

structure was always hierarchical in character, and differences among the different members of the Hamula and among Hamulas were always present.

Direct producers within the village/Hamula have always produced more than enough to meet their consumption needs. They produced a surplus in order to pay a variety of taxes, the most important of which was the tithe. Usually payed in kind, the tithe was collected by the Head of the Hamula, who in turn reaped the exchange value of the surplus either directly by selling the produce on the market or indirectly through a merchant or a trader. The actual relationship of dependence which in fact emerged from this form of production, was between the direct producers and the head of the village/Hamula and not, as some have argued, between the direct producers and the state (Gozansky, 1986; Saed, 1985). The relationship between the state and the direct producers was always mediated and never direct.

In a survey published in 1945-6, it was observed that the Ottoman state had little control over the levying of tithes from peasants holding Amiri land. Tithes were collected infrequently by state officials, and through public auction. The inefficiency of this system of tithe collection, according to the survey, resulted in some fallaheen managing to escape paying their dues entirely, while heads of Hamulas often succeeded in contributing only a fraction of the tithe they extracted from the peasants. (7) Thus it has been observed that the "Fai'd" (i.e. the difference between what the head collects from the peasants and what he pays to the state as tithe) had, in many cases, exceeded the amount of the tithe itself (Barakat, 1975:13).

The economic responsibility assumed by the Head of the Hamula