. The mastic tax was a special tax which burdened each village separately, and it was preferably paid in a quantity of mastic. Consequently, after the *sakiz-emin* paid to the sultan’s seraglio one-tenth of the total collected, in effect 300 crates weighing 90 okas of mastic (250 according to others), the remaining quantity was sold, and the resulting profits were used to cover the state’s expenses.<sup>101</sup> The quantity of mastic destined for sale and export to each international market was placed into crates or sacks that bore a special seal of the sultan, a necessary element for the free and unhindered exportation of goods from the port of Chios.<sup>102</sup> As recorded by A. De Barres, who visited Chios in 1673, any quantity found without the relevant seal was considered stolen.<sup>103</sup> The imposed mastic tax thus made the community into a civic entity responsible for paying it; consequently, within every such entity a tax was placed on the inhabitants of the community. In this respect, the lessor of the mastic tax disposed of and kept records of all the trees exploited by each individual producer in the community.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> J. Z. Stéphanopoli, *Les îles de l’Égée. Leurs privilèges*, Athens 1912, p. 176.

<sup>100</sup> An oka (Turkish *okka*) was an Ottoman unit of weight, which continued to be used even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire by the states that had previously been part of the Empire. An oka was equal to 400 dirhems (Turkish *dram*). The unit *kandar* (Turkish *kandar*) was equal to 44 okas (= 56.4476 kg).

<sup>101</sup> Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xíos*, p. 248.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>104</sup> A. Pougeois, *Vansleb, savant orientaliste et voyageur. Sa vie, sa disgrâce, ses œuvres*, Paris 1869, p. 243.

In case the annual yield was not as good as it could be, the producer was required to take out a loan in order to pay his contribution to the public fund, usually at a high interest, or mortgage his yield, even below cost. If during the following year the producer was still unable to pay his obligations, he would rather uproot his trees than work without pay.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, it seems that the inhabitants of the mastic villages enjoyed some tax deductions of the so-called *haraç* as mentioned by M. O. Eneman (1884), who explained further that the *haraç* paid by inhabitants of the mastic villages was “[...] max. three Swedish thalers,<sup>106</sup> whereas the others had to pay a *haraç* of 5 to 10 Swedish thalers”.<sup>107</sup> They also enjoyed the privilege of wearing special clothes – a white cotton turban of a length of seven cubits according to the system of the Janissaries.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, next to their right to wear a white turban and be called *mafer mutesellim*,<sup>109</sup> each leader “of a family of mastic producers could pay the *haraç* only for himself and not for his sons or for any other male members of his family, no matter who they might be”.<sup>110</sup> Another interesting point was the right of the inhabitants of the mastic villages to refer to the central authority every time they felt that their fiscal legality and the autonomy of their districts was violated (imperial firman issued by Osman III, 30/11 May 1755). The same firman provided also for the recently established ability and dynamics of the inhabitants of the mastic villages to oppose even the representatives of the district government if the legality within the district was endangered.<sup>111</sup>

Among the special privileges granted to the inhabitants of the mastic villages were not only the taxes they had to levy but also the fact that they were not obliged to contribute unpaid labour, the so-called “*angareia*” (*αγγαρεία*).<sup>112</sup> The only obligations of the inhabitants of the 21 mastic villages

<sup>105</sup> Testevuide, “L’Isle de Chio”, p. 364.

<sup>106</sup> The thaler (or *taler* or *talir*) was a silver coin used throughout Europe for almost 400 years. It was introduced and became the most widespread currency in Scandinavia under the name “daler” during the early 17th century. Various daler circulated, including the Danish rigsdaler, the Swedish riksdaler and the Norwegian speciedaler. These daler circulated in Sweden until 1873 when they were replaced by the Swedish krona.

<sup>107</sup> Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xίος*, p. 1605.

<sup>108</sup> Kanellakis, *Χιακά ανάλεκτα*, p. 504.

<sup>109</sup> Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xίος*, p. 1584.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Mavropoulos, *Τουρκικά έγγραφα*, p. 174.

<sup>112</sup> Forcing the inhabitants to work, called *angareia*, harkens to the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine era, during which the cities in Greece were under Genoese or French occupation. During this period, the farmer was obliged to provide labour. The *angareia*

were carrying the mastic to the town, providing animals for the yoke during the collection of the products from the *agha*, and protecting and fortifying the south part of the island. With respect to this, there are two relevant mentions in the imperial firman issued by Mahmud II. The first of them reads as follows, “the *rayas* of the mastic villages have been released from the obligation to pay taxes to the state or pay the tithe and some customs, both in times of peace and in times of war, because they guard all the sides of the fortress”; whereas the second one reads, “[...] under the condition that they pay their annual tax, deliver 20,020 okas of mastic, sell the rest of the mastic at a predefined price to the *multazim* responsible for the *maktu* and guard the fortress of the island”.<sup>113</sup> Consequently, given the absence of Ottoman military officers, the protection of the south part of the island was assigned exclusively to the rural community government of the mastic villages.

#### *Coastal Watchtowers: Mission, Operation and Maintenance*

Watchtowers in south Chios were constructed mainly by the Genoese for protection from piracy and raids from the neighbouring Ottomans and Western forces. Belavilas added that the *viglae*, especially on the islands of Chios and Crete, were constructed as a more systematic military guarding of the agricultural areas and for the population of the rich commercial colonies (Venetians – Crete, Genoese – Chios, and others).<sup>114</sup> Still, the place and the

---

during the Ottoman reign took the form of a tax, since the farmer had the obligation to give up produce or money, independently of the work factor. Nevertheless, the institution of *angareia* never ceased, since the farmer was called, more rarely now, to provide work on specific days of the year, work that concerned the transport of goods, participation with manual labour on works undertaken by the administration or, in special cases, work that had nothing to do with production; see S. Asdrachas, “Το αγροτικό πλεόνασμα στις περιοχές της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου” [The farmer surplus in the areas of the Eastern Mediterranean], *Οικονομία και νοοτροπίες* [Economy and frame of mind], Athens 1988, pp. 18-19; *id.*, *Ελληνική κοινωνία και οικονομίας ιη' και ιθ' αι. (Υποθέσεις και προσεγγίσεις)* [Greek society and economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hypotheses and approaches)], *Modern Greek Studies*, Athens: Ermis, 1988, p. 10; *id.*, “Οικονομία” [Economy], in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [History of the Greek nation], Vol. XI: *Ο Ελληνισμός υπό ξένη κυριαρχία (περίοδος 1669-1821). Τουρκοκρατία, Λατινοκρατία* [The Greek people under foreign rule (period of 1669-1821): Ottoman and Latin rule], Athens: Athinon, 2000, p. 161.

<sup>113</sup> Stéphanopoli, *Les îles de l'Égée*, p. 176.

<sup>114</sup> N. Belavilas, “Η ανακατοίκηση των ακτών” [The repopulation of the coastlines], in S. Asdrachas, A. Tzimtzis and G. Harlafti (eds), *Η Ελλάδα της θάλασσας* [Greece by the Sea], Athens: Melissa, 2004.



way that they were constructed clearly indicates that the coastal watchtowers were not part of a wider defence line meant to keep back the raids; their purpose was rather to watch and raise alarms as soon as possible. This is also obvious both from the fact that they were built in inaccessible locations and from their architecture, since the ground level had no doors and therefore they could not possibly be used to keep animals inside. This opinion is also expressed by Lock, who believed that the original mission of the watchtowers was not defending the island against raids but facilitating the administration of the island.<sup>115</sup>

The watchtowers (see figs 4 and 5) were parts of a centrally organized state that paid attention to maintaining and operating a means of communication. As arises from decisions of the communities of south Chios, during the first centuries of Ottoman rule each of its inhabitants was obliged to provide guard duty at the community *viglae* as a form of service, recognizing that this labour was part of his communal responsibility and his active participation in the protection of the community.<sup>116</sup> Each inhabitant of the community was obliged to go to the *viglae* on a specific day of the month, accompanied by other bearers of this communal debt, whose number corresponded to the size of the settlements, so that he would survey for 24 hours the broader sea area as well as the coast of south Chios. In case he discovered the presence of a war or pirate ship, he would raise the alarm, if it were night using lanterns, so that the inhabitants of the communities would take the appropriate measures to protect themselves. At the same time, he would alert the *viglatores* of nearby *viglae*, and they would in turn alert the *viglatores* of their own nearby *viglae*, thus sending the alert to the administration of the city of Chios so that the appropriate measures could be taken.<sup>117</sup> The *viglisma* duty, in effect watching the coastline, was placed upon the community or communities that were close by and therefore served by that specific *vigla*. A decision of the Community of Kalamoti from 1696 mentions that on 7 December 1695, “[...] the *vigla* is gone from here [...]” and on 13 September 1696, “[...] the *vigla* has come here from Armolia [...]”,<sup>118</sup> informing us that the *viglisma* duty was the task of the inhabitants of each community that the *vigla* protected, while the duration of the obligation of each community was about two months. In cases where the

<sup>115</sup> Lock, “The Frankish Towers of Central Greece”, p. 101.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Korais Public Central Historic Library, Chios, Ms. 124, Kalamoti Code (1697-1702), 5 March 1698.

<sup>117</sup> Kanellakis, *Χιακά ανάλεκτα*, p. 454.

<sup>118</sup> “[...] ἤφρυγεν ἡ Βίγλα ἀπὸ δῶ [...], [...] ἤρτεν ἡ βίγλα ἐδῶ ἀπὸ τ’ Ἀρμόλια [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 69, Kalamoti Code (1696-1707), p. 241.

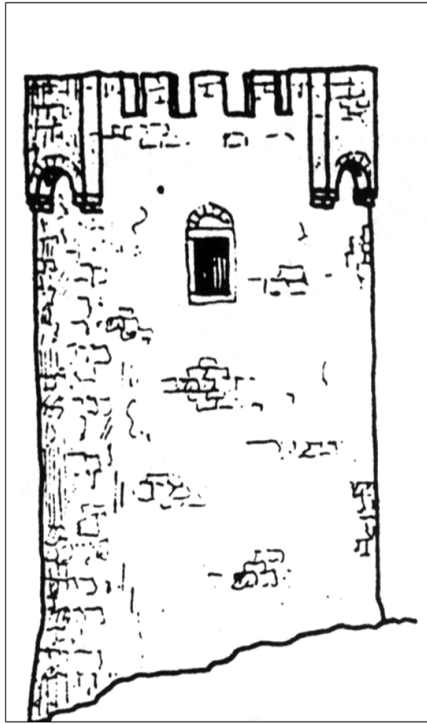


Fig. 4. Depiction of the *vigla* of Levadia Meston on Chios, after A. C. Smith, *The Architecture of Chios: Subsidiary Buildings, Implements and Crafts*, London 1927, pl. 220, fig. 3.

*vigla* served as a watchtower for more than one community, the alternating duty to operate it was maintained during the eighteenth century as well, as revealed by the surviving community decisions of the mastic villages.

In an existing notarial act referring to a decision of the Kalamoti Community that was drawn up in January 1698,<sup>119</sup> we see that in order to protect and maintain as well as to operate the *viglae*, the community administration played the most critical part. Studying this specific decision shows that the community, headed by the *gerontes* and the priests, had the responsibility to locate the appropriate workers, achieve a deal and assign them to renovate or repair the *vigla*. In a specific decision, one single *vigla* is mentioned that served simultaneously three villages, Kalamoti, Armolia and Patrika. A private worker undertook the project to maintain it, and he paid for all of the expenses. As a recompense for this work, he was exempt for life from the communal obligation of *vigliisma*. A much later

---

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Korais Public Central Historic Library, Ms. 124, Kalamoti Code (1697-1702), 5 January 1698.

decision of the Community of Kalamoti, registered in a notarial act in 1727, shows that maintaining the *viglae* continued to be one of the responsibilities of the community.<sup>120</sup> Whenever a specific guard post in south Chios served more than one community, the burden to maintain and operate that *vigla* fell on each single community in turn. In this specific decision, the Community of Kalamoti seems to bear the responsibility to protect and maintain the *vigla* that served Kalamoti, Armolia and Patrika. The work to maintain it was assigned to one or more private workers, for a fee, and the expense was covered by the inhabitants of the communities it served.

Of special interest to the communal tradition of mastic for the whole island of Chios is the mention of the *gerontes*, in a decision of the Armolia Community dating to the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>121</sup> The *gerontes* were the authority that selected the chief guard of the *vigla*, known as the *archivigliatoras*. The *archivigliatoras* bore the responsibility to name the *vigliatores* for each year, and to report and to “[...] bring before the masters for heavy punishment [...]”<sup>122</sup> whoever refused to carry out this communal obligation. However, the threat of being sent to the Ottoman administration also existed for the *archivigliatoras*, in case he was involved in “[...] personal favours and brought damage to the place that had the *vigla* [...] he would provide an apology [...]”.<sup>123</sup> A later decision of the Community of Kalamoti, registered in a notarial act in the third decade of the eighteenth century, shows that the *vigliasma* was no longer an *angareia*, that is to say an unpaid offer of labour of the inhabitants to the community. The inhabitants were now called to cover the expense, via contributions to the communal *tassa*,<sup>124</sup> a kind of communal debt arising from

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Korais Public Central Historic Library, Ms. 127, Kalamoti Code (1724-1732), 13 November 1727, p. 66.

<sup>121</sup> *Gerontes* were the representatives of each of the Chios Mastic communities. On other islands of the Aegean Archipelago, the community representatives during the Ottoman period were called *dimo-gerontes* (see K. Sakellariadis, “Η ιστορία των προνομίων των Νότιων Σποράδων” [The history of the privileges of the southern Sporades], *Νησιρικά* 3 [1969], p. 151), *kapetanioi* (see Zerlenti, *Σύστασις του κοινού των Μυκονίων*, pp. 18-19), and *kotzambasides*, *provleptes* or *epitirites*, *arhigoι*, *eklamproi afhentes*, *evgenestatoi arhontes* and *grammatikoi* (see Koukou, *Οι κοινοτικοί θεσμοί*, pp. 73-74).

<sup>122</sup> “[...] πηγαίνη εις τήν αφεντιά νά παιδεύγεται βαρέως [...]”. Cf. Armolia Code (1705-1723), leaf 62a, in S. D. Kanvadas, *Αρμολουσικά, από χειρόγραφους κώδικας* [Armolousika, from manuscript codes], Athens 1976, pp. 41-42.

<sup>123</sup> “[...] τίποτες φιλοπροσωπίες και έρτη τίποτες ζημία εις τόν τόπο διά τήν βίγλα νά έχη [...] νά δίνη άπολογία [...]”. Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> The communal debt placed on each one of its villagers; see A. Paspatis, *Το Χιακόν γλωσσάριον, ήτοι η εν Χίω λαλουμένη γλώσσα* [The glossary of Chios, being the language spoken on Chios], Athens 1990, p. 355.



Fig. 5. Depiction of the *vigla* of Levadia Meston on Chios, after A. C. Smith, *The Architecture of Chios: Subsidiary Buildings, Implements and Crafts*, London 1927, pl. 205, fig. 3.

the cost to employ one or two people as *viglatores* in the *vigla* of their area. The available community decisions from this period specify the services of the *viglisma*, mentioning that the *viglatoras* had the responsibility, after discovering that a ship had anchored nearby, to let the Ottoman administration in the city of Chios know, “[...] to keep a good lookout [...] to watch the sea and land, and whenever a ship arrived, to bring news to the City [...]”.<sup>125</sup> They also state the fees of the *viglatores*, which at the end of the eighteenth century, in case there were two of them, rose to 40 *aselania*<sup>126</sup> each, while in case there was only one, the reward rose to 60 *aselania*. The *viglatores*’ duty lasted one year, according to the available community decisions of the mastic villages.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>125</sup> “[...] να βλέπη ἀπὲ τὴν θάλασσα καὶ ἀπὲ τὴν στερεάν, ὁπότε ἔρτη κανένα πλοῖον νὰ παῖνη μαντάτο εἰς τὴ Χώρα [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 85, Kalamoti Code (1784-1791), 21 January 1783, leaf 40, in S. D. Kavvadas, *Οἱ κώδικες τῆς Χίου* [The codes of Chios], Chios 1950, p. 93; and GSA, Ms. 85, Kalamoti Code (1784-1791), 21 January 1783, leaf 69a, in *ibid.*, , pp. 94-95.

<sup>126</sup> The *aselanio* or *aslanio* was a Turkish coin that bore the likeness of a lion; see Paspatis, *Το Χιακόν γλωσσάριον*, p. 95.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. GSA, Ms. 85, Kalamoti Code (1784-1791), 21 January 1783, leaf 69a, in Kavvadas, *Οἱ κώδικες τῆς Χίου*, pp. 94-95.

The *viglae* continue to provide their services to the communities of south Chios during the nineteenth century as well.<sup>128</sup> A new element was the reduction of the term of the *viglatores* from one year to eight months, as well as the date on which this duty was assigned, which seems to have been 15 August (see fig. 6). In a decision of the Community of Kallimasia, redacted during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the reward for the *viglatores* was set at 20 *grosses* per day, while later decisions mention the total reward per term, 200 *grosses* in 1807, 340 *grosses* in 1828, 308 *grosses* in 1829, 380 *grosses* in 1831, and 480 *grosses* in 1839.<sup>129</sup> A new element that appears in the relevant community decisions of the first 40 years of nineteenth century is the clear mention of the *viglatores* assuming full responsibility for not executing their duties fully, “[...] to guard well and properly and whenever there is any problem according to the *zambitis*,<sup>130</sup> officer of the Ottoman state, and they do not guard well according to the old custom they should be punished [...]”;<sup>131</sup> “[...] and should there be any damage in this work the village should be exempt [...]”;<sup>132</sup> “[...] and should there be any *tzeremes*,<sup>133</sup> God keep us that it should be solely on them so that the village has nothing to do with that [...]”.<sup>134</sup> These new elements demonstrate the clear shift of responsibility from the community representatives to the *viglatores* themselves exclusively for any type of neglect in their duties, as well as the increase in their reward (1807-1839: 140%); they show the unwillingness of residents to undertake this responsible work, which was henceforth not protected from the interdependent responsibility of the community, as at the time there was an

<sup>128</sup> Cf. GSA, Ms. 110, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 349A, 15 August 1809; Ms. 152, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 349B, 19 August 1828; Ms. 162, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 349A, 15 August 1829; Ms. 35, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 331, 15 August 1831, and others.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. GSA, Ms. 16, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 331, 15 August 1807; Ms. 110, as above; Ms. 152, as above; Ms. 162, as above; Ms. 35, as above; Ms. 54, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, leaf 331, 15 August 1839.

<sup>130</sup> An officer under Turkish rule, corresponding to a policeman; the word is of Arabic-Persian origin; see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 1376.

<sup>131</sup> “[...] να φυλάγουν καλά καθώς πρέπει και ὅποτε ἀκολουθήσει τίποτις ἀπὲ ζαμπίτην και δὲν βιγλίζουν κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν συνήθειαν νὰ παιδεύουντεν αὐτοὶ [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 110, unattached leafs of Kallimasia, as above.

<sup>132</sup> “[...] και ἄν ἤμὲν φυλάξει ὁ Θεὸς και τρέξει εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν δούλεψην νὰ ἀπέχει τὸ χωρίον [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 54, as above.

<sup>133</sup> An undue fine; see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 2709.

<sup>134</sup> “[...] και ἄ(ν) λάχη και τρέξει τζερεμὲς ὁ Θεὸς φυλάξει νὰ εἶναι μοναχικῶς των νὰ μὴν ἔχει τὸ χωρίον νὰ κάμη [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 152, as above.

elevation in the clandestine distribution of mastic. Furthermore, this also shows the impact of the inflation in the Ottoman economy during the first half of the nineteenth century. Pamuk presented the dynamic of the inflation rate that started during the first half of the nineteenth century and remained quite high throughout the 1850s.<sup>135</sup>

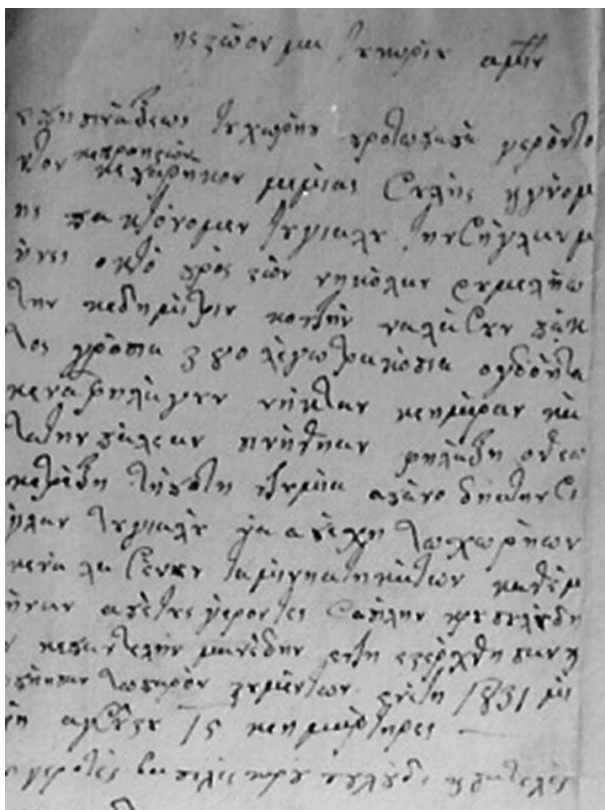


Fig. 6. General State Archives of the Prefecture of Chios, Ms. 35, unattached leaves of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 15 August 1831.

During the 1850s, the consumer price index (CPI) on the market of Constantinople experienced an immense rise, since the prices of products rose by 12 to 15 times. This evolution was related to the debasement that

<sup>135</sup>S. Pamuk, “Prices and Wages in the Ottoman Empire, 1469-1914”, <http://pierre-marteau.com/wiki/index.php>, p. 109. Accessed: 30 March 2011.

began in the 1780s and accelerated during the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839). In particular, although the CPI, which was first calculated in 1469, rose from 49.5 *akçes* during the period 1810-1819 to 62.8 *akçes* during the period 1820-1829 and to 130.1 *akçes* during the period 1830-1839, the annual salary rose to just 608.8 *akçes*.<sup>136</sup> The main reason for this new reality was the explosion of mastic contraband by sea, a practice that was common ever since the period of Genoese rule. The representatives of the Ottoman State made special efforts to curb the smuggling of mastic, and in this effort they placed great emphasis on the role of *viglatores* serving in the *viglæ* of south Chios.

To begin with, there was severe punishment, such as life sentences to naval duty or even death sentences, for those caught embezzling the quantities produced, or for those arrested selling or buying illegal mastic, or even collecting mastic illegally from trees beyond their own property. It was a common occurrence that some would not pierce the trees sufficiently, or not pierce all trees during the customary period, or even not collect the entire harvest, leaving it behind to be collected illegally, at a later time. Concerning this practice, one *agha* mentioned in a missive to the *gerontes* and *proestoi*,<sup>137</sup> the eminent people of the 21 villages, that, “[...] I shall tour all the trees of all villages and should I find any mastic trees unpierced or ungathered I shall punish the *gerontes* and *proestoi* first, and then the landlord, with corporal punishment and with a fine [...]”.<sup>138</sup>

Other farmers used to hide some of the quantity, meant to be delivered to the Ottomans, in their homes, usually in carafes. This is evident from another missive from the *agha* to the *gerontes* of the Kallimasia Community: “[...] nobody should keep even one *dram*<sup>139</sup> of mastic in their house, not even a *bardaki*,<sup>140</sup> to use as a plug, since the *mutesellim*<sup>141</sup> has decided that nobody

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> During the Ottoman rule, a *proestos* was a local chief, a dignitary, an eminent, a local leader/governor. The term refers to a person standing in front of the others, having a high rank; see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 2391.

<sup>138</sup> “[...] καὶ θὰ γυρίσω ὅλους τοὺς σκίνους τοῦ κάθε χωρίου καὶ ὅτινος σκίνους ἔβρω ἀκέντιτους γῆ ἀμάζωχτους θὲ νὰ παιδεύγω πρῶτον τοὺς γέροντες καὶ προηστούς, καὶ δεύτερον θὰ πιάνω τὸν νοικοκύρη μὲ ξύλον καὶ τζερεμὲν [...]”. Cf. GSA – Chios Prefecture Archives, Ms. 45, unattached leaf of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 27 August 1837.

<sup>139</sup> The dirhem was a subdivision of oka. An oka consisted of 400 dirhems (in Turkish *dram*). The word comes from the ancient Greek word *drachmion* (*δραχμίον*); see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 1091.

<sup>140</sup> *Bardaki* is the name of a ceramic bowl. The word comes from the Turkish *bardak* (*bardağ*).

<sup>141</sup> The *mutesellim* was the lowest rank of the administrative hierarchy in the old Turkey (in Turkish *muselim*); see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 1983.

should use it as a plug, and anybody thus caught shall be fined and beaten, in their house, and no *bardaki* shall be tolerated [...]”.<sup>142</sup> In yet another missive from the *agha* of the mastic villages, dated October 1829, addressed to the *gerontes* and *proestoi* of Kallimasia, it is mentioned that whoever, out of those obliged to pay the mastic tax, delivered a lesser quantity than what he had delivered the previous year was assumed to have gathered the remainder for illegal sale, and “[...] do not think that he shall be spared merely with corporal punishment and a fine, know that he shall be hung from his own door post, and the sin shall burden him only [...]”.<sup>143</sup>

Additionally, aiming to impose self-regulation on the mastic villages, the representatives of the Ottomans moved to the imposition of punishment on the *gerontes* of the mastic villages<sup>144</sup> or on all of the inhabitants of the communities in cases where the real culprits could not be determined.<sup>145</sup> Choiseul-Gouffier, who visited Chios during the nineteenth century, reported on the common responsibility shared by the inhabitants of the mastic villages. Specifically, he mentioned that the *agha* could include all of the inhabitants in a sentence, if he could not discover which one had committed the illegal act. This made villagers wary of each other and forced them to close the village gates at night, so that nobody would go to collect mastic from nearby fields.<sup>146</sup>

The mastic exported clandestinely was moved either via the villages, the city and the port of Chios to the international market, or, having passed the eye of the *viglatores*, was disseminated via sea, from the coast of south Chios and onto passing ships. A relevant letter by the *agha* of the mastic villages to the *gerontes* dated August 1837 supports this. It seems that villagers from the mastic villages used boats at night to approach stationed or passing ships and traded quantities of mastic off the coast of Chios. Also, the reverse practice

---

<sup>142</sup> “[...] να μὴν ἀφήκει κανένας ἕναν δράμι μαστίχην μέσα στὸ σπίτιν του, μήτε μπαρδάκιν διὰ βούλωμαν διατὶ εἶναι ἀπόφαση ἀπὸ τὸν Μουσελίμην κανενοῦ νὰ μὴν βουλῶσει καὶ σὲ ὅποιον τὸ πιάσει θεὸ νὰ τὸν ζερεμετίζει μὲ ξύλον, στὸ σπίτι του, κανέναν μπαρδάκιν μαστίχην [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 40, leaf 331, unattached leafs of Kallimasia (1727-1859), 19 November 1835. Another similar report is found in an earlier missive of the *agha* to the *gerontes* of the mastic villages, dated October 1829; GSA, Ms. 25, unattached leafs of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 31 October 1829.

<sup>143</sup> “[...] νὰ μὴ θαρεῦσετε ὅτι θὰ γλυτώσει μὲ ξύλον καὶ τζερεμὲν νὰ ξέρει πὼς θὰ κρεμάτζεται στὴν πόρτα του καὶ ἡ ἀμαρτία στὸν λαϊμόν του [...]”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 25, unattached leafs of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 31 October 1829.

<sup>144</sup> Argentis and Kyriakidis, *H Xios*, p. 1584.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 699-670.

<sup>146</sup> M.-G.-F.-A. Choiseul-Gouffier, *Description des îles de Scios, Deilos, Syra, Myconi [...]* *Memoires historiques, politiques et géographiques de voyages, du Comte de Ferrieres-Saurebeuf, faits en Turquie, en Perse et en Arabie*, Vol. II, Paris 1790, p. 89.



must have been common as well, where boats sent from passing ships reached the shores during the night and were supplied with a clandestine quantity of mastic. The *agha*, in his effort to stop this trade, asked for greater care by the *viglatores*, while at the same time sending *kolintzides*<sup>147</sup> to guard the coastline and offered a reward of 1000 *grosses* for possible smugglers:

[...] if at any of the mastic villages there are boats, these must not be dropped in the sea until the mastic has been collected and no one can go to the seashore. *Kolintzides* will patrol the coastal parts and if they find a boat at sea they will tie up the man who is on the boat and they will bring him to me as a thief of mastic and I will punish him [...] *vigles* of the seashore, do not sleep but be awake [...] *vigles* of the seashore, if I will learn that a boat moored and you left those who were on the boat to come out and you did not bring me the news, death would be better for you [...].<sup>148</sup>

He also informed the *gerontes* of the mastic villages that he knew very well how the product was embezzled, and he reminded them of their responsibilities and the danger to their lives as representatives of their communities, while at the same time he appealed to their sense of pride, reminding them that the mastic village area's representatives, the *vekilides*,<sup>149</sup> "have to drink poisons since they suffer the aches of this whole place".<sup>150</sup>

<sup>147</sup> *Kolintzides* were customs guards; see Stamatakos, *Λεξικόν*, Vol. III, p. 1687. The word *kolintzis* comes from the Turkish words *karakol* meaning watch and/or patrol and *kolcu* meaning guard.

<sup>148</sup> "[...] ὅποιον χωρίον ἔχει βάρκες νὰ μὴν μπέσει καμία βάρκα εἰς τὸ γιαλὸν ἕως ποῦ νὰ σηκωθεῖ τὸ βασιλικὸν ἐμίρη καὶ κανένας ἄνθρωπος ποῦ πῆγαιεν στὸ γιαλὸ μπεντζο-γιαλλιν οὗτοι ἐκεῖνοι δὲν ἔχουν τὴν ἄδειαν καὶ θέλουν γυρίτζουν οἱ Κολιτζήδες μου στὰ περιθαλάσσια καὶ ἂν ἔβρουν κανενοὺς βάρκαν μέσα εἰς τὸν γιαλλὸν ἤτοι ἄνθρωπον μπό-σικον θὲ νὰ τὸν δένουν νὰ μοῦ τὸν φέρνουν κάτω καὶ θὰ τὸν πιάνω κλέπτην γερινὲ τοῦ ἐμηρίου [...] βίγλες τοῦ γιαλοῦ νὰ μὴν κοιμάστε ἀλλὰ νὰ εἵμαστεν ἐξύπνιοι, βίγλες τοῦ γιαλοῦ ἂν μάθω ὅτι πῶς ἤρηξεν κανέναν πάρτιον καὶ τοὺς ἀφίκατεν καὶ βγοῦν ὄξω καὶ δὲν μοῦ φέρετε εἰδησιν καλιότερα σας εἶναι ὁ θάνατος [...]". Cf. GSA, Ms. 45, unattached leafs of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 27 August 1837.

<sup>149</sup> *Vekilides* were the representatives of the Municipality of Mastihohoria (the 21 mastic villages), a communal institution of confederate rule for the 21 mastic-producing communities of south Chios; see D. Ierapetritis, *Η συμβολή της τοπικής οργάνωσης των μαστιχοχωρίων Χίου στη διαχείριση του χώρου κατά την περίοδο 1566-1866 της Οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας* [The contribution of local organisation of the Chios mastic villages in the management of space during the period 1566-1866 of Ottoman sovereignty], Ph.D. thesis, Department of Geography, University of the Aegean, Mytilene 2007. Their main task was to protect the villagers against the oppression of the *agha* and his subordinates. The term *vekilis* comes from the Arabic-Turkish word *vekil*, meaning commissioner, delegate, fiduciary.

<sup>150</sup> "[...] ἐμὴ νὰ γλυτώσετε καὶ τοὺς ἐπιτρόπους σας ὅπου πίνουν φαρμάκια διατὶ

Of similar content, there is a letter of the *agha* of the mastic villages to the *gerontes* of Kallimasia, two years later, in which he told them:

[...] I warn you, summon your people and tell them to open their eyes well and pay attention, and not open their doors to foreigners, not even those offering money [...] even the *gerontes* and the *proestoi* and the *viglae* and the workers should open their eyes well, because if there is a lack, do not think anybody shall come to your aid, think well of this.<sup>151</sup>

Consequently, monitoring and controlling the coasts of south Chios through the work of the *viglatores* comes to be a responsibility of the communities, a responsibility which the representatives of the Ottoman State deemed very important in their efforts to stifle smuggling activities, to satisfy the international demand and maximise the financial gain of the empire from the mastic monopoly. Taking into account the strategic significance of the *viglae* for the stopping of the valuable mastic smuggling, their protection and preservation was very important for the communal administration.

The implementation of the reform decrees of the Tanzimat period (1839-1876) were aimed at the modernization and reorganization of the Ottoman Empire, in terms of administration, economy and relations with the nationals, providing that all the inhabitants of the empire were equal without any discrimination. The maintenance of special privileges for residents of Mastihohoria and the continued recovery of duty mastic, inextricably linked to monopolizing the mastic trade, would perpetuate the system of monopolies, a development which would be contrary to the new conditions. Consequently, in 1841 it was decided to liberalize the mastic trade: to abolish the tax mastic, the payment of the tithe from the proceeds of mastic and the mastics customs duty, and to end the special privileges enjoyed by residents of Mastihohoria. After the mastic trade was liberalized, the communal interest in manning and operating the *viglae* of south Chios waned, since one of its main missions, the observation and stopping of the illegal mastic trade, ceased to exist. My primary research did not reveal any communal decision of the mastic villages concerning the continued operation and maintenance of *viglae*, thus showing

---

πάσχουν τὸ σαλαμέτιν ὀλονοῦ τοῦ τόπου”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 45, unattached leaves of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 27 August 1837.

<sup>151</sup> “[...] νὰ προστάξετε τοὺς παροίκους σας νὰ ἀνοίξουν τὰ μάτια τως καλὰ καὶ νὰ προσέχουν νὰ μὴν συνάγουν τὲς ξένους ἀνθρώπους οὔτε ἐκείνους ὅπου μοιράτζου(ν) τὰ πλάτηκα [:] γρόσα ἀπάνω διὰ τὸ βασιλικὸν ἐμίρη ἐπειδὴ [...] καὶ γέροντες καὶ προεστοὶ καὶ βίγλες καὶ δραγάτες καλὰ νὰ ἀνοίξετε τὰ μάτια σας διατὶ ὕστερη νὰ μὴν θαρέβεστε πὼς ἔχετε ἀπὸ κανέναν βοήθειαν καὶ καλὰ στοχαστεῖτε”. Cf. GSA, Ms. 56, unattached leaves of Kallimasia (1727-1859), leaf 331, 30 September 1839.

the close relationship between operating the *viglae* and combating mastic smuggling during the second half of the nineteenth century.

### *Conclusion*

The watchtowers of Chios differed significantly from those on other Aegean Islands because they were constructed as part of an organized defensive system, which was centred on the harbour and town of Chios. A network of military guards defended the rural areas but mainly the population of the Genoese colony that was surrounded by a hostile Ottoman sea. When the Ottomans occupied the island of Chios, this military network system lost to a large extent its original purpose.

This paper illustrates the extent of the international market for mastic and the significant income the Porte gained from the monopoly over this product, and, second, the level of illegal trade of mastic via sea, showing that the *viglae* were kept in operation with the main aim of guarding and protecting this valuable product from contraband. In this contraband, farmers under the gaze of the Ottoman representatives cooperated closely with Western smugglers, travellers and even representatives of consulates on Chios, despite the danger of being punished severely.

An interesting pattern can be observed in the manner of operating the watchtowers. While initially their operation was a concern of the central government of the Genoese, with the advent of the Ottomans the function became the responsibility of local communities. The 21 mastic communities, within a special system of administration, played the main role in the operation, management and maintenance of these coastal watchtowers, as shown by relevant community decisions from the period in question. During the first centuries of Ottoman rule, the duty of *viglisma* was a community forced labour, while later on, after the second half of the eighteenth century when most of the community institution showed signs of decline,<sup>152</sup> it was replaced by paid labour, the expense for which, as well as the responsibility to organize and manage it, was covered by the community.

Manuscripts of the era and of the first half of the nineteenth century have shown that the expansion of mastic smuggling, observed during the first 40 years of the nineteenth century, forced the Ottoman State to take stricter measures for control. These assigned a critical role and specific instructions to the managers and staff at the *viglae*, in an effort to stop any illegal trade along the coast and sea of south Chios.

---

<sup>152</sup> Ierapetritis, *Η συμβολή της τοπικής οργάνωσης*.

The liberation of trade for this valuable product, decided upon in 1841, was the main reason this tradition waned. So, the *viglae*, these monuments among the agricultural areas of Chios, for centuries operating as institutions for the communication and protection of the population and their production, under the watchful eye of their *viglatores*, naturally stopped being a point of reference for the Ottoman conquerors, the Western smugglers, the mastic farmers or the representatives of the rural communities of the Aegean.

*Hellenic Open University*

