

## THE GRAND STRATEGY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1826-1841

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By VEYSEL ŞİMŞEK, B.Sc., MA

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AUTHOR: Veysel Şimşek, B.Sc. (Istanbul Technical University), MA (Bilkent University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Virginia H. Aksan

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### **Lay Abstract**

Grounded in archival research in Turkish historical repositories, this thesis examines the Ottoman ruling elite's efforts to ensure the empire's integrity and re-establish central authority by military-bureaucratic reform and internal negotiation in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Going beyond the standard institutional histories and Eurocentric narratives of the Eastern Question, it explores how the Ottoman sultans and bureaucrats mobilized the empire's political, military, and ideological resources to achieve their broader goals of reversing collapse and resisting European political-military challenge.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the Ottoman grand strategy during the turbulent years of war and reform between 1826 and 1841. The concept of grand strategy utilized in my thesis does hereby not refer to purely military matters. It is rather a notion that explains how a political authority strives to realize its long-term aims through mobilization of its available instruments and resources. During 1820s-1840s, facing grave internal and external threats, the Ottoman grand strategy was directed at defending its existing possessions and re-establishing the center's authority throughout the empire. To ensure their aims, Ottoman decision-makers initiated a radical bureaucratic-military reform agenda and mobilized available fiscal, military and ideological resources at their disposal.

The majority of the existing scholarship tend to interpret the Ottoman reforms in an overly descriptive or superficial manner, therefore neglecting the Ottoman decision-makers' perceptions, plans, and broader goals as well as the subsequent effects (and repercussions) of those policies within the empire. The "Eastern Question" literature, which is mainly based on European sources, often ignores the Ottoman agency and obscures the rather complex nature of Ottoman policy-making by assessing it within a facile "modernist-reactionary" bipolarity for the period in question. With my holistic approach and utilization of unused archival material, I will contribute to the existing knowledge about Ottoman policy-making and political-military transformation during the era in question.

I argue in my thesis that the imperial center consciously, if frantically, responded to the internal and external challenges by tightening its grip around its subjects and making far-reaching changes in its governmentality. Aided by an expanding and diversifying military-administrative bureaucracy, Ottoman rulers managed to collect more taxes, create and expand a disciplined army, limit the power of provincial notables, standardize governing practices and pragmatically used their newly established European embassies to achieve their foreign goals. The social and economic costs of these policies were also immense, as I clearly underline in my study. Many common subjects and members of the higher classes expressed neither optimism nor pleasure about the top-down reforms and state policies. They were heavily taxed, suffered from rampant inflation, while tens of thousands of men were pressed into the new military formations to serve until they became disabled, deserted or died.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ASK.MHM.d: Mühimme-i Asakir Defterleri

B: Receb

BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

BEO, AYN: Ayniyat Defterleri

C. AS: Cevdet Askeriye

C. ZB: Cevdet Zabtiye

C: Cemaziylahir

Ca: Cemaziyelevvel

d. : deceased

D. ASM: Asakir-i Mansure Defterleri

est. : established

HAT: Hatt-ı Hümayun

İ. DH: İrade Dahiliye

İ. MSM: İrade Mesail-i Mühimme

İ. MTZ (05): İrade Memalik-i Mümtaze

İ. MVL: İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ

*IJMES: International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*

*JOS: Journal of Ottoman Studies*

KK: Kamil Kepeci

L: Şevval

M: Muharrem

N: Ramazan

NCO: Non-Commissioned Officer

NFS.d: Nüfus Defterleri

*OTAM: Ankara Üniversitesi, Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*

r. : reigned

R: Rebiülahir

Ra: Rebiülevvel

Ş: Şaban

S: Safer

TS.MA.d: Topkapı Sarayı Müze Arşivi Defterleri, accessed from BOA

U of Chicago P: University of Chicago Press

UP: University Press

Z: Zilhicce

Za: Zilkade

## **Introduction**

This dissertation examines the Ottoman grand strategy during the turbulent years of war and reform between 1826 and 1841. During this period, the Ottoman Empire experienced a significant transformation that resulted from top-down bureaucratic-military reorganization and major armed conflicts. In 1826, Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–39) ruthlessly destroyed the Janissary Corps after a single day of bloody street fighting in the capital. The concurrent Greek Revolt (1821–29) led to war with Russia in 1828–29, a conflict that ended disastrously for the Ottoman Empire. In 1831–33 and 1839–41, the Ottoman central authority engaged in a life-or-death struggle with the unruly governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha. 3 November 1839 saw the public announcement of the Tanzimat Decree, representing the culmination of the administrative, military, economic and social policies of the previous thirteen years. The Tanzimat Decree articulated the Ottoman central authority's evolving vision for state and society, which remained influential until the empire's demise. When Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha read the Tanzimat edict at Gülhane Kasrı (Rose Chamber Manor), however, the second Egyptian crisis was far from over. The “reconquest” of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine from Mehmed Ali Pasha required two more years of fighting and diplomatic manoeuvring in the international arena.

What then, is grand strategy? B. H. Liddell Hart and Edward N. Luttwak, two of the concept's prominent developers and implementers, emphasized the its restriction to

purely military matters.<sup>1</sup> According to John P. LeDonne, who used the notion to explain Russia's consolidation and territorial expansion between 1650 and 1831,

A successful strategy depended on the mobilization of economic resources; this was the responsibility of the political leadership. Grand strategy required the mobilization of the political and military establishment, of the economy, and of the country's leading cultural and ecclesiastical figures, in order to realize a global vision, which in Russia's case was the establishment of its hegemony within the Heartland [i.e., Eastern Europe and the Asian land mass between Caspian Sea and Pacific Ocean].<sup>2</sup>... Grand strategy was not simply strategy on a grand scale, a military policy to defeat the enemy on the battlefield and to conquer territorial space. It was a comprehensive, multifaceted policy of an essentially political nature.... It involved the mobilization of resources and the creation of a military-industrial complex, the forging of an industrial and commercial policy, the elaboration of a foreign policy to create and maintain a network of client states, and the cultivation of a cult of raw power and invincibility to maintain the hegemony of the ruling elite, both at home in the Russian core and in the frontier regions surrounding it.<sup>3</sup>

LeDonne elaborated that “[such a] vision is not static; it evolves with circumstances, but it proceeds from some basic assumptions.” Even though the concept of grand strategy included “strategy in the narrower sense,” such as deploying troops and conducting military campaigns, it also encompassed “industrial policy and an ideology of cultural symbols that embodies the vision, informs strategy, and rationalizes policy. Grand strategy, then, means the management of totality of forces and resources in war and peace.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Decisive Wars of History; A Study in Strategy: The Indirect Approach* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1929); Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the Third Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press [henceforth UP], 1978). Hart extended his work and republished in the coming decades.

<sup>2</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650–1831* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 6.

<sup>3</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, 219.

<sup>4</sup> John P. LeDonne, “The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650–1831,” in *Military and Society in Russia, 1450–1917*, eds. Eric Lohr and Marshall Poe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 175.

Is such a concept applicable to the policies of the Ottoman dynastic state? During its zenith of power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman leadership indeed had a global vision for the world it knew and wanted to dominate. To these ends, the Ottoman rulers marshalled their armies, navies, land surveyors, tax collectors, clergymen, diplomats and spies in a coordinated manner. From the 1450s onward, the Ottomans strove to monopolize control over the Black Sea littoral, aiming to secure agricultural produce from the Danubian basin and Ukraine to feed Istanbul, as well as a continuous flow of white slaves from Crimea and of trade revenue from ports surrounding the sea. Soon after Ivan IV of Russia (r. 1547–84) conquered Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1556), the Ottomans responded by dispatching their imperial army to this region far away from their core lands. They even undertook a daring construction project for the early modern age, one that eventually ended in failure: Digging a canal between the Don and Volga Rivers to allow a light fleet to provide better logistics via the Caspian Sea for the campaigns in the Ukrainian steppe and against the Safavids. To achieve supremacy over the Mediterranean and the Balkans, the Ottomans fought with the Habsburgs and Venice on land and sea. The Ottoman Empire allied with France against the Habsburgs between the 1530s and 1550s, forming a military and diplomatic pact between a Sunni Muslim and a Catholic Christian power about a century before post-Westphalian Europe. In a two-year lightning campaign, Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20) conquered the Eastern Arab world, including modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Egypt. During their invasions, the Ottomans not only used firearms but also propaganda by presenting

themselves as the Arabs' saviours from their "Mameluke oppressors."<sup>5</sup> Soon after the conquest, they incorporated and reorganized the legal, fiscal and administrative structures of the newly Ottoman provinces, then diverted their agricultural and revenue surpluses to the imperial capital. In the east, the Ottomans allied with and eventually incorporated the Sunni Kurds and mercilessly waged a dynastic, religiously inflected war against the "heretical" Safavids in Persia and the heterodox Muslim *kızılbaş* population in the interior.

The Ottomans' "Eastern Question" shaped imperial law and ideology around the pragmatic political doctrines of the Hanefi School of Sunni Islam. Soon after the Ottomans had claimed the Levant, the Red Sea and Mesopotamia, they sent diplomatic and military missions to secure control over the Indian spice trade and the Middle Eastern section of the Silk Road. The Ottoman Empire also fought the Portuguese in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Ottoman diplomats, administrators, flotillas and military detachments were dispatched to places as far away as Yemen, the Indian subcontinent and the Indonesian archipelago to protect the Ottoman dynasty's interests.

Between 1826 and 1841, the Ottoman grand strategy was not as expansive as it had been some three hundred years earlier. Ottoman rulers no longer strove to dominate the Mediterranean or the Black Sea, and they had stopped pursuing policies with a global reach. Still in possession of a vast empire of diverse peoples from the Danube to the Tigris, however, the Ottoman decision-makers had sustained sets of policies to defend the

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<sup>5</sup> Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 20.

empire's shrinking borders in the face of immediate external and internal challenges. To this end, the Ottoman authorities initiated a radical reform and centralization agenda to strengthen their military power and imperial authority, sparred diplomatically with the Great Powers, and fought against internal rebellions and foreign countries.

The existing literature has not yet employed a holistic concept, such as grand strategy, to understand the formative years of Ottoman transformation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Except for a few recent studies,<sup>7</sup> the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remains among the least investigated chapters of the late Ottoman history. Available works on the era in Turkish, which tend to be overly descriptive, assess Ottoman reorganization without offering a broader picture; they list names of statesmen, dates and organizational charts, but they disregard Ottoman decision-makers' perceptions, plans and final goals, as well as the implementation and repercussions of policies within the empire. Lastly, the "Eastern Question" literature, which is often based on Western sources and written in European languages, frequently ignores indigenous Ottoman agency in contemporary events and plans for reform. The same genre, which produced indispensable diplomatic histories that this dissertation will utilize, frequently obscures the complex nature of Ottoman policy-

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<sup>6</sup> However, important studies exist which had employed the concept for the earlier centuries of the Ottoman Empire. See, for instance, Giancarlo Casale, *Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), especially 117-151; Gábor Ágoston, "Information, Ideology, and the Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Virginia H. Aksan reinterprets the changes in the Ottoman state, ruling ideology and military establishment in the international as well as national context. Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2007). Gültekin Yıldız observes that Ottoman military reform at the time did not merely endeavour to copy European military drills and tactics, but formed part of the Ottoman center's larger political-social project to redesign the power balance in the empire. Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok, Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum: 1826-1839*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009).



making by evaluating it within a bipolar “modernist-reactionary” framework adopted by many Ottomanists.

I argue that the Ottoman grand strategy, as designed and executed by the sultans and their officials, consciously—and often frantically—responded to internal and external challenges by tightening the grip around their subjects and, concurrently, by imposing extensive changes onto imperial governance. Ottoman decision-makers, among whom Mahmud II held a prominent position, wanted to strengthen the state’s military, fiscal, and political power, all of which had been declining due to foreign military-political threats and internal decentralization since the late 1760s. By the 1820s Mahmud II had come to consider the Janissaries as one of the immediate obstacles to his authority. Immediately after the destruction of the Janissary Corps in 1826, new European-style regiments began carrying out military drills in the center of the imperial capital. Voluntary recruitment did not suffice to meet the manpower needs of the expanding Ottoman military machinery, so the authorities eventually resorted to conscription on an unprecedented scale, making for a novel and strategic response to insufficient numbers, and one legitimated by Islam and state customs. To determine the available manpower and financial sources within the empire, officials carried out a series of surveys between 1826 and 1832 in Istanbul and the provinces. In contrast to the existing historiographical emphasis on the inaccuracy of the census, this dissertation will describe how the Ottoman military planners *utilized* the census data collected in a variety of decisions.

At the ideological level, the Ottoman central authority perpetuated an Islamic discourse that called on its ordinary Muslim subjects and the religious, bureaucratic and

military elite to serve “the religion and the state” under the “model” Islamic ruler Mahmud II. This discourse drew on a reinvigorated Sunni Islam that denounced Islamic heterodoxies and condemned “heretic” *Bektaşî* Janissaries. Mahmud II imposed new dress laws, established internal passports, monitored the movement of individual subjects and periodically monitored the empire’s population figures during 1830s. All of these decisions indicate that the reformers were determined not only to reshape state institutions but also to subordinate larger segments of Ottoman society to their policies. The dissertation will also explore within the context of Ottoman grand strategy the crucial but underappreciated two years between the declaration of the Tanzimat in 1839 and the end of the struggle to regain the lost Arab provinces in 1841. By underlining the early ideological origins of the Tanzimat Decree, I will demonstrate that contrary to frequent claims, the decree signified continuity rather than a rupture in the already changing practices of Ottoman statecraft begun in the early 1820s. Finally, this dissertation will re-examine the retaking of the Arab provinces—generally narrated from the perspective of the Ottomans’ British ally and emphasizing its centrality in resolving the Egyptian question—by bringing Ottoman agency and resources to the discussion.

The main argument presented here, however, does not crudely assert the existence of an omnipotent Ottoman “leviathan” (in the embodiment of Mahmud II’s personality and his “new absolutism,” as coined by Virginia H. Aksan) that was sure of every step, designing and executing perfect plans without alteration or failure. On the contrary, policy-making during this era was a process of trial and error that saw numerous setbacks and revisions. The new Ottoman army, located at the center of reform and eating up more

than half of the state's revenues and the empire's manpower for almost two decades, repeatedly faced destruction by Russian forces and those of Mehmed Ali Pasha.

Furthermore, the Ottoman ruling elite was far from being a monolithic whole. Individual political cliques did not hesitate to fight among themselves for prestige and power. Many common subjects and members of the higher classes expressed neither optimism nor pleasure about the top-down reforms. They were heavily taxed, suffered from inflation because of heavy debasement of coinage, and the men were inducted into military service or were stripped of their previous privileges. Nonetheless, by the early 1840s the Ottoman leadership had largely succeeded in meeting the broader goals set by Mahmud II after 1826. Aided by an expanding and diversifying military-administrative bureaucracy, in the two decades after the destruction of Janissary Corps the Ottoman center managed to collect more taxes; create, expand and maintain the regular army; limit and eventually command the power of provincial notables; and pragmatically use their newly established embassies in European capitals to achieve significant foreign policy goals.

My overarching approach, which moves beyond narrow institutional history, scrutinizes the changing nature and scope of the Ottoman policies. The new ruling mentality of the elite, which aimed to drastically transform state and society, represented one of the most radical shifts in the history of Ottoman statecraft and political thought. The sweeping institutional reforms that occurred between the 1820s and the 1840s had tremendous political, social and cultural effects that lasted until the empire's collapse and beyond. The Ottoman Empire's seminal experience with modernity during this period, including the creation of new educational, bureaucratic, legal and administrative

institutions, left a lasting legacy in modern Turkey and the empire's other successor states. A closer study of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century will also establish a useful basis of comparison for the experiences of other multiethnic and multireligious empires during their own transitional "long nineteenth centuries," including those of Austria and Russia.

One of the primary goals of this dissertation is to account for how the Ottoman sultans and their ruling elite articulated and legitimated their reform, centralization and mobilization agenda. Furthermore, I will probe how various groups of Ottoman subjects responded to Mahmud II's "New Order." This will help determine the reforms' true nature, and the limits imposed on the center's policies outside the capital. I will also analyze the Ottoman wars fought between 1826 and 1841, but without the intention of giving a purely military account of these armed conflicts. Instead, my narrative concentrates on the domestic aspects of war-making, with a strong focus on high-level planning and decision-making in the Ottoman Empire to offer a new account of a vital chapter in its later history.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, I bring in quantitative data, schemes and maps based on primary source material concerning populations, fiscal capabilities and army sizes of

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<sup>8</sup> While dealing with the Ottoman military establishment, I will include Ottoman navy into my narrative whenever possible, but my main focus will remain as the land forces. Ottoman state invested significant manpower, material and financial resources on its navy, which, however, did turn into a potent military instrument for various reasons, and require further specialized studies for decisive conclusions. For an institutional survey on the history of Ottoman navy for this era, Ali İhsan Gencer, *Bahriye'de Yapılan Islahat Hareketleri ve Bahriye Nezareti'nin Kuruluşu, 1789-1867* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu [Henceforth TTK], 2001). For two more recent and analytical surveys, see Ali Fuat Örenç, "Deniz Kuvvetleri ve Deniz Harp Sanayii" and Emir Yener, "Deniz Muharebeleri ve Müşterek Harekât (1792-1912)" in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi: Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri 1792-1918*, ed. Gültekin Yıldız (Istanbul: Timaş, 2013), 121-161; 227-247.

the Ottoman Empire as well as their contemporaries. By doing so, I aim to contribute to the socio-economic history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.

By taking a more comprehensive approach to the Ottoman decision-making process, and to the new policies' ground-level impact, this project aims to change how Ottoman historiography conceptualizes Mahmud II's reforms and the early Tanzimat era. It will offer a novel account of the transformation of Ottoman political thought in the years 1820 to 1850, an era that scholars working on later Ottoman intellectual history have often neglected or oversimplified.

### **Sources**

In his preface to "The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650–1831," LeDonne writes,

[s]ome readers will argue that writing a first book on Russian grand strategy without the benefit of monographs concentrating on specific problems—decision making, for example—is running the risk of writing about the "virtual past." They will argue that what is presented here is nothing but "virtual strategy," in which the author attributes to the Russian political elite a vision they never had. I answer that if we must wait until enough monographs have been published—especially on eighteenth-century history, which has been so neglected—we condemn ourselves to purely descriptive history for a long time to come.<sup>9</sup>

He then assesses the nature of contemporary Russian primary sources, which made it difficult to illustrate Russian grand strategy for the era under his scope. He explains,

[m]uch information is available in collections of various materials, be they "protocols" of Anna Ivanovna's Cabinet and Catherine II's Council or the papers of various army commanders, but they often contain very little that may be useful in constructing a paradigm of grand strategy as the term is understood here: an integrated military, geopolitical, economic, and cultural vision. What is striking in these documents is the abundance of

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<sup>9</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, vii.

details, as if the strategic purpose of a war had been taken for granted all along. The focus is on the modalities of execution: recruiting, troop transfers, logistics, appointments, and promotions. The papers of individual commanders tell us for the most part next to nothing about the goals of the war. The archives may tell us more, but one should not expect too much, and they will certainly tell us nothing about a grand strategy.... In a country where no public existed, where correspondence between members of the elite was routinely opened by the political police, where public policy was carefully fragmented so that each sector was the responsibility of individuals who jealously protected their turf against curious outsiders and sought to keep an open channel to the ruler alone, one could hardly expect to hear the debate so necessary to the articulation of a grand strategy combining military strategy with economic policy and geopolitical activities in the peripheral regions. Therefore, critics will say there could be no grand strategy.<sup>10</sup>

Similar difficulties await the historian who would attempt to “locate” and study Ottoman grand strategy between the 1820s and the 1840s, and during the subsequent decades of the Tanzimat era. One immediate problem is the lack of secondary literature written on this era. No book-length scholarly biographies exist to aid researchers with regard to the Ottoman sultans of the period in question, Mahmud II and Abdülmecid I (r. 1839–61). The personal history and reign of Mahmud II, essentially the chief decision-maker in the empire, remain seriously understudied. Only a few biographies of high-ranking Ottoman statesmen, bureaucrats, military officers, *ulema* (members of the religious class) and provincial power holders exist. We lack analytical studies that scrutinize various aspects of Ottoman political, social and economic history between the 1820s and the 1850s. The existing secondary sources are mainly composed of a few institutional histories (*teşkilat tarihi*) written by Turkish historians who almost exclusively rely on Ottoman archival documents. Even if they can fall back on a wealth of

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<sup>10</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, vii–viii.

empirical data, such as organizational charts, transcriptions of institutional founding ordinances, tables of wages and institutional budgets, they do not necessarily provide a comprehensive account of the transformation affecting Ottoman state and society in the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The nature of Ottoman archival sources and a lack of firsthand Ottoman accounts also make the task of determining an Ottoman grand strategy a challenging endeavour. Westerners who visited the Ottoman Empire in the era in question produced a large number of travelogues and memoirs. By contrast, their Ottoman contemporaries, whether elite or ordinary subjects, left behind only a handful of firsthand observations that are accessible to researchers. The Ottoman central bureaucracy produced tens of thousands of documents, registers and reports today located at the *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office in Istanbul, hereafter BOA). These contain information that has assisted historians in reconstructing the political, social and economic history of the empire. Yet the bulk of these documents detail the day-to-day routines of the state apparatus and the country it governed, and except for a number of imperial decrees, only a few official memoranda and discussions of imperial councils detail the processes of high-level decision-making. This was due to the existing institutional structure and political culture of the Ottoman state, more specifically problems concerning the accountability and responsibility of statesmen. Even though some of the policies were crafted by imperial councils rather than the sultan's unilateral decisions, the council members frequently "disowned" their positions and contributions during the decision-making processes, because they feared for their posts and lives in case

the policy they supported ended up in failure.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, there does not exist a body of documents in the Ottoman context, for instance, similar to the parliamentary debates in the West. As a result, it is difficult to determine the Ottoman decision-making process, locate cliques in the bureaucracy or focus in on conflicting perspectives of statesmen on internal and external policies. Furthermore, we do not have comprehensive collections of the papers of prominent statesmen from this period that might harbour their private correspondence, political opinion pieces or copies of official documents.<sup>12</sup> They were either lost, are currently buried deep in a Middle Eastern manuscript library or archive, or were never penned at all. What we do have is the sultan's voice, that of Mahmud II in particular, which emerges in abundant detail. Fortunately, he was also an active policy-maker during his reign.

“Did such a vision [of grand strategy] exist?” then, as LeDonne asks for the Russian decision-makers, even if “[no] single document, an official ‘position paper’ analyzing Russia’s options and capabilities on a continental scale [existed].”<sup>13</sup> I argue that the Ottoman leadership had such an integrating vision, as during the period under discussion, Ottoman military strategy, fiscal-economic goals and domestic and foreign policy<sup>14</sup> could not be separated from each other. While Mahmud II and his statesmen,

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<sup>11</sup> For some notable instances to this effect in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Özhan Kapıcı, “Bir Osmanlı Mollasının Fikir Dünyasından Fragmanlar: Keçecizâde İzzet Molla ve II. Mahmud Dönemi Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 42 (2013), 294-295, 299-303.

<sup>12</sup> The documents in Hüsrev Mehmed Paşa’s personal library, which is now a part of Süleymaniye Manuscript Library in Istanbul, make for a notable exception and will be discussed in more detail later. Reşat Kaynar edited and published selected papers of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, one of the most prominent statesmen of this era that he had in his possession. Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara: TTK, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Without dismissing the importance of diplomacy and international setting, current study seek to focus on indigenous decision-making and Ottoman domestic context rather than its foreign policy. For a synthetic



much like Peter the Great, “probably never said [they] had a grand strategy,” this does not signify that they “did not have one, [which] would be very much like saying that [they] did not know what [they were] doing.”<sup>15</sup> As the subsequent chapters, based on the study of primary and secondary sources in Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, English and French will demonstrate, there is enough evidence to make a similar conclusion for the Ottoman Empire.

Given the gaps in the existing secondary literature, archival research is a necessity for understanding high-level Ottoman decision-making. Primary sources in the BOA and Ottoman manuscripts located at the Istanbul University and Süleymaniye manuscript libraries thus have proven vital for my project. One of the largest historical archives in the world, the BOA holds most of the documents generated by the Ottoman central bureaucracy on a wide range of topics (e.g., domestic governance, fiscal matters, foreign and military policy). One of the major BOA fonds (i.e collection of related documents) that have been crucial to this thesis is the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Decrees). It roughly covers the 1750s to the 1850s, but most of the documents here date to the reigns of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and Mahmud II (r. 1808–39). The fond harbors official documents written by and circulated among high-ranking Ottoman statesmen, including the sultan himself. The *Hatt-ı Hümayun* also holds detailed memoranda on various domestic and foreign affairs, and the sultan’s commentaries (also called *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, or *Hatt-ı Şerif* in Ottoman Turkish), customarily written at the top of the documents submitted. These

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study of international diplomacy that utilizes both Ottoman and European sources, and focus on Istanbul’s agency, see H. Muhammed Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, (Istanbul: Eren, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire*, viii.

might appear as short notes such as “I have seen it” or “do as required,” or they might indicate that the issue in question had to be reconsidered, ordering bureaucrats to investigate further. Some of these commentaries, however, could be detailed or even emotional (some contain open insults). In this collection, the lucky researcher may also find a limited number of *beyaz üzerine Hatt-ı Hümayuns*, the lengthy instructions or commentaries on various topics written by the sultan himself.

By the late 1830s, permanent, well-defined imperial councils were created, and these too began producing reports, written decisions, meeting minutes, and officials’ and the sultan’s opinions on state matters. Especially after 1839, various imperial councils and other bureaucratic bodies, which constantly increased in number and size, produced a large number of documents now gathered in different collections, depending on where or why they were originally penned. For this study, I have made use of the *İrade Dahiliye* (Imperial Decrees Concerning Internal Matters), the *İrade Mesail-i Mühimme* (Imperial Decrees Concerning Various Tanzimat Reforms), the *İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ* (Imperial Decrees Produced under the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances) and the *İrade Eyalet-i Mümtaze, Mısır* (Imperial Decrees Concerning the Privileged Provinces, Egypt) collections. Most of the documents in these collections deal primarily with government matters after 1839, but they sometimes also reference reforms and policies in the earlier 1830s.

To understand the central state’s surveying policies and the number of human resources registered by the Ottomans, I consulted the *Nüfus Defterleri* (Population Registers) at the BOA extensively to collect hard-to-find numerical information regarding

Ottoman demographics. The *Muallim Cevdet*, a vast collection comprising thousands of documents in draft and completed form, also proved useful in helping me understand the various aspects of economic, military and administrative matters within the empire.

In addition to the BOA, the Süleymaniye and Istanbul University manuscript libraries in Istanbul also possess a number of memoranda on military, political and social matters written or received by the leading Ottoman statesmen of the period. These libraries also hold the period's printed regulations, penal codes and ordinances, which are difficult to find elsewhere. Many students of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman history neglect these latter repositories, concentrating their archival research on the BOA. I have found these manuscript sources reveal significant information about the mentality and decision-making processes of the Ottoman elite, however, and have used them extensively. Finally, my research has drawn on a number of published Ottoman memoirs previously untouched by historians. Even though there are but few such personal chronicles, they provide unique historical details on important events and key individuals.

## Chapter 1: Ottoman Empire, 1500-1830: A Political and Military Chronology

Three hundred and one years before the declaration of the Tanzimat Decree, Ottoman sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520-1566) had an inscription carved on the fortress of Bender, Moldavia, which said:

I am God's slave and sultan of this world. By the grace of God I am head of Muhammad's community. God's might and Muhammad's miracles are my companions. I am Süleyman, in whose name the *hutbe* [Friday sermon] is read in Mecca and Medina. In Baghdad I am the shah, in Byzantine realms, the Caesar, and Egypt the sultan; who sends his fleets to the seas of Europe, the Maghrib and India. I am the sultan who took the crown and throne of Hungary and granted to a humble slave. The *voyvoda* [Moldavian Prince] Petru raised his head in revolt, but my horse's hoofs ground him to the dust and I conquered the land of Moldavia.<sup>16</sup>

In striking contrast, Koca Yusuf Paşa, Selim III's Grand Vizier during the disastrous Ottoman-Russian War of 1787-1792, received the following report from the commander of the Janissaries and officers after a major engagement at the Danubian front:

Although we had more than 120,000 *ocaklu* (Janissaries and other central army) troops, 8,000 Muscovite soldiers crossed the Danube, overwhelmed us and showed their might. We could not resist the infidels' trained, disciplined soldiers with our untrained, undisciplined troops. Negotiate a ceasefire as soon as you could. Since our soldiers did not know about the new methods of warfare, they could not defeat the enemy until the judgment day.<sup>17</sup>

The old historiographical convention that the Ottoman Empire experienced an irreversible and overarching "decline" in every sphere imaginable -military, political, social, economic and cultural-, which allegedly lasted three centuries after the empire's

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<sup>16</sup> Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire in the Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 41.

<sup>17</sup> *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*, ed. Abdullah Uçman (Istanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser), 61.

political zenith in 1600s has now been effectively challenged.<sup>18</sup> Recent historical studies convincingly argued that the slowing down and eventual cessation of the territorial conquest did not necessarily mean an unstoppable decline in the military power and resources available to the Ottomans. Nor was it a manifestation of an inherent Islamic “conservatism” or “backwardness” that rejected more advanced “infidel” military technologies.<sup>19</sup> The contents of reform treatises or histories written by 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman pamphleteers, which outlined the reasons of Ottoman Empire’s “stagnation” and “decline” and vehemently argued for restoring the military, fiscal and bureaucratic institutions as they had (supposedly) been in the “Gilded Age” of Mehmed II, “the Conqueror” (r. 1451-81) and Süleyman I, “the Magnificent”, should not be accepted at face value, and be considered as discursive documents that could have served certain interests.

Besides, why should change always be regarded as a negative phenomenon, as many Ottoman pamphleteers of 17<sup>th</sup> century implicitly or explicitly argued? Could the transformation or disappearance of certain state institutions and practices be considered as the Ottomans’ adaptation to contemporary challenges? The decline of the classical fiscal-military institutions, such as timariot cavalymen (*timarlı sipahis*) and Janissaries (*Yeniçeris*), and rise of tax-farming as opposed to in-kind taxation did not necessarily represent a moral decay and absolute military inferiority. Instead, these could be

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<sup>18</sup> For a useful survey, which my current discussion draws heavily, see, Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review* 4 (1999), 30-75.

<sup>19</sup> Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999); Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan, Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); Gábor Ágoston “Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450-1800,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2014), 85-124.

interpreted as symptoms of increasing monetization of the Ottoman economy, the emergence of new fiscal-military state policies that addressed the immediate need for more musket-using Janissary infantrymen or seasonal mercenaries who had to be swiftly hired and sent to the front via bypassing classical recruitment methods. Moreover, the poor state of Ottoman fiscal resources after the 1580s could not be reflective of the overall economy of the empire. In other words, even though the Ottoman treasury could be empty, that did not mean that the economy was not flourishing and ordinary subjects' were faring well.<sup>20</sup> The alleged "decline" in the economic sphere was also not a linear phenomenon from 1580s to 1760s as had often been suggested. For instance, in certain areas the Empire showed a significant expansion in manufacturing and trade, which resulted in an increase in state revenues between 1700 and 1765.<sup>21</sup>

But still, what went wrong? How could the Ottoman Empire suffer the military defeats that brought it to the brink of collapse in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century? Firstly, the Ottoman army and navy no longer possessed the military power to resist its European adversaries, mainly the Russian Empire.<sup>22</sup> The Janissary Corps, which had constituted the elite infantry of the Ottoman army could no longer provide the quantity and quality of soldiers that the Ottoman state needed against the Russians. The timariot cavalry, which was allocated probably about 40% to 50% of the state's total revenues in kind and formed the mainstay of the field army in 1400-1600, had long ceased to be a significant part of the Ottoman military power, because of the changes in nature of wars

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<sup>20</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadî Tarihi 1500-1914* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 178-181.

<sup>21</sup> Mehmet Genç, "XVIII Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Savaş" *Yapıt: Toplumsal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 49 (1984), 54-55.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 2 and 3 for more details on Janissary Corps and timariot cavalry.

the Ottomans fought and the breaking down of the *timar* system.<sup>23</sup> Many fiefs had already been converted into imperial estates to pay for the mercenary bands, or reallocated to the Janissary companies, especially in the frontiers. By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, the revenues allocated to the timariot cavalrymen dropped to about 25% of the total state revenues.<sup>24</sup> In the same era, the Ottoman state expected the district and provincial commanders of the timariot cavalrymen to have larger number of household soldiers. As a result, a number of smaller fief-holders, their incomes and their military responsibilities further decreased.<sup>25</sup>

The figures for Ottoman revenues, expenditures and armies until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remain shaky to this day and further archival research is necessary to come to more definitive conclusions. However, it seems that the “classical” Ottoman army, which was composed of a smaller component of salaried soldiers and a larger component of fief-holding timariot cavalrymen that had been paid in kind, slowly transformed into a land force constituted by temporary soldiers raised by military contractors and provincial power holders from 1600s to 1800s. In the meantime, the Ottoman state could not effectively transform its financial and manpower sources, especially the fiefs of timariot cavalrymen, so that it could effectively extract more revenues and raise more soldiers to fight its wars that progressively bigger. According to one estimate, after the deduction of administrative costs for tax-collection, the central state treasury could draw only one-third of the net tax receipts in the empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The remaining revenues

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<sup>23</sup> İnalcık and Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, 55, 78-79, 88-90.

<sup>24</sup> Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, “budgets,” *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 96-98.

<sup>25</sup> Gábor, “Firearms and Military Adaptation,” 120-122.

was shared by a “larger coalition” made up of high bureaucrats, tax-farmers, financiers of the tax-farmers and the local tax-collectors.<sup>26</sup>

Smaller local notables (*ayans*) and quasi-independent dynasties in the provinces, such as Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, Osman Pasvantoglu, and Mehmed Ali Pasha became crucial for governing the empire and war-making over the course of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, their rise undermined the central authority and its abilities to extract revenues and manpower from its realms to the fullest extent. To meet the mounting material and financial needs of the armed conflicts in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state tried to tighten its grip over its manufacture and agricultural production, and imposed large amounts of taxes in-kind, which harmed the said sectors and eventually decreased the Ottoman state’s war-making capabilities in the long term.<sup>27</sup>

Contemporary European powers could find loans through national banks and international loans at lower interest rates, which enabled them to delay their debt payments and borrow large sums. In 1783, after the long and disastrous attempt to quell revolution in the American colonies, Britain’s national debt was 20 times more than its annual revenues (about £240 million), yet the British state could still borrow credit at a 3% interest rate. In 1796, the “poor” Russian state could still collect revenues amounting to £5.5 million, inject £15.7 million worth of paper money to its economy while its national debt stood at £21.5 million. In contrast, Selim III’s average annual revenue were about £1.66 million (20 million *kuruş*), while interest rates for available (and limited

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<sup>26</sup> Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi 1500-1914*, 151-152.

<sup>27</sup> Genç, “XVIII Yüzyılda Osmanlı Ekonomisi ve Savaş,” 55-61.



amount of) loans from financiers and pious foundations in Istanbul were between 10-15% in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, Selim III and Mahmud II relied on increased taxation, debasement of coinage and internal loans to pay for their wars and reforms, instead of issuing paper money, obtaining credits from international and/or national banking systems, and securing sizable foreign financial aid, like Russia received from Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. Until the mid-1850s, the Ottoman state had modest instruments and institutions at its disposal to finance its expenses that had existed in the West for decades.

### **1.1 Ottoman-Russian Rivalry, 1700-1792**

Throughout the 1700s, the Russian Empire steadily increased its power and became the most deadly foe of the Ottomans, inflicting catastrophic defeats in the wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92. After the last conflict, Behiç Efendi, a prominent Ottoman ideologue of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, reflected on the rise of Russia as follows:

The Muscovites, the vilest nation of all the Franks, were originally a base and despicable nation. This beast-like nation was the poorest in terms of capital, population, arable land, and other goods compared to other states. Some eighty years ago, the person who designated himself as Tsar -an inquisitive, clever and crafty infidel- inquired about the order of the neighbouring states and recruited foreign experts on applied sciences, geography, political science, art of fortification and navigation and especially competent artisans and craftsmen. Through their services, he and his successors managed in a matter of 30-40 years to educate the Muscovite nation, the unintelligent beast, which was incapable of learning the simplest matter in ten years even when the stick was administered.

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<sup>28</sup> Kahraman Şakul, "The Evolution of Military Logistical Systems in the Later Eighteenth Century: The Rise of a New Class of Military Entrepreneur," in *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300-1800*, ed. Jeff Fynn-Paul (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 309-310. The exchange rate for pound sterling changed between 11.1 to 14.9 *kuruş* in this era. 20 million *kuruş* was converted to pound sterling for the year 1800, in which the exchange rate was 12:1. Markus A. Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange, 1590-1914* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 393.

Astonishingly Russia is now almost equal to those states with a history of 500 years.<sup>29</sup>

During Peter I's reign (1682-1725), the Russian state and ruling elite experienced a significant transformation, which had an everlasting effect on Russia's political and military power base. Peter's various military, bureaucratic and fiscal reforms enabled a more efficient and centralized administration than his predecessors.<sup>30</sup> The Russian central authority forced nobility to serve in the armed forces or other governmental tasks, imposed heavier taxes on the population, and established a harsh military conscription regime on the lower classes to man the expanding army. In the end, Peter I managed to multiply revenues and collected some 300,000 recruits between 1699 and 1725.<sup>31</sup> The reformed Russian army defeated the Swedish forces in the Great Northern War (1700-1721) with the combined use of its "traditional" and "modern" units, securing its access to the sea by acquiring Sweden's Baltic provinces.<sup>32</sup> On Russia's eastern frontier, the military, commercial and diplomatic expeditions continued, which were aimed at extending Russian trade and political influence.<sup>33</sup> At the end of Peter's reign in 1725, there were more than 100,000 regular soldiers under arms led by trained officers, and the

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Kahraman Şakul, "An Ottoman Global Moment: War of Second Coalition in the Levant" (PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2009), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800," *Kritika* 12 (2011), 311-312.

<sup>31</sup> John H. L. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar Army and Society in Russia 1492-1874* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), 107; William C Fuller, Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 83-84. Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 68, 135-140, 172-179.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, 89.

<sup>33</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), 155-160;

Russian military-industrial complex could equip and maintain them.<sup>34</sup> After the death of Peter I, the Russian Empire consolidated and fortified its land gains in the West (Baltic shores, Northern Ukraine) and East (Siberia, Far East).<sup>35</sup> The modernization of the Russian state continued, while the Russian population, trade, and industrial production grew steadily, so too did the military manpower base and state revenues throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> In the international arena, Russian armies and diplomatic organs pursued aggressive policies in Central Europe during the Seven Years War (1757-63). The war ended without any particular gain, but the defeat of Prussian army and King Frederick II (r. 1740-86) brought great prestige for the Russian Empire.<sup>37</sup>

Catherine II's reign (1762-96) marked an era of definitive Russian victories over the Ottomans and the Poles, accompanied with territorial conquest towards the West and South of Russian heartlands. Using the power base established before her, Catherine and her statesmen could plan and enact daring policies in the international arena. The Russian Empire was also fortunate to possess leaders such as Panin, Potemkin, Rumyantsev, Suvorov as well as Catherine the Great herself. She released the unpopular service burdens imposed by Peter III (r. 1762) on the nobility, entrenching nobles' and free town-

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<sup>34</sup> Christopher Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 40. Ágoston gives the paper strength of the Russian Army in 1725 as 204,000 in "Military Transformation", 299.

<sup>35</sup> Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, 85; Bruce W. Menning, "The Imperial Russian Army," in *The Military History of the Tsarist Russia*, eds. Frederick W. Kagan and Robin Higham (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 53.

<sup>36</sup> James F. Brennan, *Enlightened Despotism in Russia: The Reign of Elisabeth, 1741-1762* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 261-267; Arcadius Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout: An Economic History of Eighteenth Century Russia*, ed. Richard Hellie (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), 1-6; Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, 152. For an overview of the reforms, their achievements and failures, see Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine the Great, A Short History* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917*, 39-40.

dwellers' rights, which she expanded and standardized throughout the empire in a series of charters during 1770s and 1780s. Serfdom, however, continued to exist in the core of Russian political and social order.<sup>38</sup> The taxable male population increased from 8 million in 1762 to 17.8 million in the mid-1790s. From this population, the Russian state managed to raise a regular army of 210.000 men,<sup>39</sup> excluding the garrison forces and irregulars that could be mobilized in time of war.<sup>40</sup>

But Russian imperial expansion during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not “an inevitable process justified by the laws of history itself –as a stately triumphal march.”<sup>41</sup> To implement his projects, Peter I demanded a lot from his peoples, peasants and nobility. Furthermore, the Russian state in the 18<sup>th</sup> century chronically lacked money, and adequately trained military and civilian personnel to rule its country effectively. Despite its huge size, the Russian army was always stretched to the limits by its given military and administrative duties.<sup>42</sup> Court factionalism, favouritism and corruption continued to hamper state power and the challenges of administering a vast country within the technological and geographical context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century persisted.<sup>43</sup> Social and political tensions accumulated due to serfdom, and over-taxation and conscription brought open challenges against the central government, as manifested by the Pugachev revolt in 1773-

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<sup>38</sup> Madariaga, *Catherine the Great, A Short History*, 121-129, 135-137.

<sup>39</sup> This is a much smaller figure than the tables published by Menning, “The Imperial Russian Army,” 64-66.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 178-179.

<sup>41</sup> Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, 86. See Chapters 3 and 4 for the overview of Russian power in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>42</sup> Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, 95-105; 174-175.

<sup>43</sup> Madariaga, *Catherine the Great, A Short History*, 132.

75.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the imperfect Russian military power, supported by relatively more advanced financial and administrative institutions, could overcome the Ottomans' in the end. When hostilities started in 1768, Russia commanded a much larger demographic and financial powerbase as well as a superior military. These realities did not change in the three Ottoman-Russian conflicts between 1787 and 1829.<sup>45</sup>

In 1686, Russia joined Venice, Poland and Habsburg Austria in a long war against the Ottoman Empire. Peter I's forces captured Azov in 1696, an important fortress at the Northern tip of Azov Sea. In 1699, the Ottomans signed the Treaty of Karlowitz (Karlofça), ceding Morea to Venice, Podolia to Poland, and Hungary and Transylvania to the Austrians. In 1700, the Ottomans signed a separate peace treaty with Russia in Istanbul, by which they left Azov to be turned quickly into a naval base.<sup>46</sup> By this treaty, Crimean Khans ceased to be the intermediaries and mediators between Russia and Ottoman Empire. Peter I also managed to win a clause that Russian Tsars henceforth were to be recognized with the same status as the sultans in diplomatic protocol.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the financial burdens and territorial losses, the defeat shook the Ottoman ruling elite's self-assured, superior self-image vis-à-vis their European opponents, and transformed their long-term military and diplomatic policies in their western and northern frontiers. As

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<sup>44</sup> Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 178-179. Madariaga, *Catherine the Great, A Short History*, 56-57; Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia 1600-1914*, 175.

<sup>45</sup> See Tables 1, 2, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Benedict Humphrey Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1949), 22-24; Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 24.

<sup>47</sup> Halil İnalcık, "Power Relationship Between Russia, Ottoman Empire and Crimean Khanate as Reflected in Titulature", *Passé Turco-Tatar, Présent Soviétique, Études offertes à Alexandre Bennigsen*, eds. Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay et al. (Paris-Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 392-393.

Aksan asserted, “after 1700, preservation of the fortress line from Belgrade to Azov became the primary strategy of all future Ottoman campaigns and treaty negotiations. Neutrality, or at least disengagement, was also a part of the tools of the new diplomacy following the Karlowitz treaty, especially in the middle years of the eighteenth century.”<sup>48</sup> The subsequent armed conflicts between the Ottoman, Austrian and Russian Empires took place through this parameter throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The Ottoman military forces was still strong enough to stall Peter I’s daring invasion of the Principalities in 1711. They managed to outmaneuver and even besiege the Russian army in the marshes of the Pruth River, including Peter himself. The Ottoman Empire took Azov back and demolished the newly built Russian fortresses around it, thereby ending the Russians’ short lived access to the sea.<sup>49</sup> In 1715, hostilities were renewed between the Ottomans, Venice and Austria. After a three-year conflict, the Ottomans managed to re-annex Morea from the Venetians but lost Belgrade and the northern part of Serbia to the Habsburgs.<sup>50</sup> In 1736-39, the Ottomans fought another war against a Russian-Austrian alliance. Russian armies quickly invaded Crimea in 1736 and after a series of costly campaigns, captured a number of important Ottoman fortresses in the North, such as Azov, Ochakov, Kinburn and Khotin. However, as the Austrians began negotiating a separate peace with Istanbul and several Ottoman armies moved against overstretched Russian forces in Moldavia, the latter decided to stop fighting.<sup>51</sup> At the end of the conflict, Azov was retained by Russia, but de-militarized. Existing histories have

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<sup>48</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 23-28.

<sup>49</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 97.

<sup>50</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 117-118.

<sup>51</sup> Menning, “The Imperial Russian Army,” 57; Duffy, *Russia’s Military Way to the West*, 52-53.

pointed out Russia's heavy losses and small gains, describing the conflict as a costly and fruitless stalemate.<sup>52</sup> Yet Russia's military success in this war should be noted: The Ottoman military machinery could still cope with Russian forces, but only if they were the sole enemy. Russian army had to fight in the areas that were extremely distant from their bases and even so, managed to capture a number of key Ottoman strongholds.

After their victory in 1736-39, the Ottoman leadership insisted on maintaining peaceful relations with Austria, Persia and Russia, and signed multilateral treaties with them. Koca Mehmed Ragıb Paşa, who served as the Grand Vizier and *Reisülküttab* (chief Ottoman official for foreign affairs) from 1741 to his death in 1763 was among the chief architects of this policy. Except for some piecemeal attempts on reform and reorganization, Ottoman decision-makers neglected the institutional changes to keep up with potential European rivals. By not participating in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) in Europe, the Ottomans did not test their existing forces which in fact required upgrade and "missed a generation of developments... Thus the technology gap significantly hindered their ability to counter the massed firepower of the post-1756 period."<sup>53</sup> By the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state chiefly relied on a myriad of provincial power magnets, ethnic warrior populations for furnishing military manpower and commanding its forces. The logistical services of the Ottoman army, which had a great a role in the earlier conquests in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, broke down in two subsequent wars against Russia in 1768-74 and 1787-92, leading to mass disobedience and

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<sup>52</sup> See, for instance, Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 53.

<sup>53</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, "Ottoman Military Power in the Eighteenth Century" in *Warfare in Eastern Europe 1500-1800*, ed. Brain J. Davies (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 322, 324; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 134-135.

desertions. After the seasonally recruited mercenaries had been disbanded at the end of military emergencies, many of them ended up as bandits who disturbed the public order and local economies. Such a force was no match for the Western and Eastern European militaries in an age when centralized states formed conscript armies commanded by professional officers, equipped and fed. In the end, the Ottoman army ended up as a badly-commanded, ill-trained, unprofessional, and ill-equipped force in contemporary terms.<sup>54</sup>

In the war of 1768-1774, the Ottomans lost the field battles and fortresses to the Russians in the Balkans and Crimea, while the Ottoman supply administration collapsed under the army's excessive demands. The Ottoman fleet at Çeşme was destroyed by a daring attack of a Russian flotilla from the Baltic Sea in 1770. Four years after, the war was finally concluded with the peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. The Russians returned the Danubian fortresses they captured, but retained the Kilburn and several other forts in the Northern and Southern tips of the Azov Sea. The Crimean Khanate became independent, which was angrily interpreted by the Ottomans as a step toward Russian annexation and one of the main reasons for the next war that took place in 1787-92. Austria also joined Russia in this war, aiming to expand its southern territories. The Ottomans fared comparatively better against the Austrians, but were repeatedly beaten by the Russian forces, which defeated them in battles and managed to conquer the strategic

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<sup>54</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 205-206; Şakul, "The Evolution of Military Logistical Systems," 307-327; Virginia H. Aksan, "Mobilization of Warrior Populations in the Ottoman Context, 1750-1850" in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2013), 331-351; İnalcık and Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, 95-98.



fortresses in Moldavia and the mouth of Danube. The turmoil fostered in Europe by the French Revolution and internal upheavals within Habsburg and Russian Empires saved the Ottomans from the worst. Still, Crimea, the Ottoman lands to the East of Crimea and those between the Dniester and the Bug were lost to Russia permanently.<sup>55</sup> The Russian wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92 had disastrous effects on the Ottoman Empire. The territorial losses and fiscal crises were accompanied with insecurity in the countryside and the empowering of the power holders in the provinces.

### **1.2 Selim III and *Nizam-ı Cedid***

After the last Russian-Austrian war, Ottoman political leadership under the initiative of Selim III (r. 1789-1807) undertook drastic military, administrative and fiscal reforms to strengthen the state, a process which was often referred to as *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Order).<sup>56</sup> These reforms were far beyond those previously attempted earlier in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> The reformers' main goals were to increase the central treasury's revenues and create a well-trained, armed and disciplined military in the European lines. However, they were also aware that their policies would not succeed if they did not re-establish their authority over the Ottoman subjects, and did not create the administrative and fiscal institutions to support desired changes. Deliberations of these policies resulted in production of a large number of treatises, laws and regulations.

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<sup>55</sup> For the most recent analytical surveys of these wars, see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 129-170; Brian Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Contemporary Ottomans and later historians used the term *Nizam-ı Cedid* interchangeably for Selim III's new model army, reform-minded policies that targeted beyond the Ottoman military and the era between 1792 and 1807.

<sup>57</sup> For a brief overview of these earlier reforms, see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 186-191, 198-206.

The new European-style regiments, which were manned by long-term conscripts, were first raised in the capital and then in the provinces. The Ottoman authorities employed foreign military officers and renegades to train the new troops in contemporary European “arts of war” using the translated drill and weapons manuals. There were attempts to increase the quality and quantity of the output of the Ottoman military-industrial complex by founding new weapons factories and expanding the building capacities of the Ottoman dockyards in the Golden Horn. To train necessary technical staff, the naval military engineering college (est. 1773) was reformed and a military engineering college for the army was founded in 1795. To finance the expanding military, the Ottoman ruler created a new budget (*İrad-ı Cedit*) and directed the revenues of some of the existing and new taxes to it.<sup>58</sup>

The New Order era overlapped with an exceptionally tumultuous international context. The French Revolution (1789) and its consequences had been reshaping European states and societies, which soon had its impact in the Ottoman Middle East and ushered another chapter in the “Eastern Question.” In 1799, Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt caught Ottomans by surprise, who had been sympathetic to France for a long time. The Ottomans turned to British and Russian help in reclaiming Egypt and expelling the French from the Ionian Islands west of Greece.<sup>59</sup> In 1806, the events took another turn. Threatened by French designs in the Balkans and their growing influence over the Ottomans, Russia invaded the Principalities and pulled British to the war as their allies. A

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<sup>58</sup> For more details on the era, see Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 268-70 and Seyfi Kenan ed., *Nizam-ı Kadim'den Nizam-ı Cedit'e: III. Selim Ve Dönemi* (Istanbul: ISAM, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, pp. 268-70.

British fleet successfully passed the Dardanelles (about a century earlier before the battles for Gallipoli), anchored near Prince Islands and threatened the Ottoman capital directly. Only the unfavorable winds and currents, and the hastily built fortifications saved the Ottomans from the utter disaster. Ottomans kept Istanbul in their hands and the British fleet soon headed towards the Aegean Sea through Dardanelles.<sup>60</sup> The fighting continued with Russia intermittently in the Balkans six more years. In 1812, Ottomans seceded some of the Moldavian lands between Pruth and Dniester rivers to the Tsar, and acknowledged the autonomy of Serbians who had risen in revolt in 1804.<sup>61</sup> In the meantime, the current and potential threat posed by the foreign powers further solidified the Ottoman ruling elite's determination to strengthen its military, collect intelligence and keep diplomacy channels open via sending diplomatic missions to and establishing embassies in European capitals from St. Petersburg to London.

By 1806, Selim III increased the number of *Nizam-ı Cedid* troops in the muster rolls to 25,000, which were stationed in Istanbul and the provinces. The sultan also created and diverted significant state revenues for solely expanding and maintaining his new land and naval forces. Nevertheless, the New Order also proved prohibitively expensive and increased taxation created discontent in different segments of the Ottoman society. Some important Anatolian notable dynasties, such as Karaosmanoğulları, benefited from lucrative tax-farming deals with the central authority and backed Selim III's policies. By contrast, the sultan could not impose the New Order (i.e. military

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<sup>60</sup> Shaw Fatih Yeşil, "İstanbul Önlerinde Bir İngiliz Filosu: Uluslararası Bir Krizin Siyasi Ve Askeri Anatomisi" in *III. Selim Ve Dönemi*, 415

<sup>61</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, p. 14.

recruitment for *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army and stationing his new regiments) in Rumelia where it met the fierce resistance of the local power holders and ordinary subjects. In late May 1807, a *coup d'état* in the capital overthrew the New Order, which was mounted by a disgruntled coalition of the *ulema* (Ottoman religious class), part of Ottoman administrative-scribal bureaucracy, the Janissaries and the lower strata of the city. Selim III and his close advisors could not respond in force and the *Nizam-ı Cedid* regiments stationed in the capital remained idle.<sup>62</sup> This was probably a lesson well-learned by then Prince Mahmud, who saw the power of a possible alliance of the mentioned social groups in the capital. He must have also observed that resolution and violence were things that he could resort to get concrete results. Despite its failure in 1807, the New Order project left a lasting legacy in the minds of Mahmud and the Ottoman political elite for the following decades.

The rebels dethroned Selim III and Mustafa IV (r.1807-08) ascended to the Ottoman throne, but also assured the execution of a number of prominent statesmen who had been active in the New Order project. Some of the surviving *Nizam-ı Cedid* supporters escaped to the Balkans and allied themselves with a certain Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, a powerful provincial notable dominating the eastern Danubian basin in north of Bulgaria. On 19 July 1808, the “Rusçuk Committee” (*Rusçuk Yaranı*) and Alemdar Mustafa Pasha’s mercenaries entered Istanbul in force and quickly established their authority. On 27-28 July, Alemdar Mustafa Pasha brought his army in front of the

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<sup>62</sup> Fatih Yeşil, “Nizam-ı Cedid’den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu” (PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2009),” 60-62, 66-68, 179-181; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, 272.

Topkapı palace and demanded the deposition of Mustafa IV and re-ascension of Selim III to the throne. In order to remain as the only male in the Ottoman dynasty, Mustafa IV acted quickly and gave orders to execute his cousin Selim III and his half-brother Mahmud, who were both in custody in the palace at the time. Executioners took Selim III's life but Mahmud managed to escape from them. Alemdar Mustafa Pasha and his men entered the palace and assured Mahmud's enthronement. This time Mustafa IV was put in custody in the palace.<sup>63</sup>

The political setting resulting in the tumultuous years of 1807-08 and the ongoing war with Russia led to an unprecedented event in the Ottoman history. After two weeks of discussions, the newly enthroned Mahmud II and several provincial power holders who came to capital with their armed retinues signed the Deed of Agreement (*Sened-i İttifak*) on 7 October 1807. The document essentially was a contract between the central authority (represented by Mahmud II, high-ranking state officials, *ulema*, and military commanders, including commander of the Janissary Corps) and several provincial notables from Anatolia and Southern Balkans. In seven detailed articles, the provincial notables pledged to respect the authority of the sultan and the state officials he appointed, to protect the sultan with their armed retinues in case of need, and to raise troops and funds in order to keep the order in the provinces, back sultan's military-fiscal policies and participate in the defense of the empire. In return, the sultan promised to respect the notables' authority in their respective areas of control. The document marked the then power of the provincial notables, their indispensability for the central authority in raising

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<sup>63</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, pp. 273-74, 276-77.

revenues and waging wars. Accordingly, it also demonstrated the limits of the Ottoman sultan's authority over its subjects in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which Mahmud II must have taken a note of.<sup>64</sup>

The sultan and his allies from the provinces and imperial center began immediately to re-create a disciplined military corps, namely *Sekban-ı Cedid*, which was modelled after the previously disbanded *Nizam-ı Cedid* formations. In mid-November, however, Janissaries and lower classes of the capital rebelled once more against the unpopular government of Alemdar Mustafa Pasha who had been made the Grand Vizier. Alemdar Mustafa Pasha sought refuge in a magazine tower near Topkapı Palace, besieged by the rebels and lost his life in the fighting in the end –it was rumored that Mahmud II considered the rebellion as an opportunity to eliminate this powerful kingmaker and deliberately did not send any reinforcements to his aid. Mahmud II executed the deposed Mustafa IV to ensure that he was the last male heir to the Ottoman throne and decided to make a stand in the Topkapı Palace against the rebels who continued their assault on him. The sultan's loyal forces included the *Sekban-ı Cedid* troops, his armed palace servants. The imperial navy also was going to bombard the residential areas near the imperial palace indiscriminately. After three days of street-fighting, the both sides made a truce. Mahmud II defended his life and throne against the challenge, but gave up the *Sekban-ı Cedid* project in exchange.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, pp. 2-3; Şükrü Ilıcak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826," (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2011), 28, 36-37, 39, 46.

<sup>65</sup> The last Janissary Revolt was detailed in Chapter 2.

After 1808, Mahmud II strove to expand his authority in the empire by curbing the power of provincial notables and Janissary Corps well into the 1820s. He also used the *Sened-i İttifak* to mobilize the Janissaries and the provincial notables to wage the ongoing Russian war. Mahmud II's consistent policy of submission or incorporation of the local power holders into the state apparatus proved more successful in the south of Danube in the Balkans and east of Euphrates in Anatolia. In some distant areas, such as Bosnia, Kurdistan, Albania and the Arab provinces, however, these policies proved not to be as effective, and in fact, they continued until the end of the empire. As Ilıcak points out, the existing state-centric historiography has reduced "this period to the centralization efforts of the Sublime Porte against the rogue [provincial notables], who would have probably partitioned the empire, had the state not taken the necessary measures. The devastation of human, material and likely natural resources during the wars between the state and the provincial power-brokers is completely ignored, as if in an attempt to preserve the glory of 'the reforming Sultan par excellence.'"<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, such an approach disregarded the possibility that some of the ordinary subjects might have been better off without the firmer grasp of the central state and have preferred to have been left in the previous order. In the end, Mahmud II either subdued the major provincial notables, exiled from their power base or simply had them killed in about two decades. After the capitulation of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha in Yanya after two years of rebellion, Mehmed Ali Pasha in Egypt remained as the only major provincial power holder by January 1822.

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<sup>66</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 47.

### 1.3 Greek Revolution (1821-29) and the Ottoman-Russian War of 1828-29

In March 1821, Alexander Ypsilanti, aide de camp of Tsar Alexander I (r. 1801-25) and a general in his army, entered Moldavia by crossing the Russian-Ottoman border at the Pruth River in Russian military uniform and with a small group of armed volunteers.<sup>67</sup> In the town of Yaş, he invited the “Hellenes” to “fight for Faith and Motherland.” He proclaimed “our cowardly enemy is sick and weak. Our generals are experienced, and all our fellow countrymen are full of enthusiasm. Unite, then, O brave and magnanimous Greeks! Let national phalanxes be formed, let patriotic legions appear and you will see those old giants of despotism fall themselves, before our triumphant banners.”<sup>68</sup>

Ypsilantis, who came from a prominent Greek-Phanariot (*Fenerli*)<sup>69</sup> family, was chosen as the leader of the insurrection by *Philiki Etairia* (Friendly Society), a Greek nationalist society founded in 1814. In about six years, the organization had attracted about 1,000 members, drawn mainly from the educated and commercial elite of the Greek population in the Ottoman Empire and Greek diaspora abroad. The initial aims of the Greek revolutionaries varied from creating an independent Greek nation-state to forming a loose confederation of autonomous and heterogeneous political entities in the Balkans.<sup>70</sup> However, in practice, the course of the revolution and the fate of the Greeks were to be determined by widespread inter-confessional/communal violence, state-sponsored

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<sup>67</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 97.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 201.

<sup>69</sup> The elite Greek (or Greek-identified) families that the Ottoman state employed in administrative and bureaucratic tasks from 17th century until 1821.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 31-37; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 290-291.



Ottoman atrocities, continuous guerrilla warfare, and the Great Powers' involvement actually rather than idealism of a handful of Greek political activists and ideologues.

Ottoman officials had gotten used to defected Phanariots, but the notion that the son of a Phanariot family invaded their realms for a nationalist cause (i.e. liberating their fellow "Hellenes") caught them totally by surprise. The Ottoman sultan and the statesmen thus could only make sense of the incident by attributing it to the Russia's secret involvement in the affair.<sup>71</sup> Yet, Ypsilanti's efforts in spreading the rebellion among the non-Greek Balkan Christians proved fruitless. Furthermore, the much expected (and needed) Russian military aid by the rebels did not materialize. Instead, Alexander I denied any involvement and dismissed his Foreign Minister Ioannis Capodistrias who had probably conspired with Ypsilanti. In March 1821, the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul officially renounced the acts of Ypsilanti almost immediately. On 19 June 1821, an Ottoman army crossed the Danube and easily defeated Ypsilanti's rag-tag force. Ypsilanti escaped to Austria and died in a Habsburg prison seven years later. Meanwhile, the intermittent Greek resistance in Morea against the Ottoman center that had been forcefully re-establishing its authority in the area during the revolt of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha, resulted in a widespread uprising under the leadership of local "bandit-patriots" (*klefts*), local notables and rich maritime traders.<sup>72</sup> Historians have not yet established whether and how the uprisings in Moldavia and Morea were coordinated, however, the revolution eventually prevailed only in the latter.

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<sup>71</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 172-73.

<sup>72</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 288-292.

With its predominantly Greek population, Morea rapidly fell to the rebels, who killed tens of thousands of local Muslims living in the peninsula. Meanwhile, an increasing number of nationalist minded Greeks and European Philhellenes set out to join the armed insurrection. Meanwhile, armed Greek merchant ships continuously attacked the Ottoman commercial and military shipping in the Mediterranean. One of the infamous responses of Mahmud II to the revolution was to execute the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch in May 1821 for his alleged support for the rebels. The mass executions continued as a large number of Phanariots and Greek notables lost their lives for real and imagined suspicions of betrayal. The Greek communities across the empire, who had almost no connection with what was going on in Morea, fell victim to massacres perpetrated by Ottoman irregulars and janissaries. “The aim of the government was to restore the Ottoman order by forcing the *reaya* to surrender and accept *raiyyet* (Ottoman subjecthood). Thus, violence became permissible, at least in theory, as long as it was exercised by the authorized punitive forces upon the *reaya* of insurgent regions.”<sup>73</sup>

With its present land and naval forces, Mahmud II could not fully suppress the rebellion and asked Mehmed Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Egypt, to send his disciplined troops and warships for his help in 1824. After three years of costly fighting, the Ottoman central troops and regulars under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, Mehmed Ali’s son, regained most of Morea except for Corinth and Nauplion.<sup>74</sup> Even though the public opinion in Western Europe and North America favored the Greek cause, the Great

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<sup>73</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 292; Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 163.

<sup>74</sup> Discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Powers did not officially support the Greek Revolution. Yet, as the fighting dragged on, Britain, France and Russia increased their pressure on the Ottomans to conclude a peace with what Mahmud II still considered merely his rebellious subjects. In summer 1827, the three countries finally agreed to force Ottomans to an armistice and sent warships to the Eastern Mediterranean. Their initial aim was to enact a naval blockade around Morea and Aegean Islands and hamper the logistics of the Egyptian and Ottoman central troops.<sup>75</sup> On 20 October 1827, the combined British, French and Russian squadrons entered the Morean harbor of Navarino, where the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet was at anchor, “ostensibly to press Ibrahim to return to Egypt but clearly with an expectation that a battle would take place.”<sup>76</sup> The allied ships attacked the Ottoman-Egyptian warships, leaving 8 out of 78 of them operational by the evening. They killed between some 3,000-8,000 sailors without losing any ships and taking less than 200 casualties. Mehmed Ali Pasha soon cut a separate deal with the European Powers and pulled the Egyptian forces from Morea despite opposing orders from the sultan.<sup>77</sup>

The destruction of the imperial fleet, the ensuing humiliation and increasing European support for the Greek Revolution escalated the Ottoman anxiety and response. Early in December, French, British and Russian ambassadors left Istanbul.<sup>78</sup> On 20 December 1827, the sultan publicly rejected European demands for an autonomous

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<sup>75</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 297; M S [Matthew Smith] Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 61-67.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 67.

<sup>77</sup> Yener, “Deniz Muharebeleri ve Müşterek Harekât (1792-1912),” 234; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 299; Andrew McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 99; Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 68.

<sup>78</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 67-68.

Greece with an imperial decree, which simultaneously called the Muslims *en masse* to defend the “religion and the [Islamic] nation” that were under threat. The empire’s enemies, the Christian nations as well as the Greek rebels, were in fact arrayed to wipe the Ottoman Muslims and their state off the world. The decree warned “God forbid, if this matter of autonomy was accepted, all the mixed provinces of Rumelia and Anatolia will be taken by the infidels. The *reaya* and the Muslims will swap roles. ‘Perhaps, they will turn our mosques into churches tolling their bells.’”<sup>79</sup> The sultan also repudiated the Akkerman Convention with Russia (1826), which had dictated the withdrawal of Ottoman troops from the Principalities, the recognition of current Russian possessions in the Caucasus and eastern shores of Black Sea, and permitted the Russian merchant ships to sail through Ottoman waters freely. In late February 1828, Ottomans closed the straits for all foreign shipping, above all Russia.<sup>80</sup> On 8 May 1828, Russian troops crossed the border and invaded the Principalities without a formal declaration of war.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the bellicose sultanic declarations and imperial orders for military mobilization, public opinion and high-ranking state officials were in fact divided as regards entering to an armed conflict with Russia.<sup>82</sup> In an earlier council meeting in May 1826, high-ranking Ottoman officials had no illusions about how a war with the Russian

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<sup>79</sup> The summary and quotation are from Hakan Erdem, “‘Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers’: Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence,” in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 77. Also see, Ahmet Akmaz, “Osmanlı-Rus İlişkileri İçinde 1829 Edirne Andlaşması” (PhD thesis, Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2000), 22.

<sup>80</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 68.

<sup>81</sup> Kapıcı, “Bir Osmanlı Mollasının Fikir Dünyasından Fragmanlar,” 299.

<sup>82</sup> Kapıcı, “Bir Osmanlı Mollasının Fikir Dünyasından Fragmanlar,” 300, 306.

military would end.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, the Greek Revolution had been draining the empire's military and fiscal resources. The Janissary Corps was destroyed in the summer of 1826, and the size and training of the new disciplined formations were not adequate to fight a major interstate war. Sultan's most potent ally, Mehmed Ali Pasha, had recalled his regular troops to Egypt from Morea and advised the sultan to expand his army before starting any armed conflict.<sup>84</sup>

Yet the hawkish opinion of going to war won in an imperial council meeting on 20 May 1828 and Ottoman Empire officially declared war on Russia. The reasoning was that if the Ottoman state granted the Greeks autonomy, it would set an example for other possible demands, uprisings and secessions in other parts of the empire and bring further foreign intervention in domestic matters of the Ottomans in the future.<sup>85</sup> Another reason of going to war could be the Ottoman trust in the fortresses across the Danube and the depth of the Balkan theatre of war, which would cause enormous challenges for the Russian armies.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the Ottomans showed signs of belief that the Russian army could send only a portion of its 800,000 strong army against them. In a meeting with the French ambassador prior to the war, Ottoman *Reisülküttab* (i.e. Foreign Minister) Pertev Efendi argued that Russians could commit a maximum of "40-50,000 soldiers" in a particular front at a time.<sup>87</sup> The Russian authorities were indeed fearful of antagonising

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<sup>83</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 283.

<sup>84</sup> Akmaz, "Osmanlı-Rus İlişkileri İçinde 1829 Edirne Andlaşması," 27.

<sup>85</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütî*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel and Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 289-302.

<sup>86</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)" in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi: Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri 1792-1918* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2013), 182-88; 194-96.

<sup>87</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütî*, vol. 1, p. 58.

a visibly hostile Austria and other European states, if the balance of power was altered drastically by their aggression against the Ottoman Empire. Frederick Kagan explained the situation they faced as follows:

Russia's inability to concentrate even a quarter of its forces on the decisive theater for a rapid campaign resulted from the strategic implications of the dangerous diplomatic situation described above. Russian intelligence that the Austrians had mobilized between 60,000 and 70,000 men and moved them toward the Turkish border pinned the Army of Poland and elements of First Army. These units had to remain available to fall on the Austrian rear even as the Austrians fell on the rear of the Russian troops advancing into the Balkans. The Army of Poland and First Army also had to be on hand to ensure that the newly conquered Kingdom of Poland continued to accept its fate passively. The rest of First Army and the Grenadiers Corps guarded the capital and the Baltic littoral against the possibility that the British might take action to match their increasingly bellicose tone.<sup>88</sup>

As it turned out, the Russian army managed to deploy only 115,000 troops on the Balkan front<sup>89</sup> and could not increase this figure significantly throughout the war. Russian troops also suffered heavy losses due to sickness and immense logistical challenges in the Balkans in 1828-29.<sup>90</sup>

During the campaign of 1828, Russian forces crossed Danube, captured the Ottoman fortresses near the mouth the river, including Ibrail and Varna, and took control of the Dobruca plains. Despite these Russian successes, Ottomans proved to be stubborn in defending their fortified positions, delayed the former's advance against Istanbul and inflicted heavy casualties. In the end, Russian forces could not penetrate into central

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<sup>88</sup> Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 86.

<sup>89</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Ottoman War on the Danube, State, Subject, and Soldier (1853-1856)" (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2013), 100.

<sup>90</sup> Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)," 194-96; Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I*, 77.

Bulgaria and stopped for reinforcements. On the Ottomans' eastern front, Russians committed only about 20,000 soldiers, who proved to be remarkably efficient. Under the energetic leadership of General Ivan Paskevich, Russian forces managed to push the Ottomans out of the Caucasus and captured a number towns and forts, including Anapa, Kars and Ardahan.<sup>91</sup>

The decisive year of the war proved to be 1829. In the Balkans, the main Ottoman army left Şumnu, the heavily fortified and well-supplied center of the Ottoman land army in the Balkans, went on offensive to relieve the besieged the fortress of Silistre. In May 1829, Russian advance formations inflicted heavy casualties on the Ottomans at the battle of Eski-Arnautlar and stopped the Ottoman offense. In early June, Russians quickly moved their forces from Silistre to Pravadi towards south, with the hopes of forcing the Ottomans to fight a major field battle. In the meantime, the Ottoman army moved towards east to first attack the Russians at Varna and then move north to relieve the siege of Silistre. However, Russian armies succeeded in occupying the Külefçe pass, and thus placed itself between Şumnu and the Ottoman army, cutting off the latter from its base. On 11 June 1829, Ottoman and Russian armies fought the largest pitched battle of the war at Külefçe, in which the former collapsed. After their victory, the Russian army left a token force to watch remaining Ottoman forces at Şumnu, launched a daring attack towards Edirne by crossing the Balkan Mountains and defeated the Ottoman forces sent against it. On 20 August 1829, the Ottoman garrison at Edirne surrendered without a fight. Even though an understrength and sick Russian force in Edirne was not in a

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<sup>91</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 343-52; Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)," 194-95.

position to march on Istanbul through Thrace, it created a great panic in the Ottoman capital. Negotiations quickly began on 1 September and the Treaty of Edirne was concluded on 14 September 1829. Ottomans recognized Russian control over the eastern Black Sea littoral and Circassia and agreed to destroy their fortresses in the Danubian delta. The treaty also assured an independent Greece, increased the autonomies of Serbia and the Principalities and forced Ottomans to pay a huge war indemnity to Russia.<sup>92</sup>

#### **1.4 The First Ottoman-Egyptian War, 1831-33<sup>93</sup>**

The next grave threat to the Ottoman central authority came from its appointed Egyptian governor, namely Mehmed Ali Pasha. Mehmed Ali arrived in Egypt as a major in one of the Albanian mercenary units that came to retake the province for the Ottoman central authority. Exceptionally talented and extremely ambitious as a leader, he quickly established his power in the province. He became the governor of Egypt in 1805 and solidified his authority by massacring the Mamelukes in 1811 during an ill-famed banquet who had survived Napoleon's invasion. Concurrently, he expanded his revenues by using cadastral surveys, taking a population census based on number of households and abolishing various tax-exemptions. The Pasha also replaced tax-farming with direct-taxation methods and established monopolies and factories to sell and process local cash

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<sup>92</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 352-63; Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)," 195-96.

<sup>93</sup> Characterizing the military conflicts and political competition between Ottoman central authority and Mehmed Ali Pasha in Egypt between 1831 and 1841 as "Turks vs. Arabs" or "Ottomans vs. Egyptians" would be misleading. These were products of conflicting ambitions of the ruling elites in Istanbul and Cairo rather than reflections of popular sentiments of the ordinary subjects in the Balkans, Anatolia, Greater Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, many individuals from these lands, who were military officers, provincial power magnets, bureaucrats and technicians with various ethnic and territorial affiliations, did not hesitate to change their allegiances, offered their services to both sides. Mehmed Ali's ruling elite in Egypt was in many ways more "Ottoman" than "Egyptian" or "Arab," whereas Mahmud II's "Ottomans" under his command included Circassians, Georgians, Albanians, Kurds, Bosnians as well as Turks, and even Greeks and Armenians. (See Chapter 5 and 6 for details) My choice of terms here is solely for practical reasons.



crops. In 1820, some 300 Mamelukes from his own household started to their training to become officers in distant Aswan in Upper Egypt.<sup>94</sup> After a failed attempt on capturing and raising thousands of Sudanese slaves as soldiers, he imposed conscription in lower Egypt in 1822 to raise European-style regiments. Next year, some six regiments of infantry (about 3,200 men each) drilled in front of Mehmed Ali Pasha and his European guests.<sup>95</sup> By 1830s, he commanded large sums of money, thousands of regular troops, a powerful navy and millions of oppressed Egyptians.<sup>96</sup> Further archival research is necessary to establish the details, but Mehmed Ali's policies in Egypt must have inspired many of Mahmud II's military, fiscal and administrative policies during 1820s-30s, perhaps more than the contemporary European examples did.

Mahmud II's suspicions and discomfort about Mehmed Ali Pasha's growing power could be traced back to the early 1820s, almost a decade before the two parties actually went to war.<sup>97</sup> The feelings were probably mutual, as Mehmed Ali Pasha must have watched anxiously the Mahmud II's centralization policies and strengthening of its military. After establishing its power base in Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha sought to spread his influence into Greater Syria as early as 1810s. He kept interfering the area's internal matters and tried to install administrators and power-holders there that were friendly to him. In 1827, Mehmed Ali Pasha asked the sultan the governorship of Syria as a

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<sup>94</sup> Letitia W. Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West, 1839-1841* (Jefferson, N. Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007), 34.

<sup>95</sup> Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), especially Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>96</sup> See Table 4, 5, 6 for a comparison between Ottoman central government and Egypt's fiscal and military resources.

<sup>97</sup> Şinasi Altundağ, *Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa İsyanı, Mısır Meselesi 1831-1841 Kısım I* (Ankara: TTK, 1945), 31-32.

compensation for his losses during the Greek Revolution, in addition to the governorship of Crete that had already been given to him. The sultan rejected his petition, citing that his presence was required in Egypt to defend it from any foreign attack. Mehmed Ali Pasha's escalating quarrel with the unfriendly governor of Acre over his runaway peasants and the mistreatment of Egyptian merchants were the immediate reasons for the Pasha to launch his attack from southern Syria. However, as his correspondence and statements show, Mehmed Ali Pasha had been keen to secure Syrian mines and timber for his existing military-civilian industries and navy. The rich Syrian ports with its populous agricultural hinterland meant more revenues and conscripts for his ever-growing military.<sup>98</sup>

In early November 1831, an Egyptian force of 25,000 regulars, and 21 warships besieged Acre from land and sea under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, the veteran commander of Egypt's campaigns in Crete and Morea. Egyptian detachments were sent up through coastal plain of Levant and towards inland simultaneously and took Jaffa, Jerusalem and Nablus in the same month. In December 1831, Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli and Beirut fell to the Egyptians without much nuisance. After his attempts to persuade Mehmed Ali Pasha to return back to Egypt had failed in December and January, Mahmud II mobilized an army that began marching to Syria in March. In the meantime, Acre (29 May) and Damascus (16 June) fell to the Egyptians. A week later, Egyptian and Ottoman armies met near Homs where Ibrahim Pasha inflicted a crushing defeat on the latter. The

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<sup>98</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 38-60; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 51-59.

Egyptian army kept moving north and defeated another Ottoman army at Beylan pass on the Amanus Mountains near Antioch on 29 July 1832.<sup>99</sup>

Mehmed Ali Pasha did not stop at the northern border of Syria. He moved his forces into coastal plain of Çukurova and by November 1832, into central Anatolia after crossing the Taurus Mountains through Cilician Gates. Mehmed Ali Pasha wanted to impose his demands on the sultan forcefully, whereas the latter proved to be as stubborn as the Pasha. Mahmud II mustered a large force in Anatolia and was determined to defeat the fast-moving Ibrahim Pasha before he threatened his capital. The two forces finally fought a decisive battle near Konya on 21 December, in which the Ottoman army disintegrated and its commander captured. Once again, disciplined Ottoman regiments were not adequate in quality and quantity, whereas better officered and trained Egyptian regulars carried out the day under the command of Ibrahim Pasha. The Egyptian forces reached Kütahya in February and Ibrahim Pasha asked permission from the sultan for billeting his troops in Bursa for winter, which alarmed Istanbul greatly.<sup>100</sup>

After Konya, Mahmud II no longer possessed any substantial military force to counter Ibrahim Pasha if he decided to march on Istanbul. The sultan also could not secure any concrete British help to counter any possible Egyptian aggression in the meantime. In a daring move that alienated both European Powers as well as domestic public opinion, the sultan accepted Russians' offer of military assistance to defend his capital on 2 February 1833. Between 20 February and 14 April, some 14,000 Russian

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<sup>99</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 61-75; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 367-371. Also, see Table 5 for the details regarding opposing armies.

<sup>100</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 75-82; Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 372-374.

troops disembarked in three waves and encamped on the Asian side of the city, while Russian warships anchored in the Bosphorus. For its military backing, Russia would gain the favorable terms of Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi (8 July 1833) in return, in which Ottomans pledged to close the Dardanelles to all foreign warships in the case Russia came under an attack. In the meantime, Mehmed Ali Pasha abstained from any bold moves, such as ordering his son to attack Istanbul, and Mustafa Reşid Bey (later Pasha), sultan's envoy, met with Ibrahim Pasha in Kütahya to broker a peace on 5 April. After prolonged negotiations, a verbal agreement was reached between the parties, which was known as Convention of Kütahya on 14 May. The sultan granted the governorships of Crete, Egypt, Greater Syria and Hijaz to Mehmed Ali Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha. The Adana district, with its rich timber resources, and access to the Cilician Gates and revenues, was also left under the Egyptian authority. In September 1833, Mehmed Ali Pasha agreed to pay 15 million *kuruş* as his yearly tribute to the sultan for the areas he controlled.<sup>101</sup> An uneasy peace between the Sublime Porte and Egypt ensued until the early 1839, when Mahmud II, whose empire had almost collapsed in the events in 1829-33, finally decided that his military was strong enough to recommence the hostilities with Mehmed Ali Pasha.

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<sup>101</sup> Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 81-87; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 83-107.

*The whole Janissary lot died, with plenty of suffering  
And they left us, the flock, alone in grief and trouble  
The whole Janissary lot died, with all their decorations  
And entrusted us to God and You, oh Muhammad*<sup>102</sup>

## **Chapter 2: Destruction of the Janissary Corps, 1826**

This chapter focuses on the destruction of the Janissary Corps in the summer in 1826, a crucial step that ensured the authority of Mahmud II would remain unchallenged at home. The “Auspicious Event” (*Vaka-i Hayriye*), as the official Ottoman chroniclers called it, provided the sultan with the opportunity to create a new political environment and, within it, a European-style military force that would eventually become one of the prime instruments of the Ottoman “grand strategy” in the following decade and a half. Using a range of primary and secondary sources, in this chapter I will analyze the preparations Mahmud II and his men made for the destruction of the Janissary Corps both in the capital and in the provinces. I will also illustrate the new political-military setting after this bloody affair by assessing how Mahmud’s regime tried to legitimate its actions and keep the public order.

### **2.1 Vampires, Janissaries and the Ottoman State**

On 7 September 1833, some curious news appeared in the Ottoman official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vakayi* (Calendar of Events). A dispatch sent by Ahmed Şükrü Efendi, the judge

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<sup>102</sup> Yorgos Dedes, “Blame it on the Turko-Romnion (Turkish Rums): A Muslim Cretan song on the abolition of the Janissaries,” in *Between Religion and Language: Turkish-Speaking Christians and Greek-Speaking Muslims and Catholics in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Evangelia Balta and Mehmet Ölmez (Istanbul: Eren, 2011), 374.

(*kadı*) of Tırnovi, in modern-day Bulgaria, was printed verbatim to make readers “draw a lesson from it”.<sup>103</sup>

As [it was apparent] in previous instances in the Balkan lands, *cadıs*<sup>104</sup> emerged in Tırnovi. They started assaulting the houses after sunset. They mixed together foods like flour, butter and honey, or spoiled them with earth. They tore the pillows, the blankets, the mattresses and the wrapping clothes that they found in the cupboards to pieces. They threw stones, earth, jars and pots onto people. Nobody could see anything. They are invisible. They also assaulted some men and women, who have been summoned and interrogated. They said they felt as if a water-buffalo was sitting on them. [But] thanks to God almighty, no one had been hurt. Because of these troubles, the residents of two neighborhoods left their homes and fled elsewhere. The inhabitants of the town agreed that evil spirits called *cadıs* were responsible for all these. A man named Nikola, renowned for [conducting] exorcism in the town of İslimye was summoned and hired for eight hundred *kuruş* by the local *voyvoda* (town administrator) El-Hac Derviş Beyefendi. Holding a piece of wood with a painting on it,<sup>105</sup> [The exorcist] went to the town cemetery, and to turn the piece of wood on his finger: The painting showed the grave haunted by the evil spirit. A large crowd went to the graveyard. As he turned the painted piece of wood on his finger, the painting stopped in front of the graves of two brigands, Tetikoğlu Ali and Apti Alemdar, formerly members of the Janissary Corps, and bloody tyrants. The graves were dug up. The cadavers were found to have grown by a half, their hair and nails had grown longer by three or four inches. Their eyes were inundated by blood, and looked terrifying. The entire crowd assembled at the graveyard witnessed this [scene]. While alive, these men had committed all kinds of devilry, including rape, theft and murder. When their Corps had been abolished, however, they had not been delivered to the executioner, because of their [old] age and they died naturally. Damned in their life, it is telling how they came back as evil spirits and now were harassing people. Following Nikola the exorcist’s directions, one had to drive a wooden stake into the belly of their cadavers and pour boiling water onto their hearts in order to expel such evil spirits. Ali Alemdar’s and Abdi Alemdar’s corpses were removed from their graves.

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<sup>103</sup> *Takvim-i Vakayi*, issue (*def’a*) 68, 21 Ca 1249 (5 October 1833). The original dispatch was penned on 7 September 1833 (21 R 1249).

<sup>104</sup> Translated as “witch, wizard, vampire” by the Redhouse Ottoman Turkish-English dictionary.

<sup>105</sup> Based on the description, this item must have been an Orthodox icon.

Wooden stakes were driven into their bellies and their hearts were boiled in a cauldron of water, but without any result. The exorcist said: we must burn these corpses. The authorization was granted, since such an act is permitted by Islamic law, based on a *fetva* by *Şeyhülislam* Saadeddin ibn Hasan. Then, the unburied corpses of the two Janissaries were burnt in the graveyard and, thank God, our town was freed from the *cadıs*' evil.<sup>106</sup>

In its first issue in 1831, the paper declared its mission in the following manner: because “human nature is always inclined to attack and criticize everything, the character and truth of which it does not know. In order to check the attacks and misunderstandings and to give people a rest of mind, satisfaction... [to] make them acquainted with the real true nature of events.”<sup>107</sup> *Takvim-i Vakayi* mainly delivered state-related news in the most mundane manner and it is certainly not the most interesting read for Ottoman historians. It included appointments of military commanders and administrators, the creation new legislations and institutional ordinances, and the launch of new imperial warships and the like. In this context, having the Janissaries return as supernatural, evil vampires in the Ottoman Empire's only official newspaper seems like an amusing anomaly to the modern reader. At the same time, the description illustrates the Ottoman authorities' continued preoccupation with the Janissaries, and their anxiety about legitimating their actions even seven years after the destruction of the corps.

On the afternoon of 15 June 1826, Mahmud II's loyal forces commenced their attack on the Janissary Corps in the capital.<sup>108</sup> Already alarmed by the creation of separate

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<sup>106</sup> This is a simplified translation made by Emre Öktem, “Balkan Vampires Before Ottoman Courts,” *Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni*. Accessed 30 April 2015, [http://www.cesnur.org/2009/balkan\\_vampires.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/2009/balkan_vampires.htm). Öktem's translation was compared with the Ottoman original and slightly re-edited here.

<sup>107</sup> Ahmed Emin Yalman, “The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press,” (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1914), 30. The translation is Yalman's.

<sup>108</sup> See Map 1 that illustrates the battle between the Janissaries and the troops loyal to the sultan.

musketeer companies called *Eşkinici Ocağı* (Corps of Active Janissaries),<sup>109</sup> the Janissaries had begun gathering at Et Meydanı (the Meat Square) the day before. During the night of 14 June, they assaulted and sacked the residences of prominent individuals (including that of Celaleddin Ağa, the current commander of the corps) whom they associated with the *Eşkinici* project. Previously alerted by the palace, however, most of these high-ranking officials had already left their houses and thus managed to evade certain death.<sup>110</sup> The following day, the sultan mobilized the armed men loyal to him, who outnumbered the Janissary fighters. Furthermore, the loyalists called on the capital's "honourable Muslims" to gather at the At Meydanı (the Horse Square, the former Hippodrome of Constantinople) with their weapons. According to Mehmed Daniş Efendi, an Ottoman chronicler, ordinary subjects arrived at At Meydanı under the supervision of their imams and elders, chanting "God is great!" as if they were "going against the infidels."<sup>111</sup> By the late afternoon, the sultan's men had won the fierce street fighting, and set the Janissary barracks (*Yeni Odalar*) on fire by close-range artillery fire. The surviving Janissary fighters dispersed into the city.<sup>112</sup>

As a well-trained, well-equipped and salaried standing military formation, the Janissary Corps had played a major part in Ottoman sultans' victories and territorial gains from the 1400s to the 1600s. Building on the ancient Islamic and Middle Eastern tradition of raising professional household slave-soldiery (who are often referred to as mamelukes

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<sup>109</sup> The *Eşkinici* project prior to the destruction of the Janissary Corps will be described later in this chapter.

<sup>110</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı ve II. Mahmud'un Edirne Seyahati*, Mehmed Daniş Bey ve Eserleri, ed. Şamil Mutlu (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1994), 46–50.

<sup>111</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı*, 51–52.

<sup>112</sup> Avigdor Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II" (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 1968), 154.



in the English-language historiography), new recruits were drawn partly from non-Muslim prisoners of war but came mainly through the *Devşirme* (Collection) system, which targeted non-Muslim subject populations, with the exception of those in Islamized Bosnia. Authorized by sultanic decrees and informed by the central bureaucracy's population and cadastral surveys, recruitment parties composed of serving Janissaries and Ottoman state officials periodically carried out *Devşirme* in collaboration with local non-Muslim notables and clergy. An early 16<sup>th</sup>-century decree cites the quota of one in forty households for the rural Christian population in the Balkans and in Anatolia. The recruiters selected young males between eight and twenty, presumably for their good health, physical strength, intelligence and other potential skills. Those recruits considered more talented were retained for the Imperial Palace School (*Enderun*) in Istanbul to be trained for higher administrative, scribal and military positions and as sultan's courtiers. Graduates of the *Enderun* also generally manned the six divisions of the sultan's elite household cavalry. The rest of the recruits, the numerical majority, became Janissaries. They were first "given to the Turk," as some Ottoman documents put it: The recruits were sent to the villages in Anatolia to do physical farmwork, learn Turkish (the lingua franca of the Ottoman military and state apparatus), get accustomed to Turkish culture, and ensure their conversion to Islam.<sup>113</sup> For the first two hundred years of the corps's existence, most Janissaries were confined to a military life of constant training, discipline, and loyalty to their regiments and the corps. The military symbolism and ceremonies

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<sup>113</sup> Erdal Küçükyalçın, *Turnanın Kalbi, Yeniçeri Yoldaşlığı ve Bektaşilik*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayinevi, 2010), 32–58, Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 128–42.

surrounding the corps indicated that they were not only the sultan's elite troops but also formed a part of his personal household. The Janissary Corps constituted a body of rootless males living largely in isolation from the rest of society in their barracks, which made them ideal candidates to be the praetorian guards loyal solely to the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>114</sup>

Ottoman military-fiscal transformation in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century ultimately led to the *Devşirme*'s breakdown. Between the 1600s and the 1800s, the Ottoman state's military requirements, as well as its manner of raising revenue, gradually but irreversibly changed. As early as at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the classical recruitment methods no longer produced the number of Janissaries required by ever longer and more expansive wars. The final recruit collection probably took place in the early 1700s. Meanwhile, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the members of the corps had already become "urban" and "localized" in the capital and the provinces. Far from being an elite force victorious in war, the Janissaries made and broke alliances with contemporary power factions and bargained and fought for their political-economic goals with competing interest groups, such as palace cliques, the religious class (*ulema*) and provincial power holders.<sup>115</sup> Confrontations between the corps and the successive sultans, which had occurred earlier as well, now translated into violent coup d'états. During certain incidents, the Janissaries in Istanbul literally became the kingmakers: during the dethroning and killing of Osman II (r. 1618–22), during the deposition of Mustafa II (r. 1695–1703) (the "Edirne Incident" of 1703)

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<sup>114</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 128–42; Küçükyalçın, *Turnanın Kalbi*, 32–58.

<sup>115</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline," *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review*, 4 (1999), 54–55; Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 136, 140–41.

and during the series of revolts in 1807–8, to name just the most prominent examples.<sup>116</sup>

In May 1807, for example, the guards stationed at the fortresses of the Bosphorus together with the Janissaries staged a coup d'état and dethroned Selim III (r. 1789–1807). The well-organized revolt had the support of certain statesmen within the palace, including Deputy Grand Vizier (*Kaim-i makam*) Musa Pasha and *Şeyhülislam* Ataullah Efendi. The mutineers secured the execution of leading reformers and the termination of Selim III's wide-ranging "infidel-inspired" reform agenda known as *Nizam-ı Cedid* (the New Order).<sup>117</sup>

## **2.2 Mahmud II and the Janissaries, 1808-1821**

A new generation of scholars has successfully challenged the historical misconceptions (Islamic reactionaries vs. reform-minded officials; unruliness vs. discipline and order) about the nature of the conflict around *Nizam-ı Cedid*. Indeed, the struggle between the Janissary Corps and the palace was not, in fact, between the "thuggish", "backward" Janissaries and "heroic", "progressive" reformers that tried to save the Ottoman Empire from collapsing. The events are best explained as a political and economic competition between several non-monolithic and porous factions who used state institutions, extant Ottoman political-social traditions and Islam to operate.<sup>118</sup> From this perspective, the struggle in the reign of Mahmud II followed.

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<sup>116</sup> Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 198–202, 329–33, 416–17, 420–24.

<sup>117</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 246–47.

<sup>118</sup> See, for instance, Mert Sunar, "Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of the Janissary Corps, 1807–1826" (PhD thesis, SUNY Binghamton, 2006); Kahraman Şakul, "Nizam-ı Cedid Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma ve İslami Modernleşme," *Divan İlmi Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 19 (2005), 117–50; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 15–130.

On the night of 14 November 1808, the Janissaries rebelled against the recently enthroned Mahmud II and his unpopular Grand Vizier, Alemdar Mustafa Pasha. Enraged by the rumours that their corps would soon be abolished, they wanted abandonment of the recently launched New *Sekbans* (*Sekban-ı Cedid*) project, which had aimed to create a well-disciplined and well-trained standing army like the one imagined along European lines during the *Nizam-ı Cedid*. On the night of 14-15 November, they first killed Mustafa Ağa, their newly appointed corps commander who did not cooperate. Then they attacked and killed Grand Vizier Alemdar Mustafa Paşa and his bodyguards in a stone magazine situated within the government compounds of the *Bab-ı Ali*. Alemdar's other men were scattered throughout the capital, taken by surprise and without instructions and leadership. The rebels easily surrounded their small, dispersed garrisons and let them leave the city unharmed after their surrender. On the following day, they sent Tahir Efendi, Kadı of Istanbul, as their emissary to ask the sultan to appoint of a new corps commander and a new Grand Vizier. The sultan did not act the way that Selim III had done during Kabakçı Mustafa Revolt in May 1807. Mahmud II rejected the Janissaries' demands and summoned his loyal commanders, artillerymen *sekbans* musketeers from Galata and Üsküdar by boats, totalling some 4,000 to 5,000 men.<sup>119</sup> The Janissaries, who were soon joined by lower-ranking *ulema*, artisans, shopkeepers, and urban "riff raff" such as bachelors, porters and vegetable sellers from the provinces, initiated what could be called the siege of Topkapı Palace. A full-scale battle raged alongside the palace walls, occasionally spread into the courtyard of the Hagia Sophia and even into the palace

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<sup>119</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 63-73.

gardens; both sides used cannon liberally.<sup>120</sup> After the palace grounds had come under musket fire from higher grounds—the roof and the minarets of the Hagia Sophia Mosque—some 30 imperial warships stationed at Eminönü received the order to bombard the Janissary concentrations near Ağa Kapısı, where corps commanders traditionally resided.<sup>121</sup> The bombardment also caused fires in the close-by neighbourhoods of Sultanahmed and Divanyolu, possibly killing thousands of Ottoman subjects.<sup>122</sup> These fires forced many rebels to abandon their fighting to take care of their families and property. When a truce was declared on 16 November, about 4,000 to 5,000 rebels had been killed, while Mahmud II had lost between 150 and 600 *sekbans*.<sup>123</sup> In the event, the sultan defended his throne and showed to the public that he could confront the Janissaries with violence. However, it appears that the sultan and his allies were caught unprepared by the rebellion and the Janissaries managed to impose their will at the end, by forcing the abandonment of *Sekban-ı Cedid* project.

In the summer of 1826, however, Mahmud II's men rapidly overcame the Janissary resistance in the capital and later, in the provinces. The sultan's victory in the capital was so swift that one contemporary source described the actual fighting as taking merely "41 minutes."<sup>124</sup> Even though we should take the official Ottoman chronicles with a grain of salt, one wonders how the Ottoman leader achieved this political-military

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<sup>120</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 75–76. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 68, n. 155.

<sup>121</sup> Fatih Yeşil, "Nizam-ı Cedid'den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu" (PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2009), 241, n. 1045.

<sup>122</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 5.

<sup>123</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 77.

<sup>124</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı*, 52.

victory so quickly, without causing a protracted civil war both in Istanbul and in the provinces. Did he have clear-cut plans from the time of his ascension to the throne, or did he act spontaneously within the context of the events of summer 1826?

In his survey of the Ottoman Empire, Stanford J. Shaw depicts Mahmud II as “firmly committed to reform” from the beginning of his reign in 1808, considering the destruction of the Janissaries as necessary to pursue his “modernist” military policies. Under the subtitle “The Years of Preparation: 1808–1826,” Shaw states that the sultan “spent the next 18 years working to rebuild a cadre of devoted soldiers and statesmen and waiting for the day when events would enable him to act once again in accordance with the lessons he had learned.”<sup>125</sup> Howard Reed notes that “it is clear that Mahmud, whose life had been threatened more than once by these soldiers, probably hoped to rid himself of their obnoxious and undisciplined power from the time of ascension.”<sup>126</sup> But Reed also argues that it was only after seeing the army’s poor performance in the Greek Revolt and the war with Iran (1821–23) that the Ottoman ruler’s attention “concentrated upon the destruction of the Janissaries from the end of 1822.”<sup>127</sup> Avigdor Levy offers a more nuanced description of the sultan, describing how competing factions and revolts ended *Nizam-ı Cedid* in 1807–8:

...in essence the struggle was not between two clearly identified groups of reformers and reactionaries. The lines of demarcation were confused and there was considerable shifting of positions. Military reform was not carried by a genuine progressive movement, but rather by various elements who were convinced only of its pragmatic values and only when these

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<sup>125</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2, 5–6.

<sup>126</sup> Howard Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries by Mahmud II in June, 1826,” (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1951), 3; Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 96–97.

<sup>127</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 4.

suited their own immediate purposes. The key issues were not so much reform and conservatism, as the control of power and preservation of vested interests.

... Young and erratic but resolute and persevering, Sultan Mahmud had learned a very important lesson. He realized that it was wide popular support that had enabled the Janissaries to overthrow the regime twice in eighteen months. So in the years to come the Sultan was to take great pains to assure public support for his measures.<sup>128</sup>

Modern historians and contemporary Western observers always face the trap of interpreting the events with the benefit of hindsight: it was Mahmud II, no other sultan, who eventually succeeded in defeating the Janissaries and who could thus implement his radical reform agenda. Yet it is hard to conclude the sultan's "real intentions" from a position paper or political treatise and thus to know whether the destruction of the Janissary Corps was the "inevitable" result of deliberate preparations that took 18 years. If there was, in fact, a detailed plan, any communication about it would have required utmost secrecy, and was therefore undertaken verbally. In this regard, we are aware that in several documented instances Mahmud II specifically ordered the non-circulation of certain documents even within the Ottoman bureaucracy because of the information they contained. In other documented cases the bureaucrats and the sultan affirmed that the directives were secret and had to be passed on only verbally to assure their continued secrecy.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 85.

<sup>129</sup> In a document prior to 1826, Mahmud II criticized the state of the Janissaries and discussed how to covertly expand his influence in the corps. He ended his commentary with an explicit note: "this is top secret" ("*begayet mektumdur*") (HAT 25636). I am indebted to Dr. Fatih Yeşil for bringing this document to my attention. For later instances of this sort, where some of the census-taking instructions were given verbally and as secrets to the officials, see HAT 19217 (undated, possibly from the early 1830s), HAT 19725 (H. 16 Ca 1247/ 23 October 1831); Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831* (Ankara: T.C Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943), 12.

Restricted by the Janissary response but having survived the uprising of 1808, Mahmud II slowly began to expand his political authority and the empire's military capabilities without making any radical moves. Following the Janissary revolt in 1808, Mahmud II had to make certain appointments under the pressure of his rivals. Yet unlike Selim III after the Kabakçı Mustafa Revolt in May 1807, he did not order a wholesale execution of his entourage to satisfy the rebels' demands.<sup>130</sup> In this manner he "saved" a number of loyal and able commanders, administrators and bureaucrats for a time when he would need them. Immediately after the truce between the sultan and the Janissaries, the palace tried to rebuild and expand its legitimacy and prestige, which had been damaged during the devastating street fighting in the capital. The sultan distributed cash bonuses to the Janissaries to appease them for at least the short term. He also gave money and food to the poor, and graced public spectacles with his presence. By 1810, simultaneously facing the war with Russia and continued Janissary discontent, the palace initiated a propaganda campaign against the Janissaries, who responded with their own counter-discourse. The Ottoman state had always succeeded at monitoring public opinion within the empire, particularly in Istanbul through networks of spies and informers. According to Mert Sunar, Mahmud II had at his disposal a wide and efficient spy network by the end of the 1810s, which closely monitored the general mood in public places such as coffeehouses and even women's bathhouses.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 85.

<sup>131</sup> Sunar, "Cauldron of Dissent," 193–94.



After the war with Russia ended in 1812, Mahmud II wished to reform, enlarge and strengthen those parts of the Ottoman military that were more loyal to him, especially in the artillery arm. By 1826, the Cannon and Cannon Wagon Corps (*Topçu Ocağı* and *Top Arabacı Ocağı*) had 10,000 and 4,400 men on their muster rolls, which had been reformed, well-maintained and better-paid. An additional 1,000-man-strong rapid field artillery unit was put under the command of Ağa Hüseyin Pasha.<sup>132</sup> During the uprisings of 1808, the Cannon and Cannon Wagon Corps, along with the bombardiers, had sided with the Janissaries.<sup>133</sup> In the final showdown of 1826, however, these units refused the Janissaries' call to rebel and proved instrumental in achieving the palace's victory.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, the sultan had put great effort into strengthening the fortifications on the Bosphorus and the Danube. Existing gunpowder works were reorganized, gunpowder production was increased and a large number of weapons were imported from Europe.<sup>135</sup>

Between 1808 and 1821, Mahmud II sometimes cautiously avoided an open fight against the Janissaries in the capital, possibly thinking that the time was not yet right. In 1815, a conflict had erupted between the Janissaries and students of religious schools (*medrese talebeleri*), after which the latter group filled the streets claiming to wish to exterminate the Janissaries. The sultan abstained from taking the students' side against the corps.<sup>136</sup> In 1814 and 1815, Seyyid Mehmed Agha, the commander of the Janissary Corps, tried to establish tighter control over the Janissaries under order from the palace.

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<sup>132</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 101–2.

<sup>133</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 79–80; Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 213–14.

<sup>134</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 270.

<sup>135</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 105–6; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 434–35.

<sup>136</sup> Nalan Turna, "The Everyday Life of Istanbul and Its Artisans, 1808–1839" (PhD thesis, SUNY Binghamton, 2006), 66–67, quoted in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 32.

The policy aimed to get rid of officers considered disobedient or who had been involved in past revolts. In March 1814, Seyyid Mehmed Agha put three well-known junior officers to death, while another senior officer was exiled because he opposed those executions. In February 1815, the commander arrested more officers from the corps. But this time, fifteen junior officers captured Seyyid Mehmed Agha instead, released his prisoners and eventually killed their commander after the administration of Mahmud II declined to dismiss him. The killing constituted a great insult against the sultan, but Mahmud II relented and gave up his attempts at direct control and confrontation with Janissaries until the early 1820s.<sup>137</sup>

It would be during the early stages of the Greek Revolt in 1821–22 that Mahmud II confronted the Janissary Corps, in particular the lower- and middle-level officers known as *ustas*, over Ottoman foreign and domestic policies. The *ustas*, who had apparently come to hold considerable authority over the lower ranks and the corps's urban allies from the lower social strata, demanded the execution of Halet Efendi from the sultan's inner retinue for his hawkish position in Greek Revolt, fearing it could lead to war with Russia, in which their own blood would be spilled. Yet on 4 May 1821, the sultan flatly refused the Janissaries' demands and decided to keep thousands of *sekbân* mercenaries from Anatolia close to the capital for the coming few months, giving a clear message to the Janissaries that he was ready to risk a full-scale armed confrontation. The next day, the commander of the Janissary Corps convened with the heads of different companies and enlisted their loyalty by paying them 600,000 *kuruş*. At the end of the

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<sup>137</sup> Sunar, "Cauldron of Dissent," 177–78.

meeting, however, one senior Janissary officer named Yusuf Ağa demanded the admission of *ustas* into the imperial council (*meclis-i şura*) permanently, so that they might participate in higher decision-making.<sup>138</sup> Mahmud II had continuously rejected similar demands since 1808, denying the Janissary officers any right to join in critical discussions in state matters.<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, this time the sultan, hard pressed to ensure the wider support of his subjects during a time of rebellion and crisis, accepted the Janissaries' proposal. In the end, the corps's commander and two *ustas* "were permitted to be present at the Imperial Councils, launching a two-year period of *usta* intervention in Sublime Porte politics."<sup>140</sup>

Among other things, managing a firmer grasp on the provinces must have helped the sultan in dealing with the Janissaries in 1826. Mahmud II pursued his centralization policies of subduing or subsuming under the palace's authority provincial power holders from 1808 onward. To ensure his own authority within the state apparatus, he frequently shuffled, exiled or executed high-ranking scribes, administrators and military officers. In Levy's words, "those who proved loyal to the sultan's policies and capable of carrying them out were promoted and retained around the capital. Those who were incapable, or were suspected of disapproving of the sultan's plans, were dismissed, assigned to distant

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<sup>138</sup> Şükrü Ilıcak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826," (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2011), 24, 218–20. Ilıcak's account is mainly based on the reports of Strangford, the resident British ambassador in Istanbul, who had a well-established network of contacts within the Ottoman bureaucracy.

<sup>139</sup> Mert Sunar, "Ocak-ı Amire'den Ocak-ı Mulgâ'ya Doğru: Nizam-ı Cedid Reformları Karşısında Yeniçeriler," in *Nizam-ı Kadim'den Nizam-ı Cedid'e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, ed. Seyfi Kenan (Istanbul: ISAM, 2010), 520. Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 218–20.

<sup>140</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 220.

posts in the provinces or banished and executed.”<sup>141</sup> In one of Mahmud II’s *Hatt-ı Hümayuns* (Imperial Decrees) before 1826, the contents of which he ordered to be kept secret, the sultan asked to locate and obtain the loyalties of those Janissaries who were skilled at using arms. He stated that the Janissaries

are a mixed bunch, comprising all kinds of men. Even though there are a few good men among them, the ignorant riffraff [*baldırıçıplak cühelası*] constitute their majority.... These reactionaries and newcomers, who are not aware that the result of sinfulness is pure remorse, quickly become officers.<sup>142</sup> Then [just for wealth and fame], they do not obey and do not listen to the advice of their senior and older officers,<sup>143</sup> and they solely follow their own reasoning and pursue their own cause. In fact, by not observing the ancient laws of the corps and being disobedient to every order coming from the Sublime State, they commit evil deeds that are harmful to the state.<sup>144</sup>

Accordingly, some 30 years after the “Auspicious Event,” as the Ottoman chroniclers called the destruction of Janissary Corps, Ahmed Vefik Efendi described how Mahmud II deprived the Janissaries of their command cadres as follows:

[The sultan] resolved to put [the Janissaries] down and for ten years silently and systematically prepared the means of doing so. He could not interfere with their promotion, which was by seniority, but he could discharge them. He gradually weeded out all their best officers, leaving only the stupid ones in command, and made friends of the good ones, whom he had removed.<sup>145</sup>

According to Reed, the dismissal and execution of the sultan’s powerful chancellor and confidant Halet Efendi (1760–1822), who influential Ottoman chroniclers

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<sup>141</sup> Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 98.

<sup>142</sup> Mahmud II is likely referring to the *ustas*.

<sup>143</sup> Most probably those who were placed into the corps by Mahmud II.

<sup>144</sup> HAT 25636 (undated).

<sup>145</sup> Nassau W. Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the Autumn of 1857 and the Beginning of 1858* (London, 1859), 136–37. I am thankful to Dr. Seyfi Kenan for bringing this travelogue to my attention.

and a number of contemporary Western observers often depicted as an archetypical “Oriental intriguer,” “conservative reactionary” and a secret friend to the Janissary Corps, also enabled Mahmud II to take drastic action against the Janissaries.<sup>146</sup>

Halet Efendi was certainly one of the enigmatic characters of Ottoman history and Mahmud II’s reign.<sup>147</sup> Coming from the *ulema* class, he was the Ottoman ambassador to France from 1802 to 1806 during Selim III’s *Nizam-ı Cedid*, and he briefly served as *reisülküttab* (chief scribe/minister of foreign affairs) in 1808. After a short exile in Kütahya in 1808–10, he moved to Istanbul and was tasked to bring down the local strongman of Baghdad, a project he carried out with great success.<sup>148</sup> Halet eventually secured the sultan’s personal favour and became one of his closest advisors in matters of state. So much so that in the words of a contemporary French consular agent, Halet Efendi in fact “governed the mind of Mahmud and directed it to his own ends. Never had any minister before him enjoyed such great favour; and full of confidence [sic] in the friendship of his master, counting on his intrigues, and on the support of numerous creatures whom he had made to serve his own ends in all the branches of the administration...”<sup>149</sup> Through his political skill and patronage networks, Halet Efendi proved instrumental to his master, especially in dealing with the provincial notables between 1810 and 1822.<sup>150</sup> His last “victim” was the powerful Tepedelenli Ali Pasha (Ali Pasha of Janina), about whose power he had begun to complain in detailed reports to

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<sup>146</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 4, 35, 50–62.

<sup>147</sup> For a useful analysis of literature written on Halet Efendi, see Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 157–63.

<sup>148</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 286.

<sup>149</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 56.

<sup>150</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 286.

Mahmud II as early as the 1810s.<sup>151</sup> By late 1819, Tepedelenli Ali Pasha was arguably the most powerful Ottoman in the empire after Mahmud II and Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt.<sup>152</sup> He ruled Albania and Northern Greece almost independently through what could be considered a state of his own with an internal bureaucracy, a potent mercenary army, ongoing diplomatic relations with major Western powers, independent revenue and even a postal service. In 1820, Halet Efendi mobilized his networks and received the approval of the sultan himself to move against Ali Pasha.

Many Ottoman chroniclers such as Ahmed Lütü Efendi and, above all, Cevdet Pasha, depicted Halet, with his networks, intrigues and eccentric personality, almost like an Ottoman Rasputin. In addition to his services in curbing *ayans*' powers, Halet owed his influence to efficiently liaising "between Greek Phanariots, Janissaries and the Ottoman administration."<sup>153</sup> Cevdet Pasha's description of his close ties with the Janissaries made it easy for later historians such as Reed to consider him a Janissary ally. After carefully analyzing Ottoman chronicles, archival material and British Foreign Office reports, Şükrü İlcak, however, suggests a different picture.

İlcak points out that hardly any primary source evidence proves favourable relations between Halet Efendi and the Janissaries. Much of the information is, in fact, based on Cevdet Pasha's influential history that covered the events between 1774 and 1826. Writing in the context of the autocratic government of Abdulhamid II (r. 1876–1909), empire-wide reform projects and a recent catastrophic defeat at the hands of

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<sup>151</sup> Süheyla Yenidünya, "Halet Efendi'ye Dair Bir Risale," *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* vol. 11, no. 2 (2009), 24, n20.

<sup>152</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 215–16, 237,

<sup>153</sup> Sunar, "Cauldron of Dissent," 182; İlcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 236.

Russia (1877–78), Cevdet Pasha saw “Mahmud II ... [as] the reforming father of the Ottomans and the precursor of the Tanzimat.”<sup>154</sup> Şanizade, another court historian who chronicled the events between 1808 and 1821, and who finished his manuscript in 1825 (three years after the execution of Halet Efendi and one year before the destruction of Janissary Corps) before dying in 1826, associated Halet Efendi with numerous detestable events in his narrative. Yet he “did not portray [Halet] as the main actor of the period” and “his Halet Efendi is not a reactionary who opposed the abolishment of the Janissary Corps.”<sup>155</sup> Esad Efendi, Şanizade’s successor as the court chronicler and one of the major ideologues of the post-1826 era, had started his *ulema* career under the patronage of no other than Halet Efendi. Whether it was dictated or not, he mentioned Halet Efendi’s name only once in his *Üss-i Zafer* [Base of Victory], the state-commissioned description of the “Auspicious Event” first printed in 1827.<sup>156</sup> In his official history, he did not depict Halet Efendi as a Janissary ally, but explained his execution as Mahmud II’s “benevolent” decision to eliminate a statesman despised by his subjects.<sup>157</sup>

In fact, Halet’s execution came as the result of negotiations between the palace and the Janissary *ustas*, after a serious threat of rebellion on the part of the corps. Esad Efendi must have deliberately omitted this part in his chronicle, because it would have contradicted the image of an omnipotent sultan Mahmud II.<sup>158</sup> As the Ottoman center moved against Tepedelenli Ali Pasha and his power base, Halet Efendi arranged the

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<sup>154</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 236–37.

<sup>155</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 158–59.

<sup>156</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2005).

<sup>157</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 241.

<sup>158</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 240–41.

dismissal of an unprecedented number of *ulema*, administrators opposing him, which undoubtedly increased his enemies and made him even more unpopular among the Ottoman ruling elite.<sup>159</sup> Ilıcak also emphasizes that Mahmud II desired to create his public image as a rightful and paternalistic absolute ruler who ultimately distanced himself from and executed a corrupt, “intriguing” minister. Mahmud II finally took direct control of state matters soon after Halet’s dismissal. Soon after Halet was sent into exile in Konya, he led a meeting at the Sublime Porte in person for the second time during his reign. At the same time, the sultan did not make drastic changes among his statesmen except for the dismissal of Halet’s close aides and part of his household.<sup>160</sup>

The prolonged campaign against Ali Pasha and the subsequent, uncontrollable Greek Revolt served as apt excuses for getting rid of Halet Efendi, who had become a liability and now made for the perfect scapegoat. Mahmud II must have been content that Tepedelenli Ali Pasha was gone forever, even though the affair had weakened the Ottoman center’s ability to quell the Greek Revolt. Had a less costly dealing with Ali Pasha and the Greek rebellion been possible, and thus had Halet Efendi remained in the circles of power, it would have come as no surprise if he had sided with the palace in the summer of 1826.

In the 1830s, a certain Vassaf Efendi, someone much younger than Halet Efendi, appears to have been one of the individuals described in detail by a Western eyewitness, namely Captain Helmuth von Moltke. Vassaf was “not a bureaucrat not a pasha, but

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<sup>159</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 237.

<sup>160</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 242–43.



something in between” who acted as a liaison between the sultan and the high-ranking bureaucrats.<sup>161</sup> Like Halet Efendi, he appears to have been a “shadow minister.”<sup>162</sup> Such individuals in Mahmud II’s court remind us of Stanford Shaw’s conception of the “kitchen cabinet” for Selim III’s close advisors during the *Nizam-ı Cedid* era. Both Selim III and Mahmud II probably used these figures to bypass the traditional chain of ranks and bureaucratic procedures in political-military decision-making.

### **2.3 The Corps’s Last War: Janissaries in the Greek Revolt (1821–1826)**

To legitimize the destruction of the Janissary Corps, the Ottoman chronicles penned by Esad Efendi during Mahmud II’s reign, and later on by Ahmed Lütü Efendi and Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, underlined the cowardice and selfishness of the Janissaries and the successes of the regular Egyptian detachments during the fighting with the Greek rebels. Yet a vivid firsthand account of the Janissaries just before the corps’s destruction by Kabudlı Vasfi Efendi, an Ottoman irregular cavalryman who fought in Morea against the Greek rebels, does not reconcile with these chronicles and provides a totally different picture. Even though his recollections are full of self-aggrandizement and other exaggerations, they were written from a disinterested point of view regarding the Janissaries by an author who was not a member of the corps and who at one time even clashed with them over war booty.

According to KabudlıVasfi Efendi, the Janissaries constituted a distinguished body of troops on the battlefield, possessing a distinct esprit de corps, a warrior ethos

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<sup>161</sup> Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 99.

<sup>162</sup> Ilıcak’s term. Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 158.

bolstered by *Bektaşî*<sup>163</sup> symbolism and a clear loyalty to the sultan, who, ironically, would order their mass persecution and killing just few years later. The Janissaries were “sultan Mahmud’s own troops, his Janissary slaves, [who] unfolded banners” with the shouts of religious battle cries and often “fought from [the bottom of] their hearts.” They did not hesitate to mount uncoordinated but brave frontal assaults on the Greek positions shouting “Allah Allah!” and “Allahu Ekber!” (God is Great!), even though they were fewer in number and suffered many casualties. They taunted the Ottoman irregulars as cowards when the latter did not follow the pursuit: “You are afraid of the infidels.... The Sultan’s bread should be denied of you.” Verbal exchanges revealed that the Greek rebels considered the Janissaries, not the mercenary cavalrymen, their “prime enemy,” the true, armed instrument of the Ottoman dynasty and state: “[Why] are you [mercenaries] fighting with us here? Go to your own country. Sultan Mahmud outlawed us and sent Janissary troops against us. We will fight with them and let us be friends.” In Kabudlı Vasfi’s account, the Janissaries used rifles, employed their particular (but costly) battlefield tactics and appeared neither like completely outdated, bigoted medieval warriors nor like cowardly rabble, as the Ottoman chroniclers and some modern historians like to present them.<sup>164</sup> In fact, the Greek Revolt was not an isolated conflict in which the Janissaries showed their zeal and commitment in their late history. Despite their constant pressure on the Ottoman government to end the hostilities, the Janissaries

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<sup>163</sup> A significant heterodox sect in Islam that was widespread among the populace, and was the “official” religion of the Janissary Corps.

<sup>164</sup> Jan Schmidt, “The adventures of an Ottoman horseman: The autobiography of Kabudlı Vasfi Efendi, 1800-1825,” in *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500-1923)*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2002), 246, 251–52, 255–56.

did a good part of the killing and dying in the conflict, especially in the later stages of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1806–12. The imperial army, which was reformed and strengthened by new Janissary regiments and other supporting units during the spring of 1811, in the summer took back the Rusçuk and Yergöğü fortresses on the Danube despite heavy casualties.<sup>165</sup> During these offensives, “[a]long with the Agha of Janissaries and the commander of the Janissary army, nearly eight thousand soldiers, the majority of whom were probably Janissaries, were killed in action. Five Janissary regiments and nineteen junior officers were also taken as prisoners by the Russians.”<sup>166</sup>

Apart from the Janissaries’ constant involvement in high-level Ottoman politics in the capital, the real reason behind the central authority’s annoyance with the corps was not its lack of courage but the smaller number of combatants the corps provided, their insistence on negotiating their terms of service during campaigns and their periodic indiscipline and non-compliance. In 1774, the Baron de Tott estimated that about 400,000 individual payslips were in circulation, only one-tenth of which belonged to soldiers actually going to war.<sup>167</sup> That only a fraction of those registered as Janissaries went on campaigns had frustrated reforming Ottoman sultans and statesmen since the Russian Wars of the 1760s to the 1790s. According to the summary muster rolls (*esame icmalleri*), 114,497 individuals in 1811 (1226 H.) and 109,706 in 1817–18 (1233) were receiving payments from the state.<sup>168</sup> Ottoman subjects traded Janissary pay tickets

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<sup>165</sup> Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 164–65, 172.

<sup>166</sup> Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 172.

<sup>167</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, “Whatever Happened to the Janissaries? Mobilization for the 1768–1774 Russo-Ottoman War,” *War in History* vol. 5 no. 1 (1998), 27.

<sup>168</sup> Mert Sunar, “XIX Yüzyıl Başları İstanbul’unda Esnaf Yeniçeriler,” *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18 (2010), 65.

(*esame*) and considered them a method of investment, thus the same individual could hold multiple pay tickets. For instance, between 1792 and 1807 only about 9,500 to 10,000 Janissaries were designated as “active” under the official term “new troops” (*neferat-ı cedit*).<sup>169</sup> In 1791, Ottoman authorities wanted to dispatch 30,000 troops from the salaried central troops (*ocaks*), including the Janissary Corps, for the ongoing war with Russia. The Janissaries responded that only 6,000 men could be mustered to go on the campaign. A following report submitted to Selim III further stated that no more than 1,000 of these would reach the front, because the rest would desert as soon as they left the imperial capital.<sup>170</sup> In April 1821, 5,000 Janissaries were dispatched to quell the initial Greek Revolt in Moldavia; they in fact began their campaign by pillaging Christian houses in the Beşiktaş neighbourhood of Istanbul.<sup>171</sup> Ilıcak notes that “there are around fifty documents in the Ottoman Archives reporting the Janissaries' adventures of riot, pillage and desertion in Moldowallachia and the towns south of the Danube.... All sources agree that Moldowallachia was devastated by 1822 by Ipsilantis' forces on the one hand and the janissaries on the other.”<sup>172</sup> During the earlier war with Iran (1821–23), Hüsrev Pasha, then acting as the supreme commander of the Ottoman forces in the East and later to serve as the *serasker* (commander in chief) of Mahmud II's European-style forces after 1826, reported to Istanbul that he could not mobilize the Janissaries from Erzurum to fight far from the city.<sup>173</sup> In contrast to the sultan's household troops, a few existing

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<sup>169</sup> See the table in Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 510.

<sup>170</sup> Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 508.

<sup>171</sup> Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 114.

<sup>172</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 214–15.

<sup>173</sup> Yüksel Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa, Siyasi ve Askeri Faaliyetleri, 1756-1855” (PhD thesis, Marmara University, 2005), 176.

European-style Iranian regiments distinguished themselves in this war, a year before Mehmed Ali Pasha started dispatching his Egyptian regulars to Crete and Morea.<sup>174</sup>

The Janissaries also constituted only one part of the Ottoman army during the campaigns in Epirus and Morea, as the bulk of the Ottoman armed forces were composed of forced levies (*nefir-i amm*), retinues of and forces raised and commanded by *ayans* from Anatolia and Rumelia, freelance mercenaries, and, above all, ethnic Albanian mercenaries hired through and led by their warlords.<sup>175</sup> Thus blaming the Janissaries for the military setbacks during the Greek Revolt, as Ottoman chroniclers and later historians have often done, proves problematic at best. Rather than the Janissaries, Albanian mercenaries numerically dominated the Ottoman forces sent to the front during the conflict.<sup>176</sup> When a 50,000-men-strong Ottoman army encamped in Yenişehir (Larissa), tasked with the first organized Ottoman military response to the Greek rebels in 1823, it had about 12,000 provincial troops brought by Rumelian *ayans*, 3,274 mercenaries from Anatolia and 31,464 Albanian irregulars under 125 different chieftains.<sup>177</sup> The accuracy of Kabudlı Vasfî Efendi's scattered figures are debatable, but his account mentions some 12,000 Janissaries dispatched to fight against the Greek rebels in total.<sup>178</sup> The Egyptian expeditionary force, whom contemporary observers and later historians considered the

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<sup>174</sup> See Stephanie Cronin, "Building a New Army, Military Reform in Qajar Iran," in *War and Peace in Qajar Persia*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmaian (London: Routledge, 2008), 92–93. Even though Cronin's figures for troop numbers seem superficial, especially for the Ottoman side, for a description of the Persian victory at the battle near Toprakkale in the late October, 1821, see *ibid.*, 95–97. For an Ottoman account of the defeat, see Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa, Siyasi ve Askeri Faaliyetleri," 180–81. In this context, a possible Persian influence on the Ottoman military reform in the 1820s might prove an interesting topic of investigation.

<sup>175</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 161–62; Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 265–66.

<sup>176</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 257–58.

<sup>177</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 31–32, 265.

<sup>178</sup> Schmidt, "The adventure of an Ottoman horseman," 246, 282.

true suppressors of the Greek Revolt until 1826, had committed a contingent of 17,000 regular infantrymen, 700 cavalymen and 4 artillery batteries. By sending this significant contingent, Mehmed Ali Pasha had in fact dispatched four of his six regiments alongside the bulk of his battle fleet and naval transports.<sup>179</sup> Even so, it took three years for the Egyptians and the Ottoman forces together to fully pacify the rebellions in Crete, Epirus and Morea. By 1826, Ibrahim Pasha had only 5,000 men under his command and was forced to wait for reinforcements. He had to devote all of his military resources throughout 1826 to fully re-establishing control over Morea, and it was the Ottomans who retook Athens in 1827.<sup>180</sup>

Except for a number of sieges and few small set-piece battles, guerrilla warfare prevailed during the Greek Revolt, luridly described by such combatants as Kabudlı Vasfi and other contemporary sources. Rather than fighting in Napoleonic columns, lines and squares, the combatants on both sides more often fought in ambushes and skirmishes, pillaged and razed villages and towns, and raped, maimed, killed or enslaved local inhabitants.<sup>181</sup> In this regard, the Albanian mercenaries, despite their indiscipline and temporary nature of their military service, proved experts, and they quickly adapted to the familiar environment in Epirus and Morea; many undoubtedly even knew the backwoods.<sup>182</sup> They were probably better suited than the regular Egyptian forces to fight

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<sup>179</sup> Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 55; Andrew McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 91.

<sup>180</sup> McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt*, 89–98.

<sup>181</sup> John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 11; Schmidt, “The adventure of an Ottoman horseman,” 216–86.

<sup>182</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 266–67.

the type of warfare typical of the Greek Revolt, and we should keep this last point in mind when reconsidering contemporary Ottoman state discourse or praises sung by historians regarding Mehmed Ali's trained soldiers. Yet with its continuous reinforcements, better-run logistics and efficient command, the Egyptian regular army and navy coped better with the "friction," to use the Clausewitzian term, which, for the Egyptians, meant constant losses and attrition due to skirmishes, disease and Greek naval blockades.<sup>183</sup> In contrast, the Ottoman central state had to go through all sorts of difficulties (and frequently failed) to bring a few thousand Janissaries, provincial troops or mercenaries to the battlefield and to keep all of them supplied.

In sum, the contemporaries' and Ottoman chronicles' assertions about the Janissary Corps's failure in mobilizing a sufficient number of warriors for the campaigns and their indiscipline have validity.<sup>184</sup> In addition to the complaints about the Janissaries' unruliness, lack of submission to the central authority and failure to get definitive results, the ineffectiveness of the forcefully recruited *nefir-i âm* soldiery, the higher costs and occasional disobedience of the irregular mercenary companies, particularly of the Albanians, proved a continuous source of criticism that often surfaced in official Ottoman correspondence.<sup>185</sup> The palace simply wanted a larger number of dedicated full-time

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<sup>183</sup> "[The difficulties in war] accumulate and produce a friction which no man can imagine exactly who has not seen War (sic). Suppose now a traveller, who towards evening expects to accomplish the two stages at the end of his day's journey, four or five leagues, with post-horses, on the high road – it is nothing. He arrives now at the last station but one, finds no horses, or very bad ones; then a hilly country, bad roads; it is a dark night, and he is glad when, after a great deal of trouble, he reaches the next station, and finds there some miserable accommodation... Friction is the only conception which in general way corresponds to that which distinguishes real War from War on paper." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (London: Penguin, 1982), 164. For further details, see pp. 164–67.

<sup>184</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 20.

<sup>185</sup> Hakan Erdem, "Perfidious Albanians and Zealous Governors: Ottomans, Albanians and Turks in the Greek War of Independence," in *Ottoman Rule and the Balkans, 1760-1850, Conflict, Transformation*,

soldiers ready to fight and die without creating much nuisance to the ruling elite, soldiers who could easily be reinforced by a flow of new recruits as their comrades under arms fell. Consequently, the need to create a better-disciplined, well-trained army force manned by full-time soldiers became a part of Mahmudian state discourse during the Greek Revolt, much as it had been during the reign of Selim III.

#### **2.4 The *Eşkinici Ocağı* Project and the Janissary Response, May 1826**

Using the emergency situation created by the outbreak of the Greek Revolt, Mahmud II put forward a daring reform plan for the army in an imperial council meeting on 19 May 1821, proposing the introduction of “the European tactics among all Ottoman troops.”

The Janissary *ustas* at first accepted the proposal “on the condition that they should not be compelled to wear uniforms and the ‘obnoxious term of *Nizam-ı Cedid*’ should not be revived. Soon after, however, for unknown reasons, the Janissaries formally retracted their consent and declared their intention to resist the proposed innovation.” The Sublime Porte suggested again the reform proposal to the Janissaries on 23 June 1821, but it had to backtrack due to intense Janissary opposition.<sup>186</sup>

Five years later, in late May 1826, the sultan and his loyal statesmen initiated the *Eşkinici Ocağı* project, less than a month after the news of the fall of Missolonghi, and the indiscriminate slaughtering of its defenders, had reached the imperial capital.<sup>187</sup> The project basically intended to create new musketeer formations along the lines of the

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*Adaptation*, eds. Antonis Anastasopoulos and Elias Kolovos (Rethymno: University of Crete, 2007); Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 210, 265, 266. The maintenance costs of different kinds of Ottoman soldiers will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>186</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 224.

<sup>187</sup> Also admitted by Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 45.



former *Nizam-ı Cedid* by enlisting recruits from eligible Janissaries. Baron von Ottenfels, the Austrian ambassador to the Porte, informed Prince Metternich in June 1826 that Mahmud II had actually been waiting for an opportunity to enact significant changes in the Ottoman army. Referring to a previous meeting with Ağa Hüseyin Pasha, which he had reported on 25 October 1825, Baron von Ottenfels underlined that the sultan and the former commander of the Janissaries had had plans for a reform for almost a year.<sup>188</sup> A month later, in November 1825, the sultan appointed Kadızade Mehmed Tahir Efendi to the post of *Şeyhülislam* (chief religious authority in *ulema*), thinking he would be able to direct the religious class with greater ease.<sup>189</sup>

The international context probably seemed suitable for the Ottoman central authority to undertake possibly risky reform attempts at home. The Ottomans signed a peace treaty with the Iranians in July 1823, making minor territorial concessions in the East to fully concentrate on quelling the Greek Revolt.<sup>190</sup> In Russia, Nicholas I (r. 1825–55), who ascended to the throne after the Decembrist Revolt (1825), was more concerned with enacting military-administrative-legal reforms at home. Accordingly, the tsar was interested neither in actively supporting the Greek Revolt nor in openly starting another expensive war with the Ottoman Empire, a policy that his predecessor had also followed carefully. Moreover, the Iranian forces under the command of crown prince Abbas Mirza

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<sup>188</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 92–93.

<sup>189</sup> Uriel Heyd, “The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II,” in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, eds. Albert Hourani et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 37; on the details about the high-ranking Ottoman *ulema*’s support for Mahmud II’s policies, see İlhami Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlmiye Merkez Teşkilatı’nda Reform* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), 233–37, 274–80, 285.

<sup>190</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ayşe Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 16.

launched an invasion of the Russian-held Caucasus from the south in July 1826, and its initial success forced Russia to divert considerable military and financial resources to the area for the following two years.<sup>191</sup>

On 26 May 1826, commanders from the Janissary Corps, high-ranking Ottoman bureaucrats and *ulema* convened at the residence of *Şeyhülislam*. During this preparatory meeting, Grand Vizier Mehmed Selim Pasha emphasized the immediate need for military reform, which the Janissary officers acknowledged. Esad Efendi compiled a *hüccet* (written deed) by the next day, which Mahmud II supported. On 28 May 1826, a larger meeting with 34 of the leading *ulema* took place at the *Şeyhülislam*'s residence. The Grand Vizier underlined the indiscipline, incompetency, lack of zeal and "apparent cowardice" of anonymous "Muslim soldiers" within the Ottoman forces. He then directed harsh criticisms at the Janissary Corps, claiming it was "filled" with impostors and "Greek spies," all of whom worked to diminish the fighting spirit of their ranks.<sup>192</sup> Then the dignitaries read aloud the founding ordinance for the *Eşkinci* Corps, legitimizing *fetvas* and the *hüccet*, which were then accepted and signed with the seals of all present. The same documents were then sent to the Janissary headquarters and read by the Janissary commander Mehmed Celaledin, Esad Efendi, intermediate Janissary officers, and prominent *ulema* and the *Şeyhülislam* himself.<sup>193</sup> In the end, the *hüccet* had 209 signatures on it; around 140 of them were those of Janissary officers.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 37, 61, 78–80; John Shelton Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825–1855* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1965), 22–38.

<sup>192</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 126–31.

<sup>193</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 26.

<sup>194</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 318–19.

Each of the 51 Janissary companies in the capital would provide 150 musketeers to the new corps. Including their officers, the total force would amount to 8,109 men.<sup>195</sup> The troopers received distinct clothing, regular wages, muskets and swords. The authorities promised the soldiers regular salaries and opportunities to rise in the ranks according to merit and ability. The soldiers had to live in the barracks and drill periodically, with detailed instructions provided for recruits' daily routines. The resident envoy (*kapıkethüdası*) of Mehmed Ali Pasha, who had served in the *Sekban-ı Cedid* army some 20 years earlier, recommended a major named Davut Ağa from the Egyptian army as the chief overseer of training. Davut Ağa was to be aided by one Ibrahim Ağa who had served as a captain in Selim III's *Nizam-ı Cedid* army. On the first day of training, it was strongly emphasized that the *Eşkinici* drill was "Egyptian" (i.e., Muslim) in essence, rather than "Frankish," which brought victory to the soldiers of Mehmed Ali Pasha in the Wahhabi Revolt in Hedjaz and in the Greek Revolt. Preachers and other religious figures, such as *fetva emins* (issuers of *fetvas*), started the drill by personally handing over muskets to the corps's director and the commanders of the participating Janissary companies.<sup>196</sup> The sultan had carefully obtained a written agreement (rather than a merely verbal promise) from the high-ranking bureaucrats, Janissary officers and members of the religious class before the creation of the *Eşkinici* Corps, which was further sanctioned by a

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<sup>195</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı*, 47; Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 133–34, n134.

<sup>196</sup> Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 173–75; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 28; Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 281.

*fetva* from the *şeyhülislam*. Clearly, Mahmud II wanted the consent of large segments of the Ottoman elite and society for the project via religious and political legitimacy.<sup>197</sup>

According to the Ottoman chronicler Esad Efendi, the *Eşkinici* project constituted a genuine and “compassionate” attempt on the part of the sultan and his advisors to reform the Janissary Corps before taking drastic action. According to Esad Efendi’s chronicle, Ağa Hüseyin Pasha in 1824 (H. 1239) had reasoned that the higher-ranking Janissary officers could be transferred if they did not cooperate, while the lower-ranking Janissaries could easily be coerced into submission. The threat came from “those in between” these two. Ağa Hüseyin Pasha had suggested the immediate outright execution of this group.<sup>198</sup> The sultan, instead, tried persuasion and the corps’s rehabilitation first. However, whether the sultan’s intentions were genuinely reconciliatory or confrontational, there could be two possible responses to his move, both of them favourable to him. If the corps had complied and the project had proven successful, Mahmud II would have drawn a well-trained and disciplined musketeer force out of existing Janissary formations. If the project did not work, the sultan would provoke the corps to rebel in the face of a well-argued and legitimized reform program. In the latter case, given the military, political and ideological build-up, Mahmud II and his supporters would still have the upper hand to confront any open challenge.

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<sup>197</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 112–13.

<sup>198</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 12–13.

## 2.5 The Opposing Forces, June 1826

Since we lack any personal account by the sultan or any minutes of these meetings, there are no definitive explanations for the questions outlined above. However, it must have become apparent that Mahmud II and his men were ready to act decisively in 1826, overwhelming their adversaries, in contrast to the most recent revolt in 1808. The palace successfully mobilized and commanded men from different backgrounds and affiliations just after the outbreak of the Janissary revolt. Mahmud II protected his able men from the Janissaries before 1826, and he kept them close. Prior to the final showdown, the sultan had been appointing “warriors” rather than “scribes” to commanding positions, including Ağa Hüseyin, Mahmud Celaledin and Hüsrev Pashas, all of whom had accumulated considerable experience in military campaigns. In 1822, the sultan promoted Ağa Hüseyin to the rank of vizier and gave him the title pasha; Hüseyin also retained the post of commander for the Janissary Corps.<sup>199</sup> Hüsrev Pasha was an experienced military commander who had previously quelled numerous uprisings of *ayans* in Anatolia, participated in the Ottoman expedition to Egypt to counter the French invasion of 1801 and fought against the Serbian and Greek rebels. He had served as an admiral of the Ottoman fleet since the summer of 1825, overseeing military operations in Morea and on the Aegean Islands.<sup>200</sup> After the fall of Misolonghi in April 1826, Hüsrev Pasha was recalled to Istanbul to bring the Ottoman naval vessels under his command. After leaving

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<sup>199</sup> Hafız Hızır İlyas Ağa, *Osmanlı Sarayında Gündelik Hayat: Letaif-i Vekayi'-i Enderuniyye*, ed. Ali Şükrü Çoluk (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2011), 302.

<sup>200</sup> Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa,” 238, 280.

some 20 ships with the Egyptian forces in Morea, the Ottoman fleet passed through the Dardanelles on May 13 and finally reached the imperial capital in early June 1826.<sup>201</sup>

It is hard to give precise estimates of the size of the loyal forces mustered against the Janissaries in the summer of 1826, even though Mehmed Daniş Bey's gave "more than 10,000" as the number of loyalist forces attacking the Janissary barracks.<sup>202</sup> Six months before the "Auspicious Event," Mahmud II drafted a law code (*kanunname*) for the timar-holders in 17 provinces in Rumelia and 34 provinces in Anatolia to physically show up in the capital and register in the bombardier and sapper corps.<sup>203</sup> 3,000 *sekban* mercenaries had already been brought to Istanbul and put under the command of Ağa Hüseyin Pasha and Mahmud İzzet Pasha, just in case the Janissaries decided to rebel due to the *Eşkinici* project.<sup>204</sup> About 3,500 theological students (*medrese talebeleri*) reportedly answered the call to arms.<sup>205</sup> The sultan also commanded the loyalties of the bombardiers (*humbaracıs*, 1,000 men strong), sappers (*lağımçı*, 200 men strong), Cannon and Cannon Wagon Corps, 10,000 and 4,400 men strong respectively, though these numbers probably appeared only on paper. An unknown number of Istanbul residents also responded to the

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<sup>201</sup> Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 271-272, 280. However, Çelik also notes that Hüsrev Pasha did not take any part during the destruction of the Corps, because he was at the Dardanelles with the Ottoman fleet which somehow left Istanbul afterward. Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 283.

<sup>202</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı*, 52.

<sup>203</sup> Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 14n58.

<sup>204</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 12 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, H. 1309 [1891/92]), 153.

<sup>205</sup> See Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 202-203, 211. Reed provides detailed explanations regarding his sources and estimations. According a census record from 1829, the number of adult religious students in Istanbul was 1,366. BOA, NFS 567 (dated by BOA as 1260/1844-1845, but it apparently shows the figures taken in Istanbul's previous census in the late 1820s. Betül Başaran estimates the year of this census as 1829. Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Order and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57-58. Also compare NFS 567 with the identical BOA, İbnülemin Dahiliye 3087, published in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1985), 220.

sultan's call to arms. Those who arrived without weapons were equipped with muskets, sabres and ammunition by the palace, affirming a pre-existing stockpile of arms.<sup>206</sup> According to a French observer, three months prior to the "Auspicious Event" 50,000 muskets had been purchased from Liege and stored in the Topkapı Palace in secret.<sup>207</sup> Esad Efendi also mentioned muskets secretly distributed to residents of Istanbul before the fight.<sup>208</sup>

It is hard to determine the exact number of combatant and non-combatant Janissaries. On paper, 196 Janissary companies existed throughout the empire by 1826.<sup>209</sup> The estimates for the number of Janissaries vary between 10,000 and 70,000, and only a fraction of this number must have fought against Mahmud II in Istanbul that year.<sup>210</sup> Not every member of the corps resided in the capital in 1826, as a number of them had scattered in the provinces. Mehmed Ali Pasha had sent his unruly Albanian mercenaries, who had proven instrumental in seizing power in Egypt earlier in his rule, to be spent in Arabian deserts to suppress Wahhabi uprisings in 1812–20 before he embarked on his European-style military buildup programme.<sup>211</sup> Similarly Mahmud II probably deliberately sent Janissary warriors to fight against the Greek rebels with the aim of diminishing their numbers before a possible armed showdown. In the recent war against

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<sup>206</sup> Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 212–213.

<sup>207</sup> Charles Deval, *Deux Années à Constantinople et en Morée (1825-1826)* (Paris, 1828), 123–24, also cited in Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 106.

<sup>208</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 68.

<sup>209</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın Kaldırılışı*, 47.

<sup>210</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 37; Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 236. Ahmed Vefik mentions about 6,000 Janissaries that had returned with the imperial navy from Greece under Hüsrev Pasha's command. The sultan demanded Hüsrev Pasha to hand them over after the "Auspicious Event." None of the men admitted to be a member of the corps, so Hüsrev answered the sultan that he had no Janissary on board. Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece*, 136.

<sup>211</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 85–86.

Russia in 1806–12, the Janissaries vehemently pressured the government, after all, because it was their lives put at risk at the front. Following the political confrontation between the palace and the corps in 1821, the central state wanted to send a large contingent to Morea to fight the Greek rebels, but this plan had to be retracted in the face of Janissary opposition.<sup>212</sup> Consequently, an Ottoman bureaucrat retrospectively estimated in the 1850s that the actual number of Janissary fighters at Et Meydanı probably was “a couple of thousand,” which accords with Reed’s evaluation that 2,000 to 3,000 Janissaries died in their barracks during the final showdown.<sup>213</sup> Thus a slightly exaggerated estimation would suggest that the Janissary combatants must have numbered somewhere around 3,000.

On the morning of 15 June 1826, the sultan was ready and determined to confront the rebellious Janissaries, three days after the *Eşkıncıs* had started drills their in the capital.<sup>214</sup> Alarmed by the quick messengers, Mahmud II arrived from Beşiktaş to the Topkapı Palace. Other military and religious officials were also summoned to the palace. After a dramatic council meeting, the sultan finally ordered the destruction of the Janissary Corps.<sup>215</sup> The *ulema* issued a *fetva* agreed to by the sultan: “[T]he law declare[d] that one should fight the rebellious. ‘If violent and evil men attack their brethren, fight these men and send them back to [Allah].’”<sup>216</sup> Mahmud II took the sacred

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<sup>212</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 224.

<sup>213</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 236, offers the possible range of casualties; see also Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece*, 136; Deval, *Deux Années à Constantinople et en Morée (1825–1826)*, 126.

<sup>214</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 171.

<sup>215</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 196, 204–6.

<sup>216</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 207.



banner of the Prophet Muhammad from its special chamber in the Topkapı Palace and handed it to the Grand Vizier and the muftis. The sultan reportedly wanted to lead the attack on the Janissaries in person, but Ağa Hüseyin Pasha persuaded him not to do so. The banner was then brought to the Sultan Ahmed (Blue) Mosque and placed at its pulpit, which became the headquarters of the military operations.<sup>217</sup>

The palace forces were divided into two main bodies. Ağa Hüseyin Pasha took command of the artillerymen and the dockyard marines. İzzet Mehmed Pasha led the bombardiers and the sappers, which were followed by the theological students and the armed populace. These two corps advanced through Divanyolu. At the Bayezid Mosque, İzzet Mehmed Pasha's forces turned right to surround the Janissary barracks from behind, while Ağa Hüseyin Pasha's forces mounted a head-on assault on the Janissary barracks. The Janissaries fortified themselves within their walled drilling grounds surrounding their wooden barracks. Ağa Hüseyin Pasha's forces brought cannon with them and opened close-range cannon fire at the fortified gate. After the sultan's forces breached the gate they kept the Janissary barracks under musket volleys and grapeshots from their cannon, setting the building on fire. Most of the Janissaries inside either died in the burning building or were captured; only a few escaped, with great difficulty.<sup>218</sup>

Yet the carnage did not end there, and the sultan's men began to hunt down real and alleged Janissaries and their sympathizers. The following day, summary trials and death sentences commenced immediately, as suspected members of the corps were killed

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<sup>217</sup> Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 207–12.

<sup>218</sup> Reed, "Destruction of the Janissaries," 217–26. Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 69–70. See also Map 1, "Auspicious Event, June 14–15, 1826."

in the middle of the street, while drumhead courts hastily handed out hundreds of execution orders at the same time.<sup>219</sup> The resident British ambassador, Stratford Canning (1786–1880), reported to London that the main gates of the city were sealed and that neither foreigners nor Christian Ottoman subjects were permitted to enter the inner city (*suriçi*).<sup>220</sup> According to the official historian Esad Efendi, some 200 persons were executed in the presence of Grand Vizier Selim Mehmed Pasha at At Meydanı, near Topkapı Palace. Another 120 were killed at Ağa Kapısı before Ağa Hüseyin Pasha.<sup>221</sup> The level of carnage became apparent in one of Canning’s dispatches. He noted that a member of one of these courts was paralyzed with guilt. Based on his local sources, the ambassador estimated that some 6,000 Janissaries were executed, excluding those who lost their lives during the burning of their barracks. In another report, Canning raised the death toll to 8,000.<sup>222</sup> Esad Efendi and Ahmed Cevdet Pasha give the number of those killed in Istanbul and the provinces as 1,000 and 5,000, respectively, while some 20,000 “riff-raff and porters” accused of being Janissary sympathizers were exiled from the capital to the provinces.<sup>223</sup> Reverend Robert Walsh, the chaplain of the British embassy between 1821 and 1824 and again between 1831 and 1835,<sup>224</sup> initially asserted 20,000 deaths in 1826, but based on his later contacts, he changed his position by noting that “the number of Janissaries destroyed has been reduced by the Turks themselves to seven or

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<sup>219</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 54–55.

<sup>220</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 32–33.

<sup>221</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 79–80.

<sup>222</sup> Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok, Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti’nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum: 1826-1839*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), 37–38.

<sup>223</sup> Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 237.

<sup>224</sup> Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 119–20.

eight hundred.”<sup>225</sup> About three decades after the incident, Cambridge University political economist Nassau W. Senior interviewed a certain “Vefic Efendi” on the “Auspicious Event”.<sup>226</sup> He commented:

When those [Janissaries] in the Etmeidan [Et Meydanı], who were not more than a couple of thousand, mutinied, he attacked them in front with his regular troops, but took care that their retreat should be open. They fled after the first discharge; few were killed. [Mahmud II] issued violent proclamations against them, but sent private orders that facilities [*sic*] should be given to all who would disavow [their Janissary] character. There were 6,000 on board the fleet; he desired them to be given up to him. The Capitan Pasha answered that he had none; that no one admitted himself to be a Janissary. About 800 [of them], who had been eminent for their crimes, were regularly tried and executed. Never was a great revolution effected with so little bloodshed. The accounts of it in the European histories are false almost from beginning to end.<sup>227</sup>

However, later in his account, Senior cited the brother of the British consul in the Dardanelles, who told a different story:

I was intimate with Husseyn [Hüseyin] Pasha, commonly called Agha Pasha, who himself conducted it. He has often told me the story, and his story was that at the Etmeidan [Et Meydanı] the Janissaries were surrounded on all sides, that all escape was carefully barred, and that no quarter was given.<sup>228</sup>

To better describe the level of the carnage, the number of Janissaries killed should be compared to Istanbul’s population. According to Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, the earliest population census taken after the “Auspicious Event” registered 45,000 Muslim males,

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<sup>225</sup> R. Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), xiii, also cited in Reed, “Destruction of the Janissaries,” 237.

<sup>226</sup> Nassau William Senior’s correspondent was probably the famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman polymath and statesmen Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823–91).

<sup>227</sup> Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece*, 137.

<sup>228</sup> Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece*, 186.

17,000 of them of military age.<sup>229</sup> A later document on Istanbul's population for the years 1829 shows 72,286 Muslim males in the capital, excluding the children and the elderly.<sup>230</sup> It is impossible to establish an accurate number of Muslims residing in Istanbul at the time or of those who lost their lives during the events. Yet even if we took Esad Efendi's comparatively smaller figure (1,000 Janissaries killed) and the 1829 Istanbul census as reference points, we can conclude that almost one in every seventy men in the city died. Some eleven years after the incident, Captain Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891), who formed part of the Prussian military mission to the Ottoman Empire at the time, described Ağa Hüseyin Pasha—an old, white-bearded man in an oddly fitted European-style uniform, smoking tobacco from a 20-foot-long pipe—by writing, “surely, this man has the most bloodied hands in the whole of Europe.”<sup>231</sup> The mixed legacies of the “Auspicious Event” have occupied a significant place in collective memory of Ottoman subjects and Turkish citizens until today. To instill the centrality of the state (even if it is the Ottoman one) and obedience to it, the Turkish Republic has essentially taught students in public schools what official Ottoman chroniclers told about the Janissary Corps. Invariably, however, the *Alevi* community of contemporary Turkey, who associates itself with the *Bektaşî* Janissaries because of their faith, viewed the “Auspicious Event” as not auspicious at all.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Ahmed Lütüfî, *Tarih-i Lütüfî*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel ve Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 205–6.

<sup>230</sup> BOA, NFS 567 (1829).

<sup>231</sup> Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, tr. Hayrullah Örs (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 101.

<sup>232</sup> For a popular critique of the mainstream discourse on the “Auspicious Event” in Turkey, see Reha Çamuroğlu, *Yeniçerilerin Bektaşîliği ve Vaka-i Şerriye* [The [Bektaşî] faith of the Janissaries and the Evil Event] (İstanbul: Kapı, 2006).

Some of those associated with the “crime” of being a Janissary, as well as men captured with weapons, were quickly executed. The sultan and his men proved to have a vindictive institutional memory, immediately beginning to also settle older accounts from for previous 20 years. The executioners “opened the books of older accounts,”<sup>233</sup> sometimes quite literally. According to Canning, a register existed containing the names of any individual who had committed a pro-Janissary deed since Mahmud’s ascension to the throne. Older men found themselves accused based on minor events that had happened 20 years earlier and were punished as Janissary supporters.<sup>234</sup> The new regime tracked down and mercilessly executed numerous individuals who had confronted Selim III, his *Nizam-ı Cedid* and later Mahmud II in the uprisings of 1807–8.<sup>235</sup> Several occupational groups in the capital, such as porters (*hamals*) and boatmen (*kayıkçıs*), were exiled in large numbers, while their leaders were often executed for supposed or concrete support for the Janissary Corps. Other potentially volatile groups such as *bikârs* (bachelors), *taşralı manavs* (grocers from outside Istanbul), unregistered shopkeepers, and coffee-shop owners (and their customers) which the palace traditionally considered harmful to the public order, also faced exile, execution or close surveillance.<sup>236</sup> After the military engagement and initial violence, the central authority deliberately extended the scope of surveillance, investigation and punishment. With the relatively smaller population of Ottoman Istanbul and the provinces taken into account, the number of

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<sup>233</sup> “Eski defterlerin açılması” is a Turkish proverb.

<sup>234</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 39–41.

<sup>235</sup> See, for example, Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 55–56; also Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 39–42, for some further details of the reckoning.

<sup>236</sup> See Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 40–42, 50–60, for details about the inspections, exiles and executions.

executions during and after the “Auspicious Event” compare to those handed down during the Terror in Revolutionary France in 1793–94. A classic study asserts that official death sentences numbered 2,639 in Paris and 13,955 outside the French capital, while the number of people who lost their lives as a result of the Terror came to 35,000–40,000 out of a population of 25 million.<sup>237</sup> Yıldız describes the Ottoman policy as “Terror *alla turca*,” a comprehensive and deliberate strategy that often arbitrarily and unjustly claimed lives to instill public obedience and fear.<sup>238</sup>

The new regime did not solely administer the stick, however, but also offered the carrot, especially for those who proved their loyalty during the “Auspicious Event.” The sultan and his statesmen rewarded with money, appointments and promotions their allies among the *ulema*, theological students, Janissary collaborators and distinguished individuals. Ağa Hüseyin Pasha, who distinguished himself in the street fighting, was awarded with the command of the new model army. He was also said to have been awarded 1 million *kuruş* from the confiscated estate of Şapçı Behor, who was a wealthy Jewish financier (*sarraḫ*) accused of connections with the Janissary Corps.<sup>239</sup> The *meşayih* (religious dignitaries) who served as preachers for the recruits during the *Eşkinici* project received 100 gold pieces each. Along with a number of bombardiers and sappers, 90 members of the *ulema* were given cash awards.<sup>240</sup> Some 3,000 theological students

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<sup>237</sup> Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1935), 37, 135, 143; H. D. Blanton, “Conscription in France during the Era of Napoleon,” in *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era*, eds. Donald Stoker et al. (London: Routledge, 2009), 7.

<sup>238</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 39–41.

<sup>239</sup> Canning’s report cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 64n144.

<sup>240</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 42.

received money for their loyalty and service during the event.<sup>241</sup> It also appears that the authorities initially attempted to keep the peace in the countryside. The Janissary leaders were invited to the local governors' offices and advised to be peacefully compliant with the changes. But as soon as the central authority gained full confidence, a policy of reckoning substituted the earlier overtures of appeasement.<sup>242</sup> For instance, the authorities initially promised to honour future payments for *esame* (Janissary pay tickets) holders, probably to calm the potential discontent. Yet the individuals who came to collect their money were accused of being former Janissaries for possessing pay tickets and faced persecution. As might be expected, the claimants stopped showing up very soon.<sup>243</sup>

Apart from their liberal use of capital punishment, the Ottoman authorities deported a large number of individuals from Istanbul to cities in Anatolia and to fortresses along the Danube.<sup>244</sup> Janissary sympathisers, including members of *ulema*, were expelled from the cities of Edirne, Kayseri, Tokad, Amasya and Anteb, where the presence of the corps had traditionally been strong.<sup>245</sup> However, safety was not a given for the exiles, as orders for their execution followed some of them. The memoirs of an Ottoman notable exiled in Kütahya for other accusations provide a rare glimpse of what it felt like to wait in fear in the provinces:

... I arrived at Kütahya, rented a manor and settled down. It was the year 1241 [1826]. The Ottoman state abolished the Janissary Corps and my arrival coincided with the turmoil. At that time, they were sending numerous Janissary officers as exiles [to Kütahya]. The execution orders

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<sup>241</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 155–56.

<sup>242</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 43.

<sup>243</sup> Levy, "Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 362.

<sup>244</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 49–58. Canning estimated the number of exiles as 18,500 as of 25 June 1826. Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 59, n. 125.

<sup>245</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 50, 57, 71.

secretly followed the officers [by which] they were finally finished off. I did not have any connection with the Janissar[ism], ... but since I had already disobeyed the [imperial] orders twice in the past, day and night, I was full of fear of death. One night ... the local commander of the musketeers with his 20–30 men came to my neighborhood to meet me without any prior notice. Since the terror already nestled in my heart, I thought, “my fears have come true.” At that time, the late Deli Osman and Hurşid stood by me, fully armed, [whereas] my other men did not act with such courage. As it turned out, the commander had just come to have a word with me. In sum, two more months passed with that fear.<sup>246</sup>

After his victory in the streets of Istanbul, possibly the city with the highest concentration of Janissaries in the whole empire, the sultan commanded great advantages over the remaining members and sympathizers of the Janissary Corps. He had the resources of the central state at his disposal, being at the top of a unified command under his absolute will and military-administrative powers to deal with scattered Janissary elements outside Istanbul. The provinces did not cause much trouble for the central authority. Janissary power in the provinces had already decreased significantly after Selim III’s *Nizam-ı Cedid*. In the new political atmosphere after 1808, hostile local notables and state officials gradually challenged and weakened Janissaries’ economic and political power. Therefore, “by 1820, janissary power in the provinces considerably eroded except in a few janissary strongholds like Bosnia, Erzurum and Edirne.”<sup>247</sup> It appears that most administrators could carry out orders of execution and exile smoothly without causing any large-scale upheavals in the countryside. This apparent ease suggests

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<sup>246</sup> Simplified translation. Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey, *Menemencioğlu Tarihi*, ed. Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara: Akçağ, 1997), 87. In his memoirs, Menemencioğlu recounted his many deeds as an administrator, clan leader, and rebel against the state and mercenary chieftain in volatile Cilicia during the 1820s to 1860s. However, this is one of the few instances in which he described his own fear and desperation with such detail and candidness.

<sup>247</sup> Quoted from Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 192–93.



that the sultan had not only appointed loyal men to posts in the capital but also to those in the provinces, possibly with secret instructions and preparations prior to the “Auspicious Event.”<sup>248</sup>

Mahmud II waited about a year to move against the cities and regions that showed signs of discontent and sympathy for the Janissaries outside the capital. In the meantime, he consolidated his power in Istanbul, received statements of loyalty from the provinces and began to create his first European-style regiments in his domains.<sup>249</sup> In July 1827, agents were sent to northwestern and north-central Anatolia to record the dissent and level of remaining Janissary activity. In the spring and summer of 1827, the governors of Sivas and Maraş were deployed to Tokad, Zile and Anteb with their armed entourages to fully establish central authority via executions and deportations. The earlier spying on Janissary activity proved crucial for these swift and effective blows.<sup>250</sup>

Nonetheless, the central authority did not prove as successful in other places. In Bosnia and Albania, the destruction of the Janissaries contributed significantly to the rising political tensions between these centrifugal areas and the increasingly centralizing Ottoman state. Immediately after 1826, Bosnians outwardly defied Mahmud II’s decision to abolish the Janissary Corps, thanks to their province’s remoteness from the center and special social-political setting in which the corps had occupied a prominent place. In their armed rebellions during 1830s, Bosnian and Albanian leaders gave Mahmud II’s

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<sup>248</sup> See, for instance, Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey’s memoirs on the markedly authoritarian and centralizing policies in Adana. Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey, *Menemencioğlu Tarihi*, 52–66, 81.

<sup>249</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 172–74.

<sup>250</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 70, 77–79.

destruction of the Janissary Corps and his European-inspired reforms as reasons legitimating their defiance of the Ottoman center.<sup>251</sup>

## **2.6 Mahmudian Regime, Politics of Religion and the “Auspicious Event”**

When the residents of Istanbul were called on to fight the Janissaries, the “invitation” extended to “those who [claim to be] Muslims.”<sup>252</sup> Esad Efendi, the official chronicler of the event, emphasized that it was the “followers of Prophet Muhammad” and “true believers” who rallied under the Prophet’s banner at the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. The “thugs” who disobeyed “religion and the state,” on the other hand, received the lawful punishment they deserved.<sup>253</sup> Clearly, the Ottoman state wanted to establish a dichotomy between what it defined as the “true Islam” and the political, social and religious legacy of the Janissary Corps. Political symbols affiliated with the corps also came under attack in the form of propaganda or outright physical destruction. Arguments and language of the Ottoman chroniclers who sided with the palace help us to dissect the state discourse at the time.

According to Mehmed Daniş Efendi’s narrative, the Janissaries started their uprising on 14 June 1826, by placing their “foul cauldrons” outside their barracks, which were in fact “their [only] faith and religion.”<sup>254</sup> During their attack on the *Bab-ı Ali* at night, the Janissaries reportedly destroyed pages from the Qur’an, as well as some framed inscriptions of Quranic verses and Hadith, as the *fetvas* issued at the foundation of the

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<sup>251</sup> Fatma Sel Turhan, “The Rebellious Kapudan of Bosnia: Hüseyin Kapudan (1802–1834),” *JOS* 44 (2014), 457–74.

<sup>252</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 52.

<sup>253</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 65–66.

<sup>254</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 52.

*Eşkinici* Corps were based on them.<sup>255</sup> After the banner of the Prophet had been planted outside the palace the next day and the Janissaries were advised to stop their revolt, they reportedly responded, “if the state has a banner, we have our sacred cauldron.”<sup>256</sup> Accordingly, the chronicles make a strong association of the Janissaries with non-Muslims. Mehmed Daniş Efendi described a captured Janissary during the “Auspicious Event” who confessed that he was a “Muscovite” and had a cross tattooed on him. The angry crowd lynched the “culprit.” Reportedly, uncircumcised men were found among the dead Janissary bodies<sup>257</sup> The new regime persecuted the *Bektaşî* faith, its religious leaders and followers, as the sect was closely identified with the Janissary Corps, and thus with blasphemy. The authorities ordered a number of *Bektaşî tekkes* (convents) to be converted into mosques or handed over to allied Sunni sects such as the *Mevlevîs*. Some of the *tekkes*, which had been built rather recently, were ordered destroyed.<sup>258</sup>

Another conscious and consistent policy of Mahmud II’s new regime was to ban its subjects from saying words or using symbols related to the Janissary Corps. Their edifices also came under attack in the form of both physical demolition and name changes. With these policies, the authorities sought immediately to establish strong control over ordinary Ottoman subjects and to erase the memory of the Janissaries in the long run. Orta Camii, the mosque attached to the former Janissary barracks, was renamed *Ahmediye Camii* and bears that same name to this day. Et Meydanı, where the Janissaries

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<sup>255</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 49–50. Esad Efendi also recounts the destruction of pages of the Quran. *Üss-i Zafer*, 94–95, 130.

<sup>256</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 50, 52.

<sup>257</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 55.

<sup>258</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 115, 117, 118–26.

periodically received their meat rations with a special ceremony, became the Ahmediye Meydanı.<sup>259</sup> In fact, all the changes mentioned make clear reference to the Prophet Muhammad—the name Ahmed also denotes him. Through this method the new regime intended to bury the Janissary memory by using Islamic symbols, thereby also reshaping Ottoman society. In this regard, the name of the new army, *Muallem Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (Trained Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad) has a clear reference to the Prophet Muhammad and was not chosen arbitrarily.

On 8 April 1826, only a few months before the armed showdown with the Janissaries, Mahmud II was present at the Friday Prayer Ceremony (*Cuma Selamlığı*) at the recently built, baroque-inspired mosque in Tophane (Imperial Foundry) area. The new building was constructed on the spot where the *Arabacılar Camii* had stood until it was destroyed in a fire in 1823, a mosque which Selim III had built attached to the barracks of his reformed Cannon Wagon Corps.<sup>260</sup> “The procession at the ceremony was organized and carried out in a very meaningful manner, which virtually signified the approaching of the end for Janissaries. While the sultan saluted and showed his favours to the members of [the Cannon Corps] who were placed on the right side, he totally ignored the Janissaries on his left side.”<sup>261</sup> The new mosque was initially named “Cami’-i Nusret,”<sup>262</sup> which would eventually be referred to as “Nusretiye,” despite the earlier remarks of Keçecizade İzzet Molla, the author of the mosque’s epitaph as well as an ideologue of the post-1826 Ottoman state, that the latter name was more suitable for a ship of the line than

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<sup>259</sup> Küçükyağcı, *Turnanın Kalbi, Yeniçeri Yoldaşlığı ve Bektaşilik*, 56.

<sup>260</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 16-17, n.35 and n.36.

<sup>261</sup> Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 198.

<sup>262</sup> Mehmed Daniş Efendi, *Yeniçeri Ocağı’nın Kaldırılışı*, 16-17, n.35 and n.36.

a mosque. Nusretiye literally meant “victory gained through the divine grace”<sup>263</sup> and shared the same Arabic root of *nasr* (to achieve victory) with the word *Mansure* (victorious), a word that existed in the official name of Mahmud II’s new model army. Six years after the destruction of the Janissary Corps, a combined army of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* and mercenary Albanians crushed the rebellion of Buşatlı Mustafa Paşa in Albania and re-captured the town of İşkodra, one of the few victories of *Mansure* formations during 1826-39.<sup>264</sup> To commemorate the victory, Mahmud II issued a medal, arguably the first of its kind in Ottoman history, to be given to the officers and soldiers participated in the punitive expedition.<sup>265</sup> It should not have been a coincidence that the Nusretiye Mosque, which had become one of the symbols of the victory over Janissaries, appeared on one side of the medal.<sup>266</sup>

Mahmud II immediately forbade the usage of the term *Ağa Kapısı*, denoting the age-old residence of the Janissary commanders, in everyday language.<sup>267</sup> The place was renamed *fetvahane* ([place where] *fetvas* are issued) and assigned it to the *Seyhülislam* as his new office, a move that again had clear symbolic significance and propagandistic aims.<sup>268</sup> Even in remote Baghdad, a place bearing the same name was also assigned to the local judge and lost its title.<sup>269</sup> Mahmud II’s new regime also prohibited the mentioning of

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<sup>263</sup> Sunar, “Cauldron of Dissent,” 198.

<sup>264</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 239-41.

<sup>265</sup> Ahmed Cevad Paşa, *Tarih-i Askeri-i Osmani, Kitab-ı Rabi*’, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, TY 4178, 93.

<sup>266</sup> For a similar explanation of the medal’s significance, also see Ethem Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz: Osmanlı Nişan ve Madalyaları Tarihi* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004), 136-137.

<sup>267</sup> Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa,” 286.

<sup>268</sup> Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlmiye Merkez Teşkilatı’nda Reform*, 29.

<sup>269</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 87-88.

the name *Yeniçeri* (Janissary), *Yeniçeri Ocağı* (Janissary Corps), as well as of any ranks or titles in both everyday and bureaucratic usage. The Ottoman state further sought to destroy the Janissary heritage in Ottoman institutional memory, sometimes quite literally. During and after the “Auspicious Event,” officials destroyed registers, documents and payrolls related to the corps, some of which eventually heated the furnace of the Hagia Sophia Mosque’s bathhouse,<sup>270</sup> an act that has irritated modern historians working on the Janissaries ever since. Janissary barracks, coffeehouses and a wide range of relevant regalia such as company symbols (*nişan tahtası*), cauldrons, fortress keys entrusted to them, clothing, and weapons were closed down, confiscated or destroyed in the provinces as well as the capital.<sup>271</sup>

## Conclusion

Soon after the “Auspicious Event”, Mahmud II received a report written by an unidentified author. In rather candid fashion, the document stated

Since his accession to the throne, his majesty’s intentions and thoughts concentrated around the abolition of the Janissary Corps, [an event] which, in my view, separated two distinct eras. It is obvious that during the time of Janissaries, his majesty was not the true, principal ruler (*failül’l-hüküm*). Thus, the proper date after which his majesty started to rule independently was the bloody affair of the abolition of the Corps.<sup>272</sup>

It is hard to chronicle Mahmud II’s true intentions concerning the Janissaries between 1808 and 1826, but as outlined above, it became clear that after the outbreak of the Greek Revolt in 1821, he was eager to take more risks and challenge the Janissaries.

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<sup>270</sup> Küçükyağcı, *Turnanın Kalbi, Yeniçeri Yoldaşlığı ve Bektaşilik*, 18–19, n5.

<sup>271</sup> For details, see Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 86–88.

<sup>272</sup> Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa,” 284n53; simplified translation.

The “Auspicious Event” finally gave the sultan his full independence as an absolute monarch. From 1826 until 1839, Mahmud II’s reign signified an uncommon epoch in Ottoman history. No individual or institution (e.g., court, *ulema*, Janissaries, high-ranking statesmen, military commanders, provincial notables) could put a real check on the decisions of Mahmud II afterward except through internal revolts, foreign wars and the limits of the sultan’s military-fiscal resources.

The imperial decrees, state-sponsored chronicles and booklets targeted various segments of Ottoman society, maligning the Janissaries as non-believers: they described them not only as useless, undisciplined and self-interested soldiers but also as faithless, heretical traitors. Accordingly, the new regime persecuted the *Bektaşî* faith, which was closely associated with the Janissary Corps and with blasphemy. With the destruction of the Janissary Corps and the experience of the Greek Revolt, the Ottoman state and its official discourse were reconfigured to perpetuate Sunni orthodoxy within the empire. This policy was not only used to legitimize the “Auspicious Event” and the imposition of reforms. The sultan's agenda appears also to have been aimed at creating a sense of Islamic nationalism, one that would mobilize Muslim subjects by transcending social class and local allegiance to rally them around financing fiscal, administrative and bureaucratic reforms and to have them contribute young men to the sultan’s wars in the decades that followed.

### **Chapter 3: Creating the Army of Mahmud II and Tanzimat, 1826-1846**

This chapter examines the rationale of the Ottoman decision-makers and their historical context as they strived to create a modern mass conscript army in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It will first demonstrate why the Ottoman central authority wanted a certain kind of soldier and a certain kind of army by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. It will then examine the establishment of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* and other military formations created or reconfigured in the years after 1826. Finally, it will scrutinize the perceptions, plans and decisions taken by Ottoman statesmen regarding the imposition of obligatory military service and conscription on the empire's Muslim population. Even though the chapter concentrates on some of the Ottoman military policies after the "Auspicious Event," it does not aim to provide another institutional history of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*.<sup>273</sup> Instead, it will argue that the creation of a European-style conscript army was a drastic change in Ottoman military practices and political-military thought in the longer history of the empire.

#### **3.1 Ottoman Quest for the Ideal Soldier and Army, c. 1600-1840**

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, a well-known political treatise and organizational ordinance titled *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan* (The Laws of the Janissaries) underlined that the current problems of the Corps, the much-respected standing army of early modern Europe and the

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<sup>273</sup> For more descriptive accounts on the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman military, see Ayten Can Tunalı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma (1839-1876)" (Ph.D. thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2003); Ahmet Yaramış, "II. Mahmut Döneminde Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye (1826-1839)" (Ph.D. thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2002); Cahide Bolat, "Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876)" (Ph.D. thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2000). Avigdor Levy's PhD thesis ("The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1968)) remains as an excellent work among all, utilizing a rich primary source base and providing insightful analyses.



Middle East, was caused by the changing methods of recruitment and the “wrong” ethnic and social composition of its recruits. To increase the devotion and military effectiveness of future Janissaries, the author recommended, the state should revert to the (allegedly) original practices of the “Gilded Age” from a century ago. It disapproved of the recruitment of only sons (because it would harm the farming and thus future state revenues), sons of priests and important men, orphans (because of their opportunism and indiscipline), tall lads (because of their “stupidity”), craftsmen (because of their unsuitability to endure hardship) and married men. The boys, who were chosen to become future Janissaries, should be first given to the Turkish peasants of Anatolia as farmhands, perform physical labour, learn the Turkish language and learn Turkish customs. They should not be given to the residents of Istanbul where “their eyes would be opened wide by being in the city, and they would not suffer hardship.” Nor should they be given to the “judges or the learned men”, because they do not possess the farmlands where the young levies could “become accustomed to hardship.” Turks and other Muslims should not be recruited for the Janissary Corps. These recruits thus made the ideal candidates for the model Janissaries, who were to obey the sultan unquestioningly, live in their barracks that isolated them from the populace, not to marry and not to involve in any other profession other than being a warrior.<sup>274</sup>

When Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and his reformers created an armed formation outside the existing military forces as a part of his *Nizam-ı Cedid* reforms in the late 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> The quotes are from Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 135-141; Erdal Küçükyağcı, *Turnanın Kalbi: Yeniçeri Yoldaşlığı ve Bektaşilik* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2009), 32-39.

century, the ideal recruits they sought resembled the ideal Janissary levy of two centuries earlier in a number of ways.<sup>275</sup> The memoranda submitted to the sultan recommended the recruitment of young, rootless boys (preferably orphans) from the lower classes (both urban and rural) who could be easily indoctrinated in the barracks and isolated from the common populace and the Janissaries.<sup>276</sup> In his reform treatise to the sultan, Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha repeated the Ottoman military's need for increased firepower and technical expertise to counter the European armies, which could be ensured by improving the quality and quantity of the of artillerymen, grenadier troops, and technical support troops such as bridge builders and sappers.<sup>277</sup> To provide the personnel for these projects, he proposed the training of some 10,000-12,000 cannonneers and grenadiers explicitly from the "young boys collected from Rumelia and Anatolia who had never been in contact with the [existing Cannon and Sapper] Corps."<sup>278</sup>

As Aksan and Yıldız have underlined, Ottoman military reforms between the 1770s and 1830s were not limited to hiring European military instructors, importing Western weaponry, or to translating French military treatises or Prussian drill manuals. Especially after the "Auspicious Event" in 1826, they should rather be seen as a wide-scale and radical military as well as political and social transformation project.<sup>279</sup> When

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<sup>275</sup> For the descriptions of ideal Janissary recruits, see Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 135-141; Küçükyağın, *Turna'nın Kalbi*, 32-39.

<sup>276</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, "Nizam-ı Cedid'e Dair Layihalar," *Tarih Vesikaları* 1, no. 6 (1941), pp. 414-425; 2, no. 8 (1942), pp. 104-111; 2, no. 11 (1943), pp. 342-351; 2, no. 12 (1943), pp. 424-432; Ergin Çağman, ed., *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyiğaları* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2010). Especially, Reşid Efendi's report in Karal, "Layihalar," 2, no. 8, 105; Abdullah Berri Efendi's report in Karal, "Layihalar," 1, no. 6, p. 424.

<sup>277</sup> Çağman III. *Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyiğaları*, 63-64.

<sup>278</sup> Çağman III. *Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyiğaları*, 63.

<sup>279</sup> For accounts of the Ottomans' "New Absolutism," see Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, 180-342; Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok, Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum: 1826-1839* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), 17-130.

Mahmud II and his men attempted to create the *Eşkinici Ocağı* (Active Janissaries) out of willing Janissary recruits only a few weeks before the “Auspicious Event,” their primary aim was not to merely dress soldiers with European uniforms or arm them with firearms instead of swords. Saib Efendi, director of the *Eşkinici* Corps, told the Grand Vizier that “the goal of [military] training is to master the art of war. If [our] aim was merely to load and fire muskets, there was no need to raise *Eşkinici* troops; the commander of the Janissary Corps would have ensured [training with muskets] by just telling his men.”<sup>280</sup> After the “Auspicious Event” and the creation of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, the image of the model soldier proved identical to that of the *Nizam-ı Cedid* recruit, and again, rather ironically, had a lot in common with the ideal Janissary whose corps Mahmud II wanted to destroy. Absolute loyalty, obedience, discipline, and an almost religious devotion to military duty were once more the key traits expected of the rootless *Mansure* soldiers.

The enrollment for the *Mansure* army started instantly after its creation; a whole regiment (*tertib*) of 1527 men was up at full strength in a short time, and reviewed by Mahmud II himself at Topkapı Palace in the afternoon of 20 June 1826. A dragoman (translator/interpreter) from the British embassy noted that the sultan “was dressed in Egyptian fashion, armed with pistols and sabre, and on his head, in place of Imperial Turban was sort of an Egyptian bonnet.” The soldiers were not issued with uniforms yet, but were all equipped with muskets and bayonets. They “were arranged in European order

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<sup>280</sup> BOA, HAT (Hatt-ı Hümayun) 294/17507 cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 27.

and going through a new form of exercise.”<sup>281</sup> About two weeks after the creation of *Asakir-i Mansure*, its official ordinance was hastily drafted in one day on 7 July 1826. Not surprisingly, the earlier *Nizam-ı Cedid* regulations served as the base for its detailed regulations.<sup>282</sup> The ordinance stipulated voluntary recruitment only and set the age of the recruits between 15 and 30, and in case they were “valiant,” up to 40. The term of service was set at 12 years for the enlisted who were to perform their military training and serve in the barracks or wherever they were deployed.<sup>283</sup> The authorities demanded that the recruits should not have any criminal past and had converted to Islam. The recruits were promised pensions in case they became too old to serve, wounded or incapacitated during their service depending on the severity of their disabilities.<sup>284</sup>

Following the first ordinance of the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* in 1826, the Ottoman state continued to generate an unprecedented number of military regulations, ordinances, drilling manuals, penal codes, and officially approved religious books to aid the shaping and re-shaping of its ideal army as well as the minds of military and civilian subjects. Without a semblance of print capitalism that had been existent in Europe for decades, the governments in Istanbul and Cairo still distributed the texts in Ottoman Turkish between 1729 and 1839. The first Ottoman publishing spree had only produced

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<sup>281</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 179.

<sup>282</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 183-84; Yunus Koç and Fatih Yeşil, *Nizam-ı Cedid Kanunları* (Ankara: TTK, 2012), XIX-XX, n16.

<sup>283</sup> When the first *Mansure* cavalry regiment raised in February 1827, the Ottoman authorities limited the term of service to 10 years in the cavalry arm, citing that it was more difficult to serve as a cavalryman than as an infantryman. Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 262, 266.

<sup>284</sup> Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik* (İstanbul: Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları, 2002), 101.

16 books in 1729-1742,<sup>285</sup> and printing operations virtually came to a halt until 1780s.<sup>286</sup> Selim III's *Nizam-ı Cedid* brought a renewed vigour for printing books. The Ottoman state produced some 40 books between 1792 and 1807, about 10 of which were on mathematics and "military sciences" (*fenn-i harb* or *fenn-i askeriye*). Yet, it was between 1826 and 1839 when the number of books printed in Istanbul and Cairo reached an unprecedented figure. The power holders in these cities supervised the printing of dozens of volumes in various subjects, a significant portion of which were military regulations, penal codes and drilling manuals.<sup>287</sup> At least on paper, these texts outlined how Ottoman officers should train, instil discipline, motivate, and manage soldiers' lives. In addition, the Ottoman bureaucracy expanded and diversified to handle new, larger and more complex tasks that the maintenance of the new army required. For instance, unlike the Janissaries, *Mansure* soldiers did not receive personal pay slips. Instead, the central government managed their salaries by muster rolls with their names on them, making it easy to estimate the expenses as well as actual strength of the regiments. The Ottoman bureaucracy compiled detailed periodical reports about the size, cost, and provisioning of the reformed army, many of which were enthusiastically examined by Mahmud II himself.<sup>288</sup> At the same time, the post-1826 military reform program led to the creation of novel military formations and the reconfiguration of existing ones. These policies brought a redefinition of who was an Ottoman soldier and in the emergence of new "military

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<sup>285</sup> Orlin Sabev, "Portrait and Self-Portrait: İbrahim Müteferrika's Mind Games" *JOS* 44 (2014), 111.

<sup>286</sup> Jale Baysal, *Osmanlı Türklerinin Bastıkları Kitaplar, 1729-1875*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Istanbul: Hiperlink, 2010), 22-24.

<sup>287</sup> Baysal, *Osmanlı Türklerinin Bastıkları Kitaplar*, 25-31, 197-203.

<sup>288</sup> For a detailed report of this sort on the artillery and sapper regiments that Mahmud II reviewed, see TS.MA.d 10740 (H. M 1254/ March-April 1838).

identities.” In this regard, the “Janissary identity” was highly undesirable, and thus its eradication as important as the physical extermination of the corps itself.<sup>289</sup>

Soon after the “Auspicious Event,” the Mahmudian state gradually located existing holders of *timars* (fiefs) and members of *evlad-ı fatihan* and other ancient military organizations (such as *derbendcis*) through empire-wide surveys. It then attempted to organize those still fit to fight into new model regiments.<sup>290</sup> But various irregular troops of different names (*delis*, *levends*, *sekbans*, *nefir-i âm* soldiery, etc.), who had joined the colors either by contractual agreements or by coercion, also continued to exist after 1826, for both practical purposes and immediate military necessities. These troops included ethnic and regional warrior bands who performed soldiering for the state as their customary “business,” and individuals who offered their services as professional fighters.<sup>291</sup> They continued to constitute a numerically and qualitatively important part of the Ottoman armed forces during the Greek Revolt, the Ottoman-Russian War of 1828–29, and the first war against Egypt in 1831–33.<sup>292</sup> Nevertheless, the Mahmudian regime’s long-term strategy was to replace the irregular troops with a conscript force as the empire’s main fighting force. In this regard, Mahmud II proved successful in changing

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<sup>289</sup> Adolphus Slade, *Turkey Greece and Malta*, vol.1 (London: Saunders and Oetley, 1837), 489.

<sup>290</sup> Aksan, *Ottoman Wars*, 358; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 345–346; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831* (Ankara: T.C Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943), 51, 57, 56, 62, 66, 157–159.

<sup>291</sup> This chapter mainly focuses on the soldiers that served in the regular/active (*Asakir-i Mansure*, *Nizamiye*) and reserve (*Redif*) units. For valuable overviews on the irregulars (*başibozuks*) during Mahmud II’s reign, see Tolga Esmer, “The Confessions of an Ottoman ‘Irregular’: Self-Representation and Ottoman Interpretive Communities in the Nineteenth Century” *JOS*, no. 44 (2014) and Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 212–248.

<sup>292</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 161–162, 173–174, 236–237; Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 406–407; Fahmy, *All the Pasha’s Men*, 63, 65; H. Muhammed Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831–1841)* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 75, 81.

the balance toward the disciplined formations by the end of his reign, at least in terms of numbers.<sup>293</sup>

The Ottoman center also wanted to know and limit the number of hired warriors employed by provincial power magnates and state officials. In numerous occasions, it tried to transfer and incorporate the mercenaries from the personal entourages into the regular formations under the authority of the central military command.<sup>294</sup> The military penal code of 1829 designated all servants, irregulars, regulars, and officers of any Ottoman army as a “member of the military” (*askerî*) and put them in the same legal category.<sup>295</sup> The language and concepts utilized in the institutional ordinances, penal codes and other regulations from the late 1820s to the mid-1840s attest to the emergence of two distinguishable social as well as legal statuses in the modern sense: “civilian” (non-members of any military formation) and “military” (formed by regulars, reservists and even irregulars). Within the redefined Ottoman “military class”, regulations, at least on paper, aimed to establish a distinction between officers and the rank and file by describing each individual’s responsibilities and duties in great detail, and by reconfiguring hierarchy for the members of the military.<sup>296</sup>

Ottoman archival documents used elevated language to describe the moment of conscription to the active army: By joining the colors, the recruit “received the honour of

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<sup>293</sup> For further details, see Chapter 5.

<sup>294</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 162-172; for the registration and classification of the men in the retinues of several provincial notables and administrators, see Karal, *İlk Nüfus Sayımı*, 29, 55.

<sup>295</sup> *Kanunname-i Ceza-i Askeriye*, H. Evahir Z 1245 [June 1830] Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi (Istanbul), Esad Efendi no. 2844, Article 1, Sub-Article 14, p. 5.

<sup>296</sup> See, for instance, the description of the ideal Ottoman “officer and gentleman” in *Müzekkere-i Zabitan* H. 1251 [1835-36], Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 822.

becoming one of the Victorious Soldiers [of Muhammad]" (*Asakir-i Mansure neferatına iltihakla müteşerref olanlar*) or "obtained the rank of a soldier of the sultan" (*asker-i padişahî rütbesini ahz [edenler]*).<sup>297</sup> In the early stages of Mahmudian military reform, the administrators in Syria referred to Turcophone *Mansure* recruits from Anatolia as "Ottoman soldiers," distinguishing them from the other, probably local, troops they had.<sup>298</sup> Along with the term "*Asakir-i Mansure*," the Ottoman bureaucracy used the phrases "*Asakir-i Muntazama*" and "*Asakir-i Nizamiye*" between 1826 and 1839, delineating the image of the new army. The term "*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*" gradually vanished after 1839; the regular regiments were more often called "*Nizamiye*" or sometimes the "*Nizam*," which could refer both to the units and to the individual soldiers in them.<sup>299</sup> Mahmud II further diversified the composition of his army by creating new military formations, such as the Guards (*Hassa*) and *Redif Asakir-i Mansure* (Victorious Reserve Soldiers). The latter was founded in 1834, and went through an extensive reorganization in 1836, to provide a pool of trained recruits that could be mobilized during wartime. Resembling the Western examples and particularly the contemporary Prussian *Landwehr*, the *Redif* army was organized territorially and their regiments were named after the districts they were raised. The *Redif* recruits were to

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<sup>297</sup>Karal, *İlk Nüfus Sayımı*, 112; Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (H. 7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) transcribed in Erhan Alpaslan, "1247-1254 H./ M. 1830-1838 Tarihli 2 No'lu Varna Şer'îye Sicil Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirmesi" (MA thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, 1996), 444-45.

<sup>298</sup> Hakan Erdem, "Recruitment for the "Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad" in the Arab Provinces, 1826-1828," in *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions*, eds. Israel Gershoni, Hakan Erdem and Ursula Woköck (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 203.

<sup>299</sup> Frederick Walpole, *The Ansayrii or the Assassins, with Travels in the further East in 1850-51, including a visit to Ninaveh*, vol. 3 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 186.



convene during peacetime periodically to conduct military drills under the supervision of centrally appointed drill masters. Ottoman authorities also wanted to clothe, feed, pay, and arm these reservists by central planning. The reformed Ottoman army retained its infantry, artillery, and cavalry arms, while specialized units were added to the line and reserve battalions, such as light infantry, sharpshooting riflemen, grenadiers, sappers, horse artillery, and even mounted cuirassiers. European-inspired uniforms were also designed and issued and paired with, novel military insignia and paraphernalia, inaugurating a new era in Ottoman military tradition and symbolism.<sup>300</sup>

It is hard to fully determine how the Ottoman soldiers associated with their units, but some scattered evidence shows how certain military outfits and individual soldiers in them were linked. The Guard units seemed to have a higher status than the line units did, and more was expected of them. Mahmud II joined the drills of the Cavalry Guard in person, wearing the uniform of a major of the Guards.<sup>301</sup> When the sultan was impressed by the skills of two *Redif* battalions from İznik and Bolu during a drill held at Selimiye barracks, he bestowed the title “Guards” to all of the reserve units coming from the said two provinces, hence making their name *Redif Asakir-i Hassa-i Mansure* (Victorious Reserve Soldiers of the Guards).<sup>302</sup> In his memoirs, Zarif Pasha described his regimental

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<sup>300</sup> For some visual samples, see Ethem Eldem, *İftihar ve İmtiyaz: Osmanlı Nişan ve Madalyaları Tarihi* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2004) and Mahmut Şevket Paşa, *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyesi* (Ankara: TTK, 2010) [reprint].

<sup>301</sup> Gültekin Yıldız, “Üniformalı Padişah II. Mahmud,” in *II. Mahmud: Yeniden Yapılanma Sürecinde İstanbul*, ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul, 2010), 108-109; Şerafettin Turan, “II. Mahmud’un Reformlarında İtalyan Etki ve Katkısı” in *Sultan II. Mahmud ve Reformları Semineri, 1989* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1990), 118-119.

<sup>302</sup> Ahmed Cevad Paşa, *Tarih-i Askeri-i Osmani, Kitab-ı Rabi’*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, TY 4178, 89-90.

commander, Şerif Bey, acting as an extremely proud and stern officer during the march against the Albanian rebels in 1832, because the unit was a Guard regiment and no Guard unit had been dispatched to the provinces until that time.<sup>303</sup> Other examples, however, give *Hassa* soldiers a more mixed record. Between 1829 and 1831, at a time when only a few Guard units existed, 168 men from the Guard regiments took furlough and never returned.<sup>304</sup> At the battle of Nizib, Moltke wrote about how quickly some of the Guard cavalymen scattered and dispersed under a light cannonade, while Ainsworth described how the Ottoman Guard infantry bravely fought against the whole Egyptian army without support.<sup>305</sup>

*Redif* soldiers, who had to train for a limited time every year and were expected to be mobilized only in times of war, made neither eager nor proficient warriors in general. Like the regulars, they did not want to leave their provinces and were dragged to distant battlefields against their will, where their fate was uncertain.<sup>306</sup> During the second Egyptian crisis of 1839-41, the Ottoman authorities themselves had doubts that *Redif* troops located in Western Anatolia would respond enthusiastically to the call to arms. An official report admitted that only 6-7,000 out of 9,936 registered reservists could be mobilized and brought to Istanbul, since many *Redifs* would run away from their homes or hide themselves as soon as the official order of call to arms reached their districts.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, "Zarif Paşa Hatıratı, 1816-1862," *Belleten* 4, no. 16 (1942), 450.

<sup>304</sup> D. ASM 37592 (H. Ca 1245 to R 1247/ October 1829 to October 1831).

<sup>305</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 270; Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 347.

<sup>306</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 262; HAT 453/ 22433-B (H. 19 Ca 1252/ 1 September 1836); Tobias Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, trans. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 84-86; Adolphus Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War* (London, 1867), 275.

<sup>307</sup> İ MTZ 3/96 (13 Ş 1256 / 10 October 1840).

The largest mutiny and court-martial in the Ottoman army that I could locate during this period also occurred among the ranks of *Redif*. In 1841, the reservists from Kütahya and Karahisar-ı Sahib in central-western Asia Minor had been mustered in Istanbul and then dispatched to Sidon in Levant. Near Babakale, a place not far from the Dardanelles, they stopped their transport ships. Some remained in their vessels while some others disembarked and headed towards their homes with their weapons. In the end, the Ottoman authorities captured all the mutineers and handed out various punishments. One lieutenant and four men, who were probably the ringleaders, were first sentenced to death by firing squad, which was later commuted to hard labor for life. 101 men were sentenced to labor for 5 to 10 years. There were 139 sergeants, 135 corporals and 1,224 privates who remained in the ships but allegedly “dreamed of desertion.” The non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were demoted to privates, and all these troops were “punished” by pressed into regular regiments in order “to make them an example for other reservists.”<sup>308</sup>

In 1843 and 1844, the Ottoman military decided to convert a large number of *Redif* to *Nizamiye* soldiers to replenish their active regiments. Again, and unsurprisingly, the potential and actual reservists responded with evasion, desertion, and even armed resistance, testifying to the unwillingness of the *Redif* to serve on active duty.<sup>309</sup>

### **3.2 Ottoman Military Recruitment, c. 1400-1800**

In the “classical” Ottoman order, the “business” of fighting belonged to a small, defined and privileged class of warriors constituting the majority of the military (*askerî*) class,

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<sup>308</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, 1116.

<sup>309</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasında*, 114-131.

such as Janissaries, supporting *kapıkulu* units, and timariot cavalrymen (*timarlı sipahis*).

Timariot cavalry organization provided the bulk of the soldiers for the field army and had a great impact on the Ottoman land administration and taxation regime in 1400s-1600s.<sup>310</sup>

As the Ottoman central state consolidated during 1350s-1450s in the Balkans and Anatolia, it adopted an ancient Middle Eastern tradition that was inherited from the Byzantines and Seljukids of granting fiefs to mounted warriors, an important part of the Ottoman military.<sup>311</sup> In essence, these men provided military service to the sultan under their territorial commanders, and aided the central government in administrating and policing the countryside. In exchange, they enjoyed a tax-exempt, privileged social status and an allocated share from agricultural and other revenues (such as fines) from the lands and peasants they policed. The land ultimately belonged to the sultan and the peasants cultivating those lands remained under the jurisdiction of centrally appointed *kadıs* (judges). The central state periodically surveyed and registered the peasants, sources of agricultural production and other revenues in the lands assigned as fiefs. (*timars*). In ideal terms, the state allocated, confiscated or expanded fiefs based on the skills and service the timariot cavalrymen provided for the state. Based on their revenues, timariot cavalrymen who had been allocated with larger fiefs had to bring armed retainers (*cebelüs*) and their own household troops to the imperial campaigns. In 1473, Mehmed II's (r. 1451-1481) fully mobilized army extracted 40,000 timariot cavalrymen from Europe and 24,000 from

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<sup>310</sup> The method of recruitment for Janissaries and other *kapıkulus* have been detailed in Chapter 2.

<sup>311</sup> The following information on timariot cavalry is mainly drawn from Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 194-206.

Anatolia.<sup>312</sup> Utilizing a range of primary sources and contemporary treatises, Rhoads Murphy estimated the timariot army stood at 99,261 men, 89,608 mobile troops for the field army, 9,653 stationary fortress guards (*müstahfiz*) in 1527. It is also noteworthy that a significant portion of these troops (37,408 mobile troops, and 6,620 fortress guards) came from the European provinces of the empire where Muslims were a minority, unlike in Asia Minor.<sup>313</sup> Murphey estimates that in 1631 106,603 men served in the timariot army, and that 44% of them came from European provinces.<sup>314</sup>

Unlike the European landed aristocracy, the term of an individual *timarlı sipahi*'s tenure on land was temporal, without any hereditary right to own his fief. What could be hereditary, however, was his *askerî* status. When a timariot cavalryman died at home or in battle, his fief would be divided between his sons, but only if the fief was large enough and the sons were not many. The majority of the timariot cavalymen inherited their fiefs from their fathers, but the Muslims from non-*askerî* background (or *reaya*, literally the flock) who showed their value in times of war, former Janissaries and other individuals from the sultan's household could be granted timariot cavalry status and given fiefs. It is also recorded that some of the non-Muslims, either as members of clergy or of conquered previous military elite, could be assigned fiefs.

Keeping track of timariot cavalymen and mobilizing them for war throughout the empire was not an easy bureaucratic and administrative task. However, the Ottoman

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<sup>312</sup> Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 88.

<sup>313</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 137. In 1490, there were 621,508 non-Muslim households in the Balkans and 32,628 in Anatolia. The number of Muslim households in Anatolia for the same year is estimated at 832,395. İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol 1, 26-28.

<sup>314</sup> Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 38-41.

campaign seasons were mostly limited between spring and fall, and often concluded with a pitched field battle that the Ottomans often won between 1400 and 1600. The scattered and seasonal nature of the *timar* system thus outweighed its disadvantages for about 200 years. The Ottoman state could maintain tens of thousands of timariot cavalrymen who also served as tax collectors and mounted police to keep order in the provinces. Above all, they offered their military labour in exchange for in-kind benefits coming from their allocated fiefs. Doing so relieved the central state from constantly administering cash payments in the provinces in an age when a large portion of state income was not collected in cash payments, land communication was difficult, and precious metals was relatively scarce.

What was the level of universality and coercion as regards military recruitment in the Ottoman Empire before Mahmudian era? Did Ottoman subjects and the elite form a “near-perfect military society” as some Western historians and modern Turkish nationalists have depicted them?<sup>315</sup> The Ottoman military was undoubtedly a powerful establishment with its supporting political, social and economic institutions. Yet it still relied more on training, command, organization and logistics than sending sheer number of green recruits to the battlefield. As is the case among other early modern empires, military service was not a universal obligation for Ottoman subjects in c. 1400-1600. Instead, the Ottoman ruling elite always tried to keep soldiering exclusive to a small, well-defined privileged group, namely the *askerî* class, and did not consider mass

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<sup>315</sup> Peter Sugar, “A Near-Perfect Military Society: The Ottoman Empire,” in L. L. Farrar ed., *War: A Historical, Political and Social Study* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1978).

mobilization of non-*askerî* subjects from the urban and rural masses as a militarily and politically a sound idea. In the years when the Ottoman Empire reached its military apogee, Lütü Pasha, who was the Grand Vizier between 1539 and 1541, postulated “troops should be few, but they should be excellent.”<sup>316</sup> Furthermore, the Ottoman ruling elite regarded the arming of the tax-paying population a risky affair, since the outcome had the danger of threatening the existing social and political order. To augment the central state’s hegemony over the ordinary non-Muslim as well as Muslim subjects, early modern Ottoman authorities persistently strived to control and monopolize the possession and bearing of weapons, particularly the firearms, however with mixed results. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, mounting internal security issues created after the mercenary companies had been discharged further justified their concerns.<sup>317</sup>

Determining the level of coercion is harder than determining universality in Ottoman military recruitment. The state did not have problems finding individuals who would become a *timar* holder voluntarily. Koçi Bey, the author of a well-known reform treatise in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, stated that there were at least 15-20 contenders for every vacant fief.<sup>318</sup> However, an unknown number of the armed retainers (*cebelüs*) might have been peasant boys that had been pressed into the service by their timariot cavalrymen.<sup>319</sup> The *devşirme*, as described previously in detail, was systematic and coercive during the

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<sup>316</sup> Quote taken from Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 258.

<sup>317</sup> Kenneth Chase, *Firearms: A Global History to 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 87, 89; *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, 285.

<sup>318</sup> Gülgün Üçel-Aybet, *Avrupalı Seyyahların Gözüyle Osmanlı Ordusu (1530-1699)*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2010), 231-232.

<sup>319</sup> Murphy predicted that there were 3 to 4 timariot troops per fief (fief-holder, plus 2-3 armed retainers) 1527 and 1631. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, 39, 41.

empire's zenith in c. 1450-1600. By targeting mainly the settled Christian populations, the *devşirme* effectively expanded the manpower pool available to the state. Whether the Ottoman authorities cared or not, it thus decreased the pressure of military recruitment on the empire's Muslim population. Since the recruitment, training and upkeep of the salaried military personnel diminished the treasury, the boys collected through the *devşirme* was limited in numbers and did not form the bulk of the imperial army numerically. Salaried imperial forces, including the Janissary infantry, Janissary novices, household cavalry, armorers, artillery and artillery wagon corps who were recruited largely through *devşirme* system, had 18,689 personnel in 1527 and 29,175 in 1574, whereas the number of timariot cavalymen was in the region of 100,000 in the same era.<sup>320</sup>

Forced recruitment was also apparent in raising *azab* troops, who were levied “from craftsmen and peasants” according to a late 15<sup>th</sup> century source. Bayezid II's Law Book of 1499 mentions quotas imposed on the able-bodied men and households in towns. The households that did not provide the *azab* were obliged to cover his expenses. Unlike Janissaries, the Ottoman military leaders did not consider *azabs* as elite troops, whom they mobilized during the time of war and used primarily as cannon fodder on the battlefield. More importantly for the discussion here, the number of *azabs* was not large.<sup>321</sup> Only 20,000 of the 103,500-strong field army of Mehmed II were composed of *azabs* in 1473, while the rest was either salaried standing troops or timariot cavalry.<sup>322</sup> In

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<sup>320</sup> Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, 45.

<sup>321</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1650*, 259-260.

<sup>322</sup> İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol 1, 88.



1514, 10,000 *azabs* from Asia Minor and 8,000 from the Balkan provinces joined Selim I's Çaldıran campaign against the Safavids.<sup>323</sup> The Ottoman army's total strength at the battle of Çaldıran was perhaps about 100,000, 12,000 of whom were Janissaries.<sup>324</sup>

As *timar* and *devşirme* systems gradually collapsed throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman central army's composition and nature changed drastically, while the number of effectives decreased. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, different sorts of troops from diverse ethnic, geographical, social, and to a certain extent, religious backgrounds formed the bulk of the Ottoman land forces. These included ethnic warrior bands from areas such as Albania, Kurdistan and Bosnia, who often signed up as a whole clan or tribe; freelance individual mercenaries or mercenary companies who were on the market of violence; seasonally recruited provincial troops (*miri levendat*); armed retainues of centrally appointed administrators or semi-independent local notables; *nefir-i âm*<sup>325</sup> soldiers who were called to arms at times of emergency from the Muslim populations. There were also warriors that fell into more than one of the above-mentioned categories. The Ottoman troops were largely recruited, deployed, equipped, provisioned and commanded under the supervision of myriad military commanders, bureaucrats, notables at in the center and provinces.<sup>326</sup> In the end, the Ottoman military relied on temporary contracts and constant

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<sup>323</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1650*, 260.

<sup>324</sup> Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters eds., *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), 286.

<sup>325</sup> Depending on the context it could mean "armed populace" or "act of arming of the populace."

<sup>326</sup> For the latest scholarship on Ottoman state, war-making and soldiery in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, see Kahraman Şakul, "The Evolution of Military Logistical Systems in the Later Eighteenth Century: The Rise of a New Class of Military Entrepreneur," in *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300-1800*, ed. Jeff Fynn-Paul (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 307-327; Virginia H. Aksan, "Mobilization of Warrior Populations in the Ottoman Context, 1750-1850" in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2013), 331-351.

negotiation with military contractors in raising, deployment and even command of its armed forces.

Aksan and Şakul questioned whether the state-funded *miri levendat* were “volunteer military labor,” suggesting some of these troops could well be coerced into the service and dispatched to the front after the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>327</sup> Religious discourse as well as coercion also became evident when desperate Ottoman authorities mobilized *nefir-i âm* soldiery due to military necessities as late as 1820s and 1830s. However, the untrained and poorly armed *nefir-i âm* levies qualitatively and quantitatively did not constitute a crucial part of the Ottoman land forces. A foreign traveller, who was present in Istanbul in 1829, vividly described the state’s efforts in mobilizing the populace for war, which he termed as “*levée-en-masse*”:

When the Russians had crossed the Balkan [Mountains], and were expected to enter Adrianople daily, the Sultan issued his proclamation for all Mussulmans from the age of fifteen to sixty,<sup>328</sup> to arm themselves, and make a last effort against the enemy. The order for a *levée-en-masse* was read with due ceremony in the mosques, and it was expected that Constantinople would be inundated with the influx of able-bodied Turks from Asia Minor; but we were soon convinced that the resources of the country were already drained: the people felt severely the effect of a protracted war; -most of the young men were already serving in the army or navy,- and the people fully experienced that the war was their worst enemy. Instead of bands of spirited fine young fellows, excited by the hope of rescuing their country from the hands of infidels, miserable decrepit old men, and boys unable to march under the weight of a musket,<sup>329</sup> were all

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<sup>327</sup> Kahraman Şakul, “The Evolution of Military Logistical Systems in the Later Eighteenth Century,” 325; Aksan, “Mobilization of Warrior Populations in the Ottoman Context, 1750-1850,” 347.

<sup>328</sup> The age group that was called up changes from document to document. In another instance, the sultan called the Muslims between the ages of 12 and 70 to arms for *gaza* and *cihad* to “defend Islam” which was their religious duty. C. As 16 (H. 1243/1828-29).

<sup>329</sup> The old men and young boys sent from the provinces as recruits could well serve as an evidence for the local power magnets’ sole concern in filling the quotas (coercively and selectively) that the central authority obliged them to.

that the depopulated and enfeebled country could send forth. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the result of this *levée-en-masse*: on the first day only fifteen men appeared on the Atmeidan: such as the levy was, however, it went forth, and marched to the defence of Adrianople; but the Pasha in command at that place had doubts how true and obedient these wild fellows from Anatolia might be, and thought it prudent not to allow them to enter Adrianople for fear of mutiny and treachery. The Russians very shortly afterwards approached, and the gates of the city were promptly open to Count Diebitch, to the no small satisfaction of a great portion of the inhabitants. Terms were in a short time agreed upon, and the motley crew, who had been called together for the emergency, and proved so ridiculously inefficient, were despatched back to their homes; and such was the fear of them that they were not allowed to pass through Constantinople lest they might create disturbances.<sup>330</sup>

Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey, a Turkish local notable in South Anatolia that sided with the invading Egyptian forces in 1830s, desperately tried to stop Arab troops from bayonetting the fleeing *nefir-i âm* soldiery after a skirmish, who he regarded as ordinary men pressed into service. Selim Bey, a high-ranking Hejazi officer in the Egyptian army, wanted the noses and ears of the captured *nefir-i âm* to be cut off to make them an example, and to deter other potential recruits from joining Mahmud II's forces. Ahmed Bey persuaded him not to by arguing that the *nefir-i âm* "did not come here voluntarily."<sup>331</sup>

None of the Ottoman recruitment methods described above qualifies to be called "conscription" on a national scale (i.e. targeting a large segment of the population on mandatory basis with the help of detailed census data) during c. 1400-1800. Only in a few instances the Ottoman state collected some of its troops forcefully and on a

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<sup>330</sup> Thomas Alcock, *Travels in Russia, Persia, Turkey, and Greece in 1828-29* (London: E. Clarke and son, 1831), 153-54.

<sup>331</sup> Yılmaz Kurt, ed., *Menemencioğulları Tarihi* (Ankara: Akçağ, 1997), 109-110.

mandatory/circulatory basis. In this regard, only the *devşirme* could be considered as a limited form of conscription, since the Ottoman state used available census data and targeted a particular population (i.e. rural Christian population) to create standing formations, which were raised, armed, paid and provisioned by central state apparatus. Yet the recruit intake and the size of these units were relatively small, *devşirme* was from being not universal (i.e. targeted only a certain part of the Ottoman population and not for too long), and the Ottoman authorities raised the bulk of their armies by using different methods and practices. Lastly, the Ottoman state did not possess an ideological and administrative-bureaucratic framework that compelled the majority of its subjects to serve in the armed forces in an obligatory fashion.

### **3.3 The Making of Ottoman Conscription: Origins and Implementation, c. 1750-1830**

The preliminary signs for large-scale, state-sponsored conscription became evident during the reign of Selim III. In one of the reform treatises submitted to the sultan in the early 1790s, Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Paşa recommended that the governors should survey the male population in the towns and villages, find the households with two or three men, and register one of them with his name and identity. Ottoman authorities should draft these as musketeers to form larger military units, drill for two days a week under the supervision of officers, and grant these troops tax exemptions.<sup>332</sup> Ottomans who had been to Western Europe and Russia reported about the power of centralized bureaucratic states and their

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<sup>332</sup> Çağman, ed., *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyhaları*, 61.

conscription practices in various writings since mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>333</sup> Şehdi Osman Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador to Russia in 1757-58, praised the complete obedience and loyalty of Russian soldiers and subjects to the state authority despite the hardships they faced.<sup>334</sup> Necati Efendi, an Ottoman prisoner of war to Russia in 1771-75, admired the Russian state's ability in ensuring a steady flow of conscripts, provisions, arms and equipment to its fighting forces through central planning and administration. He noted that in times of war, the Russian state imposed recruit levies based on the population of separate districts. Yet Necati Efendi also commented that once conscripted, the serfs could never see their villages ever again, and if the Russian conscripts ever managed to survive the dangers of military service, they were discharged without pensions and became beggars.<sup>335</sup>

Mustafa Rasih Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador to Russia in 1793-94 and among the prominent statesmen of the "New Order" provided a detailed account of Russian troops, conscription and census-taking practices, military-industrial complex, coercive powers and monopolization of violence by the state. He noted that when at war, Russian state collected 2 to 7 recruits from every 500 men to expand and replenish the armed forces from the populations that had been designated for military conscription. The recruits were distributed among the grenadier or musketeer regiments based on their ages

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<sup>333</sup> For similar Ottoman observations on contemporary Prussian and Austrian states and their militaries, see Fatih Yeşil, *Aydınlanma Çağında bir Osmanlı Kâtibi: Ebubekir Râtib Efendi (1750-1799)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2011); Virginia H. Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War & Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700-1783* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

<sup>334</sup> Türkân Polatçı, "Şehdi Osmanlı Efendi'nin Rusya Sefareti ve Sefaretnamesi (1757-1758)" (MA Thesis, Gazi Osman Paşa Üniversitesi, 2011), 71.

<sup>335</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, "Necati Efendi Tarih-i Kırım (Rusya Sefaretnamesi)" (MA Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 1990), 49.

(15 to 23) and height. Military officers registered their recruits' ages and heights, and Russian bureaucrats from the "Ministry of War" (*Cenk Kalemi*) calculated and recorded the number, age and height of recruits and number of conscriptable men in different administrative areas. Mustafa Rasih Efendi even described the military oath ceremony of newly inducted conscripts. In the presence of priests, they reportedly swore in a church that they would only obey the orders of their Empress and military officers, keep themselves busy with training and learning the arts of war. The Russian state directly funded and supervised the war effort and produced the necessary equipment, ammunition and weapons in the state manufactories for its troops. Mustafa Rasih described the Russian state as an efficient institution that could properly feed, clothe, train and pay its soldiers. He also called attention to the efficient use of the chain of military command, the clear distinction between civilians and people attached to the military, and the well-defined spheres of duties and responsibilities for officers, NCOs and privates.<sup>336</sup> Notwithstanding the realities of 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia, Mustafa Rasih's idealized description of the Russian army had all of the trademarks of a modern conscript army;<sup>337</sup> the armed forces that had indeed repeatedly vanquished the unprofessional Ottoman troops whom were recruited, equipped and provisioned by military entrepreneurs and provincial power holders and not by the central state. Like Şehdi Osman Efendi, Mustafa Rasih Efendi also put an emphasis in his record on the Russian state's authority over its

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<sup>336</sup> Uğur İyigünler "Mustafa Rasih Paşa'nın Rusya Sefareti ve Seferatnamesi" (MA Thesis, Kırıkkale Üniversitesi, 1998), 27-29, 31, 33, 35, 49.

<sup>337</sup> Modern historical studies note that the Russian army was neither as efficient nor as well-organized and supplied as described by Ottoman ambassadors. For an assessment of service and logistics in the Russian Army, see Chapters 7 and 8 in John H. L. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar Army and Society in Russia 1492-1874* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985), 143-200.

subjects, its soldiers' unquestioning obedience who did meddle with "other affairs [of non-military, perhaps political nature]." <sup>338</sup> The ruling class vigorously maintained the existing social structure and strictly controlled the movement of Russian subjects within the national borders. <sup>339</sup> According to him, nobody "gossips" on the street about state matters and everybody "just minds his own business." <sup>340</sup> Furthermore, the ambassador stressed the Russian state's monopoly in the production of guns and gunpowder and its control over the ownership and trade of them by ordinary subjects, who "had only axes for doing construction work and would not know from where they should hold a weapon if they're given one." <sup>341</sup> Halet Efendi wrote his observations on Napoleonic conscription in France as follows,

Regardless of whoever his father is [a son] has to serve for 7 years for the [French] state after he turns twenty-one. After having served for 7 years, it is up to him to stay in the army [and rise through the ranks] or to get discharged and assume another job. If Napoleon needs 30,000 soldiers, he gathers more, say, 50,000 twenty-one year-olds. In order to prevent gossip among the soldiery, [the selection] is carried out by drawing of lots. 20,000 [pieces of] white papers and 30,000 [pieces of] of black papers are mixed and put into bags. Everyone picks up a paper from the bag. If he picks up a black paper, he immediately becomes a soldier or has to give 2,000-2,500 *kuruş* to be set free. If the paper he draws is white, he is free to go. Those who are selected to become soldiers are not sent to war instantly; they drill in the nearby towns for one year. <sup>342</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> İyigünler "Mustafa Rasih Efendi," 35-56.

<sup>339</sup> The Ottoman Ambassador provides a detailed picture for the class structure in Russia, İyigünler "Mustafa Rasih Efendi," 22-26.

<sup>340</sup> İyigünler "Mustafa Rasih Efendi," 36.

<sup>341</sup> İyigünler "Mustafa Rasih Efendi," 31.

<sup>342</sup> Simplified translation from Enver Ziya Karal, *Halet Efendinin* [sic] *Paris Büyükelçiliği* (Istanbul: Kenan Basımevi, 1940) 40.

Ultimately, Selim III drafted an ever-increasing number of recruits to raise his European-style *Nizam-ı Cedid* regiments, which reached over twenty thousand men and officers towards the end of his reign.<sup>343</sup> In Western and Central Anatolia, the Ottoman center could impose a limited conscription scheme to acquire the needed manpower, thanks to the weaker but more cooperative provincial power magnets that received tax-farms on favorable terms.<sup>344</sup> In the European provinces, however, the ordinary subjects and local notables strongly opposed the “New Order.”<sup>345</sup> In 1806, Kadı Abdurrahman, the overseeing officer of the New Order project in Thrace, forcibly drafted local men for the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army and demanded the recruits’ families to contribute to the costs of their uniforms and weapons. The local population of Edirne, who also accused Kadı Abdurrahman of “forcefully dragged men from their homes and fields [in Anatolia] to Istanbul to turn them into *Nizam-ı Cedid* conscripts,” rose up in an open rebellion. In the end, they forced Selim III to abandon imposing his New Order in the Balkans.<sup>346</sup>

The Ottoman state repeatedly called the Muslim population to arms *en masse*, especially in the wars against Russia over the period 1768-1812 and did so by often trying to appeal to religious sensibilities. However, the real and perceived scale and nature of the Greek Revolution (1821-29) and the prolonged and ineffective Ottoman military response to it paved the way for the state to take the military and ideological mobilization to

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<sup>343</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, "The Origins of Ottoman Military Reform: The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army of Sultan Selim III," *The Journal of Modern History* 37 (1965), 300.

<sup>344</sup> Fatih Yeşil, “Nizam-ı Cedid’den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu” (PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2009), 5-6, 171.

<sup>345</sup> Yeşil, “Nizam-ı Cedid’den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu,” 60-62, 66-68; Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 272.

<sup>346</sup> Yeşil, “Nizam-ı Cedid’den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu,” 62.



another level. Two years after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, Mahmud II stated “it became obvious that no one from the Greek nation (*Rum milleti*) could be trusted.”<sup>347</sup> In another decree, he reasoned, “although they were concentrated in the Morea, the Greeks were not a ‘provincial people’ like Arabs, Serbs, Kurds or Albanians. They lived all over Rumeli and Western Anatolia. More notably, their communal and religious leaders were right under the nose of the sultan and were a part of the Ottoman administration, holding significant positions.”<sup>348</sup>

Soon after the outbreak the Greek Revolution, Ilıcak detects that the Ottoman ruling elite and Mahmud II made obvious references to Ibn Haldun’s political and social paradigms in interpreting and responding to the Greek rebels and the state of Ottoman Muslims.<sup>349</sup> In Ibn Haldun’s circular model, five stages characterized human societies, all of which evolved from *bedeviyet* (nomadism) to *hazariyet* (sedentary life).<sup>350</sup> Simply put, *bedeviyet* and *hazariyet* existed in different levels through these five stages, but the cycle was completed by the transformation of a predominantly *bedevi* (nomadic) society into a predominantly *hazari* (sedentary) society. In the first stage, the society’s *bedevi* attributes are prominent, which include “its ability to carry out rapid mobilization, to exude personal prowess, and to engage in face-to-face relations. The *bedevis* do not possess

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<sup>347</sup> HAT 284/17078 cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 101.

<sup>348</sup> The decree’s summary is from Şükrü Ilıcak, “A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826,” (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2011), 113.

<sup>349</sup> Ilıcak does a superb, nuanced work in explaining Ibn Haldun impact on early 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman decision-makers’ minds. For details, see Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 103-29.

<sup>350</sup> “According to Ibn Haldun, dynasties and states have a lifespan and go through stages similar to those of human beings: they are born, they grow, mature and eventually die and are replaced by new dynasties/states. During the life stages of the [ruling] dynasty, society also transforms from nomadism to urbanism.” Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 107.

conveniences and luxuries beyond the bare necessities. They wear simple clothes, live in tents or modest houses and eat simple food. Most importantly, they always carry weapons and do not entrust their security to others [e.g. a state apparatus].” In the last and fifth stage, the attributes of *hazariyet* defines the society the most, in which “people have become lazy, cowardly, and accustomed to luxury and ease.” Unlike the *bedevis*, *hazaris* are also not armed. The religion loses its significance in a *hazari* society and as a result, individuals become dishonest, corrupt and selfish. In this stage, the people’s hearts are no longer “united”, the society lacked solidarity as a whole and the ruling dynasty collapses.<sup>351</sup>

Ilıcak argues that the decrees of Mahmud II “demonstrate his belief that the Ottoman state was in the fifth and the last stage of the Ibn Haldunian dynastic cycle, namely the stage of ‘waste and extravagance,’ when the state is senile and ‘begins to crumble at its extremities.’”<sup>352</sup> Indeed, official communiques and imperial decrees continuously criticized the Ottoman Muslims collectively for being inactive, who solely value their own lives, comforts, pleasures and worldly possessions. In contrast, the Ottoman authorities repeatedly depicted the Greek rebels with traits such as hot-bloodedness, self-sacrificial and cohesive, who could act together to achieve their common goals by overcoming their differences. Thus, Greek rebels collectively fall into the *bedevi* category in Ibn Haldun’s paradigm described above.<sup>353</sup> To defeat this dangerous *bedevi* enemy, it was necessary for Ottoman Muslims to revert from their

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<sup>351</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 108-11.

<sup>352</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 112.

<sup>353</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 121-129.

current *hazariyet* to *bedeviyet* and to form a defensive bond as brothers regardless of their social, economic and political backgrounds. "In such difficult times," Mahmud II wrote in one of his decrees, no official or janissary who "called himself a Muslim was to say I am such and such."<sup>354</sup> In another imperial decree, he reasoned, "based on their recent sedition, Muscovites should have long declared war, but they have abstained from doing so. [This was because] all [Ottoman] Muslims collectively [act] (*umum ve ittifak üzere*) to arm themselves and be ready to wage [war]."<sup>355</sup> Grand Vizier Salih Paşa wrote to the sultan that "a genuine alliance was mandatory for all state officials, every segment of the military forces and every stratum of Muslims...For the sake and perpetuity of the state, everyone had to sacrifice their property and lives and exert themselves for *gaza* and *cihad*, following the example of the ancestors."<sup>356</sup>

Islam occupied a central place in the Mahmudian state's discourse and rationale in military mobilization of the Muslims. In many instances Ottoman authorities complained that the piety of Ottoman Muslims had declined because they became solely interested in their worldly self-interests –which was also one of the attributes of fifth stage in Ibn Haldun's model. They also repeatedly underlined that the Ottoman state was an "Islamic state" (*devlet-i Muhammediye*) and according to Mahmud II, "the main reason why the people are obedient [to him] is because [he] is the leader of Muslims."<sup>357</sup> Since an array of external enemies threatened the very existence of the (Ottoman) "Islamic state" and

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<sup>354</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 125.

<sup>355</sup> HAT 1084/44138 cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 103.

<sup>356</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 124.

<sup>357</sup> "Kaldı ki devlet-i aliyemiz devlet-i Muhammediyye olup zat-ı hümayunuma halkın itaati imam-ı müslimin olduğum içindir." HAT 284/ 17078 cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 101. Yıldız also cites similar conceptualizations of state and sultan during the reign of Selim III.

integrity of its territories, every eligible<sup>358</sup> Muslim individual was religiously responsible and obliged to fight the *cihad* (Holy War) to protect his religion, state and society. The imposition of obligatory military service on an individual legitimized the mobilizing discourse that permeated the existing political, social and economic classes in his/her society, which also claimed to unify the people around allegedly common interests against the common enemies. Modern nationalisms, which nation-states have perpetuated based on the ethno-religious identities they claimed to represent,<sup>359</sup> constantly employed such a discourse when they wanted their citizens to fight national wars. In the case of the pre-national, imperial Ottoman state of the 1820s, the central authority appealed to being Muslim (after 1826, the Sunnis only), the common denominator around which the qualifying populace should rally and provide conscripts for the imperial armed forces. In this regard, the term “Islamic nationalism” was one of the important traits of Mahmudian state ideology, to which scholars such as Aksan and Yıldız had also pointed out.<sup>360</sup>

Such were the identification of the Ottoman ruler and his prominent statesmen concerning the Muslim subjects’ duties after 1821, which was only a few years before the “Auspicious Event” and the establishment of a new, disciplined army manned by long term conscripts. To what extent the ordinary Ottoman subjects and soldiers shared the

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<sup>358</sup> Since the emergence of Islam to present, the Muslim scholars debated about the eligibility criteria for taking part in *cihad* (as well as conditions to declare it), which could depend on the age, reaching puberty, health/physical condition, wealth and gender. David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Majid Khadduri, *The War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955).

<sup>359</sup> The importance of religion and ethnicity in configuration of nationalism vary based on the particular state and its society.

<sup>360</sup> For the Ottoman state’s efforts to build “Ottoman patriotism” built around the Muslim identity in educating children, see Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 277-279.

ruling elite's perceptions and responded positively to the state propaganda will be discussed in Chapter 5. However, the political and ideological atmosphere described above was a near-perfect environment for the desperate and militant Ottoman leadership to make military service obligatory for all of their Muslim subjects. They would later experience the largest conscription effort in the years after the "Auspicious Event."

Apart from the ideological motives and justifications, there were some practical reasons and necessities for the Ottoman central authority to introduce conscription. Firstly, Janissaries and major provincial magnets with the exception of Mehmed Ali Pasha in Egypt, which could have challenged the wide-scale obligatory military recruitment in the empire, were out of the way after 1826. Secondly, the existing evidence hints that just like Janissaries, employing irregular troops was undesirable, because it was relatively expensive and required constant negotiation between the state and the hired mercenaries.<sup>361</sup> During the Greek Revolution, the Ottoman statesmen were fully aware that appealing to religious sensibilities was not sufficient to persuade Muslim Albanian mercenaries to fight. Grand Vizier Hacı Salih Pasha informed the sultan that "Albanian soldiers had gotten used to a salary for a long time and it would be impossible to recruit large numbers of soldiers from Albania without paying them salaries (sic)."<sup>362</sup> In 1821, after the governor of Sidon had asked for a monthly salary of 60 *kuruş* for each soldier, the sultan scolded him by writing such a wage was "unheard of."<sup>363</sup> The Ottoman statesmen were aware about the higher cost of hiring Albanian warbands, but in spring

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<sup>361</sup> Also discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>362</sup> HAT 39121 cited in Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 264.

<sup>363</sup> HAT 38500 (1 December 1821) cited in Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 214.

1822, they did had no choice and “it was more feasible to outsource the war to military contractors who would operate under the command of the Sublime Porte viziers. A contemporary report explained that “this would cost some money; however, considering the significance of the matter and the criticality of the situation, it was deemed beneficial to clear up the Morean issue as soon as possible by spending money instead of leaving the issue in the hands of *nefir-i âm* soldiers.””<sup>364</sup> In sharp contrast, a *Mansure* conscript, who was to sign up to serve for 12 years, was promised to receive 20 *kuruş* and provisions every month in the post-1826 Ottoman army.

Further research is needed to make analyze the interrelation between the Ottoman state’s coercive recruitment policies, its accessible military manpower and financial resources c. 1770-1830. However, another practical reason for Mahmud II to introduce conscription against voluntary recruitment appears to be the relatively smaller number of eligible subjects for the military in his realms, and his hard-pressed treasury. During 1500-1800, populations and armies of European countries expanded significantly, including the empire’s principal adversaries, Russia and Austria.<sup>365</sup> The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars further increased the size of the European armies, and almost every major European power experimented with mass conscription. To counter the ever-expanding foreign armies and internal military challenges, the Ottoman central state, however, had to rely on a smaller population living in gradually shrinking borders to defend itself.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Ilıcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 261-62.

<sup>365</sup> Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 456-480, 496-503; Table 1 and 2.

<sup>366</sup> Table 1 and 11.

Since the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state had lost significant territories and authority over provinces such as Egypt, Iraq and Bosnia, which resulted as loss of active and potential military manpower. The provinces of Hungary and Temeşvar (Transylvania), for instance, provided 9,000 timariot cavalymen, which was about 8% of all of the timariot cavalymen the empire could muster in 1631.<sup>367</sup> The Crimean Khanate, a vassal of Istanbul since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century provided tens of thousands of cavalymen who served as field troops, scouts and raiders. Yet, the Ottoman Empire ceded the larger Hungary (including Transylvania) to Austria in 1699 and lost control over the Crimea (effectively in 1774) to Russia. The end of the *devşirme* by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century combined with the exclusionary recruitment policies adopted by Mahmud II effectively removed a large non-Muslim population from the potential manpower base. The Muslim population alone became the target for Ottoman military recruitment.<sup>368</sup> The Ottoman authorities, who desperately needed more recruits and had already put a great strain on the Muslim population due to earlier levies, recruited only a limited number of non-Muslims for labor units and the imperial navy in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>369</sup> Finally, the Greek Rebellion (1821-29), the destruction of Janissary Corps (1826) and the war with Russia (1828-29) brought massive military casualties, consequently depleting the potential pool of volunteers and discharged veterans that the *Mansure* army could have enrolled in its ranks.

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<sup>367</sup> Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, 40-41; 214-215 fn 33.

<sup>368</sup> However, the number of recruits collected through *devşirme* was not enormous, as earlier nationalistic Balkan historiography argued.

<sup>369</sup> For details on this policy, see Chapter 5.

The founding ordinance of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* unambiguously promulgated that the new army was an all-volunteer army, and its recruits were supposed to enlist willingly and not by force. Volunteers, especially from the lower classes, stepped forward after 1826 to receive a small monthly salary, free food, shelter, clothing and some hope upward mobility through the ranks. As Zarif Pasha intimately wrote in his memoir, the public sight of uniformed soldiers armed with swords must have enticed at least some young men to enlist.<sup>370</sup> Yet, the number of volunteers simply did not suffice to meet the Ottoman military's continuous and mounting need for manpower after 1826.<sup>371</sup> On the relation between the population and army sizes in pre-industrial societies, Azar Gat stresses, "historically 1 per cent of the population constituted the upper *sustainable* (Gat's italics) limit of purely professional troops."<sup>372</sup> He notes,

there were about 9,000 knights to a population of perhaps 10 million (0.1 per cent) in the German Empire in AD 981, and 5,000-6,000 knights to 2.5 million people (about 0.2 per cent) in an exceptionally centralized England in 1166... In Japan around 1200, with a population of 7.5 million, there were perhaps 5,000-6,000 samurai (less than 0.1 per cent). Possessing a richer and probably more efficient economy than that of high feudal Europe or Japan, the Ottoman Empire around 1600, with a population of some 28 million people, sustained some 100,000-120,000 [*timarlı*] *sipahi* (0.35-0.40 per cent).<sup>373</sup>

The Mahmudian regime gave constant attention to maintaining the newly raised *Mansure* and *Redif* armies to around 50,000 men each (and numerous regiments from the latter were mobilized in 1839-41), while the constant losses and desertions the *Mansure*

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<sup>370</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, "Zarif Paşa Hatıratı, 1816-1862," *Belleten* 4, no. 16 (1942), 448-49.

<sup>371</sup> Veysel Şimşek, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Düzenli Ordu için Asker Toplanması: 1826-1853," *Toplumsal Tarih* 198 (2010), 39-40.

<sup>372</sup> Gat, *War in Human Civilization*, 474.

<sup>373</sup> Gat, *War in Human Civilization*, 352.



army suffered amounted to 161,000 men -about two-thirds of its recruits between 1826 and 1837.<sup>374</sup> In February 1841, the Ottomans had 80,000 soldiers in line regiments after the conclusion of a major conflict with Egypt.<sup>375</sup> If the surveyed (i.e. easier to conscript) Muslim population in the empire by 1832 (about 2.6 million registered males, 5.2 million in total) and thousands of irregulars are taken into account, about 2 per cent of the Ottoman population were under arms in the 1830s-40s, which was twice the upper limit mentioned by Gat. Therefore, one immediate reason for Mahmud II to launch wide-scale conscription and consent to increasingly coercive recruitment methods was to ensure a steady flow of recruits without being dependent on a supply of unsecured and probably dwindling cohorts of volunteers and veterans in the empire.

A more explicit sign of incoming conscription was the state-sponsored population censuses carried out in the capital and in the provinces. These surveys classified Muslim males according to their location, age and eligibility for military service. One of the first things the authorities did after the “Auspicious Event” was to carry out a census in Istanbul from June to October 1826, which located some 45,000 Muslim males residing in the city. Those between fifteen and forty-five, about 17,000 men, were flagged.<sup>376</sup> Another census was taken in the capital toward the end of the Russian War of 1828–29 and the authorities specifically registered and flagged about 18,000 young bachelors (*bikârs*) and 54,000 adult (*kübar*) Muslim males.<sup>377</sup> Censuses were also performed in the

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<sup>374</sup> Veysel Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds’: Conscripts for the Ottoman Army, 1826–53,” *JOS*, no. 44 (2014), 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK (Kamil Kepeci) 6799.

<sup>375</sup> İ.MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ) 42/ 782 (H, M-Z 1257/ March 1840-February 1841).

<sup>376</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütîfî*, 206.

<sup>377</sup> BOA, NFS.d (Nüfus Defterleri) 567 (dated by the archive as H. 1260/ 1844-1845, but apparently the figures shown were taken in Istanbul’s previous census in 1829).

provinces in southern Balkans, central and western Anatolia in 1830-32, which enumerated about 900,000 men eligible for military service.<sup>378</sup> The sultan was concerned about the very possibility that his subjects' realized what was really coming and he persistently wanted the surveyors to work swiftly while concealing "the main motive [of the census]," which was locating and counting the able-bodied Muslim men.<sup>379</sup>

Located in Hüsrev Mehmed Pasha's personal library, a treatise dated H. 1253 (1837-38) by an unknown author on the nature of military service provides a striking account as to crystallization of Ottoman military thought.<sup>380</sup> Since defence of the "religion and state" is amongst the "principal religious duties [of the Muslims]," (*furûz-ı i'yân*) physically eligible Muslims (implicitly implying women as well as men) between 18 and 60, regardless of their economic-social standing, were required "religiously and customarily" to be a part of the Ottoman armed forces. The author argued that given the impossibility to keep everyone within this age span in arms due to its costs, only a part of the Muslim population should serve as soldiers. However, if need be, the rest could be called up when the enemy invaded.<sup>381</sup> Another text from Hüsrev's library, written in the 1830s and entitled an "Imperial Law Code for Military Recruitment"<sup>382</sup> recounts the same idea in its first article: "A Muslim, as a religious obligation (*farize-i diyanet*), [is]

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<sup>378</sup> The censuses will be discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>379</sup> See for instance, HAT 19217 (undated), HAT 19725 (H. 16 Ca 1247/ 23 October 1831).

<sup>380</sup> *Devlet-i Aliye'nin Ahval-i Haziresine Dair Risale* (H. 1253/ 1837-1838), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 851. Hüsrev Mehmed Paşa (1769-1855) served as the commander-in-chief (*serasker*) of *Mansure* Army in 1827-36 and was one of the chief overseers Mahmud II's military reforms. .

<sup>381</sup> *Devlet-i Aliye'nin Ahval-i Haziresine Dair Risale* (H. 1253/ 1837-1838), 2a-b.

<sup>382</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 875 (c. 1835). The use of the terms "*Asakir-i Mansure*" and "*Redif Mansure*" hints that the document was written after 1834 and before 1839. It is not clear how, when and where the code was implemented.

responsible and obligated (*me'mur ve mecbur*) to protect and defend his religion and state.”<sup>383</sup> The recent census records for Anatolia and Rumelia would be utilized in matter of military recruitment. Based on their ages, the recruits were to be grouped into three categories. *Asakir-i Mansure* recruits were to be from the young men between 20 and 25. Enrolment into *Mansure* was not universal for this age group and was dependent on the manpower requirements of *Mansure* units. According to the text, service in the first line formations was still “considered as a military school of the [whole] nation.” After having served for 3 years, *Mansure* soldiers were to be discharged and enrolled in the *Redif* regiments in their home districts, in addition to those who were between 20 and 25 and have not been drafted to the *Mansure* army so far.<sup>384</sup> *Redif* troops had to serve as reservists until they were 45. Those who turned 45 and physically fit to use a weapon were to become “fortress guards” (*müstahfiz-ı kal'a*), and could be called up to serve in the designated strongholds at the time of war.<sup>385</sup> All three classes (regulars, reserves, fortress guards) were required to undertake military training during peacetime. It is also noteworthy that the law explicitly considered the sons of local notables (*vücuḥ-ı ahali*, *vücuḥ-ı belde*), “respectable persons” (*muteber kimseler*) and officers as a naturally appropriate group to turn into officers. After one year of service in the *Mansure* army, such persons could be commissioned as officers both in *Mansure* and then in *Redif* units if they were considered competent.<sup>386</sup> In the last article, it was stated that they would be given preference to be accepted into the military schools, which the state was to establish

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<sup>383</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 875, 2a-b.

<sup>384</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 875, 2a-b.

<sup>385</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 875, 6a-b.

<sup>386</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 875, 5a-b.

and maintain.<sup>387</sup> In the end, at least in theory, every Muslim man was to be a part of the Ottoman military establishment as soldiers or officers in the first, second and third line units.

Military conscription, one of the “innovations” of Mahmud II’s later rule, has remained one of the formative experiences of thousands of men and their families in the Middle East and the Balkans until today. After Mahmud II’s death, the Tanzimat Decree promised a fair, codified system of military recruitment that also stressed the necessity and therefore obligatory nature of military service for the imperial forces for “four or five years.” What was promulgated in the decree soon culminated in the military reforms of 1843,<sup>388</sup> the detailed yet provisional conscription code of 1844 and finally, a comprehensive conscription code of 1846. The first article of the 1846 conscription code in fact recounted what Mahmudian-era political-military treatises had already laid down: any Muslim selected as a conscript was bound to serve, a duty sanctioned by “customary and Islamic law” in order to “defend the honour of the religion and state, and to keep the order in the realm and protect the country.”<sup>389</sup> The reforms set the active army’s strength at 150,000, and every year, 30,000 new recruits were to replace the discharged. The recruitment quotas were to be adjusted according to each district’s population.<sup>390</sup> In 1843, five regional standing armies with their specific recruitment districts and supporting *Redif* organizations were established as armies in Rumelia, Istanbul (Dersaadet), Anatolia,

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<sup>387</sup> *Askerlik Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Hüseyin Paşa no. 875, 6a-b.

<sup>388</sup> *Nizam-ı Cedide-i Askeriye Kanunnamesi*, H. Evahir M 1260 [February 1844] Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüseyin Paşa no. 815 M1.

<sup>389</sup> *Kur’a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Istanbul H. 1262 [1846].

<sup>390</sup> *Kur’a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 3, pp. 4-5 and BOA, İ. MSM 10/ 206 (14 C 1262 / 12 July 1843).

Arabia (mainly in Syria) and the Guards. In 1848, another army was founded in Iraq, signifying the stretching arm of the central authority.<sup>391</sup> Thus were set the fundamental legal, discursive, and administrative structures for conscription that survive, with imperfections and some differences, until the end of the empire.

## Conclusion

In a public declaration that sought to mobilize Muslim subjects in 1827 for a likely war with Russia, the sultan proclaimed,

the Muslims too would unite and rise to their feet to fight for the sake of their religion and state. The great statesmen and religious scholars and perhaps all the Muslims were unanimous on this point. This coming war had nothing to do with the previous wars that were pursued by the state and that were about land and boundaries. As explained, the goal of the infidels was to eradicate the Islamic *millet* (nation) from the face of the earth. This war was a war of religion and of the *millet* (*din ve millet gavgası*). Muslims should spend their own money for that purpose and not ask for salaries or wages, as the *gaza* and *cihad* were obligatory for all, great and small (*gaza ve cihad farz-ı ayn olmus*).<sup>392</sup>

Since the definitive establishment of their power, Ottoman sultans selffashioned themselves as the warriors of Islam and defenders of the Muslim lands on multiple occasions. Furthermore, waging *cihad*, a religious responsibility every Muslim could be obliged with, constituted an integral part of Ottoman state's claim to legitimacy.

However, it was not until the later rule of Mahmud II that a novel Islamic discourse

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<sup>391</sup> The headquarters of "[Dersaadet] Army was relocated to Bulgaria and renamed as Army of Şumnu in 1848." The other armies got their names from the city where their HQs were located. Yet the old and new names were continued to be used interchangeably: "Hassa, Manastır (Bitola)-Rumeli, Erzurum-Anadolu, and Şam (Damascus)-Arabistan." Mesut Uyar and Edward Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger Security International, 2009), 159.

<sup>392</sup> Hakan Erdem, "Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers': Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence," in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Faruk Birtok and Thalia Dragonas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 77.

emerged that required his Muslim subjects to serve in its armed forces on a mandatory basis by transcending their established social, economic and political classes.

Ottoman statesmen closely observed European states throughout the 1700s, and were aware how conscription have expanded their military and political might as of 1820s. In the context of national emergencies and a bid for strengthening the central authority, the Mahmudian regime invented the necessary ideological framework and the tools to create a mass-conscript army in the empire. This was an original, indigenous (and ruthless) synthesis, and not necessarily an act of aping the European militaries. Instead, it was pragmatic fusion of ideas and practices, which drew from the Ottoman state's technical-bureaucratic information on the European militaries, its traditions and experience of governance, and desperate appeal to some of the core values of Islam. As will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, the state's aims were limited by the abilities and the realities of Ottoman society, and ultimately the subject's consent for cooperation.

The desired product of the Mahmudian state in the military sphere were the *Mansure* soldiers. They wore distinct uniforms, were billeted in isolated barracks, and trained and organized with European-style discipline, command, and tactics. These soldiers did not form a privileged administrative-military elite like the ones in the earlier centuries. Instead, they constituted the Ottoman state's first mass-conscript army, with which the Ottoman authorities thought to replace the Janissaries, *nefir-i âm* levies, irregular mercenary companies, and tribal forces that had made up the bulk of the Ottoman army by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Chapter 4: Ottoman Population Censuses, c. 1820s-1840s**

This chapter focuses on the Ottoman population surveys in the later rule of Mahmud II and early Tanzimat era, which manifest the changing nature of Ottoman governance as well as methods of military recruitment. In the following years after 1826, the Ottoman central authority counted, mobilized and diverted a sizable portion of empire's financial and manpower resources to enlarge and maintain the new European-style army. This chapter has two main goals. Past studies have mostly focused on the "1831 census" in the provinces and mainly from a demographic history perspective. In a bid to produce a more comprehensive political analysis for the Ottoman census-taking efforts, I will examine a number of lesser-known censuses in addition to the "1831 census" between the early 1820s and 1840s. Methodology and results of these surveys, which had been carried out in the capital as well the provinces, manifest certain continuities as well as novelties in Ottoman governance. Secondly, I will highlight that in addition to augment their conscription efforts, the Ottoman government's concerns for national security, social control and efficient taxation played a significant –and largely unnoticed– role in its attempts to locate and classify Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.

### **4.1 Ottoman Fiscal-Cadastral Surveys, 1400-1800**

Starting from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state had carried out surveys (*tahrirs*) to determine and keep track of the empire's military and economic resources.<sup>393</sup> There was neither a single standard template nor a pre-set period for these surveys, but the surveyors

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<sup>393</sup> For the earliest known fiscal-cadastral survey in Ottoman Albania from 1430s, see Halil İnalcık ed. *Hicri 835 [1431] Suret-i Defter-i Sancak-ı Arvanid*, (Ankara: TTK, 1954).

recorded their data in *mufassal* (detailed) and *icmal* (summary) *tahrir* registers, which high-level Ottoman decision-makers as well as lower-ranking bureaucrats utilized in political, military and fiscal tasks. Broadly speaking, *mufassal* registers contained the district laws, details about the taxable subjects and other sources of revenues. In *mufassal* registers, the surveyors recorded the numbers and locations of tax-paying households, working male population (Muslim and non-Muslim, according to their social/legal status), size and amount of the lands cultivated, tax-farms and other revenue sources, such as mills, vineyards, orchards, and even beehives. *İcmal* (summary) registers showed the members of the military class, their allocated incomes, their duties, and the number of armed retainers, weapons and equipment they had to bring to imperial campaigns. In c. 1430-1650, the Ottoman state periodically surveyed individual provinces in the Balkans and Anatolia every 20-30 years. The practice of *tahrir* was an integral part of Ottoman order in the “Gilded Age” (c. 1450-1600) and an essential pre-requisite in directly managing some 100,000 timariot cavalymen and their assigned fiefs effectively by the central authority.<sup>394</sup>

The Ottoman state conducted *tahrirs* less frequently in early 1600 and stopped the practice altogether towards the end of the century, because of the empire’s military-fiscal transformation and drastic expansion of tax-farming practices. Accordingly, the Ottoman

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<sup>394</sup> Halil İnalıcık, “Osmanlı’da İstatistik Metodu Kullanıldı mı?” *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, eds. Halil İnalıcık and Şevket Pamuk (Ankara: T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), 3-7; Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and the Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 75-78. For a general review on these sources, Mehmet Öz, “Tahrir Defterlerindeki Sayısal Veriler,” in *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Bilgi ve İstatistik* (Ankara: T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), 16-32.



bureaucracy did not produce any *tahrir* after the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Concurrently, *avarız* and *cizye* (Islamic poll-tax on non-Muslim population) taxes became the imperial treasury's main source of income, and *avarız* and *cizye* registers emerged where Ottoman financial administration recorded its tax-payers and their allocated taxes. Unlike the earlier *tahrirs*, the state did not register and thus directly deal with the tax-payers and fief-holding cavalry at the individual level. When the Ottoman state imposed the *avarız* taxes, they lumped several actual households (Muslim or non-Muslim) together and designated it as an “imaginary” *avarız* household unit (*avarız hanesi*), which was held responsible for paying the specific amount of tax. Similarly, it often imposed *cizye* on the level of community (called *maktu*) or household rather than allocating it to the individual. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman state attempted to abolish taxation at community (*maktu*) or household level and instead, to levy *cizye* on non-Muslim males separately. Nevertheless, these plans could never be implemented.<sup>395</sup> Even though there is evidence that some Ottoman authorities pointed out the necessity of large-scale fiscal-military surveys in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>396</sup> we are not aware of any comparable undertaking until the later reign of Mahmud II.

#### **4.2 Knowing and Locating the Regime's Enemies: Population Censuses in Istanbul, 1821-29**

Fuat Dündar demonstrated that the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) leadership carried out detailed ethno-religious surveys during the First World War to

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<sup>395</sup> Oktay Özel, “Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri,” in *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Şevket Pamuk (Ankara: T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), 36-39.

<sup>396</sup> Ergin Çağman, ed., *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Lâyhaları* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2010), 61.

better realize their aim of creating a “safe future homeland” for ethnic Turks and peoples that could eventually be “Turkifiable.” In the context of national emergencies created by war, CUP leaders and the Ottoman “Special Organization” (*Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa*) planned and arranged the moving, re-settling and death of hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks and Kurds by utilizing their knowledge on distribution and composition of the population in the empire.<sup>397</sup> About a century before the emergence of the CUP and ethno-politics of Turkish nationalism, Mahmud II wanted to know where and in what numbers the non-Muslims (including allegedly rebellious Ottoman Greeks) and (supposedly loyal, conscriptable) Muslims lived in his empire to better plan his national security as well as military policies.

Soon after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in Moldawallachia and then Morea, the sultan, state dignitaries and Janissary officers had grave suspicions regarding the loyalty of all the Greek subjects. In the first month of the Greek Revolution, Ottoman authorities conducted two censuses on the Greek population in Istanbul. The first one documented every Armenian as well as Greek traders and artisans living in the city; the second recorded the Greek population in every neighbourhood. “Every Greek of Istanbul had to have a Muslim bailsman (*kefil*) who would vouch for his decency and trustworthiness. The ones who did not have a bailsman would be banished from the city.” At the same time, the imperial council drafted orders to disarm all of the Christians in the Balkans and in the capital, and prohibited “gunsmith corporations” from selling weapons

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<sup>397</sup> Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008).

to them.<sup>398</sup> In summer 1821, after an imperial council meeting, the Ottoman state specifically wanted to locate and then deport “bachelors, vagabonds” and “those who could fight” residing in the capital to the provinces in Asia Minor.<sup>399</sup> The same council also discussed arming all Muslims, the execution of every Phanariot (*Fenerli*) and how the residents of Istanbul should act in the case Russia went to war with the Ottomans.<sup>400</sup> In summer 1823, “22 months after the Greek conspiracy had begun,” Janissary *ustas* openly demanded their Corps commander to convey a message to the sultan:

Since so many Greek and Armenian infidels reside in Istanbul, they could rebel and commit all sorts of treacheries if an external enemy [also] emerges... We have our properties, our lives, our families, and above all, the stakes for our religion, state, sultan and corps... We do not trust these infidels an more. It is up to [the sultan] to banish them from the city or put them on sword or to order us do [the either]. We want a firm answer from you on this matter. If you do not respond, we will go to the *şeyhülislam*. [If that also does not work], we will march to Bab-ı Âli.<sup>401</sup>

In his response, Mahmud II concurred that no Greek should not be trusted. As the leader of Muslims and Islamic state, he promised them to ask the legal opinion (*fetva*) of the *şeyhülislam* and to obey what the Islamic law dictated.<sup>402</sup> Despite the fact that Ottoman state policies eventually led to the massacring and execution of thousands of ordinary Greeks and members of the Greek elite in the next decade, evidently, Mahmud II did not implement the Janissaries’ demands. Doing so would have resulted in major domestic and

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<sup>398</sup> Şükrü Iııcak, “A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826,” (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2011), 191.

<sup>399</sup> Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok, Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti’nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum: 1826-1839* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), 102; Iııcak, “Ottoman State and Society,” 191-192. For a register compiled during the time of Greek Revolt details the number and whereabouts of the Greek bachelors residing in Istanbul, see BOA, NFS.d (Nüfus Defterleri) 9.

<sup>400</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok* 102.

<sup>401</sup> HAT 284/17078 (Undated) cited in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok* 100.

<sup>402</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 101.

international troubles, as Europeans were becoming more involved in the revolt.<sup>403</sup> The sultan apparently avoided involvement by diverting the matter to his *şeyhülislam* who probably issued a *fetva* compatible with his stance.

In June 1826,<sup>404</sup> the Ottoman government started a population survey in Istanbul immediately after the destruction of the Janissary Corps. Official chronicler Ahmed Lütfi Efendi's goal was to ensure "to keep the order" in the imperial capital after the "Auspicious Event."<sup>405</sup> The authorities recorded the numbers and whereabouts of bachelors (*bikârs*), "Albanian and Bosnian working as gardeners and grape growers" living in Istanbul, whom they must have considered as potentially volatile and dangerous to the new regime and the public order.<sup>406</sup> Based on the figures it produced, the survey seems far from complete, but nevertheless surveyors registered some 45,000 Muslim, 30,000 Armenian, and 20,000 Greek males.<sup>407</sup> A year later, Hüsrev Paşa, the newly appointed commander in chief (*serasker*) of the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, supervised another census in the capital in June 1827, which again aimed to register the non-Muslims, bachelors and those dwelling in the inns of Istanbul. In the Anatolian part of the city, the surveyors also recorded the able-bodied Muslim men between 12 and 40.<sup>408</sup> In March 1828, soon after the destruction of the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet in

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<sup>403</sup> Ilıcak, "Ottoman State and Society," 163, 230-236.

<sup>404</sup> Istanbul Şer'iye Sicilleri (Istanbul Court Records) nr. 319 (20 Za 1241/26 June 1826 and 18 Ra 1242/30 October 1826) cited in Yüksel Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa, Siyasi ve Askeri Faaliyetleri, 1756-1855" (PhD thesis, Marmara University, 2005), 291n92.

<sup>405</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel ve Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 205-206.

<sup>406</sup> Istanbul Şer'iye Sicilleri (Istanbul Court Records) nr. 319 (20 Za 1241/26 June 1826 and 18 Ra 1242/30 October 1826) cited in Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 291n92.

<sup>407</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, 205-206.

<sup>408</sup> Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 306-308. I could not locate the results of this particular census, even though the sources Çelik cites mention the existence of population registers.

Navarino and in the wake of war with Russia, the Ottoman state started the deportation of 2,730 Catholic Armenians in 1,068 families from the imperial capital for their alleged disloyalty, “sedition” and threat to the public order. Before the deportation, Ottoman authorities obtained detailed registers from the Gregorian-Armenian patriarchate, which stated each deportee’s age and occupation.<sup>409</sup>

Ahmed Lütü Efendi recorded that Russian land occupations in the Black Sea littoral, the Russian naval blockade of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and the lack of adequate wheat stocks had caused a severe grain shortage and incidents of public disorder in the imperial capital during the course of the war.<sup>410</sup> In February 1829, the sultan ordered the judge (*kadı*) of Istanbul to determine the total number of male and female inhabitants of the city so that the authorities could devise a proper rationing policy. The inner part of Istanbul (slightly more than half of all its neighbourhoods) was surveyed by mid-April 1829, and that task was fully completed probably in Fall 1829.<sup>411</sup> In contrast with the subsequent provincial surveys in 1830-32,<sup>412</sup> the Ottoman state catalogued various ethno-religious groups in Istanbul in exceptional detail and probably with more precision than the two preceding surveys in 1826 and 1827. The census specified the number of Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Roma and Muslims in the city. Armenians and

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<sup>409</sup> The Catholic Armenians would be pardoned and permitted to return in 1830. Kemal Beydilli, *II. Mahmud Devrinde Katolik Ermeni Cemaati ve Kilisesi'nin Tanınması* (1830) (Boston: Harvard University, 1995).

<sup>410</sup> Ahmed Lütü Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütü*, vol 2, 361-362.

<sup>411</sup> Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Order and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57; Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa,” 308-309.

<sup>412</sup> Enver Ziya Karal transliterated a comprehensive *icmal* (summary) census register located in İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, which has served as the major published primary source for the research on the “1831 census.” *1247 [1830-31] Senesinde Memalik-i Mahruse-i Şahane Mevcut Nüfus Defteri*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, TY 8867; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831* (Ankara: T.C Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943).

Greeks constituted a quarter of the city's total male population (about 50,000 each), and their numbers together was equal to that of the Muslims.<sup>413</sup>

Even though the census orders cited rationing policies as the reason for this survey, the Ottoman authorities had several concealed political and military aims in that particular time-frame other than feeding the Istanbul's population properly, whose anger would have had dire consequences for the sultan in a particularly precarious time. By early 1829, the Egyptian regular troops had withdrawn from Morea and a strong French expeditionary force had been present in the peninsula, while the bulk of the Ottoman central forces locked in a war in the Balkans against invading Russian armies. In the south of Danube, Russian forces had already taken fortress of Varna in October 1828, and kept the fortress of Silistre under siege. As the energetic Diebitsch assumed the command and winter cold was over, the Russians were poised to strike south of the Balkan Mountains.<sup>414</sup> The hard-pressed Ottoman government must have been ever more suspicious of thousands of Greek subjects living outside the revolt zone, especially in Istanbul where they lived in large numbers. There is also evidence that the Mahmudian regime still had grave concerns about "spirit of janizzaryism (sic)"<sup>415</sup> among a war-weary and hungry population after a severe winter.<sup>416</sup> Finally, it was no coincidence that the sultan entrusted *serasker* Hüsrev Paşa, who had proven himself as a ruthless enforcer in

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<sup>413</sup> See Table 8.

<sup>414</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)" in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi: Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri, 1792-1918*, ed. Gültekin Yıldız (Istanbul: Timaş, 2013), 194-196.

<sup>415</sup> Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, &c. and of a Cruise with the Capitan Pasha, in the years 1829, 1830, and 1831*, vol.1 (London: Saunders and Oetley, 1833), 111.

<sup>416</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)" in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi: Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri, 1792-1918*, ed. Gültekin Yıldız (Istanbul: Timaş, 2013), 195.

Istanbul during the war years, to oversee the task of updating and submitting the population tables (*nüfus cedveli*) that were compiled every six months through monitoring the inward and outward movement of people.<sup>417</sup>

#### **4.3 Counting the Men: Provincial Censuses, 1830-32**

During the war of 1828-29, the Ottoman government attempted to know how many men lived in Rumelia, most possibly to be thrown at the advancing Russians. In the *kaza* (sub-district) of Filibe, the authorities eventually counted some 12,000 able-bodied men, but the surveying process stopped altogether towards the end of the war.<sup>418</sup> After the war had ended, the Ottoman central authority finally took a census of its certain Asian and European provinces in the early 1830s. Most of the existing literature has referred to the concerted surveys of the provinces –incorrectly- as “1831 census.” In fact, the census-taking had begun in July 1830 and continued through 1831.<sup>419</sup> Based on the dates on the population registers that indicate larger numbers of males of military age for the districts mentioned in TY 8867,<sup>420</sup> the census efforts in fact continued as late as May/June 1832.<sup>421</sup> Therefore, I have referred and will refer to Mahmud II’s major surveying scheme as the “1829-32 census,” including Istanbul’s survey prior to those of the provinces.

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<sup>417</sup> Çelik, “Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa,” 308-309.

<sup>418</sup> Mahir Aydın, “Sultan II. Mahmud Döneminde Yapılan Nüfus Tahrirleri” in *Sultan II. Mahmud ve Reformları Semineri*, 1989 (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1990), 82. Aydın notes that Filibe is the only *kaza*, where he could locate the figures for the mentioned census endeavour.

<sup>419</sup> Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 92-93.

<sup>420</sup> Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*.

<sup>421</sup> BOA, TSK.d (Topkapı Sarayı Müze Arşivi Defterleri) 4895 ([End of] B 1247/ 4 January 1832); D.ASM 37912 (M 1248 / May/June 1832). I suspect that further research would push the end date even later than May 1832.

The available secondary works often agree on two main goals of these surveys. The first was determining the size of the manpower pool for the *Mansure* army, and the second was the *cizye* sources within the empire.<sup>422</sup> I do not necessarily disagree with these broader conclusions, which signify the continuity with former *tahrir* and *avarız* practices in the earlier centuries. However, censuses during the Mahmudian and early Tanzimat era, which had unprecedentedly comprehensive character, also marked a rupture in the Ottoman governance. By locating, enumerating and registering a large number of its subjects on an individual basis, the state attempted to establish a direct link between itself and the subject in the abstract world of bureaucratic records that the Ottoman government utilized for political, fiscal and military decision-making. By its censuses, the Mahmudian regime “bypassed” the present intermediary institutions and notables the state and the individual ordinary subject, such as local tribal chieftains, local notables (*ayans*) in towns and villages, and leaders of religious communities in the core provinces.<sup>423</sup> Even though the said institutions and leaders remained important in Ottoman governance until the

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<sup>422</sup> Some of the important accounts are Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*; Fazla Akbal, “1831 Tarihinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İdari Taksimat ve Nüfus,” *Belleten* vol.15 no. 60 (1951); Stanford J. Shaw, “The Ottoman Census System and Population, 1831-1914,” *IJMES* vol. 9 no. 3 (1978); Mahir Aydın, “Sultan II. Mahmud Döneminde Yapılan Nüfus Tahrirleri” in *Sultan II. Mahmud ve Reformları Semineri, 1989* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1990); Michael Ursinus, “Tahrir-i Nüfus and Tezkere-i Murur: The tightening grip of the modernizing Ottoman state on the individual subject, 1826-1840,” paper presented at the workshop *Individual Society in the Muslim Mediterranean World* (12-14 June, 1997) organized by European Science Foundation; Daniel Panzac, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Veba 1700-1850*, trans. Serap Yılmaz (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1997), 127-144; Betül Başaran, “The 1829 census and Istanbul’s population during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries” in *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond* (UPenn, 2007); Başaran, *Selim III, Social Order and Policing in Istanbul*, 56-62; Justin McCarthy, “Factors in the Analysis of the Population of Anatolia, 1800-1878” *Asian and African Studies*, 20 (1985); Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980), 19-24.

<sup>423</sup> For a valuable discussion on this point, Ursinus, “Tahrir-i Nüfus and Tezkere-i Murur,” 6-7.



empire's demise, in Michael Ursinus' words, the Ottoman state indeed "tightened its grip on the individual subject."<sup>424</sup>

It is noteworthy that the majority of the surveyors were appointed from the scribal and broader *ulema* (judicial/clerical) class,<sup>425</sup> including prominent figures such as Esad Efendi and Ağa Hüseyin Pasha. Ahmed Lütfi asserted "a general census [like this one] did not have a precedent and was not something familiar [for the people]. [Therefore] in order not to alienate the populace, only appointees were chosen only from the judicial/clerical class (*me'murin-i şer'îye*)."<sup>426</sup> According to the official descriptions, the surveyors were also from those who were "adept and astute" in order to ensure a reliable census.<sup>427</sup> Before their departure, the appointees assembled at the *Bab-ı Ali*, and received their instructions and funds for expenses.

Simultaneously, the center sent orders to the local administrators and to notables and judges of the areas that were to be surveyed, commanding them to assist the census-takers. The expenses of some 79 officials wandering throughout the empire proved to be very high, amounting to 3.5 million *kuruş*,<sup>428</sup> while one estimate puts the total Ottoman revenues at 200 million *kuruş* in 1827.<sup>429</sup> But upon receiving complaints from his deputy Grand Vizier (*kaim-i makam*) on the excessive costs of the census-taking, Mahmud II (r.

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<sup>424</sup> Rephrased from the title of Ursinus' paper cited above.

<sup>425</sup> For the empirical details of the bureaucratic procedure concerning the provincial surveys in 1830-32, see Aydın, "Nüfus Tahrirleri," especially pp. 85-89. For a list of appointees and their background, see *ibid*, 102-104.

<sup>426</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, vol 3, 640. In contrast, the surveyors operating in Thrace, Western and Northern Anatolia in a subsequent census were drawn mostly military officers. ML.CRD 823 (H. 1260/1844-45).

<sup>427</sup> Aydın, "Nüfus Tahrirleri," 85.

<sup>428</sup> HAT 19181 cited in Mahir Aydın, "Nüfus Tahrirleri," 92n66.

<sup>429</sup> Table 6.

1808-1839) responded by saying “for such auspicious matters for our Sublime State, I don’t hesitate but eagerly give money.”<sup>430</sup> A large number of documents from the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* collection clearly demonstrates that the sultan closely followed the surveying process. As the new registers arrived from the provinces, the sultan founded a separate office (*Ceride Nezareti*) some “5-10 scribes” due to the new and daunting task of processing the collected data.<sup>431</sup>

According to the standard orders sent to the provincial districts (*sancak*), the Ottoman state decided to take a comprehensive census in order to assure a fairer distribution of the taxes among the empire’s subjects. An imperial decree addressed to the administrators and notables of Konya province stated that since the Ottoman state had not conducted any surveys recently, it did not fully know the whereabouts and numbers of the tax-payers. Thus certain *kazas* had to pay more than they could, whereas others did not pay any taxes at all. Furthermore, the decree also underlined that certain communities, who had been traditionally exempt from taxation in lieu of their responsibilities for defending mountain passes, maintaining roads, bridges and inns (*hans*), such as *derbendciler*, long lost their functions, and therefore should be incorporated to the empire’s tax-base by losing their exempt status.<sup>432</sup>

However, the following bureaucratic correspondence between the center and surveyors revealed the Ottoman state’s ulterior motives. A report concerning the surveying of Karaman province, where the Ottomans first initiated their empire-wide

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<sup>430</sup> HAT 19181 cited in Mahir Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 92n66

<sup>431</sup> Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 90-91.

<sup>432</sup> Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 98-99.

census, indicated that the surveyor(s) were supposed to act as if they were sent “for solely the reorganization and taking care of taxation matters.” The state officials should keep the “main motive” of the census even amongst themselves.<sup>433</sup> According to the document, Said Pasha, governor of the province, had previously requested two *Mansure* battalions and three howitzer pieces, most likely to accompany the census-taking process. However, the sultan and his officials did not think this was a sound idea since the local populace might not “interpret” an unexpected movement of troops under a positive light. Instead, they would get “frightened” and make up “gossips.” The report’s author advised that since the survey in Karaman province would be a precedent to other provinces; it should be done “wisely,” without letting any occurrence of violence.<sup>434</sup>

In the end, the sultan and other Ottoman authorities decided to have at least a certain level of military presence in the province. In order to evade potential public suspicion, the sultan agreed with the suggestion that the reformed timariot cavalry (*Timarlu Siivari Asakir-i Mansure*) from Bursa district would be deployed in the region under the guise of doing their routine rotation. The report also suggested changing the wording of the draft of an imperial order, which was planned to be sent to the province in the forthcoming census-taking process. It advised that the phrases that implied the physical features (*eşkal*) and ages of the subjects would be registered in detail should be omitted in the final version of the imperial decree. The surveyors should be cautioned to only ask the names of the subjects, but record the subjects’ physical features and guess

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<sup>433</sup> HAT 18034 (Dated 1245 by BOA/ probably from 1830).

<sup>434</sup> HAT 18034 (Dated 1245 by BOA/ probably from 1830).

their ages by themselves on the spot. Even though the report does not provide much explanation, it argued that the said method would prevent possible “anxiety” (*vesvese*) on the part of the populace. Mahmud II agreed fully to change the wording in the decree.<sup>435</sup> Indeed, the actual imperial decree sent to Karaman, which must have had larger audience of officials as well as common folk, only mentioned about registering the names of Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>436</sup> In the Kütahya district, a surveyor pointed out the amount of time needed to register the ages of males one by one. To hasten the operation, he suggested registration in larger age groups with blanket definitions such as “child”, “young”, and “old.” He was worried that he would not be able to keep his intentions disclosed from the public, if he is going to ask detailed questions of everyone. Mahmud II’s response was to keep it as detailed as possible, threatening the official by saying “if he cannot do the job, someone else can certainly be found.”<sup>437</sup> Nonetheless, the neat, rounded figures that occasionally appear in TY 8867 suggest that surveyors used approximations and guesses in several instances.

In certain other areas, the Ottoman central authority encountered reluctance, hostility and even armed resistance of the population towards the surveying efforts, especially in areas such as Albania in the early 1830s and in Kurdistan in mid/late-1830s. In the areas west of Manastır and Üsküb districts, there were constant complaints and cautionary notes from and to the census-takers regarding the Albanians who did not want

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<sup>435</sup> HAT 18034 (Dated 1245 by BOA/ probably from 1830).

<sup>436</sup> For the copy of the decree see, Mühimme Defteri no. 246, hüküm 1231 (Evasıt, Muharrem, 1246/ Early July 1830) cited in Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 98-101.

<sup>437</sup> HAT 19217 cited in Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 92. Also, see Aydın, “Nüfus Tahrirleri,” 83-84.

to be surveyed.<sup>438</sup> After the mid-1830s, Kurdish populated provinces often responded with armed resistance to the Ottoman centralization efforts, which often ushered with the censuses and imposition of forced conscription.<sup>439</sup> In the town of Musul, the local population openly rebelled and killed the Ottoman officials responsible for census-taking in the area in April 1839.<sup>440</sup> Indeed, almost no figures exist in the summary census registers cited in this dissertation for larger parts of Albania and Kurdistan until 1843, which indicates that the Ottoman central authority did not or could not survey those areas. In 1843, Ottoman officials could only make estimations regarding the number of males in the Kurdish populated Diyarbakır province and western Albania.<sup>441</sup>

#### **4.4 Utilizing the Census Data for Military-Fiscal Policies c. 1830**

In the 1829-32 censuses, Ottoman surveyors registered some 2.52 million males in the provinces and 97,707 million in the capital, excluding those serving in various military establishments. The number of non-Muslim males amounted to 1.13 million in the provinces and 114,206 in Istanbul. Of the Muslim males, there were as many as 890,000 able-bodied men as of January 1832.<sup>442</sup> A later summary register indicated that there were 911,620 able-bodied Muslim males in Anatolia and the Balkans.<sup>443</sup>

The data presented in TY 8867 was not organized in a standard fashion. Particular categories exist only for certain districts (*sancaks*) or provinces (*eyalet*) and not for

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<sup>438</sup> HAT 335 19205 (Z 1246 / c. 1830-31), HAT 335 19206 (21 B 1247/ 26 December 1831), HAT 335 19255 (14 S 1248/ 13 July 1832).

<sup>439</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 243-253.

<sup>440</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 214, n186.

<sup>441</sup> Table 9.

<sup>442</sup> Table 7 and Table 8.

<sup>443</sup> D.ASM 37912 (M 1248 / May/June 1832).

others. Nevertheless, certain categories of information show uniformity throughout the register. For almost every administrative district (*kaza*, *sancak* or *eyalet*) surveyed, the total number of Muslim males was recorded. In most cases, the number of eligible men for military service in each administrative was also indicated. The eligible men did not have a uniform definition in the register as well. In general, Muslim males between the ages 15-40 (sometimes 12 to 45) were classified under terms such as *tüvana* (young, healthy, strong), *matluba muvafik* (suitable for the desired [criteria]) /*matlub-ı âliye muvafik* (suitable for the desired Sublime [Imperial criteria]). Apart from the eligibility for military service and age, the Muslims were recorded based on their way of life (e.g nomad), their military organization (members of *Asakir-i Mansure*, *Evlad-ı Fatihan*, fortress garrisons, and those in the armed retinues of the Ottoman officials) or as students of religious schools (*medreses*). With the exception of Jews, non-Muslims were registered usually without specific references regarding their ethno-religious affiliations. Thus figures belonging to the Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbians often appear under one *reaya* (non-Muslim, non-member of the Ottoman military)<sup>444</sup> category without any distinction in general. The Jewish subjects were registered separately while the Roma could be counted “Christian Roma”, “Muslim Roma” or just “Roma,” without specifying their religion. Non-Muslims were frequently classified according to their level of income and then summary figures were given for each group (poor, middle class, rich).

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<sup>444</sup> The term *reaya* had used to denote the tax-paying population outside military class, without any indication of religion in the Ottoman “Classical Age.” By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it came to be used predominantly to denote the non-Muslims in the empire, even though there were some rather rare instances where it also referred to the ordinary Muslim folk.

How complete a survey was the census of 1829-32? The census-taking efforts were mainly concentrated in the “core provinces,” and did not reach the regions such as Western Albania, Kurdistan, Bosnia, Syria, Palestine and Iraq. In the surveyed areas, census-takers could not manage to count each and every individual, given the physical and technological realities of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. An unknown number of subjects must also have evaded the census on their own initiative because of their fear of taxation and conscription. Daniel Panzac argues that the population data presented in TY 8867 is more complete for the Balkans than Anatolia, and for the Muslims than the non-Muslims in general. Furthermore, the surveyors registered nomads in half of the districts in Asia Minor.<sup>445</sup>

Most of the existing literature has looked down on the results of the “1831 census” and has emphasized its undercount in the provinces. Only Panzac and Justin McCarthy compared the results of this census with subsequent Ottoman surveys for the same districts by employing demographic analyses, and asserted that data the TY 8867 provides is rather reasonable.<sup>446</sup> Firstly, the current study consulted new sources, namely the summary registers for military manpower, and came up with larger numbers for the Ottoman Muslim subjects than TY 8867 indicates, and therefore, strengthens the argument that provincial censuses in the early 1830s produced reliable data for majority of the areas surveyed. Secondly, Mahmud II and his officials attributed attached great importance to the census-taking process and collected data, which should have increased

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<sup>445</sup> Panzac, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Veba 1700-1850*, 131.

<sup>446</sup> Panzac, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Veba 1700-1850*, 133-34; Justin McCarthy, Justin McCarthy, “Nineteenth-Century Egyptian Population,” *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 12, no. 3 (1976), 62-63.

the precision of the census. The sultan personally oversaw the endeavour, corresponded with a number of census-takers and gave detailed instructions. After all, the Ottoman state managed to register some 890,000 able-bodied males of fighting age throughout the empire by May 1832, just before Ibrahim Pasha's campaigns in Syria and Anatolia.

Thirdly, the Ottoman state took the census information seriously and *used* it in policy-making, something existing historiography did not pay much attention to. The Ottoman bureaucrats, above all the officials in the *Ceride Nezareti*, processed the census registers (*nüfus defterleri*) for different administrative units and compiled their data into tidy summary registers. The officials then submitted these new *defters* to the high-ranking officers and to the sultan. Over the course of the military expansion and reforms during the 1830s, Ottoman bureaucrats, administrators and commanders utilized and referred to these *defters* in military reorganization and successive levy orders.

In the early 1830s, the Ottoman authorities ordered the conscription of one in every 10 able-bodied Armenians (3,000 men in total) in the *kazas* of Kayseri, Ankara, Konya, Akşehir, Sivas, Divriği and Amasya in order to create “axe-using” labor battalions.<sup>447</sup> After the creation of territorial *Redif* (reserve) formations in 1834, Ottoman officials determined location, size and periodical manpower requirements of these units based on the provincial census records.<sup>448</sup> In summer 1835, the levy order sent to Trabzon province ordered drafting of one in every 10 able-bodied men.<sup>449</sup> In another long draft spree that lasted in December 1835, the numbers of requested conscripts from each

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<sup>447</sup> HAT 17636, A, B, C.

<sup>448</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, vol 5, 963; Cahide Bolat, “Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876)” (Ph.D. thesis., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2000), 26-28.

<sup>449</sup> HAT 28207/A (23 Ra 1251/ 19 July 1835)



district had a visible correlation with the numbers of able-bodied men that had been registered in the population registers 3-4 years ago. The ratios were not random, as the authorities wanted to conscript one in 20-25 men registered as “eligible” in the provincial censuses.<sup>450</sup> In February 1839, another levy decree that targeted several districts in Anatolia ordered the conscription of 4 in 100 able-bodied men living in those districts to the *Mansure* army. The order emphasized that the numbers demanded were based on the available population records.<sup>451</sup>

A treatise from Hüsrev Paşa’s personal library provides insight into the extent of contemporary Ottoman statesmen’s awareness and perceptions regarding the relationship between the population figures, the states’ military-economic might, and designing policies for military reorganization.<sup>452</sup> When observed closely, Ottoman military reforms of 1843 and 1846 had striking similarities in terms of figures and organizational structure that the text’s author recommended some 10 years before.<sup>453</sup> The author was Karl Freiherr von Vincke-Olbendorf (1800-1869), who was one of the four Prussian military advisors in the Ottoman Empire during the 1830s. Commander in Chief (*Serasker*) Hüsrev Paşa probably had it translated into Ottoman Turkish for consultation. Regarding the ongoing Ottoman military reforms and the alleged “Prussian effect” on it, Hüsrev Pasha’s meeting with Helmuth von Moltke (1800-1891) on 15 June 1835 is quoted often. Mahmud II had created the Ottoman reserve army, namely the *Redif Asakir-i Mansure*, about a year prior

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<sup>450</sup> See Table 10.

<sup>451</sup> BOA, ASK.MHM.d (Mühimme-i Asakir Defterleri) no. 31, p. 6. (Evahir Za 1254/ 4-14 February 1839).

<sup>452</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale* (27 B 1252/ 7 November 1836), Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887. For a summary in Turkish, see Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 254-257.

<sup>453</sup> See Table 9.

and von Moltke observed Hüsrev's personal interest and knowledge in the Prussian Landwehr organization in one of his letters. According to von Moltke, Hüsrev made an official request through the Prussian ambassador to extend Moltke's stay in the empire after their meeting. Moltke wrote his famous letters back home for the next five years, in which he shrewdly described the Ottoman state, society and the military campaigns against the Kurds and Egyptians.<sup>454</sup> Von Vincke is presently not as well-known as von Moltke, given his colleague's future fame as the military mind behind German Unification. However, certain parts of his treatise deserves quotation in length, shedding light on what ideas, concepts and information that high-ranking Ottoman decision-makers were exposed to. Von Vincke explained:

In foreign countries, the strength of the armed forces is dependent on the population size, state's income and the country's political/geostrategic (*mevki-i politikiyyesi*) situation. It is presented by the previously enacted broader censuses that half of the population is composed of females and the other half is composed of males<sup>455</sup>... [Von Vincke then gives a detailed assessment of populations, army sizes and military recruitment methods of France, Prussia and Russia]... Ottoman state's [human and financial resources] are not comparable [to those of Russia's], as it draws its military forces solely from a Muslim population of 11 million... [He declares] one of the fundamental principles for every Muslim is to protect the religion and the state with their lives; this is not a recent innovation.... The total [Ottoman] population reaches 20 million, with the addition of non-Muslims, whose taxes can support a force of 150.000 men.<sup>456</sup> But this number would not suffice to fight a great [war], let alone enable [the Ottomans] to play a significant role in the international arena, given the sizable the armies that Europeans could muster. Therefore, it is imperative that the Ottoman military should expand.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 28-30.

<sup>455</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 1b.

<sup>456</sup> Von Vincke does not give any boundaries for the "Ottoman lands." He probably did not include the lands occupied by Mehmed Ali Pasha at the time.

<sup>457</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 4a-b.

The treatise provided a wealth of historically accurate information on contemporary European countries' populations and military machinery, possibly addressed to high-ranking Ottomans.<sup>458</sup> Von Vincke then compares the French and Prussian recruitment systems and promotes the “superiority” of the latter, due to training and maintaining a larger pool of reservists even though Prussia had a smaller active army than France. He suggests the Ottomans to follow the Prussian system, because the Ottoman Muslim population (i.e. conscriptable) was closer to that of Prussia's rather than the highly populous France. If implemented fully, the Prussian military system of using a smaller active army supported by a large pool of reservists would create a large force in the case of full-scale military mobilization.<sup>459</sup> He notes that a population of one million people would produce 7,000 20-year old males every year. He makes a quick assessment for the Ottoman land army and navy: Of 11 million Muslim subjects, 10 million should be allocated to the army and 1 million to the navy. Thus, every year 70,000 recruits could become available for the Ottoman land forces. He recommends taking 30,000 of these young men into the first line regiments by a draft lottery to serve for five years and leave the rest as reservists. After deducting the yearly attrition, he reasoned, the active army, first-class and second-class reserves would amount to 140,000, 140,000 and 160,000 men respectively in five years.<sup>460</sup> Von Vincke noted that if the Ottoman state permitted enrolment of non-Muslims to increase the size of the armed forces in times of mobilization, their yearly recruit intake should not exceed 1000 men. Von Vincke

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<sup>458</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 1b-4b. Table 11 details the numerical data in the treatise.

<sup>459</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 4b.

<sup>460</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 5a-6b.

recommended that the Ottoman authorities should exempt the discharged non-Muslims from the *cizye* and underlined the necessity of their voluntary recruitment to assure their military effectiveness.<sup>461</sup>

Military reform was not the only reason that the Ottoman authorities carried out a census. The surveyors counted and registered non-Muslim as well as Muslim populations in the provinces, information that could prove to be invaluable in a time of discontent, rebellion or full-scale war with a foreign power. Furthermore, the Ottoman fiscal bureaucracy could use 1829-32 census data to have a better grasp of *avarız* and *cizye* sources since they learned more precise and comprehensive numbers for the non-Muslims living in the empire. This also signalled the possible changes regarding the taxation of non-Muslims, such as bypassing intermediaries (e.g. non-Muslim clergy, provincial power holders) and imposing taxes on individuals rather than estimated groups of households (*avarız hanesi*) lumped together as a taxation unit. Indeed, Ahmed Lütfi Efendi mentioned in his chronicle that the Ottoman ministers (*vükelâ*) considered abolishing all the customary taxes (*tekalif-i miriye*) to impose a fixed tax of 150 *kuruş* on every male subject (“*ale’l-eşhas vergi tahsisi*”).<sup>462</sup> To Ahmed Lütfi’s credit, Mahmud II reviewed a detailed report from the Deliberative Council of the Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-i Bab-ı Ali*) in April 1838, which harboured serious discussions of establishing direct universal taxation. The Ottoman state was to retain the major taxes of religious essence (*öşür* and *cizye*) and the customs duties would be while all other current taxes

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<sup>461</sup> *Asakir-i Muvazzafa Hakkında Risale*, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887, 6b.

<sup>462</sup> Ahmed Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, vol. 3, 643. However, they would keep *öşür* (tithe) which was levied on agricultural production and sanctioned by Islam.

was to be abolished. Every Ottoman male subject was to pay 150 *kuruş* a year. In response, Mahmud II wanted to know the total revenues before proceeding further.<sup>463</sup> A year after, the Tanzimat Decree promulgated the abolition of tax-farming and the imposition of universal taxation based on the “ability to pay.” In 1840-42, the Ottoman state tried to collect its revenues by employing centrally appointed tax-collectors (*muhassıls*) instead of tax-farmers (*mültezims*) for a short time. The reason cited for the experiment’s cancellation was its prohibitive expenses. However, the opposition of interest groups, who had been the beneficiaries of the pre-Tanzimat order, must have influenced the decision to revert to tax-farming.<sup>464</sup>

The continuous mobilization had been taking its toll on the Muslim population perhaps since the major wars and military reforms of Mahmud II. Ottoman conscription evidently became a life and death matter for the ordinary Muslim subject. One of the recurring themes in the European eye-witness accounts is despaired pregnant women who resorted to abort their babies in order to avoid their induction into the imperial army.<sup>465</sup>

Frank Calvert, the British consul at the Dardanelles observed

There are several causes at work [in explaining depopulation]. There is the conscription; the men whom it takes are never heard of again. They die, or

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<sup>463</sup> BOA, BEO, AYN 1729, pp. 4-5. (28 M 1254/ 22 April 1838). Stanford Shaw mentions an earlier order that promulgated similar policies, dated 23 February 1838. Stanford J. Shaw, “The Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System” *IJMES* 6 (1974), 422.

<sup>464</sup> Coşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat Dönemi, Osmanlı Maliyesi* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), 47, 282.

<sup>465</sup> The parallels between the responses of pregnant enslaved and Ottoman women whose children would face a certain harsh life and/or likely death are striking. “Some historians claim that slave women in the Caribbean commonly practiced abortion and infanticide as what Orlando Patterson terms “a gynaecological revolt against the system.” In one case in Jamaica, a slave mother defended the killing of her child on the grounds that ‘she had worked enough for *bukra* (master) already and that she would not be plagued to raise the child . . . to work for white people’ Teelucksingh gives further examples whereby slave midwives allegedly killed the babies they delivered. There were also cases in the United States of slave mothers killing their children to keep them from the horrors of slavery.” Gwyn Campbell, “Children and Slavery in the New World: A Review” *Slavery and Abolition* vol. 27 no. 2 (2006), 267.

they cannot find their way back. Turkish women of the lower classes try very mischievous means to avoid having many children. Few Turks have more than three; indeed, they seldom have more than two... Whatever be the explanation, the fact that the Turks are rapidly dying out is obvious.<sup>466</sup>

Ottoman authorities, who became more interested about the correlation between the country's military-fiscal needs and its population, developed a comprehensive stance towards abortion in the empire during the era in question.<sup>467</sup> The new reform councils prepared a series of reports and policies, which Mahmud II subsequently ratified with a decree 1838. In these documents, abortion was prohibited since it had "negative effects on population growth and its adverse effects on state power." Furthermore, although there was not a clear Islamic ban on abortion, the imperial decision was legitimized on a religious basis, condemning the act as going "against the will of God."<sup>468</sup> The imperial decree ordered the Muslim and non-Muslim midwives in the capital and the provinces to swear before their local religious leaders that they would not be providing drugs for abortion. The non-Muslim doctors and pharmacists in Istanbul were ordered to do the same.<sup>469</sup> It is hard to determine the effect of these decrees on the population as well as the commonness of abortion. However, the effort signifies the increasing attention and

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<sup>466</sup> Calvert's explanation is quoted in Nassau William Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the Autumn of 1857 and the Beginning of 1858* (London, 1859), 163-164.

<sup>467</sup> Akşin Somel, "The issue of abortion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire," paper presented at 9<sup>th</sup> *International Congress of Economic and Social History of Turkey* (Dubrovnik-Croatia, 20-23 August 2002), 346. For an original Ottoman treatise on political-economy that was penned in 1840s, see Serandi Arşizen, *Osmanlı'da bir Politik İktisad Kiiatbı: Tasarrufât-ı Mülkiye*, eds. Hamdi Genç and M. Erdem Özgür (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2011), especially pp. 13-24 for Arşizen's discussions on population.

<sup>468</sup> Tuba Demirci and Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Women's Bodies, Demography and Public Health: Abortion Policy and Perspectives in the Ottoman Empire of Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 17 no. 3 (2008), 388-389;

<sup>469</sup> Demirci and Somel, "Women's Bodies, Demography and Public Health," 389.

further intrusion of the Ottoman state into its subjects' lives for its military-fiscal purposes.

#### **4.5 Ottoman population surveys, 1832-1844 - or did the “1844 Census” really happen?**

The Mahmudian regime strove to expand the areas surveyed after its first comprehensive census endeavour in 1829-32. Furthermore, the central authority tried to monitor the demographic changes and the population movements by establishing new bureaucratic bodies and practices mainly in the “core provinces” and Istanbul, simultaneously with the census-taking process. In the seats of districts and provinces, the Ottoman state founded the “Directorates for [Registering] Population” (*Nüfus Nazırlıkları*) to update the population information retained by the *Ceride Nezareti* in the capital.<sup>470</sup> The central state also designed and issued internal passports to the individuals (*mürur tezkereleri*) to monitor and control their movement in the empire.<sup>471</sup>

Most of the students of later Ottoman history, who were influenced by the exaggerated figures cited by Ubicini in 1850s,<sup>472</sup> referred to a certain “1844 census,” which the Ottoman government allegedly took after the Tanzimat Decree and was allegedly more complete and accurate than the general survey in 1829-32. Indeed, the decree promulgated a new, empire-wide census to distribute the burden of taxation and conscription in a fairer fashion. The central authority carried out an extensive survey of households, animals, fields and other sources of revenues in the early 1840s, which were

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<sup>470</sup> Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Sürecinde Ülke Yönetimi* (Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 2007) 131-132.

<sup>471</sup> Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Sürecinde Ülke Yönetimi*, 155.

<sup>472</sup> M. A Ubicini, *Lettres sur la Turquie*, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Librairie Militaire de J. Dumaine, 1853), 21-28. Ubicini claimed that he obtained authentic Ottoman documents and his figures were based on them.

often referred to as *temettuat tahrirleri* recorded in hundreds of special registers (*temettuat defterleri*).<sup>473</sup> Finally, it is a fact that the Ottoman government carried out a new census in the capital in 1844 with results that differed from the earlier survey in 1829.<sup>474</sup>

A detailed summary report from the BOA from summer 1843 (and not 1844) shows that 2.90 million Muslim males (mainly in the South of Danube in the Balkans and West of Euphrates in Anatolia) and estimated some 1.16 million Muslim males (predominantly in Western Albania, Kurdistan and Greater Syria) in the provinces. Therefore, the number of Muslim males that was actually registered by the state (excluding those estimated) as of the summer of 1843 was not drastically different from that was recorded in 1830-32, which had been 2.52 million. More strikingly, the difference between the population figures living in the areas that were both surveyed as of 1832 and 1843 was minimal: the state registered some 65,000 additional Muslim males in 11 years.<sup>475</sup> Based on a report drawn by the *Meclis-i Tanzimat* (Council of Tanzimat) in 1856, it could be even argued that the Ottoman bureaucracy's knowledge on the number of its Muslim male subjects changed only incrementally after 1843. The report assumed that there were 4.5 million Muslim males in the empire as of 1856.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Mehmet Güneş, "Osmanlı Dönemi Nüfus Sayımları ve Bu Sayımları İçeren Kayıtların Tahlili," *Akademik Bakış* no. 15 (2014), 234-237; Nuri Adıyeke, "Temettuat Sayımları ve Bu Sayımları Düzenleyen Nizamname Örnekleri," *OTAM* no. 11 (2000), 769-823. Most of these *temettuat* surveys were compiled in 1840 and 1844-45.

<sup>474</sup> See Table 8.

<sup>475</sup> Table 9.

<sup>476</sup> Yet a subsequent report in June 1856 found the previous figure rather low and made another estimation that put the number of Muslim males at 6.035 million and non-Muslim males at 3.5 million. Ufuk Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa Osmanlı'nın Gayrimüslim Askerleri* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2010), 81-82.



The Ottoman central authority did not carry out a new census in 1844 except for in the capital. What happened probably was that between 1832 and 1843, the Ottoman state constantly updated its initial registers that had been compiled in 1830-32 through its bureaucratic bodies, such as the *Ceride Nezareti* in the capital and the *nüfus nazırlıkları* in the provinces.<sup>477</sup> The Ottoman bureaucracy did not gather any detailed demographic data based on the *temettuat* surveys in the 1840s, which often recorded the number of households but not the total number of their dwellers.<sup>478</sup> Since the figures in the abovementioned 1856 report are not much different from the 1843 report, we can deduce that the Ottoman bureaucracy either did not really extract any population data from the *temettuat* registers after 1845, and if it gathered any population data from the *temettuat* registers, these figures did not change their existent data from 1843 in any significant way. Based on all of the sources discussed, it is striking to see that the census data compiled by the Mahmudian regime constituted the core of the demographic information that Ottoman state possessed as late as 1856.

The Ottoman government continued to view and use census-taking as a matter of centralization, national security and social control in the years following 1839. Ordinary Ottoman subjects, who were potential conscripts and taxpayers, did not change their overall attitudes towards the census-taking process after the Tanzimat Decree, as the central authority still strove to carry out new surveys covertly in Arab provinces in the

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<sup>477</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman bureaucracy also used similar practices to update the demographic information it had rather than conducting new censuses.

<sup>478</sup> There are some exceptions to this practice.

1840s.<sup>479</sup> In February 1844, a worrisome Greek-Ottoman pharmacist named Yorgi from Istanbul commented that “[this new] census is not a random thing. They [i.e. Ottoman government] must be doing it because of its suspicions. They will learn how many foreigners and [Ottoman subjects] are living [in Istanbul].”<sup>480</sup> In winter 1844-45, the census-takers and press gangs closely collaborated in collecting the bachelors and unemployed of the capital for the imperial army. Many of these men died in the nearby Princes Islands because of the cold and lack of proper facilities.<sup>481</sup> Unsurprisingly, some of the well-off and settled Istanbulites from various ethno-religious backgrounds agreed with the state policies of social control. A Greek-Ottoman jeweller named Kostaki was heard saying “The census is becoming a swell practice indeed, which will discern some unregistered thieves and pickpockets that have been causing a lot of trouble [in the capital]. In the end, everyone will have a peace of mind.”<sup>482</sup> Hacı Hüseyin Efendi, a rice seller in Istanbul said “this census is a great practice, everywhere is now cleansed (*ortalık temizlendi*)... There were many improper men in Galata and Beyoğlu [neighbourhoods], one was afraid to pass through those places. Now, thanks to his imperial majesty, everyone is at ease since those are gone.”<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Tobias Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, trans. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 196, 200. In many instances, the Ottoman government collected the recruits without using any census data and drawing lots in Anatolia, Albania, Kurdistan and Arabia in 1840s. Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 171-173, 192-193, 196, 199.

<sup>480</sup> İ. DH 4270 (8 Safer 1260/28 February 1844) in Cengiz Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde “Havadis Jurnalleri”* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), 451.

<sup>481</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 161-162.

<sup>482</sup> İ. DH 4270 (5 S 1260/25 February 1844) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 450.

<sup>483</sup> İ. DH 4302 (21 Ra 1260/ 10 April 1844) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 460.

## Conclusion

In 1846, a decade after the first Ottoman “modern” census, one of Istanbul’s initial “inspiration,” then nemesis, and now a “loyal subject,” Mehmed Ali Pasha spoke grimly on his ongoing census efforts in Egypt:

Hekakyan! [to one of his close advisers] We have no men –we have no men- everybody hides his money. They will not believe they are safe-their children will. Egypt is small: but is there a finer country? How rich it might be made. What think you, that we have five millions of inhabitants? The highest number allowed was three millions and it was generally supported to be two millions and a half. I told the Shaikhys at Mansourah that they must assist me in census. They understand what it means –but as they wish to escape the just burden of service in men and money they are induced to give indirect opposition. I have determined to effect the entire establishment of the European system. I told the Shaikhs that I would surround some of their villages, and if I found they had deceived me that I would put them to death. I think the true number must be more than five millions- but the census must be repeated- and by and by we shall have a correct one.<sup>484</sup>

Census-taking was indeed a serious business in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Middle East, just as elsewhere as the warfare increasingly became an affair between entire “people under arms.” Far in the north, the Swedish state had been using tax and parish records extensively to know the number of able-bodied men in times of war as early as in the reign of Gustavus Adolphus during 1620s. Based on the clerical-bureaucratic monitoring of the population, Sweden began producing comprehensive statistics on its demographics in 1749, the contents of which were considered as a state secret.<sup>485</sup> The military-fiscal needs of Peter I’s (r. 1682-1725) foreign policy and reforms dictated his census-taking

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<sup>484</sup> Camron Michael Amin et al eds., *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History*, (Oxford UP, 2009), 41-42.

<sup>485</sup> Peter Sköld, “The Birth of Population Statistics in Sweden,” *History of the Family* 9 (2004), 5-21.

efforts, which succeeding Russian monarchs eagerly assumed for the similar reasons. With the help of census data, the Russian state managed to put some 2.5 million serfs in uniform practically for life between 1700 and 1799.<sup>486</sup> Soon after his ascension to the Austrian throne, Joseph II (1765-1790) conducted a thorough survey “to determine the availability of men, supplies, and even animals that could be used for war. Not only was the population counted, it was categorized along social lines in order to ensure that only the expendable lower classes were drafted.”<sup>487</sup>

To better expand its authority and defend its territories, the Mahmudian regime wanted to know the empire’s potential sources of manpower, revenues and domestic threats during the 1820s – 1830s. Ottoman bureaucrats and decision-makers processed, reviewed and utilized the collected data while crafting their military and fiscal policies. Apart from learning the accessible manpower for *Asakir-i Mansure*, the Mahmudian regime had other things in mind as it took successive censuses in the tumultuous years between 1821 and 1829, primarily in the imperial capital. It wanted to locate and monitor the perceived “threats” to the new regime and social-political order, such as “hidden” Greeks rebels, “disloyal” Orthodox-Armenians, “unruly” Muslim bachelors and “vagabonds,” and “conspiring” ex-Janissaries. The Ottoman government also wanted to know the number of able-bodied Muslims whom it could either hastily arm in the event of a full-fledged Greek revolt in Istanbul, or throw at the advancing Russian armies in the

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<sup>486</sup> Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 137-138; Arcadius Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout: An Economic History of Eighteenth Century Russia*, ed. Richard Hellie (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), 7-44.

<sup>487</sup> Arthur Mark Boerke, “Conscription in the Habsburg Empire to 1815” in *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era*, Donald Stoker et al eds. (London: Routledge, 2009), 72.

Balkans. After the Ottoman-Russian War of 1828-29, the Ottoman authorities carried out a series of population surveys to learn the number of Muslim and non-Muslim males in 1830-32. Despite imperfections of these surveys, the Ottoman state used the collected census data to administer the recruitment, placement and size of the regular and reserve regiments, especially those drawn from the “core” European and Anatolian provinces. Based on the its internal correspondences, the demographic data gathered during the reign of Mahmud II remained at the core of the Ottoman government’s knowledge on its population as late as 1856.

The aims, nature and utilization of Mahmudian censuses were an integral part of the Ottoman political-military transformation during the troubled years during 1820s-1840s. The censuses empowered the Ottoman government (and weakened the ordinary individual subjects) to extract more revenues and soldiers from its peoples by providing it more accurate and comprehensive information on the populace. Their information also enabled the Ottoman state to develop its comprehensive military, economic and domestic policies. The Ottoman state became more involved and more efficient in moving, controlling and reconfiguring its subject populations by improving its age-old instrument of population engineering, such as exiles, mass deportations and –if need be- mass killings.

## **Chapter 5: Imperial Power, Ideology and the Ottoman Peoples**

This chapter will further investigate the realities of military and ideological mobilization of Mahmudian and early Tanzimat eras. The other goal here will be to explore to what extent Ottoman decision-makers' plans and propaganda worked in practice. It will first detail the Ottoman military build-up and organization in 1826 to mid-1840s. Then, I will concentrate on the Ottoman state's recruitment strategies concerning the social and ethno-religious backgrounds of its subjects.

From the destruction of the Janissary Corps in 1826 to the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853–56), the Ottoman state dispatched tens of thousands of soldiers to battlegrounds in Anatolia, Kurdistan, Syria, and in the Balkans. Despite the catastrophic losses it suffered, especially between 1821 and 1841, the reformed Ottoman army enlarged continuously and drafted new recruits to maintain its size. To meet the mounting manpower needs, the Ottoman state forcibly conscripted Muslim peasants and the urban poor for its newly formed regiments. The chapter examines the conscripts' social background, and the responses of both the general public and the serving soldiers to military service. It will also analyze how religion, ethno-cultural identity, social status, and the actual experience of military service shaped the state's recruitment policies and the subjects' attitudes toward conscription in an era before modern sentiments of nationhood took root among the Muslim peoples of the empire.

### **5.1 Expansion of the Regular Army, 1826-1846**

The earlier Ottoman plans for creating a disciplined army outside the existing military formations projected its strength around 100,000-150,000 troops. In 1808, *Sekban-ı Cedid*

was planned to be a 100,000-strong force organized in 100 regiments.<sup>488</sup> The Ottoman government could only raise a force from 4,000 to 7,400 men due to the efforts of Alemdar Mustafa Paşa and local notables as well as enlisting the remnants of *Nizam-ı Cedid* troops.<sup>489</sup> According to official chronicler Ahmed Lütî Ottoman reformers envisaged the disciplined *Eşkinici Ocağı* to be 100,000 men strong in 1826.<sup>490</sup> After the “Auspicious Event”, they also wanted *Asakir-i Mansure* to be of similar size: “A proposed state budget prepared at that time by Keçecizade İzzet Molla made provisions for 100,000 *Mansure* infantry and 15,000 *Mansure* cavalry, exclusive of Guards, Artillery, Marines and [other] smaller corps.”<sup>491</sup>

At its creation, the Ottoman leadership intended *Asakir-i Mansure* to be 12,000-men strong, organized into eight *tertibs* (regiments), mainly stationed in Istanbul.<sup>492</sup> Soon, the sultan ordered its governors to raise other “new model” regiments in the provinces. At the end of 1826, the paper-strength of *Mansure* army was about 25,000, and was organized in 31 battalions that were deployed in the Balkans, Anatolia and Istanbul.<sup>493</sup> Soon, there were 3,600 men in Edirne and 2,400 men in Bursa under training as of March 1827.<sup>494</sup> In October 1827, a large drill was staged in the capital with some 4,000 men and officers organized in four regiments.<sup>495</sup> A month later, a report indicated (in truncated

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<sup>488</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 3.

<sup>489</sup> Avigdor Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II” (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 1968), 56-57.

<sup>490</sup> Ahmed Lütî, *Tarih-i Lütî*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel and Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 96, 131-32, 144.

<sup>491</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 371.

<sup>492</sup> Veli Şirin, *Asakir-i Mansure Ordusu ve Seraskerlik* (İstanbul: Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları, 2002), 94-106.

<sup>493</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 372.

<sup>494</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 194.

<sup>495</sup> Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 237.

numbers) that the central army was composed of 25,000 *Mansure*, 2,500 *Hassa* (Guard), 1,600 *Cebthane* (armorer) and 400 *Mehterhane* (military musician) troops in 36.5 battalions, in addition to 9,000 cannonneers, 8,000 household soldiers of the state dignitaries and 4,500 various support troops.<sup>496</sup> A detailed register compiled in September 1828 shows at least 13,283 regular infantry and 1,166 regular cavalry were in muster rolls.<sup>497</sup>

The creation and enlargement of the regular and reserve units continued throughout the 1830s and 1840s. A detailed organizational table from the mid-1830s, for instance, set the cadre strengths of the land army as follows: 58,038 *Mansure*, 55,429 *Redif* infantry, 15,820 cavalry and 9,454 artilleryists,<sup>498</sup> which can be reconciled with other records from the same time period. By 1837, the *Mansure* army had drawn some 161,000 conscripts into its ranks since its creation in 1826, while its effective force was 47,000 men strong.<sup>499</sup> Its muster rolls indicated that *Redif* army expanded to a 50,000-men strong force from 1834 to 1838.<sup>500</sup> At the battle of Nizib in 1839, there were 25,000 disciplined infantry, cavalry, and artillery in the 34,000-men-strong field army.<sup>501</sup> In the early 1840s, some 81,000 *Nizamiye* and 50,000 *Redif* soldiers appeared on the muster rolls, visibly

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<sup>496</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 373.

<sup>497</sup> KK 7042 (September 1828).

<sup>498</sup> The figures are rounded. Source: HAT 18450 and HAT 18561- B. Dated 1250Z 29 1 (28 April 1835) by BOA. See Table 12 for a detailed breakdown.

<sup>499</sup> Şimşek, "The First 'Little Mehmeds,'" 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK (Kamil Kepeci) 6799.

<sup>500</sup> The total number of *Redif* soldiers amounted to 53,851 in 1838. BOA, D. ASM 38883, also cited in Veysel Şimşek, "The First 'Little Mehmeds': Conscripts for the Ottoman Army, 1826–53." *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 44 (2014), 265n1.

<sup>501</sup> Quoted from William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, vol. 1 (London, 1842), 316. Moltke also provided a similar figure; 25,000–28,000 regular infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 256.



outnumbering the irregular troops.<sup>502</sup> At the outbreak of the Crimean War, “the number of regular forces that were intended to be summoned at Şumnu, Varna and the Danubian coast as 8,000 artillerymen, 63,934 infantrymen (*redif* and *nizam*) and 10,240 cavalrymen, totaling 82,174 regular forces... [t]here would be 50,200 men in Istanbul and 26,190 on the Anatolian front, with the regular forces totaling 158,564 men.”<sup>503</sup> By the mid-1840s, perhaps as many as 300,000 men in total had been inducted into the Ottoman military, with the drilling, marching, and parading uniformed soldiers a common sight in Istanbul and in many of the provinces. According to the 1829–32 censuses, this figure represented more than one-tenth of all Muslim males registered and one-fourth of all men considered eligible for military service by the Ottoman authorities.<sup>504</sup> Three decades earlier, about 1.5 million Frenchmen had been conscripted during the Consulate period (1796–99) and following the imperial era (1804–14), which corresponded to 7 percent of the population in the pre-revolutionary borders of France.<sup>505</sup> Thus we can compare the unprecedented level of Ottoman mobilization from the 1820s to the 1840s to that of France during the Napoleonic Wars.

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<sup>502</sup> BOA, İ.MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ) 42/ 782 (H. M-Z 1257/ March 1840-February 1841), İ. DH (İrade Dahiliye) 68/ 3357 (H. 1258/ 1842), İ. MSM 11/ 224 (H. 1260/ 1844). Also see Table 12.

<sup>503</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, “Ottoman War on the Danube, State, Subject, and Soldier (1853-1856)” (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2013), 128. Based on an Ottoman report regarding the preparation for the war. Köremezli, p. 128. Candan Badem noted that the Ottoman military establishment mobilized between 145,000 and 178,000 troops in Rumelia, and at least 87,000 in Anatolia after the hostilities had started. These numbers likely include both regular and irregular soldiers. Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 103, 145-146.

<sup>504</sup> Numerical data is compiled from Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831* (Ankara: T.C Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943), D.ASM 37912, BOA, TS.MA.d (Topkapı Sarayı Müze Arşivi Defterleri) 4895 (H. 29 Receb 1247/ 30 May 1832), accessed from BOA. Istanbul's population is drawn from BOA, NFS.d (Nüfus Defterleri) 567 (dated by the archive as H. 1260/ 1844-1845, but apparently the figures shown were taken in Istanbul's previous census in the late 1820s).

<sup>505</sup> H. D. Blanton, “Conscription in France during the era of Napoleon,” in *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era*, eds. Donald Stoker et al (London: Routledge, 2009), 19-20.

## 5.2 The Selection and Social Background of Ottoman Conscripts

Some of the first *Asakir-i Mansure* recruits came from the personal retinues of state dignitaries, from religious schools, and from lower-ranking *ulema* in Istanbul. The guards of Bosphorus fortresses, sappers, bombardiers, cannon, and cannon-wagon corps who remained loyal to Mahmud during the “Auspicious Event” were soon incorporated into the new army.<sup>506</sup> Subsequent purges showed that some ex-Janissaries also ended up as *Mansure* soldiers. Some ex-Janissary officers, who proved to be loyal during the showdown in the capital, were commissioned to lead the new military formations. The most famous of these was perhaps Ağa Hüseyin Paşa, a former commander of the Corps who closely collaborated in its destruction and was appointed by the sultan as the *serasker* (commander in chief) of the new *Mansure* army. Finally, surviving soldiers and officers, who had once enrolled in *Nizam-ı Cedid* army and were seen as desirable troops, were called up and some of them served as officers and drill-masters of the *Mansure* army.<sup>507</sup> Consequently, there appeared some 300-350 discharged *Mansure* pensioners from Istanbul on pay rolls in 1837-38.<sup>508</sup> After the death of Mahmud II, the Ottoman government continued to consider Istanbul as a source of its military manpower. In 1845-46, for instance, Istanbul’s male population (recorded as 99,294 souls) was allocated to the recruitment pool of the army of Rumelia.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütüfi*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel and Tamer Erdoğan (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 117; Levy, “Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” 179, 360-361.

<sup>507</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 173, 177, 188, 320.

<sup>508</sup> Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds,’” 274n35.

<sup>509</sup> *Asakir-i Cedideye Ait Taksim Cedveli* (1262/ 1845-46) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 840.

Before the comprehensive military reforms and the drafting of military codes in the 1840s, the duties and powers of the recruiters and the recruiting process were not defined comprehensively. In general, however, the task of finding recruits during the reign of Mahmud II fell to local notables and various community and tribal leaders. Military officers, administrators, scribes, and members of *ulema* (especially *kadıs*) could be appointed by the center to oversee recruitment at the local level.<sup>510</sup> In practice, the procedures of conscription were not uniform throughout the empire, despite attempts at reform and improvement. In one place, recruitment parties could round up men arbitrarily, while in another, draft boards would use census records and draw lots to conduct a fairer selection process.

There is documentary evidence of draft lotteries before the Tanzimat era and the more comprehensive military reforms of 1843 and 1846. The wording of these levy orders suggests that the authorities considered the method “just,” because able-bodied men from both “the rich and the poor” had an equal chance to be selected.<sup>511</sup> But it would be the conscription code of 1846 that fully defined the composition and duties of the draft boards, the methods of recruitment, and those eligible for draft lotteries. Every year, on *Rûz-ı Hızır* (May 5), all male inhabitants aged twenty to twenty-five were obliged to gather in the administrative center of each *kaza*. The local judge, notables, and religious

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<sup>510</sup> For the sample levy orders and the role of local notables, see BOA, C. ZB (Cevdet Zabtiye) 3780 (H. Evasıt C 1245/ December 1829); C. ZB 2074 (H. 3 Za 1247/ 4 April 1832); Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, 643.

<sup>511</sup> For the levy order to Tırnova, see BOA, C. As (Cevdet Askeriye) 46712 (H. 13 R 1253/ 17 July 1837). For another example in 1837, see Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil Defterinin,” 444-445. It is noteworthy that the recommended selection procedure in the latter document was almost identical to the procedure described by the conscription code of 1846.

dignitaries constituted the mixed draft board (*kur'a meclisi*). The state was to provide military officers, doctors, clerks, and other personnel to the board to execute required medical examinations and to oversee bureaucratic procedures. The boards were to choose eligible young men by lottery who would serve for five years in the *Nizamiye* army. Discharged soldiers and those civilians who were not conscripted for five consecutive years during the drawing of lots would serve in the *Redif* regiments for seven years.<sup>512</sup>

The state granted a wide range of exemptions to members of the scribal, clerical, and administrative classes. Members of the scribal and administrative bureaucracy were not required to serve.<sup>513</sup> Members of the religious and judicial elite were also spared, a policy that traces back to the early 1830s.<sup>514</sup> The list of exempted persons also included *imams* (prayer leaders), *müezzins* (prayer callers), *hüteba* (preachers), and *kayyiman* (caretakers of the mosques). *Medrese* (religious school) students had to pass an examination to obtain an exemption from the lottery, exams carried out by *alay imamları* (regimental chaplains) or *mümeyyizler* (examiners) from religious schools. The law, at least on paper, prevented the conscription of those whose enlistment would bring calamity to their families. For instance, an eligible man who was the sole breadwinner of his household, had elderly parents, or was the son of a widow was exempt from conscription.<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Articles 4, 7, 8, 14, 15, 25, pp. 5-7, 10-11, 15.

<sup>513</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Articles 14, 15, pp. 10-11.

<sup>514</sup> During the empire-wide census in the early 1830s, the census-takers did not put the religious students (*talebe-i ulüm*) under the category of militarily eligible men in Amasya, Tırnova, Bursa, and Eskişehir. Karal, *İlk Nüfus Sayımı*, 44-45, 94-95, 110, 148.

<sup>515</sup> For details on exemptions, see *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Articles, 7, 14, 15, 18-23, pp. 6, 10-14.

Istanbul's population, and more specifically the lower orders of the capital, was considered a readily accessible source for the new army. A variety of incidents and documents indicate that the state clearly considered bachelors, vagrants (*serseris*), non-registered or "excess" shopkeepers, vegetable sellers, and other migrant day workers an easily accessible group for induction into the regular army, while the recruiters were instructed and even reprimanded for forcefully recruiting the settled men in 1830s and 1840s.<sup>516</sup> It was no coincidence that the surveyors flagged the bachelors as well as other young men in the censuses of Istanbul in 1826 and 1829. According to Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, the 1826 census showed that there were 17,000 males between 15 and 45 in Istanbul. In 1829 census, the authorities counted 26,601 bachelors in total (150 "children," 7,524 "old" and 18,387 "young"). A population register from 1834 gives the total number of bachelors living in the capital as 17,104.<sup>517</sup> The difference –some 9,000 persons- that occurred might have well pressed into the active army in the five years after 1829. This policy did not change after Tanzimat either. In 1843, a certain Mehmed from Kastamoni, who was working as a hearth cleaner and "living in a [bachelor] room" complained

It became extremely difficult to earn money in Istanbul. There will neither be any peace [of mind for me], if I return back to [my home] province. It has been 8 months that I had come from [my home] province, I couldn't accumulate even one *kuruş*. They (Ottoman authorities, recruiters?) did not leave even one man in our province; they inducted everyone to the army. The injustice is towards the poor [or weak] everywhere.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>516</sup> Şimşek, "The First "Little Mehmeds," 276-77.

<sup>517</sup> See Table 8.

<sup>518</sup> İ. DH 4022 (13 B 1259/ 9 August 1843) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 423.

A year later, in June 1844, a water-bearer named Murtaza from Malatya was heard saying “no one is coming from the provinces since the time they conscripted men in the capital...”<sup>519</sup>

The “substitutes”<sup>520</sup> were another source of conscripts, sent by those who did not want to serve themselves and who could afford to arrange for a replacement. The practice began during the reign of Mahmud II,<sup>521</sup> and it was formally abolished only in 1886.<sup>522</sup> The temporary 1844 code and the 1846 conscription code recognized and further regulated the rules and the procedures of substitute selection.<sup>523</sup> The 1846 conscription code stipulated that the eligible substitute be a healthy man between twenty-five and thirty (thus outside the designated manpower pool for the *Nizamiye* army), had not served in *Nizamiye*, and hail from the same army district as the applicant. It permitted the sending of substitutes for those whose occupation might be ruined if he was inducted to the army for five years. It was forbidden to sell a house, farmland, or farm equipment to cover the expense of finding a substitute. Therefore, only affluent subjects appeared to have had this option;<sup>524</sup> as one Turkish folk song had put: “Our rich are exempted for money, our soldiers are of the needy.”<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> İ. DH 4398 (22 Ca 1260 / 9 June 1844) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 467.

<sup>520</sup> “*Bedel*” in the conscription code of 1846 and “*bedel-i şahsi*” in the conscription code of 1870. Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 156.

<sup>521</sup> *Kanunname-i Ceza-i Askeriye*, Article 37, pp. 119-120.

<sup>522</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 158.

<sup>523</sup> C.As 6095 (H. 23 S 1258/ 5 April 1842); *Nizamat-ı Cedide-i Askeriye Kanunnamesi* (Includes the temporary Conscription Regulations), H. Evahir M 1260 [February 1844] Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 815 M1, Article 54, p. 65; *Kur’a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 28, pp. 16-17.

<sup>524</sup> *Kur’a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 28, pp. 16-17.

<sup>525</sup> “*Zenginimiz bedel verir, askerimiz fakirdendir.*” The song is probably from a later era; the word “*bedel*” here likely denotes the exemption money rather than the substitute sent. In contemporary France, the search for substitutes created a large “market”: Every year, about 20,000 “victims” of draft lotteries paid for

The founding ordinance of the *Asakir-i Mansure* and the following regulations on military recruitment specifically wanted the recruits to be without criminal records. In a number of cases, however, Ottoman authorities inducted those they considered criminals, rebels, vagabonds and idlers into the regular army. Following a common practice of the time, the Ottoman state thus sometimes used military service as a kind of “punishment,” a tool for social control and an instrument that could turn the “useless” into someone “useful” for the state.<sup>526</sup>

During the centralization efforts from the 1820s to the 1850s, the Ottoman state subjected “reconquered” populations to military service as quickly as possible. Here, the imperial army served as an immediate instrument of military recruitment. Some 20,000 Albanians and Bosnians, whose recent revolts had been crushed, were pressed into service in Reşid Mehmed Pasha’s army that countered the invading Egyptian forces in 1832–33. To “persuade” them to fight, the army took hostages from the population and kept them in the Ottoman fortresses in the Balkans.<sup>527</sup> Reşid Pasha, the governor of Sivas, recruited “a lot of regular soldiers” from the tribesmen and nomads in the Kurdish areas in Southeastern Anatolia in the summer of 1835 after pacifying them.<sup>528</sup> After the forceful occupation of Tal Afar in Northern Iraq by six infantry and cavalry battalions in 1837, the

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substitutes, and after the 1820s, “insurance companies” emerged even in the countryside to provide a steady guarantee for those who continuously “invested” large sums of money into the system. In the 1850s, the substitutes, who were mostly the “poor lads seeking a way to raise some money, or veterans who meant to re-enlist in any case and who, this way, made a profit on their decision,” constituted one-fourth of the yearly recruit intake. (Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1976), 292-293) It would be interesting to see what sort of interaction and bargaining happened over finding substitutes at the societal and bureaucratic levels in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman context.

<sup>526</sup> For several examples of this practice, see Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 278.

<sup>527</sup> Frederick Anscombe, “Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform,” *Past and Present* 208 (2010), 181.

<sup>528</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 244-245.

Ottoman central forces captured 3,000 men; 500 among them were distributed to the army regiments.<sup>529</sup> The Ottoman central forces continued to press the Kurds against their will in areas “reconquered” in Kurdistan between 1835 and 39.<sup>530</sup> During 1842–45, the Ottoman center managed to forcibly conscript some 20,000 Albanians into the central army, causing widespread discontent in the region.<sup>531</sup> After 1839, regular forces continued to accompany recruitment parties and census-takers to increase the success of these operations and confront any possible challenge.<sup>532</sup>

Another reality of the era was the continual appearance of underage boys and sick men in army ranks.<sup>533</sup> The levy orders sent to the districts forbade the conscription of children, the physically weak, and of those who lacked limbs<sup>534</sup> or were suffering from disease, thus likely attesting to a widespread practice.<sup>535</sup> In the mid-1830s, for instance, of the 22,272 men drafted from the provinces to replenish the Guards and the line regiments, 3,794 men, nearly one-sixth of the total number, were rejected for being unfit for military service.<sup>536</sup> One reason this occurred was that the Ottoman state could not provide adequate bureaucratic and medical support for the necessary physical examinations of all

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<sup>529</sup> HAT 448/ 22332 (H. 13 Ra 1253/ 17 June 1837) in Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 249n275.

<sup>530</sup> Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 279.

<sup>531</sup> Tobias Heinzelmänn, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, trans. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 171-177; Tobias Heinzelmänn, “Changing Recruiting Strategies in the Ottoman Army, 1839-1856,” in *The Crimean War 1853-1856*, ed. Jerzy W. Borejsza (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2011), 23.

<sup>532</sup> Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 279-80.

<sup>533</sup> For more details about Ottoman armies’ “child soldiers,” see Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 281.

<sup>534</sup> Varna Court Records no. 2, case 32 (H. 13 Ş 1247/ 17 January 1832) in Alpaslan, “Varna Şer’iye Sicil Defterinin,” 168-69.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid, 197-98. See also Isparta Court Records no. 183 (H. Evail Za 1250/ March 1835) in Halil Erdemir “1246-1254 (1831-1838) Tarihli 183 Numaralı Isparta Şer’iye Sicili Üzerine Bir İnceleme” (MA thesis, Konya Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1995), 10-11.

<sup>536</sup> ASK.MHM.d no. 30 (H. 1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-235. It was inscribed in the register that these numbers show the entirety of recruits who came to the capital until December 11, 1835 (H. 20 Ş 1251).



recruits onsite.<sup>537</sup> Consequently, the recruiters in the provinces did not hesitate to fill their quotas by sending the very young (most likely orphans) and physically unfit, an easily “conscriptable” social group. Some recruits, anticipating their eventual rejection, might have even agreed to be dispatched as substitutes following a local arrangement.

### **5.3 Voluntarism vs. Compulsion: Why Did the Men Serve (or Not Want to Serve) in the Ottoman Army?**

Zarif Efendi (1816–62), who later became Zarif Pasha and the commander of the Ottoman forces in Anatolia during the Crimean War (1853–56), was among the first junior officers of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*. His short autobiography provides a rare and detailed glimpse of what the soldiers of Mahmud II and the early Tanzimat era might have experienced during their service. He described his enlistment at an early age as follows:

Whenever I saw the soldiers in the bazaars whose swords were hanging down from their waists, touching the ground, I wanted to be a soldier very much. One day ... Hamdi Bey came to the office<sup>538</sup> and began talking to his friends.... He asked “with the grace of his imperial highness, I was made a major. I am looking for a [military] scribe to substitute me. Is there anyone who wants the position?” I answered that I wanted to. He asked to see how my writing was. I wrote a couple of lines. He liked them and asked me whether my father and mother would consent. I answered, “I want to be a soldier whether they consent or not.” We went to the Rami barracks together. Sultan Mahmud was present at the barracks. Hamdi Bey took me directly to Ahmed [Fevzi] Pasha’s [later Grand Admiral] room.... Ahmed Pasha asked me, “my son, can you serve as a soldier?” “Yes, sir, I want to”, I said.... The next day, I came home with the military uniform and a sword on my waist. Mother and father cried and prayed “may Allah make you prosperous.” I sent my bed and some other items to the barracks. Whenever I went to the bazaar, I felt so happy when my sword clattered on

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<sup>537</sup> Isparta Court Records no. 183 (not dated, but likely to be issued just after *Tanzimat*) in Erdemir “183 Numaralı Isparta Şer’iye Sicili,” 12-13.

<sup>538</sup> When he was, Zarif’s father “gave” him to the *Başmuhasebe* office as an apprentice scribe. Enver Ziya Karal, “Zarif Paşa Hatıratı, 1816-1862,” *Belleten* 4, no. 16 (1942), 448.

the cobblestones. I went to the barracks. There were occasional drills. I also went to these drills with the soldiers, serving as a lieutenant or a deputy captain.<sup>539</sup>

In 1832, Mustafa Pasha of İşkodra rebelled in Albania. Zarif's regiment began its preparations before it was dispatched to Rumelia. "At that time, I began worrying and forgot all about the clattering of the sword on the streets. I came [home] to tell the news to my mother. She began crying and I cried too. I was about 14, 15 years old at the time." Later on the young Zarif recorded the horrors of war that he experienced personally. On the way to Manastır from Köprülü, Zarif saw the corpses from the previous fighting between rebels and Reşid Mehmed Pasha's troops. He could not eat meat for months, since he "had not seen anything like that." His regiment then retreated to Üsküb, where he contracted malaria. He suffered for fifty days, practically "getting out of human shape." Finally, his unit was sent back to Istanbul via Filibe and Edirne. But after a few months, his regiment was re-deployed in Anatolia. On the way to Ankara, the regiment learned of a cholera epidemic erupting in the city, news of which "terrified [them] and everyone began to cry." Cholera soon hit Zarif's regiment while the soldiers were marching from Çayırhan to Ayaş in Central Anatolia, and they began dying during their deployment. Zarif wrote "we were at the brink of going mad as we saw what was happening." Between Nevşehir and Niğde, Zarif's regiment got the news of Ottoman defeat at Beylan at the hands of Mehmed Ali Pasha's army (July 29, 1832). Under a new commander, his regiment made an about-face and this time headed toward Konya. During the march, since "there was no water on the way and [they] finished the water in their canteens,"

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<sup>539</sup> Karal, "Zarif Paşa Hatıratı, 1816-1862," 448-449.

Zarif would have eagerly paid 500 *kuruş* for a glass of water. The troops put bullets—a common practice among the front-line soldiers—in their mouths and sucked them to forget their thirst. The day before the battle of Konya (December 21, 1832), he spent the night without a tent under the snow like most of the other Ottoman troops. He dug a small hole and tried to sleep in it until he realized his boot was frozen to his foot. The next day he joined the battle against the Egyptian army under the command of İbrahim Pasha. He was bayoneted in the back by “one of the Arabs,” but suffered only a light wound and survived. Zarif then saw the disorganized remnants of the Ottoman army in full retreat after the battle of Konya. “At night when everyone returned [regrouped?], I saw the cannons, wagons, ammunition and the wounded on the each side the road,” he wrote; “my heart melted with grief.”<sup>540</sup>

It is not easy to decide how representative was Zarif’s experience in the *Mansure* army. Neither is the task of quantifying the appetite of ordinary recruit to join and fight in the armies of Mahmud II and the Tanzimat reformers. Yet, as happened in France, Prussia, and Austria during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>541</sup> the popular response to conscription were indifference, evasion, and in some cases, armed resistance to avoid military service.

The Ottoman military and civilian population quickly realized that conscription meant forceful induction to the armed service, prolonged years of service without

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<sup>540</sup> Karal, “Zarif Paşa Hatıratı,” pp. 449-454. Story of Zarif was also quoted in length in Şimşek, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Düzenli Ordu için Asker Toplanması: 1826-1853,” 36-37.

<sup>541</sup> Harold D. Blanton, “Conscription in France during the era of Napoleon,” 12-13, Dierk Walter, “Meeting the French Challenge: Conscription in Prussia, 1807-1815,” 72-74; Frederick C. Schneid, “Napoleonic conscription and the militarization of Europe?” in *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era*, eds. Donald Stoker et al., 197.

discharge, and exposure to the various dangers of military life. Consequently, thousands of potential recruits and active soldiers responded with resentment, evasion, and hostility. They ran away from the recruitment parties or, once conscripted, deserted their units.<sup>542</sup> A detailed Ottoman report compiled in 1837 detailed that some 20,000 *Mansure* soldiers deserted while another 21,000 went “missing in battle” out of 161,000 recruits inducted since 1826.<sup>543</sup> The Ottoman authorities never had any illusions about ordinary subjects’ enthusiasm. In the early 1830s, the imperial orders about the new census that were read to the public reasoned that the surveys were carried out primarily to justly distribute taxes. Internal bureaucratic communiqués and the sultan’s own remarks revealed, however, that the “main motive” (*meram-ı asli*, as some imperial orders put it), cataloging eligible men for military service, should be kept secret.<sup>544</sup>

It is doubtful that the Tanzimat Decree and the early Tanzimat reforms drastically changed the realities as well as public perception regarding conscription. The emphasis on the “secrecy” of counting militarily eligible men was repeated in the population censuses of the 1840s.<sup>545</sup> Frederick Walpole, a traveler visiting Ottoman lands in the early 1850s, in the Northern Levant wrote “the sheik had returned ... with orders to send the men to draw lots for the conscription. So there was not a gay voice to be heard, and one man was punished for saying he hoped the Sultan would die. They cursed us [he probably referred to Europeans], as the cause of all.” He observed that in another town, “in the

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<sup>542</sup> Numbers are rounded. For further details, see Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 282-83.

<sup>543</sup> Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK 6799.

<sup>544</sup> See for instance HAT 19217 (undated), HAT 19725 (H. 16 Ca 1247/ 23 October 1831); Karal, *İlk Nüfus Sayımı*, 12.

<sup>545</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 196.

morning they had cried from the mosques for all to come to draw, and the road I had passed was thronged with villagers, women, and children. They generally cursed me dreadfully, saying, ‘the Franks were the cause of it.’”<sup>546</sup> Another European observer commented that six years after Tanzimat “it is nothing unusual to see recruits for the army brought ‘*in chains*’ to the depôt and even to *Constantinople*.”<sup>547</sup> Slade also claimed that the Ottoman soldiers, especially the older reservists, sent to the Crimea in 1854 were “more or less painfully affected with nostalgia; a veritable, often fatal, disease in connection with fatalism. The Turkish soldier on service has rarely any means of communicating with his family. He broods over the forlorn condition in imagination of his wife and children in case of his death.”<sup>548</sup> An Ottoman veteran of several imperial campaigns reportedly complained in an Istanbul coffeehouse that “the troops from Anatolia and Rumelia were ordered to assemble in Istanbul. I have been serving for six years and could spend only two months in my homeland. [As I wait to receive my unpaid wages in the capital], the troops from [my?] district would begin [soon] to arrive. [We would likely to be deployed somewhere soon, so] it would be impossible to visit my home again. There is no one to take care of my children; I am in grief because of that.”<sup>549</sup>

Like their European contemporaries, Ottoman standing army suffered more from various contagious diseases and inadequate medical care than from actual battle deaths. In

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<sup>546</sup> Frederick Walpole, *The Ansayrii or the Assassins, with Travels in the further East in 1850-51, including a visit to Ninaveh*, vol. 3 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 169, 188.

<sup>547</sup> Augustus Jochmus, *The Syrian War and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1840-1848*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Albert Cohn, 1883), 120n1. Emphases are Jochmus’.

<sup>548</sup> Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War*, 275.

<sup>549</sup> İ. DH 1776 (H. 21 S 1257/ 14 April 1841) in Cengiz Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde “Havadis Jurnalleri”* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), 219-220.

comparative perspective, an Ottoman *Mansure* soldier was more likely to lose his life during his military service than his British, French, and Prussian counterparts. The yearly death rate for the *Mansure* army was around 90–100 men for every 1,000 in 1826–37, excluding battlefield deaths,<sup>550</sup> whereas Western European standing armies lost between 10 and 20 men in every 1,000 during the same time period.<sup>551</sup> The Russian army's rate of loss is probably the closest to the Ottomans': 37 Russian soldiers out of every 1,000 died annually before the Crimean War, while this ratio increased to 67 and even 95 in conflict zones like the Caucasus.<sup>552</sup> The Ottoman military medical school had been founded in 1827, but it did not provide the desperately needed trained personnel in sufficient numbers and quality.<sup>553</sup> The Ottoman state turned into employing a large number of foreign surgeons and doctors, who, however, proved in to be ineffective in the eyes of contemporary observers. After the battle of Nizib, Ainsworth described his encounter with a doctor of German origin as follows:

I asked him what was to be done with the [wounded]; he avoided the question; in fact, there was not one out of hakims [*hekim*, doctor] that had long enjoyed the Sultan's pay who gave any assistance on the day of the battle. He soon left us to go and save what he could of his baggage, while we remained at our station immediately behind the Turkish guard.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Şimşek, "The First "Little Mehmeds," 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK 6799. The average size of the regular army was estimated as 45,000 between 1826 and 1837.

<sup>551</sup> *Statistical Reports on the Sickness, Mortality, & Invaliding in the United Kingdom, Mediterranean and British America* (London, 1839).

<sup>552</sup> John Shelton Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham: Duke UP, 1965), 250-251.

<sup>553</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, p. 29; Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 210; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 305-306.

<sup>554</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 343-44; also see Moltke's comments to the similar effect in *Türkiye Mektupları*, 187.

Moltke wrote that in one year alone, diseases killed almost one-third of the Ottoman soldiers, who never actually fought against an enemy.<sup>555</sup> Indeed, according to Ottoman records, between 200 and 400 soldiers died in the hospitals around Istanbul every month in the 1830s and early 1840s.<sup>556</sup> According to a spy report from March 1844 in Istanbul, a grocer situated close to the Selimiye barracks said: “We do our business mostly with the soldiers [here]... they are carrying away 8–10 sick [soldiers] every day.”<sup>557</sup> In another spy report, a mercenary (*sekbân*) captain, whose service experience in his detachment must have been comparable to those of the regular soldiers, complained that

they sent us to İzmid. For ten days, the soldiers stayed in the open countryside. After that an epidemic struck, 200–300 died in İzmid. Now they brought us here [Istanbul], but 2–3 men are dying every day. The regulars saw a dead man’s foot eaten by the dogs at the dock. ... Instead of keeping us here in misery for nothing, they should just as well let us go back to our homelands, [otherwise] we will all perish here without food and water.<sup>558</sup>

Many serving soldiers and potential recruits must have been aware of the possible dangers, prolonged terms of service, and uncertainties of life in the military described above.<sup>559</sup> Further research is necessary to scrutinize the reasons for enlistment in regular and irregular formations, but not all of the impoverished peasants, destitute city folk or professional warriors automatically joined the colors and risk their life and limb as a

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<sup>555</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 241.

<sup>556</sup> See Appendix B for the number of deaths from disease in the military hospitals around Istanbul.

<sup>557</sup> İ. DH 3661 (H. 4 Ra 1259/ 4 April 1841) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 388.

<sup>558</sup> İ. DH 1106 (H. 20 Ş 1256/ 17 October 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 167.

<sup>559</sup> Charles MacFarlane, *Kismet; or, the Doom of Turkey* (London, 1853), 58. It should be noted that according to their founding ordinance, *Mansure* soldiers were granted furloughs for six to eight months every five years depending on the distance of their homelands. In 1837, about 10 percent of the active army were on furlough (KK 6799).

military labourer for the prospects of free food, a monthly wage, possible bonuses and plunder. Expectedly, the scattered evidence shows that the military missions' lethality, place and unit of service, amount of pay and extra rations influenced the decision to sign up and motivation of the troops under arms. In July 1840, a certain barber Osman of Ankara heard saying in an Istanbul coffeehouse

they are recruiting irregular soldiers in Rumelia, Anatolia and the [Aegean?] Islands, and some soldiers will arrive in Istanbul. There is something going on, but we have not fully understood. If this will turn out to be a war between the states, I will not [sign up] to fight. But if this turns out to be a campaign in Morea, I will be happy to join.<sup>560</sup>

Osman probably perceived a full-scale war that the Great Powers involved as far more dangerous than an imperial campaign against the smaller, newly independent Greek state. He might also have thought that there was a greater prospects of plunder in the latter. In an Istanbul coffeehouse in 1841, a grocer thus reasoned, "they are recruiting *sekbans* now. We, together with some others, better go and enlist. But one is afraid [about where and how] one would end up (*amma insan sonundan korkuyor*)."<sup>561</sup> After a discharge ceremony in the capital, which the semi-official newspaper *Ceride-i Havadis* described in pompous language in 1844, only about 150 out of some 2,000 recently discharged men and officers wanted to re-enlist. Based on the ratio in this example, the experience of at least 5-year service in the regular army did not create much enthusiasm among the Ottoman soldiers to reenlist despite the given incentives.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> BOA, Sadaret-Müteferrik (A.M.), 85 (July 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 122.

<sup>561</sup> İ. DH 1802 (H. 29 S 1257/ 22 April 1841) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 265.

<sup>562</sup> *Ceride-i Havadis*, issue (*def'a*) 175 (18 Ra 1260 / 7 April 1844).



To what extent were soldiers' salaries an incentive to serve? Foreign observers, such as Moltke and Henry Skene, argued that the Ottoman regular soldiers' salaries were satisfactory, at least on paper. Skene stated, "The pay of a private varies ... from 20 to 30 Turkish piasters [*kuruş*] per month—that is from 3s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. sterling, which is exclusive of food, medicines, and clothing ... [T]he expense to the government of each ration is 60 piasters per month, which, with his clothing, for which no stoppage is made, raises the pay of a Turkish soldier above that of a British one."<sup>563</sup> But other evidence suggests that Ottoman irregulars might have had more access to material incentives for service than did soldiers in *Mansure* or *Redif* units, and the salaries offered to the central army proved insufficient to persuade many recruits to leave their families and risk their limbs and lives as conscripts.

According to Skene's calculation, the wages of regulars/active reservists and irregulars (if they covered their own clothing, food, and equipment expenses) were actually comparable. For instance, the mercenaries in the Eastern and the Arabian provinces in the 1840s usually received 60 *kuruş* if they were infantry and 80 *kuruş* if they were cavalry.<sup>564</sup> However, it was not unusual for the state to provide irregulars' food, equipment, and weapons during the campaigns, so their pay remained intact.<sup>565</sup> Ottoman chronicler Şanizade wrote that wage of some 5,000 Janissaries who were sent to

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<sup>563</sup> James Henry Skene, *The Three Eras of Ottoman History; A Political Essay on the Late Reforms of Turkey* (London, 1851), 65-66; Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 232-233, 262-263.

<sup>564</sup> C. ZB 4068 (H. Ş 1259/ 4 September 1843), C. ZB 1262 (H. 9 Ra 1265/ 2 February 1849), C. As 46872 (R. Haziran 1265/ June-July 1849); C. DH (Cevdet Dahiliye) 12159 (August 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 128.

<sup>565</sup> See for instance, a *sekban* mercenary named Ahmed of Morea stated in the early 1840s that he had a daily allowance of 300 dirhem (little less than 1 kg) bread and his monthly salary of 60 *kuruş*. BOA, Cevdet Zabtiye 1542 (August 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 128.

Moldawallachia from Istanbul in five regiments, was 150 *kuruş*.<sup>566</sup> An Albanian mercenary's average monthly salary was about 35 *kuruş* in this era.<sup>567</sup> In other cases, the irregulars' monthly salaries could reach handsome sums, such as 110, 250, or 300 *kuruş* per month in the 1820s before the Ottoman lands experienced drastic inflation.<sup>568</sup> Furthermore, the irregular warriors and Janissaries could probably more likely to augment their salaries with war booty than the *Nizamiye* or *Redif* soldiers could. Kabudlı Vasfî's personal account indicates that as a low-ranking Ottoman mercenary in the early 1820s, his monthly pay changed from 25 to 35 *kuruş*, which was similar to that of a *Mansure* corporal or sergeant. But on many occasions, the state provided his food and equipment during the campaigns, and he benefited directly from plunder and received extra bounty for his actions on the battlefield.<sup>569</sup>

The monthly wage for a *Mansure* private was set at 15 *kuruş* at the army's establishment, and it was increased to 20 *kuruş* on August 25, 1826.<sup>570</sup> This amount remained the standard monthly pay for privates in the following decades,<sup>571</sup> when the Ottoman lands experienced rampant inflation and the debasement of coinage because of

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<sup>566</sup> Şükrü İlicak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence 1821–1826," (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2011), 214.

<sup>567</sup> İlicak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire," 214n33.

<sup>568</sup> Erdem, "Recruitment," 198; Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 161-162.

<sup>569</sup> Jan Schmidt, "The adventures of an Ottoman horseman: The autobiography of Kabudlı Vasfî Efendi, 1800-1825," in *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500-1923)*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2002), 195, 198, 229-230, 234. See also Tolga Esmer, "The Confessions of an Ottoman 'Irregular': Self-Representation and Ottoman Interpretive Communities in the Nineteenth Century" *JOS*, no. 44 (2014).

<sup>570</sup> Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," 186-87. It should be noted that there were also special instance when the regular troops received bonuses. For instance, Moltke states that the regular soldiers were paid with double wages before the final battle with Egyptian army in south eastern Anatolia in 1839. Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 257

<sup>571</sup> See, C. As 44920 (H. R 1256/ June 1840); KK 7025 (R. Nisan-Mayıs 1265/ May-June 1849). The wage of the Ottoman privates remained at 20 *kuruş* between 1826 and 1849.

the expenses of war and costly military-bureaucratic reforms. From 1822 to 1839, the silver content of the *kuruş* decreased more than half.<sup>572</sup> Şevket Pamuk notes that the daily wage of an unskilled worker in the capital was 6 *kuruş*, while a loaf of bread (1 *okka* = 1.28 kg) cost 1 *kuruş* and 1 *okka* of meat cost 4–4.5 *kuruş* in the 1840s.<sup>573</sup> Another important fact was that the pay of both Ottoman regular and irregular soldiers was often in arrears or not paid at all. The commanding officers and scribes often falsified the figures on muster rolls.<sup>574</sup> Kabudlı Vasfî, an irregular, also recorded a number of incidents between the troops and the commanders over unpaid wages.<sup>575</sup> Like Kabudlı Vasfî, a mercenary captain from Gümülcine mentioned earlier, he complained that they did not receive anything more after the first two months of pay in 1840.<sup>576</sup> On 1 March 1845, a European witness observed

a violent scene of insubordination [that occurred] at the Head-Quarters of the Artillery at Tophana (sic). A soldier of Artillery (sic) had presented a petition to the Sultan on Friday last, on His Majesty's passage to the Mosque. The petition stated that undue charges were made to soldiers for necessities (sic) and that their nominal monthly pay of twenty piasters was thus frequently reduced to next to nothing. The petitioner was arrested on his return to the barracks, but his comrades to the number of several hundred (mostly Albanians) came to his rescue and attacked the Colonel of the regiment, who was severely wounded. Mehemet Ali Pasha was obliged to escape from the barracks.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 188–200.

<sup>573</sup> Pamuk, *A Monetary History*, 208n9; İ. DH 3363 (H. 11 B 1260/ 27 July 1844) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 470.

<sup>574</sup> For various incidences to this effect, see Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War: 1853-1856*, 168, 174, 191, 228, 233.

<sup>575</sup> Schmidt, “The adventures of an Ottoman horseman,” 207, 224.

<sup>576</sup> İ. DH 1106 (H. 20 Ş 1256/ 17 October 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 167.

<sup>577</sup> Augustus Jochmus, *The Syrian War and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1840-1848*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Albert Cohn, 1883), 120n1.

Utilizing local court records and commodity prices, a study on *Mansure* veterans in Ankara argues that the 10 *kuruş* monthly pension for discharged unwounded soldiers was insufficient to live on. In 1839, one could buy only 20 *okka* of bread (about 25 kg) or about 1 *okka* of butter for that money, which would hardly suffice for one person to survive for a month, let alone his family.<sup>578</sup> A discharged corporal named Mehmed Ağa, on his way from Istanbul to his home district of Teke in 1845, died due to poor health in Bolvadin in Western Anatolia. According to local court records, the deceased soldier's possessions (mostly everyday clothing) was worth 217 *kuruş*, and he had 268 *kuruş* as cash, from which the funeral cost of 51.5 *kuruş* had to be deducted. The records give no further information about him, but if he had served for the full five years, the money he accumulated equaled nine months of his salary.<sup>579</sup> With his "military savings," he could buy one cow for 250–300 *kuruş* in the central Anatolian countryside, but would not be able to afford a second.<sup>580</sup> One official report indicated that fourteen of the sixteen discharged wounded or disabled *Mansure* pensioners living in Uşak were working on local farms even though some of them had serious injuries, likely out of necessity.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Mustafa Öztürk, "Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye Ordusundan Emeklilik ve İhraç" in *Birinci Askeri Tarih Semineri, Bildiriler II* (Ankara: Genel Kurmay Basımevi, 1983), 1-11. However, most Ottoman subjects, majority of whom were rural peasants, must have made their bread from wheat (raw or ground), which could be relatively cheaper to buy or produce than bread sold in the market. In other words, the contemporary prices of wheat, barley or rye (either raw or ground) should also be consulted to make better assumptions.

<sup>579</sup> Karahisar-ı Sahib Court Records no. 569, case 105 (H. 16 Ca 1261/ 23 May 1845) in Mehmet Biçici, "569 Numaralı Karahisar-ı Sahib Şer'iye Sicili" (MA thesis, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, 1998), 93-94. The incident was also referred to and the corporal's belongings were listed in Veysel Şimşek, "Ottoman Military Recruitment and the Recruit: 1826-1853," (MA thesis, Bilkent University, 2005), 97, Appendix E. For the wages of the corporals, see KK 6979 (H. 1256/ 1840-41) and KK 7023 (H. 1264/ 1847-48).

<sup>580</sup> For the price of a cow in the environs of Niğde, see C. ZB 1833 (June 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 109.

<sup>581</sup> D. ASM 38998 (H. S-Ra 1252/ July 1836).

Finally, and importantly, not every veteran discharged for health reasons received a pension.<sup>582</sup> There were instances of authorities discharging “useless” soldiers, who lost their health during their service, on the condition that they did not demand any pensions.<sup>583</sup> Between 1826 and 1837, 17,131 veterans were discharged after having served in the *Mansure* army, but only 1,834 of these were entitled to pensions.<sup>584</sup> A certain former weapon smith named Mustafa who became a vegetable seller in Üsküdar (cautiously) complained as regards his retirement years as follows:

For 30 years I had served as a weapon smith<sup>585</sup> at the Imperial Armory in Istanbul (Tophane). They discharged me without any pension. I can still get by now, praise to the sultan... [But] I am upset that a lot of new recruits have recently been enrolled and licensed as [weapon smith] apprentices without having done enough service to the Sublime State. If they were given wages, that would cost a lot.<sup>586</sup>

## 5.4 Conscription and the Peoples of the Empire

Further empirical research is needed to establish a definitive map of the territorial and ethnic origins of the conscripts during the era in question. Yet the archival sources consulted for this thesis suggest that a significant portion of the regular and reserve troops were drawn, especially between the mid-1820s and the late 1830s, from the predominantly Turkophone population living south of the Danube in Europe and west and north of the Euphrates in Anatolia, the areas Ottomanists often refer to as the “core

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<sup>582</sup> İ. DH 4022 (H. 12 B 1259/ 10 August 1843) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 422-423.

<sup>583</sup> C. As 38816 (H. 18 B 1256/ 15 September 1840), and especially C. As 38815 (H. 26 M 1257/ 20 March 1841). Also cited in Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds,’” 288n120.

<sup>584</sup> Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds,’” 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK (Kamil Kepeci) 6799 and ASK.MHM.d no. 30 (H. 1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-235.

<sup>585</sup> “*Topçuluk*” is the word used here which could also mean artilleryman. Based on the context of the text, it is translated as weapon smith.

<sup>586</sup> İ. DH 4022 (12 B 1259 / 10 October 1843) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 422-23.

provinces.”<sup>587</sup> Between May 1832 and November 1833, the center wanted 3,336 recruits from southern and eastern Rumelia and 9,499 men from western and central Anatolia to replenish the ranks vacated by deserters and discharged due to their sickness.<sup>588</sup> In mid-1830s, the center again demanded about 26,898 new recruits for the *Mansure* army mainly from these regions. 4,626 of these never showed up and 3,794 recruits were rejected on health grounds. In the end, the levy produced 18,478 actual soldiers, which still amounted to one-third of the active *Mansure* army at the time.<sup>589</sup> Between 1826 and 1838, the Ottoman central authority imposed successive recruit orders in Eastern and Western Thrace, demanding some 15,365 conscripts in total, enough to raise 18 full-strength *Mansure* battalions.<sup>590</sup> Another levy in 1838–39 targeted Northwestern Anatolia and Thrace and ordered the collection of 8,021 recruits to replenish the ranks of the regular army.<sup>591</sup>

Why did the majority of the conscripts come from the Turkish-speaking “core provinces”? First, Mahmud II’s centralizing policies proved to be more successful in those areas.<sup>592</sup> The sultan exterminated the notables who had wielded considerable power and proved disloyal, while he subordinated many others through coercion, bargaining, power and revenue sharing.<sup>593</sup> The Ottoman center thus often ensured the help of

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<sup>587</sup> For the places where the new *Mansure* regiments were raised, see KK 6799.

<sup>588</sup> HAT 18508 (1 M 1248-30 C 1249 / 31 May 1832-13 November 1833).

<sup>589</sup> ASK.MHM.d no. 30 (H. 1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-235.

<sup>590</sup> Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds,’” 289.

<sup>591</sup> HAT 18001 B (Spring-Summer?, 1838); ASK.MHM.d no. 31, p. 6. (H. Evahir Za, 1254/ 4-14 February, 1839).

<sup>592</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, pp. 14-16.

<sup>593</sup> Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 768-769.

provincial notables while conducting its military levies in these areas. Mahmud II thus felt secure enough to permit the local dignitaries and their sons to command *Redif* detachments from 1834 onward.<sup>594</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, small family farms dominated the rural landscape of Central and Western Anatolia.<sup>595</sup> When recruitment parties arrived in such villages, the menfolk there proved easy prey, in contrast to the more mobile and often more aggressive nomadic or settled warrior communities who lived in distant and rugged Albanian, Bosnian, and Kurdish territories. In addition, the proximity of the “core provinces” to the capital and their geographical accessibility enabled the central authority to impose tighter control and conduct larger levies. A third reason why the Turkish speakers populated the Mahmudian army, as Hakan Erdem and İlber Ortaylı have pointed out, could be the result of a “preference” on the part of the Ottoman political-military establishment.<sup>596</sup> Based on their past experiences with unreliable irregulars of other ethnic origins, Ottoman military commanders and administrators frequently professed this inclination, especially to substitute unruly Albanian mercenaries in the military.<sup>597</sup>

During 1827–28, the Ottoman authorities specifically wanted to bring “Turkish lads” from the Anatolian provinces to get rid of the undisciplined and inefficient local

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<sup>594</sup> However, the *Redif*'s founding ordinance also stipulated that *Redif* officers, who were also provincial notables, should not interfere in “local affairs” “as if they were *voyvodas*.” For said ordinance, see Cahide Bolat, “Redif Askeri Teşkilatı (1834-1876)” (PhD diss., Ankara Üniversitesi, 2000), 17-24.

<sup>595</sup> Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1988), 62-63.

<sup>596</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 137-38, Erdem, “Recruitment,” 192, 204-205, Hakan Erdem, “Türkistan: Nerede, Ne Zaman?,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 58 (1998), 38-44.

<sup>597</sup> For examples, see Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds,” 290; Ilıcak, “A Radical Rethinking of Empire,” 267-270.

troops in Damascus and Aleppo Provinces and to substitute them with fresh *Asakir-i Mansure* units. In the initial stages of the project, an official from Damascus claimed that the local troops were on “very friendly” terms with the Bedouins, while the settled Arabs “valued their lives [too] much” to become conscripts. The same official correspondence also indicated that Kurds and nomads were not wanted among the recruits drawn from Anatolia.<sup>598</sup>

Further practical problems emerged in Aleppo where Arabs were recruited as cavalymen: The foreign drill instructors spoke “Frankish,” and their directions had to be translated into first Turkish and then Arabic for the ordinary soldiers.<sup>599</sup> Moltke also wrote about the hastily inducted and maltreated Kurdish conscripts who could not understand their officers’ language prior to the battle of Nizib.<sup>600</sup> Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey, a power magnate in the Adana region who allied himself with the invading Egyptian army against the Ottoman center, recounted the difficulties in communication between the Arab soldiers, Turkish-speaking irregulars, and the conquered population of the Adana region.<sup>601</sup> In the Crimean War, the Ottoman irregulars “spoke so many different languages that, even within small units, translators and criers had to be employed to shout out the orders of the officers.”<sup>602</sup> These incidents all point to the one of the many daunting tasks the Ottoman state faced in raising, training, and maintaining cohesion in a conscript army drawn from a diverse population, a challenge contemporary Austrian and Russian

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<sup>598</sup> Erdem, “Recruitment,” 196-202.

<sup>599</sup> Erdem, “Recruitment,” 201-202.

<sup>600</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 262.

<sup>601</sup> Yılmaz Kurt, ed., *Menemencioğulları Tarihi* (Ankara: Akçağ, 1997), 106-109.

<sup>602</sup> Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), 120.



armies also faced.<sup>603</sup> Recruiting the bulk of soldiers from among Turkish speakers could help overcome this problem.

The conscription code of 1846 stipulated that regiments could not be constituted entirely by conscripts from the same city/district (*hemşehri*) or the same ethnicity/nationality (*cinsiyet*). To ensure ethnic and territorial heterogeneity in the ranks, the code allocated separate recruitment districts to each army, and its 13<sup>th</sup> article stipulated the continuous rotation of the regiments between the provinces.<sup>604</sup> In practice, however, Ottoman decision-makers did not mind if the “Turkish lads” constituted the majority of the imperial army, and a number of units were made up entirely of Turkish recruits, which was another manifestation of the described “preference” and the Turks’ perceived reliability. The authorities were often more concerned about the increasing numbers of non-Turks (Arabs, Kurds, Albanians, and sometimes non-Muslims) in a particular unit and their location of service, thus the regulations about “ethnicity” were mostly applied to non-Turks.<sup>605</sup>

Two detailed reports from the early 1850s, for instance, warned the Ottoman authorities that the number of Arabs was increasing in the Army of Arabia (*Arabistan Ordusu*) and requested the dispatch of Turkish recruits (*Türk uşağı*) destined for other armies from a list of Anatolian districts.<sup>606</sup> Otherwise the Army of Arabia was “going to

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<sup>603</sup> Compare, for instance, Robert Baumann, “Universal Service Reform and Russia’s Imperial Dilemma,” *War and Society* 4, no. 2 (1986), 31-49; Istvan Deak, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990).

<sup>604</sup> *Kur’a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 13, pp. 9-10.

<sup>605</sup> It is possible that the Ottoman authorities put some effort into preventing entire units being raised from the same (Turkish or non-Turkish) town or region (*hemşehris*).

<sup>606</sup> İ. DH 14404 (H. 21 Şevval 1267/ 19 August 1851) and İ. DH 16001 (H. 20 Ca 1268/ 22 March 1852). These documents were also referred to in Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 137.

be entirely composed of the sons of Arabs,”<sup>607</sup> which would lead to “an inconvenience related to ethnicity.”<sup>608</sup> It is important to remember that during this era, Syria and Lebanon showed resistance to Ottoman centralization efforts. The Ottoman authorities might thus have mistrusted the Arab recruits and wanted to bring more ethnic Turkish soldiers to the regiments in the region. In February-March 1848, a debate among high-ranking state officials on the recruitment of non-Muslims and Muslims from different ethnicities reveals the complexity of the issue, as well as Ottoman center’s pragmatism. *Serasker* Mehmed Said Pasha called attention to the risks of forming units from non-Muslims that were homogenous in their ethno-religious composition. Mustafa Reşid Pasha disagreed with the *serasker* regarding the recruitment of non-Muslims. Moreover he favored the conscription of non-Turks and non-Muslims, arguing that the British, Austrians, and French already had units entirely made up of Scots, Sepoys, Italians, Czechs, Hungarians, and Algerian Arabs. Yet he cautioned that these “ethnic units” should not be forced to fight against their own “nations” (*hemcins*). For instance, Albanians should be sent to the Arab provinces, while Arabs and Kurds should be sent to Albania. The Ottoman Greeks and Armenians should not be used in any armed incidents at the Greek border or in Eastern Anatolia, respectively. Instead, they should be sent to the Balkans.<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> “...ordu-yı hümayun-ı mezkurun kuvve-i askeriyesi bütün bütün evlad-ı arabdan kalarak...” İ. DH 14404.

<sup>608</sup> “...sair ordular neferat-ı cedidesinden münasib mikdar Türk uşağı gönderilerek hemcinslik mahzurunun def’i, icab-ı maslahatdan olacağına...” İ. DH 14404. The document was also used and cited in Şimşek, “The First ‘Little Mehmeds,’” 292n146-147.

<sup>609</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 224-226.

All this said, it would be a mistake to think of the Ottoman center's practical preferences as conscious ideological choices. The Ottoman state in the 1820s–1850s was certainly not a nation-state based on Turkish ethnicity and identity. Besides, the Ottoman state did not categorically exclude its non-Turkish Muslims from armed military service and inducted large numbers of Arabs, Kurds, Albanians, and Bosnians into the active and reserve army units whenever the opportunity arose. Thus, the customary approach in the historiography that depicted Arabs, Kurds and Albanians primarily serving in irregular units as contractual tribal forces in the later Ottoman history is misleading. In 1830s, von Moltke, who was accompanying Ottoman army in South-East Anatolia, wrote in length about the impressment of thousands of Kurds into the regular units that fought against Mehmed Ali Pasha's army when the hostilities restarted in 1839.<sup>610</sup> After Ottoman defeat at Nizib (1839), the Kurds, who constituted perhaps half of the Ottoman field army, ran away, just as their Turkish and Albanian counterparts had done some six years ago at the battle of Konya in the face of another Egyptian army. Any crude, essentialist reasoning that emphasizes "warrior qualities" of ethnic Turks would fail to explain how Ottomans lost these two important battles; Egyptian armies was composed of Arab rank and file who were commanded by Turco-Circassian officers, while the Ottoman armies were constituted by mainly Turkish, Albanian, Bosnian and Kurdish soldiers and officers. Answers that are more realistic were to be found in determinants, such as the skills of the field commanders, quality of officer corps, training, provisioning and morale of the rank and file during these battles. A few years after Nizip, Ottomans conscripted some 20,000

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<sup>610</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 197, 256, 261-263, 268, 271, 276.

Albanians into the regular formations between 1842 and 1845. Though they were relatively infrequent, Ottoman authorities imposed several levies in Arab provinces and peripheral Albania in between 1840s and 1860s to obtain recruits for regular formations.<sup>611</sup>

The era's Ottoman army was in fact not only multiethnic but also multiracial: documentary evidence suggests the existence of black Muslim soldiers. Many of the troops in question were possibly composed of slaves sent to the army as substitutes by their masters.<sup>612</sup> The conscription codes that the Ottoman state created in 1844 and 1846 referred to the existing practice of sending slaves to the army as substitutes.<sup>613</sup> Interestingly, the 1846 code stipulated that slave substitutes had to be white.<sup>614</sup> Unfortunately for historians, the law does not explain the Ottoman state's racial preference.<sup>615</sup> Finally, the population surveys of the early 1830s indicate that Ottoman officials did not consider Muslim Roma (*kıbtı*) as "soldier material." On more than one occasion, military-age Muslim Roma were excluded from conscription, even though they were registered in the survey.<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>611</sup> Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War*, 81. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 316, 318-319; BOA, İ MTZ (05) (İrade Memalik-i Mümtaze) 05/ 128 (H. 10 L 1256/ 5 December 1840); Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), 58-67; Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 171-205; Heinzelmann, "Changing Recruiting Strategies in the Ottoman Army, 1839-1856," 23, 37-38.

<sup>612</sup> Şimşek, "The First "Little Mehmeds," 292.

<sup>613</sup> *Nizamât-ı Cedide-i Askeriye Kanunnamesi*, Article 54, p. 65; *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 28, pp. 16-17.

<sup>614</sup> In 1852, a certain conscript named Ali, who drew a bad number, was obliged to give a white slave if he wanted to send a substitute instead of serving himself. BOA, A. MKT. MHM (Mektubi Kalemi, Mühimme) Dosya no. 112, Vesika no. 100. (H. 21 Ra 1268/ 14 January 1852).

<sup>615</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 28, pp. 16-17.

<sup>616</sup> These Roma were living in Thrace, Western, and Northeastern Anatolia. Karal, *İlk Nüfus Sayımı*, 33, 34, 36, 135-136, 158, 179.

What did being an “Arab,” “Turk,” “Kurd,” and “Albanian” mean to the Ottoman officials, subjects, and soldiers? The evidence suggests that neither the Ottoman state nor Muslim ethno-cultural communities in this period adhered to any ideologically articulated nationalism in the modern sense. Yet often ordinary subjects and state officials manifested their association with a certain collective ethnic and/or religious identity and were conscious of which ethnic or/and religious group lived where and how. They might also speculate about, brag or disparage collective characters, histories, and loyalties of ethnic and/or religious group(s). The term “*Türk uşağı*” (Turkish lads), for instance, repeatedly appeared in the official documents, referring to the Turkish-speaking population of the Balkans and the Middle East. Ottoman state documents often denoted Mehmed Ali Pasha’s forces as “*Havain-i Mısriye*” (Egyptian traitors), “*Mısır Askeri*” (Egyptian soldiery), or sometimes simply as “*Mısırlı*” (Egyptians), calling the enemy by a term of origin.

The spy reports from the 1840s that recorded unsuspecting ordinary subjects on the streets of Istanbul provide more interesting and direct information on the subject. While watching the parade of “prisoners from Egypt,” a hazelnut seller named “Şakir the Arab” and a chestnut seller called Abdullah spoke to each other in Arabic, saying that “most of these are the Egyptian *Redif* soldiers, some of them are our brothers and some of them are our relatives. May God curse Mehmed Ali! ... [The Imperial forces] took Greater Syria already, hopefully, they will occupy the interior too, so that the [locals of Syria] would be content.”<sup>617</sup> A *tatar* (courier) named İsmail Ağa, while describing the military

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<sup>617</sup> İ. DH 1210 (H. 18 N 1256/ 13 November 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 184.

strength of Mehmed Ali Pasha in what seem to be exaggerated figures, used the terms “trained Arab soldiers,” “Turkish lads,” and “Albanians” to distinguish not only different types of military assets but also their ethnicity.<sup>618</sup> An Istanbulite captain from the Ottoman navy commented on the defection of the Ottoman fleet to Egypt; after distinguishing “Turkish” and “Arab soldiers,” he emphasized that “none of our [Turkish] soldiers went over [to Egyptian side] voluntarily, they all in fact went crying.”<sup>619</sup> A neighborhood headman (*muhtar*) named Mustafa Ağa and a colonel named Ahmed Bey freshly arrived from Trablus both commented on how “treacherous,” “strange,” and “cowardly” the “Arabs” were.<sup>620</sup> A certain İzzet Ağa mentioned and distinguished the “Turkish soldiers” (*Türk askeri*), who probably came to Alexandria with the defected Ottoman fleet, from the “Arab soldiers” (*Arab askeri*), who almost fought each other because of the alleged conspiracies of a particular captain, possibly a convert called “Frenk Mehmed.”<sup>621</sup> Another Istanbulite “*hoca efendi*” asked, “How are the Kurds in Kurdistan doing now? Previously Reşid Paşa put everything in order and he used not to show any mercy to the Kurds. The Sublime Porte will benefit a lot if these Kurds will be put in line, because beneath the mountains where these Kurds dwell are a lot of *maden* (underground minerals), no other place has any *maden* like that.”<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> İ. DH 1038 (H. 1 Ş 1256/ 28 September 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 145.

<sup>619</sup> İ. DH 1155 (H. 1 N 1256/ 27 October 1840) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 172-173.

<sup>620</sup> İ. DH 1210 (H. 18 N 1256/ 13 November 1840) and İ. DH 1802 (H. 29 S 1257/ 22 April 1841) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 190-191, 260-261.

<sup>621</sup> İ. DH 1802 (H. 29 S 1257/ 22 April 1841) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 263.

<sup>622</sup> İ. DH 4207 (H. 28 M 1260/ 18 February 1844) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 447.

## 5.5 Recruiting the Non-Muslims into the Ottoman Armed Forces

The Ottoman state, just as like its prior Islamic counterparts, recruited and used non-Muslims in various combat and non-combat roles and under a wide range of political, social-and financial arrangements from 1300s to 1800s.<sup>623</sup> Immediately after the Greek Revolt and “Auspicious Event” in 1826, however, Mahmudian state largely excluded non-Muslims from the armed forces because of distrust, and a policy that strove to portray itself as the defender of Ottoman Muslims and Sunni faith.

After the “conspiracy of the Greeks”, Mahmud II not only ended the employment of Greeks as Ottoman foreign service officials and translators, but also expelled the Greek sailors out of the Ottoman warships stating “it is not permissible to employ them in the Imperial Navy. It is most necessary to recruit Muslim sailors. Find and fetch them right now!”<sup>624</sup> After 1826, ex-Janissaries, Bektaşî “heretics” and converts, at least on paper, were barred from joining the *Mansure* Army. The sultan also had a policy of employing foreign officers only as drill instructors or advisors, denying them the direct command of large military formations as Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt did.<sup>625</sup> The only earlier exception to this exclusive tendency was to include Zaporozhian Cossacks to the new model cavalry regiment in Dobruca region in 1826. According to the plans about 300-400 Cossacks were to serve in homogenous companies with assigned priests and officers up to

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<sup>623</sup> For a variety of roles and instances, see Ufuk Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa Osmanlı'nın Gayrimüslim Askerleri* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2010), 19-29.

<sup>624</sup> Hakan Erdem, ““Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers’: Ottoman responses to the Greek War of Independence,” in *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, eds. Faruk Birtok and Thalia Dragonas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 75.

<sup>625</sup> Avigdor Levy, “The Officer corps in Sultan Mahmud II's New Ottoman Army, 1826-39,” *IJMES*, 2 (1971), 23-24.

the rank of captain alongside the Muslim cavalrymen recruited from the same region.<sup>626</sup> The need for expert cavalrymen, the relatively small number of the Cossacks that were recruited, and close control and supervision by the Muslim officers from very beginning of the unit must have made such a policy appear feasible to the Ottoman center.

As the Ottoman military continued to lose huge numbers due to sickness and desertions in 1830s, Ottoman and foreign observers mentioned the drain on the Muslim population. The authorities desperately needed fresh levies to replenish the losses, and despite Mahmud II's initial reluctance, eventually began to discuss the plans for recruitment of non-Muslims, particularly Armenians and Greeks, to unarmed labor battalions and the imperial navy between 1826 and 1853.<sup>627</sup> In 1835, the authorities decided to recruit a relatively large number of Christians for the imperial navy, arguably the first wide scale enlistment of the non-Muslims since the Greek Revolt. It is not clear in what branch these men were assigned to, however, the Ottoman authorities conscripted 1,098 men for the military service. The recruits' districts of origins were not adjacent to the sea, something which had been previously typical especially for the recruitment for the navy. Ufuk Gülsoy asserted the recent memory of Greek revolt made the Ottoman state turn to the inland provinces where Armenians were the predominant non-Muslim population over the Greeks. The Ottoman state did not impose any further levies on the

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<sup>626</sup> Avigdor Levy, "The Contribution of Zaporozhian Cossacks to Ottoman Military Reform: Documents and Notes," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* vol. 6 no. 3 (1982), 372-413.

<sup>627</sup> Official memoranda on the conscription of non-Muslim subjects indicated that the Ottoman leadership treated its Jewish subjects like the Muslim Roma by not considering them "soldier material" because they were a small population, were allegedly cowardly, and would not get along with other (non-Muslim) *millets*. HAT 311/ 18381 (c. 1838) and HAT 1251/ 48355-A (c. 1838) in Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 217n56.



non-Muslim communities in 1836. A year after, in June 1837, some 1,500 Greeks were conscripted to “serve in the imperial [war]ships” who were mostly from coastal provinces this time. The state was to draft Armenians and “Catholics” (without mentioning the ethnicity of the latter) in case the number of Greek recruits would not suffice. In the last levy, the conscripts should be between 18 and 25 of age and were required to serve no more than for 5 years. They were to receive the same wage, clothing and food allocation that the Muslim sailors received, and priests were to be employed to provide them religious services. After declaration of the Tanzimat Decree, new levies imposed to recruit non-Muslim sailors in 1845, 1847, 1851, which yielded small groups of conscripts -142, 834 and 396 men respectively-.<sup>628</sup>

A lesser known aspect of the Ottoman conscription policies during this era was creation of labor units manned by non-Muslims who served as a part of the land army. Early in 1832, the sultan ordered the recruitment 3,000 Armenians, 600 of whom would be collected from Kayseri and environs, who would be armed with “sharp axes only,” given a monthly wage of 15 *kuruş* and provisions.<sup>629</sup> The war with Mehmed Ali Pasha probably hindered the recruitment and raising of these units and a subsequent Ottoman record indicated that no Armenian soldier-labourers showed up in Antalya where they had been dispatched.<sup>630</sup> On the other hand, a Christian Arab eyewitness of Ibrahim Pasha’s

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<sup>628</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 211-214; Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa*, 35-39; BOA, ASK.MHM.d (Mühimme-i Asakir Defterleri) no. 30 (H. 1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-37.

<sup>629</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 210n28; Mustafa Kılıç, “[Kayseri] 197/ 1 Numaralı Şer’iye Sicili (H. 1246-1248/ M.1831-1832) Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme” (MA thesis, Kayseri Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2002), 327-328 (15 Za 1247 / 16 April 1832); HAT 17636 C (wrongly dated by BOA, should be from the era in question).

<sup>630</sup> Kılıç, “[Kayseri] 197/ 1 Numaralı Şer’iye Sicili,” 342-343.

military campaign in Levant wrote that Egyptian army captured 800 Armenians “in the service of the [Imperial] army” after the battle of Hums (14 April 1832), who were “released and handed sent to the Orthodox metropolitan.”<sup>631</sup>

The project was re-introduced six years after this initial attempt. In 1838, İzzet Mehmed Pasha had already 500 non-Muslim axemen under his command in Ankara and wanted 1250 more.<sup>632</sup> The Ottoman Higher Military Council (*Dar-ı Şura-i Askerî*) and the Council of Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-i Bab-ı Âli*) discussed the proposal in terms of religious legitimacy and political, social and military applicability. Mehmed Emin Efendi, who was the mufti of the Military Council, ruled in the favor of recruitment of non-Muslims in support roles. Citing sources of and from Islamic history and law, he asserted that the Christians, Jews and polytheists could be called up to fight alongside the Muslims as long as they accepted the Islamic leadership. In turn, the sultan (as the *imam* of all Muslims) could offer them certain incentives, such as wages or other sorts of cash bonuses.<sup>633</sup> It is noteworthy that Mahmud II personally considered the project as “a newly introduced, precarious matter” (*muhdes mevadd-i nazika*) in an earlier imperial decree and demanded a thorough examination and a unanimous consensus (*ittifak-ı ara*) of his statesmen before proceeding any further.<sup>634</sup> In a later imperial decree, the sultan attested that the proposal had numerous merits and was legitimate according to Islam, and finally approved it. But he still referred to the project as an “innovated thing” (*muhdes bir şey*

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<sup>631</sup> Mikhayil Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries*, trans. W. M. Thackston, Jr. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 173.

<sup>632</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunması*, 214.

<sup>633</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunması*, 214-216.

<sup>634</sup> HAT 48355 cited in Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunması*, 218.

*olduğundan*) in the same decree.<sup>635</sup> The Military Council's initial memorandum, in contrast with the sultan's views, had cited that the non-Muslim poll-tax paying population (*cizyegüzar reaya*) had been used as laborers in defense of the Muslim realms since "time immemorial" (*mine'l-kadim*),<sup>636</sup> which was indeed a historical fact for the Ottoman Empire. Mahmud II probably wanted to caution his officials by underlining that such a practice had not been in effect recently, especially during his very own reign. Furthermore, he must have anticipated the possible repercussions of employing non-Muslims in his regular army, such as the likelihood of increased discontent among the Muslim civilian and military populations, who had already been alienated by his other reforms and who might view the non-Muslims' presence in the Ottoman military next to the Muslim servicemen as an unacceptable matter. As a first-hand witness of the Ottoman army and society during 1830s, Moltke concluded less than a year before the declaration of Tanzimat Decree that in the case Muslims and Armenians served together, "even the [lowest] Kurdish conscript" would consider himself at a higher position than any "infidel" soldier and would see it natural to dominate him, and therefore turn the non-Muslim serviceman's life into hell. Instead, Moltke favored forming separate battalions for Armenians and Muslims where non-Muslims could have the incentive to rise up in the ranks, be less suspicious of their state, and develop and appreciate pride for their military service.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> HAT 18381.

<sup>636</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 214.

<sup>637</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 244-245.

The sultan, just like other Ottoman authorities, also might have had concerns about the loyalty or perhaps possible mutiny of the drafted non-Muslim soldier-laborers. The potential non-Muslim recruits already did not appear to be very enthusiastic to risk their lives for the Ottoman state in in this era as the level of draft dodging showed.<sup>638</sup> To prevent homogeneity (and any possible future solidarity among the recruits), the state wanted to assure that the non-Muslim conscripts came from different ethno-religious background. Furthermore, size of the non-Muslim recruit levy was decidedly kept small, as one Ottoman official affirmed in his report that “the number of *reaya* [conscripts] demanded is insignificant when their [large] population in Ottoman domains is concerned.”<sup>639</sup> Lastly, the authorities would not equip the non-Muslim conscripts with firearms during 1830s.

The official correspondence in 1838 indicated that 3,000 non-Muslims were to be drafted from the Southern Balkans, Anatolia and Istanbul with the help of their religious leaders (*patrikleri*), and to be tasked with “cutting wood, digging ditches, building fortifications.” The recruits were supposed to be between 20 and 30 years of age, skilled in masonry and physically strong who could be used in heavy labor. Half of these recruits (1,500 men) would be distributed to 15 *Nizamiye* regiments, forming a 100-men company in each of them. The other 1500 men would be employed in the “military clothing factory (*dikimhane*) and other services for the military.” The Ottoman state was to collect 2000 men from the Balkans, where, according to the report, “Greeks, Bulgarians and

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<sup>638</sup> Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa*, 37-39, 210-211, 222.

<sup>639</sup> HAT 18381.

Albanians” were the predominant non-Muslim communities whereas “Armenians and Catholics” were numerically insignificant. Line regiments were to receive 1500 of these recruits. The Ottoman military was to use the remaining 1000 conscripts in cloth-making and other services who were planned be recruited from Istanbul and Anatolia.<sup>640</sup> Jews were not mentioned in this report as a potential recruits, probably because an earlier memorandum had already indicated their exclusion, since the Jews had a small population, were allegedly cowardly and would not get along with other *millets* (ethno-religious nations).<sup>641</sup>

In a letter dated 5 April 1839, Moltke indicated that he was aware of some discussions about recruiting Armenians into the Ottoman army which desperately needed new recruits to replenish its dwindling ranks due to continuous attrition. He also mentions that Hafız Pasha, commander of the Ottoman army in the East, toyed with the idea of recruiting one Armenian soldier in every squad, thus making one twentieth of the army made up of Armenians.<sup>642</sup> While describing the Ottoman army camp in Nizib, Ainsworth wrote “Immediately in front [of us] was a portion of land, occupied by farriers and workmen of various kinds, more especially a large body of Armenians, who were the sappers and miners of the army, and the chief constructors of intrinchments (sic).” During the night of 22 June 1839, two days before the battle of Nizib, Ainsworth observed, “[t]he troops were moved from their stations, the heavy guns were dragged up the hill side.

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<sup>640</sup> It is also noteworthy that while counting the provinces in the Southern Balkans, the text refer to a certain “Bulgaria” (*Bulgaristan*) which “*stretches from Sophia to Varna*”. HAT 18383.

<sup>641</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 217, n56.

<sup>642</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 244. However, according to Moltke, Hafız Pasha was fully aware of possible harm to the Muslim pride of such an undertaking and thus would not proceed in making the project a reality.

Armenians were set to dig intrenchments (sic), the moon shone brightly over the arduous labours of the night, and by two o'clock in the morning, and an hour before day-light, the distribution of the troops were affected.”<sup>643</sup>

In a series of high-level discussions in 1847–48, Mustafa Reşid Pasha strongly recommended the recruitment of non-Muslims to the land army, under the pretext that they shared a fatherland with the Muslims.<sup>644</sup> Yet Mustafa Reşid Pasha was not really interested in promoting equality between the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects; rather, he wanted to decrease the burden of conscription on the former. If the state did not expand the manpower base beyond the Muslim population, he argued, the Muslims would soon cease to be the “ruling nation” (*millet-i hakime*) of the empire.<sup>645</sup> A British consular report from Erzurum in 1848 stated that “the Armenians have more hands, the Mussulman youth being taken for military service. The Mussulmans do not hire labour and they are unable to cultivate the extent of land they possess.”<sup>646</sup> Other British observers during the 1840s and 1850s such as William Nassau and Charles MacFarlane also underlined the demographic and economic losses of the Muslim population created by continuous military conscription.<sup>647</sup> As discussed above, the households who sent away their young men were not only deprived of a breadwinner but also became more vulnerable to harassment, extortion, violence, and other kinds of abuse. Non-Muslim

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<sup>643</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 313, 335–336.

<sup>644</sup> “*madem ki şu memleket anların dahi vatan-ı müştarekleridir*”. İ.MSM 16/ 365 (H. 8 Za 1263/ 18 October 1847) cited in Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 224.

<sup>645</sup> Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 222–226.

<sup>646</sup> Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 55.

<sup>647</sup> Nassau William Senior, *A Journal Kept in Turkey and Greece in the Autumn of 1857 and the Beginning of 1858* (London, 1859), 139, 163–164; MacFarlane, *Kismet*, 58–60.

communities, the observers claimed, were enriching themselves and becoming more populous thanks to their exemption from military service.

Indeed, in the turbulence of political crises, pressing manpower needs, and rising nationalist sentiments between 1856 and 1909, Ottoman statesmen intermittently debated whether non-Muslims should serve in the armed forces, and if so, how. These discussions had limited results and success because of mutual suspicion and distrust between almost every involved party, such as Ottoman decision-makers, non-Muslim, and Muslim communities.<sup>648</sup>

In the end, non-Muslims were recruited in negligible numbers to serve predominantly in supporting branches.<sup>649</sup> Only in 1909 did the Young Turks impose obligatory military service on non-Muslims, and for the first time during the Great War, hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Armenians, Greeks, and Jews served in the unarmed “labor battalions” that were very similar to what Mahmud II and his statesmen had tried to create about a hundred years before.

What effect could the disproportionate representation of Muslims in the armed forces have had on the identities of the Muslim and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects in the long run? Eugen Weber and Khaled Fahmy argued for 19<sup>th</sup>-century France and Khedivial Egypt respectively that since military service homogenized the experience of thousands of conscripts for several generations, it would contribute to the development of their respective national consciousness and national identities.<sup>650</sup> For Ottoman lands after

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<sup>648</sup> For two recent overviews of this subject, see Heinzelmänn, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına*, 206-261; Ufuk Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa Osmanlı'nın Gayrimüslim Askerleri* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2010), 15-80.

<sup>649</sup> Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa*, 81-205.

<sup>650</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 268; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 292-302.

1826, Hakan Erdem and Virginia Aksan argue that Ottoman conscription, which mainly targeted Muslims, may have contributed to the demarcation between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire by enforcing ethno-religious and ethno-cultural boundaries.<sup>651</sup> According to Erdem, this may well have created a “rift”

between the army as a whole and the non-Turkish provinces of the empire, whether they were inhabited by Muslims or non-Muslims.... A regular Ottoman army that did not or could not incorporate non-Turkish Muslims into its ranks would be increasingly perceived as a foreign army of occupation and would strengthen the anti-Ottoman/Turkish sentiments of non-Turkish provincials when it was used to pacify such provinces. Similarly, the “Turks” who bore the greatest burden of the defense of the empire would have come to view the internal and external others very much in the same light, and as one could claim, they would tend to create their own reactive nationalist sentiment against the enemy from within or without.<sup>652</sup>

Their experiences during military service directly affected not only the conscripts but also their families and communities at home. Both the servicemen and their communities suffered from any death or absence. As the conversations intercepted at the coffeehouses, taverns, and streets of Istanbul indicate, many serving or discharged Muslim Ottoman soldiers must have recounted their adventures, observations, and judgments to their friends, relatives, neighbors and strangers. No matter the emotional tenor of the soldiers’ recollections, they will have inevitably created or reinforced ethno-religious or ethno-cultural “typing,” leading to an “us” (soldiers and those who identified with them) versus “them” (the enemy or those who did not serve) dichotomy.

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<sup>651</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* 3 (1999), 132-133; Virginia H. Aksan, "The Ottoman Military and State Transformation in a Globalizing World," *CSSAAME* 27, no. 2 (2007), 264-267, 269, 270; Erdem, "Recruitment," 192, 204-205.

<sup>652</sup> Erdem, "Recruitment," 192.



## 5.6 Islam and the Ottoman Soldiers

What role did Islam play in convincing recruits to join and serve the Ottoman armies during the period in question? Could it have been the opium for the masses of Ottoman infantry and cavalry, as some contemporary and modern historical sources suggest?

Ottoman decision-makers and ideologues, who demanded loyalty and sacrifice from their conscripts, repeatedly presented the era's armed conflicts as ones waged between the rightful Islamic state and "foreign infidels," "enemies of Islam," "heretics," or, in cases such as the war against Mehmed Ali Pasha, as against rebels who had taken up arms against their legitimate Islamic ruler.<sup>653</sup> Mahmud II, whom his critics ironically nicknamed the "infidel sultan," used Islamic symbols and propaganda to legitimize his actions and policies and actively presented himself and the new regime as the rightful promoters and protectors of Sunni Islam after 1826. The sultan was also careful to obtain the approval of the *ulema* elite for every major policy decision or for various reform projects.<sup>654</sup>

*Mansure* soldiers were ordered to read verses from the Qur'an, pray five times a day, and attend Friday prayers as a group. According to the *Mansure* army's founding regulations, the soldiers were to gain some knowledge about Islam, "as much as a commoner needs". Salaried *imams* were appointed to each battalion to lead prayers and preach to the soldiers on matters of Islam and their duties as soldiers of the sultan and the faith. The authorities supervised the printing of religious treatises that outlined the basic

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<sup>653</sup> For Mahmud II's and several Ottoman officials' statements, see Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 21-23, 44-46, 101.

<sup>654</sup> İlhami Yurdakul, *Osmanlı Merkez Teşkilatı'nda Reform (1826-1876)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), 234-237, 274-282.

tenets of Sunni Islam, such as *Dürr-i Yekta* and *Birgivi Risalesi*, and sent them to the regiments as well as administrative districts. According to Yıldız, the periodical prayers and religious services together with continuous physical drilling aimed to accustom the recruits to and convince them of the demands of their new, regimented military life.<sup>655</sup> The system's pragmatic goal was to mobilize as many as possible behind its policies and turn the subjects into "active militants" of the regime.<sup>656</sup>

The Islamic flavor and justification were apparent in the induction process, which ceremonially and legally initiated the conscript to his new life as a member of the Ottoman "military class."<sup>657</sup> The 1846 conscription code stipulated that the draft lottery should be initiated after a proper prayer<sup>658</sup> and that a member of the *ulema* should be employed in the drawing of lots.<sup>659</sup> The selected conscripts were to be told that they were going to serve for five years in the active army for the "state and religion" (*din-ü devlet*). Then they were to take an oath in front of the *ulema* present that they would come back to join the Ottoman army after their initial twenty-day leave, avoiding dishonor and shame in their new lives in the regiments.<sup>660</sup> The induction process and ceremonies marked the end of the conscripts' previous lives and initiation into a new legal and social status.

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<sup>655</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 352-353, 368-369n271; also, for similar "expectations" from the soldiers and officers, see the later *Müzekkere-i Zabitan*, 6. In a different world but for similar goals, British colonial authorities together with local religious agents in 19<sup>th</sup>-century India crafted what Nile Green has called a "sepoy religion" or "barracks Islam" for the Muslim rank and file. This "barracks Islam" was aimed at creating a more effective military force for the British by instilling discipline, devotion, and loyalty. Nile Green, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 136-149.

<sup>656</sup> Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok*, 371.

<sup>657</sup> A number of Ottoman military codes and ordinances used the ancient term "*askerî*" to denote the conscripted subject's new status. See, for instance, *Kanunname-i Ceza-i Askeriye*, Article 2, p. 5.

<sup>658</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 42, pp. 26-28.

<sup>659</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 46, pp. 29-31.

<sup>660</sup> *Kur'a Kanunname-i Hümayunu*, Article 49, pp. 33-34.

The evidence consulted for this study concerning the impact of such religious propaganda is rather mixed. Slade attributed the steadfastness of the unpaid Ottoman soldiers during the Crimean War (1853–56), to “their Prophet's promises. Mohammed said, ‘The sword is the key of heaven: a drop of bloodshed in action, or a night passed under arms, is more meritorious than two months of fasting and prayer. Who dies in battle his sins are pardoned....’ When men are inspired by a sentiment such considerations are of little account.”<sup>661</sup> Religious differences between the foes, he hinted, could motivate the Ottoman soldiers more and result in the escalation of violence on the battlefield. In Moltke’s account, Ottoman soldiers charged the rebellious Yezidi villages not only with fixed bayonets but also with the conventional Muslim Turkish battle cry of “Allah Allah!” According to Moltke, the soldiers’ fighting zeal would increase when they attacked enemies who were not only affluent (i.e. have stuff to plunder) but also “devil-worshippers.”<sup>662</sup> Kabudlı Vasfi’s firsthand account expressed the demarcation between “us” (Muslim Ottoman forces) and the “infidel” in the battlefields of Greece as two opposing sides.<sup>663</sup>

Other contemporary observers had no illusions that religious convictions sufficed to keep the Ottoman rank and file in the army camps and barracks and argued that a steady flow of cash, provisions, and equipment were necessary. An earlier treatise by Koca Sekbanbaşı during the reign of Selim III asserted that the days when Muslims

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<sup>661</sup> Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War*, 175-176.

<sup>662</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 191-193.

<sup>663</sup> The Ottoman soldiers prayed for their fallen comrades and attacked their enemies with the battle cries of “Allah Allah!” or “Allahu Ekber!” with unfurled war banners. The Greek rebels recited their Gospels, screaming “Oh Cross, Oh Jesus!” (*Ya Haç, Ya Put!*) under the overseeing priests while attacking the Ottomans forces. Schmidt, “The adventures of an Ottoman horseman,” 223, 230, 235, 248, 251, 253, 270.

fought wars just to please God had long passed; everyone now expected material benefits if he was to risk his life.<sup>664</sup> In 1820s, Mahmud II wrote "without a salary [the Albanians] would not go from here to there. Even if they would, the Albanians did not fight because they thought there would be no need for them if the fight was over and they would not make any money."<sup>665</sup> In September 1841, a certain *mirahur* named Deli Ahmed in his Istanbul coffeehouse was overheard saying that soldiers who did not receive their due wages would not be useful on the battlefield.<sup>666</sup> Furthermore, forcing men who did not have a personal stake in the fighting might further hamper ordinary soldiers' morale. An eyewitness to the battle of Nizib reflected on the Ottoman soldiers who had also to fight against Mehmed Ali's Muslim Egyptians. His words are worth quoting in full:

What was it to the soldiers, if the Sultan had one great province more or less, in his vast dominions! The enemy was also of the same faith as themselves, and few that were on the field had ever met them before, or bore rancour or hatred, or even ill-feeling towards an Egyptian. There had not even been any of the usual little incentives put into play to excite their feelings, and there existed nothing but the sense of duty, and a decent regard for honour, to keep the men to their posts. The Egyptians, it might be said, had not greater incentives to the struggle; this is true,—but they were perpetually talked up to a contempt of the disgraced of Homs and Koniye....<sup>667</sup>

In their seminal works on Ottoman warfare between 1500 and 1800, Gábor Ágoston and Rhoads Murphey challenged the argument of "Islamic fanaticism," which has been used to explain the Ottoman armies' military prowess and early victories. The concept of "Holy War" and the prospects of material gain (e.g., plunder, cash bonuses, other material

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<sup>664</sup> *Koca Sekbanbaşı Risalesi*, ed. Abdullah Uçman (Istanbul: Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser), 166.

<sup>665</sup> HAT 40116 cited in Ilıcak, "A Radical Rethinking of Empire, 267, n198.

<sup>666</sup> İ. DH 2221 (H. 6 Ş 1257/ 23 September 1841) in Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, 298.

<sup>667</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 340-341.

or in-kind awards) certainly formed an integral part of Ottoman military culture and warrior ethos, and they must have attracted volunteers and increased common soldiers' courage. But Ágoston and Murphey provided nuanced explanations backed by archival research, attributing the Ottomans' military successes mainly to abundant manpower and financial resources, a competent administrative-military bureaucracy, a remarkable military-industrial complex, and an impressive logistical structure by contemporary standards.<sup>668</sup> The effect of religion on the Ottoman rank and file in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has yet to be studied in more detail, but similar parameters probably shaped the morale and motivation of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century and a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman trooper. The period between the 1820s and the 1850s proved to be tumultuous, and during it, a new, ambitious regime made unprecedented demands on its populace to execute its policies without offering much in return. The state policies, religious propaganda, and personal religious convictions failed to turn conscription, mass mobilization, and war into a popular affair in the eyes of the Ottoman subjects. An official report recorded that about one-eighth of the 161,000 *Mansure* soldiers deserted between 1826 and 1837, while an equal number went "missing in battle," sometimes no doubt due to desertion.<sup>669</sup> In the following years, thousands of soldiers and potential recruits continued to desert from their regiments and to evade conscription.

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<sup>668</sup> Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan, Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

<sup>669</sup> Şimşek, "The First 'Little Mehmeds,'" 304, appendix A, drawn from BOA, KK (Kamil Kepeci) 6799.

## Conclusion

The archival evidence indicates that the disciplined Ottoman units c. 1820s-40s were primarily manned by ordinary Muslim villagers and the urban poor, who were forcibly recruited, received very little, or no, salaries, were kept under arms for years without seeing their families, and suffered heavily from diseases and other hazards of soldiering in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Middle East. The Ottoman state resorted to coercion, military discipline, and religious rhetoric to persuade these conscripts, a great number of whom were Turkish-speaking subjects, to serve the “state and religion.” The Tanzimat Decree and subsequent legislation did not really guarantee a truly “just” conscription for the Ottoman subjects. The actual procedures of selection indicate that an individual’s social and economic status basically determined his chances of becoming a draftee.

Far from being established and accepted traditions by the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, conscription and obligatory military service remained among the unpopular innovations of Ottoman reformers. From its beginning, the state was perfectly aware that its subjects would not prove willing soldiers, while tens of thousands of potential recruits and those already conscripted desperately tried to evade military service. Thus the currently popular belief in Turkey (shared by some Westerners) that “Turks” form a “military nation,” the perception that every Turk has the essential skills and zeal to be a “born soldier,” is proved a nationalist myth through historical evidence available for the first Ottoman wide-scale conscription effort in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> For a critical study of the topic for the republican era, see Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of The Military Nation, Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Yet generations of compulsory military service must have had a great impact on the formation of ethnic, religious and territorial identities, and national consciousness. In this regard, further micro-studies on conscription and the selected communities and regions would yield crucial information about changes and continuities in the economic, demographic, political, and cultural history of the Ottoman Empire between 1826 and 1918. Furthermore, they would contribute to our knowledge of what made an “Ottoman soldier,” as well as to a better understanding of changing inter-communal relations, identity formation, and the meanings of subjecthood, loyalty to the state, and territoriality of individuals in the later Ottoman Empire.

## Chapter 6: Crisis and Triumph: Nizib, Tanzimat and Reclaiming the Empire, 1839-

1841

After a period of an uneasy truce after 1833, Mahmud II decided to renew the hostilities with Mehmed Ali Pasha in 1839. Between 1833 and 1839, European consular and Egyptian internal correspondence implicitly and at times, explicitly indicated that the Pasha wanted independence (*istiklâl*) and repeatedly sought the support of the Great Powers in this goal. Furthermore, he continued to maintain and expand his land and naval forces during these years, imposed conscription and new taxes in Greater Syria in 1834, and built barracks, fortresses, military hospitals, and deployed large forces in the area. By 1837, he established his authority along the eastern and western coasts of the Red Sea from Suez to Yemen, including the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. The Egyptians captured the port of Mocha in Yemen in December 1832 and threatened to expand their control in southern Iraq and the western coast of Persian Gulf in 1838-39. These actions greatly alarmed Britain, which was becoming increasingly concerned about the security of its sea communications with India and sub-continent itself.<sup>671</sup> In Albania and Bosnia, Mehmed Ali Pasha supported the rebellions against Ottoman central authority in the 1830s by sending in his “agent-provocateurs,” and money.<sup>672</sup> In 1834 and 1837-38,

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<sup>671</sup> Muhammed H. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 109-113, 122-23, 125-129, 133; Andrew McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 110-116; Thomas E. Marston, *Britain's Imperial Role in the Red Sea Area, 1800-1878* (Hamden, Conn: The Shoe String Press, 1961), 44, 54-55, 61-63.

<sup>672</sup> Ahmet Yüksel, *II. Mahmud Devrinde Osmanlı İstihbaratı* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013), 421-22; Fatma Sel Turhan, “The Rebellious Kapudan of Bosnia: Hüseyin Kapudan (1802–1834)” *JOS*, no. 44 (2014), 444-45. It is noteworthy that one of the expense items listed by Bowring in the Egyptian budget of 1833 was called “Secret expenses, missions, presents at Constantinople & c.” and was worth 0.8 million *kuruş* (about 8,500 pounds sterling) which constituted 4% of all Egyptian expenses. John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London, 1840), 44.



Mehmed Ali's heavy-handed policies of centralization, taxation and conscription led to the large-scale rebellions in Greater Syria.<sup>673</sup> These uprisings were keenly observed from and probably supported covertly by Istanbul.<sup>674</sup> In a well-documented attempt in 1836, Mahmud II tried to have Mehmed Ali Pasha assassinated. Reşid Mehmed Bey "the spectacled" (*gözlüklü*), an Ottoman lieutenant-colonel who had been in Paris since 1832 for his military education, volunteered for the task. He was to pose as a disillusioned officer after the dismissal of his patron Grand Vizier Hüsrev Pasha and to defect to Egypt. However, even though the sultan and his highest ranking officials made preparations for the plan, it was never executed.<sup>675</sup>

In August 1838, Mahmud II authorized the Balta Limanı commercial treaty with Britain, which opened the Ottoman markets for British import and export trade. The treaty granted the British merchants favourable conditions to operate, such as reduced import duties and the abolition of the internal monopolies that Mahmud II had created in the 1820s. Ottoman statesmen were probably aware of the potential damage to the national manufactories and export revenues in the long run. Yet they also desperately needed any British support against bids to reclaim Greater Syria and defeat Mehmed Ali Pasha. The treaty ushered in an era that weakened the Ottoman state's ability to design its foreign trade policy.<sup>676</sup> Furthermore, the stipulations of the treaty were also directed at the

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<sup>673</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 113-116, 124.

<sup>674</sup> Yüksel, *II. Mahmud Devrinde Osmanlı İstihbaratı*, 385-88.

<sup>675</sup> Yüksel Çelik, "Mısır valisi Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Bâbiâli'ye karşı tutumu ve 1836'da kendisi için hazırlanan suikast planı," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 20 (2009), 69-100.

<sup>676</sup> Ottoman Empire signed a number of similar "free-trade" agreements with other European Powers in the following years. Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadî Tarihi 1500-1914* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2005), 164, 205-209. Pamuk is cautious about the treaty's negative impact on the Ottoman manufacturing industries in the coming decades.

lands ruled and internal monopolies created by Mehmed Ali Pasha, who, on paper at least, was still merely an Ottoman governor in 1838.<sup>677</sup> Later in that year, the sultan sent Mustafa Reşid Pasha to Vienna, Paris, Berlin and London to seek military and diplomatic support for a likely offensive against Mehmed Ali Pasha, which, however, did not produce any concrete results.<sup>678</sup> Nevertheless, the British ambassador in Istanbul reported to London that the sultan discussed the possibility of going to war with Egypt in two imperial council meetings on 22 January and 20 February 1839.<sup>679</sup> In the latter meeting, Mahmud II reportedly sent an imperial decree to the Imperial Council stating, “Hafiz Pasha informs me that my army is able to defeat the Egyptian army in Syria. The [Grand Admiral] tells me that my fleet is strong enough to defeat and destroy the Egyptian fleet. It remains for you to be courageous and to do your duty.” The ministers responded they that they “would do everything in their power to act in conformity with the pleasure of their master.”<sup>680</sup> In the spring of 1839, the main Ottoman field army in Eastern Anatolia received the orders for moving against the main Egyptian force stationed around Aleppo. The Ottoman goal was to defeat Mehmed Ali Pasha militarily and retake Greater Syria and Palestine, which the Pasha had been ruling for half a decade.<sup>681</sup> According to Moltke, “the whole empire...is moaning under the burden of maintaining an army in distant lands,

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<sup>677</sup> In practice, Mehmed Ali Pasha did not comply until he was defeated militarily in 1841. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 182.

<sup>678</sup> M S [Matthew Smith] Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 95.

<sup>679</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 133-134. Moltke, who was attached to the Ottoman army in distant Kurdistan, also asserted as of July 1839 that the sultan must have made his definitive decision to go to war in the early January, 1839. Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, tr. Hayrullah Örs (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 261.

<sup>680</sup> British diplomatic correspondence. Quoted in Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 134.

<sup>681</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 388-389.

without any [sound] reason except for the presence of powerful neighbour's army. In seven years, at least 50,000 soldiers were assembled and then buried."<sup>682</sup>

According to Moltke, the Ottoman state mustered some 70,000 troops in three armies across Anatolia.<sup>683</sup> Another source notes that in the opening of the hostilities, Hafız Pasha's main force was 42,000 men strong and supported by 24 batteries of artillery deployed in Malatya. There were other contingents of 12,000, 20,000 and 5,600 men in Ankara, Konya and Kayseri respectively supported by 16 batteries in total. In various locations, there were some 7,500 men and 12 artillery batteries.<sup>684</sup> Part of the Ottoman strategy was to hold the mountain passes in the Taurus mountains to counter any possible Egyptian flanking move from the lowlands of Adana into the Anatolian plains. Ottomans also kept large reserves in the rear to rush against any invading Egyptian army in case their main force was defeated. Hafız Pasha, who commanded the bulk of Ottoman regulars, reserves and artillery that had recently "reconquered" Kurdistan in 1835-1839, was to take on Ibrahim Pasha's army stationed in Syria.

In early May 1839, the Ottoman field army began assembling and building fortifications in Birecik. On 7 May, the news came to the Ottoman camp that Ibrahim Pasha had 8 regiments and 52 guns in Aleppo.<sup>685</sup> As of 20 May 1839, Hüsrev Paşa's force in Birecik was raised to 53 infantry battalions, 8 cavalry regiments and 80 guns, with

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<sup>682</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 261.

<sup>683</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 262.

<sup>684</sup> Abdurrahman Zeki, *Et-Tarihü'l-Harbi li-Asr Muhammed Ali el-Kebir* (Cairo: Darü'l-Maarif, 1950), 458-59.

<sup>685</sup> According to French consular correspondence, Ibrahim Pasha threw 8 line infantry and 2 guard infantry regiments (each was 3,200-strong on paper) accompanied with cavalry and artillery into the fray at the battle of Nizib. Edouard Driault ed., *l'Egypt et l'Europe; La Crise Orientale de 1839-41*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Royal Egyptian Geographical Society, 1930-33), 88-89.

more guns and irregular reinforcements on the way. Moltke estimated that the Ottomans fielded an effective force of 25,000-28,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 100 guns.<sup>686</sup> According to Ahmed Lütü's official history, the Sublime Porte knew that Hüseyin Paşa had 37,000 disciplined troops and 120 guns in the field, but it also was aware that before making any drastic moves, it had to know the real state of Hüseyin Pasha's army. Hacı Bekir Ağa, the chamberlain (*kethüda*) of the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, was summoned to an imperial council after his arrival in the capital. After his initial, "agreeable" answers, he was "forced to tell the truth," informing the council that all of the reservists were green, only 10-15,000 of the troops could be useful and the rest should not be trusted in a field battle. Therefore, he suggested, the Ottoman army should keep a defensive stance. Concurrently, Hafız Paşa's dispatches confirmed that the army should be kept in defense and he asked for "some more guns and 5-6 regiments" as reinforcements. *Ferik* (Corps Commander) Tayyar Paşa was tasked with inspecting Hüseyin's force in person and was given a large sum -100,000 *kuruş*- probably to cover the army's future expenses.<sup>687</sup> On 7 June 1839, Mahmud II officially declared war on his governor Mehmed Ali Pasha, "not as an equal, but as a traitor to be chastised."<sup>688</sup>

In the first days of June, the Ottoman army left Birecik, marched two hours west and reached Nizib. Facing towards the Mızar pass in the south and south-west of the town, the Ottoman forces dug-in and stayed in their new camp for three weeks. On 20

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<sup>686</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 256.

<sup>687</sup> Ahmed Lütü, *Tarih-i Lütü*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel ve Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 6 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 993. Dates/chronology of these events are not clear.

<sup>688</sup> Letitia W. Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West, 1839-1841* (Jefferson, N. Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007), 59-60.

June, Ibrahim Pasha's army appeared in sight and encamped to the south-west of the Ottoman forces. On 22 and 23 June, the Egyptians made a daring manoeuvre by swinging towards the left of Ottoman army through the Mizar pass in the south. According to Moltke, he could not persuade Hüsrev Pasha to mount a strong attack on the vulnerable Egyptian columns as they marched eastwards. In response, the entire Ottoman army reeled left to face any possible Egyptian assault. With his daring Napoleonic manoeuvre, Ibrahim Pasha successfully deemed the Ottoman defenses (mainly facing south and south west) useless with his rapid deployment and blocked his adversary's possible retreat route to its well-fortified and well-supplied positions in Birecik. Except for a heavy battery and some guard units, 51 Ottoman infantry battalions (24 of them were reserve units), 9 cavalry regiments and 105 guns were committed to the battle in three lines against the Egyptian attack coming from the east.<sup>689</sup> According to Ainsworth, the Ottomans fielded 17,000 regular infantry, 5,200 cavalry, 3000 artillerymen, and 160 guns into the battle, while some 3,000 irregular infantry and 6,000 irregular cavalry supported this force.<sup>690</sup> On the opposing side, Ibrahim Pasha commanded a regular force of 24,000 infantry (in 12 regiments), 4,800 cavalry, 2,000 engineers, 2,000 artillerymen, 120 guns and 1,500 irregular Arab horsemen.<sup>691</sup>

On 24 June, Ibrahim Pasha attacked the newly formed Ottoman lines with full force and routed Hafız Pasha's army, which crumbled at an astonishing speed. One of the main reasons for the Egyptian victory was that Hüsrev Pasha lacked Ibrahim Pasha's

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<sup>689</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 258-60, 263-65, 269.

<sup>690</sup> William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, vol. 1 (London, 1842), 316. For different estimations on figures, see Table 5.

<sup>691</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, v. 1, p. 320.

skill, initiative and resolution as a battlefield commander. Furthermore, Ottoman commanders kept their troops on alert for almost three days and nights before the battle, and the whole army repositioned after Ibrahim Pasha's flanking movement.<sup>692</sup> Two days after the defeat, Moltke observed

The Kurds, who constituted half of our forces, are now our enemies. They fired at their officers and comrades [in arms] and set up ambushes in the mountain roads. In multiple occasions, they attacked [commander] Hafız Pasha too. Other deserters threw away their muskets, took off the uniforms that made them so uncomfortable and happily headed towards their villages singing folk songs... The [disorganized] retreat cost five-sixth of the army and the artillery lost all its equipment. The reservists returned their homes *en masse*. Mahmud Pasha's [line] brigade (*liva*) is now composed of 65 men. Bekir Pasha's [line] brigade, which was once 5,800 strong, now has 351 men. Other [units] are also in the same condition. Only the [reformed] timariot cavalymen sustained their cohesion for the most part.<sup>693</sup>

Some of the Ottoman contingents stationed in the rear also started to melt away after Nizib. Osman Pasha's 3000-strong force at Gürün, east of Kayseri, threw away their weapons and deserted. In Darende, southeast of Gürün, a contingent of 1,200 men under Izzet Mehmed Pasha, the commander who would defeat Ibrahim Pasha's forces in the north of Beirut two years later, followed the suit.<sup>694</sup> In addition to the thousands of prisoners, some 10,000 muskets, 104 guns, ammunition and war material, Ibrahim Pasha, who had desperately needed hard cash, captured the Ottoman army's treasury of 2.25

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<sup>692</sup> Eyewitness accounts of this pivotal battle from both sides can be found in Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 259-274; Driault, *l'Egypt et l'Europe*, 81-86; Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, vol. 1, pp. 331-348; Le Baron D'Armagnac, *Nézib et Beyrout: Souvenirs d'Orient de 1833 a 1841* (Paris, 1844), 159-219.

<sup>693</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 271-72.

<sup>694</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 273; Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, vol. 2, p. 33.

million *kuruş*.<sup>695</sup> Egyptian forces quickly occupied Urfa, Anteb and Maraş, but a French emissary brought Mehmed Ali Pasha's orders to his son, Ibrahim Pasha to stop his advance. Ibrahim Pasha halted his army and promised not to pass the Taurus mountain range into the central Anatolian plains.<sup>696</sup>

On 1 July 1839, Mahmud II's death was publicly announced before the news of the defeat reached Istanbul on 4 or 5 July 1839.<sup>697</sup> On 2 July, his older son, Abdülmecid I (r. 1839-61), ascended to the Ottoman throne at the age of 16. During Mahmud II's funeral, Hüsrev Pasha, who was the powerful head of *Meclis-i Vâlâ-i Ahkâm-ı Adliye* (Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances), forcefully (and literally) seized the seal of the Grand Vizier from Mehmed Emin Rauf Pasha during the funeral of Mahmud II. As the Ottoman army had moved against Ibrahim Pasha's forces in Anatolia, the imperial fleet, with its 128-gun, three-decked flagship *Mahmudiye* -then one of the largest warships in the world-, had also set sail towards the Mediterranean via the Dardanelles under the command of Ahmed Fevzi Pasha on 7 June 1839.<sup>698</sup> While at sea, Ahmed Fevzi Pasha, who was one the favourite army reformers of Mahmud II but also an adversary of Hüsrev Pasha, received the news of Mahmud II's death, Hüsrev Pasha's ascension to the grand viziership and his dispatches that demanded Ahmed Fevzi Pasha's return to Istanbul as quickly as possible. In an unprecedented act, Ahmed Fevzi Pasha defected to Mehmed Ali

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<sup>695</sup> According to the reports of Süleyman Pasha, one of the senior Egyptian commanders and M. Petit, a French officer attached to the Ottoman field army. Driault, *l'Egypt et l'Europe*, 82, 85.

<sup>696</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 140.

<sup>697</sup> Depending on the source, Mahmud II's date of death could be between 28 June and 1 July 1839. Yüksel Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa: Siyasi Hayatı ve Askeri Faaliyetleri (1756-1855)" (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2005) 379-80, 391.

<sup>698</sup> Ufford, *How Mehmet Ali Defied the West*, 59-60.

Pasha with what constituted the bulk of the Ottoman navy: two three-decked warships including *Mahmudiye*, 7 other ships of the line, 11 frigates, 25 ships in total. An Egyptian fleet of 28 ships received Ahmed Fevzi Pasha's force and the Ottoman ships entered Alexandria harbour on 14 July 1839.<sup>699</sup>

Abdülmecid I immediately instructed Hüsrev Pasha that he pardon Mehmed Ali Pasha, even though he had been "guilty of certain offensive proceedings against [his] late glorious father" in order to stop the spilling of Muslim blood. "Provided that Mehmed Ali Pasha shall exactly fulfill the duties of submission and vassalage," the sultan "grant[ed] him the hereditary succession of his sons to the Government of Egypt." In later instructions, it became clear that the Istanbul government was only willing to cede Egypt proper and demanded the return of Greater Syria, Crete and Hijaz. Nevertheless, Mehmed Ali still wanted to negotiate to keep all the provinces under his control and to assure the dismissal of Hüsrev Pasha from his post. He had two invaluable bargaining chips: his crushing victory at Nizib, and his possession of the bulk of the Ottoman fleet. The future looked gloomy for the Ottoman side as Akif Efendi, the sultan's envoy to the Pasha, returned to Istanbul on 21 July with Mehmed Ali's demands.<sup>700</sup> The Ottoman statesmen began planning their next move to mediate peace with the least loss of land, money and prestige.

Luckily for the Sublime Porte, the Great Powers also did not want Mehmed Ali Pasha any further escalation of the armed conflict. They did not want to deal with any

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<sup>699</sup> Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 388-91; Hacer Bulgurcuoğlu, "Deniz Tarihimizin Sembol Gemilerinden Mahmudiye" (MA thesis, Mimar Sinan University, 2004), 52; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 142.

<sup>700</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 140-43.



unforeseen and unmediated results of the war that could lead to further disagreements among themselves. On 27 July 1839, they informed both belligerents that “agreement among the Five Great Powers on the question of the East is secured” and requested them to “suspend any definitive resolution without their concurrence.”<sup>701</sup> As had happened in the previous Ottoman-Egyptian conflict in 1831-33, the crisis thus became internationalized, a situation that frustrated Mehmed Ali Pasha but was immediately accepted by the Ottomans for achieving their goals.<sup>702</sup>

### **6.1 The Proclamation of the Tanzimat Decree**

Towards the end of August 1839, Mustafa Reşid Pasha returned from his diplomatic mission in London. Within a few months, the Pasha, the sultan and other high-ranking officials drafted a reform edict, famously known as the Rose Chamber Decree (*Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu*) or Tanzimat Decree.<sup>703</sup> On 3 November 1839, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, who played a pivotal role in the creation of the text, personally read it in the presence of state dignitaries, leaders of Ottoman non-Muslim communities and foreign ambassadors in the garden of Gülhane Kasrı (Rose Chamber Manor), a part of the Topkapı Palace complex looking towards the Marmara Sea. In an unprecedented act, perhaps since the authorization of the *Sened-i İttifak* by Mahmud II in 1808, Abdülmecid I took an oath that he was to observe and execute the contents of the decree in one of the chambers of

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<sup>701</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 147.

<sup>702</sup> Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 149.

<sup>703</sup> Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 302; Frederick Stanley Rodkey, “Lord Palmerston and the Rejuvenation of Turkey, 1830-41: Part II, 1839-41” *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1930), 203-4; Butrus Abu Manneh, “The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript,” *Die Welt des Islams* 34 (1994), 192-93. I somewhat disagree with Abu Manneh regarding his explanation of the ideas behind the decree and his dismissal of Mahmudian roots of the ideas present in the decree.

Topkapı Palace where the holy relics of the Prophet Muhammad were kept. The ceremony was carried out in the presence of senior *ulema* and high-ranking Ottoman officials, who took a similar oath.<sup>704</sup> A European eyewitness described the ceremony at Gülhane Kasrı as follows:

... the proclamation ceremony was likely to be curious. So on the appointed day I started forth in full uniform, to be present at it. It was to take place within the Seraglio. Nevertheless, we got without hindrance to a kiosk, the upper story of which was to be occupied by the Sultan and his harem, and the lower by the diplomatic corps. A special window had been reserved for me. Bands began to play, loud shouts were heard. The Sultan was coming, on horseback, preceded by a crowd of officers and pashas, in full dress. Between him and them, dressed in a sort of blue blouse with epaulettes, hobbled a little lame man with a big red head, a white beard, and a spiteful-looking face. It was Kosrew [Hüsrev] Pasha, the Grand Vizier ... After him came the Sultan's pages, handsome young fellows, carrying halberts (sic) and wearing gilt shakos with immense plumes of peacocks' feathers, aigrettes, or birds of Paradise. In the centre of them was the Sultan himself, almost hidden by their plumes. He kept his head thrown back and wore a black cloak trimmed with diamonds and a fez with an aigrette adorned with the same stones. He dismounted. The Grand Vizier and the new Sheik el Islam (*Şeyhülislam*) held up the corners of his cloak, while a hideous negro, with hanging lips and haunches like a woman, covered with embroideries, advanced to receive him. This was [*Kızlar Ağası*], chief eunuch and governor of the harem.

... From my window I look out on a broad space, surrounded by beautiful umbrella pines and sloping gently down to the sea. Beyond is the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus and the pretty village of [Kadıköy], This space is full of troops, twelve splendid battalions of the Imperial Guard, Lancers and Artillery. These form a circle, in the centre of which rises a pulpit covered with some yellow stuff, and around it the pashas and the whole—body of Ulemas and Mollahs, wearing the ancient costume -coloured kaftans, and big white or green turbans, crossed with broad gold bands—shortly collect. The chief dervishes and the heads of all the religious sects are there also. All this clergy stands there motionless, impassive, with lowered eyes, not over pleased, I fancy, at bottom. Then the crowd makes a rush, which infuriates the Grand Vizier. He makes towards it, lifting his

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<sup>704</sup> Abu Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," 192-93.

little leg very high and waving his handkerchief. At the very sight of him everybody flees, and retires humbly within bounds. Then the manuscript of the [*Hatt-ı Şerif*] is brought to him. He carries it respectfully to his lips and forehead, and hands it over to Reschid Pasha, who ascends the pulpit and reads it out. That over and finished midst the deepest silence, an [*imam*] takes Reschid Pasha's place in the pulpit. He stretches out his arms. All present do the same, the soldiers stretching out but one on account of their weapons, and he intones the prayer for the Sultan, which every one repeats in chorus. After which every man passes his hand across his eyes and beard and the troops shout “Allah” three times, with unequalled fervour and passion. Hundreds of cannon are fired in all directions, and the beautiful sight, lighted up by the most brilliant of sunshine, has come to an end. The Sultan has departed. The Sultana Validé [Abdülmecid's mother] sends me a posse of officials, bearing cakes and sweetmeats. I take leave of Kosrew Pasha and depart also, thinking sadly that if this Turkish people, so brave on the field of battle and apparently still so devoted to its sovereign, and so firm in its religious faith, is truly, in spite of all, a rapidly decaying nation, the miserable rag of paper read out this day will certainly not save it.<sup>705</sup>

Following the older traditions of Islamic political writings in “justice decrees” (*adaletname*) and “mirror for princes” (*nasihatname*) literature, the decree made the case to improve the Ottoman state's power and its subjects' well-being simultaneously through better governance. The subjects should comply with the promulgated order regardless of their religion or status and rank in the society.<sup>706</sup> More specifically, the decree promised to abolish tax-farming practices and to distribute the taxes based on every individual subject's ability to pay. It underlined the people” (*ahali*) of the empire were obliged to provide recruits to ensure the defense of the empire. The decree admitted that the Ottoman government had not been conducting conscription in a just fashion. It confessed

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<sup>705</sup> Prince de Joinville, *Memoirs* [Vieux Souvenirs], trans. Lady Mary Loyd (London, 1895), 140-43.

<sup>706</sup> Abu Manneh, “The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript,” 189-90; Halil İnalçık, “Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu” in *Tanzimat*, eds. Halil İnalçık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu (Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), 104-106.

that the state imposed recruit levies in the areas without considering the size of their populations and kept the recruits “for life,” which resulted in harming population growth, agriculture and commerce in the long term. The decree pledged to bring an orderly system for military recruitment based on accurate population data, limiting the service to 4 or 5 years and substituting those discharged with new recruits. In his decree, the sultan guaranteed the security of life, honour and property of all of his subjects regardless of their faith.<sup>707</sup> Finally, the decree underlined that the Ottoman state would not use power arbitrarily over its subjects, announcing that it would not confiscate property or punish individuals without due process and fair trial. Various state councils and officials, which were to strictly follow the rule of law and avoid corruption, were to codify the necessary laws and regulations.<sup>708</sup>

At first glance, the Tanzimat Decree could be regarded as the Ottoman state’s short-term response to the military setbacks in the summer of 1839, which sought to gain further European, and more specifically British support against Mehmed Ali Pasha’s onslaught through the proclamation of a series administrative, military, fiscal and legal

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<sup>707</sup> Contrary to the most popular and scholarly assertions, it was not mentioned anywhere in the text that Muslims and non-Muslims were declared equal in the legal or social sphere. In fact, the discussions and debates about legal and civil reform in mid-1850s indicated that Ottoman statesmen had neither wanted nor made Muslim and non-Muslim subjects equal since 1839. Candan Badem, “The Question of the Equality of Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War (1853-1856)” in *The Crimean War 1853-1856 Colonial Skirmish or Rehearsal for World War? Empires, Nations, and Individuals*, ed. Jerzy W. Borejsza (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2011), 80-83. How the Tanzimat Decree was implemented and perceived by the Ottoman political elite and ordinary subjects were other important questions that still needs to be answered for different places and time. The spy reports that recorded statements of Ottoman subjects from diverse backgrounds in Istanbul in 1840s indicate reception of Tanzimat Decree varied greatly. Cengiz Kırılı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde “Havadis Jurnalleri”* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008).

<sup>708</sup> I used the transliterated text of Tanzimat Decree provided in Coşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Maliyesi* (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), 281-84.

reforms. At the same time, the imperial rescript was a significant political document in itself, which intended to enlist the loyalty of subjects, reshape state institutions and governance for the coming decades. Another implicit goal of the text was to ensure security of life and property of the high-ranking statesmen who involved in drafting the text in the face of arbitrary absolutist rule.<sup>709</sup> The sultan himself took an oath to uphold its promises in front of his officials, it was declared in a public ceremony, propagated by the official newspaper and dispatches to the administrators and judges in every province. Tanzimat Decree remained a crucially emblematic text that the Ottoman political elite and intellectuals remembered and made reference to over the next century.

Yet even though Mahmud II would have not taken an oath in front of his officials as his son did, many of the ideas and reform projects presented in the decree were in many ways the confirmation and continuation of his earlier designs or “grand strategy” that had been formulated since the early 1820s rather than a drastic rupture.<sup>710</sup> The continuities start with the well-known terms “*Tanzimat*” (the re-orderings) or “*Tanzimat-ı Hayriye*” (the blessed re-orderings) that could either refer to the famous decree or the reform era preceding it until the reign of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909). In fact, Ottoman official documents had used the very same terms during the later reign of Mahmud II, in

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<sup>709</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008), 72-73; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: I.B Tauris, 2004), 51.

<sup>710</sup> The impact of Mahmud II’s policies on making of the Tanzimat Decree and post-1839 reforms had been noticed by foreign observers as early as 1850s as well as modern historians. (For example, see M. A Ubicini, *Lettres sur la Turquie*, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: Librairie Militaire de J. Dumaine, 1853), 29-30; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 51.) My aim here is to go beyond these accurate observations and substantiate this point by closely examining unused Ottoman archival sources.

addition to phrases such as *Nizam-ı Müstahsene*, and *Nizam-ı Cedit*.<sup>711</sup> In a report compiled by Deliberative Council of the Sublime Porte (*Dar-ı Şura-i Bab-ı Ali*) from April 1838, Ottoman statesmen and the sultan opined in detail about the nature and scope of major changes in the taxation regime, which was also denoted as *Tanzimat-ı Hayriye* before the proclamation of the decree.<sup>712</sup>

More important than the terminology, the ministers of interior, foreign affairs and treasury discussed the abolition of all taxes that were not sanctioned by Islam and substituted them by a single, standardized tax for every male subject in the same report. The Ottoman authorities were to use the existing census data and conduct new population surveys to ensure the efficiency and fairness of new taxation system.<sup>713</sup> Mahmud II was cautious and wanted the state's total revenues to be determined first, and then to implement these radical changes next year.<sup>714</sup> In another meeting, the council underlined the ills of tax-farming practices and the abuses of tax-farmers in an almost identical way that the Tanzimat Decree would a year after.<sup>715</sup> Accordingly, the central authority planned to appoint salaried administrators/tax-collectors (*muhassıls*) instead of tax-farmers to be responsible for collecting the taxes. In 1838-39, the province of Bursa and some of the

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<sup>711</sup> Çelik, "Hüsrev Mehmet Paşa," 284. This rather curious but overlooked fact could also be found in works, such as, Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, *Tanzimat Devrinde Meclis-i Vâlâ (1838-1868)* (Ankara: TTK, 1999), 38.

<sup>712</sup> BOA, BEO d. AYN 1729, p. 4 (28 M 1254/ 23 April 1838).

<sup>713</sup> BEO, AYN.d 1729, p. 4.

<sup>714</sup> BEO, AYN.d 1729, p. 5. Also discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>715</sup> BEO, AYN.d 1729, p. 5. (4 Ra 1254/ 28 May 1838)

districts Gelibolu, which were conveniently in the proximity of the capital, were surveyed in detail as the initial areas to implement the planned administrative and tax reforms.<sup>716</sup>

As demonstrated earlier in Chapter 2, Ottoman decision-makers and ideologues already argued strongly in the reign of Mahmud II that all Muslims were obliged to serve in the Ottoman military. The Ottoman levy orders or treatises concerning conscription in 1820s-30s almost always used the phrase “state and religion” (*din-ü devlet*), and the word religion there referred to Islam. Tanzimat Decree clearly makes a reference to the defense of the fatherland (*muhafaza-i vatan*) and how the Ottoman subjects (*ahali*) were obliged with it. However, this (probably purposefully chosen) vague term might have denoted both Muslims and non-Muslims in the text.<sup>717</sup> Since it was only in the 1846 Conscription Code military service and defense of the empire was explicitly defined as a religious obligation for every Muslim, one can speculate that the makers of Tanzimat did not want to oust the possibility of conscripting non-Muslims in 1839 and kept their options open until they made their final decision 7 years later. Even though the targeted ethno-religious group for military recruitment might have changed in time, the imperial decrees, bureaucratic correspondence and court records from the 1830s discussed and outlined the desired nature, scope and methods of conscription in detail. Their contents clearly

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<sup>716</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 40.

<sup>717</sup> Ottoman bureaucracy and the foreign travellers tended to reserve the word “*reaya*” solely for the non-Muslims whereas “*ahali*” referred to the Muslim subjects during this era. It is noteworthy that Tanzimat Decree does not use the word *reaya* even once, thus does not utilize the usual contrast “Muslims and non-Muslims” (*ahali ve reaya*) to denote the population of the empire.

constituted the foundation of the conscription plans after the Tanzimat during the 1840s.<sup>718</sup>

The Ottoman authorities had also been fully aware of the military-fiscal “value” of the empire’s population for their plans and the demographic strain of conscription on the empire’s Muslims in the 1830s prior to the Tanzimat. They had also noticed the discontent caused among the populace due to arbitrarily conducted levies and keeping the recruits under arms indefinitely. Apart from the limited attempts on conscripting non-Muslims, the Mahmudian state had tried to address this issue by holding lotteries to decide who would serve in some areas.<sup>719</sup> Mahmud II even issued several decrees that ordered limiting military service in the army and navy. In June 1835, the sultan decided “5 years [of service] was enough” for an army conscript to be discharged and replaced by another.<sup>720</sup> An imperial order concerning a recruit levy in the *kaza* of Varna emphasized that the selected conscript were to serve for 5 years, only to be replaced by others at the end of their service.<sup>721</sup> Another report in the mid-1830s indicated that the sailors of the imperial navy should serve “one or two years” more than army soldiers instead of the proposed 15-20 years, which would cause despair and discouragement among them.<sup>722</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> See Table 11 for a detailed comparison between a reform proposal penned by a Prussian officer in 1836 and actual military reforms of 1846.

<sup>719</sup> Veysel Şimşek, “The First “Little Mehmeds”: Conscripts for the Ottoman Army, 1826–53.” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 44 (2014), 275.

<sup>720</sup> HAT 1592/67 (11 S 1251/ 8 June 1835). The idea of limiting the term of military service to 3 and 5 years in two separate treatises located in Hüsrev Paşa’s personal library. (*Devlet-i Aliye’nin Ahval-i Haziresine Dair Risale* (H. 1253/ 1837-1838), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 851 and *Asakir-i Muvazzafe Hakkında Risale* (27 B 1252/ 7 November 1836), İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887).

<sup>721</sup> Varna Court Records no. 2, case 292 (H. 7 R 1253/ 11 July 1837) transcribed in Erhan Alpaslan, “1247-1254 H./ M. 1830-1838 Tarihli 2 No’lu Varna Şer’iye Sicil Defterinin Transkripsiyonu ve Değerlendirmesi” (MA thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi, 1996), 444-45.

<sup>722</sup> HAT 298/17701 B (Dated by BOA as 29 Z 1254/15 March 1839).



The implementation of these orders were another story, both before and after 1839. In a letter dated 15 June 1838, Moltke indicated that he had heard an imperial decree had decreased the term of service to 5 years. He added, however, the decree had no effect on the villagers until the discharged soldiers returned their homes, and that “no soldier has been discharged since the establishment of the regular units.”<sup>723</sup> In 1848, the commander of Ottoman Army of Arabia reported that 1,350 out of 14,183 soldiers under his command had been under arms for 11-13 years. In my opinion, neither the Mahmudian nor Tanzimat regimes managed to implement the rules they promised, not because they did not intend to do it but because they were hampered by pressing military necessities and limitations of the state apparatus.<sup>724</sup>

Finally, it is doubtful that the Ottoman government in the post-Tanzimat era managed to obtain a significantly accurate (and drastically different) census data to distribute the burden of conscription and taxation as it promised. After the first empire-wide census efforts in 1829-32, the Ottoman central authority surveyed and “reconquered” several new districts and incorporated their populations to the empire’s military manpower pool. However, as argued in Chapter 4, the Ottoman state’s knowledge concerning the population of the “core provinces,” and thus the available manpower for conscription, did not really change between 1832 and 1856.

As a forerunner of the Tanzimat Decree, the Mahmudian authorities emphasized justice and promised good government without arbitrary exercise of state power in a bid

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<sup>723</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 197-98.

<sup>724</sup> Tobias Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, trans. Türkiş Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 194-195.

to keep the domestic order, calm the possible dissatisfaction with the ongoing changes, and to ultimately win over the non-Muslim and Muslim population. During his visit to Varna in 1837, Mahmud II publicly stated that he came to see his subjects personally to fully appreciate their conditions. He was determined to rebuild the cities and forts, and to assure the welfare of the empire. He finally underlined that the law and justice must be enforced not only in Istanbul but also in the provinces.<sup>725</sup> He remarked,

You Greeks, you Armenians, you Jews, you all are the followers of God and my subjects just like [my] Muslim [subjects]; your religions are different, but you are all under the protection of the law and my imperial authority. Pay the taxes imposed on you for they shall be used for the purposes that will serve your security and welfare.<sup>726</sup>

Moltke, who witnessed Mahmud II's tour in the Balkans, asserted that one would have to wait in order to see how the mentioned "justice" would be applied throughout the empire. However, he also viewed the acceptance of this "principle" as a crucial step; the rest (i.e its implementation) will follow eventually. One immediate application of the sultan's public statement was that lodging and travel expenses of the Mahmud's entourage were paid.<sup>727</sup>

The ideas of upholding justice, domestic order and protection of the weaker subjects in society were not novel concepts in the Ottoman state discourse and political thought that came into existence in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What could be regarded as a change was the Mahmudian state's stronger public bid and to some extent,

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<sup>725</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 99.

<sup>726</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 99.

<sup>727</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 99.

practical efforts to ensure good government that accompanied a new image of the state that had increasing interactions with more of its subjects. The Mahmudian era saw the expansion of the imperial bureaucracy, the establishment of new state institutions, the creation of a table of ranks for imperial military officials, administrative and clerical positions, and the official formation of consultative bodies such as *Dar-ı Şura-i Bab-ı Ali* (1838) and *Meclis-i Vala-i Ahkam-ı Adliye* (1838). In addition to the printed military regulations and penal codes, the Ottoman state published a short but unprecedented law book in May 1838 that outlined how the Islamic judges (*kadıs*) should conduct their work. Its articles intended to fight bribery and favoritism, regulate the judges' appointments, and the legal procedures they supervised. The sultan founded a school (*Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adliye*) for specifically training the much-needed civil officials in 1839, and by the 1840s, about 70 graduates held offices.<sup>728</sup>

## **6.2 Re-taking Greater Syria, 1839-1841**

Ironically, the Ottomans' initial aggression and defeat at Nizib resulted in a beneficial international setting that they deliberately took advantage of. In the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, British foreign policy-makers wanted a friendly and stronger Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean and South of Black Sea littoral. Such a state with reformed administration and army could serve as the first line of defense against a possible Russian expansion towards the south that could threaten India. The favourable terms of the Balta Limanı commercial treaty (16 August 1838) and the

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<sup>728</sup> Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte 1789-1922* (Princeton UP, 1980), 131, 159-60; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2, pp. 36-40.

subsequent Tanzimat Decree (3 November 1839) undoubtedly had a positive impact on British policy-makers. At the same time, the British did not want a stronger Mehmed Ali Pasha who had been expanding his military presence and political influence in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Levant. They were also concerned about the possibility of growing French influence in the region that could threaten their commercial and political interests in India, because in addition to the conquest of coastal Algeria in 1830, France had been sympathetic to Mehmed Ali Pasha for decades and lent its military and political support to him.

The Austrian Chancellor Metternich disliked the idea of an independent and powerful Egypt, and sought to preserve the previous status quo by weakening Mehmed Ali's power base. During the crisis, what Russia primarily wanted was to prevent warships of the other powers entering the Marmara Sea and thus prevent any threats against its territories and commerce in the Black Sea. In fact, this would also serve as a re-affirmation of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty (1833) on the international stage. In exchange, Russia agreed not to send its troops and navy to the Levant to aid the beleaguered Ottomans (which the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty had actually sanctioned and a possibility that Britain abhorred) but provided diplomatic support.

During the crisis, only France proved to be supportive of Mehmed Ali Pasha and sympathetic for conceding him the hereditary governorship of Syria. The disagreement between France and other powers continued from July 1839 to July 1841 and manifested itself in various ways and magnitudes, but in the end, France did not join the conflict with its army and navy to support Mehmed Ali's claims. After almost one year of

deliberations, Prussia, Britain, Russia, Austria and the Ottoman Empire signed a convention on 15 July 1840 in London. France was not consulted.

A few weeks later the Maronites around Beirut rebelled against Mehmed Ali Pasha. The Druze of the Lebanese mountains, who had led two dangerous rebellions against Mehmed Ali's authority in the 1830s, followed suit. Furthermore, they were going to receive muskets, ammunition and money from the British and Ottomans as soon as they disembarked on the Lebanese coast. The four powers agreed to support the Ottoman capital and the straits if Mehmed Ali Pasha decided to attack Istanbul. Britain and Austria pledged to commit warships to threaten Egypt's sea communications. Mehmed Ali Pasha was given an ultimatum that he should return the defected Ottoman fleet and that the lands and peoples under his control should be re-subjected to the sultan's decrees, laws and treaties. In exchange, Abdülmecid I offered Mehmed Ali Pasha the hereditary governorship of Egypt, and the southern part of Syria, including Acre for life. After dragging the negotiations out for weeks, Mehmed Ali Pasha rejected the offer. Hostilities renewed towards the end of summer as some 6,000 Ottoman troops landed in Cyprus on the night of 30 August 1840.<sup>729</sup>

The British warships, which had been deployed to Beirut a few weeks before, bombarded its fortifications and garrison during 9-12 September. The Egyptian deserters informed the British that "1,000 men were killed by shot and shells, whose bodies were

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<sup>729</sup> The diplomatic history of the second Ottoman-Egyptian crisis have been studied rather well. See Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923*, 88-109; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 131-94; Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West*, 15-231; Frederick Stanley Rodkey, *The Turco-Egyptian question in the relations of England, France, and Russia, 1832-1841* (Urbana: University Of Illinois, c.1924), 75-232; Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 278-305 for the details.

left in the streets when the troops retired. The forts [were] destroyed and considerable damage [had] been done to the town.”<sup>730</sup> Throughout September 1839, Ottoman, British and Austrian land forces supported by their warships captured the ports of Haifa, Tyre and Sidon. On 10 October, an allied force disembarked north of Beirut under the supporting guns of the allied navy and fortified themselves. In about two weeks, the allied contingent consisted of 5,000 Ottoman troops, 1,500 British marines and 200 Austrians.<sup>731</sup> Between 9-10 October, some 3,000-4,000 combined Ottoman and British troops attacked and defeated a 2,000-3,000 strong Egyptian force in the heights around Beirut under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, a battle that was referred to as battle of Kaletü’l-meydan or Cünye.<sup>732</sup> Egyptian reinforcements from other parts of Syria arrived late and in piecemeal fashion. Augustus Jochmus, one of the senior Ottoman commanders in the theatre, reported that Ibrahim Pasha and his senior commanders retreated with some 4,000 men towards east to Zahle, situated in the Bekaa Valley on the other side of Lebanese mountains. After a series of engagements, the Ottoman-British forces took 9,500 prisoners and deserters, killed or wounded 1,500 men while some 5,000 Syrian conscripts ran away to their homes. The Egyptian regular and irregular formations in the area ceased to be an effective fighting force.<sup>733</sup> The rather smaller clash at Cünye was going to be the largest pitched battle occurred between the warring factions during 1839-41 after the battle of Nizib. A few weeks later, on the night of 3 November 1840, the

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<sup>730</sup> Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West*, 140.

<sup>731</sup> W. Pattison Hunter, *Narrative of the Late Expedition to Syria*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), 102-105.

<sup>732</sup> Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West*, 166-170.

<sup>733</sup> Augustus Jochmus, *The Syrian War and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1840-1848*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Albert Cohn, 1883), 17-18.

allies captured the fortress of Acre after a heavy naval bombardment made the fortress' magazine explode and killed hundreds.<sup>734</sup> From 10 October to 16 November, the Ottoman forces swelled from 6,500 (supported by 1,500 British marines and 160 Austrian Congreve rocketeers) to 15,765 men. By 17 December 1840, 17,985 Ottoman regulars occupied the towns of Sidon, Beirut, Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Tyre and Tripoli.<sup>735</sup>

As late as 27 October, an indecisive Mehmed Ali Pasha wanted Ibrahim Pasha to defend Syria. On 9 November 1840, news of Acre's fall reached Mehmed Ali's headquarters.<sup>736</sup> His sea communications with Syria cut off, his Levantine bases captured and his army defeated at Cünye, Mehmed Ali finally gave the order to his son to withdraw Egyptian troops from Adana, southeast Anatolia and Levant coast, and to be reassembled in Damascus. Egyptian troops, who had withdrawn from Adana, reached Aleppo on 9 November. The next day, they began the evacuation of the city to head for Damascus, towards which the remaining Egyptian garrisons in Maraş and Urfa also marched. Finally, the remnants of Ibrahim Pasha's force camped at Zahle began their march towards Damascus in late November. In a daring move, a group of British warships moved to Alexandria, and its commander Commodore Sir Charles Napier, joined them on a steamer on 21 November. After a few days of deliberations and negotiations, while the British ships anchored in the harbor, Napier enforced the terms of an armistice on Mehmed Ali Pasha on 27 November.<sup>737</sup> On 10 December 1840, Mehmed Ali Pasha wrote to the Ottoman Grand Vizier Hüsrev Pasha that he was ready "to

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<sup>734</sup> Ufford, *How Mehmed Ali Defied the West*, 178-181.

<sup>735</sup> Jochmus, *The Syrian War*, vol. 1, pp. 17-18, 41, 53.

<sup>736</sup> Ufford, *How Mehmed Ali Defied the West*, 187-89.

<sup>737</sup> Ufford, *How Mehmed Ali Defied the West*, 189-192.

withdraw his troops from Crete and Arabia and the Holy Cities, and that his troops in Adana and Syria had begun their return to Egypt.”<sup>738</sup> On 29 December, a combined Egyptian force of 36,000 regulars and 4,000 irregulars left the city towards south. Due to desertions, sickness, starvation and attacks of the rebellious mountaineers, only 15,000 regulars and 3,600 irregulars reached Gaza and Maan in Palestine by 31 January 1841.<sup>739</sup>

Between February and August 1841, negotiations and bargaining continued between the Sublime Porte, Mehmed Ali Pasha and the Great Powers. On 10 June 1841, Mehmed Ali Pasha and the Sublime Porte finally came to an agreement. Mehmed Ali Pasha, and after him the eldest sons from his dynasty, were going to be the hereditary governors of Egypt.<sup>740</sup> The Pasha was to return Greater Syria, Crete, Hijaz, and the Ottoman fleet to the sultan. The size of the his army could not exceed 18,000 men.<sup>741</sup> The Sublime Porte initially pressed for claiming one-fourth of all the revenues of Egypt as the yearly tribute (which could be estimated at 73 million *kuruş* in 1841-42<sup>742</sup>), in order to

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<sup>738</sup> Ufford, *How Mehmet Ali Defied the West*, 214-216.

<sup>739</sup> Jochmus, *The Syrian War*, vol. 1, pp. 120-121. Jochmus calculates that out of 65,000 regulars (including 7,000 cavalymen), 10,000 irregulars (including 5,000 cavalymen), 619 fortress guns and 270 field pieces stationed in Greater Syria by 10 September 1840, 50,000 regulars (including 4,000 cavalymen) and 6,200 (including 3,100 cavalry men) became casualties. No fortress guns could be saved and only 122 guns reached Gaza and Maan.

<sup>740</sup> On paper, Egyptian governors were supposed to be no different from any other appointed governor of the empire, which was different from the reality.

<sup>741</sup> In practice, “by shifting regiments between Upper and Lower Egypt, obscuring numbers of the Sudan garrison, and judicious bribery, a gradual build-up increased military strength [from the authorized 18,000 in 1841]. Prince [Ömer Tosun] suggests that these measures caused Turkish authorities to underestimate the Egyptian army by almost 50 per cent. Some of this began under Ibrahim’s direction, but [Khedive] Abbas completed the programme. Thus, Turkish officials were unaware Egypt could field over 100,000 soldiers in 1853.” John P. Dunn, *Khedive Ismail’s Army* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 15. Also see Table 5.

<sup>742</sup> See Table 6. The expenditures of Egyptian army and navy was 90 million *kuruş* in 1838. John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London, 1840), 44-45.



prevent any future military build-up in Egypt. After a prolonged bargain, Mehmed Ali's yearly tribute was fixed at 30 million *kuruş*.<sup>743</sup>

Indeed, the Ottoman center did not want any future troubles in its southern frontier and desperately needed some peace to enact the administrative, fiscal and military changes that it had been striving to implement in the empire. Succeeding governors of Egypt also turned to domestic issues and directed their expansion policies towards Sudan, the Horn of Africa and Yemen. After a decade of bitter hostilities and costly wars in 1831-41, a curious yet understudied cooperation between Istanbul and quasi-independent Cairo was in effect perhaps until the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. During the Crimean War (1853-56), for instance, Abbas Hilmi Pasha, a grandson of Mehmed Ali, sent 15,000 Egyptian and warships to aid the Ottoman war effort. A decade later, Egyptian troops came to help the sultan in quelling the rebellion in Crete in 1866. In the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78, Ismail Pasha spent a huge sum of 0.5 million pounds on its military and dispatched about 30,000 soldiers and sailors to contribute to the sultan's war effort.<sup>744</sup>

There is another overlooked mystery in the existing literature, which is more relevant to the current dissertation: After having lost its main field army at Nizib and the bulk of its navy having defected to the enemy, how did the Ottoman central state retake the populous and wealthy territories of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine that equaled almost one-fourth of the empire's lands? The short and easy explanation is the Great Powers',

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<sup>743</sup> Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West*, 222-231; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)*, 187-88.

<sup>744</sup> Dunn, *Khedive Ismail's Army*, 18, 65, 78-80.

above all Britain's, involvement in the conflict on the Ottoman side. This view has been enforced by the fact that the oft-quoted narratives of the campaign in Greater Syria were chiefly written by the British commanders who personally took part in it, such as Napier.<sup>745</sup> The Ottomans probably could not have achieved their military and political aims without Britain's naval support in the Eastern Mediterranean, which effectively hampered Ibrahim Pasha's communications with his father and cut off his supply lines to Egypt proper. Yet a fuller explanation should include how the policies of Mahmud II and early Tanzimat statesmen affected the Ottoman victory.

The defeat at Nizib has often been depicted as a culmination of the half-hearted and inept reform attempts from the reign of Mahmud II, which is usually followed with praise for the Egyptian army's strengths and Mehmed Ali Pasha as the wiser and more skilled reformer. There is no doubt that Nizib was a serious blow to the Ottoman state's military power and prestige at home and abroad, and that Mehmed Ali Pasha gained a huge advantage in furthering his political and territorial claims. The Ottoman army was still badly officered and morale of the rank and file was particularly low. Yet reading Nizib as a manifestation of the inherent failure of Mahmud II's policies would not help to explain how more or less the same Ottoman leadership and (much smaller) Ottoman force could overcome Ibrahim Pasha's 75,000 men deployed across Greater Syria.

Since the disastrous wars of the Sacred League (1683-99), the Ottoman state adopted the strategy of avoiding maneuver warfare; instead, it concentrated on building

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<sup>745</sup> Charles Napier, *The War in Syria*, vol. 1-2 (London: John W. Parker, 1842). Napier was the commander of the British fleet that helped the capturing of Syria.

fortresses alongside the Danube, and Balkan and Caucasus Mountains. Ottoman fortresses, whose dispositions were greatly aided by the mountain ranges and major rivers, delayed Russian military operations in seven subsequent wars in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the empire's northern frontier. The large swathes of uneven Balkan lands that Russian troops had to cross through to reach the Ottoman capital increased the already great distances that their supply columns and reinforcements had to cover from Russian heartlands.<sup>746</sup> On the southern frontier, however, Ottoman central authority had no comparable defensive system constituted by the mixture of natural obstacles and fortresses to postpone the Egyptian advance from Palestine towards southern Anatolia. The only exception was the fortress of Acre, whose capture in 1831 by the besieging Egyptian army and 1840 by the Ottoman-British troops significantly changed the course of the conflicts. Thus, the Egyptian army's lighting victories in Greater Syria throughout 1832 can be explained not only by its greater military effectiveness, but also the lack of a defensive network formed by a disposition of rivers and mountain ranges supported by man-made fortifications that would have worked to the Ottomans' advantage.<sup>747</sup> The Egyptian army's timely capture of passes in Amanus and Taurus ranges opened the way to the inland plains of Anatolia in 1832, where Ottoman central authority did not have time to build fortifications to counter their enemy's advance towards Istanbul.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Osmanlı-Rus Harpleri (1768-1878)" in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi: Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri 1792-1918* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2013), 182-88; 194-96.

<sup>747</sup> For the deliberations on not building fortifications around the city of Konya before the encountering of the Ottoman and Egyptian forces, see Salih Kış, "Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Anadolu Harekatı ve Konya Muharebesi," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* no. 23 (2010), 148, 150-51.

<sup>748</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Virginia H. Aksan for bringing the effect of geography to my attention in Ottoman-Egyptian wars in 1831-41, and the described contrast between the Balkan and Greater Syrian frontier.

The Mahmudian state managed to provision, equip and pay Hafız Pasha's field army even though its fighting effectiveness ultimately suffered from sickness, ill-training and bad command.<sup>749</sup> This was in sharp contrast with supplying the Ottoman military in the Balkans during the earlier Russian-Ottoman wars of 1768-74, 1787-92 and 1828-29. In these wars, Ottoman field armies and fortress garrisons were arguably better disposed than Hafız Pasha's 35,000 men wandering in southeastern Anatolia in order to receive the necessary provisions and military equipment by land and sea. It is also true that desertion was rampant in Hafız Pasha's already demoralized army, which disintegrated almost completely after the defeat at Nizib. However, Ibrahim Pasha's army in Syria was in a worse condition; dispirited Egyptian soldiers and officers, who had not been adequately fed and paid, deserted or defected to the Ottoman side in large numbers. In one incident, even a whole battalion of 800 officers and men deserted to Hafız Pasha's army a few days before the battle. Ainsworth observed "there were also about 2,000 Egyptians on the field" with Hafız Pasha's force. Even immediately after the victory, Ibrahim Pasha's triumphant soldiers continued to run away. According to Moltke, Egyptian cuirassiers accompanied deserting Ottoman timariot cavalry, two battalions of Egyptians defected to the Ottoman side even during a day of victory. On the same day of Nizib, Egyptians deserters swam across Euphrates and surrendered 3,000 muskets to the Ottoman camp at Birecik. Ibrahim Pasha reportedly ordered opening fire on his own men, who were retreating.<sup>750</sup> After the hostilities started in September 1840, some 16,000 Egyptian troops

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<sup>749</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 232-33, 240-41, 256-58. For the sickness among the Ottoman troops, see Chapter 5.

<sup>750</sup> Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, 262-63, 272; William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, vol. 1 (London, 1842), 316, 318-19.

deserted to or were captured by the Ottomans, 25,000 ran back to their homes and only 4,000 were killed or died in the field until the evacuation of Greater Syria. In other words, Ibrahim Pasha lost more than half of his army's effective strength (75,000) to desertion and defection.<sup>751</sup> Astonishingly, the regular Ottoman land forces that fought in Greater Syria increased from 5,000 to a mere 18,000 men during this time, who were supported by a tiny contingent of 1,500 British marines.<sup>752</sup>

In the end, a rather small contingent of regular Ottoman troops, who were not different from the *Mansure* soldiers of the 1830s, enacted a daring amphibious assault in the Levant, defeated the forces Ibrahim Pasha sent against them, and ultimately captured Greater Syria. Mehmed Ali Pasha's indecisiveness during the months after Nizib arguably contributed to his defeat as much as the presence of the British navy and the marines in Levant. Unlike the earlier conflict in 1831-33, Mehmed Ali Pasha did not dare order his son to march into Anatolia (and threaten Istanbul) immediately after the Egyptian victory at Nizib. Neither did he command him to withdraw his forces from Adana, southern Anatolia, Aleppo and Damascus and to concentrate them against invading British-Ottoman troops in the Levant coast.<sup>753</sup>

Another important reason for Ottoman success on this occasion was the Ottoman ability to re-build its army during the very same time. By using the conscription machinery that Mahmud II had established, the Ottoman military ruthlessly drafted tens of thousands of new recruits to fill its line regiments and mobilized thousands of

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<sup>751</sup> Jochmus, *The Syrian War*, vol. 1, pp. 18, 121.

<sup>752</sup> Jochmus, *The Syrian War*, vol. 1, pp. 17-18, 41, 53, 234.

<sup>753</sup> Ufford, *How Mehemet Ali Defied the West*, 158-165.

reservists after the loss of its 35,000 strong field army. An Ottoman report produced for internal bureaucratic consumption detailing the troop numbers and their costs indicated that the army had 80,059 regular infantry, cavalry and field artillerymen, 30,545 mobilized reservists and 12,875 fortress artillerymen as of February 1841. Some 20,000 regulars and 20,000 reservists assembled in Istanbul. In the Balkans, 11,000 reservists were deployed in Edirne, 8,000 regulars in Albania, 2,000 regulars in Bosnia, 2,200 regulars across the Danube excluding the fortress artillerymen. In central Anatolia, some 2,000 regulars were stationed, whereas 3,200 regulars held the eastern front. About 18,000 regulars were present in the newly captured Greater Syria, 7,400 and 1,400 reservists were sent to occupy Crete and Cyprus respectively.<sup>754</sup> As the Ottomans emerged victorious from the two-year conflict in early 1841, the empire looked like a fortified military camp as tens of thousands of troops were deployed in Istanbul, the Balkans and Anatolia. The massive military mobilization must have made Ottoman decision-makers confident about the empire's defense, a sentiment that must have been furthered after Russian support and French non-belligerence became apparent during 1840. This setting also enabled them to send only a part of their armed forces to Lebanon. Finally, the military build-up in Anatolia and the capital must have forced the Egyptian leadership to be much more cautious regarding an assault against Istanbul via Anatolia after Nizib.

Apart from the military-fiscal powerbase established by Mahmud II, the Ottoman state utilized the experienced French-speaking officials and permanent embassies across

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<sup>754</sup> BOA, İ.MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ) 42/ 782 (M-Z 1257/ March 1840-February 1841).

Europe in the 1830s to contribute to the Ottoman cause against Mehmed Ali Pasha. It was probably not a coincidence that Mustafa Reşid Pasha, who was promoted by Mahmud II thanks to his articulate reports from the front during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-29, proved to be a pivotal figure in the drafting of the Tanzimat Decree and continuous diplomatic negotiations of 1839-41. During the second crisis with Egypt, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry assumed an extraordinary responsibility in establishing and maintaining talks with the friendly powers and the enemy, and handled and processed an unprecedented amount information flow between the capital, Ottoman embassies and foreign powers. The Ottoman foreign service also provided constant intelligence on the war in Greater Syria via its European diplomatic sources, keeping Ottoman decision-makers informed in the capital.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>755</sup> The fond İ. MTZ (5) is full of such informative reports from the era that were translated from European languages to Ottoman Turkish for internal bureaucratic use.

*If the state's goals are minimal, it may not need to know much about the society. Just as a woodsman who takes only an occasional load of firewood from a large forest need have no detailed knowledge of that forest, so a state whose demands are confined to grabbing a few carts of grain and the odd conscript may not require a very accurate or detailed map of the society. If, however, the state is ambitious — if it wants to extract as much grain and manpower as it can, short of provoking a famine or a rebellion, if it wants to create a literate, skilled, and healthy population, if it wants everyone to speak the same language or worship the same god—then it will have to become both far more knowledgeable and far more intrusive.<sup>756</sup>*

## Epilogue

The Ottoman grand strategy between 1826 and 1841, which this dissertation has analyzed, was aimed at the defense of the empire by strengthening the state apparatus through institutional reform, centralization, ideological reconfiguration and military mobilization. Mahmudian state, as described by Scott above, also had to become (and did become) “more knowledgeable and far more intrusive.” To use Charles Tilly’s concept, Ottoman decision-makers enacted “war-making and state-making as organized crime” at the immense expense of the ordinary subjects in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>757</sup> Despite some serious setbacks, errors and shortcomings, many of the goals that Mahmud II set after 1826 were reached by the summer of 1841. The Ottoman central state stood at

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<sup>756</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 184.

<sup>757</sup> Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985), 169-186. Even though they focus on areas outside the Ottoman Empire, works of Charles Tilly and James C. Scott inspired and guided me in dealing with several important themes that were explored in this dissertation, such as state-formation, centralization, taxation, conscription, census-taking, and state surveillance. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Cambridge, Mass: Basil Blackwell, 1990); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985) and *Seeing Like a State*.



a stronger position than it had in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the challenges to come in the rest of the century.

During these turbulent years, the Ottomans strove to create its European style regular army with its supporting institutions, such as the medical and surgery schools (1827, 1833), a military academy to train officers (1835), indigenous musket, artillery, ammunition manufactories, and factories to produce military uniforms and boots. Even though far from being a first class force in the international arena, the Ottoman regular army was a far better organized, equipped, disciplined and loyal force than the central authority had been able to ever muster in the previous hundred years. It also proved to be very effective, if not invincible, in crushing rebellions, subduing the provinces and upholding the political social and political order. By the 1840s, the regular army was kept at a respectable strength as a steady flow of new conscripts entered its ranks every year, while *nizamiye* and *redif* soldiers outnumbered the Ottoman irregulars. In order to support its constantly expanding military and state institutions, the late Mahmudian regime extracted about 3 times the taxes it had collected in 1809, even though it had lost its revenues from Greater Syria and Crete to Mehmed Ali Pasha throughout the 1830s.<sup>758</sup> In 1841, Mehmed Ali Pasha was finally defeated and the lost Arab lands were re-annexed. In the following decades, the Sublime Porte established a continuous peace with Egypt, which also chose to cooperate with the former instead of becoming a dangerous rival. After Mehmed Ali Pasha, no other provincial power holder could challenge the central state politically and militarily in a significant way. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the

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<sup>758</sup> See Table 6.

Ottoman government cooperated with local notables in extracting military-fiscal sources and incorporated them into the administration, bureaucracy and military in various ways.

About 10 years later, the power of the Ottoman state and the success of its reforms were put to the test during the Crimean War (1853-56), which ended in the fulfillment of a long-standing Ottoman ambition: defeating Russia in an armed conflict. The details of the reasons, progress and results of that war are beyond the scope of this study. However, the Ottoman successes in the conflict could be explained by the transformation of the Ottoman state in the Mahmudian and early Tanzimat eras.

During the Crimean War, Russia fielded a larger, better-organized, equipped and reinforced army than it had in the war of 1828-29.<sup>759</sup> As of summer 1827, there were perhaps some 23,000 Ottoman *Mansure* infantrymen present in the Balkans and Istanbul, which were to be outnumbered by 115,000 Russian troops deployed in the Principalities in the spring of 1828.<sup>760</sup> In the early stages of the Crimean War, however, the Ottomans managed to deploy a disciplined force of 80,000 men in the Balkans, 50,000 in Istanbul, and 26,000 in Anatolia. Furthermore, Russian inactivity and hesitancy to attack earlier in 1853 gave time to the Ottomans to increase their military build up especially in the Balkans. Between summer 1853 and summer 1854, some 200,000 Russian troops entered the Principalities to confront the Ottoman forces.<sup>761</sup> Russian soldiers still outnumbered the Ottoman troops two to one in the Balkans, which once more became the main theatre of

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<sup>759</sup> Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 242-43.

<sup>760</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, "Ottoman War on the Danube, State, Subject, and Soldier (1853-1856)" (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2013), 100; Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II," (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1968), 372.

<sup>761</sup> Köremezli, "Ottoman War on the Danube," 128, 157.

war. Yet, the Ottoman government and military succeeded in mobilizing an unprecedented number of regular and reserve formations, whose military effectiveness was increased by the skilled émigré officers that fled from Russia and Austria during the revolutions of 1848-49, to defend its European frontiers from any possible Russian offensive on the Danube in 1853-54.<sup>762</sup> Moreover, the Ottoman forces successfully defeated the Russian field armies in a series of battles along the Danube between Fall 1853 and Summer 1854 and held their besieged fortress of Silistre for two months in 1854, both before the involvement of French and British troops in the conflict.<sup>763</sup> The greatest Ottoman debacle on land occurred in northeastern Anatolia, where maintaining, supplying and reinforcing the army posed a much greater challenge for the central authority. On 25 November 1854, the Russians captured the important fortress of Kars and kept it until the end of the war.

The Ottoman military, despite its potential and achievements during the conflict, quite possibly would not have endured the might of Russia alone had the war continued for too long. Undoubtedly, the British and French diplomatic and military involvement proved to be crucial in defeating Russia. The Russian surprise attack and destruction of some 10 Ottoman warships at anchor in Sinop harbour in November 1853 increased European sympathy for the Sublime Porte. The Austrians were unwilling and eventually hostile towards the Russians, whose help had been crucial in crushing the Hungarian rebellion in 1848-49. For the British decision-makers, containing the expansion of

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<sup>762</sup> Köremezli, "Ottoman War on the Danube," 184, 189-90.

<sup>763</sup> Köremezli, "Ottoman War on the Danube," 205-241.

Russian influence and curbing its power was of utmost importance than fighting for the Ottoman interests per se, which they did not hide even during the war. France's intentions of increasing its influence over Catholics in the Ottoman Empire as well as the Holy Places had been clashing with Russian interests. In addition, Napoleon III's bid for internal popularity and personal ambitions for glory and catalyzed France's participation in the war. The international setting was favorable for the Ottomans to receive European military and diplomatic support. Taking advantage of the situation, the Ottoman foreign service actively negotiated with European states and assured their aid, as they had done during the previous crisis of 1839-41.

After Russian withdrawal from the Principalities, the war expanded to the Crimea in Fall 1854. Tens of thousands of Ottoman, French, British and later on, Sardinian troops poured into the peninsula and laid siege on Sebastopol, the main Russian naval base in the Black Sea. The Russian army could not defeat the invading allied forces in Crimea and break the siege in the battles of Alma, Balaclava, Inkermann and Eupatoria. On 9 September 1855, Sebastopol was finally captured by the allies. Regarding whether Russia should continue the war after 1855, Russian Minister for State Properties stated,

Our situation is extremely difficult. In history there has never yet been such an example of the union of two naval powers, destroying in concert the actions of our fleet. Four allied powers, with 108 million people and 3 billions [rubles] in income stand against Russia, which has 65 million people and barely 1 billion in income. In such a situation, without help from the outside, without any likelihood of alliance with anyone, wanting in the means for continuing the war and having in mind that even the neutral states are inclining to the side of our adversaries, it would be, to say the least, unwise to risk a new campaign.<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>764</sup> Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I*, 241-42.

In the end, the Sublime Porte emerged among the victors of the Crimean War thanks to its military prowess and the arrival of the French and British, who allied themselves with the Ottomans. This was a scenario that Ottoman statesmen probably could not have imagined when they initiated a new era of centralization and transformation in 1826.

## Appendices

**Table 1: Populations of Ottoman and Russian Empires (in millions)**

Years	Russian Empire	Notes	Ottoman Empire	Notes
1520-35			12.50 <sup>i</sup>	
1600	5.00-7.00 <sup>ii</sup>			
1700	10.00		20.00-22.00 <sup>iii</sup>	
1719	7.79 <sup>iv</sup>	Adult Males only		
1744	9.10	Adult Males only		
1762	11.58	Adult Males only		
1782	14.20	Adult Males only		
1795	18.61	Adult Males only		
1831	18 <sup>v</sup>	Eligible souls for conscription		
1832			3.86 <sup>vi</sup>	2.62 million Muslim males, 1.24 million non-Muslim males
1838	61.50 <sup>vii</sup>			
1844			4.20 <sup>viii</sup>	Muslim Males only
1851	65.07 <sup>ix</sup>			
1856	25 <sup>x</sup>	Eligible souls for conscription	9.53 <sup>xi</sup>	6.03 million Muslim males, 3.50 million non-Muslim males.

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<sup>i</sup> Vassals and territories outside the “core provinces,” such as Egypt, the Principalities and Hungary, are excluded. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 28–29.

<sup>ii</sup> The population data for the Russian and Ottoman Empires cited here is not absolute because of the shortcomings and occasionally limited nature of census-taking efforts in the early modern age. The population figures for Russia for the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries are drawn from Gábor Ágoston, “Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800,” *Kritika* 12 (2011), 297–98.

<sup>iii</sup> Ágoston suggests that the Ottoman Empire’s population “was stable at about 20–22 million, the revenues of treasury increased only by 10 percent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (Ágoston, “Military Transformation,” 309). The foreign travelers’ estimations from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries fluctuate between 24 and 50 million, but these are often incomplete and unreliable. (Cem Behar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun ve Türkiye’nin Nüfusu* (Ankara: T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1996), 21). It is also hard to determine the distribution of the population across the different parts of the empire, which obviously differ in the level of governance and hence their military-fiscal contribution to the state. Finally, the Ottoman Empire lost control of greater Hungary to the Habsburgs after 1699, and of Crimea and the Ukrainian and North Caucasian steppes to Russia by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, while Istanbul’s control over North Africa (including Egypt) was rather loose.

<sup>iv</sup> The Russian population figures from 1719 to 1795 are based on five nation-wide censuses, conducted every two decades. Arcadius Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout: An Economic History of Eighteenth Century Russia*, ed. Richard Hellie (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), 8.

<sup>v</sup> Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 242.

<sup>vi</sup> The registered subjects were mostly living in the lands lying south of the Danube and west of the Euphrates, excluding areas such as Greater Syria, Iraq, Kurdistan, Bosnia, Albania, and the Principalities. See Table 9.

<sup>vii</sup> Including the “non-European” Russia. William L. Blackwell, *The Beginnings of Russian Industrialization, 1800–1860* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968), 427.

<sup>viii</sup> In the mid-1840s, the Ottomans counted some 3.04 million Muslim males and estimated 1.16 million Muslim males in Anatolia, the southern Balkans and living in the provinces, such as Albania, Kurdistan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, some of which had been recently retaken from Egypt. For details, see Table 9.

<sup>ix</sup> Brian Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics, 1750–2010* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), A1 Europe: Population of Countries at Censuses.

<sup>x</sup> Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I*, 242.

<sup>xi</sup> Estimations of the Council of the Tanzimat (*Meclis-i Tanzimat*) as of June 1856 for the provinces that had been surveyed. After the Crimean War (1853–56) had ended, the said council estimated the Muslim and non-Muslim population of the empire to draft plans for conscription and taxation. Ufuk Gülsoy, *Cizyeden Vatandaşlığa Osmanlı’nın Gayrimüslim Askerleri* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2010), 81–82.

**Table 2: Army Sizes of Ottoman and Russian Empires<sup>i</sup>**

Years	Ottoman	Russian
1450		35,000
1473	103,500 <sup>iii</sup>	
1528	118,000	
1630		92,000
1669-70	76,000 <sup>iv</sup>	
1676		120,000
1710-11	136,000	
1724		204,000
1761-62	197,000	
1765		303,000
1768	61,000 <sup>v</sup>	
1795		[279,500]
1801		446,000
1806	24,000 <sup>vii</sup>	
1812		576,600
1825		607,400 <sup>viii</sup>
1828		800,000 <sup>ix</sup>
1840-41	123,500 <sup>x</sup>	
1850		859,000 <sup>xi</sup>

<sup>i</sup> The number of soldiers for the Russian and Ottoman military, like the population figures, are not absolute, especially for the earlier era. Furthermore, they mainly refer to the central troops, such as Russian regular regiments, the Ottoman Janissary Corps and other salaried combatant and non-combatant formations, garrison troops, rather than to seasonally recruited irregulars. The number of disciplined regular troops does not always represent the belligerents' total military prowess and combat efficiency in the 18<sup>th</sup>- and even 19<sup>th</sup>-century battlefields in the Balkans and the steppes of Ukraine and the Caucasus.

<sup>ii</sup> The figures from 1450 to 1765 are compiled from Gábor Ágoston, "Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800" *Kritika* 12 (2011), 299. The data from 1795 to 1825 is drawn from Janet Hartley, *Russia 1762–1825: Military Power, the State, and the People* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008), 8–9.

<sup>iii</sup> For 1473 and 1528, the figures include central troops, timariot cavalry and registered irregulars/auxiliaries. See Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 88–89.

<sup>iv</sup> The figures for the Ottoman army for 1669–70, 1710–11, and 1761–62 are cited in Ágoston, "Military Transformation," 304. For these years, the figures show only the sum of "central troops" and garrison/fortress troops. These do not include irregulars, timariot cavalry and seasonally recruited mercenaries (*segban*, *levend*, *sarıca*, etc.). The seasonal warriors became more important for the Ottoman state and their numbers increased while the number of campaigning Janissaries decreased during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>v</sup> Mustafa Kesbi gives the paper strength of the Ottoman central troops on the eve of the 1768–74 war as 60,918. (Mustafa Kesbi, *İbretnâme-yı Devlet (Tahlil ve Tenkitli Metin)*, ed. A. Öğreten, (Ankara: TTK, 2002), 87). Aksan estimates that some 100,000–150,000 *levends* were raised and set out at the front during



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the Russian war in 1768–74 (Virginia H. Aksan, “Whatever Happened to the Janissaries? Mobilization for the 1768–1774 Russo- Ottoman War,” *War in History* vol. 5, no. 23 (1998), 29).

<sup>vi</sup> Number of Russian Infantrymen.

<sup>vii</sup> The European-style *Nizam-ı Cedid* army of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) had about 24,000 men at the end of 1806, before its dissolution after the revolutions of 1808. Stanford J. Shaw, “The Origins of Ottoman Military Reform: The *Nizam-ı Cedid* Army of Sultan Selim III,” *Journal of Modern History* 37/3 (1965), 300.

<sup>viii</sup> Excluding the irregular forces, which were calculated at 120,000.

<sup>ix</sup> About 149,000 combatants were deployed in the Balkans against the Ottoman forces in the war of 1828–29. Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1999), 85, 89.

<sup>x</sup> The reformed Ottoman army had some 123,479 troops from March 1840 to February 1841, including 80,059 active, 30,545 reserve and 12,875 fortress artillery troops. BOA, İ.MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ) 42/782 (H, M-Z 1257/ March 1840-February 1841).

<sup>xi</sup> İbrahim Köremezli, “Ottoman War on the Danube: State, Subject, and Soldier (1853–1856)” (PhD thesis, Bilkent University, 2013), 90.

**Table 3: State revenue in fine silver (in tons)**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Russian Empire<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Ottoman Empire</b>
<b>1724</b>	175	
<b>1748</b>		214
<b>1751</b>	239	
<b>1769</b>	454	
<b>1786</b>	925	136 <sup>ii</sup>
<b>1796</b>	1,342	
<b>1798-99</b>		(97) <sup>iii</sup>
<b>1805</b>	1,406	(71) <sup>iv</sup>
<b>1809</b>	1,044	(99) <sup>v</sup>
<b>1825</b>	1,868	
<b>1838-39</b>	2,873	280 <sup>vi</sup>
<b>1840-41</b>	2,898	375 <sup>vii</sup>
<b>1841-42</b>	3,114	529 <sup>viii</sup>
<b>1853-54</b>	3,834	779
<b>1856-57</b>	4,338	888

<sup>i</sup> The data for the Russia and Ottoman Empires for the years 1724 to 1796 is drawn from Gábor Ágoston, “Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800,” *Kritika* 12 (2011), 309–10. The paper and silver ruble figures for 1805, 1809, 1825, 1839, 1841, 1842, 1854, and 1857 are taken from Brian Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics, 1750-2010* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), G6 Europe: Central Government Revenue and Main Tax Yields. The amount of fine silver was calculated by using the data in International Institute of Social History, “*Silver and Gold Content of the Russian Rouble, 1535–1913*,” (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/data.php#russia>, accessed 30 April 2015), also used by Ágoston. The amounts of net silver in Ottoman *guruş* between 1799 and 1856 are taken from Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 163, 191.

<sup>ii</sup> The Ottoman revenue in silver for 1748 and 1786 are taken from Ágoston, “Military Transformation,” 310. The Ottoman revenues for 1786 belong to *Hazine-i Amire*, which was the main Ottoman treasury and thus is a good representative of the central Ottoman authority’s revenue. Nevertheless, before 1840–41, the Ottoman state did not use a “modern budget” that catalogues all of its revenues and expenditures, making it harder to depict a comprehensive fiscal picture for the earlier years. LeDonne notes that “a comprehensive budget did not exist in Russia until 1781—a most telling commentary on the fragmentation of the central government, the autonomy of its constituent agencies, and the helplessness of a ruler whose ‘autocratic power,’ manifesting itself through a ‘bureaucracy,’ should have been able to keep a tight rein on this crucial sector of government.” Yet Russia was about 60 years ahead of the Ottomans and would manage to extract enormous revenue from its population to finance its administration, bureaucracy and military. John LeDonne, *Absolutism and the Ruling Class: The Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700–1825* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), 283.

<sup>iii</sup> The cost of the Ottoman expedition to Egypt against Napoléon’s invasion in 1798–99. This amount is given here to illustrate the level of Ottoman capabilities in financing extraordinary expenditures. Fatih

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Yeşil, “Nizam-ı Cedid’den Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılışına Osmanlı Ordusu” (PhD thesis, Hacettepe University, 2009), 195–99.

<sup>iv</sup> The combined revenue of the separate treasuries of the imperial navy (*Tersane-i Hümayun Hazinesi*) and of *İrad-ı Cedid*, which was created to finance the *Nizam-ı Cedid* army and other bureaucratic-administrative reforms. Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII.yy dan Tanzimat’a Mali Tarih)* (Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), 163, 225.

<sup>v</sup> The *İrad-ı Cedid* treasury was abolished in 1808. This figure shows the combined revenue of *Hazine-i Amire* and the treasury of the navy in 1808. Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi*, 225, 228.

<sup>vi</sup> The combined revenue of *Hazine-i Amire*, and various army and navy treasuries. The total Ottoman expenditure stood in the region of 342.8 million *kuruş*, which would have contained 322.2 tons of fine silver. Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi*, 280.

<sup>vii</sup> Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi*, 296. Note the dramatic increase in revenue by 1841 because of Mahmud II’s harsh centralization and fiscal policies during 1826–39. Even so, note that the Ottomans’ total revenue was less than one-third of that of Russia’s in 1796 and one-eighth in 1825.

<sup>viii</sup> The Ottoman revenue for the years between 1841 and 1857 is taken from Tevfik Güran, *Osmanlı Mali İstatistikleri: Bütçeler, 1841–1918* (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2003), 19, 39, 41.

**Table 4: Populations under the Rule of Mahmud II and Mehmed Ali Pasha**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Southern Balkans and</b>	<b>Greater Syria<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Egypt<sup>ii</sup></b>	<b>Iraq</b>
<b>1800</b>		1.20 million	3.85 million	
<b>1827</b>			4.37 <sup>iii</sup> –4.60 million	
<b>1827</b>			618,000 tax-paying households <sup>iv</sup>	
<b>1832</b>	2.62 million Muslim males, 1.24 million non-Muslim males <sup>v</sup>		4.53 million	
<b>1832</b>	896,000 Muslim males of military age (12–40) <sup>vi</sup>			
<b>1833</b>			870,000 Muslim and non-Muslim males over the age of 17 <sup>vii</sup>	
<b>1836</b>	11 million Muslims, 9 million non-Muslims <sup>viii</sup>	1.26-1.50 million	4.19 million	
<b>1839</b>		1.45-1.86 million	4.27 million	
<b>1844</b>	4.20 million Muslim males <sup>v</sup>		4.41 million	
<b>1846</b>			4.48 million	
<b>1856</b>	6.035 million Muslim males, 3.5 million non-Muslim males <sup>v</sup>		5.14 million	
<b>1867</b>			6.07 million	1.28 million <sup>ix</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Covers approximately modern-day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel. All these regions were under Egyptian control between 1831 and 1840. The figures for Syria's population are drawn from the various estimates in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent, 1800–1914: A Documentary Economic History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), 16.

<sup>ii</sup> Nomads are included. Compiled mainly from Justin McCarthy, "Nineteenth-Century Egyptian Population," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 12, no. 3 (1976), 33.

<sup>iii</sup> Daniel Panzac, "The Population of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century," *Asian and African Studies* 21 (1987), 14.

<sup>iv</sup> The estimation of the French diplomat Bois le Comte. Panzac, "The Population of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century," 14.

<sup>v</sup> See Table 7.

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<sup>vi</sup> See Table 7.

<sup>vii</sup> Mehmed Ali Pasha's personal statement to Bois le Comte. *Panzac*, "The Population of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century," 14. Based on the 1848 census, perhaps about 6 to 7 percent of this figure were Egyptian Copts who were exempt from military service except in rare circumstances. Mohamed Saleh, "A Pre-colonial Population Brought to Light: Digitization of the Nineteenth Century Egyptian Censuses," *Historical Methods* vol. 46, no. 1 (2013), 13, table 6; Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 79, 98, 259–60.

<sup>viii</sup> The Ottoman translation of Karl Freiherr von Vincke-Olbendorf's treatise (27 Receb 1252/ 7 November 1836) Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüseyin Paşa no. 887. The figure probably includes the populations of Bosnia, Albania and Kurdistan, but excludes Egypt and Greater Syria.

<sup>ix</sup> The figure covers the populations of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra Provinces in Mesopotamia. Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800–1914*, 17.

**Table 5: Number of Disciplined Soldiers of Egypt and the Ottoman Central State**

	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Ottoman Central State</b>
<b>1824, July</b>	17,000 infantry, 700 cavalry, 4 artillery batteries <sup>i</sup>	
<b>1827, July</b>		24,986 infantry <sup>ii</sup>
<b>1828</b>	20,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry <sup>iii</sup>	13,283 infantry, 1,166 cavalry <sup>iv</sup>
<b>1831</b>	26-27,000 infantry and cavalry, 40 guns <sup>v</sup>	11,001 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen, 2,604 reformed cavalry, 9,096 fortress artillerymen <sup>vi</sup>
<b>1832, July 8 Battle of Homs</b>	20,000, majority of them disciplined <sup>vii</sup>	4 infantry and 3 cavalry regiments <sup>viii</sup>
<b>1832, July 29 Battle of Beylan</b>	16,000 infantry, 3 cavalry regiments, 4 artillery batteries <sup>ix</sup>	10,000 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen <sup>x</sup>
<b>1832, December 21 Battle of Konya</b>	15,000–20,000 disciplined troops <sup>xi</sup>	53,000-65,000 disciplined troops and irregulars <sup>xii</sup>
<b>1835</b>		58,038 infantry, 55,429 reserve infantry, 15,820 regular cavalry, 9,454 regular and reserve artillerymen, 388 guns <sup>xiii</sup>
<b>1837, February</b>		47,639 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen <sup>xiv</sup>
<b>1838</b>	66,400 infantry, 12,614 cavalry and artillerymen, 2,310 sappers <sup>xv</sup>	53,851 reservists <sup>xvi</sup>
<b>1839, June 24 Battle of Nizib</b>	24,000 infantry, 4,800 cavalry, 2,000 engineers, 2,000 artillerymen, 120 guns <sup>xvii</sup>	17,000 infantry, 5,200 cavalry, 3000 artillerymen, 160 guns <sup>xviii</sup>
<b>1840, Fall</b>	65,000 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen, 270 field guns, 619 stationary guns <sup>xix</sup>	23,617 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen, 12,000–13,000 reservists <sup>xx</sup>
<b>1841, February</b>	15,000 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen, 122 guns <sup>xxi</sup>	80,059 infantry, cavalry and field artillerymen, 30,545 reservists, 12,875 fortress artillerymen <sup>xxii</sup>
<b>1841</b>	50,000 <sup>xxiii</sup>	
<b>1842, September</b>		50,035 reservists <sup>xxiv</sup>

<b>1851</b>		123,000 infantry, cavalry and artillerymen <sup>xxv</sup>
<b>1853</b>	69,748 Infantry, 11,628 cavalrymen, 6,775 artillerymen, 5,796 coastal artillerymen <sup>xxvi</sup>	158,564 regular and reserve infantry, cavalry and artillerymen <sup>xxvii</sup>
<b>1870</b>	87,000 disciplined troops, 40,000 potential reservists <sup>xxviii</sup>	

<sup>i</sup> The initial strength of the Egyptian expeditionary force dispatched from Alexandria to quell the Greek Revolt. Mehmed Ali Pasha sent four out of six regular regiments at hand. As of September 1824, the Egyptian authorities were planning to raise three more regiments. Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 55; Muhammed H. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831–1841)* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 43.

<sup>ii</sup> As of July 1827, the paper strength of recently reorganized 31 regular infantry battalions, each including 806 men and officers. “The deployment of this force was as follows: about a third, or ten battalions, were stationed in Istanbul and the Bosphorus area; another third was sent [10 or 11 battalions] was sent to observe the empire’s European frontiers from bases in Vidin, Silistre and Çirmen; eight or nine battalions were posted to the Greek theater of war and operated from Salonika, İzmir, Euboea (Egriboz) and Dardanelles; the Asiatic provinces were practically denuded of new troops with only two battalions posted to Erzurum.” Avigdor Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1968), 372.

<sup>iii</sup> Egyptian forces in Morea by the winter of 1827–28. Andrew McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 102.

<sup>iv</sup> This must be only a part of the regular troops, which will probably have amounted to twice this number. KK 7042 (4 Ra 1244 /14 Eylül 1828).

<sup>v</sup> The number of Egyptian troops that left Cairo in October 1831 to attack Acre overland. The disciplined troops of this force were organized in six infantry and four cavalry regiments. There were perhaps 3,000–4,000 irregular Bedouin cavalry in the expeditionary force. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 62; Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question*, 62. A contemporary account by a Lebanese notable puts the strength of besieging Egyptian troops at “eight regiments of foot soldiers, eighteen thousand in number, eight regiments of cavalry, four thousand in number, and about two thousand Hanadi Arab horsemen. The cannons, rockets and mortars were thirty to forty pieces and a rock crusher.” Mikhayil Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, trans. W. M. Thackston Jr. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 168.

<sup>vi</sup> Based on the population census in the early 1830s, which appears to be an undercount. According to the census records published by Karal, 11,001 men were enrolled in *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, 1,239 reformed timariot and Cossack cavalry, 1,365 reformed *Evlad-ı Fatihan* cavalry. Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*, (Ankara: T. C. Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943).

<sup>vii</sup> According to Mishaqa’s eyewitness account, 11,000 regular infantry, 2,000 regular cavalry, 3,000 irregular cavalry, 43 guns and 3,000 transport camels left Damascus in early July 1832. This contingent was later joined by a 6,000-men-strong detachment, bringing up the total strength of the Egyptian army to 20,000 men at the battle of Homs. According to an Egyptian spy report referred to by Egyptian commander İbrahim Pasha before the battle, the Ottoman army had 55,000 irregulars on the field, which seems an exaggeration. During the battle, Mikhayil Mishaqa observed that there were more Ottoman regular troops than Egyptian. Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder*, 170, 172–73.

<sup>viii</sup> Supported by 15,000 irregulars. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 63.

<sup>ix</sup> Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 65.

<sup>x</sup> Supported by 10,000 irregulars. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 65.

<sup>xi</sup> Salih Kış, "Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Anadolu Harekatı ve Konya Muharebesi," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* no. 23 (2010), 151. The Egyptian field army was composed of five infantry, one guard infantry, four cavalry regiments and four artillery batteries. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 161.

<sup>xii</sup> In a rather unusual decision, the Ottoman authorities publicly stated the strength of the Ottoman army converging on Konya as 65,000 in the official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vakayi*, on 13 December 1832. The Ottoman leadership probably felt sure about a victory against the invading Egyptian forces. Kış, "Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa'nın Anadolu Harekatı," 149; Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 161.

<sup>xiii</sup> Paper strength of the Ottoman army in the mid-1830s. For details, see Table 12.

<sup>xiv</sup> Veysel Şimşek, "The First 'Little Mehmeds': Conscripits for the Ottoman Army, 1826–53," *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 44 (2014), 304, appendix A, which was based on KK 6799.

<sup>xv</sup> 27,600 regular infantry, 5,200 cavalry, 2,000 artillerymen and 500 sappers were stationed across Syria. Stationed in Lower Egypt were 7,800 regular infantry, 4,200 cavalry and artillerymen, and 900 sappers. Sizable contingents, each of which had a combined strength of about 12,000 troops, were garrisoning the cities of Crete and Hedjaz. John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London, 1840), 50.

<sup>xvi</sup> D. ASM 38883, also cited in Şimşek, "The First 'Little Mehmeds,'" 266n1.

<sup>xvii</sup> Infantry and cavalry were organized in twelve and nine regiments, respectively. Some 1,500 Bedouin cavalrymen supported this force. William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, vol. 1 (London, 1842), 320.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ainsworth was careful to note that 17 Ottoman infantry regiments were not up to their full strength of 20,400 troops. Some 3,000 irregular infantry and 6,000 irregular cavalry supported the Ottoman army. There were 2,000 Egyptian deserters on the side of the Ottoman central army. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, 316. M. Petit, a French officer attached to the Ottoman Hafız Pasha's headquarters, noted that 23,000 regular infantry 5,000 cavalry and 3,000 artillerymen were supported by 4,800 irregulars. Edouard Driault, ed., *L'Egypte et L'Europe: La Crise Orientale de 1839–41*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Royal Egyptian Geographical Society, 1930–33), 82. Moltke put the combined strength of the three Ottoman armies in Anatolia at 70,000 men in 1839. At the army camp at Birecik on 20 May 1839, he estimated that there were a higher figure for the regular infantry (25,000–28,000 in 53 battalions), a similar number for the cavalry (5,000 in 8 regiments), and about 100 guns. In addition to the heavy artillery batteries and guards units, he gave the strength of the Ottoman army at the battle of Nizib as 51 battalions of infantry, 9 cavalry regiments (42 battalions), and 105 guns. Helmuth von Moltke, *Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969), 256, 262, 269.

<sup>xix</sup> The strength of the main Egyptian army stationed in Syria before the opening of the hostilities. Augustus Jochmus, *The Syrian War and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1848*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Albert Cohn, 1883), 120.

<sup>xx</sup> The number of troops located in Istanbul and Anatolia mentioned in İ MTZ (5) 3/96 (13 Ş 1256 / 10 October 1840). The Ottoman authorities were planning to create two 35,000-men-strong armies out of the existing active and reserve formations.

<sup>xxi</sup> The surviving Egyptian force that had retreated south from Syria to Gaza. Jochmus, *The Syrian War and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire*, 120.

<sup>xxii</sup> From March 1840 to February 1841, 123,479 troops were on the Ottoman muster rolls. BOA, İ.MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ) 42/ 782 (H, M-Z 1257/ March 1840-February 1841).

<sup>xxiii</sup> "In 1841, with many regiments mere cadres, [Egyptian army's] total manpower was about 50,000." John P. Dunn, *Khedive Ismail's Army* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 15. Mehmed Ali Pasha was officially permitted to use 18,000 troops in Egypt in the peace established in the summer of 1841. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question*, 182, 188.

<sup>xxiv</sup> It appears that this comprehensive muster roll depicts eight regiments (20,752 men in total) with their ideal cadre strength. Therefore the real number of troops in these units must have been lower. İ. DH 68 / 3357 (5 Ş 1258 / 11 September 1842).

<sup>xxv</sup> The number of effectives among the disciplined troops. James Henry Skene, *The Three Eras of Ottoman History: A Political Essay on the Late Reforms of Turkey* (London, 1851), 62.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ömer Tosun, *El-Ceyşü'l-Misri fi'l-Harbi'l-Rusiye el-Ma'rufe bi-Harbi'l-Kırım, 1853-1856* (Alexandria: Matba'at al-Mustaqbal, 1936), 49-55.



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<sup>xxvii</sup> 63, 924 regular and reserve infantry, 10,240 cavalry and 10,240 artillerymen in the Balkans, 50,200 regular troops in Istanbul and 26,190 in Anatolia. İbrahim Köremezli, “Ottoman War on the Danube, State, Subject, and Soldier (1853-1856)” (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2013), 128.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Dunn, *Khedive Ismail's Army*, 32.

**Table 6: Revenue and Expenditures of Ottoman Central State and Mehmed Ali Pasha's Egypt (in million pounds)<sup>i</sup>**

	Revenue		Expenditures	
	Egypt <sup>ii</sup>	Ottoman State <sup>iii</sup>	Egypt <sup>iv</sup>	Ottoman State
<b>1809</b>		(1.09)		
<b>1817-18</b>	4.70			
<b>1821</b>	3.75		2.96	
<b>1822</b>	4.71			
<b>1826</b>	3.44			
<b>1827</b>		(3.29)		
<b>1829-30</b>	3.57		3.22	
<b>1833</b>	2.63 <sup>v</sup>		2.17	
<b>1834-35</b>	3.13		3.07	
<b>1835-36</b>	3.21		3.02	
<b>1838</b>	2.62			
<b>1838-39</b>		2.87		3.30
<b>1840-41</b>		3.59		3.86
<b>1841-42</b>	2.64	4.82		4.86
<b>1845-46</b>	2.79			
<b>1846-47</b>	2.89	5.73		5.74

<sup>i</sup> Ottoman and Egyptian *kuruş* are converted to pounds by using the data sets in Markus A. Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange, 1590–1914* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 393–94. For the double years (e.g., 1829–30), the latter year is used as a reference for conversion. The Egyptian *kuruş* “was commonly regarded as being of higher value than the Turkish one,” even though officially and technically they should have been of equal value. Ibid., 599. In May 1836, Mehmed Ali Pasha’s decree officially made 19.5 Egyptian *kuruş* equal to 20 Ottoman *kuruş*. (Roger Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy, 1820–1914: A Study in Trade and Development* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 384, Appendix 3). For the calculations in the years after 1835–36, the said ratio is used to normalize Egyptian *kuruş* vis-à-vis the Ottoman one. Finally, it should be noted that Egypt also suffered from high inflation in 1800–1840, much like other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Kenneth M. Cuno, *The Pasha’s Peasants: Land, Society, and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740–1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 212, Appendix 2.

<sup>ii</sup> For 1821, 1829–30, and 1833: John Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia* (London, 1840), 44. The remaining data is compiled from Cuno, *The Pasha’s Peasants*, 118, Table 6.3.

<sup>iii</sup> For 1809: the combined revenue of the *Hazine-i Amire* and the treasury of the navy in 1808; the real total revenues should have been larger. Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII.yy dan Tanzimat’a Mali Tarih)* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), 225, 228. For 1827: the estimation of Keçecizade İzzet Molla for the total state revenues. Avigdor Levy, “The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II,” (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1968), 449. For 1838–39: the combined revenue and expenditures of *Hazine-i Amire* and various army and navy treasuries. Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi*, 280. For 1841–47: revenue and expenditures are drawn from Tevfik Güran, *Osmanlı Mali İstatistikleri: Bütçeler, 1841–1918* (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2003), 19, 21.

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<sup>iv</sup> For 1821, 1829–30, and 1833: Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia*, 44; for 1834–35 and 1835–36: Owen, *Cotton and the Egyptian Economy*, 43.

<sup>v</sup> About 2.3 percent of this amount (3 million *kuruş*) was destined for Istanbul as the yearly tribute. Bowring, *Report on Egypt and Candia*, 44–45.

**Table 7: Results of the Ottoman Population Censuses in the Provinces, 1829-32**

	<b>Muslim Males</b>	<b>Military Age Muslim Males</b>	<b>Non-Muslim Males<sup>i</sup></b>
<i><b>Balkan Provinces</b></i>			
<b>Rumeli</b>	210,822	72,016	
<b>Silistre</b>	272,572	98,411	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	483,394	170,427	795,565 <sup>ii</sup>
<i><b>Anatolian Provinces</b></i>			
<b>Anadolu</b>	1,199,402	408,593	
<b>Adana</b>	85,785	33,150	
<b>Karaman</b>	226,013	83,405	
<b>Sivas (Rum)</b>	283,075	97,019	
<b>Trabzon</b>	125,121	41,707	
<b>Çıldır</b>	73,282	23,511	
<b>Kars</b>	17,685	5,142	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	2,010,363	692,527	
<i><b>Aegean Islands</b></i>			
<b>Cyprus</b>	14,857	5,327	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	28,381	9,105	318,937 <sup>iii</sup>
<b>Istanbul</b>	97,077	18,387	114,206 <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Grand Total</b>	2,619,215 <sup>v</sup>	890,446 <sup>vi</sup>	1,228,708

<sup>i</sup> Excluding the Ottoman Roma. The registered population of the Roma was 35,707, which was composed of roughly equal numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims. Drawn from the summary figures presented in Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1985) 114.

<sup>ii</sup> Includes non-Muslim males who were registered as Jews (10,133 souls) and Armenians (2,099 souls). Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, 114.

<sup>iii</sup> The number of non-Muslim males in Anatolian provinces, Aegean Islands, and Cyprus. The figure includes those who were registered as Jews (5,164 souls) and Armenians (16,643 souls). Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, 114.

<sup>iv</sup> Composed of 49,323 Greek, 47,866 Armenian, 12,032 Jewish and 4,985 Catholic males. For further details and sources for Istanbul's population in 1829, see Table 8.

<sup>v</sup> Excluding the military personnel (*Asakir-i Mansure*, *Evlad-ı Fatihan*, fortress guards, armed retinues of various power holders etc) in the provinces which was about 30,000 men. However the same figures also include the nomads surveyed, who were counted at approximately 100,000 males. I constructed the numbers for the total male population and able-bodied males in the provinces by comparing the summary figures from the two main sources: 1) "1831 census." 1247 [1830-31] *Senesinde Memalik-i Mahruse-i Şahanede Mevcut Nüfus Defteri*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, TY 8867 transliterated in Karal, *1831 Nüfus Sayımı* 2) BOA, TSK.d (Topkapı Sarayı Müze Arşivi Defterleri) 4895 ([End of] B 1247/ 4 January 1832). TY 8867 shows total male population, and usually the number of able-bodied men for the surveyed districts. TSK.d 4895 only listed the able-bodied males by district but likely to have been finalized at a later date and more up to date than TY 8867. If population and able-bodied men in a particular district

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are both available only in TY 8867, I took it as the primary data for my calculation for those districts. If both TY 8867 and TSK.d 4895 provide a figure for the able-bodied men in the same district, I chose the higher number to be counted towards the gross total, assuming larger the number more comprehensive/updated is the number provided. In a few cases, there are numbers for either total population or able-bodied males, and not for both. For the majority of the districts in TY 8867, both the population and able-bodied men between 12-40 or 15-40 are indicated. The (rounded) ratio between the able-bodied men and total number of males is 1 to 3 throughout TY 8867 in average. Thus, if the total population of a particular district is not indicated in TY 8867 and the number of able-bodied men in the same district is given in TSK.d 4895, which seldom happens, I used the number of able-bodied men from TSK and multiplied it by 3 to find the total population for that district. If only the population data is existent for a certain district (and not the number of able-bodied men) in TY 8867, I used the total number of population towards the gross total of population, and divided the total population by 3 to find the able-bodied men in that district. The number I found for the total Ottoman population is 2.62 million, which is about 100,000 more than the population calculated in TY 8867 and thus Karal, *1831 Nüfus Sayımı* and in Karpas, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, 114. In calculating the number of nomads, I used the data provided in TY 8867, which gives a larger number than TSK.d 4895 provides, and reconcilable with a later census of the nomads in ML.CRD 609 (1257/ 1841-42).

<sup>vi</sup> TSK.d 4895 indicated that there were 725,948 able-bodied men (143,502 in Rumelia, 573,462 in Anatolia and 8,984 in Cyprus and Aegean Islands. Another document with a later date, D.ASM 37912 (M 1248 / May/June 1832) indicates that there were 911,620 able-bodied men in Anatolia and Rumelia, which increases my calculation for January 1832 by about thirty thousand. Still, D.ASM 37912 does not provide a complete figure, the actual number of able-bodied men and the population actually counted should be higher in the areas surveyed.

**Table 8: Population of Istanbul, 1826-44**

	1826 <sup>i</sup>	1829 <sup>ii</sup>	1834 <sup>iii</sup>	1844 <sup>iv</sup>
<b>Muslim Males</b>				
<b>Adult</b>		53,899	44,390	
<b>Children</b>		16,556	17,704 <sup>v</sup>	
<b>Young</b>	17,000 <sup>vi</sup>			
<b>Settled/Married sub-total</b>		70,455		67,418
<b>Bachelors-Young</b>		18,387 <sup>vii</sup>		
<b>Bachelors-Children</b>		150		
<b>Bachelors-Old</b>		7,524		
<b>Bachelors sub-total</b>		26,061	17,104	34,514 <sup>viii</sup>
<b>Muslim Roma</b>		561		
<b>Muslim Males Total</b>	45,000	97,077 <sup>ix</sup>	79,198	101,932
<b>Non-Muslim Males</b>				
<b>Greek Males</b>				
<b>Settled/Married</b>		24,530		24,338
<b>Adult</b>			14,807	
<b>Bachelors</b>		24,793	32,131	21,442
<b>Children</b>			6,905	
<b>Greek Males Sub-total</b>	20,000	49,323	53,843	45,780
<b>Armenian Males</b>				
<b>Settled/Married</b>		29,612		29,349
<b>Adult</b>			20,264	
<b>Bachelors</b>		18,254	19,879	18,650
<b>Children</b>			9,502	
<b>Armenian Males Sub-total</b>	30,000	47,866	49,645	47,999
<b>Catholic Males</b>				
<b>Adult</b>			2,812	
<b>Settled/Married</b>		4,089		4,047
<b>Bachelors</b>		896	491	1,079
<b>Children</b>			1,054	
<b>Catholic Males Sub-total</b>		4,985	4,357	5,126
<b>Jewish Males</b>				
<b>Settled/Married</b>		11,986		12,192 <sup>x</sup>
<b>Adult</b>			7,876	
<b>Bachelors</b>		46	43	63
<b>Children</b>			3,562	
<b>Jewish Males Sub-total</b>		12,032	11,481	12,255
<b>Non-Muslim Males Total</b>	50,000	114,206	119,326	111,160
<b>Roma (religion unspecified)</b>			476	601
<b>Grand Total</b>	95,000	211,283	199,000	213,693

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<sup>i</sup> Ahmed Lütfî, *Tarih-i Lütîfî*, eds. Ahmet Hezarfen, Yücel Demirel ve Tamer Erdoğan, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 205-206.

<sup>ii</sup> BOA, NFS.d (Nüfus Defterleri) 567 (dated by the archive as H. 1260/ 1844-1845, but apparently the figures shown were taken in Istanbul's previous census in 1829) seems identical to BOA, İbnülemin Dahiliye 3087, published in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1985), 202-203.

<sup>iii</sup> BOA, TSK.d (Topkapı Sarayı Müze Arşivi Defterleri) 4976. The document, which was probably inspected by Mahmud II himself, is apparently a periodical register that kept the count of number of subjects moving in and out of Istanbul, births and deaths between in March-April 1834 (Za 1249) as well as the number of residents from different denominations. It is indicated that the figures in the document exclude the palace personnel, religious students and regular soldiers.

<sup>iv</sup> Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, 202-203. Karpat uses BOA, İ. DH 24402 (24 C 1273 / 19 February 1857), a document which Mustafa Reşid Paşa submitted to the sultan in 1857 and shows the Istanbul's population in April-May 1844 (R 1260) and November-December 1856 (R 1273).

<sup>v</sup> Below 12 years of age.

<sup>vi</sup> 17,000 of these males were between 15 and 45.

<sup>vii</sup> Includes those who live in the inns (3,375 persons), workers at the mills and bakeries (627 persons).

<sup>viii</sup> Palace personnel (1,548 persons) and bachelors from the provinces (32,966 persons).

<sup>ix</sup> Includes 1,374 religious students, and 1,536 bachelor palace workers, and 554 various servants, students etc.

<sup>x</sup> Including 112 Karaim (non-rabbinical Jews).

**Table 9: Muslim Male Population In The Ottoman Empire, 1829-44**

	<b>1829-32</b>	<b>1843-44</b>
<b>ISTANBUL<sup>i</sup></b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,077</b>	<b>134,898</b>
<b>PROVINCES<sup>ii</sup></b>		
<b>BALKANS</b>		
Sofya, Manastır, Köstendil, Niğbolu, Vidin, Selanik, Silistre, Üsküb Districts	333,447	
Rumeli, Vidin, Selanik, Silistre Provinces; Üsküb District		444,696
Çirmen, Vize, Gelibolu Districts	149,947	
Çirmen Province (including Gelibolu District) and Suyolu Villages		122,547
Kalkandelen, İvrenya, Prizren		39,643
Velçitrin, Ohri, Elbasan, Dukakin		85,323 <sup>iii</sup>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>483,394</b>	<b>692,209</b>
<b>WESTERN ANATOLIA</b>		
Kocaili District	50,078	68,753
Biga District	27,866	24,028
Hüdavendigar, Kütahya, Karahisar-ı Sahib, Karesi Districts	403,614	
Hüdavendigar Province		333,902
Aydın, Saruhan, Menteşe, Suğla Districts	267,035	
Aydın Province		252,350
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>748,593</b>	<b>679,033</b>
<b>CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ANATOLIA</b>		
Ankara, Kırşehir, Kayseri, Bozok, Çorum, Sultanönü Districts	207,003	
Ankara Province		227,318
Bolu, Kastamonu, Kangırı, Viranşehir Districts	281,492	
Bolu Province, excluding Kocaili District		210,086
Konya, Aksaray, Akşehir, Beyşehir, Niğde, İçil Districts	204,129 <sup>iv</sup>	
Konya Province <sup>v</sup>		225,721
Sivas, Divriği, Amasya Districts	158,177	
Sivas Province		134,196
Karahisar-ı Şarki		22,866
Gümüşhane		34,663
Teke, Hamid and Alaiye Districts	127,596	126,650
Adana, Tarsus and Üzeyr Districts	26,350	23,524
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,004,747</b>	<b>1,005,024</b>
<b>NORTHERN ANATOLIA</b>		
Canik District	40,935	38,032



<b>Trabzon Province</b>	125,121	
<b>Trabzon District, <i>Kazas</i> of Ünye and Ordu</b>		139,018
<b>Kars Province</b>	17,685	
<b>Kars District</b>		19,786
<b>Çıldır District</b>	73,282	71,074
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>257,023</b>	<b>267,910</b>
<b>EASTERN ANATOLIA<sup>vi</sup></b>		
<b>Van District</b>		13,151
<b><i>Kazas</i> of Ma'den</b>		171,433
<b>Erzurum Province</b>		65,677
<b>Musul</b>		12,755
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>263,016</b>
<b>ISLANDS</b>		
<b>Cezair-i Bahr-i Sefid (Aegean Islands)</b>	13,524	
<b>Cyprus</b>	14,857	
<b>Total surveyed population in the provinces</b>	<b>2,522,138</b>	<b>2,907,192</b>
<b>Ottoman authorities' estimations on unsurveyed populations</b>		
<b>Unregistered nomads population in Anatolia</b>		129,444
<b>İskenderiyye (İşkodra), Yanya, Avlonya ve Valonya (Albania)</b>		180,338
<b>Diyarbakir Province (Kurdistan)</b>		124,820
<b>Şam, Haleb, Sayda, Trablus, Urfa ve Maraş (Syria and Palestine)</b>		726,476
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,161,078</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,619,215</b>	<b>4,203,168</b>
<b>Increase between the populations in the areas that were both surveyed in 1829-32 and 1843-44</b>	<b>Istanbul</b>	<b>+ 37,821</b>
	<b>Provinces</b>	<b>+65,096</b>

<sup>i</sup> See Table 8.

<sup>ii</sup> Figures for the provinces are drawn from the summary population register appendant in BOA, İ. MSM 10/ 206 (14 C 1262 / 12 July 1843), which was also transcribed in Tobias Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, trans. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 275-279. The document was re-consulted and the districts were re-organized for the table above in order to conduct a sensible comparison with 1829-32 census. The document was also copied in Ahmed Cevad Paşa, *Tarih-i Askeri-i Osmani, Kitab-ı Hamis*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi TY 6127, pp. 33-34, which was also cited in Stanford J. Shaw and Ayşe Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 117n101. The council decisions' following the document is penned in summer of 1843 and not 1844, which was the oft-quoted year given for the second empire-wide census in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The figures provided in the summer of 1843 corroborate with the population data in the subsequent years. Compare with *Asakir-i Cedideye Ait Taksim Cedveli* (1262/ 1845-46) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüseyin Paşa no. 840, I MSM 15/ 318 (13 Ca 1264 / 17 April 1848) and I. MSM 15/ 326 (7 Ş 1264 / 9 July 1848).

<sup>iii</sup> Areas surveyed in detail for the first time after 1832.

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<sup>iv</sup> Nomads of Karaman province, which was numbered 28,853, is included in the total population figure here.

<sup>v</sup> Excluding Teke, Hamid, Alaiye Districts and probably including İçil district.

<sup>vi</sup> Areas surveyed in detail for the first time after 1832.

**Table 10: A recruit levy for *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, broken down into districts (1835)**

Districts ( <i>sancaks</i> )	Muslim males in the district <sup>i</sup>	Able-bodied men (between 12-40) in the district <sup>ii</sup>	Recruits that were requested during the levy <sup>iii</sup>	Ratio between Eligible men/ Recruits requested
<b>Çorum</b>	33,775	10,506	683	15.4
<b>Hüdavendigâr</b>	157,523	46,000	1,605	28.7
<b>Aydın</b>	100,257	36,237	1,875	19.3
<b>Kütahya</b>	167,759	62,255	2,521	24.7
<b>Safranbolu</b>	59,502	15,185	620	24.5
<b>Kastamonu</b>	119,135	44,677	1,700	26.3
<b>Karahisar-ı Sahib</b>	42,375	14,867	925	16.1
<b>Suğla maa İzmir</b>	45,520	19,856	879	22.6
<b>Ankara</b>	49,825	19,964	1,085	18.4
<b>Kangırı</b>	50,586	20,037	975	20.6
<b>Alaiye</b>	28,792	9,760	555	17.6
<b>Teke</b>	28,964	12,454	645	19.3
<b>Bozok</b>	50,188	17,987	908	19.8
<b>İçil</b>	30,643	12,546	507	24.7
<b>Total</b>	934,201	342,331	14,976	22.9 (Average)

<sup>i</sup> Figures are compiled from Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831*, (Ankara: T.C Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943) and TSK.d. 4895 (May 1832).

<sup>ii</sup> Figures are compiled from Karal, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İlk Nüfus Sayımı 1831* and TSK.d. 4895 (May 1832).

<sup>iii</sup> Figures are compiled from BOA, ASK.MHM.d no. 30 (H. 1250-54/ 1834-39), pp. 232-235. The latest recruit group arrived in İstanbul on 20 Ş 1251/ 11 December 1835. The provided list of *sancaks* does not include every administrative/judicial district provided in the document, in order to create a parallel comparison base for the districts provided in the census registers. The total number of recruits requested from Anatolia and Rumelia in this levy amounted to 26.898. By the end of 1835, 8895 men were still expected to be “delivered” to meet the quotas assigned for the districts.

**Table 11: Ottoman Conscription and Manpower in the European Context, 1836<sup>i</sup>**

Country	France	Prussia	Russia	Ottoman Empire (proposed-1836)	Ottoman Empire (actual-1846) <sup>ii</sup>
<b>Population<sup>iii</sup></b>	33 million	13 million	46 million <sup>iv</sup>	11 million Muslims, 9 million non-Muslims <sup>v</sup>	4,20 million Muslim males <sup>vi</sup>
<b>Reaching military age annually</b>	250,000	90,000	-	77,000	-
<b>Annual intake to the army</b>	80,000	36,000	92,000	30,000	30,000 <sup>vii</sup>
<b>Conscription Method</b>	Drawing of lots	Universal military service <sup>viii</sup>	2 to 10 men in every 500	Drawing of lots	Drawing of lots
<b>Conscription Age</b>	“a suitable age for military service”	20 for the active army <sup>ix</sup>	-	20	20
<b>Active Army</b>	400,000	110,000 <sup>x</sup>	[600,000]	140,000 <sup>xi</sup>	150,000
<b>Active Reserve</b>	160,000 <sup>xii</sup>	60,000 (“ <i>İhtiyat</i> ”)	-	-	-
<b>Term of Service</b>	5 years (active army) 2 years (active reserve)	3 years (active army) 2 years (active reserve)	25 years	5 years <sup>xiii</sup>	5 years
<b>Other Reserves</b>	1,000,000 National Guard (“ <i>Müstahfızan-ı Millet</i> ”)	170,000: 1 <sup>st</sup> Line Landwehr 120,000: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Landwehr 3 <sup>rd</sup> Line Landwehr <sup>xiv</sup>	-	1 <sup>st</sup> Line Reserves : 140,000 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Reserves: 160,000 3 <sup>rd</sup> Line Reserves: 200,000 <sup>xv</sup>	[50,000]
<b>Mobilized Wartime Army</b>	700,000 <sup>xvi</sup>	460,000 <sup>xvii</sup>	600,000	640,000	[200,000]

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<sup>i</sup> Unless mentioned otherwise, the data here is drawn from the Ottoman translation of Karl Freiherr von Vincke-Olbendorf's detailed treatise, which is located in Hüsrev Pasha's personal library, dated (27 B 1252/ 7 November 1836), Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 887.

<sup>ii</sup> Based on the conscription code of 1846.

<sup>iii</sup> Populations of France (1836), Prussia (1837), and Russia (1838, the whole empire) were 33.5, 13, and 61.5 million respectively. Brian Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics, 1750-2010* (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2010), A1 Europe: Population of Countries at Censuses; Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks: Conscription, Military Service and Civil Society in Modern Germany*, trans. Andrew Boreham with Daniel Brückenhau (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 54. William L. Blackwell, *The Beginnings of Russian Industrialization 1800-1860* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968), 427.

<sup>iv</sup> This is the population that is "eligible for recruitment." According to von Vincke, 2,100,000 would be drafted. 500,000 would perish out of prior to joining the ranks, 1,000,000 men would die due to lack of care and proper organization in 25 years.

<sup>v</sup> 10 million of this population should be allocated to the army and 1 million to the navy as their recruitment base. The figures probably include the populations of Bosnia, Albania and Kurdistan, and exclude Egypt and Greater Syria.

<sup>vi</sup> For details on figures, population and sources, see Table 7, 8 and 9.

<sup>vii</sup> According to BOA, İ. MSM 10/ 206 (14 C 1262 / 12 July 1843), the yearly gross intake was to be around 37,000. Thus, it was implied that Ottoman navy was to claim 7,000 of these recruits.

<sup>viii</sup> Selective recruitment based on the service branch.

<sup>ix</sup> Ages between 25-32: 1<sup>st</sup> Line Landwehr; 32-39: 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Landwehr; 39-50: 3<sup>rd</sup> Line Landwehr.

<sup>x</sup> Figure provided by von Vincke. The exact number should be 108,000.

<sup>xi</sup> Von Vincke's suggests an annual attrition rate of 14,000 men that should be deducted from the yearly recruit intake.

<sup>xii</sup> About 10,000 of active reservists become ineligible to serve every year.

<sup>xiii</sup> 1 year training and adaptation in "depots" followed by 4 years in active service.

<sup>xiv</sup> von Vincke does not provide any figure.

<sup>xv</sup> 25-32: 1<sup>st</sup> Line Reserve (*Redif Mansure*), 32-40: 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Reserve, 40-50: 3<sup>rd</sup> Line Reserve.

<sup>xvi</sup> Including 150,000 new recruits, excluding the National Guard.

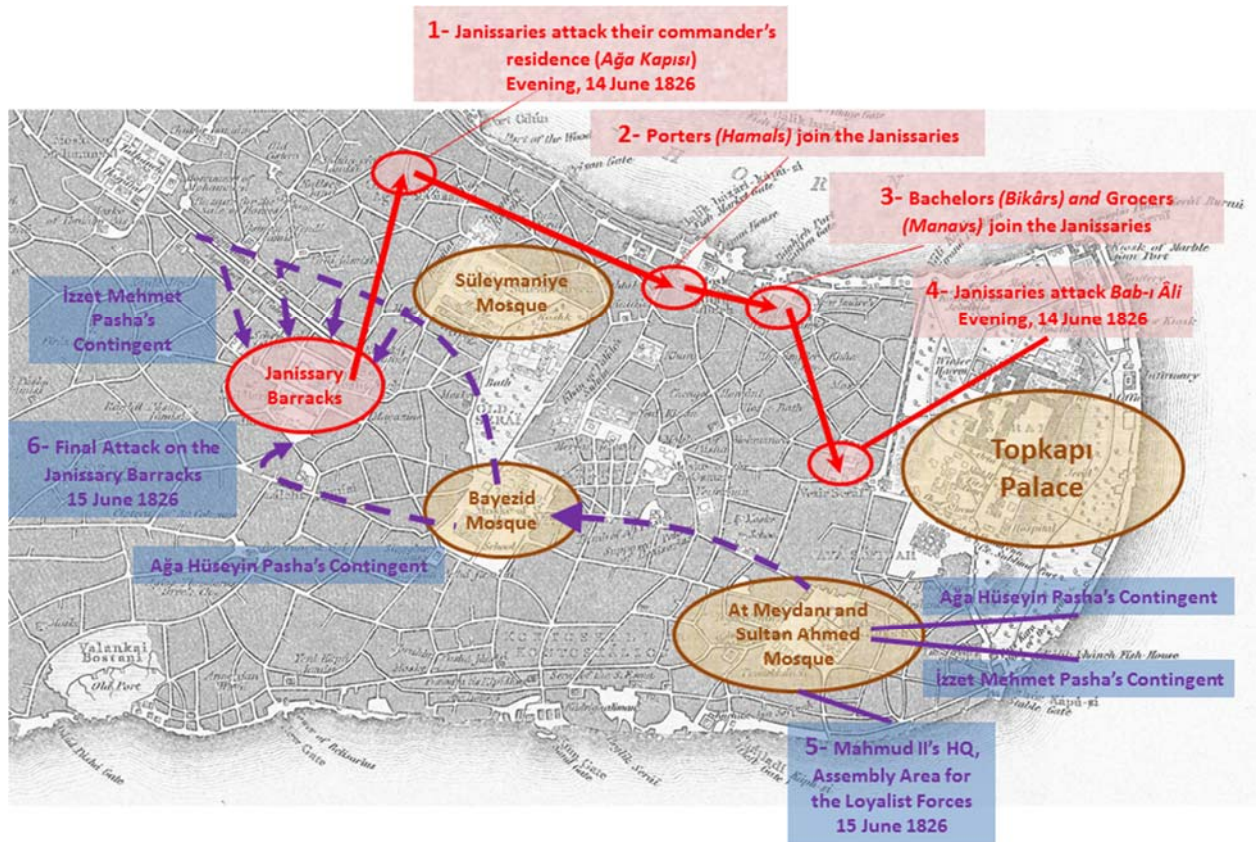
<sup>xvii</sup> Excluding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Line Landwehr. In another manuscript found in Hüsrev Pasha's library, out of a population of 12 million, Prussia could mobilize 28,000 guard infantry, 112,000 line infantry, 4,000 light infantry, 104,000 reserve infantry (Landwehr) in 248 battalions (*tabur*), 43,448 cavalrymen in 256 squadrons, and 27,000 artillerymen in 135 batteries in 1814. The total strength of Prussian land forces then amounted to 330,598. Excluding the 2<sup>nd</sup> line Landwehr in 1836, the numbers more or less reconcile in both documents for 1814 and 1836. *Prusya Devleti'nin Usul ve Nizam-ı Askeriyesi*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hüsrev Paşa no. 769, 4-5, 133-134.

**Table 12: Paper Strength of the Regular Ottoman Army, mid-1830s<sup>i</sup>**

<b>Infantry</b>			<b>Notes</b>
Line Infantry <sup>ii</sup>	74 <sup>iii</sup> battalions <sup>iv</sup>	58,038	1,998 officers, 56,040 <sup>v</sup> privates and NCOs
Reserve Infantry <sup>vi</sup>	41 battalions <sup>vii</sup>	55,429	55,429 officers and men
<b>Cavalry</b>			
Line Cavalry	10 regiments	15,820	15,820 officers and men <sup>viii</sup>
<b>Artillery</b>			
Foot Artillery	148 guns <sup>ix</sup>	3,576	2,968 artillerymen and 608 reserve ( <i>ihdiyat</i> ) artillerymen <sup>x</sup>
Horse Artillery	20 guns <sup>xi</sup>	490	406 artillerymen and 84 reserve ( <i>ihdiyat</i> ) artillerymen
Reserve ( <i>İhtiyat</i> ) Artillery	110 guns	2,694	2,244 artillerymen and 450 reserve ( <i>ihdiyat</i> ) artillerymen; 480 officers, 2214 men and NCOs
Reserve ( <i>Redif</i> ) Artillery	110 guns <sup>xii</sup>	2,694	2,244 artillerymen and 450 reserve ( <i>ihdiyat</i> ) artillerymen; 480 officers, 2,214 men and NCOs
	388 guns	9,454	Total number of guns and artillerymen
	388 guns	138,741	Total strength of Line and Reserve formations in infantry, cavalry and artillery arms

<sup>i</sup> Based on HAT 18450. Dated 1250Z 29 1 (28 April 1835) by BOA.<sup>ii</sup> *Asakir-i Mansure*.<sup>iii</sup> Excluding 7 infantry and 1 tent-pitcher battalions deployed in Baghdad and Belgrade.<sup>iv</sup> Each Battalion (*tabur*) consists of 27 officers and 760 fusiliers, 768 men in total, excluding scribes, prayer leaders, surgeons<sup>v</sup> The figure Should have been 56,240 but I followed the sum provided by the document.<sup>vi</sup> *Redif Asakir-i Mansure*.<sup>vii</sup> *Redif* battalions are larger than *Mansure* battalions<sup>viii</sup> HAT 18450 shows that Ottoman army had 10 cavalry regiments but it does not detail how many men and officers these units had. The paper strength of a cavalry regiment as of February 1827 was 1,582. Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1968), 262, 265.<sup>ix</sup> 2 guns are assigned for every infantry *Mansure* battalion<sup>x</sup> Each *Tophane-i Amire* "style" artillery company had 6 guns and 147 men (122 artillerymen and 25 reserve (*ihdiyat*) artillerymen).<sup>xi</sup> 2 guns are assigned for every cavalry *Mansure* battalion.<sup>xii</sup> 2 guns are assigned for every 1,000 *Redif* soldiers.

**MAP 1: The Battle between the Janissaries and Mahmud II's forces in Istanbul, 14-15 June 1826**



**Janissaries and their allies:** 3,000 - 10,000?

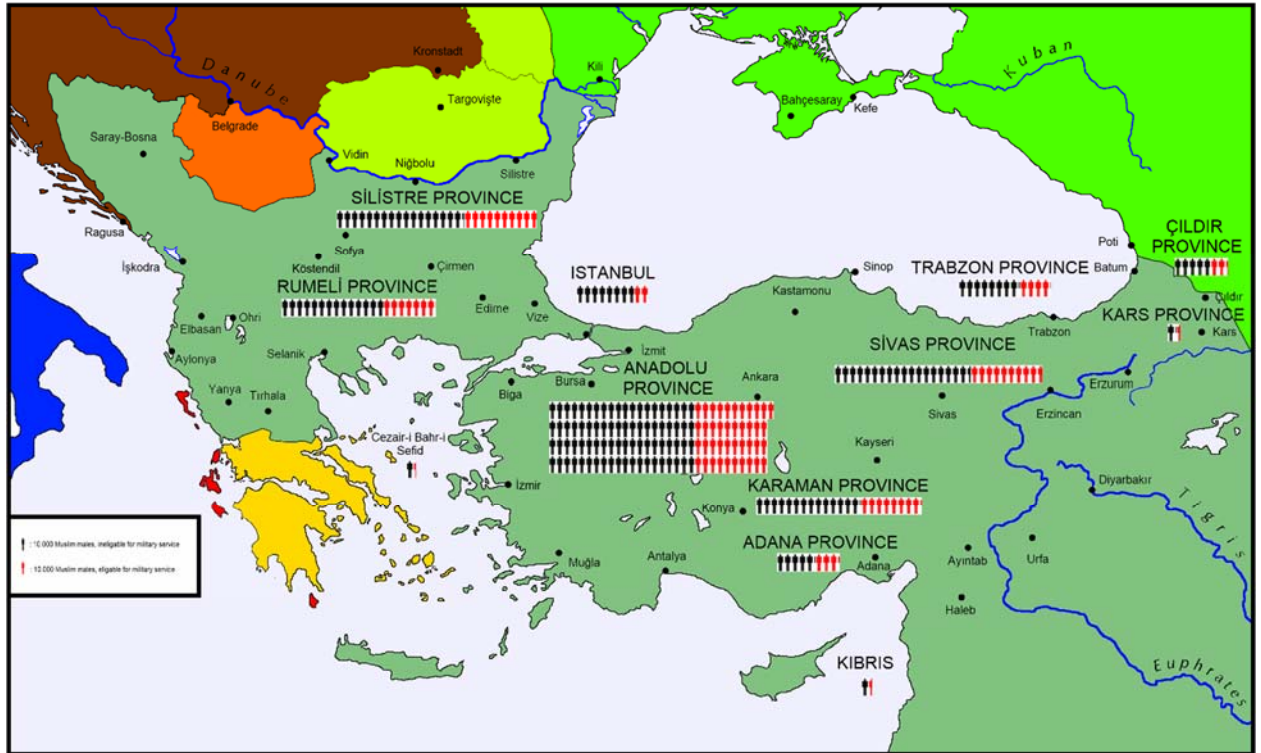
**Ağa Hüseyin Pasha's Contingent:**

*Segbans* (3,000), Cannoneers (10,000?), Cannon Wagonneers (4,400?), Dockyard Marines

**İzzet Mehmed Pasha's Contingent:**

Bombardiers (1,000), Sappers (200), Theological Students (3,500?), Armed Populace

### MAP 2: Ottoman Muslim Population and Manpower, 1829-32





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C. AS (Cevdet Askeriye)

BEO, AYN (Ayniyat Defterleri)

D. ASM (Asakir-i Mansure Defterleri)

HAT (Hatt-ı Hümayun)

KK (Kamil Kepeci)

İ. DH (İrade Dahiliye)

İ. MSM (İrade Mesail-i Mühimme)

İ. MTZ (05) (İrade Memalik-i Mümtaze, Mısır)

İ. MVL (İrade Meclis-i Vâlâ)

NFS.d (Nüfus Defterleri)

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