

The Greek-Orthodox Family Structure in the Late Nineteenth Century Sanjak of Kayseri

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Abstract: This study expounds the Greek-Orthodox millet community's family formation in the Sanjak of Kayseri in the 1870's from the aspects of especially extended family, polygamy, endogamy, average age of marriage, inheritance rights and ratio of children. By revealing heterogeneous tendencies among the Greek-Orthodox communities of different parts of the Ottoman imperial lands, it is partly going to be a comparative study. In the same way, while evaluating the Greek-Orthodox family structure, Kayseri's other sedentary communities' family formations –Muslim and Armenian one- will be also taken into consideration. Certainly we cannot talk about one type of family structure, which was assumed as a model and implemented by the Greek-Orthodox inhabitants residing in different parts of the Ottoman domain. In different places, regional factors and local customs seem to play a crucial role in shaping the Greek-Orthodox families. Like everywhere else in Kayseri too, in addition to these, various socio-economic reasons gave shape to family formation. Comprehension of this subject therefore requires a short examination of such determinant elements. Briefly speaking, in reference to Frederic Le Play's categorization, the 1870's Kayseri's Greek-Orthodox families –as well as Muslim and Armenian ones- were formed as "stem family". In the meantime, from the perspective of inheritance rights, they can be defined as a "conjugal" family. Likewise, endogamy was also a common feature both in the Muslim and non-Muslim families. Apart from these, we can say that in the vicinity of Kayseri, females and males were prone to marry at early ages.

The population of Kayseri in the late nineteenth century mainly consisted of the inhabitants from the Muslim, Armenian and Greek-Orthodox *millet*s (Sâlnâme-i Vilâyet-i Ankara, 1878). Hence, along with the Greek-Orthodox one, the current paper, which aspires after revealing Kayseri's Greek-Orthodox' family structure, is going to partially bring up the Muslim and Armenian families. For our analysis here, the main sources being resorted to are the testimonies of the Greek-Orthodox inhabitants of the late-nineteenth early twentieth century Kayseri and its vicinity, the sharia court registers of the early 1870's and the American Protestant missionary letters. Being related with the subject, before analyzing more closely the family formations, it is necessary to dwell a little bit on the socio-economic conditions of the last decades of the nineteenth century Sanjak of Kayseri. This will definitely facilitate our understanding of the Greek-Orthodox family structures in the region, since such factors had tremendous effects on the families of the native people as a whole.

First of all, Kayseri and its immediate vicinity was not only populated by the sedentary townsfolk. In addition to the native settlers, this sanjak came to fore as a settlement place of various nomadic tribes. Like some members of the sedentary population of Kayseri, the members of these tribes used to move seasonally to other places –around Erciyes Mountain or out of Kayseri such as Adana and Urfa. However, due to the disturbances that the nomadic tribes caused, especially in the pre-nineteenth century, many inhabitants had to leave their hometowns and migrate to safer places for a long period of time. In the Hamidian period (1876-1909), by launching the tribal settlement policy, the negative impact of these tribes was partly eliminated (Ubicini, 1856; Hasluck, 1921; Hülâgü, 2000; Sansar, 2003; Kapoli, 2004; Türkay, 2005; Çelik, 2008).

Despite this, in the years to follow, the migration process in the vicinity did not come to an end because, towards the mid 1870's both in the Anatolian and in the Balkan lands of the Ottoman realm famines came out as a reason, deteriorating a great deal the living standards of people. Many relevant historical documents recorded at that time touched upon the severity of these famines. As the American missionaries who sojourned in Kayseri mentioned, it was even possible to see some local inhabitants who were throwing themselves into the river to die, because they could not cope with this situation (Barrows, 1874a; Barrows, 1874b; Farnsworth, 1875a; Farnsworth, 1875b; Farnsworth, 1877; Farnsworth, 1879; Papadopoulos, 1953; Chatziiosif, 2005). Consequently, migration appeared as a reasonable solution for the native denizens especially for the Greek-Orthodox inhabitants (ΚΠ 45; ΚΠ 55; ΚΠ 126; ΚΠ 138; Rizos, 2007). Without digression we should underline the existence of long-term circulatory movements in which the migration phenomenon took years, next to the seasonable migrations, lasted for few months (Bartlett, 1876; ΚΠ 55 Καισάρεια; ΚΠ 124 Ταρχίαν-Ταξιάρχη-Καισάρεια; Sarioglou, 1959).

Within the radius of demographic mobility it is useful to underscore that, due to its geographic location –situated in the centre of Anatolia-, the nineteenth century Kayseri was one of the places where the exiled people were sent by the central authority. Among the exiles many people, from Muslim to non-Muslim or foreigners, from ordinary people to the

significant state officials like, secretaries and even pashas can be seen (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 197: 1831-1833; Arpee, 1936).

All these ongoing demographic mobilities in the nineteenth century Kayseri and its vicinity did not mean the deficiency of stable social life. On the contrary, parallel to the entire imperial lands (Horton, 1854; Oskanyan, 1857), the family life and values were of great significance in Kayseri. When we look at more closely to Kayseri's families, we see that there was more than one sort of family formations. To begin with, according to Frederic le Play's categorization, the family structures of all sedentary communities –Greek-Orthodox, Muslim and Armenian- in the Sanjak of Kayseri can be to a degree regarded as a “stem family”, which is in between the “joint” (patriarchal) and “conjugal” (also, nuclear or unstable –married couple and their unmarried children-) families. Some families in Kayseri were formed by the married sons' joining their fathers' households. Hinging upon the economic circumstances, the bridegrooms could join his spouse's family too. In the meantime, nuclear families also existed (ΚΠ 53 Καισάρεια; Flandrin, 1979; Duben, 1990; Burke, 1992; Renieri, 1999).

In the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, analogous family formations could be observed in separate regions under various names. The urban mansion families (*konak aile*), formed through married sons' and other married relatives' joining into the same family, for example were one of them. Like most of the traditional Ottoman families, the mansion families were also patriarchal and *paterfamilias* was accepted and respected by all. The basic reasons behind the emergence of these mansion-families were the deteriorated economic conditions and inequalities in the income distribution. However, they did not spread to whole imperial lands in the same degree. In the nineteenth century İstanbul for instance, the nuclear families still had the quantitative superiority (Duben and Behar, 1991; Erdoğan, 1999; Ortaylı, 2006).

From this aspect, the nineteenth century Syrrako (*Συρράκο* in Epirus) and Kayseri can be comparable. The Greek-Orthodox communities of both regions lived along with other ethnic and religious groups. The nineteenth century Syrrako was inhabited by semi-nomadic population and by migrating stock-raiser or agriculturalist Greek-Orthodox inhabitants. Hence, while comparing Kayseri's and Syrrako's Greek-Orthodox communities' family formations, the structural characteristics of the communities must be reckoned with. In the nineteenth century Syrrako, numerically, the nuclear families -thirty-five percent- were followed by the combined families (*σύνθετες δομές*). In the extended families of Syrrako, next to the parents and children, other relatives, married children and their spouses were also found (Kaftantzoglou, 1997). At this point it should be noted that in the Sanjak of Kayseri, the extended families were not peculiar to the agriculturalist Greek-Orthodox population, there were also numerous extended merchant families (ΚΠ 48 Καισάρεια). Perhaps they preferred to form extended families, because by dint of this, their business relations and activities could be strengthened.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century Balkans too, the extended family formations were prevalent among the Orthodox communities. *Zadruga* types of family formations were seen in Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and some parts of Bosnia. There was however, no uniformity in the *zadrugas* of different regions. The Croatian *zadrugas* (also known as “skup-chinas”) for instance, were regarded as “communal households”, which were not necessarily in the form of family, because their members were not at all times composed of kins (Hammel, 1978; Trouton, 2002; Cockburn, 2003; Rithman-Auguštin, 2003).

The *zadruga* style families of Serbia on the other hand, were categorized as paternal and fraternal. Whereas the former one consisted of the father and married sons, the fraternal *zadrugas* were formed through the married sons living in the same household. In these types of Serbian extended families, most of whom had six children, even the fourth generation could be found in the same house. Hence, the average number of children in the Serbian families was above the average number of children in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, -where the number of individuals per household varied between 4.95 -5.85 (Halpern, 1978; Flandrin, 1979).

In comparison with the Serbian families, the child ratio of Kayseri as a whole also seemed to be rather lower. According to the eighteenth century sharia registers of Kayseri (1738-1749), the average number of children for Muslims was 5.12 and for non-Muslims it was 3.16. From the late nineteenth century registers of Kayseri (1871-1873) the child ratio for the Greek-Orthodox and Armenians can be inferred better, because the *millet* names of the non-Muslims were revealed more precisely: 3.56 for the Greek-Orthodox, 3.73 for Armenians and 3.69 for Muslims (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873; Aktan, 1998).

The sharia court registers of 1871-1873 contains two hundred and two registers from which the quantitative data on children was ascertained. In total, hundred and eighteen Muslim, thirty-nine Greek-Orthodox and forty-five Armenian families were figured out from the mentioned records. Among the registers, the child number of four Armenian, three Muslim and three Greek-Orthodox families were not indicated. Besides, in four entries –two for Muslims, one for Greek-Orthodox and one for Armenian- children's numbers are elusive. From the context of these registers, it is inferred

that only some children of these families were mentioned. For the obtainment of more precise results therefore, the children of such families were ignored and only the named-children were taken into account. Likewise, the numbers of the children in the repeated law suits were not included to our calculation. As a consequence seven hundred and fifty-seven children, out of which three hundred and fifty-eight of them were females and three hundred and ninety-two were males, were attained. In two registers, one Armenian and two Muslim pregnant women were identified with their unborn children as “a wife of X, who has baby (load) in her womb” (*zevcesi ... batnında müstebin haml-i mevkufun*, “*بطننده همل موقوفه*” (توجه سی... مستبین) (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873, pp. 35, 64, 74). Such unborn children were included in our calculation and they were assumed as male children. Because from their inheritance shares in the *tereke* (ترکه) registers it is clearly understood that these children –who were denoted as “the tied load” (*haml-i mevkufe*, “*همل موقوفه*”) (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873, p. 35) - were regarded as male offspring.

According to these documents, the inhabitants had a tendency to have less than six or seven children. Only few families had more than seven children: three Muslim and one Armenian families had eight, one Armenian and two Muslim families had nine children. Besides, two Muslim and one Armenian families had eleven and one Muslim family had twelve children. These Muslim families, with eleven and twelve children, were formed through polygamy (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873).

Table 1: The number of children in the Greek-Orthodox families and other communities of Kayseri in 1871-1873 (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873).

Number of children per-family	Number of Greek-Orthodox families	Number of Armenian families	Number of Muslim families
1 child	4	7	19
2 children	4	4	17
3 children	9	11	26
4 children	10	11	17
5 children	6	3	12
6 children	3	5	6
7 children	2	2	11
8 children	-	1	3
9 children	-	1	2
10 children	-	-	-
11 children	-	1	1
12 children	-	-	1
Total number of children	141 (70 girls, 71 boys)	179 (68 girls, 104 boys)	437 (220 girls, 217 boys)

Apart from these, the aforementioned child ratios –of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries- hint at a quantitative decrease in the number of Muslim children. In the time span we probed, it appears that polygamy type of marriages did not have a great impact on this numerical decrease. The reason for the sharp decrease in Muslim children could be germane to the indigent conditions of the Muslim community. In every period of world history, the poor tend to have more children than people who have average or better economic standards. So, the Muslim community of the nineteenth century Kayseri had in fact, more children than their non-Muslim counterparts. The death ratio of the Muslim children however, was higher than their birth ratio, which was the outcome of low living standards.

The Malthusian theory supports the idea of a general decrease in the population rate of Kayseri. This theory assumes that in the non-existence of any extraordinary occurrence, the population rate of the society suppose to increase two folds in less than twenty-five years (Malthus, 1798). Considering this, whereas the population of Kayseri was about 37.000 in 1831, forty years later it had to increase 3.2 folds and reached at least 118.000, but it remained around 66.000. In this regard we cannot talk about the effectiveness of the preventive checks, like birth control or abortion. It seemed that

the positive checks in the area –like the mentioned famines or some epidemic diseases- deeply affected the inhabitants (Boissier, 1897; Erkiletlioğlu, 2000; Güler, 2000).

Although it partly enlightens us about the decrease or increase in the Greek-Orthodox population, -since we do not have information on the “average rate of death” for the Greek-Orthodox community-, for a more detailed quantitative information on the birth rate of Greek-Orthodox children, this community’s baptism and birth registers can be examined (see Table 2). In these documents, basically two types of phrases were used: “βαπτίς ἐπί” or “βαπτίς ἐγλετή” (*vaftiz etti* or *vaftiz eyledi*, baptized) and “κουτζαγηνά αλιτή” (*kucağına aldı*, held in the arms) (Κώδικας 217, 1834-1894, pp. 60-79; Κώδικας 218, 1834-1869, pp. 210-235). It must be noted that in the Greek-Orthodox culture, a child might be baptized few months or one year after the baby’s birth. So, the babies, who were recorded as “baptized” might be born a year earlier.

Table 2: The baptized and newborn Greek-Orthodox children. (Κώδικας 217, 1834-1894; Κώδικας 218, 1834-1869).

Year	Greek-Orthodox children in Κώδικας 217	Greek-Orthodox children in Κώδικας 218
1870	30	25
1871	44	14
1872	44	24
1873	35	31
1874	25	31
1875	17	9
1876	28	18
1877	17	22
1878	56	16
1879	40	23
1880	40	4

The endogamy on the local level:

As we have mentioned, the families of Kayseri were formed through various ways. Endogamy was one of these ways. According to the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences,

“the rule of endogamy exists where the field of possible spouses is limited to persons within an individual’s territory and/or social group. The scope is enlarged by researchers such as Bromlei who claims that endogamy “is custom forbidding marriage outside a given group” and adds that it should be understood as “preferential marriage with one’s own community” (Ginat, 1982, p. 133).

This definition can be only in part applicable for Kayseri, because no specific and explicit rule or custom which proscribed outside marriages existed. In fact, it is true that there is no clear-cut definition of endogamy. Literally endogamy means “marriage within”. So, the marriage within can be within a locale or a group of kinsfolk (Cox, 2011). The endogamy here in this paper is used for intra-village marriages, and does not necessarily refer to lineage.

In Kayseri, despite the existence of mass migration phenomenon endogamy type of marriage was trend both within the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The migrant inhabitants could choose their spouses from the places they migrated to, however, such exogamies were few in number. The Greek-Orthodox of Endürlük village for example had marriage ties with other villages of Kayseri, such as Ağırnas, Taşlık, Rumkavak, Çukur and so on. To some extent, this prevailing tendency also reflected the inhabitants’ consideration of their economic activities. So as to say, some of these marriages were arranged for the continuation of their business transactions (ΚΠ 52 Καισάρεια; ΚΠ 137 Καισάρεια; Renieri, 1993). Thus, from one respect it is true that endogamies do not only bound husband and wife, but pertained to other relatives. Such marriage alliances were seen within the scope of marriage strategies. In the Greek society of the former times too,

"The thought taken to form a marriage alliance considered many factors. It is clear from the marriage strategies that marriages thought of over several generations. One gather that not only the immediate family was involved in the transaction but consideration of the extended kin also came into play. It was this communal concern therefore that put pressure on the husband and wife to make a marriage work. Marriage then was a way of uniting families but also a way of making things run smoothly"... (Cox, 2011, p. 243).

In fact, similar economic motives could also be valid for the extended family formations of Kayseri. Especially for the gathering of the immovable properties, probably the formation of the extended families –which is another thing than endogamy- was seen as a helpful solution.

The average age of marriage:

The general tendency of endogamy among the Greek-Orthodox of Kayseri was not the only custom that they inherited from their ancestors. Having regarded as the basic component of social life, from many aspects, the Greek-Orthodox family institution in the Ottoman period reflected the continuation of Byzantine family traditions. Relatively, the Byzantine family structures were more stable than that of the Roman and Medieval Western families. During the Byzantine period, for the regulation of relationships between married couples, some Christian teachings were taken as basis (Kazdan, 1989). In this respect, *"Μπορούμε να πούμε ότι στο Βυζάντιο οι εκκλησιαστικοί κανόνες έγιναν με την πάροδο του χρόνου νόμοι του κράτους, μετασχηματίζοντας το νομικό πλαίσιο του γάμου, αυτό που κληρονόμησε από τη ρωμαϊκή ή πρωτοβυζαντινή εποχή"* (Kioussopoulou and Benveniste, 1991, p. 259).

In the nineteenth century, the implementation or remembrance of these customs can be followed in the formation of Greek-Orthodox families. According to the Greek-Orthodox Church of Kayseri for instance, the women had to submit themselves to their husbands. Indeed, this suggestion must be for the reminiscence of the Byzantine tradition. Especially on account of the absentee of the migrant male population, the position of the female figure in the nineteenth century Greek-Orthodox community of Kayseri was fairly essential. The demeanour of certain community corpuses towards the female figure in the community and the role assigned to women by such organs could be different from the realities and needs of the society. In the prologue of baptism and birth registers of the period of 1834-1894, which were recorded by the Greek-Orthodox clergy of Kayseri, it was also underlined that for the marriages, the male spouses had to be older than the female spouses. The suggested ages for both females and males however, seemed to be very young: it was thirteen for females and above sixteen for males. (Note that according to *Εξάβιβλος* a person, who is going to be engaged must be at least at the age of seven, and must be aware of his/her engagement). Citing specific statistics on the average marriage age for the Greek-Orthodox community of the late nineteenth century Kayseri is difficult, but examples of this can be traced in different parts of the sanjak. In Tavlusun for instance, the females married between the ages of thirteen-sixteen and the males between the ages of twenty and twenty-five (Κώδικας 217, 1834-1895; ΚΠ 48 Καισάρεια; ΚΠ 121 Ταβλούσου-Καισάρεια; Emmanouilidis, 1949; Armenopoulos, 1971; Kasdagli, 1991).

The marriage age for marriage varied in other Greek-Orthodox communities of the Empire. Compared with the Greek-Orthodox populations of other regions we know, the Greek-Orthodox of Kayseri tended to marry earlier. As Panagiotis Savorianakis stresses, in Rhodes Island, in the mid-nineteenth century for instance, the girls usually married at the age of twelve. In Syrrako on the other hand, the average age of males for marriage was thirty. In Ermoupolis (*Ερμούπολη*), which became a Greek land by 1832, it was twenty-five for males and eighteen for females. The same trend was also prevalent among the Muslims and Armenians of Kayseri –and other regions. In this period the females of the Western societies had an inclination to marry at an older age. Even in the seventeenth century France, usually the females married around twenty-four (Carlisle, 1855; Oskanyan, 1857; Flandrin, 1979; Bafounis, 1984; Kaftantzoglou, 1997; Savorianakis, 2000; Malanima, 2009).

Perhaps, postulating the formation of the aforementioned extended families as one of the outcomes of the marriages at early ages in Kayseri and Cappadocia region, as well as in other parts of the Ottoman domain, will not be wrong. Despite their ages, both brides and bridegrooms were entrusted with various responsibilities (Pouqueville, 1820; Schneider, 1846). Naturally, at the age of puberty, they could not form a proper family. The young couples needed their parents or elders, who could advise and teach their knowledge or skills acquired by life experiences, around them.

* "We can say that during the Byzantine period the ecclesiastical rules became laws of state, converting the legal frame of marriage, which was inherited by the Roman or the early Byzantine period".

The dowry, *mihr* and inheritance practices of the native communities of Kayseri:

Lastly, for this study it will be useful to dwell on the issues of dowry, *mihr* and inheritance practices of the Greek-Orthodox and partly other inhabitants of Kayseri. Since, such customs give us essential clues about the current subject. Habitually through dowry (*προίκα*), both Greek-Orthodox males and females received their inheritance shares from their parents. Depending on the economic conditions of the families, dowries could maintain different sorts of chattels, landed-property or live-stock. In Kayseri, the wealthier girls were obliged to bring more chattels as dowry. When they married, even the poorest Greek-Orthodox girls carried their own belongings like dresses, furs, socks, shoes, and some gold money. During the weddings of the poor Greek-Orthodox girls, usually an economic assistance was provided by the wealthy members of the society or the *έφοροι*. This kind of financial aid, however, was not supplied in all Greek-Orthodox communities of the Empire. In Naxos Island (*Νάξος*) for instance, instead of getting married, girls, whose economic conditions were not good enough, migrated to other places.

During the Ottoman period, for the family formation or the legal systems concerning the family, the Greek-Orthodox of different regions were influenced from different traditions. In the Cycladic Islands (*Κυκλάδες*), along with the Byzantine and Greek-Orthodox Church, the Western Europe also left its imprint behind. So inevitably, situated in the centre of Anatolia, there must be Islamic influence on the marriage traditions of Kayseri's Greek-Orthodox. The archival sources, for instance, clearly indicate the adaptation of the "bride-price" (in Greek: *χρήματα γάλακτος*, in Turkish: *süt parası*) tradition, which was a quantity of goods or sum of money given to a bride's family by that of the groom or his family, by the Greek-Orthodox inhabitants (Fhoisteris, 1953; Elvanoglou, 1959; Karakaş, 2005; Kasdagli, 1991; Yılmaz, 2005; Çetindağ, 2007).

When we take also other regions of the imperial lands into consideration, another marriage tradition which was implemented by Muslims and occasionally by non-Muslims was *mihr* (*مهر*) (Sak and Aköz, 2004; Araz, 2008). *Mihr-i müeccel* (*مؤجل*) was a pre-arranged monetary marriage settlement, designed to be given to female side in case of divorce or death. *Mihr-i muaccel* (*معتجل*) on the other hand, was a property or money traditionally given from husband to his wife by an agreement. So, in the Islamic law, it was a property –or belonging– right of women in matrimonies. The sharia court registers point out that, the practiced *mihr* tradition in Kayseri was tried to be legally regulated by the central government. Despite these arrangements, in Kayseri still in the 1870's, the amount of *mihrs* of the Muslims could not be regulated affectively (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 125, 1730-1731; Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 197, 1831-1833; Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 210, 1853-1854; Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873; Calvert, 1767; Cin, 1988; Altındal, 1994; Arıkan, 1994; Imber, 2000; Göçek and Baer, 2000; Gürler, 2001; Öksüz, 2004).

Under the Islamic law, "One becomes entitled to inherit from another person on two grounds: biological, linear, genealogical relation (*nasab*, cognate relatives) and the non-biological, non-genealogical relationship (*lateral*, *sabab*)" (Ja'far al-Tusi, 2008, p. 424). Basically, these relatives were: mother (*ümmü*, *أم*), grandmother (*cedd-i salih*, *جدّ صالحه*), father, grandfather (*cedd-i salih*, *جدّ صالح*), brother or sister (*ahlum*) and children (also unborn children). The non-biological are the spouses: wife (*zevce*, *زوجه*) and husband (*zevc*, *زوج*), –as well as freed slaves (*wala'*) in the former times. In case of polygamy, the second wife and her children also had right to receive title by descent. The shares of male and female children however, were not identical. The male children usually received more share –or at least equal share– than the females (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 210, 1853-1854; Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873; Ja'far al-Tusi, 2008).

Although the non-Muslim population could apply to the community courts (*επισκοπικά δικαστήρια*), as can be seen through the nineteenth century sharia court registers, a significant number of Greek-Orthodox had preferred these courts for their inheritance matters. At the sharia courts, the Greek-Orthodox were subjected to the abovementioned Islamic law (Anastasopoulos and Gara, 1999). So, the same inheritance principals and rights –applied to their Muslim counterparts– were also valid for them. The *tereke*s of the Greek-Orthodox of the early 1870's presage that in most cases both parents were prone to leave bigger inheritance shares to their sons –especially to their elder sons. In only one case –among thirty-two Greek-Orthodox inheritances–, all female children received bigger shares than their younger and older brothers. Apart from these, in most of the inheritance registers, the Greek-Orthodox wives received lesser shares than the children. Again there were some exception: in one entry, the wife was granted bigger portion than other heirs and heiresses in the family and, in other seven entries the female spouse either received an equal or bigger share than her daughters. In the same period, resembling inheritance distributions also observed in the Armenian and Muslim families (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873). Note that from this perspective, the Greek-Orthodox and Armenian, as well as Muslim families can be put into the "conjugal" category of Frederic le Play's family classification, since unlike in the stem family formation, almost all the children of the same gender received equal portions (Flandrin, 1979).

Table 3: Examples for the inheritance shares in the Greek-Orthodox families of Kayseri. (Kayseri Şer'iyye Sicili 224, 1871-1873)*.

Spouse	1 st Child	2 nd Child	3 rd Child	4 th Child	5 th Child	6 th Child	7 th Child	Other
Wife 639	Female 447	Female 447	Male 893	Male 893	Male 893	Male 893		
Wife 194	Female 645	Male 1290						Mother 426
Wife 1032	Female 804	Female 804	Female 804	Female 804	Female 804	Male 1608	Male 1608	
Wife 1674	Female 948	Female 948	Female 948	Female 948	Female 948	Male 1897	Male 1897	Mother 2232
Wife 1803	Female 2524	Male 5049	Male 5049					

Finally, to see different implementations in inheritance traditions by the Greek-Orthodox communities of different regions, the seventeenth century Naxos example can be of use. Certainly, Naxos and Kayseri had different surroundings and a historical past. Because of their geographic locations, whereas the former one –situated at the core of the Cyclades Islands–, was in constant contact with the Western societies, the latter one was under Islamic influence. A two-century difference between the time span that this paper covers and the seventeenth century Naxos should be also born in mind. In defiance of this, it is an eminent example. Since, in the seventeenth century legal system of Naxos, in which the Byzantine law and the Orthodox Church regulations were dominant, some components of the Western European laws could be traced.

In the seventeenth century Naxos, in most of the cases the maternal (*cognatio*) and paternal (*agnatio*) ties were taken as basis for the inheritance distributions within the families. Most often, the mothers left their inheritances to their female offsprings, whereas sons inherited from their fathers. Occasionally, the male and female offsprings could be granted inheritance shares from both sides. This was clearly a sign of a dissimilar inheritance practice between the Greek-Orthodox of different regions. In the case of Kayseri we cannot make generalization because there was no standard inheritance practice. It appears that depending on the wills of their parents, both male and female offsprings held their titles by descent. Apart from these, in the Byzantine inheritance law, the step children and the relatives (even the seventh degree relatives) could claim from inheritance shares. In Naxos, the examples of this sort of inheritance practice could be observed. In the inheritance registers of Kayseri that we have examined however, we could not pin down such examples (Armenopoulos, 1971; Kasdagli, 1991; Kasdagli, 1999).

Conclusion

To sum up, with this comparative study we have seen that from religious to demographic or economic, various issues played role in shaping family structures, and the Greek-Orthodox family formation in different parts of the Ottoman Empire constitutes one of the eminent examples of this situation. Culture and “shared meanings” are essential for people. However, here for analysis, along with the cultural heritage, the socio-economic needs of the given period were thought over as determined factors (Bianchi and Casper, 2005). In their localities as a consequence of symbiotic living, the Greek-Orthodox inhabitants of Kayseri seem to be influenced by other *millet* groups’ –Muslims’ and Armenians’– family traditions. Certainly the reverse was also true. Muslims and Armenians were affected by the family customs and values of their Greek-Orthodox neighbours.

* For the calculation of this table, as a monetary unit only *kuruş* (piaster) was counted. The monetary amounts less than piaster were not taken into account.

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