

THE NOTION OF *HASSA* SOLDIERY AND *KUL* IDENTITY IN THE EARLY  
OTTOMAN STATE – EXAMPLE OF THE JANISSARY CORPS  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A Ph. D. Dissertation

by

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In memory of Halil İNALCIK

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

### THE NOTION OF *HASSA* SOLDIERY AND *KUL* IDENTITY IN THE EARLY OTTOMAN STATE - EXAMPLE OF THE JANISSARY CORPS

#### A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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May 2022

This study aims to reveal the conceptual origins of the notion of *hassa* soldiery and the idea of *kul* system in the early Ottoman state on the example of janissary corps by using the early Ottoman chronics, fourteenth and fifteenth century *vakf* registers, foreign memories and a later source of *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*. A comparative approach referring to the pre-Ottoman and contemporary Turkic-Islamic near eastern states, Turco-Mongol states, as well as the Roman and the Byzantine states, reveals that the terms *ghulam*, *kul* or *kapıkulu* had a different meaning and function in the near eastern tradition and in the Ottoman context which cannot be found in western terminology, even though similar formations can be found in the Medieval states which are similar to the *ghulam-kul* system of the near east in terms of structure, as a result of the *longue duree* of acculturation between east and the west. The Ottomans seemed to establish a special form of *hassa* soldiery in the *kul* identity of the janissary corps peculiar to themselves.

Keywords: *Hassa* Soldiery, Janissary, *Ghulam*, *Kul*, *Nöker*

## ÖZET

### YENİÇERİ ASKERİ ÖRNEĞİNDE ERKEN OSMANLI DEVLETİNDE HASSA ASKER KAVRAMI VE KUL KİMLİĞİ - KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışma, erken Osmanlı kronikleri, ondört ve onbeşinci yüzyıl vakfiyeleri ile yabancı hatıratlar ve bir onyedinci yüzyıl kaynağı olan *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* kullanılarak, yeniçeri askeri örneğinde erken Osmanlı devletindeki hassa asker kavramının ve kul kimliğinin kavramsal kökenlerini aydınlatmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Bu olgular, Osmanlı öncesi ve çağdaşı yakın doğu Türk-İslam, Türk-Moğol ile Roma ve Bizans devletleri ile karşılaştırılmalı bir yaklaşım ile değerlendirilmiştir. Her ne kadar yakın doğu Ortaçağ devletlerindeki gulam-kul sistemine benzer oluşumların doğu ve batı arasındaki uzun kültürel etkileşim süreci sonucunda mevcut olduğu görülse de, yakın doğu geleneğindeki ve Osmanlı özelindeki gulam, kul ve kapıkulu terimlerinin içerdiği farklı anlam ve fonksiyon batı terminolojisinde bulunmamaktadır. Osmanlıların yeniçeri-kul kimliğinde kendilerine özgü bir hassa asker kavramı meydana getirmiş oldukları görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hassa Asker, Yeniçeri, Gulam, Kul, Nöker

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1) The Objectives of the Study

##### *Janissary Corps as the Hassa Soldiery of the Ottoman Sultans*

The janissary corps, as the first regular standing army of the Middle Ages, shaped not only the military and the political structure but also the socio-economic structure of the Ottoman Empire for more than four centuries. As the professional salaried permanent household troops under the direct command of the Ottoman sultan and his specially trained *hassa* soldiery, they were the first example of a standing army of servant soldiers in the fourteenth century.

In the Ottoman circles, they began their career as slaves taken from the one-fifth of the war captives as the legal portion of the Ottoman sultan during the age of Murad I (1362-1389). They were kept by the frontier *begs* as a result of the incursions to *darü'l-harb*, non-Islamic lands in the Balkans. Hence they were labelled as the *pencik oğlanı*s. Later, we observe that they were recruited through a system known as *devşirme*, that was based on the collection of youths within Ottoman subjects. In both cases, they were recruited and trained for military, administrative, as well as for ceremonial services in the Ottoman statecraft.

There were some valid reasons which led the Ottoman men of *ulema* and bureaucrats who were motivated for the conscription and formation of such specialized man power. As the early chroniclers of the Ottoman historiography mention, the initial reason was the need for establishing a regular standing army under the direct command of the Ottoman sultan as his *hassa* force. This could be attributed to the expanding Ottoman territory in the first decades of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, this *hassa* force under the direct command of the Ottoman sultan would stand as a counterbalance against the frontier forces and the Turcoman *yaya*-infantry regiments in the provinces.

Additionally, the mentality behind the establishment of such regular regiments lay also in the need for the formation of a force under the direct command of the sultan whom they served on the basis of absolute loyalty. Therefore, the one-fifth of war captives were collected not only because it was the legal right of the sultan, but also because they were young, rootless and free of any ties. With these qualities, they could easily be trained both physically and mentally for the purposes mentioned above, that is, ‘absolute loyalty’ to the reigning Ottoman sultan.

Consequently, one can state that the Ottomans found a practical solution for the utilization of these extra number of war captives that they gained as a result of the expanding conquests in the Balkans in the second half of the fourteenth century. Hence, the war captives were recruited and trained as military and administrative personnel on the condition of ‘dependence’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘service’ to the Ottoman sultan. This example of the janissary corps could be considered the start of a ‘slave-originated’ and a ‘court-based imperial bodyguard’ of household troops known as *kapıkulu*, the ‘servants of the gate,’ in the Ottoman state in the second half of the fourteenth century. Janissaries, as the *hassa kapıkulu*, stood up as the essential tools in

the centralization process as well as the pillars of the absolute authority of the Ottoman sultans and lasted until the corruption of this institution in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

In our research we notice that the novelty of this idea was criticized in the anonymous chronics. Nevertheless, the creation of a personal army under the direct command of the Ottoman sultan was a good way to challenge the power of Turcoman frontier *begs*. Furthermore, as indicated above, the possession of a personal and permanent army of salaried troops as a *hassa* army was considered an essential tool in combating centrifugal tendencies among the Turcoman *begs*.<sup>1</sup> Though it is open for debate, this might have been a significant reason for forming such forces.

On the other hand, we can state that such a practice of taking or purchasing the young war captives as slaves and training them for military, administrative and palace service was known as the *ghulam* system in the near eastern tradition, which had been in use in the pre-Ottoman Medieval Turkic and Islamic states. The *ghulam* system was different from the ordinary slave institution in Islam. In the *ghulam* system, the slave-originated war captives could not only become the essential part of the ruler's household with a distinguished status of the 'military', but also they could be promoted to high positions in the military or in the administrative structure of the state after completing their palace education.

This constituted the special feature of the *ghulam* system in the near eastern tradition, which the Ottomans followed in their *kul -kapıkulu* institution. Thus the *ghulam-kul* system gave rise to a special typology of soldiery as special household troops who could be compensated on the condition of absolute loyalty and service to the ruler, based on the manner of his merit and bravery. Hence, the janissary-*kapıkulu*

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<sup>1</sup> Rhoads Murphey, "Yeni Ceri", *Encyclopedia of Islam, (EI)* Second ed., Vol. XI, (2002), 322

identity in the Ottoman state portrayed a specific elite group of ‘military’ within the Ottoman class system.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the *hassa* soldiery was immune from public prosecution, and had an administrative and jurisdictional autonomy as a closed caste, together with their communal ethos, that bound them under *yoldaşlık*, as comrades-in-arms and the regimental cohesion, the group identity, solidarity, independence and pride that made them a special category of soldiery<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, their political influence over the accessions and assassinations of the sultans and being clashing in nature, made them an influential group over state affairs.<sup>4</sup> Also, apart from their role in municipal service and provincial garrison duty, their ceremonial function as *hassa* regiments in their regular pay distributions, *ulufe divanı*, Friday prayers, accessions and their presence in foreign diplomatic missions, distinguished them as *hassa* forces of household troops<sup>5</sup>. The major motivation of janissary military service, as the professional salaried infantry who fought in the form of phalanx, was financial, that is their regular payments. The *culüs bahşişi*, which is a special payment upon the accession of each new Ottoman sultan, was vital for them to subdue to the authority of the new sultan. It is worth mentioning that other *kuls* of the sultan also received such payment upon accession.

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<sup>2</sup> In the Ottoman class system which had its origins in the near eastern state tradition, there were three main groups of classes. The first one was the ‘military’. They constituted the class who were directly in the service of the sultan and not engaged in any production. They were namely, the *ulema*, the men of religion, the military man and the bureaucrats together with their relatives. The second class was the class of ‘*reaya*’ those who engaged in trade and agriculture. The *reaya* constituted all the tax-paying subjects of the state regardless of their religious identity. The third group was the ‘exempted *reaya*’ who enjoyed certain tax exemptions and privileges in return for several services to the state, like the *yaya* and *müsellem* corps, Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 1995), 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Murphey, “Yeni Ceri”, 325

<sup>4</sup> Cl. Huart, “Janissaries”, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, First ed., Vol.IV, (1987), 574

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 574

In summary, through the formation of such court-based imperial household troops for military, administrative and ceremonial functions, the early Ottoman state gained prestige among the petty neighbouring Muslim states in Anatolia.<sup>6</sup> This system of a *kul* or *kapıkulu* institution, where the janissaries played an essential role as the *hassa* household troops of the sultans, lasted until the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839), who radically changed the Ottoman palace organization and abolished the janissary hearth in the 1826<sup>7</sup>.

Within this perspective, there are two main objectives in this study. The first one is to find out the impacts of pre-Ottoman and contemporary Turkic-Islamic and Turco-Mongol states in terms of *hassa* soldiery on the Ottoman model of janissary-*kul* identity. In other words, I will analyze how the slaves become the *kuls* of the rulers, as his *hassa* forces in various Medieval near eastern Turkic-Islamic and Turco-Mongol states, and whether they stood as a model for the Ottoman formation of household troops. This will constitute the first argument of the study.

Hence, through the study the janissary formation will be evaluated within this conjecture of ‘slave-originated household troops’, that is the *kapıkulu*, in the near eastern and in Turco-Mongol tradition with emphasis on the acculturation between those cultures. For this, I will initially discuss various meanings of the terms *ghulam* and *kul* on a literal and sociological perspective. The intention is that analysis of

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<sup>6</sup> Murphey, “Yeni Çeri”, 322.

<sup>7</sup> The reasons of the corruption of the *kapıkulu* and the janissary institution is beyond the scope of this study. In brief terms, though contemporary critics attributed the corruption of the janissary hearth to the entrance of the ones other than coming from *acemi ocağı*, novice education, the real reason must be searched within the change in the structure of warfare and equipment towards the end of sixteenth century in Europe. For the traditional view see, Mustafa Akdağ, “Yeniçeri Ocak Nizamın Bozuluşu”, *DTCF Dergisi* V (1947): 291-313 and for a broader overview, see Cemal Kafadar, “On the Purity and Corruption of the Janissaries”, *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No.2 (1991): 273-280. See also, Umut Deniz Kırca, “The Furious Dogs of Hell: Rebellion, Janissaries and Religion in Sultanate Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire”. (MA Thesis, Bilgi University, 2010) and M.Mert Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of the Janissary Corps 1807-1826” (PhD Thesis, Binghampton University, 2006)

various connotations of both terms will also help to reveal the conceptual origins of the pre-Ottoman *ghulam-kul* system.

As part of the first argument, the western case will also be analyzed to have a complete comparative analysis given the fact that the western case seems also important in the quest for the origins of the typology of such soldiery. To reveal their impact on the Ottomans, if there is any, I will take into consideration the direct or indirect impact of the pre-Ottoman and contemporary western household troops, specifically in the Roman and Byzantine cases and also further in the early Medieval European state of the Carolingians.

With respect to the second objective of the study, I will discuss the early *kul* formation and identity in the Ottoman state and the role of janissary corps, both as the military and household elements in the early Ottoman state. How the early janissary corps, as former slaves, became the forerunners of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* institution as the early *hassa kuls* of the sultan will constitute the main argument. This phenomenon is important in the sense that, with these forces the Ottoman sultan gained prestige and advantage by owning the first standing army of the era. This will be discussed under the second objective of the study.

I will not discuss the *devşirme* regulation in the early Ottoman state, since that topic has been studied thoroughly so far.<sup>8</sup> So the main focus of the study will be on

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<sup>8</sup> For a recent study on *devşirme* See Nergiz Nazlar, “Some Aspects of the Organizational and Socio-Economic Role of Janissaries” .(PhD Thesis, Bilkent University,2017) Nazlar based her study on the investigation of conscription registers of the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries where she determined that the responsibility of conscription process was transferred from the local representatives of officials to the ‘janissary officials’ as part of a firm standing army which consolidated the central authority. For the legal status of *devşirmes*, See Gömeç Karamuk, “*Devşirmelerin Hukuki Durumları Üzerine*”, in *Söğüt’ten İstanbul’a*, eds. Oktay Özel and Mehmet Öz (İstanbul; İmge Kitabevi, 2000):555-573. See also Gülay Yılmaz, “Devşirme System and the Levied Children of Bursa in 1603”, *Bellefen* C.79, S.286, (2017):901-930



the conceptual origins of *hassa* soldiery in the example of early janissary corps and their role as household troops in the early Ottoman state up to the end of Murad II's (1421-1444, 1446-1451) reign.

I was inclined to study this topic because no studies have been made so far to the best of my knowledge regarding the conceptual origins of this slave-originated court-based imperial household troops in the Ottoman service on such a broad 'comparative basis'. Through this study, I hope to reveal the conceptual origins of *hassa* soldiery and the direct or indirect impact of various prototypes of such soldiery in the Middle Ages on the Ottoman example of the janissary-*kul* model and contribute to the literature on this subject.

## **1.2) The Methodology**

### ***Comparative Historical Research as a Model for Historical Studies***

I will mostly follow a 'comparative' historical approach in the study. Comparative history can briefly be defined as the systematic comparison of certain historical phenomena for their better description, explanation and interpretation.<sup>9</sup> The main reason to follow a comparative historical approach is that the objectives of the work naturally yield to such a methodology. The quest for the origins and the peculiarity of the historical phenomenon studied or my case study – the Ottoman *hassa* soldiery – can better be revealed by the comparison between the earliest and contemporary similar examples of the compared case. For this purpose, in the initial stage of my work, I will trace the analysis of the origins of *hassa* soldiery from

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<sup>9</sup> Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History", in *Comparative and Transnational History*, eds. Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (New York: Berghahnbooks, 2009), 2.

antiquity via research through the earliest example, where the historical phenomenon emerged, as a legitimate and necessary inquiry for a comparative historical study.<sup>10</sup> However, the obstacle and challenges lie in whether it was the same motives or the same circumstances which gave birth to the phenomenon compared<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, the first use of comparative historical research enables us to analyze – or for me rather to differentiate - societies that are widely spread in time and space so that any analogies between them cannot be explained by mutual influence or by a common origin.<sup>12</sup> Within this framework, the concept of *hassa* soldiery in the Ottoman state, as the main historical phenomenon compared, will be studied for its origins in comparison not only to its contemporary eastern and western counterparts, other than having common origin, but also for their remote pre-Ottoman examples.

Also, within this context, as mentioned above, Max Weber's comparative theory of "looking into non-western world to better understanding of the western rationalization" stood as a stimulus for my investigation of the west in terms of *hassa* soldiery, to a better understanding of the Ottoman case.

Though it is not appropriate to mention one specific comparative historical method that can be used in all of the comparative studies, there are various other models for comparative historical research developed so far. These characterize the methodology of a specific comparative historical study of a certain phenomenon.

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<sup>10</sup> Marc Bloch, "A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies", in *Land and Work in Medieval Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1969), 55

<sup>11</sup> Bloch, "Comparative History", 55

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 46

Initially the models of comparative history were developed by J. Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century in his treatise, *A System of Logic*, written in 1843.<sup>13</sup> In that work, he points out four distinctive methods for comparative historical inquiry, which are: the ‘direct method of agreement’, the ‘method of difference’, the ‘jointed method of agreement and difference,’ and lastly, the ‘method of residues and concomitant variations’. These methods stood as the basis for most of the models for comparative history in the following centuries<sup>14</sup>.

Further, in the twentieth century, T. Skocpol and M. Somers developed specific models for comparative history which were modelled after the methodology of J. Mill.<sup>15</sup> This new classification helped to evaluate the works of Marc Bloch, Max Weber, and Eisenstadt, who mostly worked on the dynamics of the social changes and epochal transformations of the cultures. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the pioneers of comparative historical research are the sociologists (and economists) like A. Tocqueville, Karl Marx, J. Stuart Mill, and Max Weber in the nineteenth century and J. Mokyr, A. Toynbee, N. Eisenstadt, E. Durkheim, B. Moore, and Charles Tilly in the twentieth century.

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<sup>13</sup> John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For Mill, comparative history of societies initially emerged among the intellectuals of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century such as, Montesque, Voltaire and Adam Smith.

<sup>14</sup> For a recent study on comparative history, see, Balazs Trencsenyi, et al, *The Rise of Comparative History*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2021)

<sup>15</sup> Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22/2 (1980):174-197. The models they design for comparative historical studies are based on Mill’s classification; the first one is, the method of ‘Parallel demonstration of theory’ which elaborates theoretical models and hypotheses before turning to historical cases to convince the readers of the validity of certain theoretical arguments. A good example of this approach is Eisenstadt’s, *The Political Systems of Empires: The Rise and Fall of Historical Bureaucratic Societies*, (NY: Free Press, 1963) where he followed a structure-functionalist theory of the emergence, persistence and the decline of the centralized bureaucratic empires like the Ottoman state. In his work, comparative history serves as an ancillary mode of theoretical demonstration, Skocpol and Somers, 176-178. The second model they offered is, the ‘Contrast of Contexts’, which seeks clear-cut differences between cases that are primarily contextual particularities. The main focus is on the contrasts between cases rather than the theories or hypothesis, Skocpol and Somers, 178-181. Finally, the last model is, the comparative history as the ‘Macro-Causal Analysis’, which can be considered as the combination of both models previously mentioned. It tests the validity of existing theoretical hypothesis to infer new historical generalizations. Moreover, it stands as a powerful tool for criticizing and invalidating mistaken theories, Skocpol and Somers, 181-187.

Concomitantly, the concept of comparative research as a method of social science in history seemed to have an intimate relationship with ‘sociology’. Sociology, in its analysis of the transformation of the societies, uses the method of comparative history as a tool for its purpose. Therefore, the concept of ‘historical sociology’ became an esteemed phenomenon after the World War II with the contributions of researchers like B. Moore and T. Skocpol.

Similarly, M.Bloch’s analysis on the method of sociological comparative history is also noteworthy. In his work mentioned earlier, which was written in 1969, he points out two methods for comparative history.<sup>16</sup> However, he was criticized by being incoherent and having lack of precision in offering both methods.<sup>17</sup>

According to Bloch, the first method of comparative historical inquiry is the ‘parallel study of societies’ once neighbouring and contemporary exercising a constant mutual influence and owing their existence in part at least to a common origin. The second method, as mentioned earlier, is a ‘comparative methodology’ by the selection of some societies so widely separated in time and space which any analogies observed between them cannot be explained either by mutual influence or by a common origin.

In any case, though there exist various comparative methods on a theoretical and statistical scale, historians usually refer to the method of ‘difference and similarities’, so that the comparative studies are classified in accordance with these combinations. I also intend to use both methods in the quest for the origins of the Ottoman *hassa* soldiery in the study.

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<sup>16</sup>Bloch, “Comparative History”, 828-846

<sup>17</sup> For the criticism of M.Bloch’s work, see Alette Olin Hill and Boyd Hill Jr., “Marc Bloch and Comparative History”, *The American Historical Review*, 85/4 (1980) :828-846

Although all the methods of comparative history have their own outcomes, the usefulness of comparative historical methodology is several. For one thing, since historical peculiarities can become explicit when compared to different examples that share similarities or differences in either respect, it helps to identify problems and questions which are hard to pose, in order to explain a historical phenomena and make a clear profile of the individual cases.<sup>18</sup>

Within the framework of the above argument, attempts will be made to analyze the historical phenomenon of *hassa* soldiery, its problematic origins and development, as well as its peculiarities in the Ottoman case by comparing it with different examples of household troops. Moreover, some comparative history also helps to criticize ‘pseudo-explanations’ and check ‘generalizations’ in order to defamiliarize the “familiar” which leads us to reconsider our assumptions about the uniqueness of the case<sup>19</sup>. Within this perspective, by such an analysis I will show certain essential different features of the Ottoman *hassa* soldiery which so far are unfamiliar or remained unnoticed.

Furthermore, comparative historical research also helps to reveal the ‘cultural specificities’ and ‘historicity’ while looking into another country or culture. It enables us to better understand one’s own peculiarities of the historical phenomena discussed.<sup>20</sup> Within the light of the arguments above, I hope to find out the cultural

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, M. Bloch’s comparison of the English and French examples of the agrarian structures, not only identify a problem in agrarian history but also contribute to the rewriting of the region’s history by explaining its peculiarities, Kocka and Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond”, 3-4

<sup>19</sup> In that sense, comparative history is like an indirect experimental design that can help to test hypothesis where like ‘a’ appeared without ‘b’ in the other historical case that helps to identify its peculiarity, Kocka and Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond”, 3-5

<sup>20</sup> In their study, Kocka, evaluates this kind of comparative model with the intention of finding the origins of a historical phenomena as the ‘Asymmetrical Comparative Method’, in which the peculiarities of one case is revealed by looking at the others. This is a method generally used for the purpose of ‘background’ while the intensive investigation is reserved for the main area or problem researched. Kocka and Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond”, 5.

specifications and peculiarities of the Ottoman *hassa* soldiery while comparing it with similar examples in different cultures.

Finally, the view of Mohoney, who points out the importance of ‘concept analysis’ is also worth mentioning. Considering that social sciences built around concepts and ideas, it is not possible to conduct research or analyze a topic without concepts. This can be done through comparative history that contributes to the understanding of the ‘conceptual development’ and the ‘conceptual background’ of the cases compared in detail.<sup>21</sup> Within this perspective, as I mentioned earlier, the first objective of the study is devoted to reveal the conceptual origins, development and background of the Ottoman *hassa* soldiery.

However, there are also problems and risks in comparative history. As it is in ‘parallel-oriented’ and ‘contrast-oriented’ comparative historical methods, as well as in ‘macro-causal’ analysis, the cases selected can be manipulated according to the logic of the theory or hypothesis built by the researcher<sup>22</sup>. Additionally, the juxtaposition of two or more historical cases may not actually strengthen the validation of theories, so there is always the risk of overgeneralizing the case study which may lead to erroneous conclusions. Furthermore, there is also the risk of underestimating the multi-dimensionality and contingency of the historical phenomena without a deep analysis of the factors beneath.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, comparative historical research, gives a ‘skeptical’ look and ‘analytical’ look on the historical cases with diachronic and synchronic comparisons. The latest trends in historical methodology, like comparative history or ‘entanglement

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<sup>21</sup> James Mohoney, “Comparative Historical Analysis in Social Sciences”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30, (2004): 93-95

<sup>22</sup> Skocpol and Somers, “Macrosocial Inquiry”, 194

<sup>23</sup> Kocka and Haupt, “Comparison and Beyond”, 8

history', makes historical phenomena less nation-specific or Eurocentric with a transnational and transregional focus on history on a multi-disciplinary scale by an innovative emphasis on symbolic forms and cultural practices.<sup>24</sup>

So, such an approach, which focuses on the relations, transfers or interactions between cultures with emphasis on connections, continuity and hybridity of the historical cases, is of great value for historical studies.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, comparative historical research, while looking at similarities and differences, can disclose quite striking and interesting results. Many “seemingly” analogies when closely examined may prove the opposite.

Therefore, by a broad-cased comparison within historically remote cultures in place and time, I will hopefully intend to make a contribution in the comparative historical studies by indicating the influences, transfers, relations of imitation between close and remote cases of the notion of *hassa* soldiery as household troops in the Middle Ages.

### **Comparative History in the East and in Turkey**

The pioneer of systematic historical methodology and comparative historical analysis in the east was İbn Haldun (1332-1406), who was an important sociologist influenced not only the eastern realm but also the western sociological thought<sup>26</sup>.

Later, Katip Çelebi of the seventeenth century was one of the important figures who

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<sup>24</sup> Kocka and Haupt, 17-20

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>26</sup> Gülsüm Tütüncü and Neslihan Ünal, “Karşılaştırmalı Tarih: Doğuşu, Gelişimi, Metodolojisi ve Türkiye’deki Durumu, *Al Farabi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 4 (2019), 80. For them, before İbn-i Haldun, Debusi (978-1039), Farabi (872-950), Biruni (973-1048), İbn Müsleveyh (d.1030) and Reşidüddin (1247-1318) were the other practitioners of social history.

evaluated Ottoman history in face of Europe for the first time<sup>27</sup>. Further, in the nineteenth century, Cevdet Paşa, as a prominent man of law, statesmen and historian, wrote comparative essays on eastern versus western practices. After that, in twentieth century, A. Refik and A.N. Kurad can be cited as some of the historians who used comparative historical research in their studies.

However, in the second half of the twentieth century, the emphasis is more on the socio-economic and demographic structures of the societies, as exemplified in the *Annale* school. The *Annale* school offers the interpretation of history as a total long-term socio-economic integrity with the use of scientific methods.<sup>28</sup> This method, influenced by the French social thought in the late nineteenth century, had a strong impact on the studies of Z. Gökalp, as the follower of E. Durkheim. Later F.Köprülü, influenced by Lucien Febvre as one of the founders of *Annale* school, in terms of methodology and conceptualization, focused his studies on the cultural roots of the Turkish states on a long-term comparative basis.<sup>29</sup>

In this respect, the methodology of F. Köprülü, who suggested evaluating the Ottoman institutions within the scope of Turkish history with a ‘chronological’ and ‘comparative’ method for a study on the Ottoman institutions, is taken as a reference for this study. Thus, it will be helpful to mention briefly the view of F. Köprülü.

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<sup>27</sup> For Katip Çelebi’s life and works see, *Katip Çelebi Hayatı ve Eserleri Hakkında İncelemeler*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991)

<sup>28</sup> For Annales School see, Halil İnalcık, “Impact of the Annales School on Ottoman Studies and New Findings”, *Review I* (3/4), (1978):69-96. The founders of this school were Lucien Febvre, M. Bloch and Fernand Braudel. The first representative of *Annale* school in Turkey is Ö.L.Barkan. He points out the economic and demographic problems in the Ottoman state. See, Ö.L.Barkan, “Türkiye’de İmparatorluk Devirlerinin Büyük Nüfus ve Arazi Tahrirleri ve Hakana Mahsus İstatistik Defterleri”, *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, II/1, (1940):20-59 and his “Tarihi Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi”, *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, X, (1951-53):1-23. Recently the comparative historical studies of Halil İnalcık and Özer Ergenç can be cited as the continuation of *Annale* school. For example see, Özer Ergenç, *Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi Kent Tarihçiliğine Katkı, XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya* (Ankara: Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı, 1995).

<sup>29</sup> İnalcık, “Annale School”, 69-70. See also Halil İnalcık, “Fransız Annales Ekolü ve Türk Tarihçiliği”, in *Osmanlı ve Modern Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013):269-284.



In his article written in 1931 and titled *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazalar*,<sup>30</sup> Köprülü pointed out the indirect impact of the Roman-Byzantine institutions via Medieval pre-Ottoman Turkic-Islamic near eastern states on the Ottomans on an institutional basis. Considering the thousand years' of interaction between the Greco-Roman and Persian civilizations and the inevitable acculturilization between Islam and Christianity, Köprülü asserts that the Roman-Byzantine institutions might have effected the Ottoman institutions in an indirect manner by way of pre-Ottoman Medieval Turkic-Islamic states.

Therefore, the relation and continuity between Roman-Byzantine and Ottoman institutions can only be managed through a strict 'chronological' and 'comparative' methodology by the evaluation of Ottoman history as part of Turkish history as suggested by F.Köprülü.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, though Köprülü admits Byzantine influnce over the Ottoman institutions as a result of the natural outcome of the close interaction between the two cultures, the results of his comparative inquiry indicate two seemingly similar cases might have quite different origins.

As for the second methodology of the study, a 'comparative text critic' methodology will be pursued by referring to the early Ottoman chronics on the passages about the establishment of janissary corps. This will help to determine the amendmments made by their authors at different times. So, I attempt to make a text critic on the passages about the establishment of janissaries at the early chronics to

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<sup>30</sup> Fuad Köprülü, *Some Observations on the Influence of Byzantine Institutions on Ottoman Institutions*, ed. Gary Leiser, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1999), 26-32. For the acculturation between Byzantine an Ottoman states, See also, Sp., Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the eleventh through the fifteenth century* (California: University of California Press, 1971) and Heath Lowry and Anthony Bryer, *Continuity and Change in the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Service, 1986).

<sup>31</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 26-32

determine the original account as accurate as possible so that a full text on the accounts about the establishment of janissary corps will be revealed.

Within this framework, the importance and the aim of the text critic method in a historical study is to be mentioned. In brief terms, it can be defined as the ‘narration’ or ‘transliteration’ of a certain text or an idea about a different culture into modern times. To determine the original text or an idea as correctly as possible with a specific methodology is the quintessence of the analysis. Thus it became perceivable as a historical source.<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, the study aims to reveal the place of the Ottoman state in the Medieval period in terms of the innovations that are peculiar to itself in the shaping of its military, the *hassa* soldiery and household forces as its *kapıkulu* as the example of janissary corps. This might have been shaped as a result of a process of *longue duree* by eliminating or incorporating various practices of the eastern and western traditions in the Medieval period.

Actually, the phenomenon of ‘acculturation’, as a long process of mutual influence between both sides that have taken place as a result of a long period of interaction, is the subject of sociology, or rather the anthropological sociology.<sup>33</sup> However, in the historical studies, the two aspects of acculturation, as defined by Güvenç are mostly referenced. Güvenç mentions the concept of ‘diffusion,’ where, although no direct interaction is of concern between societies or

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<sup>32</sup>Halil İnalçık, “Hermenötik, Oryantalizm, Türkoloji”, *Doğu Batı*, I (2005):34

<sup>33</sup> Bozkurt Güvenç, *İnsan ve Kültür*, (İstanbul:Remzi Yayınevi, 1979), 130-134

<sup>33</sup> The second aspect of acculturation, as the ‘trans-culturation’ which is characterized by the imposition of ones cultural aspects to the other,consequed by the process of assimilation and subjection. N. Berkez regards the *devşirme* regulation as an example of this aspect. On the other hand for Güvenç, the janissary cross religious phenomenon is regarded as an example of this diffusion aspect, Güvenç, *İnsan ve Kültür*,136.

cultures, they can influence each other in an indirect manner by way of other cultures<sup>34</sup>. As mentioned earlier, this view is highlighted by F.Köprülü, who pointed out the indirect influence of pre-Ottoman cultures on the Ottoman institutions. Following this process, I will make references to the examples of acculturation throughout the thesis where necessary.

In conclusion, I will discuss the historical case of *hassa* soldiery in the early Ottoman state by referring to its similar remote and close models in both near eastern and western realms on a comparative basis, pointing out the cases of acculturation where necessary.

### 1.3) Sources and Literature Review

The primary sources of the study are the works of the early Ottoman chroniclers who wrote in the second half of the fifteenth century, they are namely the works of Aşıkpaşazade, Neşri, Oruc Beg and the Anonymous *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*<sup>35</sup>. Within this context, it is worth to share some information on the early Ottoman chronics which will be used in this study. The importance and authenticity of the early Ottoman chronics is pointed out by Halil İnalcık in his article “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography”<sup>36</sup>, as a response to the opposing view, which regards them as merely consisting of fictitious accounts.

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<sup>35</sup> The following editions of the chronics are used in the study: Aşıkpaşa oğlu Ahmed Aşık, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, ed. Çiftçioğlu Nihal Atsız (İstanbul: Türkiye Basımevi, 1947), Mehmed Neşri, *Kitab-ı Cihan-nüma*, Vol. I-II, ed. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1995), Oruc bin Adil el-Kazzaz, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, ed. Franz Babinger (Hannover: Orient-Buchhandlung Heinz Lafaire, 1925) *Anonim Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, ed. F. Giese, translated by Nihal Azamat (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1992)

<sup>36</sup> Halil İnalcık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography”, in *From Empire to Republic* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1995): 1-15. For the view that the early Ottoman chronics merely cover folk tale and legendary material, See Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1481* (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 1990)

Aşıkpaşazade, Neşri, Oruc and the Anonymous *Tevarih* seem to use the same source of Yahşi Fakih in their works for the first centuries of Ottoman history, according to İnalçık. This was a *menakıbnâme*, a narrative in the form of a legend, which must have been written in the age of Mehmed I. Yahşi Fakih was the son of the *imam* of Orhan Gazi. Hence, Yahşi Fakih's work has been regarded as a contemporary source for the events of the early period of Ottoman history<sup>37</sup>.

However, as İnalçık pointed out, although the chroniclers seem to follow the same source as Yahşi Fakih until 1422, as abridged by Aşıkpaşazade, all must be regarded as separate sources. Their authors made certain abridgements and additions from different sources, like *gavazatnames*, the narratives of holy war and *takvims*, calendars or oral information, which cannot be found in any other sources. So all texts must be regarded as the individual versions of the original source in Aşıkpaşazade, since all of them use the original source in their own way by additions from different sources<sup>38</sup>.

Furthermore, according to Menage and İnalçık, the earliest chroniclers, as the early compilers, are significant for the early Ottoman historiography since they are regarded as the main sources for the later histories written on the first two hundred years of the Ottoman history.<sup>39</sup> İnalçık also reveals that, apart from the chroniclers mentioned above, the latter chronics of İbn Kemal in his *Tevarih*, İdrisi Bitlisi in his work *Heşt Bihişt*, Ahmedî's *Dasitan* in his *İskendername*, and Enveri in his *Düsturname*, also follow the text of Yahşi Fakih. This implies that they followed

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<sup>37</sup>İnalçık, "The Rise" of Ottoman Historiography", 1. For Yahşi Fakih, See Hüseyin Namık Orkun, "Yahşi Fakih'e Dair", *Dergah V* (1337): 106 and "Yahşi Fakih", *Mitteilungen Z. Osmanischen Geschichte* (II) : 317-321.

<sup>38</sup> İnalçık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography", 6-7

<sup>39</sup>Victor I. Menage, "The Beginning of Ottoman Historiography", ed. B.Lewis and P.M.Holt, *Historians of the Middle East*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 168-169 and İnalçık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography", 13

Aşıkpaşazade-Neşri tradition which cover original information.<sup>40</sup> Thus, I will use the aforementioned sources as complementary sources to the early chronics.

It is important to mention that, apart from the early Ottoman chronics mentioned above, as a complementary source both for Christian and Ottoman chronics, the anonymous *Gazavatname* written on the battles of İzladi (1443) and Varna (1444) is also important, in the sense that it covers the *menakıbnâme* of Mahmud Paşa, which is unknown to early chroniclers<sup>41</sup>. Surprisingly, it seems that none of the early Ottoman chroniclers use this source. This source can be considered as one of the reliable sources from a contemporary view point, reflecting the typical epic character of the Ottoman historiography.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the sources mentioned above, another important source for the organization of the janissary hearth, named *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* is noteworthy<sup>43</sup>. İ.H.Uzunçarşılı used a version of this work in his work *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, where we find valuable information on *acemi ocağı* and the janissary institution. *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, as a seventeenth century source written by a nameless janissary, covers valuable information, though there were some chronological inconsistencies with respect to some events.

The unknown author of the *Kavanin* lived in the age of Ahmed I (1603-1617) and must have composed his work in the years between 1606 to 1617. Considering that the author's grandfather had been in the service of the janissary hearth for twenty

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<sup>40</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Kuruluş Dönemi Osmanlı Sultanları (1302-1481)* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 213. The following editions of the mentioned authors are also used in the study: İdris-i Bitlisi, *Heşt Bihişt* Vol. I-II, eds. Mehmet Karataş and Selim Kaya (İstanbul: BETAV Yayınları, 1990), Nihad Sami Banarlı, "Ahmedi ve Dasitan-i Tevarih-i Müluk-i Al-i Osman", *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 4 (1942):49-176 and *Düsturname-i Enveri*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1928)

<sup>41</sup> *Gazavatname-i Sultan Murad b. Mehmed Han*, eds. H.Inalcık and M.Oğuz (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1989)

<sup>42</sup> *Gazavatname-i Sultan Murad b. Mehmed Han*, VII-VIII.

<sup>43</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, ed. Tayfun Toroser (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011).

one years and participated in the campaigns as a member of the janissary garrison since the age of Mehmed II, treating the source of *Kavanin* as a contemporary figure makes sense; and we may regard it as an authentic source.

It is noteworthy that the author himself was also a member of the janissary hearth. This indicates that he had witnessed or heard about most of the affairs of the janissary hearth.<sup>44</sup> However, as will be seen below, there exists certain anachronisms in the text. It covers many references to the ‘old law’ regarding the early stages of the hearth.

Thus, it would be fair to say that for the early Ottoman history, *Kavanin* is to be used with caution. In any case, the analysis of the passages in the work in comparison with the early chronics using the method of text critic will hopefully reveal the original text on the establishment and early stages of the jannissary corps.

As for other primary sources, the memories of J.Schiltberger<sup>45</sup> and Konstantin Mihail Konstantinoviç<sup>46</sup> are also useful sources for the early stages of the janissary corps. What makes Schiltbergers’s work important and unique is the fact that he was an eye-witness of the events between 1396-1402. As we learn from the preface of his work, having participated in the battle against the Ottomans at Nicopolis in 1396 under his lord, he was caught as a war captive by the janissaries. Then, he was brought to Bayezid I, where we have a vivid description of the treatment of war captives by the Ottoman sultan.

However, considering that he had composed his work at a later date (in 1427), based on his memory, which was mingled with tales and legends of the time, there

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<sup>44</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Johannes Schiltberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar Arasında (1394-1427)*, trans. Turgut Akpınar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997)

<sup>46</sup> *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, ed. Kemal Beydilli (İstanbul: Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları, 2003)

exists certain historical mistakes. In any case, his work is still of some value, reflecting the real intentions of the slave-originated *kuls* and the existence of *solak* soldiery in the age of Bayezid I.

The memories of Konstantin Mihail Konstantinovic, who served in the Ottoman palace, first as a novice, then as a Serbian janissary in mid-seventeenth century, also presents some valuable information on the military and social roles of janissary corps, such as the janissary influence over the second accession of Murad II (1446-1451), their role in the battle of Varna (1444) and the reasons for their rebellion in Edirne Buçuktepe to name a few, which were all well-presented by the author.

The author, himself being a member of *kapıkulu* organization, reflects the real intentions of janissaries as the “devoted” *kuls*. Furthermore, the author’s detailed reports of the palace structure and of the *kuls*, as a musician and intellectual who played role in diplomatic missions between Europe and the near east, discerned the work from other contemporary works.

As the Ottoman historians, like Babinger and Baranowski stated, there exists unprocessed information in this work, which so far were not utilized by the researchers<sup>47</sup>. The two manuscripts of the work, dated to fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were updated several times by different authors to serve the current political atmosphere. However, the work also needs to be evaluated with caution and put in the proper perspective since its tone reflects anti-Turk and anti-Islamic ideology. Nevertheless, Ottoman historians like R. Peters, R. Hartmann and H. İnalcık admit the authenticity and reliability of his work as a source for the early Ottoman history<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Beydill, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, xiv-xvi

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, xiv-xvi

Furthermore, for the first period of Ottoman history, the early *vakfiye* registers are also important sources to determine the military titles and social status of the early *kuls* and janissaries of the early Ottoman state. These published Bursa *Vakıf* Registers cover most of the fourteenth and fifteenth century *vakfiyye* records and are significant sources for identifying the prototype of the early Ottoman *kapıkulu*-janissary identity.<sup>49</sup>

Mahmud Şevket Paşa's *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyesi*<sup>50</sup>, also covers information on the social status and military rank of the soldiers, is another important source for the military costumes and headgear of the Ottoman soldiery.

Finally, the primary sources for the Seljukid and İlhanid *ghulam* system and for the general overview of the Anatolia between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries are the contemporary sources of İbn-i Bibi's history,<sup>51</sup> Aziz B. Erdeşir-i Esterabadi's *Bezm u Rezm*<sup>52</sup>, Yazıcızades's *Tarih-i Al-i Selçuk*<sup>53</sup> and Aksarayi's *Müsameretü'l-Ahbar*,<sup>54</sup> which are significant as they have many references to the *ghulam-kul* system which had been in use in the pre-Ottoman Anatolia. A more thorough analysis of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* system and palace organization can be found in İ.H. Uzunçarşılı's works, which were developed primarily based on early *vakf* registers and *mühimme* records.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Bursa Vakfiyeleri I*, eds. Hasan Basri Öcalan and Sevim Doğan Yavaş (Bursa: Bursa Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayınları, 2013)

<sup>50</sup> Mahmud Şevket Paşa, *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyesi*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014)

<sup>51</sup> İbni Bibi, *El-Evamirü'l-Ala'iyye fi'l Umuri'l Ala'iyye Selçukname*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014)

<sup>52</sup> Aziz B. Erdeşir-i Esterabadi, *Bezm u Rezm*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014)

<sup>53</sup> Yazıcızade Ali, *Tarih-i Al-i Selçuk*, ed. Abdullah Bakır (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2000)

<sup>54</sup> Kerimüddin Mahmudi Aksarayi, *Müsameretü'l-Ahbar*, translated by Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2000).

<sup>55</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları I-II* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1988) and his *Osmanlı Teşkilatına Methal* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1988)



In addition to the sources above, we can also list two similar and popular works for the lively description of the janissary institution. The first one is Reşat Ekrem Koçu's work, *Yeniçeriler*.<sup>56</sup> Based on the *mühimme* registers, the author's lively description of the janissaries gives a vivid depiction of the janissary institution from its beginning to its end. Similarly Godfrey Goodwin's<sup>57</sup> work *Janissaries* deals with the selection of youths from Christian families in Balkans for the janissaries as elite corps. In his work, the author points out the originality and distinctive characteristics of the janissary corps and their influence over the Ottoman sultans.

We can also mention Cemal Kafadar's works on the early janissary identity, which has significant value in terms of understanding the role of the institution, not only in the early period but also in the later stages of the Ottoman history. In his work entitled, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State*, he points out the critical role of the janissary institution in forming a self-consciously centralizing administrative apparatus. Kafadar, in his work, further stresses the advantage of a janissary as a standing army which played the role of an essential military element as an extension of the royal household<sup>58</sup>.

Lastly, we could also cite a recent study by B.E.Çavdaroglu, who worked on the role of janissary corps in the changing structure of Ottoman and European warfare between 1650-1700<sup>59</sup>. The author argued that after the janissary corps became a permanent standing force in the Ottoman army as an infantry regiment, the structure

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<sup>56</sup> Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Yeniçeriler* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2015)

<sup>57</sup> Godfrey Goodwin, *Janissaries* (Saqi Books, 1994)

<sup>58</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State* (London: University of California Press, 1995), 17. And his *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2014) See also Gülay Yılmaz, "The Economic and Social Roles of Janissaries in a seventeenth Ottoman City: İstanbul" (PhD Thesis, Mc Gill University, 2012) On this topic See also Cemal Kafadar, "Yeniçeri-Esnaf Relations: Solidarity and Conflict" (MA Thesis, Mc Gill University, 1981)

<sup>59</sup> Burhan Erhan Çavdaroglu, "Değişen Harp Usulü Karşısında Osmanlı Ordusu: Tımarlı Sipahiler ve Yeniçeriler "(1650-1700) (MA Thesis, Kırıkkale University, 2021)

of both Ottoman and European warfare changed. He concluded that the usage of fire guns by the janissary corps not only gave an advantageous position to the Ottomans in the face of Europe, but also led to the rise of thte infantry and cavalry units with fire guns in Europe.

Consequently, considering that this study covers many secondary literature on various individual topics, relevant literature will be provided in each chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1) *Ghulam* and *Kul* Connotations in the Near Eastern Tradition and in the Ottoman Context

The connotations and the usage of the terms *ghulam* or *kul* showed little variation in meaning among various sources. The literal meaning of the term *ghulam*, which is derived from the Arabic root *gilma*, means a boy, youth, lad or a slave, servant and waiter.<sup>60</sup> In addition, it covers various specific connotations like a bodyguard and a slave, or a freed man bound to his master by personal ties, or an artisan.<sup>61</sup>

However, the implication of the term *ghulam* in the near eastern Turkic and Islamic states covers a more grander meaning than its literal meanings. The term *ghulam* refers to the members of a specific system, known as the *ghulam* (slave) system, where the youths of slave origin were acquired and trained for military, administrative and ceremonial services at the palace of the rulers. The rulers in the near eastern states owned an impressive number of *ghulam* who held high positions in the palace or in the army.<sup>62</sup> Hence, in this respect we can say that the *ghulams* in the

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<sup>60</sup> Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), 682

<sup>61</sup> D. Sourdel, "Ghulam", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second ed. Vol.II, (2005): 1079.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 1079.

near eastern tradition were the adherents of an organization within the state as a distinguished class in the statecraft.<sup>63</sup>

### **The term *Kul* in the Ottoman Context**

On the other hand, we find the term *kul* as the counterpart of *ghulam* in the Ottoman context. The term *kul*, as the direct translation of the Arabic term '*abd*', literally means a slave, servant, serf or bondsman and a human being or more likely the servant of *Allah*<sup>64</sup>. It also covers the meaning of a retinue, a servant, or, more likely, a loyal servant. Thus, it is fair to state that in the Ottoman context the term *kul* not only refers to the servant of *Allah*, but also of the Sultan and the Porte.

However, we notice problems in the translation of the term *kul* as "slave" in English, in terms of its interpretation in the *ghulam-kul* context. As İnalcık puts it, the translation of *kul* as "slave" is misleading, because to be a slave of the sultan was an honor and privilege and it does not designate a lesser status.<sup>65</sup> This marks a key difference between an 'ordinary slave' and the 'slaves of the Sultan' in the Ottoman usage, though in both cases we use the term "slave" in English<sup>66</sup>.

Specifically, in the Ottoman historical context, *kul* or rather the *kapıkulu*, connotes the 'servant of the sultan' who was educated in the palace for the purpose of

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<sup>63</sup> Mustafa Z. Terzi, "Gulam", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol 14, ( 1996), 178

<sup>64</sup> Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 586

<sup>65</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 87.

<sup>66</sup> Hakan Erdem, *Osmanlı'da Köleliğin Sonu 1800-1909* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 10-11, An ordinary slave sold in the slave markets is labeled as a 'slave', *esir* or *rakik* which the literal meaning of the term connotes in connection to ones' legal status; as the one owned by a master in Islamic law. M.Kunt states that, in course of time the term *kul* also designates the free Muslims who were of non-slave origin, (Erdem, 20). However, B. Papoulia regards *kuls* who were in the service of the Ottoman sultan, as the real slaves as long as they directly served the sultan, Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 14. For slavery in the early Ottoman state see, Nida Nebahat Nalçacı, *Sultanın Kulları* (İstanbul: Verita Yayınları, 2015) Nalçacı regards the usage of war captives as slave soldiery whose status is different from ordinary slaves as the tradition of *miri*, state-owned soldiery in the Ottoman state, Nalçacı, 43. For slavery in the Ottoman state, See also *Osmanlı Devletinde Kölelik*, eds. Z.Güneş Yağcı and Fırat Yaşa, (İstanbul: Tezkire Yayınları, 2017)

serving the state.<sup>67</sup> Also, it is worth mentioning that the sons of the *kuls* were labelled as *kuloğlu* or as *kapıkulu*.<sup>68</sup> So, the term *kul* in the Ottoman context refers to one's special status, as being in the special service of the sultan.<sup>69</sup>

The *kuls*, whether they are in the service of the state or of a private owner, were not regarded as a member of lower class; on the contrary,, the status of being a *kul* procured influence and esteem in the Ottoman society.<sup>70</sup> When we consider the near eastern concept of proximity to the sovereign that determined ones's status, the *kul* of the sultan designates a status more than being a slave.<sup>71</sup>

Some researchers consider the *kul* or *kapıkulu* system as the backbone of the Ottoman administrative and military apparatus in the Classical period of the Ottoman state.<sup>72</sup> As Özer Ergenç states, this system enables the formation of a typology of a certain Ottoman individual, whose participation in the system is possible on the condition of absolute loyalty to the sultan and on the degree of his merit, *liyakat*. However, it is true to say that the *kuls* were formerly slaves purchased or taken as *pencik oğlanı*s. Perhaps, it is better to label them as the 'special servants' with the indication of 'your majesty' – *kulunuz*, the *kul* of the *Allah*, and the *kul* of the Sultan, keeping in mind the grandeur designation of the word in the Ottoman historical context<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> İncalcık, *The Classical Age*, 223

<sup>68</sup> Abdülkadir Özcan. "Kul", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 26, ( 2002),348

<sup>69</sup> Kemal Beydilli, "Yeniçeri", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 43 (2013) 450. Beydilli states that the term *kul* in the Ottoman context is used only for the ones who came through the *acemi ocağı*, the page-school of a novice, where the slaves were first stationed, before joining the janissary corps.

<sup>70</sup> Halil İncalcık, "Ghulam in the Ottoman Empire", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second ed. Vol.II,(2005), 1090

<sup>71</sup> İncalcık, *The Classical Age*, 76

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 77

<sup>73</sup> It seems rather convenient not to translate the term *kul* as the "slave" in the Ottoman context, since there isn't any word which directly corresponds to its direct connotation in English. So, the term *kul* will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the *kapıkulu* members and for the janissary corps. M.Kunt clearly indicates that *kul* is the equivalent of a *kapıkulu* member as being the "true ottoman", M.Kunt,

Within this conjecture, it is worth mentioning certain specific characteristics of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* system and the specific condition of the janissary corps as part of this process. The status of the *kuls* of the Ottoman sultan as part of his *kapıkulu*, is similar to the position of *ghulams* in the near eastern tradition in terms of their acquisition, training and career. It is noteworthy to mention that the Ottoman concept of *kul* system is closely associated with palace education as was also the case in the near eastern tradition.

In the Ottoman notion of *kul* system, the slaves as war captives or as *devşirme* children who were the candidates for the *kapıkulu* institution, were required to go through several stages of education in order to become a *kul*. In the initial stage, the best of them were chosen as the novices, *acemi oğlanları*, who received special training (including physical, religious and literary education and craft or fine arts) that varied between 2-7 years. The rest of the novices were given to Turkish villagers in Anatolia to learn Turkish language and culture before being allowed to enter the janissary regiments.

After the initial phase, under the strict discipline and inspection of the palace tutors, all underwent a second selection process, which was known as *çıkma*, a kind of graduation to military or palace service. Hence, the most able had the right to be in the service of the sultan's palace in the Greater and Lesser rooms or in janissary regiments, whereas the remainder were employed in the cavalry divisions of the Porte.<sup>74</sup>

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“Osmanlı Dirlik-Kapı Düzeni ve *Kul* Kimliği”, in *Tarih Eğitimi ve Tarihte “Öteki” Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 166. It is also noteworthy that the janissaries opposed to be labelled as “slave”, conscious of their high status, Feridun Emecan, *Osmanlı Klasik Çağında Savaş* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2018), 49.

<sup>74</sup> It is no doubt that those “slaves” educated at the Ottoman palace school contributed to the production of many Ottoman historical and literary writing as well as the development of the Ottoman

Within that context, we may cite the stipulations of the *ghulam-kul* system as:

- 1) The acquisition of young war captives (slaves) through several ways (e.g., purchase, practice of *pençik* or *devşirme*, as a gift or as a hostage)
- 2) Training them for military and administrative services in the special palace schools (religious, military, fine arts and letters education) or giving them to Turkish families (in the Ottoman case)
- 3) Employing the most talented for palace service (in the course of time, some could be promoted to high posts in the statecraft based on their abilities and seniority) or,
- 4) Conscripting them for *hassa* regiments as regular professional forces; or leaving them in any other military segments (janissary regiments or other *sekbân* regiments in the Ottoman palace)

It is noteworthy that a ‘slave’ could become ‘free’ and become a *ghulam* or *kul* upon these stipulations.

In the sixteenth century, the *kuls*, or rather the ‘specially educated servants’ who passed through the palace education, formed the core of the *kapıkulu* institution. They, as the *ehl-i örf*, constituted a separate category within the Ottoman class system, as the ‘military class’ to whom the sultan delegated his authority on the condition of unquestioning obedience and loyalty to him<sup>75</sup>. Moreover, they, as the special servants of the sultan, were the group who enjoyed the authority of the sultan and formed a distinguished class in the statecraft, which had its roots in the Persian-

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architecture and fine arts, İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 78-79 and 88. For a detailed description of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization in the age of Süleyman II See, A.Howe Lybyer, *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Süleyman the Magnificent* (London: Cambridge- Harvard University Press,1913)

<sup>75</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 94

Indian concept of class system<sup>76</sup>. As an eye-witness novice who served in the palace in the seventeenth century mentioned, the Ottomans managed to govern their huge territory through this system of a well-organized palace education in various fields.<sup>77</sup>

In Max Weber's analysis of the Ottoman class structure, on the other hand, the Ottoman patrimonial system was considered as 'sultanism', the extreme case of the patrimonial state which operates under the arbitrary power of the sultan in all affairs. Hence, the *kul taîfesi* or *kapıkulları* of the palace and the army were the 'household instruments' of the Ottoman sultan, discerned by the arbitrary power of the Ottoman sultan.<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, for Weber, the *kuls*, as the slave-originated troops of the Porte who were directly under the personal service of the sultan, were organized exclusively to respond to the ruler's demands, although their training and specialization were not prerequisites for this. According to Weber, the promotions of *kuls* depended on the ruler's favor and arbitrary power, not on their merit.<sup>79</sup>

Based on Weber's views, if we consider the status of *kuls* in a broader context, where the government was conducted at the 'gate' of the ruler, then it is true that his officials technically were all in the position of his "slaves" and Weber's analysis could be meaningful. Also, there is no doubt that the *kapıkulus* constituted the

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<sup>76</sup> For the Persian-Indian class system, See *The History of Al-Tabari*, ed. Franz Rosenthal (New York: State University of Ny Press, 1989) and, *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, ed. M.Minovi, (Tahran,1962).

<sup>77</sup> *Albertus Bobovius ya da Santuri Ali Ufki Bey'in Anıları Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, ed.StefanosYerasimos and Annie Berthier, trans. Ali Berktaş, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2009), 110.

<sup>78</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of Clifornia Press, 1978), 231-232. Here Weber analyzes the Ottoman *kul* system and the status groups arisen from it as the instruments of a patrimonial near eastern state which shaped by the arbitrary and despotic power of the ruler. On the other hand, İnalcık, conversely indicated the points that Weber missed for the restrictions of the arbitrary power of the Ottoman sultan. He states that it was not only the 'tradition' but also the 'Islamic law' and the *kanuns*, law codes, as well as the *ehl-i örf* as the power group within the government, that prevents the Ottoman state to be purely a state based on sultanism, Halil İnalcık, "Comments on Sultanism: Max Weber's Typification of the Ottoman Polity" in *The Ottoman Empire and Europe* (İstanbul: Kronik Books,2017) 74.

<sup>79</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 232



household troops of the sultan, who were employed in various services for the Ottoman sultan and of the Porte.

However, in the Ottoman context, this system of training discerned them as a special privileged group within the Ottoman class system. As will be seen further in the study, they were actually the powerful group and were able to influence the sultan, as ‘traditional status groups’ within the state, who could manipulate the sultan and the state.

On the other hand, if we look back to the analysis of the meaning of the terms *ghulam* and *kul*, D. Pipes, for instance, described this type of slave-originated soldiery as ‘military slaves’. According to him, the terms *ghulam*, *fata*, *memluk* or *kul* have no direct connotation in the Western terminology and the practice of ‘military slavery’ is a concept peculiar to Medieval Islamic states.<sup>80</sup> He further states that ‘military slavery’ is different from ordinary slavery in the sense that it requires a systematic military training as a professional soldier under the control of a central government or a ruler. Moreover, a military slave was acquired through three stages which were ‘acquisition’, ‘transition’ and ‘employment’.<sup>81</sup>

Pipes’ argument seems reasonable within the context of the near eastern *ghulam-kul* context. However, E. Göksu, in his analysis of the *ghulam* system in the Seljukid period argues that the slave-originated *ghulam* system and the ‘arming of ordinary slaves’ in the west, which Pipes considers similar, are different. For Göksu, the *ghulam* system in the middle eastern states was developed through a specific process which requires the acquisition and training of the slaves ‘systematically’ to

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<sup>80</sup> Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, 5

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 5-6

make them ‘profesional soldiers’ or ‘officials.’<sup>82</sup> Thus, according to Göksu, what Pipes might have missed could be the specialized position of the *ghulams* as a distinguished class of officials in the traditional *ghulam* system. In the near eastern notion of the *ghulam* system, the military slaves could hold high posts as military commanders or as high officials in the military and administrative apparatus, according to their competence and abilities. This factor seems to mark the difference between Pipes’s argument on military slavery.

Obviously, when we consider the multi-functionality of the *ghulam-kul* personages as the servants of the rulers or of the palace, the *ghulam-kul* system requires more than merely the arming of ordinary slaves in the near eastern tradition. Most importantly, it was the status of the *kuls* as high officials in the administrative apparatus of the state which distinguished them from Pipe’s definition. In any case, the stipulations offered by Pipes for military slavery seemed universal and could also be present in the western tradition, with variations from its classical form in the near east.

Interestingly, A. Çetin, in his analysis of the Memluk military structure, states that although it is true that military slavery developed in the circumstances of Islam and its well-developed form made its appearance in the Memluk state, he claims that this application is not peculiar to Islam, as examples can be found in the Sasanid and Byzantine states<sup>83</sup>. In the following section we will discuss the historical background of the *ghulam* system in the near eastern and western states in this conjecture.

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<sup>82</sup> Erkan Göksu, *Selçuklu’nun Mirası, Gulam ve İktâ* (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2017), 14-15

<sup>83</sup> Altan Çetin, *Memluk Devletinde Askeri Teşkilat* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2007), 44. For the analysis of the Memluk system see Chapter V of the thesis.

## 2.2) *Ghulam System in the Persian Realm*

The Ottoman Empire of the late sixteenth century is regarded as a highly developed example of a near eastern empire in terms of its administrative, socio-economic and military structure<sup>84</sup>. Therefore, it will be meaningful to analyze the *ghulam-kul* system in the Turkic and Islamic states established in the near eastern realm and determine its impact on the Ottomans. Pursuing the traces of slave-originated court-based household soldiery under the direct command of the rulers in the Persian realm will also help reveal the conceptual origins of the *ghulam-kul* system and further enhance the analysis.

When we look at the states established in the ancient near east in the second part of Egyptian period, we observe that the pharaohs had the right to take certain war captives for various purposes; and we see a standing army under the grand commander for the guardiance and defense of the expanding Egyptian borders.<sup>85</sup>

The Asurians, on the other hand, utilized war captives in the service of the state in several ways. For example, some were recruited for the special regiments, and the rest were either employed as peasants, gardeners or shepherds or given to nobles and citizens for service as a reward. In the Asur Empire, the intimates of the king, after an oath of loyalty to him, constituted the core of his standing army.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, the existence of large slave armies are known to have existed in the Achaemenids.<sup>87</sup>

As İnalcık asserted, however, it was mostly the Sasanid state which stood as a model for the Ottomans of the sixteenth century in terms of its statecraft and military

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<sup>84</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Amelia Kuhrt, *Eski Çağ'da Yakınoğu*, Vol. I, trans. Dilek Şendil (İstanbul: T.İş Bankası Yayınları, 2017), 285

<sup>86</sup> Kuhrt, *Eskiçağ'da Yakınoğu*, Vol II, 204

<sup>87</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 77

organization, and whose influence came by the way of the Abbasids through the employment of Persian and Christian scribes.<sup>88</sup> Within this framework, J. Howard points to the Sasanian success with an efficient tax system, a remified government, and an army paid by the government under the direct control of a centralized state.<sup>89</sup> So we can say that a ‘slave guard’ as the ‘slave army’ must have constituted the nucleus of the early Sasanid army, as opposed to indigenous peoples.<sup>90</sup>

It is a known fact that war captives as *hassa* soldiery and as *ghulams* existed in the Sasanids before 500s. It was under the Soghdians that the children of inner Asian nomads were trained for military and agricultural purposes.<sup>91</sup> In addition, colonizers, that is, the barbarians, who were the war captive people of Sind and were known as better fighters than Iranian peasants, were systematically drafted in the Sasanid army; and they also constituted the permanent army of Khosroes I.<sup>92</sup>

As Tabari indicated, the *ghulams* of the Shah or certain followers, *atba* of the masters, who must have been of slave origin as a part of Sasanian army, are noteworthy.<sup>93</sup> It should also be noted that the main army was mostly conscripted from those non-native elements. Therefore, it can be inferred that the practice of building up slave armies based on the practice of the recruitment of foreign elements dates back to the ancient near east.

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<sup>88</sup> İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, 3. The Sasanid impact on the development of Turkish institutions is also asserted by Köprülü. Also, Ottoman intellectuals like İbn Haldun and Ziya Gökalp admitted the Sasanid impact to the Ottomans by the way of Byzantine state. Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 31

<sup>89</sup> James Howard-Johnson, “The two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: A Comparison”, in *East Rome, Sasanian Persia and the end of Antiquity*, (Aldershot Ashgate: Variorum Collected Studies/848, 2006):157-226

<sup>90</sup> C.E. Bosworth, “*Ghulam in Persia*,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second ed., Vol. II ( 2005),1081.

<sup>91</sup> Pipes, *Slave Soldiers* , 162-163

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 161-162

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 164

Over the course of time Persia became the land of slave labor from Russia, Central Asia and India as a result of the economic growth during ninth and tenth centuries, and Turks, as slave-originated *ghulams*, began to be employed in the armies of the Persian states.<sup>94</sup> A contemporary author, Ibn Hassul, narrates that the Turks were already in the slave armies of Persian states in the tenth century because of their known loyalty and brave martial qualities.<sup>95</sup>

The typical example of the employment of Turkish *ghulams* early in Persian realm was seen in the Samanid State (819-1005), where the slave guard of Turkish troops was regarded as the nucleus of the army<sup>96</sup>. For instance, the existence of various titles of Turkish origin in the Samanid statecraft can be attributed to the influence of Turkish *ghulams* in the Samanid army. It is also noteworthy that the soldiery were paid four times a year, as we see in the Ottoman payment schedule of its janissary corps.<sup>97</sup> So, it must have been through those Turkish troops and commanders that the military habits had been transferred throughout the centuries.

Regarding the systematic training of *ghulams* in the Samanid state, Nizamülmülk states that it was in the Samanid state where the training of *ghulams* for military purposes was first established.<sup>98</sup> However, Bosworth argues against this view and points out the impossibility of such a long training program in the Samanid state because of the lack of administrative experience of the Samanids. He further claims that Nizamülmülk must have reflected the ideal situation, rather than the actual one. Considering that there exists little information on this issue in the sources, Bosworth

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<sup>94</sup>Bosworth, "Ghulam in Persia", 1081

<sup>95</sup> Carole Hillebrande, *Malazgirt Muharebesi* (İstanbul: Alfa Tarih, 2015), 167

<sup>96</sup> Bosworth, "Ghulam in Persia", 1082. Apart from the Turkish *ghulams* which constituted the majority of the army, there were the troops of *ikta* holders, the auxiliaries and the volunteers which constituted the total of the Samanid army, Aydın Usta, "Samaniler", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.36,(2009), 66

<sup>97</sup> Köprülü, *Byantine Institutions*, 80

<sup>98</sup> Göksu, *Gulam ve Ikta*, 23

states that the training program of the *ghulams*, which Nizamülmülk mentioned, must have been merely the field training that the troops were involved in the Samanid state.<sup>99</sup>

On the other hand, Turkish commanders in the Samanid state, like Alp-Tegin, had their private armies of *ghulams*. This can be considered one of the factors of Samanid decline, according to some historians. When central power decreased, Alp Tegin became a semi-autonomous leader with the power of his own *ghulam* forces against the Samanid state, and hence succeeded in establishing his own state with those slave-originated forces, that is the Ghaznevid state. We can say that this can be regarded as the disadvantage of the *ghulam* system, where the notables or powerful commanders could also have their private *ghulam* forces that could be used against the central government. Conversely, the Ottomans always tried to avoid the power of *kapıkulus* and powerful frontier *begs* against the state, which, as we saw in the case of Samanid state, have the potential of threatening the central government.

Within this context it will be worthwhile to give some information about the Ghaznevid (962-1187) military structure, which was also thought to have an impact on the military structure of the Ottoman state.<sup>100</sup> It is important to note that the Gaznevid military and administrative apparatus, as a military and administrative machine, revolved around the personality of a *ghulam* ruler. Thus, the characteristics of the Ghaznevid army differentiates the armies of Islamic Persian dynasties from those of its pre-Islamic ancestors like the Sasanids.<sup>101</sup> Founded officially by the descendant of a slave-originated Turkish *ghulam* commander in the Samanid army, Sebuk Tegin, Samanid influence on the building of an army of *ghulams* seems only

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<sup>99</sup> Bosworth, "Gaznevid Military Organization", *Der Islam* 36 (1-2) (1960): 45-46

<sup>100</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 100-101

<sup>101</sup> Bosworth, "Ghaznevid Military", 37-40

natural. Turks, known for their loyalty to the rulers and martial qualities, were again preferred as *ghulam* forces in the Ghaznevid armies. The Turkish *ghulams*, who were either purchased or given as a gift as a result of the intense slave trade from the traditional central Asian sources, made up a greater part of the Ghaznevid army.

We can argue that the Gaznevid system of *ghulam* acquisition lies in the purchasing of slaves at an early age. These slaves, who were free of roots, local connections, and consequently highly mobile for campaigning, were trained in warfare on the condition of loyalty.<sup>102</sup> The above description of the Ghaznevid practice of *ghulam* acquisition at an early age and training them for the purpose of loyalty, represents the main mentality behind the *ghulam* system in the near eastern tradition.

As mentioned earlier, the acquisition of the ‘rootless’ and the ‘unqualified’ who could easily be adapted to serve for the purpose of the state, makes the essence of this system. On the other hand, the existence of *gulaman-ı saray* or *gulaman-ı hassa* or *gulaman-ı sultan* as the personal household of the sultan in the palace, indicates that the *ghulams* began to be employed in personal service to the sultan as well as in the various services in the Ghaznevid palace.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, we see the dual function of *ghulams*, either as the military or administrative (palace service) element in the Ghaznevid state. In addition, the *ghulams*, as crack forces in the Ghaznevid state, also took a role in the ceremonies.<sup>104</sup> It should be mentioned that the Turkish *ghulams* again mostly constituted the military element, whereas the Persians made up the administrative part.<sup>105</sup> Hence, we can say

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<sup>102</sup> Bosworth, “Ghaznevid Military”, 40

<sup>103</sup> Erdoğan Merçil, “Gazneliler”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 13, (1996), 483. The palace *ghulams* of the Gaznevids seem to be an individual unit within the state apparatus, having their own commanders, officials and standards similar to the organization of the janissary hearth.

<sup>104</sup> Bosworth, “Ghaznevid Military”, 46-7

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 37

that in the Ghaznevid state we find the early example of the classical *ghulam-kul* system.

If we continue to examine the Great Seljukid state as the successor of the Ghaznevids, we see that a similar practice is also observed in the Seljukid State in Persia, where the *ghulams* were employed for military and ceremonial purposes by the state.<sup>106</sup> It seems that the Seljukid sultan and other dignitaries had their own regular forces composed of slave-originated *ghulams* as their salaried *hassa* soldiery, known as the *ghulaman-ı saray*.<sup>107</sup>

The institution of *ghulam* is thought to be an important element in the Great Seljukid state, reflecting the power of the ruler that can be observed in every rank of the Seljukid society<sup>108</sup>. It should also be noted that the *gulaman-ı saray* under the command of *salar-ı gulaman-ı saray*, the commander of the *ghulams*, was paid four times a year, which is called *pişegani*, as was the case in the Samanids and the Gaznevids.<sup>109</sup> As mentioned earlier, we can trace this practice all the way to the Ottomans. Moreover, the *ghulams*, also as *hassa* forces, constituted a great portion of the manpower of the Seljukid army. As war captives, they were taken following the Islamic law, which gives one-fifth of the slaves to the ruler, similar to the Ottoman *pencik* regulation<sup>110</sup>.

We also observe the continuation of the same military structure in the Anatolian Seljukids. Köprülü stated that it was predominantly the military structure of

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<sup>106</sup> Bosworth, "Ghaznevid Military", 47-48 For the *ghulam* system in the Seljukid states See Coşkun Erdoğan, "Selçuklu Devletlerinde Gulam Sistemi", (MA Thesis, Atatürk University, 2010.) Erdoğan states that *ghulam* system as an Islamic institution is to reinforce the central authority of the sultans and to utilize slaves by turning them into an aristocratic military class.

<sup>107</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Methal*, 52-53

<sup>108</sup> Bosworth, "Ghulam in Persia", 1080

<sup>109</sup> Bosworth, "Ghaznevid Military", 52-53

<sup>110</sup> Ali Sevim and Erdoğan Merçil, *Selçuklu Devletleri Tarihi* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1995), 512.



the Anatolian Seljukids which is thought to have influenced the Ottoman organization of its *hassa* soldiery and *kul* system.<sup>111</sup> This view is also shared by İnalçık, who stated that the Ottomans inherited the idea of *kul* system from the Seljukids of Rum.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, the Seljukid historian O. Turan also argues that the practice of purchasing Christian children at a younger age and training them in special schools at the palace, *ghulamhane*, or at big cities and utilizing them for military and administrative practices, must have been taken as a model by the Ottomans from the Seljukids of Rum in their formation of the janissary corps.<sup>113</sup>

We know of many officials, like *atabeğs* or *melik'ül-ümera*, who were of *ghulam* origin and served in the important posts of the administrative apparatus of the Seljukid state. They were chosen amongst the most loyal and trustworthy of *ghulams* trained in *ghulamhanes*, as reflected in sources as the *hass ghulam* of the Seljukid rulers.<sup>114</sup>

Within this context, it is worth noting various references to *ghulams* who served in several capacities within the Seljukid sources of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. In most of these sources, we find *ghulams* as always being the nearest to the Seljukid rulers and dignitaries as *hassa* forces in military or administrative apparatus. For example, in the work of *Bezm u Rezm*, which is attributed to Kadı Burhaneddin in

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<sup>111</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 106-107 Here Köprülü points out to the *hassa* army of *ghulams* in the Anatolian Seljukid state, 101-102

<sup>112</sup> İnalçık, “*Ghulam in The Ottoman Empire*”, 1085

<sup>113</sup> Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi ve Türk İslam Medeniyeti*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 2010), 348

<sup>114</sup> Nejat Kaymaz, *Anadolu Selçuklularının İhithatında İdare Mekanizmasının Rolü*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2011). For example, Emir Ertokuş and Seyfüddin Ay-Aba were portrayed as the *hass ghulam* of İzzüddin Keyhüsrev who also constituted the intimate military retinue of the sultan, Kaymaz, 38. It is noteworthy that there existed many statesmen of slave origin in the service of the Anatolian Seljukid state like Greeks, Kıpçak, Turks and Slavs who were trained in accordance with Turkish *ghulam* education, Kaymaz 18. Within this framework the specific case of Hüsameddin Emir Çoban is noteworthy. As a prominent frontier beg he was experienced in training of the *ghulams* in the Seljukid state, Kaymaz, 60, n.129.

the fourteenth century, we find Hacı Mukbil as the *ghulam* of Hacı İbrahim, the former being an influential personality in state affairs.<sup>115</sup>

Likewise, in İbni Bibi, the *hassa ghulams* of the Sultan, is known as *gulaman-ı hass* who always looked after him.<sup>116</sup> In Yazıcızade's *Tarih-i Al-i Selçuk*, we find *ghulam-ı hass* as the equivalent of guardians. In the account, the *ghulam* Seyfal-Din Aybe is depicted as a *candar*, who fought for the sultan at the front stage for the sake of his life.<sup>117</sup> In Aksarayi, the *ghulams* were portrayed as the bodyguards of the Sultan Alp Arslan who fought vigorously for him.<sup>118</sup> Aksarayi, as an officer in the Seljukid state, mentions that the power of the Sultan depends on the *ghulams* he purchased.<sup>119</sup> Thus, we find *ghulams* under different titles but similar functions such as, *müfarede*, *Halka-i Has*, *Gulaman-ı dergah*, *Gulaman-ı yayak* and *Mülaziman-ı yatak ve yayak*, that all coincided with the *hassa* soldiery of the Sultan throughout the Seljukid period.<sup>120</sup>

Hence, if we consider *ghulam* in terms of a distinguished status, like the term *kul*, E.Göksu states that the term *ghulam* must have indicated a higher status than an ordinary slave, *köle* in the Seljukid period, and they were considered as being *devletlu*, prosperous and fortunate as the *hassa kuls* of the rulers.<sup>121</sup> There are many examples of *ghulams* being promoted to the rank of high officials within the statecraft or in the provinces in the Anatolian Seljukids.<sup>122</sup> Consequently, although the ethnic origins of the *ghulams* in the Seljukid period were rather vague, the utilization of

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<sup>115</sup> Aziz b.Erdeşir-i Esterabadi, *Bezm u Rezm*, 127

<sup>116</sup> İbni Bibi, *Tarihi-i Al-i Selçuk*, 574

<sup>117</sup> Yazıcızade, *Tarihi-i Al-i Selçuk*, 89. In some places, the term *ghulam* is also used as the equivalent of life-time mercenaries.

<sup>118</sup> Aksarayi, *Müsameretü'l-Ahbar*, 13.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 263

<sup>120</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Methal*, 100

<sup>121</sup> Göksu, *Gulam ve İktâ*, 15-17.

<sup>122</sup> İnalçık, "Ghulam in the Ottoman Empire", 1085

slave-originated foreigners, other than the native elements, as *ghulams* for military and administrative services must have been the common practice of neareastern states between the eighth to twelveth centuries.

The importance of having *ghulams* with different ethnic backgrounds was reflected in the work of Seljukid vizier Nizamülmülk's *Siyasetname*, who advises the rulers to have soldiery of different kinds<sup>123</sup>. Having his own multi-ethnic *ghulam* corps named after him as *Nizammiyye*, Nizamülmülk points out the disadvantages of a homogenous army. For him, if the soldiery is of the same kind and origin, it will be potentially troublesome for the state, since they may choose to fight for their own race rather than the state.<sup>124</sup> The advice of Nizamülmülk reflects the general tendency of the period in the near eastern realm and explains why the *ghulam* system persisted throughout the centuries. To form a heterogenous army of slaves, which could be adopted easily and utilized as the *hassa* force of the rulers, seems to be the essential factor in composing a *ghulam* army, instead of utilizing native elements.

Along this line, the existence of Byzantine *ghulams* in the Seljukid army should also be noted. As Bosworth indicated, a paid professional army of *ghulams*, mainly of Turkish and Greek origin, played an important role against the rebellious Turcomans in the Seljukid frontier during the tenth to eleventh centuries.<sup>125</sup> One could assume that, apart from the Turkish *ghulams*, the *ghulams* of Greek origin must have been also responsible for the transfer of practices between the Turkish and Byzantine cultures.

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<sup>123</sup> Nizamülmülk, *Siyasetname* (İstanbul:Dergah Yayınları,1981). As an early example of the *ghulam* system, Nizamülmülk states that a thousand Turcomans were recruited as the *ghulams* in the Seljukids, *Siyasetname*, 145

<sup>124</sup> Nizamülmülk, *Siyasetname*,146-147

<sup>125</sup> Bosworth, "Ghulam in Persia", 1082

As far as the Byzantine state is concerned, a similar practice of taking war captives or hostages at an early age and raising them as Byzantines seemed to be a common practice before the twelfth century. In the tenth century, Slavs were baptised and trained for the purpose of several services in the state.<sup>126</sup> A commander who was Persian in race but raised as Greek in the twelfth century can be cited as an example. Another example was the regenerated Turkish war captives taking part in the Byzantine military as infantry forces armed with bows. Vryonis indicated that such neo-Byzantines played an important role in the military of the Byzantine state in the tenth century.<sup>127</sup>

Considering that the late Byzantine army had a multi-ethnic character, the existence of many multi-ethnic groups as military forces seems reasonable. This could be taken as a supporting evidence that they must have played a significant role in the process of acculturation between Turkish and Byzantine cultures. However, it seems that there did not exist any similarity with the near eastern systematic *ghulam* organization. Also different is the use of some youths in the Byzantine army for several services, such as baggage train and gathering fodder for animals which does not represent a model similar to the classical near eastern *ghulam* system.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *The Taktika of Leo VI*, ed. G.Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Papers for Harvard University, 2010), 471

<sup>127</sup> Sp.Vryonis, "Byzantine and Turkish Societies and their Sources of Manpower", in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East* (London:1975), 128-135. As Vryonis stated, by the eleventh century onwards Latins, Cumans, Uzes, Turks and Alans took part in the Byzantine army and the existence of Turks, and half-breeds (Greek and Turkish) in the armies of sultans and emperors revealed the ethnic composition of the Byzantine armies until the fourteenth century.

<sup>128</sup> Vryonis, "Manpower", 142 and 132

### 2.3) The Idea of Standing Army and *Ghulam* System in the Arabian Peninsula (622-1258)

The establishment of the *ghulam* system through the use of slaves as *hassa* military forces and the establishment of a standing army in the Arabian peninsula can be said to begin with the emergence of Islam. There is no doubt that there did not exist a permanent army before Islam, since the Araps were leading a *bedevi*, bedouin-type lifestyle based on a tribal organization of *asabiyet*, brotherhood.<sup>129</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that, in the early Arabic society the first converts and the first emigrants to Medina were the soldiers who assembled under the religious brotherhood who fought for the holy war, *cihad*. They constituted the first military corps, together with Ensar under the command of Muhammed the Prophet<sup>130</sup>.

In the first centuries of Islam, the soldiers were engaging with agriculture during peace time. Thus, in order to establish a disciplined army, Hz. Ömer prohibited the soldiers' engagement with agriculture and turned them into professional salaried soldiers so that *cihad* would not be neglected. Through this practice, the first permanent standing army amongst the chosen soldiery had been experienced during the time of Hz. Ömer.

Later on, those who voluntarily fought for booty and holy war, as Islam requires, were transformed into a specialized corps with an obligation to fight in the Islamic army<sup>131</sup>. Thus, the above brief explanation of the early organization of the soldiery in the early years of Islam indicates that there existed a need for

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<sup>129</sup> Corci Zeydan, *İslam Uygarlıkları Tarihi I*, trans. Necdet Gök (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 213-214

<sup>130</sup> Zeydan, *İslam Uygarlıkları*, 214

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 214-215

specialization and a permanent standing force to fight regularly, specifically for the holy war.

The formation of the organized soldiery under Hz. Ömer also continued with the Emevids (661-750). When the Muslims gathered under the unity of the Emevid caliphate, then the caliphs began to establish standing armies with *hassa* forces. However, as the powerless caliphs could hardly maintain the order in the army, disobedience took place amongst the soldiers; and eventually, Haccac established the first regular permanent standing army and the first military organization in Islam. Thus, we can say that the traditional division between the salaried and voluntary service amongst the soldiery would have taken place in the Islamic military history.<sup>132</sup>

Within this context, it is noteworthy that the practice of utilizing slaves for military purposes was seen in the Emevid state, but not in a systematic way<sup>133</sup>. In the Emevids' army, apart from the Arabic element, Turks as *mevali*, non-Arabic Muslims, together with the Persians and Berberis as war captives, were in the service of the caliph's army as *gılman* (plural of *ghulam*) regiments.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, when the government abolished the infiltration of the non-Arabic elements into the administrative apparatus of the state, we can no longer talk about a typical *ghulam* system in the Emevid state in terms of the systematic acquisition of foreign elements. However, over time, the Turks as *gılman* became the main element of the Emevid army as a permanent salaried professional soldiery. Hence, by that way, they were promoted to the *mürtezika*, the distinguished forces of the Caliph.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Zeydan, *İslam Uygarlıkları*, 216-217

<sup>133</sup> Göksu, *Gulam ve Ikta*, 21

<sup>134</sup> Sourdel, "Ghulam," 1079

<sup>135</sup> Aydın Usta, "Emeviler", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.11, (1995), 95

Nevertheless, as Pipes stated, the Emevid army always remained tribal in composition as the government hardly gained control over the army.<sup>136</sup>

In any case, we can confidently state that the first step in the formation of a standing army by using non-Arabic forces took place in the reign of Emevids. Moreover, the introduction of the Turkish element as *gilman* in the service of the caliph as *mürtezika* must have contributed to the formation of a permanent *hassa* force and the detribalization in the Emevid state.

Subsequently, the Abbasids (750-1258), by ascending to the role of the caliphate, realized that there was a need for a loyal army and hence loyal soldiers to strengthen the power of the caliphate, so they eliminated the tribal element of the Emevid army. As Pipes put it, they ‘detribalized’ the army by organizing new kinds of corps of their own without any allegiances and loyalty to anyone but to the caliphate<sup>137</sup>. Therefore, they no longer depended on the ‘marginal area soldiers’ as Pipes labels them; namely, the Khurasanis, Arabian and Iranian elements who brought them to power but rather purchased alliances for the army who were again mainly the Turks.<sup>138</sup>

In this context, Mutasım was known to be the first caliph who had officially introduced the foreign element as *gilman* into the government in the history of Muslim world. He bought slaves from the slave market of Bagdad, mainly of Ferganas and Turks; hence a Turkish corps of slaves, Turkish *gilman*, came into being as the nucleus of the Abbasid army as guard troops of the caliph, or employees in

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<sup>136</sup> Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, 174

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 174

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 179-181

palace service.<sup>139</sup> In the later stage, the war captives taken at a younger age were subjected to military training to be the warriors of Islam.<sup>140</sup> However, it is not certain whether the ordinary slaves who constituted the greater part of the Abbasid society, were trained systematically and regularly for military service.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, by the 835s, Turks as *mürtezika* or *gılman-ı hassa*, began to be employed in the armies of the caliphs as *hassa* forces.<sup>142</sup> The reasons for the utilization of foreign elements, mainly of Turks in the Abbasid army, were twofold. First, it was the high martial qualities of the Turkish archers as the infantry; second, the state, in order to eliminate the pressure of the Iranian elements, preferred to buy or collect Turkish slaves in the ninth century<sup>143</sup>.

Within this context, the idea of slave-originated foreign soldiery can also be considered as a challenge to the tribal strife and weakening of the Arab ruling class in the Emevid and Abbasid states.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, the employment of Turkish troops as the permanent professional forces in the Abbasid state indicates a step towards the development of the *ghulam* system.<sup>145</sup> From this point of view, Göksu, points to a change in the connotation of the term slave (ordinary slave) versus *ghulam*. Later on,

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<sup>139</sup> Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, “Abbasiler”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.1, (1988),39. The essential force directly under the control of the caliph as his *hassa* force, was the *mürtezika*, the salaried regular permanent force of the caliph like in the Emevids. Known also as *haresü'l- halife*, they stationed in the capital to protect the city and the caliph. On the other hand there were the forces of the high officials and forces in the provinces apart from the *avasım* and *sungur* stationed in the borders and the auxillary and voluntery forces of *mutatavvia* as it is in the Emevids who fought for booty.

<sup>140</sup> David Nicolle, *İslam Orduları 600-1100*, trans. Emir Yener (İstanbul: T.İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 22

<sup>141</sup> Yıldız, “Abbasiler”, 46

<sup>142</sup> Terzi, “Gulam”, 179

<sup>143</sup> Sourdel, “*Ghulam*”, 1080

<sup>144</sup> Speros Vryonis, “Basilike D. Papoulia, Ursprung und Wesen der Knabenlese im Osmanischen Reich”, Book Review, *Balkan Studies*, 5, (1965):146

<sup>145</sup> Göksu, *Gulam ve Ikta*, 22-23.



the term *ghulam* began to be used as a technical term, where it represents the members of the administrative and military apparatus.<sup>146</sup>

However, over the course of time, as a result of the Abbasid's policy of the utilization of Turkish slaves in the administrative and military role, the authority of the Caliphate declined in favor of Turkish commanders. As the descendants of the first *ghilman*, they in a way formed a new aristocracy and in the end established their short-lived states with their slave armies. Consequently, the Turks as separate *ghilman* regiments, fighting under their own free military chiefs, turned into powerful forces, challenging the authority of the caliphs and central administration by the second half of the ninth century. Having obtained high ranks within the statecraft or in provinces, they engaged in state politics, palace intrigues, coup d'états, and even played a vital role in the succession of the caliphs<sup>147</sup>.

Hence, the approach of the caliphs to rely on such forces, free from all local attachments, to avoid civil war and to strengthen their central power, proved to be ineffective. It should be noted that it was those *ghilman* regiments of the military chiefs who were responsible for the decline of the Abbasid caliphate.<sup>148</sup>

The political atmosphere of the Abbasid state is reflected in İbn Haldun's work *Mukaddime*. According to Haldun, the decline and corruption of the Abbasid state was due to the existence of the 'outsiders', that is, the slaves, *azatlıs* and the ones who were in the service of the state, like the Turkish *ghilman*. The status of aliens in İbn Haldun's work is reflected as follows: "Though a ruler needed aliens to avoid the threat and the occurrence of group feeling amongst ones who were of his own

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<sup>146</sup>Göksu, *Gulam ve Ikta*, 22-23

<sup>147</sup>Sourdel, "Ghulam", 1080

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid*, 1080

geneology, in time the former gain a group feeling having lived together for long times hence, the assistance of ones who were not of his geneology is not proper for a ruler.”<sup>149</sup>

In this context, the Ottoman policy of absolute centralization of the state with the Sultan being the sole and absolute authority is noteworthy. Though his endless power was restricted by *ehl-i orf*, the avoidance of the military chiefs having absolute authority and autonomy can be regarded as one of the main features of the Ottoman policy. However, ironically in the Abbasid state the Ottoman administration in the eighteenth century could hardly restrict the establishment of *asabiyet*, group feeling and rebels amongst its janissary corps against the state<sup>150</sup>.

In conclusion, we may infer that the usage of foreigners, with all of its advantages and disadvantages, as *ghulams*, *hassa* servants of the ruler for administrative and military purposes seem to be rooted in the Abbasid state with the Turkish element. The Turks with regards to their martial qualities seemed to stand as the prototype of the *ghulam* or *memluk* element in these near eastern states.<sup>151</sup> So why the *ghulam* system was established and persisted within the Persian and Arabian realm can also be found within the need for a loyal (to the ruler), unrooted, and qualified manpower for the administrative and military apparatus. This makes up the quintessence of the *ghulam* system as established in the Arabian peninsula as well.

Consequently, Vryonis states that the success of *ghulam* system in the Abbasids, Ghaznevids, and successively in the Seljukids and the Ottomans, lies in the

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<sup>149</sup> İbn Haldun, *Mukaddime*, 37-43

<sup>150</sup> For the later stages of the janissary corps as becoming a powerful status group within the Ottoman state See Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of Ottoman order in the age of revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016)

<sup>151</sup> İsmail Kızıltoprak, “*Memluk*”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 29, (2004): 87-88

sovereignty of all in such a multi-lingual and a multi-ethnic atmosphere.<sup>152</sup> In this sense, twelfth century Anatolia is of importance as where the Seljukids brought the traditional Islamic *ghulam* system.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, it was through those Persian scribes of the Seljukids that this system of administrative practices was transferred to Anatolia.<sup>154</sup> Thus, the Ottomans found a model for themselves already established in Anatolia, which they adopted for the establishment of their *kapıkulu* institution and *hassa* soldiery.

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<sup>152</sup> Sp Vryonis, “Selçuklu Gulamı ve Osmanlı *Devşirmesi*”, in *Söğütten İstanbul*, eds. Mehmet Öz and Oktay Özel (İstanbul:İmge Kitabevi, 2000),518-519

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 553

<sup>154</sup> İnalcık, *The Classical Age*, 65

## CHAPTER III

### THE WESTERN NOTION OF HOUSEHOLD TROOPS

#### 3.1 ) The Roman Legionaries and the Praetorian Guard

The indirect impact or the transference of Roman institutions through the Byzantine state to that of the Ottomans as a result of the frequent interactions with the Byzantine state between the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries is rather a debatable issue, which has been discussed by some historians. As mentioned earlier, it was F.Köprülü who thoroughly pointed out the indirect influence of the Roman-Byzantine institutions by way of Medieval near eastern states on the Ottomans. H.İnalcık also indicated the impact of Roman-Byzantine institutions and practices on the Ottomans. Furthermore, İ.Ortaylı stresses the importance of having the knowledge of Rome for a thorough understanding of the Ottoman case.<sup>155</sup>

Within this perspective, it is worth it to discuss the Roman military tradition to detect any indirect impact of the Roman military tradition on the Ottoman case in terms of the existence of household troops. Given the scarcity and complexity of the sources, especially for the early years of Roman history, it is hard to portray a

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<sup>155</sup> The impact of Roman-Byzantine institutions to the Ottomans is discussed in the article of Halil İnalcık in the example of the resemblances between the Roman-Byzantine and Ottoman taxes, “The Problem of Relationship Between Byzantine and Ottoman Taxation”, *Akten*, XI. *Internationalen Byzantinisten Kongresses*, (1958): 237-242 and his *Osmanlılarda “Raiyyet Rûsumu”*, in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Toplum ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1992): 31-67.

complete and cohesive picture of the Roman military tradition that was valid for all periods and regions.<sup>156</sup> Nevertheless, the regal Roman military apparatus must have comprised of the king and his bodyguard and retainers, as well as the members of clan groups in the city or its vicinity.<sup>157</sup> As Roth pointed out, the status of the king was rather more like a chieftain or a warlord in the very early years of the early Roman period<sup>158</sup>. There, we observe a small formation around the king as his household retinue. This, no doubt, occurred out of the necessities of the protection of the kingship.

Besides, if we look at the structure of the Republican Roman army, there was an obligation that all free adult male citizens of the Roman state had to take part in the Roman army in wartime.<sup>159</sup> Over the course of time, the recruitment of all free male Roman citizens under 45 into the army constituted the regiments known as the 'legioneries'. As professional and heavy infantry, they served for several purposes. such as police force, taking part in some of the administrative apparatus or as constructors of the city walls.

They had an advantageous and honorable status as the '*milites*'- similar to the Ottoman military class - apart from the ordinary citizens of the empire. Therefore, it seems like the early Republican Roman army comprised all Roman citizens but not the slaves.<sup>160</sup> However, in the initial stage, in 216 BC some legions were recruited from the

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<sup>156</sup> Pat Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2-5

<sup>157</sup> Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army From Republic to Empire* (London: Routledge, 1984), 14.

<sup>158</sup> Jonathan Roth, *Roman Warfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 8. It is interesting to note that the term people derived from the Latin word *populus* denotes to the army and the term *legio(n)* which makes the backbone of the Roman army means the levy or recruitment of all the people or the soldiers, Southern, *The Roman Army*, 87

<sup>160</sup> [www.ancient.eu/Roman\\_legionary](http://www.ancient.eu/Roman_legionary) "Roman Legionary" by Donald L. Wasson 10 March 2021

slaves who were freed for the purpose of serving in the army;<sup>161</sup> However Roth states that those slaves were not used as combat forces, but rather were employed as labourers in the military units of the army.<sup>162</sup>

Therefore, whether those legionary regiments constituted a standing army under the direct command of the reigning emperor or not, is another issue to be discussed. Some of the legionaries of the late Republican period developed as permanent troops, known as the ‘Imperial Legions,’ and were stationed in Rome for the first time. However, as the Roman historians state, the Republican Roman army was not yet a professional and permanent standing army. Nevertheless, it was through the end of Republican period that troops were stationed in Rome for the first time on a standing basis, not disbanded in peace time<sup>163</sup>.

It should also be noted that in the former stages, the legions were under the command of the generals; and their loyalty was attributed to them, rather than the emperor and the Roman state. It was again by the reign of Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD) in the period of the Principate, that the legions formed a standing Roman army on a permanent basis on the condition of loyalty (and economic support) to the emperor.<sup>164</sup> Hence, the Roman legionary became the ‘man’ of the Roman emperor by an oath of allegiance to him, *sacramentum*.

Thus, we can infer that under Augustus, who attempted to form a centralist autocratic administration, the military became under the monopoly of the imperial family as the *hassa* soldiery of the emperor. Therefore, under such circumstances, the need of reorganizing the legions under the monopoly of the emperor and the imperial family

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<sup>161</sup> Boris Rankow, “Military Forces”, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, Vol II, Part 1: The Late Republic and The Principate, eds. P.Sabin and H.Van Wees at all.,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press),32

<sup>162</sup> Roth,*Roman Warfare*, 34

<sup>163</sup> Rankov, “Military Forces”, 44

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*,37

became a necessity. As mentioned earlier, the janissaries, with a similar mindset, played an important role as the essential tool in the centralization process of the Ottoman state. Hence, one can find similarities between the Roman legionaries and the Ottoman janissary corps as both being the permanent regular forces.

Legionaries were grouped to form a citizen militia of a manipular army made up of cohorts. Thus, they formed a legion of infantry and cavalry units who fought as heavy infantry armed with a round shield and a long spear in the style of Greek phalanx (form of roller). Here, we have a portrayal of a legionary established in the early Republican Roman period, who, over course of time, became a well-trained, disciplined, full-time, and paid permanent professional soldiery, fighting as heavily armed infantry under the command of the *legates*, the commander of the legions. The historians note their resemblance to the Ottoman janissary corps who fought as heavy infantry in the form of a Greco-Roman phalanx.<sup>165</sup>

As for the training process of the legionaries, they were taken to a training camp before becoming a legionary soldier. However, this was intended to be only military training, rather than a thorough education in all fields, unlike the Ottoman palace education. In addition, each legionary soldier was required to take an oath of allegiance to the Roman emperor to guarantee his loyalty, which was renewed every year<sup>166</sup>. This seemed to be a contract designating mutual dependence for both sides. The legionaries, like the Ottoman janissary corps, were a distinctive group of ‘military’ who also enjoyed exemption from taxes and were subjected to military law.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> İnalçık, “Osmanlı Tarihinde Devlet ve Asker”, “Osmanlı Tarihinde Devlet ve Asker.”*Doğu Batı*, III. No. 53, (2010), 13

<sup>166</sup> Rankov, “Military Forces”, 65

<sup>167</sup> Richard Alston, “The Military and Politics, ”, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, Vol II, Part 1: The Late Republic and The Principate, eds. P.Sabin and H.Van Wees *at all.*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 178-184

Thus, the legionaries became a privileged unit, who received special donations from the emperor, apart from receiving a certain pay called *stipendium*, paid in arrears, generally in three to four monthly installments.<sup>168</sup> So, is it a coincidence that we find the same ratio of payment in the near eastern tradition as *pişegani* that paid four times a year? It is noteworthy that the main interest of a legionary soldier was economic benefit; so when they were dissatisfied with their pay, they rebelled against the government like the janissary corps did. Moreover, as an influential social group, they were also very effective in accessions like the janissaries.

The legionary soldier, like the Ottoman janissaries, had to be single to ensure his loyalty merely to the emperor and to devote himself fully to the assigned military activities, nothing else. On the other hand, the prolonged military service of this manipular citizen army of legionaries no doubt contributed to the formation of a unit identity, *esprit de corps*, as a closed caste within troops, similar to the Ottoman janissary corporate identity, *asabiyet*.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the disbanding of the legionary Roman army was due to the entrance of all unqualified voluntary citizens to the regiments. This seems similar to the Ottoman *sekban* and *saruca* groups, who fulfilled the janissary cadres that led to the disintegration of the janissary institution.

### **Praetorian Guard as the Personal Bodyguard of the Roman Emperors**

In the time of Augustus, certain regiments, who previously functioned under the name of 'friends' or 'clients,' were reorganized as the permanent bodyguard of the emperor and the royal family. This seems to be a necessity of the new regime of

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<sup>168</sup>Dominic Rathbone, "Warfare and State", in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, Vol II, Part 1: The Late Republic and The Principate, ed. P.Sabin and H.Van Wees at all.,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 159



Augustus in confrontation with his monarchical tendencies in his centralist state<sup>169</sup>. Known as the ‘praetorian guard,’ whose members mostly came from Italy or the fully-Romanised provinces. The Roman state practically made use of the excessive number of troops, who had accumulated around the capital as trained personnel in the praetorian guard.<sup>170</sup> This practice resembles the practical Ottoman solution in utilizing the excessive number of war captives as the men of *kapıkulu* or as janissaries.

However, it was not the slave-originated troops that Augustus made as his main force for the praetorian guard; instead, he chose mostly the Italians as the native citizens of the Roman empire, who were thought to be more faithful and loyal than the foreign troops. This seems quite reasonable, considering the precedence of Roman citizenship as the important tradition in the Roman empire. So it is no doubt that the main source for the army and of household troops was the Roman citizens, rather than the foreigners.

Hence, the praetorian guard, as the more privileged group than the legionaries, fulfilled all the traditional roles as a guard unit, like ceremonial escorting, palace protection, and military aid in the battlefield.<sup>171</sup> It should be noted that, as the personnel retinue of the emperor, they could be employed in various services wherever there was a need. As the civil administrators, they were mostly employed as fire-fighting and police guard or as speculators in games and workers in construction projects, rather than in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Rankov, “Military forces”, 44

<sup>170</sup> Sandra J. Bingham, *The Praetorian Guard in the Political and Social Life of Julio- Claudian Rome*, (Phd Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1997), 4. See also her, *The Praetorian Guard: A History of Rome's Elite Special Households* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012)

<sup>171</sup> Rankov, “Military forces”, 47

<sup>172</sup> Bingham, *Praetorian Guard*, 7 Within this context, the municipal role of the janissary corps as the fire-fighters or as police force in the capital or in the provinces in the late eighteenth century is noteworthy.

Unlike the important *ghulams* who were promoted to high positions in the administrative or military ranks in the near eastern states, and unlike the Ottoman men of *kapıkulu* of highest rank, the praetorian guard seemed to be appointed only to rear services or to municipal services in the Roman state. Nevertheless, they constituted a distinguished group within the Roman state, having several immunities, such as tax exemptions like the Ottoman janissaries<sup>173</sup>.

According to Bington, it was the ability of their ‘prefects’ who helped the praetorian guards to be successful in the imperial household of the emperors.<sup>174</sup> As the head of the guard, the ‘praetorian prefect’ was the second man after the emperor who was allowed to carry a sword in the presence of the emperor. Moreover, he was of the highest equestrian rank who also functioned as advisory council of the emperor.

The position of the prefects recalls the position of the *ağa* of janissaries, who had a privileged status besides the Ottoman sultan. The praetorian prefects, who were chosen from the elite body of the empire as the commanders of the guard, were highly experienced men. Similarly they directed the intrigues within the guard, and they were very influential in the political affairs, like the *ağa* of janissaries.

Consequently, if we evaluate the organization of those groups, that is, the legionary regiments and the praetorian guard, we cannot assert with certainty that they shared a totally similar structure with the *ghulam-kul* system of the near east. There were some differences. The main difference is that they were not slaves originally captured for the purpose of military and administrative duties, and they did not take any systematic training for a given purpose. They were mostly employed in various services apart from the administrative posts. Therefore, the mentality behind the formation of such

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<sup>173</sup> Rankov, “Military forces”, 45

<sup>174</sup> Bington, *Praetorian Guard*, 8

household troops in the Roman state seems different from the near eastern *ghulam-kul* formation.

Thus, we may assume that the reorganization of legionaries and the Praetorian guard can be considered as the reflection of a new ideology under Augustus, that is based on the idea of absolutism, which took its roots from the Roman tradition as well as Hellenistic monarchs.<sup>175</sup> The formation of the legionaries and the Praetorian guard can also be regarded as part of the essential elements in a centralist state, where such groups, as influential status groups, formed the household and military retinue of the rulers.

### **3.2 Household Troops of the Carolingian State (688-741)**

The early European Medieval rulers seemed to have permanent personal military forces who fulfilled important representational and protective, as well as military functions. Rewarded with considerable wealth by the rulers, the household warriors as the bodyguards of the king functioned as a rapid force in the Carolingian period, similar to the housecarls of England in the eleventh century<sup>176</sup>. However, most of them did not have a special status.

In the Frankish kingdom of the Carolingian state (688-741), the household troops were usually recruited from the foreigners of semi-servile origins.<sup>177</sup> Hence, they could not take an eminent role as part of the political community in the Carolingian state. Therefore, we cannot state that the household troops in the early

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<sup>175</sup> Frank Ira Richard, "Scholae Palatinae: The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire", (PhD Thesis, University of California, 1965)

<sup>176</sup> Timothy Reuter, *Carolingian and Ottonian Warfare*, ed. Maurice Keen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13.

<sup>177</sup> [www.deremilitari.org](http://www.deremilitari.org) Sandra Alvarez, "The Recruitment of armies in the early Middle ages: What can we know?", June 30, 2014

Medieval period were specially trained and promoted to a special status of servant-warriors, as was the case in the near eastern *ghulam-kul* system.

With respect to the existence of a standing army in the Carolingian period, it is not clear whether the household forces constituted a permanent regular force in the army or not. On the other hand, there were the ‘conscript forces’ and ‘followings’ as military forces in the Carolingian state. The former covered all free adult males who were obliged to serve in the army, as was declared by Charlamagne in 806 in the order to Abbot Fulrad of St. Queen.<sup>178</sup> They constituted the essential core of the armies as self-equipped troops. As for the other category, the ‘followings’, they were more likely the retinues of the king, who had rather humble origins and were associated with the military forces that they served on a feudal basis.<sup>179</sup> They walked behind the king as their title designates.

However, according to some historians, the ‘followings’, by swearing an oath of loyalty to the lord, performed military service in compensation for land; and they made up the core of early Medieval armies.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, the difficulty in supporting the huge realm of the Carolingian state financially and strategically must have prevented the formation of a standing army in a regular and systematic way.

Consequently, we observe that the early Medieval household troops shared a totally different structure in terms of mentality and organization than their counterparts in the near east. As Charles Oman indicated, it was only by the end of the early Middle Ages that we witnessed a sort of specialization of a military class in

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<sup>178</sup> Pierre Riche, *The Carolingians A Family Who Forged Europe*, trans. M. Idomir Allen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 89

<sup>179</sup> [www.deremilitari.org](http://www.deremilitari.org) Sandra Alvarez, “The Recruitment of armies in the early Middle ages: What can we know?”, June 30, 2014

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

terms of function, with the rise of a heavy armed cavalry in the eleventh century, as opposed to the tribal armed forces of the earlier times.<sup>181</sup>

### 3.3) The Varangian Guards in the Eleventh Century Byzantine State

We detect a similar organization of household troops in the early Byzantine empire under the reign of Basil II (976-1025). They were organized as special regiments under the title of the ‘Varangians’. They were depicted as the personal life-guards of the emperor who were recruited from the foreigners, initially from the Christianized Russian and Scandinavian mercenaries, later among the Anglo-Saxon refugees who immigrated to the Byzantine territories as a result of the Norman rule in the eleventh century.<sup>182</sup> However, the stimulus for Basil II in organizing such forces was different. It was because he had grown up at a court of intrigue and betrayal. Thus, he decided to recruit foreign soldiers with no political attachments and family roots.<sup>183</sup>

If we look at their organization, we see that Varangians were similar to the Ottoman men of *kapıkulu*; they were multi-functional and served in the inner and outer sections of the Byzantine palace. Their main function was military and ceremonial service similar to the Ottoman janissary corps, who accompanied the emperor in both areas. As an elite unit recruited from the free men, they were

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<sup>181</sup> Charles Oman, *Ok. Balta ve Mancınık Ortaçağ'da Savaş Sanatı* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013), 24

<sup>182</sup> The etymology of their title is disputable. According to the general view, the term Varangian designates a foreigner who has taken service with a lord by a treaty of fealty to him. For the other, the title derives from the term *varar*, which means confidence and vow of fidelity, Sigfus Bröndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, ed. B.S. Benediktz Ulster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978),

<sup>183</sup> Sidney E. Dean, “Varangians and Mamluks”, *Medieval Warfare*, Vol.2, No.2 (2012), 18

subjected to severe military training, in which if they were unsuccessful, they were punished, which could be as harsh as being blinded or being executed.<sup>184</sup>

The Varangians, similar to the *ghulam-kul* or janissary personages, seemed to be an advantageous group within the Byzantine state. Apart from their income, they had the right to take the share of booty (one-third) and also received presents at each accession. Moreover, they had the right to eat at the table of the emperor at special banquets.<sup>185</sup>

By the early eleventh century, the Varangian regiments occupied an important part of the campaign army. They were present in the major campaigns of the eleventh century; they fought against the Seljukids in 1054 at Manzikert on the eastern frontier of Anatolia, and they were also present in the First Crusade in Nicea in 1097 and at Myriokephalon in 1176. This no doubt made them an element of acculturation between the Persian, Turkish, and Byzantine cultures<sup>186</sup>.

Varangian regiments also portray a closed caste similar to the janissary hearth. For one thing, they had their own guard-rooms in the imperial palace, apart from their military camps, located in several districts in the empire. In addition, they had a special church for their prayers and a private bath. They had the right of judging their own members, but under the supervision of the emperor.<sup>187</sup> These seem to be very

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<sup>184</sup> Bröndal, *Varangians*, 23

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 28 and 180

<sup>186</sup> For the military campaigns of Varangians see B.S. Benedikt Ulster, "The Evolution of Varangian Regiments in the Byzantine Army", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 26 Issue 1 (1969): 1-5. A striking example of a *longue duree* of acculturation could be searched within the style of their battle costumes. Wearing conical ridge helmets of Byzantine design, in course of time, they put on leather straps on their body armours with mail or ring hauberks over their shoulders crossing to the waist in front and the back which prevented the hauberks from shifting. Though this style was known as the 'Varangian bra', it was actually the adoption of Roman form transferred from Persian practice, Dean, "Varangians and Mamluks", 19.

<sup>187</sup> Bröndal, *Varangians*, 181

similar to the living conditions of the janissary corps who had their private barracks and jurisdictional autonomy.

On the other hand, Byzantine sources contradict each other in terms of the existence of the Varangian guard through the fourteenth century. Although they were thought to function until the end of the eleventh century as the only palace guard, the Chronicle of Morea mentions the last reference to Varangians in the fourteenth century.<sup>188</sup> The description of the Russian traveler Ignatius of Smolensk of the presence of Varangians in the coronation of Andronicus III ( 1328-1341 ), walking on either side of the emperor, proves their existence through the fourteenth century.<sup>189</sup>

Moreover, the miniature depicting the ceremonial role of the Varangian guard can also be regarded as an evidence of their existence until the fourteenth century. In the miniature, Ioannis VI Andronicus was presiding at the ecumenical council in 1351, where we see Varangians standing closest to the emperor with their white headgear adorned with golden ornaments.<sup>190</sup>

Consequently, although the Varangian regiment seemed closer to the janissary corps in terms of status, function and livelihood, we cannot assert that they were systematically acquired and trained, nor could have the chance of being promoted to high ranks within Byzantine hierarchy like their *ghulam-kul* counterparts in the near eastern tradition.

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<sup>188</sup>Savas Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium 1204-1453* (Leiden: Brill, 2011),113

<sup>189</sup> Ignatius of Smolensk, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. G.Majeska (WashingtonDC:1984), 106-9.

<sup>190</sup> Iohannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in the Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill ,1976) İnalcık expressed the view that the white headgear that was worn by the *hasa* regiments of the Ottomans might have been modelled on the white cap that the Byzantine *hasa* regiments – in this case the Varangian guard- had worn.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FORMATION OF THE *HASSA* SOLDIERY AND *KUL* IDENTITY IN THE EARLY OTTOMAN STATE

#### 4.1) The *Kuls* of the Early Ottoman State as the Prototype of *Hassa* Soldiery

The famous work of *Kutadgu Bilig* that was written in the eleventh century provides valuable information about the ancient Turkic state traditions, along with the Indo-Persia mirror-for-princes literature. The work is an important source to study and learn about the Ottoman administrative practices, which are thought to be a combination of the ancient Turkic state tradition and that of the Persian.<sup>191</sup> In the aforementioned work, the importance of wealth and a *hassa* army as the essential elements of the ruler is frequently mentioned by its author, Yusuf Has Hacip, who was acquainted with ancient Turkic state traditions.

The following verse from the work, *Kutadgu Bilig*, well reflects the function of the *kuls* in the Karahanid state in a thorough manner; “... I’m a *kul*, I’m the servant, My place is the gate, My trait is truthfulness and My disposition is to service my ruler.”<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Halil İnalcık, “Kutadgu Bilig’de Türk ve İran Siyaset Nazariye ve Gelenekleri” in *Osmanlı’da Devlet, Hukuki Adalet*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2000), 19

<sup>192</sup> Yusuf Has Hacip, *Kutadgu Bilig*, ed. Reşit Rahmeti Arat (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1988), 590. It is noteworthy that we find a similar practice of purchasing slaves at a younger age and training them for military and administrative services in the Karamanid state. It was mostly the Turkish slaves who were



In the Ottoman usage, we find the same term ‘gate,’ which designates the Ottoman *divan*, imperial council where the sultan supervises the affairs of the state.<sup>193</sup> Hence, the gate, *kapi*, is a place where the *kuls* as the servants of the sultan served him with veracity. At this point, it would be meaningful to analyze the early *kul* identity in the Ottoman state as it is the prototype of the Ottoman men of *kapıkulu*.

### ***Nökers, Comrades as the prototype of Kapıkulu***

The initial warband of Osman Gazi who gathered around him were a group of warriors under different names and function, fighting under him for *gaza*, holy war and booty. They were namely the *alps*, heros and the *gazis*, *alp-erens*, holy warriors, the *garibs*, strangers as foreigners or slaves, *nökers*, comrades.<sup>194</sup> They were the first retinue and military entourage of Osman Gazi who were considered to be his *kuls*.

Within these groups, *nökers* seemed to play an important role in the formation and development of the Ottoman *kul* identity and *kapıkulu* institution. According to H. İnalçık, the institution of *nökership* is considered to be the backbone of the *devşirme-kul* system and the jannissary institution. İnalçık states that the janissaries of the Sultan, the *ghulams* of the *begs* (*ghulam-i mir*) and the *ghulams* as the servants of the timariot *sipahis* were all in the position of *nökers*.<sup>195</sup>

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recruited as *ghulam* forces in the army, Abdülkerim Özeydin, “Karahanlılar”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 42 (2000), 410-411. The existence of *ghulams* traces to the time of Satuk Buğra Han, Reşat Genç, *Karahanlı Devlet Teşkilatı* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1981), 197.

<sup>193</sup> İnalçık, “Kutadgu Bilig”, 18

<sup>194</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye I* (Ankara: T.İş Bankası Yayınları, 2009), 9-11

<sup>195</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Kuruluş Dönemi Osmanlı Sultanları*, 22-23

Thus, *nökership* as a military-social system seemed to play an important role in the Ottoman society and also in the formation of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization as the *kuls* of the early Ottoman sultans. It was those *nökers* that were recruited from the allied states or captured enemies who formed the original household, that is the *kul taifesi* of Osman Gazi, who were tied to him with an oath of loyalty unto death.<sup>196</sup>

In addition, Weber's theory of charismatic leadership also helps to explain centralist and formalized patrimonialism, where the personal household of the sovereign constitutes the essential element.<sup>197</sup> Within this framework, being assembled around a leader, a *nöker*, means to become the intimate retinue of the leader as his *hassa* force. It should be noted that the most important function of the *nökers* was military. Hence, they can also be regarded as the prototype of *hassa* soldiery.

In the early chronics, we see that Osman Gazi granting favors to his *nökers* who submitted to him, as their good will depends on the favors granted to them by the Sultan.<sup>198</sup> Here we observe the mutual relationship between the two sides. Thus, loyalty and submission to the leader seem to be the essential factors in *nökership*. We also observe these factors in the traditional *ghulam* system of the near east as the prerequisites of the *ghulam-kul* identity.

In addition, a *nöker* doesn't need to be from a clan based on blood relationship, as it was in the Turco-Mongol tradition, but rather he could be a foreigner, a *garib* or a slave coming to fight for holy war and booty<sup>199</sup>. Within this

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<sup>196</sup> İnalçık, "Sultanism", 74

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*, 75

<sup>198</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 108 "...Çadırılı tekvuru, Lefke tekvuru muti' olub karşı geldiler. Memleketlerin teslim etdiler. Kendüler Osman Gazinün yanında yarar nökerler oldılar." "...ve bir dahi nökerlerüne dayım ihsan et kim senün ihsanun anun halinun duzağıdur..."

<sup>199</sup> İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye I*, 11

framework, the specific case of Köse Mihal, who was formerly the Christian *tekvur* of Harmankaya, then as the *nöker* of Osman Gazi, is noteworthy. It is very important to note that, in the personality of Köse Mihal, we observe the characteristics of the early *kuls* in the Ottoman state. He was portrayed as always being very close to Osman Gazi in the early chronics.<sup>200</sup>

In the account of Oruc's history, presented in the form of an epic, Köse Mihal appeared first as a Christian *tekvur*, a local Byzantine prince of Harmankaya, named Constantin; and after his conversion, he took the name *Abdullah*<sup>201</sup>. The historical identity of Köse Mihal not only reveals a typical *nöker* functioning as his comrades and comrade-in-arms, but also the prototype of *kapıkulu*, as a newly converted Muslim, who were usually named as *Abdullah* after their conversion to Islam.

Thus, Köse Mihal portrays a prototype of a Christian notable in a muslim society, eventually apostolized to become a part of the ruling class. So the question is: is it a coincidence that the first generation converts in the Ottoman circles were generally named *Abdullah* where we find them as part of the *kapıkulu* in the Ottoman military class?<sup>202</sup>

Within this context the name *Abdullah* deserves some interpretation in terms of its significance as a name attributed to the *kuls* of the early Ottoman state. It was a common practice for the newly converted *kuls* in the Ottoman *kapıkulu* system to bear

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<sup>200</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 99. "...Köse Mihal her dayım anun ile bile olurdu."

<sup>201</sup> Oruc Beg, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 10-11, 26. Though the historical identity of Köse Mihal is questionable, archival evidence proves him as being the descendant of Mihaloğlu family. For the historical identity of Köse Mihal See S. Hopwood, "The Tales of Osman: Legend or History", XII. Türk Tarih Kurumu Bildiriler, C.III, Kısım III, (Ankara,2002),1-2

<sup>202</sup> Sp.Vryonis, "Byzantine and Turkish Societies and their sources of Manpower" in *Studies on Byzantine, Seljuks and the Ottomans*, (1981), 125-140, According to Vryonis the *kunya*, *bin Abdullah*, denoting to new muslims, is a nomenclature which reflects the absorption (through conversion) or symbiosis of the foreign element in the cultures. He further states that similar terms with similar connotations also exist in the Byzantine society but without religious or patronymic colors.

the name *Abdullah* or another variation of the name with the adjective '*abd*' denoting the slave and servant of *Allah*.

M.Kunt, in his analysis of the Ottoman names, suggests that the newly converted *kuls* were given the name *Abdullah* or *Abdülmennan* as their father's name, rather than as their first name that referred to one's new muslim status.<sup>203</sup> As Kunt further asserts, in the places where islamization was dense, we find the name *Abdullah* among the *kuls* as their father's name rather than their first name. However, in the places that had long been muslim we find the name, *Abdullah* as one's muslim first name.<sup>204</sup>

We also find many references to the name *Abdullah* in the early *vakf* registers. The following example is worth mentioning to indicate the early existence of the name *Abdullah* given to a father of a *kul* at an early period. In the *vakfiye* of Orhan dated H.761/1360, we find the name *Şahin bin Abdullah*. In the same *vakf* register we find Evrenkuş *hadim*, as the man servant.<sup>205</sup> Kunt interprets these pre-Islamic names, such as, *Şahin* or any other names of birds given to *kuls* like *Balaban*, *Karaca* or *Doğan*, as the names of the newly converted *kuls*.<sup>206</sup>

The following examples are also noteworthy since they provide some clues of the existence of the name *Abdullah* in the early Ottoman *kul* system. In the *vakfiye* of Asporça Hatun<sup>207</sup>, the wife of Orhan Gazi, dated H.723/1323, we find *Serdar Lütfullah bin Abdullah* as one of the eyewitnesses. In another *vakfiye* of Lala Şahin

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<sup>203</sup> Metin Kunt, "Ottoman Ages and Ottoman Names", *Journal of Turkish Studies-İnalcık Festschrift*, 10-11, (1987)

<sup>204</sup> Kunt, "Osmanlı Dirlik Kapı-Düzeni ve *Kul* Kimliği", 163-164

<sup>205</sup> İ.H.Uzunçarşılı, "Gazi Orhan Bey'in Vakfiyesi", *Belleten*, XXVI/107, (1963):442

<sup>206</sup> Kunt, "Osmanlı Dirlik-Kapı Düzeni", 166, There were also such pre-Islamic names like *İskender*, *Firuz*, *Bihruz*, *Ferhed* and *Hüsrev* given to newly converted *kuls* by the impact of Iranian-Sasanian influence.

<sup>207</sup> *Bursa Vakfiyeleri I*, 24.

Paşa<sup>208</sup> dated H.749/1348, we find *Mehmed bin Abdullah* as *miralay*, a military title denoting a colonel; and *Ömer bin Abdullah* as *hazinedar*, a treasurer.

Assuming that those aforementioned people were newly converted *kuls*, we may assert that the slave-originated *kuls* could hold positions in the statecraft at an early age. However, Kunt, in his counter argument, claims that such common muslim names, like *Mehmed bin Abdullah* or *Abdullah bin Ahmed* could hardly be newly converts but someone from *ulema* or clergy.<sup>209</sup>

In addition, in the *vakfiye* of Süleyman Paşa<sup>210</sup> dated H.761/1360 which was designed for the *zaviye* of Karaoğlan, we find *Şahin bin Abdullah*, *Orunkuş Hadim* and *İlyas el-Matbahi*, the chief of the kitchen. These titles can also be regarded as the indication of the newly converted *kuls* employed in the services of *zaviyes* in an early period.

It is important to mention that under Bayezid I's reign (1389-1403) the *kuls* coming from *devşirme* could hold high ranks in the statecraft and were granted *timars*.<sup>211</sup> On the other hand, in the *temlikname* of Orhan, we find the name *tavaşi Mukbil*, the eunuch in the service of the palace<sup>212</sup>. All these titles can be regarded as indications of the existence of the slave-originated *kuls* appointed as palace and administrative officers early in the age of Orhan Gazi<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, 54

<sup>209</sup> Kunt, "Osmanlı Dirlik-Kapı Düzeni", 166

<sup>210</sup> *Bursa vakfiyeleri I*, 132

<sup>211</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Ghulam in the Ottoman Empire", 1086

<sup>212</sup> Uzunçarşılı, "Orhan Gazi Temliknamesi", *Belleten* 5/19 (1941):40

<sup>213</sup> İnalcık, "Ghulam in the Ottoman Empire", 1085-6. In the *vakfiye* of Mekece of Orhan Beg we find the same Tavaşi Şerafeddin Mukbil as the *mütevelli* and himself as *hadim* (*harem ağası*) registered as the manumitted slave of Orhan Beg, *Bursa vakfiyeleri I*, 32. Uzunçarşılı considers those personalities who were named *b. Abdullah* as the *azatlı kuls*, "Çandarlızade Ali Paşa Vakfiyesi ( H.808/1405-6)", *Belleten*, C.V, No. 20, (1941): 562

The following example is also noteworthy: the name *Abdullah* was applied to *kuls* coming from novice barracks. In the *vakfiye* of Hasan Ağa dated H.828/1425, Hasan Ağa himself appeared as *Hasan Ağa bin Abdullah*, who was once a member of *acemi* hearth and later became the *sekbanbaşı* of the janissary hearth, as one of the *emirs* of Bayezid I.<sup>214</sup> Also, in a document dated 1385, the name of the two janissaries *İlyas bin Abdullah* and *İskender bin Abdullah* can be considered to be a clue for the slave-originated *kuls* who were the member of the janissary hearth.<sup>215</sup>

To clarify the usage of *bin Abdullah*, Lowry, by examining a sixteenth century record in a *tapu* register, interprets the term in the form of *veled-i kul*, as the son of a *kul*, or rather ‘the son of a janissary’. Lowry further states that, although the assertion deserves more study in a broader context, *veled-i kul* is a technical term applied to the sons of the janissaries.<sup>216</sup>

On the other hand, in the *vakfiye* of Mihaliç Beg<sup>217</sup>, dated H.763/1362, we find *Özbek bin Abdullah subaşı el-Karahisari*, as the chief of the corps. It is to be noted that here, the name with the epithet, *el-Karahisari*, refers to the place of where he was living as a native. This may also suggest his Muslim origin. Therefore, we may assume that in this context the name *Abdullah* appeared as a common Muslim name, rather than designating to one’s status as a newly converted *kul*.

Even though it is difficult to distinguish the two usages of the name, we can state that *Abdullah* is a common name usually attributed to the newly converts.

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<sup>214</sup> *Bursa Vakfiyeleri-I*,336

<sup>215</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Kapukulu Ocakları I*,145

<sup>216</sup> Heath Lowry and Anthony Bryer (ed.), “The Island of Limnos: A Case Study on the Continuity of Byzantine Forms under Ottoman Rule”, in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, (NY, 1986):235-259

<sup>217</sup> *Bursa vakfiyeleri I*,152

Likewise, in the vakfiye of Sultan Murad I<sup>218</sup> dated H.787/1385, we find *Hacı Hasan bin Abdullah*, his epithet as the '*hacı*' may indicate his Muslim origin. In conclusion, the usage of the name *Abdullah*, whether as the name of a muslim born or a converted new muslim, deserves careful attention in analyzing the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization.

On the other hand, the early Ottoman chroniclers mention various references to early *kuls* as the comrade-in-arms of Osman Gazi, the prototype of *kapıkulu*. Initially, *Balabancık Bahadır*, as the *hass kul* of Osman Gazi, is mentioned as he who assisted him in the siege of Bursa.<sup>219</sup> This shows that *hassa kuls* were employed in military affairs at an early stage. We also find the term *karavaşı* as a female slave in Aşıkpaşazade's account as the servant of Evrenos Beg.<sup>220</sup>

Consequently, as the early Ottoman sources above indicated, the Ottoman *kul* identity with newly converted *kuls* began to take shape early in the fourteenth century, as seen in the examples of *nökers* and slave-originated *kuls* holding military and administrative ranks early in the Ottoman service.

### ***Yaya Corps as the First Hassa Soldiery and Kuls***

The early Ottoman chroniclers mention *yaya* corps as the first *kuls* in the status of *kapıkulu* and regular *hassa* soldiery of the early Ottoman state. Their status, as the early example of *kapıkulu*, is discussed by Palmer,<sup>221</sup> based on the accounts of Aşıkpaşazade and Oruc Beg. Before commenting on the view of Palmer, it is worth

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<sup>218</sup> *Bursa Vakfiyeleri I*, 158

<sup>219</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 106 "... *Balabancuk derler idi bir kulu var idi. Ol dahı gayet dilir er idi...* "

<sup>220</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 120 "...*Evrenüz beyin getürdiği kulu, karavaşı bu taraftan gelen elçilere üleştirdi...* "

<sup>221</sup> J.A.B. Palmer, "The Origin of the Janissaries", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 35/2, (1952/3):448-481

mentioning briefly the accounts of the establishment of the *yaya* corps, both in Aşıkpaşazade's and Oruc's text so that Palmer's assertions can be put in proper perspective<sup>222</sup>.

In both texts, we find the same conversation between Orhan Gazi and his vizier Alaaddin Paşa regarding the establishment of *yaya* corps<sup>223</sup>. Alaaddin Paşa suggested to Orhan Gazi to build up a *hassa* force from the excessive number of soldiery under his command, who were then distinguished by a peculiar symbol of their own, that is, the 'white headgear', apart from the rest of the soldiery, who were carrying 'red headgears'.

There exists a subtle difference in the narration of the two chroniclers which captured the attention of Palmer in terms of the *hassa* status of *yaya* corps. In Aşıkpaşazade's text, we read that the white headgear worn by the *hassa* soldiery was to distinguish them from the soldiery of the other *begs*. However, in Oruc's text, the white caps that would be worn by the *hassa kuls* of Orhan Gazi was to distinguish them from the rest of the Ottoman soldiery<sup>224</sup>.

In this argument, Palmer prefers Oruc's account to Aşıkpaşazade's, as it was in Orhan's time and some of the soldiery in the Ottoman territory was distinguished as his *hassa kuls*<sup>225</sup>. The expression of *ilden yaya çıkar*<sup>226</sup>, 'let *yayas* be enrolled from

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<sup>222</sup> The text on the establishment of *yaya* corps in Aşıkpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* by Atsız edition (*Bab 31*, 117-118) was corrected by Halil İnalçık in N.E.Mergen, "The *Yaya* and *Müsellem* Corps in the Ottoman Empire (Early Centuries)", (MA thesis, Bilkent University, 2001.) For *Yaya* and *müsellem* institution in the Ottoman Empire See H.Doğru, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yaya Müsellem Taycı Teşkilatı* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1990) and M.Arıkan, *XV. Asırda Yaya ve Müsellem Ocakları (Toprak Tasarrufu, Vergi Muafiyeti ve Hizmet)*, (Unpublished Ass. Proff. Thesis, Ankara University, 1966)

<sup>223</sup> In all the chronics Alaaddin Paşa appeared as the 'brother' of Orhan Gazi. However archival evidence proves that he was not the brother but 'vizier' to Orhan Gazi. See, İ.H.Uzunçarşılı, "Osmanlılarda İlk Vezirlere Dair Mütalala", *Belleten*, 9/3 (1939):99-109

<sup>224</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 117-118.

<sup>225</sup> Palmer, "The Origin of the Janissaries", 490

<sup>226</sup> İnalçık, *Osmanlı Sultanları*, 72.



the province' (of Orhan) in Aşıkpaşazade's account, actually reinforces the argument of Palmer. The *yayas* were then enrolled within the territory of the Ottomans, not from the territory of other *begs*.

On the other hand, the expression *ilden yaya çıkar* also refers to a call for the campaigns within the Ottoman territory. After the call, the *yayas* assembled under the flag of Orhan Beg. This also suggests that the status of the *yayas* was not permanent nor did they constitute a standing army in the age of Orhan Beg. So it is apparent that, as in Oruc's account, we have a differentiation of soldiery within Orhan's retinue as the '*kuls*'.

Thus, if we accept the account of Oruc, like Palmer, that means the Ottomans had already established the prototype of *hassa* soldiery early in the fourteenth century in the example of *yaya* corps, apart from the *akıncı-gazi* forces. In addition, Aşıkpaşazade narrates that being enrolled as a *yaya* must have been a distinguished status, as evidenced by people offering bribes to the *kadıs* to become *yaya* soldiery. So it is evident that the term *yaya* can be regarded as the equivalent of *kul* in terms of its advantageous status in its initial stage.

However, we cannot assert that they were specially trained for the purpose of administrative and military services, since the *yayas* were then part-time peasant-soldiers who were called up for the campaigns. Considering that they engaged in agriculture on their farms granted to them by the state, we cannot regard them as regular permanent forces as part of a standing army.

In any case, the *yayas*, whose status was distinguished from the rest of the Ottoman soldiery, stood as the first *hassa* soldiery of the Ottoman state, but not on a regular and permanent basis. After the establishment of the janissary corps in the

second half of the fourteenth century, the *yayas* had to transfer their *hasa* status to this new group of soldiery, janissary corps, who constituted the first standing army of the time. Even though the *yaya* corps were no longer considered to be the *hasa* soldiery of the sultan, they continued to act as active combatants or as emergency troops recruited in times of *nefir-i 'am*, a general call to arms, until the first half of the fifteenth century. Afterwards, they were taken to rear services as auxiliary troops until the abolition of their institution in the sixteenth century<sup>227</sup>.

Within that context, why the janissaries supplanted the *yayas* in terms of *hasa* status; or why the Ottoman state felt the need to create new *hasa* soldiery are the issues that deserve further discussion. Most critics of the age asserted that their loose organization, with regards to the frequent change in their status as temporary auxiliary troops, should be looked at as an initial reason. Moreover, the hard conditions they were employed for, such as, cleaning the harbors, hauling cannons, guarding mountainpasses, must have had an impact on the disorganization of the troops<sup>228</sup>.

Most importantly, acting both as soldiers or peasants (doing farm work) must have been burdensome for them. Thus, the state found a solution by separating the military from agricultural activities. Therefore, new regiments needed to be established as regular permanent forces. Hence, the Ottomans found the practical solution for the excess slave source of war captives gained as a result of the large campaigns in Rumelia and utilized them for the military and administrative needs of the state on a permanent basis. This phenomenon, as discussed earlier, was in contrast

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<sup>227</sup> For the conscription of *yaya* corps in sixteenth century see Gyula Kaldy-Nagy, "The Conscription of Müsellem and Yaya Corps in 1540", *Hungaro-Turcica Studies in honor of Julius Nemeth*, (Budapest: Lorand Eötvös University, 1976): 275-281

<sup>228</sup> For the firmans about rear services the *yayas* were employed See Ayn-i Ali Efendi, *Al-i Osman der Hülasa-i Mezamin-i Defter-i Divan*, ed. M.T. Gökbilgin (İstanbul: Enderun Yayınları, 1979)

with the near eastern mentality of having an army of unrooted foreign troops apart from the house of the ruler.

Furthermore, the Ottoman bureaucrats and *ulema* – acquainted with the near eastern tradition - were probably aware of the advantages of having a multi-ethnic army as the *hassa* element, rather than the employment of native elements, as experienced by the *yaya* corps. So in contrast with the near eastern tradition, the Ottomans then decided to utilize the war captives as slave-originated foreign troops as its *hassa* force.

#### **4.2) The Establishment of Janissary Corps as *Hassa Kuls* in the early Chronicles and *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan***

The first reference to janissaries in the Ottoman sources is in Aşıkpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*.<sup>229</sup> In other earliest chronics, such as Neşri's *Cihannüma*, Oruc's *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, and the Anonymous *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, we find the same version of the account in Aşıkpaşazade's work with some variations<sup>230</sup>. Thus, to better

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<sup>229</sup> For Aşıkpaşazade's life and work, See Halil İnalçık, "How to Read Aşıkpaşazade's History", in *Essays in Ottoman History*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1998), 31-55. As noted in the introductory part of the study, the importance of Aşıkpaşazade's work is his usage of an authentic contemporary source; a *menakıbnâme* by Yahşi Fakih, up to the period of Bayezid I. As İnalçık mentioned in his article, rather than considering the genre of *menakıbnames* purely as legends, efforts should be made to infer authentic historical information from them. Within this framework, Aşıkpaşazade's work can be regarded as a good example of this genre which cover real authentic historical information and legendery material. On the other hand, as İnalçık mentions in his aforementioned article Aşıkpaşazade's comments should be evaluated with caution since being a descendant of a *Vefai-Babai* order family whose members had always been extended favors by the Ottoman sultans, his work must have reflect his appreciation to the Ottoman dynasty. Moreover, as İnalçık stresses, one should bear in mind that his work also reflects the ideas current in the first years of the Ottoman state.

<sup>230</sup> For the texts on the establishment of janissaries in the mentioned chronicles, See Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, Atsız ed. 127-128; Neşri, *Cihan-nüma I*, 196-199; Oruc Beg, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, Babinger ed., 21-22 and the Anonymous *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, Giese ed., 24-25. Regarding the work of İdris-i Bitlisi, *Heşt bihişt*, as Palmer analyzed, the passages about the establishment of *yaya* corps and janissary corps seemed to be confused with anachronistic expressions. So for the early stages of janissary corps, İdrisi's work can not be preferred as a source presenting original information. However his work should also be considered as a source which covers first-hand information on the

determine a complete and original account of the establishment of janissary corps, individual texts of the early chroniclers on this account should be analyzed comparatively with the method of text critic.

The establishment process of a group of new soldiery under the name *yeni-çeri*, the ‘new troop’, started after the conquest of Edirne in 761/1361 in the age of Murad I, which was given in all the chronicles except in Neşri who gives the date as 762/1362.<sup>231</sup> However, as İnalçık revealed, the conquest of Edirne was in 1363<sup>232</sup>. So we can state that the janissary corps were established in 1363 after Murad I ascended the throne in Edirne.<sup>233</sup>

In all the accounts of the chroniclers, we find that Lala Şahin and Evrenos Beg, as frontier *begs*, concentrated their raids on Zağra, İpsala and Filibe. This signifies that the Ottoman state was then expanding into the Balkans with concentrated raids, which means a high accumulation of manpower as war captives taken as a result of these raids. As mentioned earlier, this must have stimulated the Ottomans with the practical solution of utilizing those war captives for military purposes as ‘slave soldiery’.

Afterwards, by the suggestion of Kara Rüstem as a *danişmend*, a wise person from *ulema* from Karaman, and Çandarlı Halil as *kadı-asker*, the idea of utilizing war captives was discussed. Hence, it was the idea of those two personalities, both being

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parts when he is not in ambivalence with the other early chroniclers. Palmer, “The Origin of the Janissaries”, 380

<sup>231</sup> Neşri, *Cihan-nüma I*, 197

<sup>232</sup> İnalçık. “Osmanlı Tarihinde Devlet ve Asker” 12. See also H. İnalçık, “Edirne’nin Fethi (1361)”, in *Edirne*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1993):137-154

<sup>233</sup> İnalçık, “Osmanlı Tarihinde Devlet ve Asker”, 12

men of *ulema*, who came up with the idea of collecting one-fifth of the war captives for the sultan as his legal right according to Islamic law<sup>234</sup>.

Considering that both men came from the region of Karaman, the place of the Karamanid Principality, whose founders come to Anatolia from Azerbaijan as a result of the Mogol invasion, they seemed to play a key role in transferring the Persian administrative traditions, ascended from their ancestors to the Ottomans.<sup>235</sup> Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that the Karamanids, originally the descendants of a Turkish family of the Afşar branch of the Oğuz tribes, also follow the administrative traditions of the Seljukids.<sup>236</sup> According to Huart, the credit for the creation of regular regiments belongs to the merit of Çandarlı Halil, when Medieval Europe was still at the age of armed bands and long before the formation of companies of archers in England and a century before the creation of the first standing army in France.<sup>237</sup>

### ***Pencik Regulation***

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that in all the chronics, the legal portion of the one-fifth is assigned to the sultan. This regulation must trace its justification to the Islamic jurisdiction indicating, ‘the employment of slaves for the well-being of the

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<sup>234</sup> For Kafadar, the novelty of the idea is obviously the beginning of a ‘new army’ under the direct control of the Ottoman state. However, the tax imposed on the *gazi* forces in Rumelia could be a punishment for their independent actions where Kara Rüstem was appointed to collect them in 1376/7, Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112-3

<sup>235</sup> Faruk Sümer, “Karamanoğlu”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.24 (2003): 454-460. Çandarlı Halil Paşa is from the village of Cendere, Candır – Sivrihisar, Nallıhan which was once a village of the Karamanid province. İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1980), 1-2 and Münir Aktepe, “Çandarlı Ali Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8, (1993):209-213

<sup>236</sup> Faruk Sümer, “Karamanoğlu”, 454

<sup>237</sup> Huart, “Yeni Çeri”, 573

muslims'<sup>238</sup>. This is narrated with different expressions in each of them. In Aşıkî we find the expression, *hanlık malı* as one-fifth the right of the *han*; in the Anonymous *Tevarih* we find the expression, *beğlik malı* as the right of the *padişah*; in Oruc we find it as *ganimet malı* as the right of the *padişah*; and in Neşri we find the expression as *sultanlık malı* as the right of the *hünkâr*. Differences in terms can be regarded as an indication of the authors' interpreting the original text in their own way, and each giving the Ottoman sultan a different title according to their mindset. It would be proper at this point to mention Menage's criticism of the early chronicles for changing the original text.<sup>239</sup>

Within this perspective, it would be meaningful to give some information on the early *pencik* regulation in the Ottoman state. İ.H.Uzunçarşılı, based on a *kanunname*, a law code of *pencik* dated to the end of the fifteenth century, gives the date of the beginning of *pencik* regulation as 1363.<sup>240</sup> So, considering that the establishment of the janissary corps was after the conquest of Edirne in 1363, we may date the early application of the *pencik* regulation to after 1363. It is to be noted that the two dates coincide.

Additionally, in another law code of the *pencik* regulation it is stated that *pencik* is to be taken if a campaign is in the form of *haramilik* with the participation of more than a hundred campaigners with the intention of *gaza* to the *darül-harb*.<sup>241</sup> This

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<sup>238</sup> Molla Hüsrev, *Dürer'ül-Hukkam fî Şerh-i Gurerü'l-Ahkam I*, ed. Sevim İlgürel (Ankara:TTK Yayınları, 1988), 46 See also Hezarfen, Hüseyin Efendi *Telhüs'ül Beyan fî Kavanin-i Al-i Osman* (İstanbul:Fazilet Neşriyat, 2017), Vrk.79

<sup>239</sup> Menage, "The Ottoman Historiography", 74

<sup>240</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları I*, .9 (For the *Kanunname* See Milli Tettebbular Mecmuası, no.2, 325)

<sup>241</sup> Ahmet Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, 2.Kitap,(İstanbul: Fey Vakfı,1999),128-134. According to Akgündüz, there exists two *kanunnames* about *pencik* which had survived. One of them dates before 1510 where we find information how the *pencik* was collected. "...uç beğleri, akıncı ve sair yiğit ve yeğil cem' idüb gaza niyetine Darü'l-harbe seğırtmek akındır. Ve uç beğleri, kendüler eşmeyüb adamlarına akıncı ve sair yiğit ve yeğil koşub göndermek, eğer eşen kimesneler yüz ve yüzden ziyade olursa, haramiliktir. Bu iki kısımdan penç-yek alınır. Ve eğer uç

also is in conformity with the Ottoman intention of *gaza* raids to the Christian provinces. In any case , those *pencik oğlanı*, as the property of the Ottoman sultan, were no doubt a good source of income for the Ottoman state since the ones who could not afford this one-fifth ratio, gave instead 125 *akçes* for its counterpart.

On the other hand, if we look at the historical background of the *pencik* regulation, we find that it was an Islamic practice since the time of the Abbasids.<sup>242</sup> The term derives from the Persian word *penç ü yek* as a one-fifth ratio and is regarded as the right of the ruler either as property in kind or cash. This is also mentioned in the Holy Book of *Kuran*.<sup>243</sup> So it became a regulation of Islamic law as *hums-i şer'i*, that is taking one-fifth of war captives as *beytü'l-mal*.<sup>244</sup> Similarly, in the Seljukid state and in the principality of Aydın we see the same ratio, one-fifth taken as *pencik*.<sup>245</sup>

In the *Kavanin*, we also find information on *pencik kulus*. It is stated that the ones collected as a result of the raids from the Christian provinces in the realm of Bilecik were named as *pencik oğlanı*, or, since one-fifth of them were regarded as the legal right of the sultan, they were registered as *pençik kulu*.<sup>246</sup>

In the account of the early chronics, it is stated that Evrenos Beg was assigned to take war captives in Gelibolu or its counterpart of 125 *akçes* with the approval of

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*beğleri kendüler eşmeyüb adam gönderib eşen adam yüzden eksük olursa, çetedür, penç-yek alınmaz....”*

<sup>242</sup> Abdülkadir Özcan, “Pencik”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.34, (2007),226. For the pre-Islamic application of *pencik* see Chapter V of the thesis.

<sup>243</sup> Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, 2.Kitap, 128

<sup>244</sup> Erdem, *Osmanlıda Köleliğin Sonu*, 35

<sup>245</sup> Enveri, *Düsturname*, 59 “...pencüyek çıkardı kısmet eyledi leşkerin cümle ganimet eyledi...”

<sup>246</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, 15 “...Bu toplanan oğlancıklara pençik kulu demeye sebep şudur, Hristiyan vilayetlerinden olan Bilecik diyarına akın yapıp ele geçen oğlanların beşte birini padişah için alıp üçyüz oğlanı deftere kaydettiler. Bunlara pençik kulu demeye sebep budur...” In the *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, the term *pencik kulu* was used by the author both denoting to the children collected but also for the official who collected them.

the *kadı* <sup>247</sup>. Being a descendant of a Byzantine family in the service of the Karamanid Principality, Evrenos Beg was a very experienced statesman and commander, who was familiar with the practices of different cultures in the frontier. Asis stated in Neşri's chronic, Murad I always asked for the advice of Evrenos Gazi on important issues, as he is the most experienced in the frontiers.<sup>248</sup> Thus, it becomes clear why Evrenos Gazi was assigned to register these war captives in Gelibolu.

However, it is to be noted that even in this early period of Ottoman state, frontier *begs* power was not absolute; rather their power was restricted, and in the frontier the *akıncı* forces were under the control of the pretenders, not the frontier *begs*.<sup>249</sup> In any case, the role of frontier *begs*, like Evrenos Beg, who were accustomed with the affairs in the frontier lines, cannot be denied in organizing the military and administrative apparatus, and conquests of the early Ottoman state in the Balkans.

### ***Pencik Oğlanı as the early Kuls***

In the accounts of the early chronics, we have information on how the process of *kulluk* begins. Initially, upon the suggestion of Çandarlı Halil, the *pencik oğlanı* were given to the Turkish farmers in Anatolia for a couple of years' training. In Aşıkpaşazade, we find the expression of *Türke vermek*, 'given to the Turk' to learn Turkish as part of their training process. In the history of Oruc and the Anonymous *Tevarih*, we find additional information on this issue; both works stating that they

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<sup>247</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 271 Also in this part we have additional information in Neşri on the term one-fifth as *hums* and its counterpart of 125 akçe as *geçit akçesi*. As additionally narrated by Neşri, *gazis* began to run away in order not to bring the war captives or give the portion of 125 akçe. Here we see how Neşri uses the original source more fully or add information from other sources.

<sup>248</sup> Neşri, *Cihan-nüma I*, 271 "... Rivayet olunur ki hüinkar....andan Hacı Evrenoza eyitti, nice zamandır seni bu ucta kodum, bunların ayinin, erkanın bildin ve tecrübe ettin..." For the uc beğis in Rumelia see Hasan Basri Karadeniz, *Osmanlılar ve Rumeli Uç Beyleri* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2015) and Ayşegül Kılıç, *Bir Osmanlı Akıncı Beyi Evrenos Bey* (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2014)

<sup>249</sup> Karadeniz, *Osmanlılar ve Rumeli Uç Beğleri*, 108



were given to Turkish farmers in Anatolia for farming and learning Turkish for a period of three to four years.

The history of Neşri also provides additional information on their Islamization process. This is a good example for how chronicles complement each other in processing the original source. As we learn from the accounts of the chronics, they were brought to the *kapı*, gate, to become the *kul* of the sultan. Hence, they became *yeniçeri*, the ‘new troop’ with their distinctive symbol of white headgear. In the following pages we will see how *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* became a complementary source for the early Ottoman chronics.

However, considering that the author of the *Kavanin* was an eye-witness of the period between 1575 to 1617, his narration for the early years of the janissary institution is anachrotic in some cases; and he seemed to confuse the narration on the establishment of *yaya* corps with that of the janissary corps. Nevertheless, the information known so far on the establishment of the *acemi ocağı* seemed to come from *Kavanin*.

According to *Kavanin*, *acemi ocağı* was first established in Gelibolu in the time of Murad I, where the slaves were first employed in naval service for one akçe in the ships between Lapseki and Çardak. Then, after 5 to 10 years of service, they were recruited for the *acemi ocağı*.<sup>250</sup> This practice reveals the very early stages of the janissary corps which all the early chronics lack.

On the other hand, if we analyze *Kavanin* with respect to writings on the *kul* identity of the corps as the *hassa* soldiery, the information presented mostly conforms with the near eastern concept of *ghulam-kul* identity. First of all, as mentioned in the

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<sup>250</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* 7-8

*Kavanin*, the war captives or *devşirme* children collected were to be non-Turkish and non-Muslim for the initial reason that, since they would later become *hünkar kulu* or *kapıkulu*, their relatives might also disguise as *kapıkulu* and exploit this position.

So, in order to preserve order in the society, those who are collected were to be rootless. The idea was that this, i.e., having no ties, would make them good soldiers; and being converted to Islam would give them extra incentive to fight for their new religion and become hostile to their own non-Muslim relatives.<sup>251</sup>

According to an observation of an eye-witness novice in the Ottoman palace in the seventeenth century, those rootless converted Christians served the sultan in a more loyal and vigorous manner than the Turks, since their only hope was to get favors from the sultan<sup>252</sup>. So it is obvious that loyalty to the sultan was essential to become a *kul*.

Additionally, the marital status of the novices and their qualities were also important in forming a devoted *kul* to the sultan. As for the *Kavanin*, the boys collected had to be single and their affection only given to the sultan. Within this framework, the term *kuloğlu* must have designated the janissaries who married at a later age. Hence, the term *kuloğlu* designates the sons of the janissaries, either coming

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<sup>251</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 13-14 “...Sakın ve sakın Türk evladını almayalar... Türk evladını almamaktan fayda odur ki onların çoğu hünkar kulluğuna geçerse, memleketlerindeki bütün akraba ve yakınları, hünkar kulu oldum diye halkı incidib tedürgün edib, öşür ve diğer vergilerini vermedikten başka, yeniçeri kimliğine girib, o diyardaki sancak beyleri, alay beyleri, vilayet voyvodaları, onları gerçek kapıkulu zannedib, zabt edemeyüb, taşrada hünkar kulu olan ile olmayan belirsiz olunca, gecikmeden haklarından gelmek mümkün olmayub, İstanbula arz itmek gereküb, fitne ve fesat ve eşkıya türemesine sebep bu olur...” “....Hristiyan evladını toplamakta fayda oldur ki, Islama geldiği gibi din gayreti baş gösterib, kendi halkına ve akrabalarına düşman olub, içlerinden düşman çıktığından serhadde her birinden yararlık ve dilaverlik görüldükten başka, kendüleri her rütbeye erişseler, yeniçeri kethüdası dahi olsalar, akrabaları gayrimüslim olduğundan haraçlarını aldırılmaya imkan bulamayacakları sebebiyle, hristiyan evladını toplamayı kanun yaptılar...”

<sup>252</sup> Albertus Bobovius, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, 41

from *acemi ocağı* or through *devşirme*.<sup>253</sup> As indicated in the *Kavanin*, it was at the time of Selim Han that they were allowed to marry.<sup>254</sup> Furthermore, a novice was better to have no artistic skills other than martial skills; otherwise he would not prove to be a good soldier.<sup>255</sup>

The distinguished status of the janissaries as the *kuls* coming from *acemi ocağı* is also stressed in *Kavanin*, stating that it was the *kuls* who come from the *acemi ocağı* that would be most useful to the sultan.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, *Kavanin*, referring to the older practice of the earlier times, mentions that it was only from the *kuls* coming from *acemi ocağı* or *devşirme* that could become the *kul* or the *kuloğlu*.<sup>257</sup> It had been the rule not to make anyone other than these coming from *acemi ocağı* or through *devşirme* to be the *kul* of the sultan.<sup>258</sup> Frequent complaints by the author of the *Kavanin* about the neglect of this rule in the seventeenth century indicates the corrupted status of the janissaries and the hearth at the time when *Kavanin* was written.

### **The Symbolism of *Ak Börk* ‘White Headgear’ as the Symbol of *Hassa* Status**

The symbolism of *hassa* status appeared to be the ‘white headgear’ in the early Ottoman chronics and in the *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*. As mentioned above, it was the

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<sup>253</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 26 “... Yeniçerine kuloğlu derler...” and *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 34 “... Yeniçeri ocağına hariçten adam girmesi mümkün değildir, çünkü babasının odasının odabaşısı yoldaşımız oğlu demez ve demeye gücü yoktur...”

<sup>254</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 40 “...Eskiden acemi arasında küçük yokmuş ve kuloğlu hiç yokmuş, çünkü o zamanlar yeniçeri bekarmış, evlenmezmiş. Sonra Sultan Süleyman oğlu Selim Han zamanında iş göremeyenler, padişaha arz idilip, evlenirlermiş...”

<sup>255</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 14 “...Evli olan oğlan alınmaya çünkü yüzü gözü açık olur ve evli olan padişaha kul olmaz. Sanatı olan oğlan alınmaya çünkü sanatı olan ulufe için bela çekmez, sanatına güvenir, sefere gitmeyib karına bakar, hizmet edilmemeye sebep olur...”

<sup>256</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 22 “...Acemi ocağı başka ocaklara benzemez... padişaha lazım olacak kuldur...”

<sup>257</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 33 “...Kadim günlerden beri acemi oğlanları devşirmeden ve kuloğlundan, yani yeniçeri oğullarından olagelmıştır...”

<sup>258</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 24 “...Devşirme ile acemioğlanından başkasının kul yapmak kanun değildir...”

yayas who wore the white headgear as a symbol of their *hassa* status; and as we see in the *Kavanin*, the white headgear was transferred to the janissaries because of their loyalty to the sultan and their willingness to fight vigorously for him.<sup>259</sup>

It is also worthwhile to point out the symbolism of white headgear in the Ottoman-Turkish context. The color white has been the color of nobility and the symbol of dependence on the sovereign beginning in early Turkish history.<sup>260</sup> So it is no doubt that the impact of Middle Asian traditions have so far survived through the early years of the Ottoman state. According to common belief, the color white also symbolizes honour, dignity and justice. In the ancient Turk society, the dignitaries of the Hunnic Turks wore white dress in the campaigns.<sup>261</sup>

In the history of İdris-i Bitlisi, regarding the clothing and the headgear of the Ottoman soldiery, we find that the most auspicious color that sultans and *hassa* soldiery wear is ‘white’. İdrisi stressed that “wearing white clothing is considered as Sunna according to the Islamic law”<sup>262</sup>. İdrisi mentioned that “*hassa* soldiery of the Ottomans wear white felt caps as a symbol of their distinguished status”, which aligns with the traditional account of the early chronics. Furthermore, as we find both in

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<sup>259</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, 58 “...bu tayfa padişah uğruna can ve başlarıyla oynayageldikleri için beyaz keçeyi onlara yeniçeri keçesi tayin ettiler...”

<sup>260</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Medeniyeti Tarihi*, ed. Kazım Yaşar Koprman (İstanbul:1976),154.

<sup>261</sup> Ahmet Karadoğan, “Türk Ad Biliminde Renk Kültü”, *Milli Folklor* No. 62,( 2004):91-2((89-99). For *Ak Börk* see also Salim Küçük, “Eski Türk Kültüründe Renk Kavramı”,*Bilig*, No.54 (2010):185-210 and Elvin Yıldırım, *Türk Kültründe Renkler ve İfade Ettikleri Anlamlar*, (MA Thesis, İstanbul University,2012)

<sup>262</sup> İdris-i Bitlisi, *Heşt Bihişt I*, 245-6 “... Cümle-i müluk-i tevaif memalik-i Rum'da bir dürlü libas-ı mahsusa ile mevsum ve sipah ve leşkerleri birer resm ile mümtaz ve ma'lumdur. Fe amma bu ecnad-ı mübarizan-ı cihad-ı şöhet-şi'ar ve ziynet-i tace ziyade i'tibar idüb ve ekseri nemed-i surhdan külah giyerler. Padişah-ı mücahidana münasib olan budur ki “hayrü's-siyabi el-ebyadu” (elbiselerin en hayırlısı beyaz olanıdır) fetvasınca leşkeriyan-ı hassaya nemed-i sefidden tac-ı mefaharet ve imtiyaz kendülere dahi mutaba'at Sünnet-i Nebevi ile ser-i servetleri tac-ı ebyad ile ser-efraz eyleyeler...” “...La cerem, iktiza-yı zaman ve mekan ve mülayemet-i ehl-i iman ile meyani leşkeriyan-ı hassa ve guleman-ı mahsusa için nemed-i sefid ta'yin buyurdular. Ol zamanda eyyam-ı saltanat-ı padişah-ı sahib-i tey'id Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid'a degin libas-ı mukarrer-i şahan-ı Osmanıyan ancak tac-ı sefid idi. Zaman-ı Yıldırım Han'da Timurtaş Beg ki emirü'l-ümera idi. Libasda sebeb-i ref'i iltibas ile mülazıman-ı imtiyaz için nemed-i sefidi müntesiban-ı sultana ve külah-ı nemed-i sürhi ümera ve leşkeriyanın hizmetlerinde olan çaker ve gulemana mahsus eyledi...”

İdrisi's work and in *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan* that it was initially Timurtaş Beg who offered white felt caps for the distinguished soldiery and the *ümera* or the retinue of the sultan in the age of Bayezid I.

However, the accounts of the early chronics state that the creation of white headgear probably originated in the age of Orhan Gazi. Aşıkpaşazade's placement of the woven white headgear in Bilecik in the time of Orhan Gazi can be considered as his attempt to point out the importance of Bilecik where Ede-Bali of the *Vefaiye* order emerged.<sup>263</sup>

Furthermore, in the *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyesi* of Mahmud Şevket Paşa written in the nineteenth century, we find the importance of headgear in the Ottoman society as a symbol of differentiation of the soldiery. It was stated in the work that white clothing is worn by the dignitaries like *begs* and pretenders to distinguish themselves from the rest of the society and enemies. It is also stated by Mahmud Şevket Paşa that according to a hadith, 'the most auspicious color to be worn is white.'

In addition, in the narration of Mahmud Şevket Paşa, we see that the flag, which was thought to be given to Sultan Osman by the Seljukid ruler as a symbol of his sovereignty, is also white.<sup>264</sup> Mahmud Şevket Paşa also stated that white headgear

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<sup>263</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 238.

<sup>264</sup> Mahmud Şevket Paşa, *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyesi*, 25-26. "... Osmanlılarca tayin-i kıyafet hususunda bidayet-i emirde elbiseden ziyade serpuşlara ehemmiyet verilmiş ve askerin vakt-i sulhde ahaliden vakt-i harbide efrad-ı düşmandan fark olunması için başlarına aynı şekilde beyaz külah giymeleri münasıb görülmüştür. Müverrihin-i Osmaniye'den bazıları renk-i mezkurun tercihi hususunda "esvabın hayırlısı beyazdır" mealinde olan hadis-i şerif veyahud kalem kibarı sebeb gösterdiği halde bazıları da Sultan-ı Selçuki tarafından ol (evvel)? Selatin-i Osmaniye olan Sultan Osman hazretlerine alamet-i istiklal olmak üzere irsal kılınmış olan sancağın rengi beyaz olduğu cihetle asker için kabul olunan külahın dahi beyaz renkli olmasına rical-i hükümetce karar verildiği beyan eylemektedir. Mezkur külahın yeniçerilerden evvel teşkil kılınan ve fakat daimi surette silah altında bulundurulmayub sefer vaktinde bir akçe yevmiye tahsiliyle cem ve muharebeye sevk olunarak (Yaya) tesmiye olunan askere dahi iksa' Edildiği mervidir. Ol vakit beyaz külahı efrad-ı askeriye ile

was worn by the *hassa* soldiery of the Ottoman state, initially by the *yaya* corps and later by the janissary corps as a symbol of the differentiation of their status. Consequently, the white headgear no doubt symbolizes nobility, rank and dependence on the sovereign in the early Ottoman *hassa* soldiery according to the ancient Turkish tradition.

On the other hand, the similarities between the Varangian white headgear and the Ottoman *yaya*-janissary white headgear is noteworthy<sup>265</sup>. Assuming that both sides impacted each other, this, that is wearing white headgear, must have resulted from the acculturation between the Byzantines and the Ottomans in the fourteenth century.

We find in *Netayicü'l Vuku'at* a similar view on the acculturation between Byzantine and Ottoman cultures. It is stated by Mahmud Paşa that not only the Ottoman soldiery like *solaks* and the military regiments, but also the costumes of the Ottoman state must have been transferred from the Byzantine state.<sup>266</sup>

On the other hand, Köprülü, based on Kondakov, points out the similarities between Byzantine palace costumes of the emperors and the costumes of the officials of the ancient Persian cavalry<sup>267</sup> and concludes that it was the impact of ancient Persia on the Byzantine uniforms. On this issue, Nicolle points out the impact of Islamic-Persian military costumes on the military uniforms of the palace guards of late Roman state in the sixth century as 'white' *kaftans* and cloaks.<sup>268</sup> In any case, the views

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*beyler ve şehzadeler dahi giyib vakt-i hasrda ve alaylarda külahın üzerine dülbend sarıklar dahi sararlar idi...*"

<sup>265</sup> See the miniature in the Appendix depicting the Varangians standing nearest the Byzantine emperor with their white headgear.

<sup>266</sup> *Netayicü'l- Vukuat Kurumları ve Örgütleriyle Osmanlı Tarihi I*, ed. Neşet Çağatay (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1987).66-7.

<sup>267</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*", 149-150

<sup>268</sup> David Nicolle, *Doğu Roma Orduları MS.306-886*, (İstanbul: T.İş Bankası Yayınları, 2017), 23

mentioned above on the Byzantine influence on the clothing of the Ottomans needs further analysis, and interpretation should be based on more solid ethnographic evidence, along with the contribution of art historians.

### **The Emphasis on Hacı Bektaş through *Ak Börk***

The relation between Hacı Bektaş and his impact on the formation on the early Ottoman soldiery is rather a controversial issue<sup>269</sup>. It is kind of anachronistic to attribute a role to Hacı Bektaş (1209-1271) on the establishment of the janissary corps. However, the hearth's affiliation with Bektashism by the end of sixteenth century is admitable. It was a time when a *dede*, a grandeous personality in Bektashism from the Bektaşî order, was crowned by the *ağa* of janissaries in the hearth; hence Hacı Bektaş was officially recognized as the patron Saint of janissaries.<sup>270</sup>

On the other hand, it was the common belief that the janissaries who were Christian in origin felt more comfortable being affiliated with this type of popular Islam rather than Sunni Islam.<sup>271</sup> It is also noteworthy that, as a traditional status group, it seems natural that the janissaries sided with other traditional groups like *ulema* and religious orders like Bektashism.<sup>272</sup> So, it is no coincidence that Mahmud II abolished the corps and the Bektashi order at the same time (1826).

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<sup>269</sup> For the relation between Bektashism and Janissary corps, See Betül Özbey, “Bektaşilik-Yeniçeri Ocağı İlişkisi”, (MA Thesis, Marmara University, 2013). Here Özbey admits the anacronism of Hacı Bektaş with the janissary institution. Moreover the relation between Hacı Bektaş and Janissary institution is rather a controversial historical problem with regards to his historical-mythological personality, A.Y.Ocak, “Hacı Bektaş-i Veli”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.14, (2001): 455-58.

<sup>270</sup> İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, 194

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, 194

<sup>272</sup> İnalçık, “Comments on Sultanism”, 64

If we analyze the early chronics and the *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, in terms of this relationship, we find that the author of the *Kavanin*, who had written his work when this affiliation was in the foreground, attributed a significant role to Hacı Bektaş in the affairs of the hearth.<sup>273</sup> However, he did this in an indirect manner; probably being conscious of the anachronism. The relation between Hacı Bektaş and the janissary hearth is reflected through the clothing and the white headgear of the Mevlevi *külâh*, a special kind of conical cap, which was thought to be the headgear of the Bektashi order.

We have the description of the janissary headgear in the account of the *Kavanin* with the emphasis on grandiose personalities like Hacı Bektaş and Velizade Timurtaş Paşa (d. 1404), who was thought to be the descendant of Hacı Bektaş, and Emir Şah Efendi as the descendant of Mevlana<sup>274</sup>. As is stressed in *Kavanin*, the stable felt cap, *doğru keçe* worn by the janissaries with prayers, is the model of the headgear of *Hazreti* Mevlana; and the mohair, *tiftik* behind it, is the model of Hacı Bektaş, which was designed in the age of Murad I.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Beydilli, “Yeniçeri”, 453

<sup>274</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, 56 “... O zamanda kerameti meşhur olan Hacı Bektaş Velizade Timurtaş Dede ve Hazreti Mevlana evladından Emir Şah Efendi marifetiyle yeniçeri keçesini düziüp, bunlara giydirdiler. Keçeden yapıldığı için adına keçe dediler, başa giyildiği için börk dediler, namlarına yeniçeri dediler. Yeniçeri yoldaşların giydiği doğru keçe Hazreti Mevlana'nın giydiğinin örneğidir. Ardındaki tiftiği Hacı Bektaş Veli'ninkinden örnek alıp dualarla giydirdiler. Bu asker yeni kul olduğundan adına yeniçeri dediler...”

The first years of Timurtaş Paşa is rather vague so his relation between Hacı Bektaş and his role in the establishment of janissary corps, F.Emecen, “Timurtaş Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 41, (2012), 185-6

<sup>275</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, 56 “...Hazreti Mevlana yolda yürürken ayağı taşa çarptı, Hacı Bektaş Veli bunu görünce, kepeneginin yenini kesip, ayağına sar diyerek verdiğinde, o ayağına sarmaya layık görmeyip, uğur için başına giydi. Bu sebepten Timurtaş Dede adındaki oğluda yenini yeniçeriye giydirdi. Bu tayfanın giydiği giysiye Hacı Bektaş Veli giymiştir. Osman Gazi ki Osmanlıların büyük atasıdır, kılıç kuşandığında bu giysi ile kuşanmış lakin yeniçeri teşkilatı kurulmadan önce ölmüştür. Bu yüzden oğlu olan Timurtaş Dede Orhan Gazi oğlu Sultan Murad zamanında yeniçeriye bu giysiyi giydirip yen-i çeri adını o vermiştir...” It is important to note that Palmer in his analysis of the Bektaşî *vilayetnames* he determines that, the same story actually exists in the *Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektaş* which was written earlier than the fifteenth century chronics, Palmer, “The Origin of the Janissaries”, 507-508.



Here we see the authors' efforts to show the influence of Bektashism on the janissary hearth. Therefore, the author puts a contemporary personality on the fifteenth century: Timurtaş Dede as the descendant of Hacı Bektaş and Emir Şah Efendi as a descendant of Mevlana, to point out the relation between Bektashism and janissary corps in the same age. This can be regarded as the legitimization of the passage concerning the relation between Hacı Bektaş and the janissary corps.

On the other hand, if we look at the early chronics of Neşri, Oruc Bey and the Anonymous *Tevarih*, we notice that they did not mention anything about the role of Hacı Bektaş in the establishment of janissary corps. However, only Aşıkpaşazade, at the end of his history in the form of question and answer, explicitly explains why he did not mention Hacı Bektaş in relation to the janissaries.<sup>276</sup> Aşıkpaşazade stated that Hacı Bektaş was not living in the age of the Ottoman sultans; and that is the reason why he did not mention him.<sup>277</sup>

Further in the account, when Aşıkpaşazade was asked about the relation between Hacı Bektaş and the headgear of the janissaries, he stated that the headgear worn by the janissaries was actually invented at the time of Orhan Gazi in Bilecik. Moreover, the *üsküf*, *elifi tac* of the janissaries was actually worn by Abdal Musa, a notable Bektaşî *derviş* of Orhan's time<sup>278</sup>. Here we see again Aşıkpaşazade's efforts to attribute a role for his own order *Vefaiye* in the creation of white headgear to

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<sup>276</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 238 “....Sual: Bu Bektaşiler eyidürler kim Yeniçerilerin başındaki tac Hacı Bektaşındur derder. Cevab: Yalandur! Ve bu börk hod Bilecükde Orhan zamanında zahir oldu... Ve illa Bektaşiler geymeye sebeb: Abdal Musa Orhan zamanında gazaya geldi. Ve bu yeniçerinün arasında bile yürüdi. Ve bir yeniçeriden bir eski börk diledi. Yeniçeri üsküfini çıkardı. Bunun başına geydüirdi. Abdal Musa vilayetine geldi ol börk bile başında. Sordılar kim: “Bu başundaki nedir?” Ol eyitdi: “Buna elifi derler” dedi. Vallahi bunların taclarının hakikati budur...”

<sup>277</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 237 “...ve illa bu Hacı Bektaş Al-i Osman neslinden kimseyile musahabet etmedi...”

<sup>278</sup> Emel Esin. “Bedük Börk, The Iconography of Turkish Honorific Headgears”. *Proceedings of the IXth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference*. Naples, 1970, 73, For Esin, Orhan gave an Islamic appearance to the headgear of his retinue, thus *börk* being worn only with military garments.

Bilecik, as it was the place of Ede Bali of Vefaiye order whom the Ottoman dynasty is thought to be descended from.

On this issue, Palmer asserts that the white headgear was not actually the headgear of Hacı Bektaş, but modelled after the conical white *serpuş*, that was also known as *elifi tac* of the *ahis*, who were a group of impressive participants on the Ottoman sultans.<sup>279</sup> Within that context, the shape and material of the janissary headgear, *börk*, needs to be discussed. It is noteworthy that the shape, material and the color of the headgear symbolized rank and status in the Ottoman-Turkish culture.

The proportion of *börk* as a symbol of dignity is mentioned in Kutadgubilig as “*Neçe baş bedüse, bedük börk kedür*”, “As the head rises into magnitude, the *börk* becomes proportionately larger”, reflects the relation between the rank and magnitude of the *börk*.<sup>280</sup>

When we consider the shape and the size of janissary *börk* in terms of its magnitude, we may infer that they, as the *hassa kuls* of the sultan, deserved to put on such magnificent headgear. For more and detailed account of the headgear *Kavanin* would be a good source. It was mentioned in the account that the headgear they wear for good luck in the campaigns is the headgear, *külâh*, of the conical cap of holy Mevlevis’, which represents fighting with the holy spirit of Mevlana and Hacı Bektaş. These caps were awarded to them in the age of Murad I.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup>Palmer, “The Origin of the Janissaries”, 459-466. Uzunçarşılı accepts the same alternative stating that white cap was actually the cap of the *ahis*, *Kapıkulu Ocakları* I, 11.

<sup>280</sup>Esin, “Bedük Börk”, 73 According to Esin, The size of the *börk* determines the status of an individual which was actually a Chinese concept in origin though we observe this in many of the cultures.

<sup>281</sup>*Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 57-58 “...*Yeniçeri yoldaşlar gittikçe ziyade olup her bir seferde Hacı Bektaş Veli ve Hazret-i Mevlana himmeti ile büyük fetihler yaptıklarında, keçeleri delip, turna tüyü takarlardı. Sonra içlerinden birisi küçük bir yük takacak, gümüşten bir şey düzdürüp keçesinin önüne süs diye takdı. Diğerleri onun tüy takmaya yaradığını görünce, irice olup düşmana korku vermesi ve irice yükler takmak için sağlamca olması lazımdır diye, şimdiki yüklük gibi irice yaptırıp adına yüklük dediler. Yük koyacak yer olduğu için, gazada zenginlik elde eden yeniçeri yoldaşlardan bazı*

Moreover, as *Kavanin* mentioned, the ornaments on the headgear of the janissaries *üsküf*, a kind of knitted bonnet with a tassel, *daltaç*, with a place on the front line of the cap to put golden and silver bands, *turna tüyü*, crane furs; and *yüklüks*, a small bag to carry something in, were all placed on the headgear in order to cause fear among the enemy. On the other hand, it was also stated in *Kavanin* that, as the old law requires, the novices were to wear stable felt caps, *düz keçe*, not the *üsküf*, and placed in *yüklüks*. The holy felt cap of the janissaries were the headgear of four holy figures, *evliya*, which they wear during the campaigns to instill fear in the enemy by making themselves look grander in shape<sup>282</sup>.

For İçli,<sup>283</sup> who thoroughly analyzed the tombstones of janissaries, *üsküf* was worn by the high officials of the janissaries only in ceremonies. Actually *üsküf* was not the characteristic headgear of the janissaries, but rather *börk*, *dardağan*, *serdengeçti*, *kalafat* and *kuka* were the most common types of headgear used by the members of the janissary hearth. In addition, the *yüklük* or *kaşıklık* on the *daltaç*, where they put certain ornaments, symbolizes the rank and the dignity of a janissary. So we may infer that headgear was important symbolism in the hierarchy of the Ottoman military.

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*ihtiyarcaları, altından ve gümüşten üsküf yaptırmayı dilediklerinde, bir azizin fikriyle daltaç yapturdılar. Keçelerinin üzerini daltaçla kapladıklarında bir o denli zarif olup, düşmana korku olmuştur. Yeniçeri yoldaşların bahsedilen giysileri evliyanın kutsal Mevlevi külahıdır. Bu giysi Osmanlılarından Gazi Süleyman Paşa ve Gazi Murad zamanında kabul edilip, kendileri de uğur için seferlerde giymişlerdir....*” On the other hand Uzunçarşılı based on an manuscript of *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, interprets the term *yüklük* as *yünlük*, woolen cap. *Kapıkulu Ocakları* I, 264

<sup>282</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 85 “...(Yeniçeri) keçesinde heybet vardır, yüz keçeli bin görünür, bini on bin er görünür, bu kutsal keçe üç dört evliyanın keçesidir...”

<sup>283</sup> H. Necdet İçli and Mehmet Kökrek, *Yeniçeriler Remizleri ve Mezar Taşları* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2017), 67-69

### 4.3) Military Roles of Jannissary Corps up to 1444

#### Age of Murad I (1362-1389)

The reign of Murad I can be characterized by concentrated raids to the Balkans to reinforce the Ottoman sovereignty in Rumelia. On the other hand, Murad I struggled with the Karamanids in Anatolia to control the lake provinces and the silk road passing through Asia Minor.<sup>284</sup> Within this historical framework, the role of the janissary corps as the *hassa* soldiery of Murad I is significant in two cases, the battle with the Karamanids in 1386 and the battle of Kosova in 1389.

When we analyze the chronicles in terms of the military activities of the janissary corps in the age of Murad I, the most abundant information can be found in Neşri's chronic, whereas Aşıkpaşazade, Oruc and the author of the Anonymous *Tevarih* do not provide much information.<sup>285</sup> Regarding the organization of the soldiery of Murad I in his battle with the Karamanids in 1386, we find that the soldiers came to the battlefield with their horses and then they took the form of a straight line in each wing and put up the tent of the Sultan in the battlefield.

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<sup>284</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Murad I", in *Kuruluş Dönemi Osmanlı Sultanları (1302-1481)*, (İstanbul: Timaş, 2010), 81-108.

<sup>285</sup> The importance of Neşri's history is that, it covers the *Gazaname* of Ahmedi narrating the account on the battle of Kosova. .Ahmedi (d. 1412/13) as a contemporary poet from the region of Germiyan had written an Ottoman history covering the period 1385-1413, namely the *Dasitan-i Tevarih-i Mülük-i Al-i Osman* in his *İskendername* when he was in the service of Mehmed I. The *Gazaname* on the battle of Kosova there can be regarded as the first of Ottoman *şehnâme*s covering authentic information. Neşri seemed to copy it in his *Cihannüma*. Ahmedi as an eyewitness of the period seemed to participate to the campaigns against Karaman, Bulgaria and Kosova by Murad I and more he also seemed to utilize from the accounts of Çandarlı Ali Paşa, Gazi Evrenos, Bayezid I and certain Serbian soldiers in writing the part about the Ottomans. Moreover, he seemed to use the *menakib* of Yahşi Fakih which was summarized in Aşiki and Enveri's lost source which he used in his *Düsturname*, İnalcık, Osmanlı Sultanları, 108. For Ahmedi as an authentic contemporary source for the battle of Kosova, See H.İnalcık, "I.Kosova Savaşı Üzerine Çağdaş Bir Kaynak: Ahmedi", in *Osmanlı Tarihinde Efsaneler ve Gerçekler*, İstanbul: NTV Yayınları, 2014. For Ahmedi's work, see İsmail Ünver, *Ahmedi ve Dasitan-i Tevarih-i Müluk-i Al-i Osman*, *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, Cilt IV, (1939):49-176.

Then, Murad I stood in the midst of the battlefield with his *havass*, the infantry located on the front line, and the cavalry located at the back side. Afterwards, his sons, Bayezid and Yakup Çelebi, took their position on each side of him, together with the other *begs* of Anatolia under his vassality. The references in Neşri to *Yayabaşı İlyas*, *Pazarlu-Togan*, *Yahşi Beg*, *Saruca Paşa* and *Eyne Beg* in Neşri, indicates that the *yaya begs* of the former *hassa yaya* and *müsellem* corps were still active as the *hassa* soldiery in the military expeditions of Murad I.<sup>286</sup>

Uzunçarşılı verifies this battle formation and mentions that the janissaries were mostly located at the midst, *kalb*, of the army in the battlefield, where on each sides were located the *kapıkulu* cavalry and the timariot cavalry.<sup>287</sup> Thus, we can infer that by the term *havass*, Neşri must have referred to the janissary corps. According to İnalçık, the battle with the Karamanids signifies the success of the Ottoman standing army against the traditional tribal forces.<sup>288</sup>

In addition to this, when we analyze Neşri's account of Ahmedî's *gazaname* for the battle of Kosova, which was destined to end Ottoman sovereignty over the Balkans, we read that Murad I was fighting against the forces of the united Balkan states with the janissaries as his best *kapıkulu* on the battlefield. We also read that the

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<sup>286</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 224-227 "...Tertib-i asakir-i Sultan Murad Han Gazi: Andan Hünkar buyurdu, çeri at arkasına gelüb, saflar düzüb, bar ü büngahı berkidüb, meymene vü meysere araste kılub ve cenah peyveste oldı. Murad Han Gazi dahi kendü havassıyla kalbe turub yayayı önüne atıyır girüye kodı. Büyük oğlu Bayezid Çelebi'yi sola koyub, Firuz Beğ'le Hacı Beğ'i Kastamonı çerisiyle sol cenah idinüb ve Laz'dan gelen kafir askerın meysere ucında kodı. Sağ kola kiçi oğlu Yakub Çelebi'yi koyub, Karesi Beği Eyne Beğ Subaşıyı ve Eğirdir subaşıasını Kutlu Beğ'le sağ cenah idinüb, haracgüzar Sarac ile Köstendil'i meymene ucın kıldı. Leşkerkeş Kara Timurtaş'ı Germiyan çerisiyle göğüse koyub, Ahmed Çavuş'la Sivrihisar subaşıası Temürtaş'ı çerinun ardına kodı. Yayabaşları Saruca Paşa ve İncecük Balaban ve Torica Balaban ve İlyas Beğ ve Müstecab subaşı, bunları cümle sağa sola kodı. Ve bi'l cümle leşkere tertib virüb, esbab ve alatı müretteb ve müheyya kılub yürüdi..."

<sup>287</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları I*, 375.

<sup>288</sup> İnalçık, "Murad I", 99

archers, who were mostly the janissaries, threw their arrows from each side of the battlefield.<sup>289</sup>

It is also important to mention that the Ottomans had used fire arms and cannons for the first time in the battle of Kosova. So apart from arrows, bayonets and swords, cannons seemed to be used by the Ottoman soldiers early in the last decades of fourteenth century.<sup>290</sup> As far as we can observe, some verse portions of the Anonymous *Tevarih* on the part about the battle of Kosova are parallel to the Neşri's account.<sup>291</sup> According to both narrations, when Murad I was about to die in the battlefield at the battle of Kosova, he was left with a number of his *kuls*, *hasekis*. So we may infer that the author of the Anonymous *Tevarih* must have used Neşri-Ahmedi tradition.

Furthermore in the chronicle of Oruc, we have additional information on the number of Ottoman forces in the battle of Kosova. Oruc gives the number of infantry from Anatolia as ten thousand and some ten thousand *azeps* from Rumelia;<sup>292</sup> whereas no number is provided in other chronicles. Given that the number of janissary corps equipped with arrows in the battle of Kosova numbered around two thousand,<sup>293</sup> we may hardly rely on Oruc's account for such details.

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<sup>289</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 285 "...Murad Han Gazi eytdi, pes savab olur ki evvel tir-endazları öne tutub sağa ve sola ok yağdıralar..."

<sup>290</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 296-299 "... El kıssa heman topçılar kafirler üzerine bir nice saf-şiken ve seng-eşken, kaza-nevazil, kader-şemail toplar irsal eylediler... Hüncar tir-endazlara eyitti: heman bismillah diyüb, niyet-i gaza, kafire ok sepün ki, şöyle alayları kütüz olub turmasun...ve bi'l cümle heman tir-endazlar başladılar tarafeyden ok atub, küffar dahi çoknaşub guh-i ahenin manendi tururken tir-baran olıcak, harekete gele başladı..."

<sup>291</sup> See the same statement in Anonymous *Tevarih*, 29 "...Kova gitdi düşmeni hayli sipah Kaldı birkaç kul ile bir yirde şah..." and the same in Ahmedi's *Dasitan*, 129. See Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 304-5 "...Murad Han Gazi dahi kendü şehid olmasına cezm itmişti. Çünkü kafir sığındı. Hiç kendüye eser-i şehadet belirmedi, teaccüb idüb birkaç hasekilerle bu har-püşte olan küşteleri seyri derken bir kafir varidi...". It is noteworthy that Neşri had changed the verse forms into a regular narrative form where the author of the Anonymous *Tevarih* directly transformed the verses.

<sup>292</sup> Oruc, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 46-47

<sup>293</sup> Beydilli, "Yeniçeri", 455

In sum, it can be inferred that, by 1387 the army of Murad I was comprised of his *hassa* forces of janissaries, the cavalry as well as the former *yaya* corps. As İnalçık stated, the Ottoman army began to essentially take shape as a professional regular army in the age of Murad I.<sup>294</sup> So we can state that, the Ottomans had already established a well-organized standing army, mostly with janissary regiments, by the end of the fourteenth century.

### Age of Bayezid I (1389-1403)

When we analyze the accounts of early cronics in the age of Bayezid I, Neşri again gives detailed information on the battle of Nicopolis, which was considered a challenge by the crusading forces against Murad I's and Bayezid's former conquests in the Balkans. On the battle of Nicopolis, Neşri gives his source as Umur Bey, the son of Kara Timurtaş, who was an eye-witness of the battle. However, Neşri wrongly gives the date of the battle as 1394<sup>295</sup>. We also learn from Neşri that Bayezid has a *kul* in the castle of Nicopolis named Togan who provided information about the the enemy. Moreover, Neşri states that Bayezid divides his forces into two and with the tactic of ambush surrounded the castle<sup>296</sup>.

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<sup>294</sup> İnalçık, "Murad I", 107. The Ottoman army in the age of Murad I also comprised of native christian soldiery in Rumelia together with the Arap, Persian and Turkish troops who were taken to the *sipahi* regiments in the Ottoman army. İnalçık resembles this multi-ethnic army to that of the Byzantine *hassa* regiments,"Murad I", 93-94.

<sup>295</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 328-329 "...Bu gazanın tafsili ve anda olan macerayı Kara Temur Taş'un oğlu Umur Beğden istıfsar olunub, ol haber virdi ki anda hazırdı...bu gazanın tarihi hicretün yedi yüz toksan yedisinde vaki oldu..."

<sup>296</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 326-7 "...Hünkarın kalada Togan nam bir kulu vardı...Hünkar dahi yitişüb Niğbolı üzerinde Ungurus'la buluşub kafirler İslam leşkerini göricek, çerisini iki bölük idüb, İslam leşkerini araya almak istediler. İslam leşkeri dahi iki bölük olmuşlardı. Sultan Bayezid Han tarafı pusuda turmuşlardı..."

On the other hand, the information from the western sources for the battle of Nicopolis is noteworthy. We can get additional information from them complementary to the limited data we get from the early chronicles. Within that framework, Atiya gives the number of Turkish infantry, the *azebs* and the janissaries in the battle of Nicopolis as twelve thousand <sup>297</sup>, which coincides with İbnü'l Cezeri's statement of twelve thousand Turkish forces against thirty thousand crusading forces.<sup>298</sup> However, Neşri gives the number of crusading forces as a 'hundred and thirty thousand'. Here, Neşri must have mistakenly added a hundred to the total number<sup>299</sup>.

On the other hand, M. Daş, in his analysis of the battle of Nicopolis, states that according to the chronicle of St. Dennis, who also uses contemporary sources for the battle, the Turkish forces were more than twenty thousand with the infantry advance forces and auxiliaries; and Bayezid's reserve forces was forty thousand. The forces of the crusades were also forty thousand<sup>300</sup>. In the chronicle of Oruc, we find the number of Turkish forces in Nicopolis to be ten thousand.<sup>301</sup>

On the other hand, Schiltberger, who had personally participated in the campaign and was taken as a war captive in that battle, states that the forces of Bayezid I in the battle of Nicopolis was two hundred thousand, which is regarded by the authorities as a very exaggerated number. However, then he states that Bayezid had

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<sup>297</sup> A.S.Atiya, *Niğbolu Haçlılar Seferi*, (Ankara: Güney Matbaası, 1956), 98 He stated in his work that he gave this number based on the eye-witnesses of the soldiery who participated to the battle. Emecan, Niğbolu, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.33, (2007):91

<sup>298</sup> Neşri, Cihannüma I, 367“...Ungurus tekvuru yüz otuz bin erle Eflak ilinden Tunayı geçüb, İstanbul tekvuru tahrikiyle gelüb, Niğbolu'yu muhasara ide yürür...”

<sup>299</sup> Atiya gives the number of crusading forces of a hundred thousand which is regarded as too abridged for him and he mentions based on Köhler that Turkish forces was ten thousand, Atiya, *Niğbolu*,77.

<sup>300</sup> M.Daş, “Saint-Denis Ruhbanının Kroniği adlı Fransız Kaynağına göre Niğbolu Savaşı”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, V. XXVII, No.1, (2012):69-77

<sup>301</sup> Oruc, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*,51



sent twelve thousand infantry as the advance force, where they took the form of a crescent in the battlefield, encircling the enemy.<sup>302</sup> This number, twelve thousand, also coincides with that of Atiya, citing İbnü'lCezeri. So these conflicting numbers exhibit that we must be careful in evaluating the numbers in memoirs.

As for the role of janissaries in the battle of Nicopolis, Atiya states that the janissaries, as the permanent standing guiding force of the Ottoman sultan, constituted the first standing army of Europe. He also gives the depiction of their location in the battlefield, stating that the janissaries were located at the front line as *pişdar*, vanguard. He further states that, considering the Turkish tactic of placing the essential force at the front line, would mean that the janissaries were not regarded as the force of most importance.<sup>303</sup>

However, Atiya admires the janissaries brave fighting as the light infantry with their arrows, blade, axes, sword and mace against the heavily-armed cavalry of the crusading forces at the battle of Nicopolis.<sup>304</sup> Moreover, St. Dennis also admits the bravery and discipline of the Turkish forces against the undisciplined forces of the crusader armies.<sup>305</sup>

Finally, the observation of Nicolle, who wrote based on the contemporary observations of J.de Creguy, Tournai J de Fay and Phillpe de Meziere, who fought in the army of Murad I, is worth mentioning.<sup>306</sup> Nicolle states that the Ottoman forces in the battle of Nicopolis were comprised of the *hassa* janissaries, raiders, timariot

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<sup>302</sup> Schiltberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 29

<sup>303</sup> Atiya, *Niğbolu*, 77-79

<sup>304</sup> Atiya, *Niğbolu*, 83 and 95 For the drawing of janissary arms and equipment, see Graf Marsilli, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Zuhur ve Terakkisinden İnhitai Zamanına Kadar Askeri Vaziyeti*, trans. M.Kaymakam Nazmi (Ankara: Büyük Erkanıharbiye Matbaası, 1934)

<sup>306</sup> David Nicolle, *Niğbolu 1396*, translated by Özgür Kolçak (İstanbul: T.İş Bankası Yayınları, 1999), 30

sipahis and *müsellems*, the mounted auxillary troops, together with the *solak* soldiery. As we learn from Nicolle, the janissaries and *kapıkulu* cavalryman were located at the back of the battle of Nicopolis so that they would be protected.<sup>307</sup>

The statement of Nicolle, who mentions that the janissaries were located at the back in the formation of battlefield, contrasts with that of Atiya, who stated that the janissaries, as the essential soldiery of the Sultan, were located at the front line in the battle of Nicopolis. Hence, we may infer from those varying accounts that the janissaries were located in each side and line of the battlefield as the *hassa* forces of the Ottoman sultan. Nevertheless, the janissary corps, as the most costly group within the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization in terms of their training and salaries, had to be the most protected group and were placed to hit the enemy last in the battlefiled.<sup>308</sup>

On the other hand, the chronicle *Kronika Turecka*, which was thought to be written by a janissary named Konstantin Mihail Konstantinovic in 1455, presents lively information on the importance of the janissary corps and their siege tactics in the battles. As Konstantinovic stated, when the Turks decided to conquer a city or a castle, they enter the city quietly at night. He continues as, “The janissaries camouflaged with the branches of the trees carrying sound stairs, advanced to the breaches in the walls of the castles and in day time, they climbed the castle with their stairs and the battle starts by throwing of the arrows and the firing of cannons with the strong voice of the drums”.<sup>309</sup>

Further in the account, Konstantinovic stated that, “the natives of the city had fled away as a result of the firing of cannons then the janissaries on the city walls

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<sup>307</sup> *Ibid*, 51-52

<sup>308</sup> Beydilli, “Yeniçeri”, 453-454

<sup>309</sup> The work is to be evaluated with caution since it reflects a western oriented view with its anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic propoganda and updated several times to serve for the ideas current in the sixteenth century, Beydilli, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, vii-xvi.

turned back and two sides began to fight with each other”. Konstantinovic, also states that if the Sultan thinks that he will be defeated, then he decides to retreat, leaving behind a certain guard force in the city. Through this tactic some important cities, such as Nicopolis, were captured by these forces.<sup>310</sup>

On the other hand, Konstantinovic also admires the Turkish advantage of having light infantry, as opposed to the heavy cavalry of the enemy. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of the janissary army of the fifteenth century and states that if the janissaries were defeated or left in the battlefield, wounded or killed, the Sultan could hardly manage to overcome the enemy.<sup>311</sup>

### **Schilberger as an early example of *Solak* Soldierly**

Another important source for this period of Ottoman *kapıkulu* system and military organization is the work of Schiltberger, who, as an eye-witness, presents a vital description of the Ottoman *kul* system and the formation of *solak* soldiery in the Ottoman state. *Solaks*, as part of the Ottoman household troops, were important in the sense that they functioned not only as a military element, but also for ceremonial purposes. As Schiltberger himself stated in his memoirs, he participated in the battle of Nicopolis under his lord L. Richartinger, where he was caught by the janissaries and brought before Bayezıd I in 1394<sup>312</sup>.

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<sup>310</sup> Beydilli, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, 112-113

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, 103

<sup>312</sup> Schiltberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 27

The observation of Schiltberger is in conformity with the treatments applied to war captives according to the Islamic law.<sup>313</sup> So we may rely on his source for this detail. As he himself stated, he was then 16 years old; hence, he was not killed because, as the Islamic law requires, slaves under 20 should not be killed but rather taken as the legal portion of the Sultan. Then, he was sent to Edirne and later to Gelibolu, where he was imprisoned for two months until he was sent to Bursa.

Afterwards, he stayed in the Ottoman palace, where he was in the service of Bayezid I, accompanying him in the campaigns until he was captured by Timur in 1402. On the other hand, considering his words stating that; “It was an Ottoman tradition that certain infantry walk in front of the Sultan wherever he goes”, we may consider him as an early example of a *solak*. Schiltberger also mentioned that he could afford a horse after a six years of service as infantry.<sup>314</sup> This may indicate that he later became *solakbaşı*.

Within this framework it is worth giving some information on the *solaks* and their role as the *hassa kuls* of the sultan. *Solak* soldiery must have been established in the age of Murad I. They seemed to play an important role in the military and ceremonial activities of the Ottoman state<sup>315</sup>. The first reference to *solaks* in the early chronics is found in the Anonymous *Tevarih*.<sup>316</sup> We also read in Neşri that they were

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*,34-38. For the Islamic practices on slavery See H.Erdem, *Osmanlı'da Köleliğin Sonu*, 14-16. According to Islamic law war captives were either killed or freed in return for *fidye-i necat* or in some cases freed without ransom and in any case enslaved.

<sup>314</sup> Schiltberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 39

<sup>315</sup> Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, “*Solak*”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.37 (2009), 368. *Solaks* were chosen among the janissaries who were good at arms and had presentable appearance. Some of them was chosen as *hassa solaks* or *rikab-ı humayun* whose main function was the guardiance of the sultan either in ceremonies or in the battlefield. They walked in each side and ahead of him at *alay-ı humayun* or encircled the sultan in the battlefield. Only the *solakbaşıs* had the right to have a house. They were considered among the distinguished group of *kapıkulus* after the *ağa* of the janissaries.

<sup>316</sup> Anonymous *Tevarih*, 35 “...Yıldırım Hanın karşısında nacaklarla *solaklar* tuturlardı...”

wearing *dikak börks*, tall and thin caps, and walked ahead of the sultan with their *tuğ*, horsetail and arrows.<sup>317</sup>

*Kavanin* also presents important information on the *solaks*. *Kavanin* states that *solakbaşılık* was established in the age of Bayezid I as one of the oldest offices which the *ağas* of the hearth hold.<sup>318</sup> It had four *cemaats* with eighty people per *cemaat*, where the number of people were increased by twenty in the later stage. Furthermore, *Kavanin* states that one of the janissary comrades who was tall, old and a veteran was chosen by the eighty in the *cemaat* as *solak* and another old and experienced *yayabaşı* selected as *solakbaşı*. When the latter died, the oldest amongst them was appointed as *solakbaşı* as the law required. Only the *solakbaşı*s had the right to have a house.

It is also stated in the *Kavanin* that, the *yayabaşı*s of the janissary corps are chosen amongst the ones who acted bravely in the campaigns by putting the flag on the captured castles and, hence, are promoted to *yayabaşılık*, *bölükbaşılık*, or become a *gedik* and become *zağarcı*, *sekban*, *solak*, *sipahi* and doorsmen, *kapıcı*.<sup>319</sup>

Moreover, a *solak* is described in the *Kavanin* as the one chosen amongst the *devşirme* children who was tall and handsome. Considering that their task was to instill fear in the enemy, they must also be good at throwing arrows and teach this skill to the inexperienced, as they were also the guardsman of the Sultan.<sup>320</sup> We may

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<sup>317</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 199 “... *Pes yeniçeri ve solaklar Murad Han zamanında ihdas oldu. Ve solaklar dahi dikak börkler giyub ve tuğlar sokinub ok ve yayla hüncarın önince yürürlerdi...*”

<sup>318</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 144 “...*Ocak ağalıklarının eski makamlarından biri de solakbaşılıktır. Yıldırım Bayezid Han zamanında ortaya çıkmıştır, dört cemaattir, eskiden beri seksen kişidir, sonradan yirmi kişi artmıştır. Bunların ortaya çıkışı şöyle olmuştur, yeniçeri yoldaşlardan ihtiyar ve emektar olup, boy pos sahibi olanlardan seksen kişiyi yoluyla solak tayin edip, içlerinden yoluyla eski olan bir ihtiyar Yayabaşını üzerlerine solakbaşı tayin edip, o vefat ettiğinde içlerinden ihtiyar olanların solakbaşı olmasını kanun yaptılar...*”

<sup>319</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 99-100 “... *Yayabaşılardan hizmet edenler zağarcı, sekban ve solak olur...Seferde baş kesip, kaleye sancak dikip, erlik edenlere Yayabaşılık, bölükbaşılık, gedik verilir, bunların benzeri zağarcılık, sekbanlık, solaklık, sipahilik, kapıcılık dahi verilir, kanun budur...*”

<sup>320</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 14 “... *Gayet Uzun boylu olan oğlan alınmaya, ahlak olur; ancak yüzce güzel olursa, padişaha solak olup, düşmana korku olması için alalar...*” See also *Kavanin-i*

infer from the account of the sources that Schiltberger, as one of *solak* who later had the right to have a horse, can be regarded as a good example of an early *kapıkulu* as a *solak* who later became *solakbaşı*.<sup>321</sup>

On the other hand, Schiltberger tells a story about himself and his friends' plans as Christians for escaping from the Porte. However, they were unsuccessful in their plans and were caught by Bayezid I's soldiery. When they were brought to the presence of Bayezid I, their lives were saved by the efforts of a soldier, *çavuş* of the janissaries who caught them. Later they were sentenced to a nine-month imprisonment; however, by the effort of Emir Süleyman during Ramadan, Bayezid forgave them, gave their horses back and increased their salaries.<sup>322</sup>

Here we can assert that, though Schiltberger was one of a *kapıkulu* who was expected to be loyal to the sultan and Islam, he did not forget his Christian identity. Within that context, it is noteworthy that some of the janissaries were found carrying the gospel of St John.<sup>323</sup> Also, a novice in the palace service clearly mentioned that the janissaries, though they were '*sarıklı*', they did not accept their new religion in their heart<sup>324</sup>. In general, although the examples mentioned above cannot be valid for all the slave-originated *kapıkulus*, the loyalty and trustworthiness of the janissaries is

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*Yeniçeriyan, 146 "... Solak olacak kimsenin gösterşli ve boylu boslu olması gerekir, taze oğlan olmaması, köse ve bodur olmaması gerekir. Çünkü solaklar padişahın önüne süs olarak tayin edilmiş kuledur. Bunların taze olması kanuna muhaliftir zira bunlar düşmana korku vermek için tayin edilmiştir. Bunların işi ok atmak, vurup delmek ve bilmeyene öğretmektir. Bunların ok atıp delmesi lazımdır çünkü bunlar padişahı korumalarıdır."*

<sup>321</sup> Schilberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 39 "... Ben Türk Kralının sarayına geldim ve orada başkalarıyla birlikte altı yıl süreyle, kral nereye giderse ben de yaya olarak oralara önden yürüyerek gitmek zorunda kaldım. Çünkü hükümdarın önünde yaya olarak gidilmesi adettir. Bu altı yıl sonunda bir binek hayvanına sahip olma hakkını elde ettim ve altı yıl daha süvari olarak onun yanında kaldım ki, cem'an oniki sene Bayezid'in emrindeydim..." It is noteworthy that as the editor of his work indicated, here Schiltberger is anachronistic since it takes only six years between the battle of Nicopolis (1396) and the battle of Ankara (1402) where he was imprisoned, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 39

<sup>322</sup> Schilberger, *Türkler ve Tatarlar*, 45-47 The plans of escaping from the Porte had always been in the mind of janissaries as stated by Konstantinoviç aswell, Beydilli, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, 61

<sup>323</sup> Vryonis, "Man power", 139 Vryonis regards the *devşirme* and *kul* systems as the essential tools of the Islamization process of the Ottoman policy.

<sup>324</sup> Albertus Bobovius, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, 71

questionable, since they hardly adopted this new religion in their heart as new converts.

## Age of Murad II

The role of janissaries in Murad II's first accession (1421) is noteworthy. The janissary effort who sided with Murad II against his brother Mustafa is also important in the sense that it resulted in the suppression of frontier *begs* in Rumelia by Murad II after 1422. Thus, they played a vital role in the conquests of Balkans under Murad II.<sup>325</sup> Nevertheless, as a result of certain defeats in the Balkans, the unification of crusading forces against the Ottomans could not be prevented, which led to the battle in Varna.

In the battle of Varna in 1444, the janissary success against the heavy infantry of the crusading army is noteworthy. In the *Gazavatname*, janissaries are portrayed as the comrade-in-arms of the sultan who fought vigorously for Islam.<sup>326</sup> The mutual relationship between the janissary corps and the sultan is well-reflected in the work. It is also noteworthy that as the loyal *kuls* of the sultan, they fought for the sultan without hesitating to lose their lives. We also find in the *Gazavatname*, the economic interest of janissary corps as a stimulus for *gaza* activities.<sup>327</sup> So, as seen above, it can

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<sup>325</sup> İnalçık, "Murad II", *Osmanlı Sultanları*, 135-136.

<sup>326</sup> *Gazavatname*, 57 "....*Amma padişah emr eyledi, cümle yeniçeri ve yayabaşlıları ve azaplar bi'l-küllîye karşusuna geldiklerinde cümlesinin hatırların ele alub ve hayr dualar edüb eyitti kim, her gazada siz benim yoldaşlarımsınız Heman göreyim sizi din-i İslam aşkına aşıkane küffar-i hakisara, ki anlar dinimiz düşmanlarıdır nice kılıç urusunuz...*"...." *Amma eğer yeniçeri ve eğer yaya-başlılar ve eğer azaplar dediler kim, Padişahım, sen heman gönlünü hoş tutasın kim, biz kulların senin oğrına ve din-i mübin aşkına göresin kim, küffar ile ne savaş edüb ve ol din düşmanlarına nice kılıç urub ve nicemiz senin oğrına kurban olalım...*"

<sup>327</sup> *Gazavatname*, 22 "...*Ez-in-canib padişah-ı 'alem yeniçeri kullarını katına kagırub: İmdi yarın savaş günüdür, göreyim sizi, benim bunca hazinem sizindir, heman iş başarın, ben sizi altına ve gümüşe müstagrak ederim dedikte, cümle kullar baş yere urub tek Padişahımız sağ olsun, inşallah*

be inferred that *gazaname*, rather than being merely a heroic-epic literary genre, it includes certain historical facts.

On the other hand, Konstantinovic, who was an eyewitness of the age of Murad II, mentioned in his memoirs that the sultan motivated the janissaries by stating that not only his treasury but also whatever he owned actually belonged to them. Moreover, the sultan stressed the critical role of the corps by advising his sons that whoever won the heart of the janissaries, would be the one who would hold the sovereignty.<sup>328</sup>

In the aforementioned work, we also find the critical role janissaries played in the second accession of Murad II. When Murad II was away from the throne for solitude, the janissaries hardly subdued his son Mehmed and got worried about the current conditions. Moreover, since they did not get their pay for six months, they rebelled and plundered the house of notables in the *divan*. It should be noted that they did not damage any public property.

This seemed to be the reason for their first rebellion in Edirne Buçuktepe. It was then that Murad II came back to Edirne and being ascended to the throne for a second time and his advice to his son that he should take care of the janissaries since they were not only the property of the sultan but also of the state.<sup>329</sup>

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*yarın küffar-i hakisara bir kılıç koyalım ki, bir zaman dastan ola dediklerinde padişah-ı 'alem el kaldurub cümlesine hayır dualar eyleyüb kaviy'ül-kulüb eyledi..."*

<sup>328</sup> Beydilli, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, 80 and 92

<sup>329</sup> Beydilli, *Bir Yeniçerinin Hatıratı*, 46-7 According to the account of Konstantinoviç the janissaries who proved successful in big campaigns were granted rank, like promotion to *sancakbeyilik* house and extra Money.



## Military Role of Janissaries in *Kavanin*

On the other hand, if we analyze *Kavanin* in terms of the early military roles of the janissary corps, we find information on the earlier practices and the description of the janissary army in the battlefield referring to the old tradition. We read in the *Kavanin* that the janissary comrades put up their tents forming a street between the tents of the janissary *serdar* and the Sultan”.<sup>330</sup> Additionally, *Kavanin* mentions that a *talimhane* was built during the reign of Sultan Bayezıd Han for the janissaries to be trained in throwing arrows and learning its *ilm*, science<sup>331</sup>.

Moreover, it was mentioned that a *bölükbaşı*, head of a section, was appointed as *talimhanecibaşı*, in order to train the janissary corps in how to throw arrows by reserving five *odas*, rooms, as a *talimhane*. However, it was stated in the *Kavanin* that in the seventeenth century they were neither engaged with throwing arrows nor using firearms.

Furthermore, *Kavanin* mentions that, in the earlier times, the janissary comrades practiced in throwing arrows and arches and firearms every morning; and stated that the later military success of the janissary corps in the campaigns was due to the quality of the firearms they were given from the treasury.<sup>332</sup> It is noteworthy that

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<sup>330</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, ”... Yeniçeri yoldaşlar cenk mahallinde çadırlarını serdarın çadırının ve padişah otağının iki tarafına kurarlar sokak gibi olur... “

<sup>331</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 154-5 “...Yeniçeri yoldaşlara ok atmayı öğretmek için eskiden bir bölükbaşıyı talimhanecibaşı tayin etmişlerdi. Odaların yakınındaki beş talimhaneyi Sultan Bayezıd Han yeniçeri yoldaşlar için yaptırmış ve bunların üzerine o bölükbaşıyı talimhanecibaşı yapmıştır... Bunlara hazineden yay alıverirlerdi ki yeniçeri yoldaşlar ok atmada usta olup, tüfek atmada usta olup, düşmanın kirlı vücudunu okla delik deşik etsinler diye çalışırlardı...”, *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 209 “... O talimhaneleri yapan yeniçeri yoldaşlar, divan olduğı günler gelip ikişer ok atıp, ok atma ilmini öğrenmeleri için yapmışlardır. Şimdi o talimhane kullanılmadığından, yeniçeri yoldaşlardan talep bile kalmamıştır... Bu yüzden ocağımızda ne ok atmaya rağbet eden var, ne tüfek atar var...”

<sup>332</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, .211 “...Yeniçerilere hazineden tüfenk verdiklerinde, iyisini vermek ve tüfenkleri iyi yapmak gerekir ki cenkte işe yarasın”,

the janissary corps were acquainted with firearms, called *tüfenk-endaz* , early in the age of Murad II (1404-1451) at the battle of Kosova II.

*Kavanin* also mentions that in the earlier practice, only the ones who became *kapıkulu* after the process of passing successfully were given firearms. As the firearms carry the seal of the state on them, they could not be sold; and they were better than the guns privately owned. Moreover, as *Kavanin* indicates, periodic controls were made within 3 to 4 years by one of the *yayabaşıs* or *bölükbaşıs*, in order to determine the ones holding ‘state firearms’ who were not *hünkar kulu*’ If determined otherwise, they were returned to the treasury.<sup>333</sup>

We also read from *Kavanin* that, initially there were *tüfenkçis* making firearms, either for the state or for private ownership for a fee; however, in the seventeenth century, the *tüfenkçis* no longer made such firearms and as a result no guns were distributed to janissary corps.

Thus, as far as we can infer from *Kavanin*, the firearms belonging to the treasury could only be used by *hünkar kulu*, the *hasşa kul* of the Sultan in the early stages. Therefore, firearms can be regarded as a symbol of ‘state-dependency’ which was assigned to the *hasşa kapıkulu*. The stress on firearms as a symbol of the *hasşa* soldiery could be a reflection of the corrupted janissary identity in the seventeenth century, where the outsiders under the name of *sekbân*, *saruca* infiltrated into the hearth, supplanting the military role of janissary corps.

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<sup>333</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 136 “...Eskiden kapıya çıkana tüfek verirlerdi, onlar da seferde kullanırlardı, hazine damgalı olduğundan satılmazdı ve özel tüfenkten iyiydi. Üç dört yılda bir Yayabaşılardan veya bölükbaşılardan birini gönderir, şehirlide ve hünkar kulu olmayanda hazine tüfeği bulurlarsa alıp getirirlerdi, hünkar kulu olmayanda kullandırmayıp hazineye verirlerdi. Sefer olduğunda , defterle odadan odaya dağıtırlardı.Şimdi oradaki tüfenkçiler, padişaktan bu kadar ulufe yerler, tüfenk yapmazlar. Yeniçeri tüfenk almadıysa tüfenkçilere de ulufe vermemek gerekir, eğer verilirse tüfenkleri de eskiden olduğu gibi vermek gerekir.”,

Regarding the salaries of the janissary corps who participated in the campaigns, *Kavanin* states that when the hearth was established in the time of Murad I, 4 *akçes* cost 1 *dirhem*. So they were paid 4 *akçes*. However, in the later period, unless a janissary participated in the campaign, his *ulufe* was not paid.<sup>334</sup> Considering that the corps hardly engaged in military activities by the seventeenth century, the salaries of the janissaries who did not participate in the campaigns were not to be paid<sup>335</sup>. This can be one of the essential reasons for their increased rebellions in the same century.

Moreover, *Kavanin*, referencing the old law, mentions that the janissary comrades who were on castle guard for three years were given one *akçes*. *Kavanin* then states that in the seventeenth century, since there did not exist any janissaries on the castles, a proportion of their wage was not paid.<sup>336</sup>

#### 4.4) The Socio and Political Roles of the Janissary Corps up to 1422

##### The Age of Bayezid I

It is noteworthy that under Bayezid I, the Ottoman state became a well-established centralized state, modeled after the near eastern tradition. Most importantly, it was the janissary army that played the essential role in the

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<sup>334</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 88 “... Gazi Sultan Murad Han, Yeniçeri Ocağını kurduğunda 4 akçe 1 dirhemdi...”

<sup>335</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 210 “...Yeniçeri yoldaşların sefere geleninin ulufesini odabaşılardan eksiksiz aliverip, gelmeyenin bundan böyle ulufesi kesilir...”

<sup>336</sup> *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, 84-85 “...Kanun odur ki; seferde, kalelere nöbetçi koyulduğunda, üç sene orada dururlar. Orada, kale hizmetinde olan yoldaşların birer akçe nafakaları vardır, verilir, eski kanundur. Şimdi o nafakayı padişahın hazinesinden çıkarıp, kalelere göndermezler; gönderdiklerinde de az gönderirler çünkü kaledekilerin erleri olmadığından talep edemezler, düzenleyenlerde kalır gider...”

establishment of a centralized administration, both in Anatolia and the Balkans.<sup>337</sup>

The main instrument of this centralization policy was no doubt the *kul* system which was composed of slave-originated *kuls* functioning on the basis of loyalty and submission to the Ottoman sultan.

Within this framework, the following narration about Bayezid I's confrontation with Timur at the battle of Ankara in 1402, which is found in all the chronicles in variations, can be regarded as a good example reflecting the role of janissaries as the loyal *kuls* of the sultan. When the centralized administration of Bayezid I was corrupted by Timur in 1402, the current situation is reflected in the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade, who stated that he had cited this account from one of the *solaks* of Bayezid I, Koca Nayıb.<sup>338</sup>

In the account of Aşıkpaşazade, we find that, in Bayezid I's confrontation with the soldiery of Timur, Bayezid came to the battlefield with his own soldiery, together with the soldiery of the other *begs* under his vassalage. His sons, Emir Süleyman, Çelebi Mehmed, and Mustafa were also with him on the battlefield.

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<sup>337</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlı Tarihinde Devlet ve Asker", 113

<sup>338</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 144-5 "...Temür Engürüye doğrıldı. Bu taraftan Bayazid Han heman evvelki tedbirinin üzerinde kim kendü vilayetinden ve gayrı vilayetden yazılı leşkerini çıkara...Ve hem Bayazid Han üç oğlın dahi bile almış idi. Emir Süleyman Aydın Eli sancağı ve Karası sancağı ve Saruhan bile, Mustafa Hamid Eli sancağı ve Teke Sancağı bile. Ve Sultan Mehmed Amasya leşkeri ve cemi Rum leşkeri bile. Ve bu leşkerleri ki cem etdi. Tatarı ve gayrı leşkerikendüyle bile yürüdiler. Anlar dahi Engürü'ye vardı. Temür-i bedbaht dahi geldi. Perşenbih gün sabah Temür kondı. Bayezid Han ikindiyyin kondı, bir birine karşı. Temür hendek kesdi. Cum'a günü sabah oldu. Oturdılar. Etrafda Cum'a namazı kılındı. Sultan Bayazid sancakları çözdürdi. Köşler çalındı. Saf ber saf alaylar bağlandı. Hemin kim mukabil oldılar. Tatar hayın oldu. Kendü begleri oğlıyidi kim Erzincan begi Tahratan kim ol Erdananun kardaşı oğludur. Germiyan leşkeri Germiyanogluna döndiler. Elhasılı her vilayetin leşkeri kendü beğlerine döndiler kim onlar Temura varmışlar idi. Vilakoğlu kafir çerisi bile eyü ceng etdi. Ve gördi kim her taraf kolaylı kolayına gıtdiler, Vilakoğlu dahi kendü kolayına gıtdi. Oğlı Mustafa atından ayrıldı. Belürsüz oldu. Emir Süleyman dahi paşaları aldılar. Ara yerden çıkdılar. Gıtdiler. Sultan Mehmed Amasya leşkerini alub Amasiyyeye gıtdi. Bayazid Han kendü kapısı kuluyilen kaldı. Solak Karaca derler idi bir kulu var idi. Eyüdür: "Hay Bayazid Han! Kamı ol güvendiğün oğulların, ol sancağın begleri, ya ol sarhoş vezirlerin? Ne gökçek yoldaşlık etdiler sana dedi." Akçayı harc etmedün. Hazineye koydun. Oğlancuklarını rızkıdır dedün". Bayazid Hana bu söz gayet acı geldi. "Bana mihnet mi edersiz" dedi. Atını depdi. Kulun arasından daşra çıkdı. Bilesince birkaç Yaya oğlanıyile bir niçe solak vardılar. Çağadayun alayını bir birine vurmağa başladılar..."

However, during the battle, the soldiery of the other *begs* changed sides in favor of Timur.

Moreover, Bayezid's sons fled from the battlefield. Thus, they all betrayed him except his *kuls*; and Bayezid was left alone in the battlefield with a number of his loyal *yaya* and *solak* soldiery and one of his *kuls*, *Solak Karaca*. Hence, Bayezid I continued to fight with a number of his *yaya oğlanı* and *solaks*. Here, the loyalty of the *kuls* to the Sultan on the battlefield is reflected by Aşıkpaşazade with emphasis on the betrayal of all, except his *kuls*, who under no condition left him. This can be considered as an example of the importance of *kul* system in the Ottoman state.

In Neşri,<sup>339</sup> who seemed to follow the same source as Aşıkpaşazade, we find the same account with an important addition. This can be regarded as a clue for Neşri who had operated Aşıkpaşazade's source more fully. In Aşıkpaşazade, the identities of the *kuls* of Bayezid I in the battlefield were not clear. However in Neşri, the direct reference to the term 'janissaries' and 'solaks' as the *kapıkulu* of the Sultan, indicated that the janissary corps were regarded among the *hassa kapıkulus* of Bayezid I, who proved their loyalty to him.

On the other hand, in the Anonymous *Tevarih*, we find additional information on the same account.<sup>340</sup> It was mentioned in the Anonymous *Tevarih* that Bayezid I was left on the battlefield with a number of his *kapıkulu*, that is, ten thousand janissaries. It is known that the number of janissaries in 1480 was 10 thousand<sup>341</sup>. So,

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<sup>339</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma I*, 349-353 "...Bayezid Han kendü kapısı halkıyla, kulları, Yeniçeri ve solaklarıyla kaldı..."

<sup>340</sup> Anonymous *Tevarih*, 42-43 "...Andan Yıldırım Han yalnız kendü kapusu halkıyla kaldı. Ol vakit Yıldırım Han'un onbin yeniçerisi varidi..."

<sup>341</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ (1300-1600)*, (İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998),90

this can be regarded as an example of the reliability of the Anonymous *Tevarih* when it comes to details.

On the other hand, the Anonymous *Tevarih* puts the same account which was found in Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri, in the mounth of a janissary, giving advice to Bayezıd I on the same battlefield.<sup>342</sup> We read in the Anonymous *Tevarih* that, when Bayezıd I stood at the midst of the janissary corps on the battlefield, he was attacked by an unknown group.

As Bayezıd I wanted to take revenge on his soldiery who betrayed him, he decided to find them and fled away from the midst of the janissary corps. In that instance, one of the janissaries advised him not to go; however, Bayezıd I did not take his advice and hence was caught by Timur's soldiery. The janissary whom the author of the Anonymous *Tevarih* portrayed as his source, stated that if Bayezıd would have taken their advice, neither he nor the janissaries would have been caught by Timur. In the chronic of Oruc, we have the shortest version of the same account described in the Anonymous.<sup>343</sup>

What can be inferred from the account is that the janissary corps began to interfere in the decisions of the Sultan at an early age. The accounts of the chroniclers can be regarded as an indication of a well-established *kul* system already early in the

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<sup>342</sup> Anonymous *Tevarih*, 43 "...Yıldırım Han bizim içimüzde tuturken geldiler, etitdiler: "Ne turursın, leşkerün hayin oldı, kaçdı gitdi" didiler. Heman kim bu haberi işitdi, gazaba gelüp el çomagina urup dahi alaydan çıkup ol leşkerün ardına düşmek istedi. "Hey hepsem ol alaydan çıkma" diyu gördük çare olup yinemedük. Alaydan çıkdi, yani kaçanları leşkerden döge döge gine laya getüre. Hemankim alaydan çıkdi, leşkerden hoz kimesne kalmamışdı. Bir zamandan sonra gördük kiim tutmuşlar, karşumıza getürdiler. Naçar biz dahi muti olduk. Eğer aramızdan çıkmaza umud vardı kim belki ele girmeyeydi. Ahşam oldugunlayın alup bir yana kaçar giderdük. Mal'lum değildi kim anı bizim içimüzden alabilirlerdi. Zira kim biz onbin yeniçeri idik, malum değüldi kim Timur leşkeri bizi tağıdaydı. Eğer Yıldırım Han söz tutaydı başına ol vakit ol vakıa gelmezdi. Hem bir dahi tutsak olup soyulmazdık..."

<sup>343</sup> Oruc Beg, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, 60-61 "...Yıldırım han kendi alayı halkı ve yeniçerisiyle kaldı..."

fifteenth century with its instrument of the janissariy corps and *solaks* as part of the influential, loyal *kapıkulus* and *hassa* soldiery of the sultan.

### Reign of Mehmed I and the Period of Interregnum

The early Ottoman chronics also present important information on the socio-political influence of the janisary corps on the Ottoman sultans and the pretenders in the period of interregnum. Though they were the loyal *kapıkulu*, their two-sided policy towards the Ottoman sultan and their real intention behind this issue is well reflected by the chronics.

Neşri states that, after the battle of Ankara in 1402, Mehmed I came to help his father with his own *hassa* soldiery which was enslaved by Timur. Mehmed I, who was then eleven, consulted his *hass* in order to save his father. Hence the *hass*, probably the janissaries, told him that they were ready to die for the Sultan, “*Şaha, bizüm canımız ve başımız senündür.*”<sup>344</sup> Further in the account of Neşri, we read the janissaries giving battle tactics to Mehmed I in order to save Bayezıd I, which indicates not only the faithfullness of the corps, but also their martial intelligence.

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<sup>344</sup> Neşri, *Cihannüma II*, 367 “... Rivayet iderler ki, çün merhum Yıldırım Han Timur’la bir vakıa’ya uğrayub kazıyesi bu vechile olıcak, ol eyyamda Sultan Mehmed on bir yaşında idi. Tokat’ta olurdu. Çün Timur leşkeri galib olub, her kişiye kendü ehli ve iyali sevdası olub müteferrik olmuşlardı, bu dahi kendünün has askeriyle ve Rum dilaverleriyle sancağın çeküb, Timur’un askerin yarub çıkub, ‘azm-i Rum idüb, önüne gelen Tatar’dan bi-had ve bi-kıyas leşker kırub, gelüb Tokat’a yetişdi. Rum’a yitüşdikleri gün atasının giriftar olduğın ve karındaşları nabedid olduğın ve memleket düşmanun ayağı altında payimal olub, ehl-i İslamı gaaret ve hasaret itdüklerinişidüb, gayret odı yüreğın yakub, mübarek gözleri yaşla tolub, ah ,düb, eytdi ki,: “Ey diriğ memleket-i Osman’a ki, düşmanun atı ayağında helak ola. Ve diriğ reayasına ki, vedayi-i hazret aferid-kardur, düşman elinde aciz ve sergerdan olmuşlardur. Ve Sultan babam dahi ‘aduv elinde giriftar olub, ol geçen ‘ıyş u nuş, niş olub, ferah teraha mübeddel olmuşdur”, diyüb ağladı. Andan haslarıyla şöyle müşavere itdi ki, kendüyi ‘aduv leşkerine ura, ya bir tarikile atasın kurtara ve yahud anun yolunda helak ola. Bunlar eytdiler ki: Şaha, bizüm canımız ve başımız senündür; yolunda feda olsun. Buyurdığınız be-gayet boşdur, amma akılane maslahat oldur kim, bu düşman ki bu vilayete müstevli oldı, be-gayet çok leşkerdür, buna yakın olmak reva değüldür. Maslahat oldur kim, bunları ırakdan arkadan yürüyüb gözedelim. Anun gibi halvet bulub ve leşker kenarında bulunanları cümle helak idelim” didler. Sultan Mehmed bu tedbiri beğenüb asker-i Rumla kalkub, aşığı tarafa gitdi...”

On the other hand, the following account in the Anonymous *Tevarih* indicates the real intention of the corps.<sup>345</sup> In that account we have important information on the relation between Musa Çelebi and the janissary corps in the period of interregnum. The Anonymous mentions that Musa Çelebi was very generous towards his *kuls* and janissary corps. Here, the Anonymous narrates a vital depiction of Musa Çelebi as an example of his generosity . It was narrated in the Anonymous that Musa Çelebi was giving *akçe* with *filori* in a silver bowl to his *kuls* and the janissaries. Moreover, the Anonymous interestingly narrates that Musa Çelebi also distributed *akçe* and *filori* by putting it in the headgear, *börks* and *üsküf* of the janissaries so that the loyalty and support of janissary would have been maintained.

Furthermore, when some of the janissaries with their *ağa* turned to Mehmed's side in the period of Interregnum, some janissaries and *kuls* stayed with Musa. Here the Anonymous must have inserted this anecdote about the money to show that the janissaries sided with Musa Çelebi because of money. There is no doubt that the main interest of the corps was always economic. Additionally, in the account of Anonymous, we find a *hass kul* of Musa named *Derzi Saruca* who was always with him until his death.<sup>346</sup> Here the social function of the *kuls* as the comrade-in-arms and guardians of the Ottoman sultans is noteworthy.

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<sup>345</sup> Anonymous *Tevarih*, 54-55 “...Musa Çelebi gayet yavuz idi. Hem Rumililüyyü sevmez idi, karındaşı yanında hayin geldikleri için Ve illa kendü kulların severdi. Hem gayet cömerd idi. Şöyle rivayet iderler kim filoriyi akçayile karışdırırdı. Dahi yeniçeriye ve kendü kullarına bir gümüş sagrak içine toldururdu, dahi virürdi. Yahud başlarından börklerin çıkarırdı, dahi üsküf içine filoriyle akça koyardı, üleşdürirdi. Sonra Sultan Mehmed gelicek cümle girü Rumililüler hayin oldılar. Sultan Mehmed'e vardılar. Heman kendü kullarıyle yeniçeri kaldı. Cümle il Sultan Mehmed'e tapdılar. Çün iki Sultan beraber oldılar, gördiler kim hem yeniçeri kaldı. Yeniçeri eytdi: “Gel seni alalum bir yana gidelüm” didiler. Uymadı. Ta hatta yeniçerinin agası dahi Sultan Mehmed'e kaçdı vardı. Hemin beraber olduk. Şöyle rivayet iderler kim çünkim agamız kaçtı, anda agamızun bir çuhadarı kaldı. Ol dahi tururken gafilin Musa Çelebi omuzına çaldı. Bir kolunu tutmaz eyledi. Ol dahi kaçdı gitdi. Çün Musa Çelebi kendüyi ol halde gördi, o dahi içimizden çıkıdı gitdi. Atı çamura çökdi. Bir kolu tutmaz oldı. Atını yinemedi ve hem kendi dahi yol bilmezdi, gayet yavuz çamurlu yirdi. Anda yirlisi acizdi...”

<sup>346</sup> Anonymous, *Tevarih*, 55 “... Musa'nın bir kulu vardı, Derzi Saruca dirlerdi. Kendü kuliyidi...”



On the other hand, we have the criticism of the establishment by *iç oğlanı*s and Çandalı Ali and the men of ulema in the Anonymous *Tevarih* since they caused the intrigue in the state.<sup>347</sup> It is no coincidence that the Ottoman society reacted to the establishment of a *kul* system made up of youths as echoed in the Anonymous. Within this perspective, we can also infer that the janissary corps was no doubt established as a counterbalance against the Turcoman forces in the hinterland at an early period. As the tools of a centralist regime, the janissaries, as the ‘men of the state’, served to strengthen the centralist policy of the Ottoman state. In any case, in the period of interregnum, the military groups were conscious of the fact that their status and prosperity strictly depended on the continuation of a centralized Ottoman administration.<sup>348</sup>

### **The Role of of the Janissary *Ağa* in the period of Interegnum**

The *ağa* of janissaries, chosen within the janissary hearth until the sixteenth century, was of the highest rank among the Ottoman officials in the central administration of the Ottoman state and the highest commander of the janissary corps whom the sultan most trusted.<sup>349</sup> It is important to note that in the *Kavanin*, the relation between the janissary *ağas* and the Sultan in the seventeenth century is well-stated in the passage on the graduation ceremony of the novices. As the Sultan Ahmed I stated, “I am the key and they (ağas of janissaries) are the lock” and “If I say I have

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<sup>347</sup> *Ibid*, 34, “...Heman ki Kara Halil oğlu Ali Paşa vezir oldu, fışk u fücur ziyade oldu. Mahbub oğlanları yanına aldı, adını iç oğlanı kodı. Bir nice zaman ne gerekirse idüp çıkarıp mansıb virdi...”

<sup>348</sup> İnalcık, *Kuruluş Dönemi Osmanlı Sultanları*, 130

<sup>349</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları I*, 177. See Fatih Sultan Mehmed Teşkilat Kanunnamesi, Ahmet Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri I*. Kitap, 317-318 and for their elkab 331

the right to bring them to the gate, they know the worthy who would be taken to the gate”<sup>350</sup>

On the other hand, Neşri presents information on the political roles of the janissary *ağas* in the period of Interregnum.<sup>351</sup> Neşri narrates that in his struggle with his brother Süleyman Çelebi, Musa Çelebi decided to kill him. When Hacı Evrenos, the *lala* of Süleyman warned Süleyman that he would be killed by his brother Musa, Süleyman did not take the warning of Evrenos into consideration. Then Evrenos wanted Hasan Ağa, the *ağa* of janissaries to warn him thinking that Süleyman might have taken *ağa*’s words into consideration.

In this account, Neşri signifies the influence of janissary *ağas* over the pretenders. However, Süleyman did not take his words into consideration as well, and ordered Hasan Ağa’s beard to be cut off. Hence, Hasan Ağa gets angry and states that “now that Süleyman Çelebi was no longer a statesman with felicity” and declared that he would be in the service of Musa Çelebi from then on and asked if there were any *kapıkulu* who would be with him for this adherence. Thus, Hasan Ağa, together with certain *kapı oğlanı* and a number of janissaries who heard of his call, adhered to Musa Çelebi. Here we see the two sides of the janissary *ağa*.

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<sup>350</sup> Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân, 163 “... Ocağın kilidi bunlardır, anahtar benim, kapıya çıkarmak benim elimdedir. Eskilerini onlar bilir, kapıya çıkarmasını ben bilirim.”

<sup>351</sup> Neşri, Cihannüma II, 482-485 “...Andan Musa Çelebi tamam yakın gelip, çerinin önü iki taraftan bir birine ulaşıp, savaşa başlayacak Hacı Evrenoz Emir Süleyman’a içeri girip eyitti ki: “Ey şah-ı ‘alem Musa Çelebi gelip hayli asker perakende etti”, deyicek, eyitti ki: “Ey Hacı Lala, beni sohbetimden ayırma. Anın canı yoktur ki, bunda gelip, benimle mukabil ola”, dedi. Hacı Evrenoz çıkıp andan Hasan Ağa’ya eyitti ki: “Ey Ağa yörü, sen dahi var. Senin sözünü işidir ola”, dedi. Andan Hasan Ağa içeri girip söyliyeyin sınadı. Bunun sözü Emir Süleyman’a katı gelip heman emr etti. Hasan Ağa’nın sakalını yoldular. Andan Hasan Ağa taşra çıkıp, eyitti: “Ey Beyler ve ey ulular! Bu belalar bize nedir? Hümetse ancak ola. Bu kişiden devlet ve saadet gitti. Şöyle bilmiş olasınız”, dedi. Hasan Ağa ol vakit yeniçeri ağası idi. Ve andan eyitti: “Hele bilmiş olasız ki ben Musa Çelebi katına giderim” deyip, “benimle gelen kapı oğlanı gelsin” dedi... mecmu’ Musa Çelebi’nin katına vardılar... Emir Süleyman’a haber yetişt ki, “Hasan Ağa külli yeniçeriyi ve kapı oğlanını alıp, karındaşın katına gitti...”

Consequently, what can be inferred from the analysis of the above passages is that the janissary corps and their *ağa*, as one of the most influential *kuls* of the sultan, began to play roles in the states' policy, having influence on the decisions of the sultans at an early age. So, it is not as what Weber considers that is the arbitrary despotic power of the sultan who manipulates Ottoman policy in all spheres, but the influential status groups, like the janissary corps, who determined the decisions of the sultan, as reflected in the early Ottoman historiography.

## CHAPTER V

### COMPARISON WITH THE CONTEMPORARIES

#### 5.1) *MEMLUK* SYSTEM

The term *memluk*, derived from the Arabic verb, *mulk*; which means to have the right of possession or ownership; denotes to the one owned or the one in possession. Moreover, it also means a ‘white slave’.<sup>352</sup> In the historical context, the term designates the special legal status of the war captives who were in the service of the Memluk state (1250-1517), possessing a special privilege and honor. So, similar to the connotations of *ghulam* and *kul*, the term *memluk* also designates the distinguished status of certain slaves who were in the service of the Memluk sultanate.

The main mentality behind the *memluk* system seems to have its roots in the near eastern tradition of the *ghulam* system. As will be seen below, the *memluk* system can be considered as a more developed form or rather the continuation of the *ghulam* system in the near east in the thirteenth century. Specifically, the significance of the Memluk state is that all the administrative and military apparatus were in the hands of the slave-originated *memluks*, including the sultan.

Therefore, the system can be regarded as a good example for how the “slaves” are developed into an aristocratic class of professional *hassa* soldiery and ruling class,

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<sup>352</sup> Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 922-923.

and hence had power in government policy<sup>353</sup>. According to the common view, the main characteristics of the *memluk* system shared certain similarities with the Ottoman *kapıkulu* system, since the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization is considered as a continuation of the *ghulam* and *memluk* systems.<sup>354</sup>

A. Çetin, in his analysis of the *memluk* system, also shares the view that the Ottoman state presents a well-developed example of the *memluk* system. He further states that the status of the *memluks* in the Memluk state is similar to the status of the janissaries as the distinguished *kuls* of the rulers<sup>355</sup>. Within this context it is worth asking whether the main characteristics of the *memluk* system are identical or not to the Ottoman *kapıkulu-janissary* institution.

The *memluks* in the Memluk sultanate were mostly acquired through the purchasing of slaves from the Central Asian steppes and Caucasia. The qualified young slaves, either purchased or given voluntarily by the will of their parents, were brought to the presence of the Memluk sultan by the merchants.<sup>356</sup> However, in the Ottoman case, the war captives as *pencik oğlanı*s or youths taken through *devşirme*, acquired under the direct control of a state official without any mediator from outside.

On the other hand, similar to the Ottoman practice, the *memluks* who were brought to the presence of the Memluk Sultan, took Turkish names and were subjected to religious and military education in special schools called *tibak* under a supervisor, *tavaşi*. Afterwards, they went through a process of elimination and recruitment in terms of physical appearance and moral qualities; hence, they became a member of the Memluk Sultanate on condition of loyalty to his ruler<sup>357</sup>. This practice seems very similar to the *çıkma* in the Ottoman palace, where a constant mobility

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<sup>353</sup> Süleyman Kızıltoprak, “*Memluk*,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.29, (2004): 87-88

<sup>354</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 112-113

<sup>355</sup> Çetin, *Memluk Devletinde Askeri Teşkilat*, 41-45

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid*, 74-79

<sup>357</sup> Çetin, *Memluk Devletinde Askeri Teşkilat* 86

occurs within *kapıkulu* candidates after they finished their moral and physical education in *Enderun*, the inner palace.

However, the important and fundamental difference between the Ottoman *kul* system and the *memluk* system lies in the frequent change of the *memluks* in each accession. It is noteworthy that the most important task of the newly ascended Memluk sultan was to organize his own *memluks* and eliminate the ones of the preceeding sultan. However, in the Ottoman case, the newly ascending sultan hardly eliminates the former janissary corps. As mentioned earlier, the janissaries were always the ‘men of each legitimate sultan’ and the current government. The sultan could change, but the *kapıkulu* and the janissaries remain unchanged. This marks the fundamental difference between the *memluk* system of the Memluk Sultanate and the Ottoman notion of the *kapıkulu* system.

Nevertheless, like the Ottoman Sultan, the power of the Memluk sultans depended on the loyalty and quality of the *memluks* he owned as his principal supporters and an essential group who could execute his orders. Moreover, some of the *memluks*, who were qualified, became the *Hasekiye* of the Memluk sultan as his *hassa* soldiery or employed in his personal service in the palace. Hence, the Memluk sultan would have reserved himself a certain military *hassa* group called *Hassekiye* under his direct command.

It was this group, known also as the *Memalik-i Sultaniyye*, which constituted the *kapıkulu* soldiery of the Memluk sultan.<sup>358</sup> Similar to the Ottoman janissaries of the *hassa* soldiery, the *hasekiye*, as the most distinguished group amongst the *memluks*, who were girdened with swords, *kuşaklı-kılıçlı*, occupied the intimates of

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<sup>358</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Methal*, 414

the Memluk sultan who had the power on accessions and symbolized the power of the reigning sultan<sup>359</sup>.

On the other hand, the social aspect of the *memluk* phenomenon as an individual status group within the society seemed to share similarities with the janissary hearth. Having lived in their *tibaks* under the control of their supervisor with special regulations peculiar to them, the life of a *memluk* was very similar to the life of janissaries, who lived in their special *kışlas* under the supervision of the *ağa* of janissaries. This no doubt did not prevent the occurrence of *asabiyet*, solidarity and *huşdaşlık*, brotherhood amongst the *memluks*, as we similarly observed in the Ottoman janissary corps.

Within this perspective, Weber's description of the *memluk* identity is noteworthy. He pointed out the condition of *memluks* in the Memluk state as the 'status groups' within the state like the Ottoman janissary corps. As the household troops of a patrimonial state, they evolved into a closed caste as semi-autonomous traditional groups, whose corporate interests were an important factor in the struggle for power within the government.<sup>360</sup>

Consequently, the above discussion reveals certain similarities and differences between the Ottoman *kul* system and the *memluk* system in the Memluk sultanate . Within this framework, the impact of the *memluk* system on that of the Ottoman *kul-kapıkulu* system can be searched through the interaction between the Memluk and Ottoman states early in the fifteenth century.

When Murad I and Bayezid I inclined to have good diplomatic relations with the Memluk sultans against their rivalry with the Karamanids and other principalities

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<sup>359</sup> David Ayalon, *Memluk Ordusunun Yapısı Üzerine Araştırmalar I-II-II*, trans. A.Mesut Ağar (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2015),19

<sup>360</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society I*, 231-232

in Anatolia who sided with the Memluks, this impact must have become foreground<sup>361</sup>. Nevertheless, we can infer that the Ottoman notion of the *kul* system, although *memluk* impact can be observed, developed by their own practical needs peculiar to themselves.

## 5.2 *Nökership in the Mongol-İlhanid Tradition*

*Nökership*, as the comrade-in-arms and household servants of the Mongolian rulers, can be regarded as a good example of *kul*-sovereign relationship which was apparent in the Mongol and İlhanid states. However, it should be noted that *nökership* in the Turco-Mongol tradition is different from the classical *ghulam-kul* system in the near east. So, it is worth discussing the initial formation of Turco-Mongol *nökership* in the Mongol tradition within the framework of M.Bloch's theory of 'individual vassality', that is, the bondage between the "weak" and the "strongest". We believe, that the origins of the *kul* system had also its roots in this phenomenon of individual vassality.

To discuss it briefly, the idea of *nökership* lies in the notion of individual vassality, where one becomes the 'man of the other'. In M. Bloch's analysis of the relations of vassality in the early feudal Medieval Europe, this individual vassality is legitimized by a ceremony of *hommage*, *biat*; an oath of allegiance and by *anda*, an oath of loyalty to a ruler unto death, which symbolizes the dependence and protection of both sides. Hence, while one gets ready to obey and serve, the other is ready to offer him maintenance and protection. Bloch, labels this relationship in feudal terms

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<sup>361</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica* No.2 (1954),123



as follows: while the one becomes the ‘vassal’, the other becomes his ‘senior’ or ‘suzerain’<sup>362</sup>.

It is noteworthy that people have always desired to be under the protection of the stronger throughout the ages. As Bloch argues, especially in a circumstance that is lacking security and where the structure of a society is collapsing, specific structural safety units came into being as a result of this phenomenon. Hence, the weaker becomes under the protection of the stronger. On the other hand, Bloch argues that the stronger also needs the help of the weaker for the continuation of his prestige, wealth and security. Thus, one might see a mutual dependence in this contract.

However, for Bloch, ironically the weak is not only in the position of the vassal but also the protector. So for the weak, it is not only the desire to be under the protection of the stronger, but also the desire to get the command<sup>363</sup>. This we observe in all of the ‘status groups’ whose influence was heavily felt over the rulers and affairs of the state. Within this perspective, the phenomenon of individual vassality coincides with the mentality behind the *ghulam-kul* system in broad terms.

In both cases, we have a senior-suzerain relationship based on loyalty, protection, obedience and mutual benefit for each party. Moreover, we see how the “senior” became dominant over the “suzerain” in the examples of *ghulams* or *kuls* or how janissaries or other household troops interpolated into the affairs of the state as quite influential elements.

If we observe this phenomenon in the Mongolian state in the Cengizkhanid era onwards, we find the protagonists of this system in the house of Turco-Mongol states

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<sup>362</sup> March Bloch, *Feodal Toplum*, trans. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay (Ankara: İletişim Yayınları, 1988), 185-186

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid*, 188-9

under different titles, such as *boghol* and *nöker*, that denotes broadly to a servant or bodyguard of slave or freedman who is bound to his master by personal ties.<sup>364</sup> Similarly, their function as the comrade, protector, warrior or homeman of the rulers in the Mongolian society signifies the importance of *nökers* as a differentiated group within the Mongolian society as being the hereditary loyalties of the ancient steppe aristocracy.<sup>365</sup>

It is no doubt that Cengiz Khan derived his power from his talented *nökers*<sup>366</sup>. It is important to note that, a *nöker* in the Cengizhanid era could be of nomadic, sedentary, noble or of slave origin who in time acted as the members of imperial administration, both as the khan's slaves and comrades<sup>367</sup>.

However, there did not exist any systematic acquisition and training in the Mongolian notion of *nökership* as it was in the *ghulam-kul* system. On the other hand, the role of *nökers* in shaping the military and feudal structure of the Mongol society like in the early Ottoman state is noteworthy. The *nökers*, discerned by being the comrade-in-arms of Cengiz Khan, constituted the core of his personal army; always accompanying him in the campaigns as his permanent guard forces.<sup>368</sup> The case of the four famous *nökers* of Cengiz Khan, Cebe, Kubilay, Celme and Subetay, as being powerful commanders, proves this phenomenon. This can be compared to the case of the *nökers* around Osman Gazi as his comrade-in-arms.

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<sup>364</sup> Soudel, "Ghulam", 1079

<sup>365</sup> Rene Grousset, *Stepler İmparatorluğu, Atilla, Cengiz Han, Timur*, trans. Halil İnalçık (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2011), 231

<sup>366</sup> Tat'jana Skrynnikova, "Boghol, A Category of Submission at the Mongols", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, 58/3, (2005): 313-319

<sup>367</sup> Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46/1, (1986), 20

<sup>368</sup> B.Y. Vladimirtsov, *Moğolların İçtimai Teşkilatı* (Ankara: TTKYayınları, 1987), 66-67 *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi*, translated by Ahmet Temir (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2010), 146

Within this framework, Weber's theory of a charismatic leadership and patron-client solidarity in Eurasian steppes is noteworthy. As Weber stated, every leader starts his career with a warband of *nökers* recruited from allies or captured enemies bound to him by anda, oath of loyalty until death.<sup>369</sup> As in the case of Osman Gazi, the *nökers* constituted the original household of Osman and the Ottoman *ghulam*, *kul* system of the later centuries, must have had its origins in the *nöker* institution<sup>370</sup>.

Moreover, as Golden stressed, this phenomenon can be regarded as “breaking the traditional tribal ties of kinship into a personal guard force based on loyalty to the ruler which was the characteristic of Medieval feudal societies and the nucleus of personal armies”<sup>371</sup>

Finally, the function of the *nökers* as the personal men of the rulers in the early Mongol state is well-reflected in the contemporary source, *The Secret History of Mongols*. There existed slave servants in the household of Cengiz Khan, similar to the Ottoman men of *kapıkulu*. As the famous quotation from the *Secret History of Mongols* echoed, “Let them be thy slaves in thy threshold, if they leave cut their heels, Let them be the servants in thy gate and if they leave thy gate cut their livers”. Here, Temir interprets the ones offered amongst the captured men to Cengiz Han, as the servants of threshold and *kapıkulu*<sup>372</sup>. It is no doubt that they, as the servants of Cengiz Khan's gate, were to protect him.

Although the term gate is symbolic, referring to the place where the post was carried, the post of door-keeping was considered as an honorable post given to Cengiz Han's retinue who were responsible for certain services like guarding and fighting for

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<sup>369</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*,

<sup>370</sup> İnalçık, “Comments on Sultanism”, 74

<sup>371</sup> Peter Golden, “I will give the People unto Thee: The Cinggisid Conquests and their Aftermath in the Turkic World”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 21/41, (2000),25-26

<sup>372</sup> *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi*, trans. Ahmet Temir (Ankara: TTK Yayınları,2010),146

him and his clan<sup>373</sup>. Consequently, the notion of Turco-Mongol *nökership* no doubt contributes to the formation of Ottoman *kul* system in the early stage apart from its near eastern *ghulam* model.

### **The İlhanids (1256-1353)**

When the Mongolian suzerainty became dominant in Anatolia in 1235 and successively the İlhanid sovereignty was realized after the Mongol invasion of Anatolia in the second half of the thirteenth century, the administrative traditions of Mongol-İlhanid statecraft, mingled with the Persian-Islamic state traditions, began to dominate Seljukid Turks, whose influence was felt down to the Ottomans.<sup>374</sup> Within this atmosphere, an acculturation took place in terms of *nökership* which already preexisted in Anatolia under the Seljukids of Rum. Thus *nökership* also seemed to be influenced by the *ghulam* system. If we consider *nökership* as ‘individual vassality’ of the *kuls*, as İnalçık stated, the Ottoman concept of *kapıkulu* institution seems closer to *nökership* than its Islamic counterparts.<sup>375</sup>

Though we hardly detect the classical form of *ghulam* system in terms of slave acquisition and training, as applied systematically by the İlhanids, there existed certain similarities between the *nökership* in the İlhanids and the *ghulam-kul* system. For one thing, slaves who had martial skills were taken by the ruler as his legal

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<sup>373</sup> Skrynnikova, “Boghol”, 315-316

<sup>374</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 37-38

<sup>375</sup> İnalçık, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest”, 120

proportion of booty. Then they were employed either in the eastern provinces or taken directly into the service of the ruler as military forces or as administrative officials.<sup>376</sup>

For the others, a practice similar to *devşirme* regulation, which can be considered as a source for *nökers*, was also applied in the İlhanid state. Gazan Han was known to have taken one male child of a family for the army. Moreover, he purchased Mongol children to form a *hassa* force under his command. This way he had established a *hassa* army to reinforce the centralization of the state.<sup>377</sup> However, in the first years of the İlhanid state, one can hardly state that there was a systematic palace life and a strict organization of the army. The former tribal influences seemed to continue, although in the later stage the existence of soldiery called *ketavul*, as the salaried and *hassa* soldiery of the sovereign and a *korucu* as his bodyguard, was known to have existed.<sup>378</sup>

In any case *nökers*, as feudal aristocratic retainers and still functioning as military commanders or as palace officials, seemed to play an important role in the administrative and military structure of the İlhanid state. We also find *boghols* as the prototypes of *nökers* appearing as male servants or slaves in the service of İlhanids<sup>379</sup>.

Likewise in the early Ottoman *vakfiyes*, various references to *nökers* as eyewitnesses are observed in the *vakf* register of Cacaoğlu Nureddin, the emir of Kırşehir and Mongolian governor of Eskişehir in Anatolia in the thirteenth century<sup>380</sup>. This may indicate the role of *nökers* functioning like the early *kuls* of the Ottoman state. Similarly, in another contemporary source, *Bez̄m u Rez̄m* attributed to Kadı

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<sup>376</sup> Berthold Spuler, *İran Moğolları* (Ankara:TTK Yayınları, 2011), 453-4

<sup>377</sup> Mustafa Uyar, “İlhanlı Devletinin Askeri Teşkilatı”, (PhD Thesis Ankara University, 2007), 111-112.

<sup>378</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Methal*, 225

<sup>379</sup> Spuler, *İran Moğolları*, 300 and 435

<sup>380</sup> Temir, *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi*, 1959, 163

Burhaneddin written in 1397/8, we find *nökers* functioning as the men of *kapıkulu*. There *nökers* appeared as the men of Kadı Burhaneddin and *emirs* as *kapıkulu*. In the aforementioned work, the expressions such as *nökeran-i hassa* and the *kul*, servant of the Sultan which were used for the *nökers*, indicate their role as the special intimates of the Sultan<sup>381</sup>. In the same work, we find *nökers* functioning also as the military retinue of the sultan or as the deputy of the Sultan as his guardians.<sup>382</sup>

### 5.3) The Late Byzantine Notion of Household Troops

The impact of Byzantine institutions in shaping the Ottoman institutions have been discussed by the Byzantine and Ottoman historians so far. It was mainly after 1453, after the conquest of Constantinople, that this assertion came to the foreground by Busbec, Gibbons, Mortdmann, Iorga and Hammer, who Köprülü thinks based their assertions on their prejudice and superficial observations done without any scientific criteria.<sup>383</sup>

As mentioned in the introductory part of the study, Köprülü admits Byzantine influence over the Ottoman institutions which took place as a result of the long period of interaction among them between fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Within this framework, the late Byzantine case is of importance in this issue in terms of the acculturation of military and administrative practices. So in this part we will look at the late Byzantine *hassa* soldiery and household troops to find out about this impact.

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<sup>381</sup> Esterabadi, *Bezm u Rezm* 1990, 175-6

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid*, 440 and 297

<sup>383</sup> Köprülü, "Byzantine Institutions", 16-26 The Byzantine effect on the Ottoman institutions was accepted as an axiom by some western historians specifically after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. The idea that it was only through the adoption of Byzantine institutions that the "Asiatic Ottoman Principality" could established such imperial institutions based on the Byzantine heritage, is strongly opposed by Köprülü who stressed the point that the Byzantine state of the fifteenth century was no more than the corrupted version of the Eastern Rome.

In the mid Byzantine period, although the mid and the late Byzantine period military forces were mostly characterized by the use of mercenaries, there existed certain groups of household troops to protect the emperor and the state, similar to janissary regiments in or outside the capital. As the early regiments of the Byzantine household troops in the seventh century, there were the ‘crack troops,’ which included the *Bucellarii*, *Foederati* and the *Optimas*<sup>384</sup>.

It should be mentioned that the units of those crack troops were initially under the control of their own leaders, who were mostly of native aristocrats; hence, their affection and loyalty were diverted to their leaders, rather than the emperor and the state.<sup>385</sup> On the other hand, the success of emperor Heraclius against the Persians in the seventh century was considered to be the success of those crack troops, settled in various provinces of Asia Minor, who were then transferred into regular regiments under government control.<sup>386</sup>

As for a more systematic and regular force, we may cite the units of *tagmata*, created as a central rapid response force stationed in Constantinople and its environs, who were centrally paid and maintained by Constantine V (741-75). As the core of the central army, they functioned as the bodyguard troops within and outside the capital.<sup>387</sup> As Haldon asserted, the *tagmata* units were established as a result of the

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<sup>384</sup> W.Ensslin, “The Government and Administration of the Byzantine Empire” in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol.IV The Byzantine Empire, Part II Government, Church and Civilisation, ed. J.M.Hussey, at all, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 36

<sup>385</sup> David Nicolle, *Doğu Roma Orduları M.S. 306-886*, trans. Buket Bayrı (İstanbul: T.İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 16

<sup>386</sup> Ensslin, “The Government”, 39

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid*, 39

empire's assertion of its military power in the east against Persian and Arab raids in the seventh to eighth centuries.<sup>388</sup>

Within this framework, *tagmata* units can be considered as the *hassa* retinue of the emperor, acting under a commander, *domesticus*, who played a vital military role as household troops until the eleventh century.<sup>389</sup> Natives were preferred for the cadres of *tagmata* units in the initial stage, rather than the foreign troops or slaves.<sup>390</sup> It is noteworthy that, similar to the *praetorian* guards, the loyalty of *tagmata* units depends on their economic support by the emperor. They were the distinguished segments of the Byzantine army with better pay. Further, in the ninth century, when their function as the military decreased, they were mostly employed for ceremonial purposes.<sup>391</sup>

However, amongst the division of *tagmata* units, the *(h)etaireiai* was the real bodyguard of the emperor. Their name derives from the Greek word *etairos*, which denotes the 'comrades' or 'comrade-in-arms' of the emperor as his intimate retinue.<sup>392</sup> As the direct continuation of the Roman *foederati*, they were recruited from foreign mercenary troops, mostly from the Germanic troops, Goths and Longobards, who accompanied the emperor on campaigns and ceremonies; and their existence can be discovered in the sources until the last decades of eleventh century<sup>393</sup>.

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<sup>388</sup> John F. Haldon, "Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army C.550-950, A Study on the Origins of the Stratiotika Ktemata", in *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 357.Band*, (Wien,1979), 84

<sup>389</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 3-4

<sup>390</sup> Nicolle, *Doğu Roma Orduları*, 36

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid*,37

<sup>392</sup> Ian Heath, *Bizans Orduları 900-1461*, trans. Buket Bayrı (İstanbul:T.İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014),15

<sup>393</sup> Enslinn, "The Government and Administration of Byzantine Empire", 39-41. There were also the soldiers of muslim origin as the *hetaireiai*, at the ninth century, Nicolle,*Doğu Roma Orduları*, 37.



In any event, we do not have any information whether they were recruited or trained systematically similar to the *ghulam-kul* system in the near eastern tradition. It is noteworthy that as the distinguished segment of the *tagmata* sections, their cadres were sold at high prices. Thus, this shows that to be an *hetaireiai*, that is, to become the direct retinue of the emperor, must be advantageous.

On the other hand, regarding the status of *hetaireiai*, Birkenmeir states that they should not be considered among the tagmatic troops since they were not picked but rather attached to the emperor in some way, although they did have a formal elite status. They, as extra-heavy shock troops, served as special mission attachments, who were organized ethnically, but not trained and regularized like the other tagmatic troops of the following centuries.<sup>394</sup>

In the following centuries, *tagmata* units were divided into individual formations, each with a specific duty. Then in the late period, we find the *tagmata* units under the title of *allagia* or rather under *vasilikon allegian*, connoting both to the imperial escort guarding the emperor on campaigns and the mobile regiments in the provinces.<sup>395</sup> Within this framework, the new units of *allagia*, like the *tagmata* regiments, can also be considered as the *hassa* forces of the late Byzantine state.<sup>396</sup>

Nevertheless, considering the complexity of late Byzantine army in terms of the inner and external problems in the fourteenth century, one can hardly search for one standing army which would protect and defend the whole territory of the Byzantine borders. So, *tagmata* regiments under various titles and subdivisions portrayed individual small standing armies scattered around the provinces.

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<sup>394</sup> John Birkenmeir, *The Development of the Komnenian Army 1081-1180* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 124-5

<sup>395</sup> Savas Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium, 1204-1453* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 84-5

<sup>396</sup> Heath, *Bizans Orduları*, 25

Therefore, the *allagia* units, as infantry and cavalry regiments, seemed to serve not only as the bodyguard of the emperor, but also as the troops that guarded the city walls and the palace. However, one can hardly mention the systematic acquisition and training in the cadres of *allagia* units like in the classical *ghulam-kul* system in the near east.

On the other hand, the late Byzantine army was mostly characterized by the employment of foreign mercenaries who, until the mid fifteenth century, infiltrated not only into the sections of the army, but also most of the palace units. We may state that they constituted the '*hassa* regiments of foreigners,' who acted not only as household troops of the emperor and the palace, but also functioned as the essential military forces of the late Byzantine army. It should be noted that some mercenaries remained in Constantinople as 'Imperial Mercenaries' to protect the imperial city as the *hassa* bodyguard<sup>397</sup>

In the work of M. Bartusis, who studied the late Byzantine palace guards thoroughly, we find many ethnic-groups of foreign mercenaries employed as palace servants, although their status and function were rather vague in the late Byzantine sources.<sup>398</sup> The following groups are noteworthy in terms of their function as the household troops and their role in acculturation process. Within the perspective of the study, apart from the Varangian guard, we may cite the *Vardarioati* and a certain group of Catalans as palace guard units in the service of the Byzantine state, roughly from the tenth to the eleventh centuries.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 237. For details see Part II: The Army as an Institution, Palace Guard, Garrisons, Borders, 271-306

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid*, 269

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid*, 279-280

The *Varadarioti*, as a group of palace guard, were actually Persians by race from the Vardar River. Whether they were Turks that are considered to be Persians in the Byzantine sources, or whether they were Hungarians (whom the Byzantines called the “Turks”) settled along the Vardar valley during the tenth century is disputable.<sup>400</sup> Nevertheless, we follow them in the sources until the mid-twelfth century as an armed palace guard unit<sup>401</sup>. Moreover, as the entourage of the emperor, their duty was to keep people orderly in the ceremonies as imperial servants.<sup>402</sup>

We may also mention a group of Catalan troops who functioned as palace guards in the late Byzantine state. A very interesting assertion regarding a group of Catalan palace guards about their origins with the janissary corps is noteworthy. According to the account of contemporary Byzantine chronicler, N. Gregoras (1295-1360), some Catalan sailors remained in Constantinople after the Venetian-Genoese war in 1352. Gregoras writes that the emperor Kantakouzenos gathered 500 of them and armed them as a light infantry unit and made them his bodyguard.

However, as Pseudo-Kodinos narrates, they were not employed in any of the palace guard units but were recruited as the personal guard of the emperor.<sup>403</sup> E. Zachariadou has an hypothesis regarding this Catalan group. According to her, the Ottoman term ‘janissaries’, derived from the name of this Catalan group, who were named as the *ianitzaroi*. She states that the terms originally derived from the Latin word *janizzarie*, *janizzari* or *janua* which denotes to the ‘porte’ or ‘light cavalry’ in the thirteenth century Europe. The term also exists in various forms as the *genetari*, *giannetario* or *janizzari* in Greek, which is the equivalent of *janitor* in Latin, denoting

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<sup>400</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium*, 114, Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 280

<sup>401</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium*, 114-5

<sup>402</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army* 279

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid*, 284

the name of a Berber tribe of Zanata in Spain whose members were light infantry and served as the lowest level of imperial servants<sup>404</sup>.

Zachariadou bases her evidence on the memoirs of S.Syropoulos, who served as a member of the council of Florance between 1438-1439. He narrates that there existed a group called ‘janissary’ as the retinue of emperor Ionnes Paleologus (1425-1448) in his trip to the council in Florance.<sup>405</sup> Moreover, Zachariadou asserts, based on Pachymeres, that this Catalan group came into the Byzantine service as the guard personnel of I.Kankakuzenos VI and served him with loyalty until 1354<sup>406</sup>.

Furthermore, as mentioned by Syropoulos, there were groups of troops known as the *janizzari* in western Europe in the fourteenth century who later served the Byzantine state towards the end of the same century as a separate group apart from the *stratiotes*.<sup>407</sup> Thus, Zachariadou, using this as an evidence, stated that the term ‘janissary’ was actually the transliteration of the name of this Catalan group who were in the service of the Byzantine state in the late fourteenth century and she argues that the Ottomans transferred this term for their newly established corps as a result of their interaction with the Byzantines.

Zachariadou further asserts that, at the time of the existence of this group in the Byzantine service, the Ottoman janissaries had not yet been established<sup>408</sup>. So, she considers this to be the Byzantine impact on the Ottoman naming of its infantry.

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<sup>404</sup> E. Zachariadou “Les janissaires de l’empereur byzantin”, in *Zachariadou Romania and the Turks* No.XI (London,1985), 594. The Spanish terms as the *genets*, *ianets* or *cavallers* connotes to light armed cavalry in the west. Moreover, in Catalan the term as *genetari* or *ginetari en catalan*, as *genetaire* or *genetayre* or *ianetaire* in French and *giannetaire* or *gianetario* or *giannettiere* in Italian.

<sup>405</sup> Zachariadou, “Les Janissaires”, 591

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid*, 596. See Sylvester Syropoulos, *Les Memoires du Grand Ecclesiarque de l’Eglise de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florance (1438-1439)*, ed. V.Laurent (Rome,1971)

<sup>407</sup> Zachariadou, “Les janissaries”, 597

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid*, 597

According to Zachariadou, the Turkish impact on the Byzantine practices was very vague in that period. Moreover, for her, the Byzantines would probably not transfer the name of an Ottoman regiment for their own, whom they recall with hatred<sup>409</sup>

On the other hand, according to M.Daş, who had first commented on this issue, the Ottoman term no doubt is the transliteration of the Turkish term *yeni-çeri*, *çeri* referring to ‘soldier,’ already existing in the pre-Islamic Turkish. On the other hand, for him, the Turkish interaction with the Byzantines had already begun before the Catalan guard was active in the Byzantine state. So the hypothesis of Zachariadou seems invalid.<sup>410</sup>

Regardless, we may assume that the term *yeniçeri*, like the term *kul*, has no equivalent in English; not only in terms of its actual connotation but also of etymology. The term ‘janissary’ rather sounds like the distorted version of the Turkish *yeniçeri* in a western accent. Consequently, to conclude in an accurate manner, the term needs further interpretation by the linguists. Also, the interpretation of the term *ianitzaroi* by Zachariadou needs to be further evaluated by the linguists.<sup>411</sup> Although words could have similar connotations in several languages throughout the centuries within cultures, we may hardly accept the hypothesis of the change in the accent of the word from the *iannatzaria* to janissary.

If we continue to analyze the palace guards in the late Byzantine state, the reasons for their disappearance give us clues about their organization. For one thing, it was difficult for them to adapt to a new ruler or the new emperor when the new emperor might have wanted to create his own personal guards. In addition, there were

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<sup>409</sup> Zachariadou, “Les janissaries”, 595

<sup>410</sup> M.Daş, “Osmanlı Tesiri ile Bizans Sarayında oluşturulan Yeniçeri Muhafız Birliği Hakkında”, *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No.12, (2002),293-304

<sup>411</sup> For the etymology of the word, See the aforementioned dictionaries mentioned in Zachariadou 594, ft.12

difficulties in recruiting manpower for these guards; and finally, at times it was hard for the state to finance them.<sup>412</sup>

Thus, we can infer that as we observed in most of the household troops, the acquisition of manpower for the palace guards did not portray a systematic conscription and training under the control of a centralized government in the late Byzantine era. Hence, they were not regular, permanent guards but subject to change and dismissal upon the will of the new emperor. So, their status did not seem to offer such advantages as their *ghulam-kul* counterparts in the near east and in the Ottoman janissary regiments.

#### **5.4) Byzantine Turkish Acculturation in the Fourteenth Century**

The Byzantine frontiers which had been exposed to many raids by various ethnic groups, such as the Slavs, Persians, Arabs and the Turks starting by the seventh century up to fourteenth no doubt shaped the demography and military and administrative structure of the Byzantine state. This view is supported by Demirkent, who thinks the states encircling the Byzantine state must have reflected their impact.<sup>413</sup> Within that context, we may state that the inevitable interaction along the borders helped shape the military structure of all parties.

As Köprülü mentioned, essentially the Sasanid and later the Arab influence over the Byzantine institutions are significant in the organization of their military.<sup>414</sup> Moreover, Ostrogorsky also admits Sasanid influence, but argues that it was not as

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<sup>412</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 272

<sup>413</sup> Işın Demirkent, "Bizans", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.6, (1992), 230-244

<sup>414</sup> Köprülü, *Byzantine Institutions*, 30

dominant as it was thought to be.<sup>415</sup> However, it is noteworthy that the Abbasid frontier system of defence, *avasım* as the continuation of the Sasanid defence system, must have an impact on the organization of the Byzantine frontier system of *limitai*, apart from its Roman models.<sup>416</sup>

Furthermore, the employment and the settlement of foreign mercenary groups to maintain permanent military forces in various sections of the military regiments or granting of *pronoia* welcomes the introduction of Western and Turkish military practices to the Byzantine army before the fourteenth century.<sup>417</sup>

Considering the vivid interaction between the Turkish troops and the Byzantines in Asia Minor in the fourteenth century, it would be meaningful to have a look at the late Byzantine army in terms of acculturation of martial habits. This interaction no doubt led to the intermingling of martial habits. It was also by the fourteenth century that local governors of Byzantine cities and provinces in Asia Minor started cooperating with Turkish principalities.<sup>418</sup>

A vivid scene for this interaction was the close relationship between Umur Pasha of Aydın principality and Kantakouzenos. The latter, admitting the impossibility of facing the strength of the Turkish military, decided to lead a policy of appeasement and cooperation with the Turks. Thus, he relied on Umur's military assistance, as well as other Turkish groups.<sup>419</sup> Within this context, the existence of Umur's archers as part of *tagmata* units in the Byzantine army is noteworthy.

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<sup>415</sup> Ostrogorsky, *The History of the Byzantine State*, (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1956)

<sup>416</sup> For the interaction between the Byzantines and the Arabs on the frontier line, see J.Haldon and H.Kenney, "Arab Byzantine frontier in the eight and ninth centuries:Military Organization and Society in the Borderlands," *ZRVI*, 19(1990)79-116

<sup>417</sup> Batusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 6-7

<sup>418</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium*, 28

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid*,39

When Umur Pasha assisted Kantakouzenos in 1345 at the battle of Peritheorion, he took the right flank with his Turkish archers, and Kantakouzenos stayed at the center with the group of Turkish soldiery, probably with the Alans and the Turkopoli, and Byzantine troops<sup>420</sup>. In the same battle we find Asen as the commander of the ‘imperial retinue’ of the emperor that was composed of the members of the ruling elite, holding the left wing with the Byzantine heavy cavalry.

It is noteworthy that, in the account of Enveri’s *Düsturname-i* narrating the activities of Umur Bey of Aydın Principality in the fourteenth century, we find the same Asen, the Byzantine commander who had close relations with Kantakouzenos, commanding the Byzantine forces with the emperor Andronicus III (1328-1341) at the campaign of Gallipoli in 1332.<sup>421</sup>

On the other hand, as a result of the interaction between the Byzantine and Turkish soldiery, we find the practice of taking ‘one-fifth’ as the ratio of the booty reserved for the Byzantine emperor. As discussed briefly in the previous chapter, originally the ratio of the one-fifth of booty reserved for the rulers was a pre-Islamic Arabic custom traced to antiquity, where the chief of the campaigners took the one-fifth of the spoils and the rest was divided amongst the raiders.<sup>422</sup>

Within this context, the following discussion on the origin of the *hums*, as the ‘one-fifth,’ is noteworthy to evaluate its origins and its transference to the Byzantine state. Before the battle of Badr at 624 AD, the Prophet had free choice to divide the

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<sup>420</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 256. It is noteworthy that the battle formation of the Byzantine army mostly being light-armed infantry like the janissary troops resembled to that of the Ottoman formation of division of troops into three segments as the left, right and the center.

<sup>421</sup> *Düsturname-i Enveri*, 61 “...*Geliboluya Esen tekfura çun hakim olur Haktan şeh-i Mansur çun*” “*Çün Geliboluya çıkdılar gúzat gördiler kim leşker olmuş kayinat*” “*Ol Esen tekfur ola elli bin er cem ıldı karşı çıkdı kopdı şer...*”

<sup>422</sup> Abdülaziz Sachedina, “Al-Khums: The Fifth in the Imami Shi’i Legal System”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.39 No.4 (1980), 277. For this see also Norman Calder, “Judicial Authority in İmam Shi’i”, *Bulletin of British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.6 No.2 (1979):104-108



booty based on Arab customary law. However, since there was chaos among his followers regarding the distribution of spoils, upon the decision of divine legislation of the jurists, it was decided that one-fifth would be the portion of *Allah*, then the others would be divided among the nearest kin of the Prophet, and the rest to be distributed to the orphans and the poor.<sup>423</sup>

In an account of Kantakouzenos, narrating Andronicus III's campaign against the Albanians in Epiros in 1338, we read him stating; "it was customary that the 'one-fifth', (*pempte moira*) of booty should be given to the emperor as a reward and an equal part to the *megas domestikos*, as he was the head of the whole army."<sup>424</sup>

Similar in another account of Kantakouzenos, narrating the current situation after the Byzantines defeated the Albanians with Umur's aid, we find similar expressions about the ratio taken by the emperor. When a great portion of the booty was left behind for them, we find the expression as "earlier in his experience it had been the custom for the army, whenever it won, more or less booty that the best fifth was granted to the emperor" and he continues as "but this time they did not do customary things".<sup>425</sup>

What could Kantakouzenos mean by the phrase 'customary'? In the aforementioned statements, considering that Kantakouzenos had composed his work in the fourteenth century, he must have referred to the older Byzantine practice by stating that "it was the earlier custom to take best fifth of booty as the right of the emperor". This suggests that the Byzantines encountered such non-Byzantine practices earlier than fourteenth century.

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<sup>423</sup> Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 121.

<sup>424</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Byzantium*, 146-7

<sup>425</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 249

Moreover, in the account of an other contemporary work, Pseudo-Kodinos, we read, “ From the booty (*koursos*), first a fifth (*pentamoiria*) is given in the name of the emperor, a second portion on behalf of the entire army to the *megas domestikos* and a third to the division leaders, from the division each commands”<sup>426</sup> So it is apparent that in both sources we find the same ratio of ‘one-fifth’ as the commander’s or the emperor’s portion in the Byzantine state. However, It is noteworthy that the portion of booty varied as ‘one sixth’ or ‘one tenth’ in the Byzantine sources of the tenth century.

In the *Taktika* of Leo VI compiled in the first half of the tenth century, we find the ratio of booty as ‘one-fifth’ as well.<sup>427</sup> Considering that *Taktika* contains many references to Islamic tradition as a result of the Arab raids in the seventh century, it must have been the Arab-Islamic influence on the Byzantine practice of portioning ratio of the booty. This practice was also seen in Muslim Spain and in the practices of the Catalan company based in Gallipoli.<sup>428</sup>

Within this framework, the reference to the ratio as ‘one-fifth’ in Kantakouzenos and Psedo-Kodinos must have traced to the old practice which was still in use when *Taktika* was compiled in the tenth century. Now, it becomes meaningful why Kantakouzenos uses the term ‘customary’ for practice of one fifth. So, it must have been the Arabic-Islamic influence over the Byzantine in the seventh century that this practice was transferred to the Byzantines.

Moreover, considering the alliance with Umur and Kantakouzenos, it must also be the impact of the Turkish principality of Aydın Bey, where this practice of

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<sup>426</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium*, 147

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, 147-148

<sup>428</sup> Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium*, 148

one-fifth was in use.<sup>429</sup> On the other hand, we cannot answer whether it was only the booty taken on the ratio of one-fifth or whether there were any slaves taken using this ratio too. Considering that the Byzantine emperor Manuel served as a vassal in the porte and in the army of Murad I in the last decades of thirteenth century, and Orhan Beg had sent 10 thousand troops under the command of Süleyman Pasha to help Kantakuzenoz, the transference of various practices seems a natural outcome of these interactions.<sup>430</sup>

On the other hand, whether there existed a model of *devşirme* or the recruitment of war captives as slave forces for the Byzantine army is another important issue to be discussed. The Byzantine emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969) was known to have baptised certain Muslim children for military purposes in the tenth century. As Dela Jonquire indicated, Nicopheros Phocas was known to collect and baptise and then train ten thousand Muslim children for military purposes in 962.<sup>431</sup>

Moreover, we find in the *Taktika* of Leo VI that a certain group of Slavs were baptised and trained for the purpose of military manpower in the tenth century.<sup>432</sup> Furthermore, in the reign of John Vatatzes (1193-1254), Cumans in Asia Minor were recruited as war captives for the purpose of settling them as peasant soldiers.<sup>433</sup> The settlement of different ethnic groups for the defence of the borders, or to colonize a certain area in the Byzantine state was a common phenomenon of the late Byzantine

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<sup>429</sup> *Düsturname-i Enveri*, 59-60 “...ol ganimetden kamu şadan olur, gece yedi içdi yatdı iki emir, subh dem göndürdi verdi çok esir, geldi şehrine Hızır Beg namdar, kıldı paşaya du’a leyl ü payan, penc ü yek kim çıkdı yok payan u had...”

<sup>430</sup> Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 504-5 and 487

<sup>431</sup> A.S.Atiya, *Niğbolu*, 161

<sup>432</sup> *Taktika of Leo VI*, 471

<sup>433</sup> Bartusis, *Late Byzantine Army*, 208

period.<sup>434</sup> In any case, with respect to the ethnic composition of the Byzantine army, this policy must have contributed to the process of acculturation within cultures. However it is hard to state exactly who transferred from whom.

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<sup>434</sup> Bartusis, "On the Problem of Smallholding Soldiers", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 44, (1990), 24

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

As a result of this comparative analysis, we concluded that the recruitment of slave-originated foreign troops as salaried, permanent, regular forces to be used for military, administrative and ceremonial purposes, was a phenomenon which was mostly seen in the near eastern states. Hence, in such a system we observed a transition from “slavery” to *kulluk* in the status of those slave-originated *kuls* who were differentiated from the ordinary slaves by being the special servants of the rulers. It can be inferred that the janissaries, as the *hassa kuls* of the Ottoman sultan, were probably aware of their distinguished status and power over the state affairs by an early period.

In the near eastern states, we observed the existence of such court-based imperial household soldiery under different titles, such as *mürtezika* in the Emevid and Abasid states, *ghulaman-i saray*, *ghulaman-i hassa* or *ghulaman-i sultan* in the Ghaznevid state, *ghulaman-i dergah*, *ghulaman-i yayak*, *Halka-i hass*, *mülaziman-i yatak* and *yayak* or *müfrade* in the Seljukid states, and *Memalik-i sultaniye* or *Hasekiye* in the *Memluk* sultanate. We find the similar category of *hassa* soldiery of

household troops under the title of *kul* or *kapıkulu* with its special connotation to ‘janissary’ corps in the Ottoman state.

On the other hand, we observed that similar household troops that existed in the Roman-Byzantine states did not have a thoroughly distinguished status; hence, they were different from their counterparts in the sense of the classical *ghulam-kul* system in the near eastern tradition. For one thing, it was the ‘systematic’ recruitment and training of foreign troops, mainly of ‘slave’ origin, who constituted the core of these *hassa* household troops in the near east, as well as in the Ottoman state. For the other, the difference in the classical *ghulam-kul* system was that the *kuls* in the near eastern tradition could be promoted to high ranks within the statecraft, either as military commanders or as high officials in the administration. Hence, the term *kul* designates to a grander class of ‘military’ in the near eastern tradition.

However, likewise in the near eastern states, including the Ottomans, the Roman-Byzantine household troops, the legioneries, praetorian guard, the Varangians, the *tagmata* units and the *heteriatia* and the *allegia*, were effective groups over the states’s affairs and accessions; and they were the essential tools in the centralization process, reinforcing the ruler’s power against native elements. Thus, similarly they offered mutual advantage and prestige to both sides. Additionally, their loyalty, like their *ghulam-kul* counterparts in the near east, mostly depended on their economic interests.

For the late Byzantine impact on the Ottoman institutions, which have been rather a debatable issue discussed by the Byzantine and Ottoman historians so far, we concluded that, it seems that it was mostly the Turkic-Islamic practices that might have impact on the Byzantine practices. This was apparent in the case of the ‘one-

fifth' of booty the Byzantine emperor had taken as a result of the raids in the fourteenth century, or as in the similar regulation of *devşirme* applied by N. Phocas who collected and baptised Muslim, and Slav children for military purposes in the tenth century. We also find that Umur's archers fought as part of *tagmata* units in the Byzantine army in the fourteenth century, which must have contributed to this acculturation process.

So apart from its near eastern model, the Ottomans seemed to be influenced by the notion of *nökership* in the Turco-Mongol tradition already existing in Anatolia in the early fourteenth century. We find such household troops under the title of *boghol* or *nöker* in the Cengizkhanid era and *ketavul* or *nökeran-ı hassa* in the İlhanid state. Although they functioned in a similar way compared to their counterparts in near eastern tradition, they were not systematically recruited and trained for the state's service. We can say that the notion of *nökership* seemed to be transferred to Anatolia by the way of İlhanids, and then the Seljukids down to the Ottomans.

Within this perspective, we observed that, Köse Mihal, as a *nöker* to Osman Gazi, can be an early example of the *hassa* soldiery and *kul* identity in the Ottoman state in the early fourteenth century. Formerly, a Christian prince who later converted and took the name *Abdullah*, a name generally given new converts, Köse Mihal became the intimate retinue of Osman Gazi in the early fourteenth century.

Besides that, when we analyze the early *vakf* registers further in the fourteen and fifteenth centuries, we determined many references to the name *Abdullah*, who were assigned as *kuls*, not only in the palace service, but also in the military and administrative apparatus under the titles, *hadim*, enunch, *tavaşi*, *hazinedar*, treasurer and *miralay* early in the fourteenth century. This may indicate their non-Muslim slave

origin, although *Abdullah* was also a name frequently given to the muslims. Hence, we may infer that a prototype of *kapıkulu* and palace organization had already been established early in the fourteen hundreds.

In addition, we determined that the name *Abdullah* was given to two janissaries in a *vakf* register of 1385. Finally, we found in a *vakf* register of 1425 that the name *Abdullah* was given to a *sekbanbaşı* of the janissary corps coming from the novice barrack. Consequently, we may assume that the Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization seemed to take shape by the end of fourteenth century by assigninig slave-originated *kuls* to the state's service.

So, it seems that the Ottomans had established their *kul-kapıkulu* system with their own peculiarities. First of all, we may assert that the formation of a slave-originated *hassa* soldiery on a permanent standing basis signifies a departure from the Turcoman-*yaya* corps, who were considered as the first *hassa* soldiery of the early Ottoman state, but were actually native Turcoman peasant soldiers and served on a temporary basis.

Thus, the creation of a slave-originated court-based permanent regular force from the foreign *kuls* under the direct command of the sultan designated to a new stage in the formation of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* institution developing under the impact of the near eastern tradition in the second half of the fourteenth century. Moreover, it was the practical solution found by the Ottomans to utilize war captives to meet the needs of a *hassa* army under the direct command of the sultan for their further conquests.

On the other hand, when we look at the *mamluk* model, which is thought to stand as the closest model to the Ottoman janissary-*kul* example, there exists a



fundamental difference. Unlike the *memluk* system, where upon the accession of each new sultan, the cadres of *memluks* change, the Ottoman janissary-*kuls* remain untouched. Therefore, we may state that the Ottoman men of *kul*-janissary troops were actually the ‘men of the state’ or rather the ‘men of each legitimate sultan.’ This occupies the fundamental difference between the Ottoman notion of the *kul* system with that of the *memluk* model.

Consequently, for the first objective of the study, we may infer that the conceptual origins of the Ottoman *kapıkulu* of *hasa* soldiery was mainly shaped under the impact of near eastern tradition, as well as by Turco-Mongol *nökership*. Thus, a specific typology of *kul* identity was established by the Ottomans for the practical needs by pursuing a subtle policy for the development and the control of such household troops in the janissary model – as *hasa kuls* - under a centralist policy.

With regards to the second objective of the study, for the process of the establishment and the socio-political and military roles of the early janissary corps as the *hasa* soldiery in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, we observe that the early Ottoman historiography presents authentic information. However, they, as the historiographers of the state, are to be evaluated with caution, since there exists certain legitimizations and amendments, like additions or omissions of certain events reflecting the current Ottoman policy.

Anonymous *Tevarih* is the only source where we find a different perspective in certain accounts, which is natural reflecting the opposite public opinion. Therefore, the chronics are to be checked and completed by other sources like *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, *kanun* codes and memoirs for a total historical sequence and also to

eliminate anachronisms. We observe that all are complementary to each other, containing details which the other lacks.

Within this framework, we concluded that the janissary corps as *pencik oğlanı* were probably first recruited in 1363, after Murad I ascended the throne, a date in conformity with the first regulation of *pençik*. The role of prominent men of *ulema* like Çandarlı Halil and the Kara Rüstem, who were accustomed to Persian-Islamic traditions, and the important role of the frontier beg Evrenos, who was accustomed with the life on the frontiers, were also mentioned and stressed by early chronics in the formation of janissary-*kul* model. This also signifies their role on the acculturation of near eastern practices to the Ottomans.

Therefore, by the formation of a *hassa* soldiery of household troops under the name ‘janissary’, the new-troop, we find a new special category of ‘slave soldiery,’ who were more than ordinary slaves, as part of a special system known as the *kapıkulu* institution early in the fourteenth century Ottoman state.

Hence, the slave-originated *kuls* as the special servants of the Ottoman sultans constituted a grander class of *hassa* soldiery, who were distinguished by their ‘white headgears’, *ak börk* as a symbol of their *hassa* status designating nobility and dependence to the sovereign. Here, we detect Aşıkpaşazade’s effort to put emphasis on the role of the *Vefaiyye* order in the creation of ‘white headgear’ in Bilecik at the time of Orhan Gazi, rather than the Bekthasi influence on this issue.

On the other hand, this phenomenon is reflected through grandeur personalities like Timurtaş Pasha who was thought to be the descendant of Hacı Bektaş in *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*. This emphasizes the hearth’s affiliation with Bektashism and can be regarded as an attempt made by the source to legitimize and to

avoid the anachronism of the time gap between Hacı Bektaş and the creation of janissary hearth.

For the second objective of the study, with regards to the early socio-political roles of the janissary corps, we concluded that the early Ottoman historiography, the *Gazavatname-i Sultan Murad Han* of the fifteenth century and the memoirs of contemporary figures, presented reliable information and details. Their sources were mainly the eye-witnesses of the current situation. What we can infer from the sources mentioned above is that, as a status group, the loyalty and the motivation of the janissaries to the sultan as his “devoted *kuls*” were mainly based on their economic concern. Additionally, their influence over the pretenders and the sultan’s decisions was significant. We also observed the critical role of the janissary *ağa*, his two-sided policy and the reflection of his relation with the Ottoman sultan by the symbolism of ‘key’ and the ‘lock’.

On the other hand, we find that *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan* as a seventeenth century source, presents information on the early stages of the novice barrack which the chronics lack. In this source, we find the portrayal of the janissary-*kul* identity in conformity with the near eastern traditionm as being the rootless, single and unqualified novices to become good and loyal soldiers.

Moreover, we learn from *Kavanin* the importance of state-sealed firearms symbolizing ‘state dependency,’ which could only be used by the *hassa* soldiery or *hünkar kulu* who came through *çıkma*. Therefore, we may conclude that in the later stage, ‘fire-guns’ became the symbol of *hassa* soldiery apart from the ‘white headgears’.

Furthermore, regarding the military role of the early janissary corps, we see that it is mostly the foreign memoirs that give information on the battle tactics and martial skills of the corps for this early period. Considering that they could hardly be ‘objective’ in their criticisms of the Ottoman side, however, the foreign observers admire the corps’s bravery as disciplined and regular light infantry, as opposed to the heavy-armed cavalry of the crusading forces as the accounts on Kosova and Nicopolis indicated.

Additionally, we also learn from the memoirs that the janissary corps fought in the form of phalanx scattered on each side of the battlefield with the tactics of ambush, crescent, retreat and camouflage as well as by throwing arrows and firing of cannons. It is noteworthy that we find cannons as firearms for the first time at the battle of Kosova, as narrated in the Anonymous *Tevarih*, which must have followed the Neşri-Ahmedi tradition.

Finally, we determined that Schiltberger, who wrote on the early Ottoman military and palace structure as an eyewitness, could be an early example of a *solak* soldiery who later became *solakbaşı*. As verified by *Kavanin*, *solaklık*, as a distinguished *hassa* regiment whose members functioned as the guardians of the sultan and for military and ceremonial functions, was established in the age of Bayezid I.

Consequently, by this comparative analysis of studies of the structure of the most of the household soldiery, we observed a similar pattern in terms of their structure, service, influence over the rulers, and their loyalty on the condition of the economic concerns. However, the systematization and equilibrium in terms of loyalty and autonomy of the status groups seemed to be well-balanced under the centralist

Ottoman policy in the janissary-*kul* model which distinguished itself from its pre-Ottoman near eastern and Turco-Mongol models. Therefore, as seen throughout the study, the comparative analysis of various structures “seemingly similar” helps us to identify the peculiarities of the case discussed with an analytical look on the issue.

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