# THE URBAN JANISSARY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ISTANBUL

By

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# Abstract

The traditional narrative of Ottoman history claims that the Empire went into decline from the seventeenth century onwards, with the eighteenth century being a period of upheaval and change which led to the eventual fall of the Ottomans. The janissaries are major players in these narratives with claims from both secondary and primary writers that this elite military corps became corrupt and this contributed significantly to the overall decline of the Ottoman Empire. Such a simplistic view overlooks the changes taking place in the environment surrounding the janissaries leading to members of the corps needing to adapt to changing circumstances. The result is that the janissaries of this period were for the longest time almost exclusively studied through a binary 'purity/corruption' paradigm and it became difficult for scholars to move away from this system of thinking about the corps. As the principal aim of this dissertation is to facilitate a further move away from to the 'purity/corruption' paradigm for scholars it shall explore a range of secondary literature pertaining to the janissary corps and use primary sources to argue that this institutional 'corruption' is in fact and institutional adaptation. The primary documentation for this thesis is drawn primarily from the Prime Ministerial Archives in Istanbul and from the Istanbul Court Registers held at ISAM library as well as a range of published primary sources. This thesis shall break down the identity and function of the janissaries of eighteenth-century Istanbul into three principal chapters and examine each aspect janissary life within these chapters highlighting how janissary developments in these areas lend themselves to an interpretation of adaptation as opposed to corruption. Furthermore, this thesis shall attempt to reframe the discussion of the janissary corps moving towards an image of an institution adapting to the changing context it found itself in.

*For Robert,*

*This would never have happened without you*

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Finally, my husband Robert Masson, for having faith in me when I had none.

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## A note on translation and transliteration

For Turkish terms commonly used in Anglophone scholarship, such as *vizier*, I have used these Anglicised forms as they appear in the Oxford English Dictionary. With regards to the transliteration of Ottoman Turkish I have transcribed words as close to the appearance in Modern Turkish as is possible, and have avoided the diacritics associated with transliteration for ease of reading. For the same reason I often pluralise Turkish words in the English manner. I was guided by the Library of Congress transliteration scheme for Ottoman Turkish.

Pronunciation of Modern Turkish Letters:

c j, as in *jar*

ç ch, as in *church* or *chimney*

ş sh, as in *ship* or *short*

ğ unvocalized, lengthens preceding vowels

ı io, as in *motion*

ö u, as in *furnish*

ü u, as in *amuse*

While primary sources usually give dates in the Hicri calendar format, I have, for ease of reading and understanding, chosen to give years in the Gregorian calendar format only.

# Glossary

*Acem* - Persian
*acemi* - novice
*acemi oğlan* – novice in the janissary corps
*ağa* – officer title for the janissary corps, *lit*. lord or master
*ahitname* – imperial decree
*akçe* – small silver coin which was the basic unit of older Ottoman monetary system
*akide* – boiled sweets
*Ali Emiri* – Archive classification including both foreign and domestic affairs
*arzuhalcı* – trained scribe working as a professional petition writer
*askeri* – military/pertaining to the army, name of group in Ottoman society that were not taxed
*baklava* – Sweet pastry made with nuts and syrup
*baklava alayı* – Baklava Event, celebration occurring annually during Ramadan
*bazırganbaşı* – supplier of high-quality imported cloth items to upper classes
*Bektaşi* – referring to the *Bektaşi* order of Sufi Dervishes
*berat* – Patent, warrant
*bey* – mister/sir
*beylik kalemi* – Office of the Chancellery producing Imperial Orders.
*cebren kaçırır* – 'taking by force'
*cüzhan* – reader or reciter of the Quran
*çavuş* - sergeant
*çeki* – unit of weight equal to 25 kg.
*çelebi* – educated gentleman
*çelenk* – wreath, garland or plume used as a head ornament, medal of bravery worn on hat
*cizye* – poll tax imposed upon non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire
*çorbacı* - colonel
*çorbaci başı* – colonel of the janissaries
*defter* – register
*defterdar* – Minister of finance
*dergah-ı ali* – pertaining to the Sultan's court
*derviş* – member of a Sufi religious order who has taken vows of poverty and chastity
*devşirme – lit.* collection, recruitment process by which the janissaries were conscripted
*duagu* – official of a mosque appointed to recite prayers
*efendi* – gentleman/master
*enderun mektebi* – palace school
*esame* – muster roll/wage book of the janissaries
*esnaf* – tradesmen, artisans
*evamir* – imperial orders
*evlad* – children
*evrak* – document, paper
*ferman* – royal order
*gedik* – trade license
*guruş-ı esedi / esedi guruş* – Dutch currency, coins circulated in the Ottoman Empire
*hacı* – title of one who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage
*han* – bachelor lodgings
*Hanafi* – name of a school of Islamic legal thought
*hanım* - lady

*hatun* - lady
*hatt-ı hümayun* – imperial decree
*icrateyn* – rent paid to a *vakıf*
*kadı* – judge of Islamic Law
*kadı sicilleri* – registers of *kadı* courts
*kalebend* - fortress
*kanunname* – law books
*kapıcıbaşı* – head doorkeeper
*kapıkulu* – janissary guard, palace servant
*kapıya katran sürme* – painting tar onto the door of a house to cause social shame
*kapudan paşa* - admiral
*kasapbaşı* – head butcher
*katib* - scribe
*kefil* - surety
*kethüda* – warden of a trade guild
*kethüdalık* - duties or rank of *kethüda*
*kul* – janissary
*kul kardaşı* – brother of the corps, title for fellow janissary
*kuloğlu* – Son of a janissary
*kuruş* - piaster
*macuncu* – maker of medicinal taffy
*malikane* – large estates held in fief by private owner
*mektebi* – school for training civil servants
*mescid* – small mosque
*mühimme defter* – book of records of Imperial Assebly of State
*nizam* – rules of a guild
*nasihatname* – advice literature
*nöbet şekeri* – sugar ropes
*ocak* – regiment
*ocak ağası* – chief of the janissary corps
*oda* - regiment
*orta* – regiment
*para* – money, currency, coin
*paşa* – high title of civil and military officials
*pastirma* – pressed cured meat
*pinyal biçak* – a type of thin blade, possibly similar to a stiletto or rapier
*reis-ül-küttab* or *reis efendi* – Chief Administrator of foreign affairs
*reaya* – tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman Empire
*rencide* – annoyed, vexed
*rüus* – office of Ottoman chancellery
*serden-geçtiler* – special mission commando
*şeyhülislam* – dignitary responsible for all matter pertaining to religious law
*sharia* – Islamic law
*sheikh* – honorific for an elder or leader, particularly of a Sufi order
*sicilleri* – court registers
*sipahi* – cavalryman
*sucuk* – cured meat

*surah* – verse of the Quran
*süratcı* – artillerymen
*şehir oğlanı – lit.* sons of the city, trouble makers
*şeriye (defter)* – legal registers
*taciz* – troubling, harrassing
*tanzimat* – political reforms of the nineteenth century instigated in 1839
*taslakçı* – pretender
*tekke – derviş* meeting lodge
*tereke* – estate inventory of a deceased person
*tahvil* – office of Imperial Council handling administration of land holdings
*tevcih fermanıs* – imperial appointments
*timar* – tax farm
*tulumbacı* - fireman
*tulumbacı başı* – head fireman
*ulema* – Ottoman Islamic clergy
*ulufe* - salary
*vaka-i hayriye* – The Auspicious Event, name given in Ottoman history to the abolition of the janissaries
*vakıf* – pious endowment
*vakıf-ı ehli* – endowment contributing to pious cause after death
*vakıf-ı hayri* – endowment establishing a pious foundation
*veled* – child
*vukkiye* – a measure of weight equal to 2.8 lb
*yamak* – local recruit
*yerli* - local
*yeniçeri* – janissary
*zayi olunmak* – to be lost
*zimmi* – non-Muslim subject in the Ottoman Empire.

# Introduction

Mention the janissaries of eighteenth-century Istanbul to any historian of the Ottoman Empire and any of a number of images may come to mind, maybe the elite soldier so feared by the enemies of the Empire, maybe the young boys recruited by way of the *devşirme* (*lit.* collecting) system sitting in schools in Istanbul learning the Quran and swordplay, or perhaps it is the image of the 'corrupt' janissary. It is the prevalence of the latter image that has been singled out as generating a key turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire, and it is this assumption that I shall re-examine and reframe using the available evidence.

Specifically, I shall be using the purity/corruption paradigm as a departure point for this thesis. The implication in much of the traditional historiography is that the janissaries were both the making and the unmaking of the Ottoman Empire. This notion falls squarely within the telling of the history of the Ottoman Empire along the traditional imperial narrative of 'rise-peak-decline-fall' that is now a contested staple of history. What is intriguing about the Ottoman case, however, is how entwined the history of the janissaries has become with the decline paradigm. Following their abolition in 1826, in what has traditionally been called *Vaka-i Hayriye* ('The Auspicious Incident'), the janissaries were prevalent in the historiography of Ottoman decline, with references to their alleged 'corruption' and how it contributed to the decline of the Empire. They seem to have suffered the same fate as other institutions who have served as scapegoats throughout history such as the Knights Templar of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, Ali Yaycioğlu has stated that "…binaries are misleading for grasping the empire's multifaceted transformation."[1]

However, since the 1990s trends in Ottomanist scholarship have sought to readdress

[1] Ali Yaycioğlu, 'Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions', (Stanford, 2016), 1.

the dichotomy of purity and corruption, and along with it the entire narrative of the traditional classical age and subsequent decline era. With the purity/corruption model having its accuracy and validity thoroughly disproved my work here shall critically survey the historiographical journey which has led scholarship to this point and then I shall rebuild the image of the eighteenth-century urban janissary from the ground up. By contextualising and analysing the primary documentation my contribution to the historiographical narrative of the janissaries shall be an emphasis on adaptation as opposed to corruption. By presenting the actions and lives of the janissaries at this time as symptomatic of a group adapting to their changing environment, not only shall the discussion of the janissaries present an alternative model to the now debunked binary but also move the discourse away from the use of morally loaded terminology and a teleological representation of the janissaries during the *longue durée.* While this thesis offers a close examination of the capital at a certain point in the eighteenth century, the concept of institutional adaptation on the part of the janissaries can and should be utilised across all of Ottoman social history which opens up new possibilities for interpretation of evidence and directions of research.

The particular focus of this project is upon the years between 1730 and 1790, with discussion of the period immediately before 1730 following the final *devşirme* levy. This timespan has been chosen due to the fact that it is a relatively quiet peaceful of the eighteenth-century. There are fewer military campaigns and fewer urban uprisings in this time and so it is the period in which we can gain insight into how janissary lives settled into new routines and rhythms. This shall also span the gap between two well-studied periods of Ottoman history. Firstly, the period known as the Tulip Era in the early eighteenth-century and secondly, the period of reforms ushered in by Sultan Selim III (1761 – 1808, r. 1789 – 1807), in the 1790s. However, as stated, sources shall be used from either side of this primary periodisation for the

sake of charting the changes under discussion. This will help us to more clearly see where the janissaries as an institution were coming from and what they became by the end of the eighteenth century.

The reassessment attempted here is not only important because the janissaries formed such a key element in the Ottoman Empire, but also because the changing historiography on the Ottomans and availability of evidence not used previously, allows it. Throughout the history of the Ottomans, the janissaries were a key military force of the Empire and, over time, they evolved into a significant socio-political interest group within Ottoman society as well as being key players in the economy of Istanbul.

## Secondary Literature Review

When dealing with an empire as vast as the Ottoman Empire it is difficult to maintain a balanced dialogue between the centre and the provinces. In the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire spanned from Egypt, Palestine, North Africa through Anatolia, Syria and Iraq to Bosnia, Serbia and Romania. Karl Barbir and Michael Hickok, writing in 1980 and 1997 respectively, saw a gap in the historiography for their regional studies[2] and they have started a trend. In reviewing 'Ottoman Military Matters' in 2002, the studies analysed by Virginia Aksan were almost entirely books, articles or edited chapters on specific regions.[3] This fashion for provincial studies concerned Karen Barkey in 2008, who claimed that historians were now ignoring the state centre in favour of these localised studies.[4] While there is some truth to her concerns, often when historians write about Ottoman actions in general

[2] Karl K Barbir, 'Ottoman Rule in Damascus 1708-1758' (Princeton, 1980) and Michael Robert Hickok, 'Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia' (Leiden, 1997).
[3] Virginia H. Aksan, 'Ottoman Military Matters', Journal of Early Modern History, 6 (2002), 52-62.
[4] Karen Barkey, 'Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective' (Cambridge, 2008), 199.

they are referring to the capital city and the actions of the governing class residing there. More focussed studies on the events in Istanbul could remedy the imbalance Barkey sees, which is the intention of this work.

Regarding work on the janissaries what may be termed the first modern work in their historiography was written by İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, the first edition being published in 1943.[5] This work is encyclopedic and highly factual, though Uzunçarşılı does admit that there are things which are unknown to historians and need further work, such as the exact makeup of the 196 companies of the janissary corps.[6] The sources used for this study include a great deal of Ottoman writers as well as contemporary European works on the Ottoman Empire. Uzunçarşılı also used a lot of contemporary Ottoman law books and registers among other manuscripts. He charted the entirety of the changes that the janissary corps underwent including marriage, trade and moving out of the barracks, which he argued were all connected. I would agree with this assessment in that it was the undertaking of new trades and the forming of families that caused the janissaries to leave barracks and set up their own households. Where I differ from Uzunçarşılı is that I do not view such changes as a deterioration but rather an adaptation.[7]

European historians who were contemporaries of Uzunçarşılı include Arthur Horniker with his work ‘History of the Janissary Corps.’ Published in 1944, at the height of the Second World War, Horniker makes no attempt to distance his work from his society remarking at the outset on the parallel he saw between the janissaries and "the elite guard of Nazi Germany."[8] Such studies, full of overt bias and lacking in scholarly objectivity, should not be taken seriously by this study but as symptomatic of their time. Alan Palmer says in relation to the

[5] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, ‘Omanlı Devleti Teşkilâtından Kapukulu Ocakları I Acemi Ocağı ve Teniçeri Ocağı’, (Ankara, 1988).
[6] Ibid., 155.
[7] Ibid., 310.
[8] Arthur Leon Horniker, 'The Corps of the Janissaries', Military Affairs, 8 (1944) 177.

writing of Ottoman history, "It is easier to identify signs of decay in the Ottoman Empire than to discover why it became such a durable institution."[9] The times in which Palmer and his fellow Whig historian Lord Kinross, were writing were times in which the question of decline and loss of empire was of key concern to British historians, which would in turn impact British historians of the Ottoman Empire as well. It was judged of key importance to know why empires fell[10], arguably an obsession lasting since Gibbon published the first volume of his *magnum opus* in 1776. Matthew Kelly sets out to explain how the decline narrative has largely fallen out of favour since the 1970s, arguing that it is not so simple as scholars rejecting the paradigm as it is so deeply entrenched and, even when historians have rejected the narrative of decline, signs of it still appear in the scholarship which proves that such binary perceptions are not necessarily conscious.[11]

More recently Gabriel Piterberg discusses how differently shaped decline ideas have influenced Ottomanists. In his book he argues that, in some cases, using the term 'decentralisation' is actually a nicer way of describing decline and, in fact, is not a move away from traditional teleological narratives.[12] Piterberg makes much of Ariel Salzmann's work in which she argues that decentralisation could strengthen the state institutions which ushered in the nineteenth century and concludes that the changes made in Ottoman tax farming can be dubbed privatisation.[13] Salzmann summarises her argument in her own words by saying, "The very longevity of the Ottoman state points to a paradox: that long-term institutional decentralisation may well be a viable strategy, in fact an integral part, of the socio-

[9] Alan Palmer, 'The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire', (London, 1992), 32; Lord Kinross, 'The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire', (New York, 1977).
[10] See Krishan Kumar, 'Greece and Rome in the British Empire: Contrasting Role Models', Journal of British Studies, 51 (2012), 76-101.
[11] Matthew Kelly, 'The Fall of Decline: the Decline Paradigm and its Lessons' Revue Ibla, 1 (2008), 101-102.
[12] Gabriel Piterburg, 'An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play', (London, 2003), 154.
[13] Ibid., 155.

organisational evolution of the modern state."[14] While I would argue that discussions of modernisation are in themselves teleological, I do concur that the changes occurring in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century can and should be reframed as adaptations to a changing world rather than symptoms of corruption and decline.

When working on the Ottoman Empire scholars are also required to deal with a historiographical tradition which is being called into question. In 2005 Caroline Finkel condemned the traditional Eurocentric practices of writing Ottoman history arguing that historians were rarely seeing Ottoman history on its own terms. She claims that "hindsight – and one might add, teleology – compound the distortions already implicit in the historians efforts to recover an understanding of the past."[15] She goes on the argue that Ottoman scholars contend with a mythical legacy of 'the Golden Age' (more commonly called the Classical Age by Ottomanists) and that, while the clash of civilisation model has lost its appeal in recent work, it still needs to be remembered that the loss of territories was not necessarily indicative of the health of a civilisation.[16]

The core issue at the heart of this research was given coherent form by Cemal Kafadar. He presented the purity-corruption paradigm as a 'pure' version of Ottoman institutions and practices, as they were traditionally created, pitched against later 'corrupt' versions, which had undergone transformation.[17] The question of extreme oppositions and their debunking has been treated most recently in 2015 by Marios Hadjianastasis in his work on identity and politics in seventeenth century Cyprus. Hadjianastasis charts the changes in

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[14] Ariel Salzmann, 'An Ancien Regime Revisited: "Privatisation" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,' Politics and Society, 21, (1993), 394.

[15] Caroline Finkel, ''The Treacherous Cleverness of Hindsight': Myths of Ottoman Decay' in Gerald Maclean (ed.) 'Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East', (Basingstoke, 2005), 151-152.

[16] Ibid., 153-154.

[17] Cemal Kafadar, 'On the Purity and Corruption of the Janissaries', Turkish Studies Association Bulletin, 15 (1991), 275.

historical writing, from the extreme oppositional framework, to the more balanced and holistic approaches of more recent scholarship. Additionally, evidence is presented for how history is "re-packaged for the needs of the modern, nationalist consumer"[18]. In the interests of balanced argument, Hadjianastasis also cautions against going too far in the other direction and over-correcting the scholarly narrative. Writing in 1991, Kafadar pulled one element out of the overall discourse on decline and placed it under the historian's microscope, exposing aspects about janissary life that had previously been overlooked, such as their civilian peacetime occupations and their adoption of artisan crafts. Focussing largely on janissary commercialisation, Kafadar cites Ömer Lütfi Barkan's observations of the early *askeri* (military) involvement in agrarian-commercial enterprise (from 1546 onwards), and the inclusion of *kul* and other members of the ruling elite among their number.[19] Whether or not these records can be linked to janissary *timar* (tax-farm) holders is a subject for further research.

In another influential work, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff in Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause? '[20] Kafadar suggests that the janissary uprisings had a greater social impact as well as military impact. In aiming to study the uprisings as a series Kafadar, in a departure from his previous work, situates janissary actions firmly within the larger overall narrative of Ottoman history in this period and, by seeking a common thread throughout the rebellions, attempts to understand the make-up of these protest groups, as well as what their motives were. In terms of official 'janissary' involvement, Kafadar grants that the rebels would have come from many different segments of Ottoman society, not just from the

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[18] Marios Hadjianastasis, 'Between the Porte and the Lion: Identity, Politics and Opportunism in Seventeenth Century Cyprus' in Marios Hadjianastasis (ed.) 'Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey' (Leiden, 2015), 139-167, 144.

[19] Kafadar, 'On the Purity and Corruption', 276.

[20] Bakı Tezcan and Karl K. Barbir (eds.) 'Identity and identity formation in the Ottoman world : a volume of essays in honor of Norman Itzkowitz', (Madison, 2007).

janissary corps.[21] Kafadar cites Ignatius d'Ohsson (1740-1807) who claims one can distinguish three different types of janissary in late eighteenth century Istanbul, these being: the soldiers, numbering around 20,000 in the capital, approximately 150,000 holders of *esame*,(pay-books) who did not perform any services and any number of what he calls *taslakçı* (pretenders).[22] Through educated conjecture it may be possible to guess which of these classifications of janissary were most likely to participate in rebellions. I suggest that the most likely candidates would be the *esame* holders, who were more likely to be the urban merchants and artisans who bought their certificates of entitlement and pay books on the black market, rendering them janissaries in name only. They could be expected to participate as they had a vested interest in janissary wages remaining punctual and in coinage which had not been debased. Furthermore, as business owners and traders in the capital they would also seek to influence domestic politics and economics to their advantage where possible and, by marching as a janissary, they could mask their more secular motives behind a martial aspect. Kafadar defines the *taslakçı* as, a 'group of pretenders.' This definition gives us a good idea as to the composition of this Janissary-affiliated social formation that had emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They "were not paid at all; they affiliated themselves with the corps for the honour, the protection, and the likelihood eventually to become a paid member."[23]

The treatment of the janissaries within Istanbul society by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet involves janissary actions being woven throughout their work on the capital's social history, showing janissary involvement in all areas of Ottoman society, from their place in ceremonial processions, to the actions of their officers. The predominant focus however is on the

[21] Cemal Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff in Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause?' in Tezcan and Barbir 'Identity and identity formation in the Ottoman World', 116.
[22] Ibid., 117-118.
[23] Ibid., 118.

janissaries as holders and wielders of power which, according to Boyar and Fleet, was often misused.

They state that "The janissaries and the *sipahi* were major players in political upheaval,[...]No sultan could run the city without taking the janissaries into account, and power in Istanbul swung like a pendulum between these two power centres."[24] According to Boyar and Fleet, this power was often imbalanced and there were periods in which sultans were more able to oppose them than others. They argue that, in many cases, it was the janissaries and not the sultans who controlled policy and politics in the city.[25] Much of the information concerning the janissaries in this work relates to violence whether it manifested as part of a rebellion, conflict between the janissaries and other groups, or even intra-janissary rivalries. The general consensus is that these uprisings in Istanbul should be viewed as socio-political events as opposed to military matters.[26] Much work has been done on the janissary integration into civilian society in seventeenth century Istanbul, notably that of Gülay Yılmaz and Eunjeong Yi.

In her doctoral thesis Yılmaz set out to examine the new urban dynamics brought about by the changes manifesting in and around the janissary corps in the seventeenth century and her work focussed on not only the changing makeup of the janissary corps but also on how the janissary presence in the wider urban population shows itself through sources. Yılmaz examines both intra-janissary conflicts and those of the janissaries with other groups within Ottoman society as well as demonstrating an increased social and economic solidarity amongst the janissaries as evidenced largely by probate registers. Her conclusion is that the changes she presents are a result of wider economic trends in the Ottoman Empire, namely the

[24] Ebru Boyar & Kate Fleet, 'A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul' (Cambridge, 2010), 90.
[25] Ibid., 93.
[26] For more on distinguishing between military mutiny and civilian rebellions in the Ottoman Empire see Jane Hathaway (ed.), 'Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire', (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002)

growth of accumulated capital and the emergence of a credit economy. [27] The work of both Yılmaz and Yi demonstrate that by the seventeenth century the janissaries were already a significant socio-economic presence within Istanbul.

This is still very much in evidence during the eighteenth century with Boyar and Fleet showing that many became artisans, stating that by 1792 40% of shops and workplaces in the Haliç area of Istanbul were owned by janissaries.[28] The authors claim that this has led to a mistaken assumption that the janissaries were guildsmen, which they argue against. They claim that the janissaries always saw themselves as janissaries, owing a loyalty to their regiments, and also that the state always saw them as janissaries and acted in line with that identity. Boyar and Fleet argue that the interests which a janissary-cum-guildsman wanted to protect were his own and not those of the guild, and that it was the position of janissary, however tenuous it may have been, that gave these men the influence to abuse their power to their own ends. Orhan Sakin agrees that being a janissary had a lot of advantages including the influence it afforded but that it also had disadvantages. He states that in the eighteenth-century janissary wages could often be three or even four years in arrears yet despite that janissary numbers kept growing. A fact that he partially attributes to the need to find work for a growing younger population.[29] Sakin further acknowledges that there was a great fear of the power that the janissaries held as an institution and that, in 1771, 30,000 names were removed from the janissary registers and that the Ottoman powers turned towards policies to discredit the corps. A policy which only continued as janissary numbers grew again under Sultan Mahmud I (1696 – 1754, r. 1730 – 1754).[30]

As referred to previously, regional studies for the Ottoman Empire are popular among

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[27] Gülay Yılmaz, 'The Economic and Social Role of Janissaries in a 17th Century Ottoman City: The Case of Istanbul', Unpublished PhD, McGill University, (2011).
[28] Boyar & Fleet, 'A Social History', 101.
[29] Orhan Sakin, 'Yeniçeri Ocağı: Tarihi ve Yasaları', (Istanbul, 2011), 59-60.
[30] Ibid., 60-62.

scholars and in addition to the work of Hickok and Barber there are several key scholars who deal with the janissaries in the provinces. Andre Raymond's work on soldiers in eighteenth-century Cairo is one of the comprehensive work to date on the integration of military groups into civilian society in Egypt during the Ottoman era.[31] Other regional areas of interest to scholars include Ottoman Cyprus[32] as well as areas of the Balkans and Ottoman Greece.[33] Anastasopoulos and Spyropoulos have probed the question of the janissaries on eighteenth-century Crete arguing that the corps should be viewed as part of widespread and diverse networks which gave their members advantages over the rest of the population through legal and financial means. These scholars suggest that janissaries were permitted to engage in trade due to the increase in their numbers creating a greater burden on the state for their salaries. By making them less dependent on their wages from the imperial treasury the state gained some flexibility and financial breathing space.[34] Anastasopoulos and Spyropoulos make clear the distinction between imperial janissaries, those assigned from and paid by the authorities in Istanbul, and the local regiments who were paid partly in coin and partly in wheat from the treasury of Crete. This distinction is important as they present the imperial janissaries as having a more privileged legal status as they could not be held accountable for wrongdoing except by their own officers.[35]

Within Istanbul Boyar and Fleet claim that military backing allowed the janissaries to trample the rights of other traders and members of the populace, which is in line with many of

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[31] Andre Raymond, 'Artisans et commercants au Caire: au XVIIIe siècle' (Damas, 1974).

[32] Antonis Hadjikyriacou, 'The Province Goes to the Center: The Case of Hadjiyorgakis,' in Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (ed.) 'Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries', (Indiana, 2016), 239-259; Marios Hadjianastasis, 'Between the Porte and the Lion: Identity, Politics and Opportunism in seventeeth-century Cyprus,' in Marios Hadjianastasis (ed.) 'Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: studies in honour of Dr Rhoads Murphey', (London, 2014) 139-167.

[33] Fariba Zarinebaf, John Bennet and Jack Davis (ed.), 'A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: The Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century', (Athens, 2005).

[34] Antonis Anastasopoulos and Yannis Spyropoulos, 'Soldiers on an Ottoman Island: The Janissaries of Crete, Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Centuries,' Turkish Historical Review, 8, 2017, 2.

[35] Ibid., 10.

the common identifiers of the corrupt, thuggish janissary. The authors also point out that a dual identity could serve men in illegal actions in other ways as, up until the nineteenth century, the police and security services were controlled by the janissary corps. However, yet again in the interests of a fair and balanced assessment, it is acknowledged that the janissaries were not the sole contributors to lawlessness in the city, devoting space to a discussion of sailors and their actions. Sailors, interestingly, were another military, or at least military adjacent group, who would have been trained for conflict in their line of work. Boyar and Fleet, without outright stating it, seem to be suggesting that men in occupations where combat and conflict were common seem to have been more predisposed towards violence and crime. This is an interpretation which is not exclusive to the Ottoman world with the stereotype of the thuggish military man being seen throughout all areas of history. When it comes to janissary identity and how this changed when the men spent more time in the city than on the frontiers, their conclusion is that the janissaries became "inhabitants of the city with a military identity but also another profession or trade."[36]

Anastasopoulos and Spyropoulos concur that the interests of janissaries became entwined with the areas in which they lived but, while Yılmaz argues for a socio-economic solidarity of the corps, they claim that the janissaries were not homogenous in this manner, owing to the discrepancies in wealth between the different ranks. They claim that what bound the janissaries together was their legal status as related judicial rights.[37] While it is entirely possible that this was a regional variation between Istanbul and Crete it is also possible that these observations represent a further shift in janissary lives between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Baki Tezcan entered the janissary debate with his 'Second Ottoman Empire' in 2010,

[36] Boyar and Fleet, 'A Social History', 101.
[37] Anastasopoulos and Spyropoulos, 'Soldiers on an Ottoman Island,' 24.

proposing a grand narrative of early modern Ottoman society[38] from the end of the sixteenth century through to the eighteenth. Tezcan compares this Second Empire to the English Civil Wars arguing that these Ottoman examples are more than simply a case of "soldiers-turned-bandits as mainstream twentieth century historiography would like us to believe."[39] Tezcan seems to belong to the camp of janissary legitimisation arguing that they had valid reasons for discontent[40] and states that, while recent historiography has argued against Ottoman decline, it has yet to be replaced by a positive narrative of social development and modernisation which is one of his aims in the current text.[41]

In relation to Tezcan's treatment of the janissaries, they are represented primarily in the final chapter of the work entitled ‘The Second Empire goes public: The age of the janissaries’[42] in which he represents them as the symbol of the new Ottoman order,[43] having charted their transformation from martial institution to a socio-political corporation in the preceding chapters. The argument that they came to represent popular opinion, as opposed to exclusively their own interests, has been echoed by other historians[44] and is a question requiring further analysis in the later discussions of janissary economics and social life (see Chapter 4). This change in what the janissaries stood for was accomplished by a fundamental restructuring of the membership, brought about by members of the lower classes buying their way into the corps. Tezcan cites their motivations as an achievement of life long ambitions, which they imagine could be fulfilled by military membership providing the first step on the

[38] Sinem Erdoğan, 'Baki Tezcan, The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010', Tarih, 2 (2010), 118.
[39] Baki Tezcan, ‘The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World, (Cambridge, 2010), 5.
[40] Ibid., 6.
[41] Ibid., 10.
[42] Ibid., 191.
[43] Erdoğan, 'Baki Tezcan', 120.
[44] Philip Mansel, ‘Constantinople: City of the World’s Desire’ (London, 1995), 225.

ladder of social advancement.[45] The main developments leading to social change, according to Tezcan, were two-fold; firstly, the growth of a monetised economy by which goods were paid for in cash as opposed to services and secondly, the emergence of a "class" of entrepreneurial soldiers who invested in their military membership.[46]

This idea of a janissary social class has been supported by several historians including Kafadar.[47] Tezcan also argues that initially Sultan Osman II (1604 – 1622, r. 1618 – 1622) had been eager to allow the janissary corps to develop into a public institution.[48] It is unclear whether or not this was due to a fear of their martial might and was therefore an attempt to distract them with a new role. In this treatment of the janissaries as the symbol of his Second Empire, Tezcan effectively exonerates them of their roles in the rebellions, claiming that they were in fact incited by their old rivals, the cavalry *(sipahi)*. Additionally, he argues that the janissaries surpassed the cavalry in their political gains during the seventeenth century, eventually becoming symbols of the *ancien régime* in the eyes of those power holders who later sought to reform and modernise.[49]

Another point made about seventeenth-century janissary status is that the gain from joining the corps at this time was more than monetary as the salary was negligible. The main appeal was likely socio-political status, contacts or mercantile influence. Tezcan however, argues that the availability of credit would be another draw[50] and, in an economically turbulent time this is plausible. Tezcan does not challenge the arguments of janissary corruption per se as he sees no question about the decay of the institution as a fighting force.[51] However, he does not view the practice of men joining the corps and never offering military

[45] Tezcan, 'Second Empire', 14.
[46] Ibid., 30.
[47] Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 116.
[48] Tezcan, Second Empire, 117.
[49] Ibid., 191.
[50] Ibid., 205.
[51] Ibid., 199.

service as a negative thing, or any kind of moral detraction, arguing that a varied membership in the corps led to better lives for all.[52]

Despite his opinion that janissary social integration is a key factor in the development of Ottoman society, Tezcan claims that it is hard to quantify their increasing involvement in non-military activities which makes it difficult to legally define them as a social class,[53] which could be one reason why historians have found it hard to disassociate janissaries from a military perception of Ottoman history. Another possible weakness in the thesis is that Tezcan admits he has shied away from discussing capitalism as it has been done so often before and would not help the understanding of the "fundamental political transformation that this book is about".[54] To conclude a thesis which builds so heavily on the concept of economic shift from service based economy to a cash-based economy with such a statement seems inconsistent.

Furthermore, the emphasis Tezcan places upon constitutionalism and absolutism, concepts which he freely admits are his own creation, has caused controversy.[55] The claim of an unwritten constitution regarding the authority of the Ottoman sultans is problematic, despite the rise of the vizier households which Tezcan argues, the abundance of Mirror for Princes literature as well as the vast amount of petitions and requests to be found in the archives is not indicative of an Ottoman 'proto-democratization.'[56] Indeed, their existence may be said to disprove such a notion. Perhaps the most problematic factor about 'The Second Ottoman Empire' is the detailed building of a seventeenth-century socio-economic-

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[52] Ibid., 206.
[53] Ibid., 202.
[54] Ibid., 230.
[55] See the critiques by Rhoads Murphey, 'Review: The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World by BAKI TEZCAN,' Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 74, (2011) 482-484; Jane Hathaway, 'Review: The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World by BAKI TEZCAN,' Journal of World History, 23, (2012) 177-180.
[56] Tezcan, 'Second Empire', 77.

political model, however controversial and flawed, then the imposing of this framework en masse onto the eighteenth-century with less depth of research into the 1700s and a seeming assumption that very little changed from the previous century.

Another way soldiers could further integrate into Ottoman society was by becoming landowners by way of *timar* grants. Land and possessions were valid capital granted to members of the Ottoman military in recognition of their service.[57] Although timars were more commonly associated with the *sipahi* cavalry there were also *timar* holders among the janissaries. Even if not awarded a *timar* themselves during their years of service, many retired janissaries chose to retire by hiring themselves out as mercenaries to guard such holdings while their owners were absent on campaign or resident in the main fortified towns.[58] Katib Evliya Çelebi (1609 – 1657) records janissaries leaving their regiments in order to qualify.[59] This, along with the bias of 'old' janissaries against the new recruits is suggestive of an intra-janissary hostility as opposed to a cross-janissary phenomenon. Such rivalries, between old and new janissaries were highlighted by Orhan Sakin who deems them perfectly natural considering the context of the time.[60]

As mentioned earlier the sales of *esame* were rife and a large section of the bureaucracy benefited from the drawing of fictional salaries. Such activities were not only immoral but a danger to the Empire as military strength was calculated based on these corrupted muster rolls. By the end of the eighteenth century out of a possible 400,000 pay chits in circulation only ten per cent represented live soldiers ready for duty. This fraud can be seen from as early in the eighteenth century as the 1730s and in 1778 the then Grand Vizier

[57] Stanford Shaw, 'History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey Volume One: Empire of the Gazis, the rise and decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808' (Cambridge, 1977), 26.

[58] Ibid., 94.

[59] Caroline Finkel, 'Osman's Dream: the story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923' (London, 2005), 210.

[60] Sakin, 'Yeniçeri Ocağı', 58.

had his career ended when it was discovered he possessed chits valuing 12,700 *akçe* per day.[61] Just to give a sense of the scale of the fraud in action here, the average enlisted janissary lived on around 20 *akçe* per day. This system where many non-combatants grew rich while ordinary soldiers went unpaid not only gave the janissaries reason for discontent and protest, but also created a system that was in urgent need to reform which was nevertheless hard to implement.[62]

Additionally, Virginia H. Aksan has highlighted that by the 1700s the janissary corps had shifted from a meritocracy where appointments and promotion were awarded to the deserving, to a system that operated more heavily upon the patronage of favouritism.[63] Sarı Mehmed Paşa (? – 1717), when addressing the condition of the corps, states the very high standard to which he feels the officers should be held. They are to be "very able in management, trustworthy and devout".[64] The theft of wages from their men is hardly a trustworthy act and is another factor suggestive of tensions between different ranks of the janissaries as opposed to between the entire institution of the janissary corps and the rest of Ottoman society. There is a lot of interesting study to be done in order to assess these tensions between janissaries. In proposing reform of the corps Sarı Mehmed advocates the appointment of an experienced veteran from among the janissaries to remedy the situation.[65] This indicates that he felt the janissary corps still had value as an institution and was considered worth reforming.

Gabor Ágoston, writing in 2011, cited a more recent wave of interdisciplinary scholarship, which critiqued the traditional periodisation of the Empire, and cites Douglas

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[61] Virginia H. Aksan, 'Ottoman Military Recruitment' in Erik J. Zürcher (ed.) ‘Arming the State: military conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925’, (London, 1999), 24.
[62] Ibid., 24.
[63] Virginia H. Aksan, ‘Ottoman Wars 1700-1850: An Empire Besieged’, (London, 2007), 53.
[64] Sarı Mehmed Paşa, ‘Ottoman Statecraft The Book of Counsel for Vezirs and Governors (Nasā'ih ül-vüzera ve'l ümera)’ Introduction, Trans., and Notes by Walter Livingstone Wright Jr, London, 1935), 110.
[65] Ibid., 113.

Howard, among others, as scholars who have argued that the decline paradigm is untrue.[66] As stated by Kelly above the decline narrative has been falling out of favour since the 1970s and so soon after this theoretical framework was debunked, so too was the concept of janissary corruption, which has been most noticeably contradicted from the 1990s onwards. In the concluding paragraph of his article, Kafadar alludes to the question of developing janissary identity through their wider involvement in Ottoman society and commerce, citing the dissolving separation between the soldier classes and mercantile elements,[67] namely, an overlap with soldiers moving into trades and artisans becoming soldiers with men working in both industries. This is the idea which has grown since the article was published and provided the alternative to the purity/corruption paradigm, instead, we see a growing integration and socialisation. It is my intention, in this work, to show how this integration is symptomatic of a wider institutional adaptation to the changes occurring in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

Most recently Yüksel Kayaçağlan has claimed that the eighteenth century can be accepted as the start of the transition between old and new as the traditional order of the Ottoman Empire was broken down by this time.[68] I would argue that, as these changes were long term institutional processes, that the breaking down of the traditional structure was part of the changes in question. Regardless, Kayaçağlan is correct in claiming that these changes affected the everyday likes of Ottoman subjects and resulted in a very different political and social structure within the janissary corps than there had been previously. [69] As with Sakin, Kayaçağlan agrees that the janissaries were affected by corruptions in the payment of their

[66] Gabor Ágoston, 'Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500-1800' Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, 12 (2011,) 287.
[67] Kafadar, 'On the Purity and Corruption', 278.
[68] Yüksel Kayaçağlan, ‘XVIII. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında yeniçerilerin politik ve sosyo-ekonomik rolleri:İstanbul Örneği’, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, Yıldırım Beyazit Üniversitesi, (2018), 1.
[69] Ibid., 1-2.

salaries leading to a diversifying in trades and, of course, the lowest ranks of the corps suffered the most from this problem. Kayaçağlan is also correct in stating that janissaries had been coexisting with the general population of Istanbul since the conquest of 1453 and that not all of the eighteenth-century uprisings were janissary uprisings. This misrepresentation, it is claimed, can be traced back to European writings on the early modern Ottomans.[70]

## Sources

The primary source material for this thesis is drawn extensively from the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives (*Başbakan Osmanlı Arşivi* hereafter BOA), situated in the Kağıthane district of Istanbul as well as some Istanbul *sharia* court records (*kadı sicilleri).* These local court records include those digitised by the ISAM library in Istanbul. In order to make the amount of primary source material manageable within the time and space constraints of this thesis, *sicils* were examined for key terminology and then the relevant entries pertaining to the janissaries were included in this thesis where they were deemed relevant to the research. The majority of the *sicil* entries contain details of janissary deaths and who was to inherit. These sources are primarily analysed in Chapter 4 of this thesis for the information they contribute, to janissary economic and financial status and involvement in the Ottoman economy. These probate entries also provide information on janissary families including the number of men who were married and any children they had. Certain other legal disputes featuring janissaries are also present and have been assessed for this study.

Registers of all kinds are frequently given comprehensive treatment and are studied as whole volumes by historians. Indeed, several have been transcribed in whole and presented as thesis in Turkish universities. I have utilised several of these sources also, they are to be found in the database of the Yök website. A large portion of my sources are drawn from *evrak* (loose

[70] Ibid., 4, 80, 187.

documents) from the BOA as I believe that these sources would benefit from being brought together and searched for trends, as many scholars have done with registers, from Ottoman archives. In a period of many changes, as the eighteenth century undoubtedly was, many occurrences may not have been considered within the remit of traditional record keeping within registers and so were recorded on loose documents and in such folios. This resulted in a wealth of untapped *evrak* evidence for eighteenth-century which I have examined for the Ottoman capital.

In addition to combing the most obviously available sources I have also examined previous works in Ottoman social, economic and military histories on similar subjects in order to gain an idea of what primary sources are available to researchers and where they would be found. This includes treasury registers and *defterleri* pertaining to land ownership as well as punishments by exile. Interestingly enough, the *mühimme defterleri* consulted did not yield any entries pertaining to the janissaries in Istanbul. This does not mean that men who held janissary status are note present in the affairs recorded but merely that they are not presenting themselves as janissaries in these matters. However, in addition to *evrak* sources from the BOA a number of *şeriye* registers contained entries pertaining to the janissaries. Much like the *kadı sicilleri* these entries mostly comprised of death and inheritance entries. Registers have long been given great importance as a source for Ottoman history, yet their value is not uncontested. For example, due to the number of *kadı sicilleri* which have survived, James Baldwin argues that these courts have been seen as more important institution in Ottoman life than they actually were.[71] Furthermore, Guy Burak, writing on seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Syria, has explored the complicated relationship between Ottoman dynastic law and

[71] James E. Baldwin, 'Islamic Law and Empire in Ottoman Cairo', (Edinburgh, 2017), 6.

Hanafi legal discourse.[72] Burak argues that there was a debate happening across this period as to the accuracy and validity of Ottoman registers as uncorroborated legal evidence. This leads to an argument that documentation from this period of Ottoman history exists to reinforce what would have been the standard practices, but it was considered important to have textual evidence in more diverse forms than simply registers. Burak also states that this debate has been overlooked by historians owing to the fact that there are far fewer written sources outlining the disagreement than for other Ottoman legal debates.[73] Building upon this argument my choice to include many *evrak* sources pertaining to a diverse range of events, and to give them due importance and attention, seems to be a wise idea. If Burak can be interpreted as saying that the sources of a period are reflective of the bureaucracy at the time, then knowing the changes that were happening in the Ottoman power structure of the eighteenth century (outlined in more detail in Chapter 3) then we may say that the record keeping in such times may be scattered. This could well have occurred as the Ottoman bureaucracy sought to refine new ways of managing records in line with the structural changes it was facing. A final primary source group that has been consulted is contemporary Ottoman writers. The Ottpol project website was invaluable for assisting in the locating of such sources as was the Yök thesis database.

From among the documents discovered I aim to offer a fair picture of the scope of the material without bias. The documents included here were specifically chosen as they are cases where I found several documents reflecting the same or similar subjects. In this way I believe that my sources are better able to reflect trends and habits, as they refer to repeated actions and events. Indeed, the primary sources I found in turn informed the structure of the

[72] Guy Burak, 'Evidentiary truth claims, imperial registers, and the Ottoman archive: contending legal views of archival and record-keeping practices in Ottoman Greater Syria (seventeenth–nineteenth centuries)', Bulletin of SOAS, 79:2, (2016), 233-254.
[73] Ibid., 235-236.

substantive chapters of this thesis. In this way I have endeavoured to allow the primary sources to dictate the secondary reading which then contextualised and informed my analysis, as opposed to the other way around. This is another reason why my primary focus is the 1730-1790 period as a great deal of materiel emerged from archive searches, especially for the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I (1725 – 1789, r. 1773 – 1789). With regards to the material from the BOA, searches were run in every classification of the catalogue with both digitised and original paper manuscripts were consulted. I reproduced many of the paper copies digitally for in-depth reading and analysis overtime. Given how prevalent janissaries were in Ottoman society in general, and Istanbul in particular, it is not surprising that the BOA archive catalogue yielded results from every classification when searched with the specification for janissaries based in Istanbul for the dates of the eighteenth century. This ranges from the classifications pertaining to military deployment, supply, payment, appointments and the personal correspondence of the sultans. Additionally, there is material on the role of janissaries in marketplace transactions as well as complaints being brought against the corps for unruly behaviour.

A great number of the documents I have chosen to include in this thesis are petitions, either by the janissaries, on their behalf, or concerning them in some other way. The importance of petitions to the understanding of Ottoman history cannot be underestimated. Nora Lafi claims that they were a central feature throughout every stage of the Empire's development and were more than just a simple instrument but were standard practice. Their significance in governing urban factions is also highlighted when she states that said governance "was achieved through negotiations, often via petitions, to secure the submission of other factions"[74] This argument is something that shall be verified by evidence presented

[74] Nora Lafi, 'Petitions and Accommodating Urban Change in the Ottoman Empire' in Elisabeth Özdalga, Sait Özervarlı, and Feryal Tansuğ (eds.), 'Istanbul as seen from a distance. Centre and Provinces in the Ottoman

throughout this thesis. If Tezcan is correct and the janissaries became more representative of wider social concerns, then using their traditional influence to petition power holders of the state on behalf of members of the population who otherwise may not have had their voices reach policy and law makers, then it is likely that petitions could reveal some suggestion of this.

Lex Heerma van Voss, writing on petitions more generally and their uses in social history, points out that in societies where petitioning became accepted practice it could then evolve to affect changes in legislation and that the right to petition could open up other rights to the population, such as the right to gather and discuss grievances from which a petition was written.[75] In this development of the right to petition we can see the criticisms levelled against the janissaries and their comrades gathering in coffee-houses in Istanbul and the orders to make them stop. Van Voss further claims that petitions can be used to find cracks and weaknesses in power, as the petitioners are often perceiving a weakening in the ruling classes and seeking to exploit it. Despite the usefulness of analysing the request and the potential motivations thereof, van Voss advises caution when assessing petitioners reminding us that many documents would have been drawn up by professional scribes or similar and as such it may sometimes be hard to distinguish what is the influence of the scribe upon the petition and what was included in the original petitioners' intent and meaning.[76]

Studying petitions sent to the sultan from Ottoman Egypt James Baldwin charts the long and arduous process of bureaucracy a petition went through, in addition to the distances petitions from the provinces had to travel, which inevitably added time to its processing. With regards to provincial petitions Baldwin claims that this act was often carried out, not in the

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Empire' (Istanbul, 2011), 73-82.

[75] Lex Heerma van Voss, 'Introduction' in Lex Heerma van Voss (ed.) 'Petitions in Social History' (Cambridge, 2002), 3.

[76] Ibid., 6-9.

hope of intervention by the imperial council, but that the subsequent court case regarding the complaint would be supervised by the provincial governor, as many of these petitions regarded private disagreements between subjects it is understandable that high government intervention would not be forthcoming. Furthermore, Baldwin mentions the existence of professional petition writers *(arzuhalcı)* who he claimed were mostly present in Istanbul and were likely to be scribes retired from government positions.[77] This will be especially significant as I have reason to believe that due to the nature of several of the petitions I shall present in this thesis, they were penned by a third party. These are all significant points to bear in mind when discussing petitions in this research, as finding documents written explicitly from the first-person janissary perspective has been a problem for this work, there will be a great deal of analysing and discussing the implications of the contents of the primary sources used here.

The range of sources available to researchers covers a wide range of Ottoman administrative departments. Here is a brief summary of the power structure of the Ottoman chancery to assist in better situating the sources used in this thesis within their context. Overall control was in the hands of an official titled Minister of Foreign Affairs (*reis-ül-küttab* or *reis efendi*). This office was exclusively an Ottoman phenomenon set up in the sixteenth century and its occupant was in charge not only of all correspondence relating to foreign affairs, envoys and embassies, but also the drafting of documents to be presented to the sultan by the grand vizier at official meetings.[78] Under him were the three offices of the chancery. Firstly, the Secretariat of State (*Beylik Kalemi*) which produced official orders known as *ferman* and *evamir,* excepting those that came under the purview of the Minister of Finance

[77] James E. Baldwin, 'Petitioning the Sultan in Ottoman Egypt,' Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 75, (2012), 499-505.

[78] Jan Reychman and Ananiasz Zajączkowski, 'Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomatics', (edited by Tibor Halasi-Kun, Berlin, 1968) (For this research the 2014 revision was consulted), 160.

(*defterdar*). This office also retained original copies of civil and military regulations *(kanunname),* as well as treaties and capitulations *(ahitname).* Secondly, the Land Registry (*Tahvil*). This office annually renewed and granted land diplomas and grants *(berat, timar, tevcih fermanı).* Finally, The Head Office (*Rüus*), this was the supply office providing for the needs of Ottoman officials. Each office included scribes, reporting officials and clerks.[79]

Additionally, the nature of janissary identity in the eighteenth century was very fluid in that janissaries were often not only janissaries but also merchants, artisans, so there is a distinct possibility that they do not always appear in documents under their "janissary" identity. Finally, I have included some European sources on the Ottoman Empire, only after much thought and careful assessment. The principal place of these sources is in the chapter upon military matters where many of the developments the Ottoman undertook in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries came from cooperation with European experts on military matters. These sources, of course, have their limitations such as a tendency towards Orientalist perceptions of the Ottomans. Also, it is unlikely that European visitors would be able to fully comprehend the Ottoman institutions and structures and therefore may very well have misidentified janissaries in their writings. The language barriers between European diplomats and travellers provide a further obstacle to accurate understanding and reporting of affairs in Istanbul in these documents. Matthew Kelly referenced the creation of idealised and homogenous views of Ottoman institutions as well as inaccurate representations of the janissaries created by what he dubs "European fetish".[80] These are shortcomings I have considered carefully and endeavoured to negotiate to the best of my ability when using the evidence of these sources in this thesis.

[79] Ibid., 165-166.
[80] Kelly, 'The Fall of Decline', 103-104.

# Chapter 1: Methodology and Research Framework

## Locating Istanbul[1]

Attempting to define the 'Ottoman City' is a daunting enough prospect but attempting to define and classify a city such as Istanbul which has so many facets, especially in the eighteenth century, adds another layer of complexity to the issue. Istanbul has passed through so many incarnations in its long lifetime being defined linguistically, religiously, ethnically as well as being defined by its construction, its location and its legend. Defining what is meant by Istanbul for the purposes of this thesis contributes to defining the boundaries of janissary activity this thesis shall assess. Furthermore, having a clear understanding of the nature of Istanbul sets the scene for understanding the context in which the janissary actions that shall be discussed took place.

In attempting to tackle the issue of defining Istanbul historians Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters collaborated and produced the volume 'The Ottoman City Between East and West'.[2] Each took one key city of the Empire to examine but first they opened their introduction by asking whether there was such a thing as an Ottoman city at all? Through an analysis of the Islamic City and Weberian theory the authors demonstrate how model building has defined urban studies everywhere and have argued that, while this can be useful, it does exclude what makes a city unique and changing. They then outline the 1960s New Urban History paradigm, which sees cities as processes and representations of specific 'types'. They quickly respond that the cities they have chosen for their study (Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul), do not conform to the model of distinct 'types' but are characterised as being

[1] For a map of Istanbul at the end of the eighteenth century see Appendix 7.
[2] Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman & Bruce Masters, 'The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul', (Cambridge, 1999).

"middle grounds" between East and West.[3] Istanbul is most commonly known as bridging between periods, that of the Byzantine and the Ottoman, as well as geographically bridging Europe and Asia due to its position on the Bosphorus. Istanbul has long been seen as a cultural melting pot with stark changes across its many districts reflecting the diverse inhabitants. In his chapter on Istanbul Eldem offers that 'contact' is probably the most accurate concept to describe the vagueness of the city's imperial identity,[4] and this is something he carries through his analysis arguing for the capitals' increased peripheralization over time due to increased 'contact' with Europe; this argument, while supported in my view, side steps the issue of Istanbul identity as an 'Ottoman' city. Having discounted 'port city', as inaccurate owing to its nature of being something added on to a larger structure, Eldem then simply swaps one version of a city being added on to a greater whole for another. We are still no closer to understanding what the blueprint for an 'Ottoman' city may be, inclusive of but not dictated by its Islamic identity. Furthermore, Istanbul poses the questions of being both an 'Ottoman' city and also and capital city, so where these two identities intersect, there needs to be an understanding of what an 'Ottoman capital city' looks like to the urban historian.

Aside from characterising Istanbul as a multicultural metropolis, what else defines this Ottoman capital? And how do we define it in the changing context of the eighteenth century? As stated above, Eldem argues that Istanbul was long dubbed a 'port city' owing to its location on the natural harbour of the Golden Horn,[5] and this was certainly the impression left on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762) in the 1700s, who would title her memoirs 'Life on the Golden Horn'. However, port cities are very often viewed as peripheral additions to a country or empire to incorporate them into the world system and as such imply a

[3] Ibid., 1-13.
[4] Eldem, 'Istanbul: From imperial to peripheralized capital' in Eldem, Goffman and Masters (eds.) 'The Ottoman City', 138.
[5] Ibid., 137.

periphery, which I would argue is not conducive with an imperial capital. Historians Eldem and Philip Mansel both agree that eighteenth century Istanbul is largely characterised by Ottoman interactions with Europe, especially France. The Ottoman's close relationship with France is a long-established fact and Eldem gives a detailed analysis of how France influenced trade and consumption,[6] while characterising the century as a diplomatic one, charting the development and history of foreign diplomatic presence in the city.

Both themes are consistent with the reduction of warfare and refocussing of priorities on the part of the Ottomans. Furthermore, being drawn to Europe instead of fellow Muslim nations was largely a convenience of geography[7] and so we can largely attribute the growing Ottoman passion for European culture during the period known as the Tulip Era to this factor. From this we can judge that eighteenth-century Istanbul was characterised by a period of adaptation to the changing world on the part of the Ottoman state. As the eighteenth century was a period of significant change, I shall aim to carry forward the image of Istanbul as constantly changing and adapting in this period, attempting not to remain constrained by a rigid framework of thought. This image of the city constantly at change and occupied by a vastly diverse populace helps us to understand a little of how and why the janissaries were able to integrate so well in Istanbul. In a population accustomed to interacting with many different cultures and groups daily the janissaries would be only one more group to live alongside.

## Locating the Janissary

What exactly is meant by the word ‘janissary’? Defining what janissary means for the purposes of this thesis is beneficial as it identifies clearly who this project is focussing on, in an institution with a diverse membership and wide range of ranks and affiliates, it is important

[6] Ibid.,158-164.
[7] Mansel, ‘Constantinople’, 190.

to be clear on this point before proceeding. In Turkish janissary is *yeniçeri*, this is a compound word of *yeni* = 'new' and *çeri* = 'troop, regiment.' This title was given to the corps when it was first formed, and the group was never renamed.

Kafadar argues that *yeniçeri* became a generic term for all *kul* in contemporary literature and later historiography.[8]The rapid expansion of the corps over time and the changing make-up of its membership makes defining the eighteenth-century janissary very difficult. Even defining the exact numbers of janissaries would be far from straightforward after 1730 as the records were kept secret even from Ottoman officials.[9] And yet we still speak of the 'order' or the 'corps' as if it was a single homogeneous entity, perhaps driven by modern notions of military organisation. As janissaries moved from their solely military charter and diversified into being artisans, traders, husbands and fathers their purposes, priorities and most certainly their identities became more complex.[10] Opinions of both contemporaries and historians regarding the janissaries vary considerably. We have already seen the image of the original 'pure' janissary and how contemporary perceptions changed over time into what has previously been perceived as 'corruption'.

Additionally, the fact that janissary numbers swelled when recruitment became more open, shows that many contemporaries throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were eager to become janissaries. Finally, it is true that the original image of the janissary in 'Western'/Anglophone scholarship has its roots in the first histories of the Middle East written the nineteenth century. These texts suffer from the fatal flaw of only using other European sources as the writer arrogantly believed in European superiority and thought that the Ottomans themselves would not have known what was of enough importance to write down. This is an argument which the amount of material in archives and libraries definitively

[8] Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 124.
[9] Ibid., 117.
[10] Ibid., 134.

disproves. However, it did lead to very generalised and often inaccurate writings of Ottoman history in the West. As has already been stated, the question of the janissaries and their corruption has been thoroughly debunked by modern scholars.

These factors must be taken into consideration alongside the more literal definitions such as janissary officers, *acemi oğlan*, Imperial Janissaries based in urban centres, localised *yerli* regiments in the provinces, *yamak* auxiliaries, those who entered the janissaries via *devşirme* and those who became a janissary by other means, such as the hereditary practices we have already covered and by the purchase of payslips. There is also a danger of civilians who socialised with janissaries to be thrown in with their companions such as the "*şehir oğlanı*" defined by Sariyannis from the writings of Mustafa Ali (1541 – 1600) as "infamous liars who gossip all day in coffee-houses with *sipahi* and janissaries and get entangled with hooligans in taverns." claiming that in the eighteenth century these same social elements would perversely dress as members of official retinues.[11] Each observer, contemporary and historical alike, would have an idealised image of what a janissary should be, and would carry this into their interactions with actual janissaries in society, whether it was the unquestioningly obedient soldier or the authoritative businessman. Another point is that, in his socially orientated analysis, Tezcan is always very specific when referring to the “army corps” and the “janissaries”, marking them as different groups.[12] The primary focus for my study is those janissaries who have already passed out of *acemi oğlan* (cadet status) or those who simply bought a permit into the corps bypassing the *enderun mektebi* (palace schools). In aiming to include the whole of the janissary identity insofar as such a thing is possible, I shall also be looking at the janissary officer ranks, including pathways to such positions and the hierarchy and changing of appointments.

[11] Marinos Sariyannis, "'Mob," "Scamps" and Rebels in Seventeenth Century Istanbul: Some Remarks on Ottoman Social Vocabulary', International Journal of Turkish Studies, 11 (2005), 5, 7.
[12] Tezcan, ‘Second Empire’, 172.

There is also the fact that janissaries closer to the imperial household would arguably have a greater grasp of up to date politics and policies, allowing their reactions to be of first importance. Additionally, modern historiography has emphasised the closeness of janissaries and the civilian population,[13] and therefore, focussing on the capital will allow ample opportunity to examine this claim. Another reason for this emphasis is that, once janissaries became local powers, such as in Belgrade for example, they largely ignored the central authority.[14] The examination by Robert Zens of Hacı Mustafa Paşa's (1733 – 1801) governorship of Belgrade clearly shows the dangers janissaries could post to centralised rule in the provinces, especially when allied with the local notables.[15] Surely this is an indicator that janissaries in certain regions had no larger designs on the central government and toppling of the traditional authority, but were merely wishing to carve out comfortable lives for themselves wherever they could. I suggest that janissaries in the provinces, especially janissaries who were not very mobile, would be different to those in the capital who were closer to the centre of power as their immediate concerns would be with their own livelihoods, this can be seen in the requests for supplies and pay examined below in Chapter 2. None of the petitions seek a change in the overall policy of supplying and paying janissaries in the provinces, they simply ask for what each individual group needs. Due to this I believe that location greatly determined the actions, goals and priorities of many of the janissaries. However, there will only be comparisons with other urban centres of the Empire as well as the provinces where it is beneficial to the overall aims of the project. This thesis focuses on adult males of the janissary corps based on those registered on the rolls and appearing in archival documentation bearing the title of ‘janissary’. While the numbers on

[13] See Tezcan, Second Empire, p. 29; Sariyannis, '"Mob," "Scamps" and Rebels.', 14.
[14] Andrew Wheatcroft, ‘Infidels: A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam’ (London, 2003). 246.
[15] Robert W. Zens, 'In the name of the Sultan: Hacı Mustafa Pasha of Belgrade and Ottoman Provincial Rule in the Late 18th Century,' International Journal of Middle East Studies, 44, (2012), 129-146.

paper may not always be the most accurate representation of janissary strength, they certainly give a good indication of how large the sector of society was that the Ottoman government recognised as being affiliated with the janissary corps at any given point in time.

## Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalism is a relatively new theory in the social sciences. It advocates the study of institutions as a way to discern larger long-term trends and has been used predominantly in political and economic scholarship. This theory is useful for this thesis, focussing as it does upon a significant Ottoman institution (the janissaries). Furthermore, this thesis aims to examine janissary reactions to, and role within, long-term processes impacting Ottoman society. Therefore, historical institutionalism is a theoretical model which aligns thoroughly with the aims of this project. Suddaby et al argue that, while institutions may not behave rationally in an economic sense, their actions are in line with the prevailing trends of their contemporary society.[16] This project shall certainly emphasise the links between the janissary corps as an institution and how janissaries related to and lived in wider Istanbul society. Amenta argues that institutions influence politics in one of two ways, they either constrain and limit possible courses of action, or they construct the means by which solutions to problems can be solved.[17]

Recently Giovanni Capoccia has taken historical institutionalism one step further arguing that initially the emphasis of the theory was on how institutions aided in structuring social and political actions but that it has now shifted, to analysing institutional change. However, he argues that the shift has not gone far enough to be wholly useful. Capoccia

[16] Roy Suddaby, William M. Foster & Albert J. Mills 'Historical Institutionalism' in Marceko Bucheli & R. Daniel Wadhwani (eds.) ‘Organizations in Time: History, Theory, Methods’, (Oxford, 2013).
[17] Ibid., 48.

believes that current theories do not fully comprehend how institutions impact upon both wider political outcomes and, most importantly, their own change and development.[18] The problem in assessing the impact of institutions upon their own development comes from the path-dependency assumption that institutions are stable parts of a moving political landscape which, I would argue, is not possible. This is particularly true for an institution like the janissaries whereby its members were so enmeshed in the interests of many different groups, from policy makers to traders and artisans. I agree with Capoccia when he argues that institutions have significant agency in the process of their own development, and this is something I hope to highlight for the janissaries. While it is true that more traditionalist and conservative elements may seek to keep institutions from reforming, the janissaries, I would argue, showed significant development and change in adapting to the changing environment of the eighteenth century.

Economist and Political Scientist Gerard Roland outlined institutional change through a fast-moving/slow-moving institutional paradigm. He argued that political institutions were generally fast-moving and that, by assessing their interactions with slow-moving institutions like values and social norms, light could be shed upon institutional change. Focussing mainly on modern economic institutions he states that, economics allow for both exogenous and endogenous enforcement of institutional norms, that is, influence from outside of the institution as well as from without the institution. The former method often relies on the involvement of a third party with a vested interest in enforcing the status quo.[19] If we apply this framework to our eighteenth-century context and cast the janissaries as the fast-moving political institution, both with reference to its members being politically active and the

[18] Giovanni Capoccia, 'When do Historical Institutions “Bite”? Historical Institutionalism and the Politics of Institutional Change,' Comparative Political Studies, 49 (2016), 1095-1127.
[19] Gerard Roland, 'Understanding Institutional Change: Fast-Moving and Slow-Moving Institutions', Studies in Comparative International Development (2004), 1-34.

institution as a whole being used as a political tool, then the domestic power structure of the Ottoman Empire take the part of the third party with a vested interest in ensuring the institution adheres to the rules set down by them. If Ottoman society as a whole is our slow-moving institution in this scenario, this is where Roland's thesis may break down as it may be discovered that changes in the janissary institution in Istanbul were predominantly reactionary, as opposed to self-initiated. That is, the changes being adaptations on the part of the janissaries to their changing environment.

## Research Framework

Aside from the historiographical trends in the field that any study should be aware of, there are several angles to be considered along with the key questions of this project. Those key questions are: 1. The purity/corruption paradigm is no longer relevant to the study of the janissaries in eighteenth-century Istanbul. This being the case can the changes in both the institutional makeup and the actions of the corps be classified as an institutional adaptation? 2. If this is a reactionary adaptation, are the janissary adaptations equal to the changing situation the men found themselves in? It will also be interesting to discover what this change in perception means in terms of a holistic view of the janissary corps at this point in Ottoman history. In this section I shall work through these key questions and present what needs to be ascertained in order to answer each one.

Firstly, how do we interpret the available evidence, as adaptation rather than in the light of the ‘purity/corruption’ paradigm? Secondly, are the adaptations made by the janissaries appropriate to the scale of the changes they themselves were faced with? These two questions will be addressed together, as not only does the answer of one inform the other, but it shall be these two questions this thesis shall endeavour to answer. I have already given a

brief overview of the Ottoman concepts of ‘purity’ and ‘corruption’ and how they have been represented in secondary literature, based upon primary documentation examined by scholars. The core issue at the heart of this question is how far can the differences between a ‘pure’ janissary and a ‘corrupt’ janissary be viewed as a moral degeneration of the institution, as opposed to social adaptation?

There is no doubt that the janissary corps underwent a great many significant changes and developments, however they are just as likely to have come from an external source as opposed to within the corps itself, in line with Roland’s ideas about historical institutionalism as stated above. The changing recruitment processes also raises the question, if these changes are manifested solely in the actions of the rank and file, what part do janissary officers play in these adaptations? Are they subject to the consequences of the changing context surrounding the corps at this time or not? If it is found that these changes occur mostly in the lower ranks of the corps, do these adaptations offer a form of social mobility previously denied to members of the janissary corps under more traditional regimes?

Additionally, with the growing socialisation of the janissaries via marriage and trade it must be explored how these new lives reconciled with the traditional janissary role and the possible influence on military effectiveness. The issue of semantics will be key in historical understanding for this topic, as previously stated, degrees of ‘slavery’ obviously meant something different to the Ottomans than it does to our modern society. The janissaries practically wore their *kul* status as a badge of honour. Aksan also touches on this point arguing that the meaning of ‘rebellion’ changed over the early modern period from an event which was a confrontation between competing authorities to a new definition by the end of the eighteenth century which cited a state of near civil war.[20]

[20] Virginia H. Aksan & Daniel Goffman, 'Introduction', in Aksan & Goffman (eds.) ‘The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire’, (Cambridge, 2007), 4.

Also, how far did external perceptions of the corps contribute to the construction of their identity that has coloured historiography? This is probably the easiest question to find evidence for as the documentation pertaining to the janissaries is largely generated by people from outside the corps. Whether it be state officials, scribes, chroniclers or European observers. While these external sources are key in understanding how the janissaries were perceived by their contemporaries and, subsequently, by historiography, if we are ever to truly understand the motives and expectations of janissary actions some attention must be given to how they perceived themselves. Their society put them on a pedestal yet still seemed to expect a meek obedience and servility that does not comply with their seemingly aloof elitism, which, by the eighteenth century would have been very deeply entrenched both in the janissary awareness of themselves and the social psyche of the Empire.

At this point we begin to address the third key question of this study. How new images of the janissaries can be constructed. This question opens up questions of janissary identity. One major problem with attempting to create a model of janissary self-perception is that first hand sources by janissaries themselves are difficult to find, though Elif Aydınlı has recently presented work upon the marginalia written in Ottoman manuscripts by readers, including janissaries, and what they revealed about the personality and tastes of these men.[21] However, on the whole most sources about them, as we have already seen, are official records written by members of the ruling elite[22] and offer their point of view. However, some educated conjectures can be drawn from historical hindsight. The janissaries were acutely aware of their military position as the sultan's highly trained and skilled standing army. Indeed, Merriman cites the janissary expectation of military campaigns every three years, as if it was

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[21] Elif Sezer Aydınlı, 'Unusual Readers in Early Modern Istanbul: Manuscript Notes of Janissaries and other Riff-Raff on Popular Heroic Narratives,' Journal of Islamic Manuscripts, 9, (2018), 109-131.
[22] Sariyannis, '"Mobs," "Scamps" and Rebels', 1.

the most natural and expected thing in their world.[23] That said, their reputation for military conformity would not match any well drilled armies of the modern era as several historians agree that they did not march in step nor drill in any kind of uniformed movements.[24] Yet another reason why they allegedly objected to the new, and what they would see as restrictive European style military drills implemented later.

Just as they were also aware that they were given their power through the Sultan[25] the idea of a kinship with their surrogate father was reinforced by the symbolic enrolment of Süleyman in the first janissary regiment of the state, as well as with the sultans mustering with the men on pay day to symbolically receive his janissary wages from the paymaster (they of course went right back into the treasury). However, Lewis argues that this was more of a publicity stunt to encourage the men to unite behind the sultan as opposed to the sultan identifying himself as one of them.[26] Yet if the janissaries took the sultan's gesture to heart they can hardly be blamed, for it was thorough even going so far as to have the sultan tattooed with the number one.[27]

Within the corps itself janissaries had very established ideas about the brotherhood and family formed among their comrades. They may not have marched to war in step, but they still displayed a powerful *esprit de corps.* The very name of the corps, *ocak,* literally means ‘hearth’ with officer designations all titled with homely imagery pertaining to mealtimes such as the *çorbacı başı* or colonel meaning literally ‘chief soup maker’[28] the corps was home and life to these men and this concept is reflected in the language. The garrisons provided an element of stability and protection as well as comfort in what was a harsh life and in later

[23] Roger Bigelow Merriman, ‘Süleiman The Magnificent 1520-1566’ (New York, 1966), 79.
[24] Horniker, 'The Corps of the Janissaries', p. 192; Mansel, ‘Constantinople’, 237.
[25] Daniel Goffman, ‘The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe’, (Cambridge, 2002), 65.
[26] Raphaela Lewis, ‘Everyday Life in Ottoman Turkey’, (New York, 1971), 36.
[27] Andrew Wheatcroft, ‘The Enemy at the Gate’ (London, 2008), 20.
[28] Horniker, 'The Corps of the Janissaries', 188.

years a period of dramatic change and so it is little wonder that the men clung to these surrogate families.[29] This, coupled with the traditional janissary privileges led to a deep conviction of corporate identity and status.[30] When it is recalled that, aside from their slave status, these men were originally outsiders taken from their native cultures and brought to a strange place it is only natural that they should seek such bonds with their fellows, and the apparent confidence, often called arrogance that they were able to display in such situations can be seen as a sign of courage in men making the best of their circumstances.

Despite the, quite correct, argument that we need to learn to appreciate historical eras in their own right and not force our own modern values upon them. Virginia H. Aksan also agrees that an interdisciplinary approach has allowed Ottoman history a broader scope and academic legitimacy,[31] and with a field so ripe for interdisciplinary work as the Ottomans it is indeed a shame to let such opportunities to promote the subject into other fields pass by. If it follows that a janissary identity is something that is created by the individual or the group as opposed to something imposed on them from external sources the early janissaries probably don't have much of a cultural identity based on their own endeavours. However, a case could be made for ample regulation, both via other members of the corps and each individual's conscience, it could also be said that they had close to unique representations in their regimental tattoos and banners which they paraded out whenever they went to war. That only leaves the janissaries lacking their own production and consumption drives as their food, clothes, money and indeed the warfare which was their occupation were all provided by the state.

Once we move into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries janissaries begin to take

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[29] Shaw, 'Empire of the Gazis', 283.
[30] Bernard Lewis, 'The Emergence of Modern Turkey' (Oxford, 1976), 134.
[31] Virginia H. Aksan, 'Theoretical Ottomans: Review An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play by Gabriel Piterberg,' History and Theory, 47:1, (2008), 109.

methods of production into their own hands, with their adoption of trades along with modes of consumption, one example of which is the frequenting of coffee houses for which the janissaries became widely known.[32] Allowing for janissaries to adapt and settle into their new ways of living over time, by the time we reach the mid to late eighteenth century, the image we should find is one of janissaries used to adapting to changes and able to navigate them. This is another reason why the eighteenth century is a good period to examine for such questions.

[32] Ali Çaksu, 'Janissary Coffee Houses in Late Eighteenth Century Istanbul,' in Dana Sajdi (ed.) 'Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century' (London, 2007), 117.

# Chapter 2: The Janissaries as Soldiers

The most obvious image of the janissaries is of their original martial function as soldiers. Military matters are also where a great deal of the allegations of janissary corruption focus. Claims that janissaries were not paying attention to military duties and training, that they were not ready to serve when required and that they were badly trained form the basis of this argument. The allegation of poor training is an interesting one to blame the janissaries for as, with the abolition of the *devşirme* at the start of the eighteenth century and no evidence of a replacement system, the janissaries could hardly be guilty of not completing training programmes which were not provided for them. Hence, the allegations of corruption levelled against the janissaries in their military capacity are at best hypocritical and at worst, completely irrelevant. This chapter shall utilise sources from the BOA pertaining to the training and military structure of the janissaries as well as provisioning the campaign and European perceptions of the janissaries. I shall also discuss the janissaries' paramilitary duties in Istanbul as policemen and firemen as well as analysing their number and wages. This shall assist in assessing janissary adaptation in the military sphere of their lives as we shall see how resources were found to support the, admittedly reduced, warfare during the eighteenth century as, even if new territories were not constantly being conquered, the existing lands had to be manned and maintained. This chapter shall also show the adaptations afforded by the inclusion of technological military advances borrowed from Europe and assimilated into Ottoman warfare. In assessing the role of janissaries as policemen and fireman this chapter shall again show how resources and funding were secured for these institutions which were vital to the health of the capital city. These sections will also show how janissaries adapted to law enforcement in a domestic environment when they were called upon to do so. In this

manner we can argue that the traditional janissary duties, moving between active battlefield and urban law enforcement, already required a degree of adaptability on the part of the janissaries. Studying janissary numbers and wages shall provide evidence for the need for janissaries to diversify and adapt owing to being unable to live, and for many janissaries' support families, on what was at best a minimal and at worst an intermittent income.

From their foundation in the fourteenth century, almost consistently up until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Empire was constantly at war, constantly expanding and the soldiers found time for little else. By all accounts their off-season barrack lives were as Spartan and regulated as the campaign seasons in the field. Overtime, with abuses entering into the recruitment processes early on, the janissaries became what was arguably a mercenary army, then a militia, the membership of which was inherited from father to son.[1] Such abuses included bribing officials to take or not to take certain boys at recruitment time. By the mid-sixteenth century records show a janissary corps 13,661 strong of whom 11,535 were Istanbul-based. Global numbers for 1653-1670 show a membership of 51,000 to 54,000 men.[2] Even allowing for a percentage of these men to be cadets and other janissary affiliates, it is still a substantial increase in membership. One possible reason for the surge in numbers is that after the Battle of Lepanto (1571), an increase in campaigns led to a rush on the instruction and induction of janissaries[3], another factor which also possibly contributed to the alleged decline in the martial ability of the corps. Despite this early boost in membership, later seventeenth century reforms saw a corps of 70,000 men (with in reality no more than 10,000 actively serving) culled to around 34,000, allegedly all fighting, ready and able to serve in a military capacity.[4]

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[1] Horniker, 'The Corps of the Janissaries', 194.
[2] Rhoads Murphey, 'Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700' (London, 1999), 57.
[3] Goffman, 'The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe', 113.
[4] Shaw, 'Empire of the Gazis', 252.

Kadır Üstün has examined the janissaries in relation to the emergence of the New Order at the end of the eighteenth century. He argues that janissary objections to the new order were not solely in aid of protecting their privilege as, in his opinion, at a time of a financial crisis, political instability and warfare, it was hard to claim the janissaries were privileged. He does however admit that the janissaries were not subjected to more traditional discipline measures because of the power they held. His argument that the janissaries were deeply embedded in wider society and so did not always resort to violence in the first instance has significant merit.[5] Perhaps the traditional overturning of janissary cauldrons could be viewed as a form of passive resistance? Üstün agrees that it is difficult for historians to distinguish between 'real' janissaries and other fakers and pretenders, furthermore he argues that contemporary Ottoman society also had this problem. If this is the case it is yet another factor affecting the accuracy of who does or does not bear a janissary title in primary source evidence. It is suggested that this confusion was one of the reasons for the increased vigilance in enforcing Ottoman clothing laws at this time.[6] Üstün concludes that what has been dubbed as corruption by historians stems from the fact that the janissaries negotiated with the state on many points according to their own unwritten codes of honour. Finally, he lays the larger question of Ottoman decline at the foot of the state arguing that "This cannot be explained away by the conventional frameworks that focussed on janissary insubordination…We have to factor in the governments' inability to transform the janissaries into an effective fighting force…"[7] Considering the fact that janissary integration into Ottoman society made them more of a citizen militia than a standing army at this time, as well as the abolition of the *devşirme* and its associated training, it is plausible to argue that the change in janissary

[5] Kadır Ustun, 'The New Order and Its Enemies: Opposition to Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1789-1807' Unpublished PhD, Columbia, (2013), 146-150.
[6] Ibid., 154-156.
[7] Ibid., 191.

identity and function was due to the absence of the state apparatus which had previously shaped and dictated their lives as soldiers. However, with the dismantling of the *devşirme* institution and calls for reduced recruitment it can be argued that the state did not feel that it needed such a substantial fighting force. Certainly, the decrease in active warfare during the eighteenth-century points to this reasoning. However, a sudden policy change in military matters takes a while to filter through the intricate Ottoman systems. Furthermore, it does not answer the question of what was to be done with the existing janissaries, nor the centuries of propaganda making membership of the janissary corps an aspirational goal for many. Such things do not go away overnight and so the result was a surplus and ever-increasing janissary population left resident in civilian areas for extended periods.

This chapter shall begin with an examination of the training and military structure of the janissaries followed by evidence regarding the provisioning of the military for campaigns and provincial assignments. I shall then discuss the traditional paramilitary roles of the janissaries as policemen and firemen in Istanbul because these was part of the original duties assigned to the janissaries during the Classical Age and as such they should be examined as part of their military roles. This chapter shall also include a section regarding Ottoman relations with Europe, especially in terms of military exchanges and perceptions. Finally, I shall explore documentary evidence regarding janissary numbers and pay during the eighteenth century. The reason the sections of this chapter have been organised in this manner is to imitate the journey of a recruit through the hierarchy of the corps in so far as it is possible.

## Training and Military Structure

Understanding the traditional military structure of the janissaries is beneficial to this thesis as, with changes in recruitment practices becoming more common in the eighteenth-

century, being able to pinpoint where these new janissaries missed certain training which would have been available in previous centuries shall show the new circumstances the janissaries were adapting to at this time.

As stated above the traditional beginnings of a janissary were recruitment via the *devşirme* system from a conquered territory of the Ottoman Empire. Once selected, the boys were then given the clothing of *acemi* (novices) and could easily be identified by the distinctive red caps. The young recruits then marched to Istanbul where they entered an immersive and comprehensive education program which consisted of both vocational and academic learning. (See Appendix 2) A few days after arriving in the capital the most talented and handsome boys would be separated and sent to one of the four main palaces. Gülay Yılmaz tells us that these boys learnt "Turkish and Arabic languages and literature, the Quran, Muslim jurisprudence, theology or law, and were given military training."[8] She details how every three to seven years the best performing candidates were sent to the Palace School to continue their scholarly education while the rest went to be soldiers.

Those boys who did not get sent to the palaces were registered as novices *(acemi oğlan)* and went through two stages of training. Firstly, they were hired out to Turkish families in Rumelia and Anatolia, being careful not to send boys back to the same areas from whence they came, and they then worked in their assigned regions for around five years. Working for these families caused the boys to learn the Ottoman language as well as Turkish and Islamic customs. Secondly, upon their return to the barracks in Istanbul they began their next round of education. Students in this system would learn horsemanship, weaponry, archery and fighting as well as Turkish (Ottoman), Arabic, Islam and the Quran as well as

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[8] Gülay Yılmaz, 'Becoming a Devşirme: The Training of Conscripted Children in the Ottoman Empire' in Campbell, Gwyn, Miers, Suzanne, and Miller, Joseph C. (eds.) 'Children in Slavery Through the Ages' (Ohio, 2009), 123.

classics, tactics and the history and theory of warfare. They also worked at general housekeeping tasks within the barracks, served on ships carrying wood and ice into Istanbul, replaced janissaries when they went on campaigns and served as night watchmen, firemen and police. When there was a vacancy in the main janissary corps, novices were promoted, and younger recruits were recalled from their Turkish host families to fill the vacancies in the novice ranks.[9] In this way numbers and promotions were managed.

The streaming processes described here largely dictated their eventual professional destinations. Those recruits who showed the greatest skill in languages and other literary arts went into training for the Ottoman civil service and could potentially end up in any number of offices or high appointments, some even becoming Grand Vizier. Those recruits with more martial prowess went into the military stream and would eventually become infantry soldiers with full membership in the corps, possibly even occasionally officer rank. Rhoads Murphey points to the need for thorough training in the technical aspects of warfare, and that this process could not be hurried if it was to be accurate and effective. Furthermore, the Ottoman state was practical enough not to want to spend the time, resources and monetary expense training recruits who showed no talent for the roles they were given, hence the careful and multi-layered streaming process. This was not only a means to garner the best of the best in terms of talent, but also a way of keeping expenses manageable.[10]

The changes to janissary recruitment did not occur overnight, Yaycioğlu argues that the seventeenth-century recruitment of Muslims into the corps occurred alongside urbanisation and changes in the provinces. He claims that any young boy who had been taught how to use a gun when firearms spread to the countryside could then be considered a

[9] Ibid., 123-124.
[10] Murphey, 'Ottoman Warfare', 43.

candidate for recruitment.[11] This shows that changes in military recruitment occurred over time in line with wider societal changes, making them reactionary adaptations to a wider changing context.

With regards to military training and having to adapt to the lack of the *devşirme* education system there are multiple documents in the military *evrak* folios from the 1790s, ordering the regular provision of funds, powder and shot for the purposes of training janissaries in the use of firearms twice a week.[12] One request breaks down the expense stating that it cost 25 *kuruş* for the bullets and a further 25 *kuruş* for the pitchers.[13] Furthermore, it is a testament to how carefully the Ottoman state was recording and managing its finances at this time that requests were only submitted and granted on a month by month basis.[14] This training is corroborated by the historian Halil Nuri Bey (? - ?), also writing in the 1790s, that the janissaries were required to drill twice a week between May and November under the supervision of their officers in the districts of Topkapı and Sadabad.[15] The number of orders concerning this indicates that it became a regular event, even on one occasion a request being put in for an extra gunpowder allowance for this purpose.[16] This indicates that a great number of janissaries were participating in this training which tells us that the corps was not ignoring its military duties and were willing to partake in professional development in this direction. It also refutes the traditional claim that the janissaries were opposed to use of new technologies in warfare, being against them as they came from the West. This has been disproved by Günhan Börekçi in his 2006 article where he offers a seventeenth century Ottoman miniature as evidence that the janissaries had been using volley fire in battle since well before the

[11] Ali Yaycioğlu, 'Janissaires, ingénieurs, et prédicateurs. Comment l'ingénierie militaire et l'activisme islamique changérent l'ordre ottoman,' Revue d'histoire du XIX$^{e}$ siècle,' 53, (2016), 22.
[12] BOA, CAS, 358, 14842, 5/12/1211.
[13] BOA, CAS, 65, 3035, 22/3/1211.
[14] BOA, CAS, 24, 1096, 8/2/1213.
[15] Seydi Vakkas Toprak, 'Nuri Tarihi (Metin – İnceleme)', Doktora Tezi T.C. İstanbul Üniversitesi (2011), 511.
[16] BOA, CAS, 358, 14842, 05/12/1211.

1700s.[17] Further evidence on such military exchanges will be addressed below in the discussion of European relations and perceptions. This documented training is also suggestive of adaptation in that, new developments in firearms were being made constantly and so the Ottoman military needed to keep their soldiers up to date in the use of current technologies. Furthermore, this shows an adaptation to the lack of *devşirme* training, new ways of training the soldiers were found.

However, in contradiction to this janissary willingness to adapt, Ottoman writer Ahmet Cevdet Paşa (1822 – 1895), in his history claims that, at the time of the New Order there was personnel requested from the janissaries and the janissaries subsequently refused.[18] It must be remembered that Cevdet Paşa was writing after the abolition of the janissaries and, as a significant figure during the *Tanzimat* worked towards the modernisation of the Empire along more secular and Western lines. As such, it can be expected that he would not have a favourable view of the janissaries. This need not be interpreted as a janissary opposition to new methods of warfare, but rather a desire to protect the community of the corps and a preference for changes within the existing institution as opposed to the establishment of a new one.

## Provisioning

The question of provisioning the janissaries on a material level, excluding their cash wages, is four-fold. They are to be fed, clothed, sheltered and to be given the requisites they need to effectively discharge their duties. This latter provisioning includes travel expenses, funding provincial assignments and providing the other necessary supplies for a campaign.

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[17] Günhan Börekçí, 'A Contribution to the Military Revolution Debate: The Janissaries use of Volley Fire during the Long Ottoman-Habsburg War of 1593-1606,' Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung., 59 (2006), 407-438.

[18] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi Birinci Cilt', (İstanbul, 2008), 358.

There are many documents pertaining to provisioning, usually requesting or granting funds and/or provisions in the military folios of the BOA as well as some from the correspondence of various sultans, the latter show a very involved approach to dealing with janissary matters on the part of several Ottoman rulers It is from these two sources I shall draw the examples discussed here.

Firstly, the question of feeding the janissaries. In 1769, a year after the conflict with Russia began, a request from a *kethüda* of the janissaries of the royal household asked that meat provisions be provided for fifty men on credit with a promissory note.[19] It could have been standard practice to manage the accounts with credit in this way however, from the financial situation of the Ottoman state and the wider Ottoman economy at the time (addressed in more detail in Chapter 4), it may be seen by some historians as a risky system. However, considering the fact that the janissaries did have close ties to the butcher's guild at this time, I believe that meat on credit would be a regular concession between these two parties. In the late 1780s there are requests found for the janissary bread rations, one requesting that two individuals have their allowances raised,[20] and another requesting the provision for fifty-nine days' worth of bread to be provided for the janissaries and artillerymen serving in the Bosphorus on the Black Sea.[21] For fortress duty providing rations in bulk makes sense, Sultan Mustafa III (1717 – 1773, r. 1757 – 1773) in 1762 granted bread rations to a troop sent, by his order, to Büyük Ada, and thence to Romania, ordering that each man be provided 28 kg of bread for the journey.[22]

Regarding the request to raise the allowance of two specific individuals, no reason is given beyond the fact that they are in service to the *ağa* and that one is an ex-*ağa.* It is

[19] BOA, CAS 381 15765, 17/M/1183.
[20] BOA, AE SABH I, 257, 17291, 3/10/1202
[21] BOA, AE SABH I, 311, 20888, 1/5/1199
[22] BOA, CAS, 64, 3011, 24/11/1175

possible that these men either found themselves in financial trouble and thus required extra support, or that they had families to support, although a member of the officer class should, in theory, have had very little trouble providing for themselves or a family. This could be a sign of financial inflation due to coinage debasement that this extra support is requested. Whatever the reason, the permission is granted for this request. What is interesting is the question of whether it is the food itself being handed to the janissaries or the funds to purchase the rations. This is discussed in a case under Sultan Abdülhamid I in 1789. A janissary barracks had burned down including some stores of food and there is a request that these be replaced. The Sultan is advised that by providing the money to buy stores, as opposed to the stores themselves, he will endear himself to the janissaries and so this is the course he takes, paying 5100 kuruş to cover provisions for 169 troops.[23] This practice of granting sums of money to meet expenses is also used for clothing allowances and requests are found for the clothing of a gunner[24], military boots for security forces[25] and extra allowances for the cost of the cloth and the labour for making janissary jackets.[26] In giving money and trusting the janissaries to use it for the authorised expenses suggests a trust between the state and the janissaries demonstrating that the corps had a good relationship with the Ottoman power structure in this matter during the eighteenth century.

Despite the fact that many janissaries now kept households of their own through marriage and children, while yet others lodged in bachelor hans, there was still a demand for the traditional barracks. In 1719 one Salih Ağa, a janissary officer was tasked with ensuring barracks suitable for habitation and, having previously been granted 100,000 kuruş, he

[23] BOA, AE SABH I, 7, 639, 10/7/1203.
[24] BOA, CAS, 323, 13364, 23/8//1156.
[25] BOA, AE SMHD I, 264, 21377, 27/2/1168.
[26] BOA, CAS, 847, 36180, 29/12/1193.

requested a received 50,000 *kuruş* more with the permission of the then Grand Vizier.[27] In October 1730 Sultan Ahmed III, upon hearing that the janissary rooms in Istanbul were in need of repair ordered that they be fixed immediately.[28] This indicates that, despite the abolition of the *devşirme* the janissaries were expected to be an enduring institution for whom accommodation was to be provided. The maintenance of barracks in Istanbul, and thus, the expectation of janissary continuity, continues into the late eighteenth century. In 1775 Sultan Abdülhamid I received a request to bring iron all the way from mines in Samako in Bulgaria to repair barracks[29] followed by further repair expenses in 1779.[30] There were further issues finding building materials the following year when an absence of roof tiles delayed the repair of some barracks and tiles had to be brought from Serbia.[31] Moving into the 1780s the recorded repairs consist of one case requesting an expense reimbursement for lumber brought from the Black Sea[32] and one where the building in question belonged to a janissary troop foundation and the workmen were to be paid after the repairs were done.[33] In 1783 a number of requests were made for recompense from the treasury to janissary officers who had outlaid significant amounts from their own finances to build and repair janissary barracks, the sums of money involved run up to 40,000 and 50,000 *kuruş*.[34] These cases from later in the century have a tendency to be examples of granting money for work already done rather than giving money for work which people say they want to do. Additionally, these tend to be repairs as opposed to the building of new structures suggesting that there was adequate accommodation within Istanbul for those of the janissaries who wished to live in the barracks. There is a report from the *Topkapı Sarayı* documents of a disastrous fire occurring in 1799 causing great

[27] BOA, CML, 12, 504, 9/2/1132.
[28] BOA, AE SAMD III, 1, 5, 18/3/1143.
[29] BOA, AE SABH I, 285, 19127, 25/9/1189.
[30] BOA, CAS, 1072, 47210, 22/12/1193.
[31] BOA, CAS, 1175, 52349, 11/1/1194.
[32] BOA, CAS, 1075, 47351, 16/5/1197.
[33] BOA, CAS 1112, 49281, 4/3/1198.
[34] BOA, CAS, 1075, 47351, 16/51197.

damage to the barracks of several regiments.[35] However, I did not find any plans or requests for repairs and rebuilding in the wake of this event. Considering the fact that recruitment numbers and wages were still high (more information below) this shows that increasing numbers of janissaries were living outside the barracks in family homes and lodging houses indicating a greater integration into wider urban society as the century wore on.

In spite of this, for a significant part of the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire was at war with its eastern neighbours, the Safavid Empire. In addition, the Ottomans encountered problems in the West as well as the beginnings of trouble in the Crimea, during the Russo-Turkish wars launched in the time of Catherine the Great(1729 - 1796, r. 1762 - 1796). Examining how military campaigns were provisioned at this time will reveal how well equipped the janissaries were to carry out their military duties, as this has a bearing upon allegations of how well janissaries performed on the battlefield at this time.

The archives contain several documents pertaining to the preparation and provisioning of military campaigns as well as providing for janissaries to carry out their traditional duties in Istanbul. An example of this can be found in 1738 when a request was granted for three janissaries from the sultan's household to travel out to meet the Persian *(Acem)* ambassador and escort him back to the city.[36]Another document, dated 1770, requests a great amount of money and personnel for what is only defined as "a journey". The petition asks for 100,000 *kuruş*, a scribe, an accountant and a treasurer to accompany a group which includes imperial janissaries, armourers, artillerymen and drivers. The document also speaks of a need for 4000 *çelenk* for the campaign.[37] These seem to be standard examples of how excursions were provisioned at this time and the state seems to be happy to supply whatever they are told is needed for these journeys.

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[35] BOA, TS MAE, 4409/1.
[36] BOA, CHR, 39, 1918, 3/9/1151.
[37] BOA, CAS, 1036, 45461, 21/3/1184 (For a copy of this letter see Appendix 4).

A request from Niş Castle in Serbia, dated 1787, shows that the petitioning soldiers not only requested a great deal of military goods, such as gunpowder, lead, bags and clothes but also makes reference to the bread and meat rations of the castle having been unchanged for a long time. The fact that the petitioners lay out the route by which the goods might be most efficiently and speedily sent from the capital to reach them[38] could be due to the implied urgency of getting these supplies out to them Alternatively it could be because sending goods through lands at war was a precarious business and the men in the provinces in question would be well equipped with the knowledge to plan out such an expedition, arguably more so than anyone resident in the capital. The response to this petition is also enclosed in a separate document which lists the supplies to be sent and reiterates the same route as was laid out in the original request in confirmation that this is how the supplies will be sent. The reply also states that while the goods will be sent on this occasion, but states that this is an exceptional situation and it will not become a regular practice to be repeated.[39] Considering the Ottoman situation in Serbia at this time the need for more supplies is not surprising.

In 1772 a request is made to Sultan Mustafa III for the amount of 720 *kuruş*. This money is to fund the travel of the Head Surgeon of the Janissaries and his five assistants into the battle zone to tend to the soldiers there.[40] Following this in 1788, there is a request made for the provision of a surgeon and an accompanying staff of five people to be brought on campaign. Their salaries are to be 6000 *akçe* each totalling 30,000 *akçe* and this all seems to be in-line with the precedent for such matters. There is also an annotation on the document confirming that the request was actioned and that the relevant papers had been sent to the Head Accountant of the Treasury for processing.[41] Again, the specific campaign the request is

[38] BOA, CAS, 692, 29056, 6/9/1202.
[39] Ibid.
[40] BOA, AE SMST III, 323, 26031, 29/12/1171.
[41] BOA, CSH, 29, 1402, 27/4/1202; BOA, CSH, 14, 679, 12/5/1202.

being made for is not made clear, but it is likely to be for either Russia or Persia.

Another case took place in 1791 and is a request for janissary requisites to be sent to Varna in Bulgaria. This document focusses largely on the logistics of sending the supplies and the official channels of customs through which any goods sent by sea would pass.[42] It is natural that supplies to Varna be sent by sea as it is a coastal town. This request comes at a time when the Bulgarians were a few decades into a cultural awakening, which historians have called the National Revival, some even calling it the Bulgarian Renaissance. In essence this was a growing sense of the Bulgarian identity which came via a cultural awakening and resulted in the ousting of the Ottomans in the nineteenth century and the creation of the Bulgarian nation. Perhaps the janissaries stationed there were encountering hostility from the local population and so were having trouble supplying themselves from local sources, hence the large request sent to Istanbul. The next document from this collection is dated 1738 and is a request for equipment and fodder money for janissary artillerymen, called *süratçı* for their speed. Again, the annotation is present and again it confirms that the money for fulfilling the request has been granted.[43]

From the documentary evidence regarding the support and provisioning of the janissaries, we can see that they were still an enduring institution and drew a great deal of material and financial support from the state. That they continued to receive provisions in agreement with the traditional janissary charter indicates that the state felt that they were still fulfilling useful functions in line with their original purpose and function. However, it was not only from official state channels that the janissaries sourced their provisions. Aside from utilising their ever-expanding networks they also received gifts such as in 1770 when an

[42] BOA, CAS, 173, 7558, 29/5/1205.
[43] BOA, CAS, 922, 39847, 29/11/1150.

animal driver gave sixty-five horses to the imperial regiments.[44]

Unfortunately, not all dispatches from the battlefronts were as simple to deal with as requests for supplies. In 1778 a collective petition came from military personnel in the Ukraine detailing the disobeying of the Sultan's order by one Kul Kethüda Hasan Ağa. Hasan had allegedly captured twenty-two janissary deserters and was bringing them to be imprisoned when the captured soldiers' fellows attacked. Several soldiers were killed, and their bodies placed before the jail leading to the release of the captured deserters. Hasan Ağa himself was killed and after a conflict lasting an hour and a half the death toll rose to include more soldiers, officers and army doctors.[45] The fact that soldiers deserted and that their fellows were willing to come to their aid supports the claims that the janissaries were becoming dissatisfied with long military campaigns and wished to use their time otherwise. Being called away on campaign would be more of an inconvenience to a janissary with a family and a job whom he had to leave to fend for themselves than for a janissary of the earlier periods who remained largely single and exclusively occupied by military matters.

## European Perceptions

The argument that many of the reforms and developments in the Ottoman military came from Europe in the eighteenth century has been called the borrowing thesis. Firstly, it has been applied to the *devşirme* levies in the matter of personnel recruitment for the militia. The argument that boys from conquered lands such as Greece and Eastern Europe can be classified as being taken (or 'borrowed') from other cultures. Secondly it has been applied to the question of military technology, tied into the Military Revolution debate. This is a body of scholarship in which the Ottoman Empire is not very frequently represented. For these

[44] BOA, AE SABH I, 163, 10868, 6/1/1184.
[45] BOA, HAT, 26, 1270, 30/5/1192.

reasons, an assessment of the Ottoman relationship with Europe, particularly concerning military matters including the janissaries, is beneficial to this thesis.

The question of recruitment from foreign lands into the janissary corps does not really apply to most of the eighteenth century due to the discontinuation of the *devşirme.* Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erikson argue that, after the growth in numbers of the *kapıkulu* regiments and the abolition of the *devşirme*, there was little to no socio-ethnic differentiation between mercenaries and the soldiers. Furthermore, the authors claim that this often served the ambitions of the mercenaries seeking membership in the corps.[46] The changes in recruitment at this time led to the sons of janissaries *(kuloğlu)* getting preferential admission into the corps, with their numbers being made up by *kul karındaşı* (brother of the corps) sometimes also called *yamak* (apprentice). They were allegedly promised full janissary status after three years if they kept a good record of service. The first thing to change was the *acemi oğlan* status. There was no need to send native Turkish speakers and practising Muslims out to apprentice with Turkish families and so this decreased the training period of new janissaries, from between five to six years to one or two years.[47]

Concerning technology, it is most usually the eighteenth century that is held up as an example of Ottoman technological deficiency and it is easy to understand why this is the case. After defeat at the hands of the Austrians and the humiliating Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 the Ottoman presence in central Europe was greatly diminished due to territorial losses and the new frontiers remained difficult to define and enforce. As can be seen in the writings and actions of contemporary Ottomans, the need for military reform was widely acknowledged. The first step towards achieving this reform was acquiring the personnel with the relevant

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[46] Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erikson, 'A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Ataturk', (Oxford, 2009), 93.

[47] Ibid., 90-91.

knowledge. With it's multicultural, multi-ethnic and generally tolerant society, the Ottoman Empire had long welcomed immigrants, especially those with artisan skills and had proved a good prospect for many Europeans seeking alternative opportunities.[48]

Despite opposition from the more conservative elements of Ottoman society, significantly the janissaries and the *ulema*, Sultan Mustafa III began recruiting European military men to begin reforming the Ottoman army as well as ordering the founding of new Academies for Mathematics and the Sciences. These reforms were continued during the reign of his successor, Sultan Abdülhamid I, with a continuation of the influx of foreign military men and engineers, among whom was the Baron De Tott (1733 – 1793) who arrived in Istanbul in 1769 and began working for the Ottomans right away. After playing a major role in building fortifications for the Russo-Turkish wars, De Tott was commissioned by the Ottoman government to cast new field artillery for their army's use.[49] However upon arriving in the Empire he discovered that no foundries the Ottomans had were up to the task and so first he employed himself building a modern foundry, the impact of which was not as great as he hoped. He recounts this in Volume Two of his memoirs stating that "the Foundaries which they already had were useless;...and the metal...was not hot enough when it reached the Moulds; the improper make of which added yet another defect to the Pieces they produced."[50] In his Memoirs, De Tott is very critical of Ottoman methods of resource management, suggesting that he did see the Ottomans as lagging behind Europe in military development as they seemed to have no idea, even how to finance and manage a decent foundry. "The funds intended for the Artillery were spent...and it was with difficulty that the necessary supplies

[48] Goffman, 'The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe', 169-188.
[49] Vedit İnal, 'The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Ottoman Attempts to Catch up with Europe.' Middle Eastern Studies, 47 (2011), 735.
[50] Baron François De Tott, 'Memoirs of the Baron De Tott Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea Volume 2', 1786. (Forgotten Books, 2012), 114.

were obtained for what was acknowledged to be more useful."[51]

These condemnations of De Tott can be further examined by using the model presented by Keith Krause on the diffusion of military technology. This model has three tiers of diffusion; the first is a period of rapid innovation occasioned by some new discovery, in this case the gunpowder revolution of the fifteenth century. Secondly this innovation is exported by the second tier, primarily through the migration of skilled workers to other nations much in the same way De Tott came to the Ottomans. The third tier of this model consists of producers who manufacture and copy the now existing technologies but do not possess the underlying processes of innovation or adaptation.[52] The Ottomans belong to this group, and arguably had always fit in here as, due to the long history of European migration to the Empire this was not necessarily a radical phenomenon in De Tott's time. So, the Ottomans had not dropped a level in the process of military adaptation, rather it is due to the comparison of the Ottomans, third-tier producers that they were, to the first-tier innovators that creates the image of inferiority and decline which subsequently permeated writings on Ottoman military history.

Prior to the eighteenth century the Ottomans had been able to besiege and capture major cities as well as prevail in naval warfare, so what had changed? Well, in terms of the Ottomans borrowing and adapting practices from other places, not much. I would argue that the great successes at sea were due in no small part the relationship the Ottomans forged with the Barbary corsairs in previous centuries, even taking the (in)famous Barbarossa (1478 – 1546) into their navy as an admiral. Originating in the nomadic horsemen tribes of Anatolia, the Ottomans had a legacy of being skilled in combat and raiding on wide open land. However, sieges and fighting in large urban areas was something the Empire had to learn and

[51] Ibid., 178

[52] Keith Krause, 'Arms and the State: Patterns of Military Production and Trade' (Cambridge, 1992), 30–31. (For a diagram version see Appendix 1).

develop as time passed. There is also the question of the military revolution, a movement which scholarship tells us began in Europe before spreading. The developments resulting from this revolution also explain why the Ottomans brought in European consultants, such as Baron De Tott, to work with them as opposed to contractors from elsewhere. Yet again, this could also be a question of convenience and opportunity arising from increased trade and diplomatic relations with Europe. The Ottoman military, like most aspects of the Ottoman identity in all areas, is perhaps best summarised by Fernand Braudel: "At first sight, indeed, every civilisation looks rather like a railway goods yard, constantly receiving and dispatching miscellaneous deliveries."[53] This is exactly the image that can be found when observing Ottoman developments and identity creation.

Norman Itzkowitz has argued that most of the earliest Anglophone histories written on the Ottoman Empire are flawed due to the absence of native source material and reliance on the writings of contemporary Europeans resulting in the erroneous stereotypes of modern historiography.[54] Though it must be noted that scholarship has progressed considerably since the works Itzkowitz discusses. However, in light of this, and the argument that the increasing westernisation of the Empire in the eighteenth century was a key catalyst for many significant events, I would like to briefly examine a few of the European eighteenth century interpretations which led to the initial misconceptions and confusions over janissary status.

One of the most popular European sources for the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire are the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife to the British Ambassador, these sources also afford us a view of the Ottoman military in general, and the janissaries in particular, from a civilian perspective as opposed to De Tott's technical and professional observations. Lady Montagu was a prolific letter writer and corresponded with friends back in England on every

[53] Fernand Braudel, 'A History of Civilisations' (London, 1993), 29.
[54] Norman Itzkowitz, 'Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities', in Tezcan and Barbir (eds.) 'Identity and identity formation in the Ottoman World', xx.

leg of her journey to and from Istanbul as well as keeping duplicate copies of her correspondence for her own records. Writing from Belgrade on 12 February 1717 en route to the Ottoman capital she tells her friend Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) that the city is " ...strengthened by a very numerous garrison of their bravest janissaries, commanded by a pasha seraskier (i.e. general). This last expression is not very just, for, to say truth, the seraskier is commanded by the janissaries who have an absolute authority here, not much unlike a rebellion which you may judge...".[55] Her opinion of Ottoman power and discipline is not improved by her experiences in the former capital of Adrianople (Edirne) from which she writes "The government here is entirely in the hands of the army and the Grand Signor with all his absolute power as much a slave as many of his subjects, and trembles at a janissary's frown."[56] It is worth noting that Lady's Mary's writings on the relations of the janissaries and the domestic power structure would likely have been influenced by contemporary European views of Oriental absolutism. Lady Mary also recounts one evening when she had wanted pigeon for supper and, upon being unable to procure any from the *kadı* who had none, the janissary entrusted with the errand flew into the rage and "in the height of his zeal for my service" as Lady Mary puts it, locked up the man and offers her his head in recompense.[57] Despite Lady Mary's negative judgements César de Saussere (1705 – 1783), a Swiss gentleman who travelled out to the Ottoman Empire with the British Ambassador Lord Kinnoull (1689 – 1758) in the 1730s observed “Les Francs ne voyagent jamais par terre en Turquie sans avoir un Janissary avec eux, crainte s'etre insulté par quelques canailles.”[58] So brutish and violent the janissaries may have seemed to the Europeans, but they were certainly

[55] Letter written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Belgrade, 12th February 1717 in ‘The Turkish Embassy Letters Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’, (ed.) Malcolm Jack (London, 2011), 52.
[56] Letter written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Adrianople, (modern Edirne), 1st April 1717 in Ibid., 66.
[57] Ibid., 68.
[58] (The Franks never travel by land in Turkey without a Janissary with them for fear of being insulted by some scoundrels.) Nigel & Caroline Webb, ‘The Earl and his Butler in Constantinople’ (Rutland, 2006), 29.

seen as the preferred method of protection.

Baron De Tott mentions the tale of Montagu and her janissary with the pigeons in his 'Memoirs'. He suggests that it was more likely that the janissary grew tired of searching for pigeons and, having been dismissed by the *kadı*, lost his temper "at the demands of the female traveller, he may have taken upon him to ask, if he should bring the Cady's head?"' De Tott also argues that this statement was probably delivered with an attitude of impatience thus showing more contempt for Montagu herself than the *kadı*. The Baron concludes that Montagu's misrepresentation of the event was due to the inaccurate translations by her *dragoman* interpreter who would most likely have been diplomatically trying to avoid giving offence to her.[59] By these means the Ottomans balanced and negotiated their relationship with Europe and Europeans within their borders during the eighteenth century and the janissaries, in their military and guard roles, were a key aspects of that relationship.

## Paramilitary Duties

### 1. Policemen

A common role undertaken by janissaries when they were not on campaign was that of policemen. As this was a traditional role assigned to the janissary corps it is not surprising that the documentation I shall present in this section, and the following section on the janissaries as firemen, comes again from the military folios and sultanic correspondence available in the BOA. Operating under the authority of the Istanbul Janissary Ağa, these janissaries were responsible for law enforcement in the capital city. This involved the division of the city into districts with each district being assigned a company to police it. Companies held each district one year at a time on permanent rotation through all markets, streets and alleys. Two corps of

[59] De Tott, 'Memoirs Vol 1', 17-18.

detectives were also supplied by the janissaries for the prevention and punishment of crime as well as to preserve order and decorum. The success rate of these detectives in the retrieval of stolen goods has been attributed, by Raphaela Lewis, as being due in part to their connections with the guilds of thieves and other members of the Ottoman criminal community. Additionally, these policing duties were taken up by apprentices and trainees during campaign seasons.[60]

Needless to say, that this afforded the men in question a great deal of power in their interactions with the citizens of Istanbul as well as with other members of the domestic power structure. Betül Başaran has argued that the policing of Istanbul was a unique case given its status as capital. She describes how Istanbul and the three adjoining areas of Galata, Eyub and Uskudar were split into several different administrative districts for the purposes of policing and that senior military officials and janissaries oversaw public order in Istanbul. The Grand Vizier and his deputy oversaw the Janissary Ağa and his deputy, while other senior officials assisted in overseeing the various districts. Başaran does warn that this does not correspond to a hierarchy as cleanly as we may like, these roles did not always have firmly defined boundaries and often operated independently of each other.

However, it was the duty of these officials and their retinues to work with the judges and the market inspectors to ensure order and enforce judicial decisions. Lewis claims that the senior officials did not have the authority to determine punishments, but did have the authority to inflict punishments as stated in the official regulations.[61] This is somewhat contradicted by Fariba Zarinebaf, who states that the police would sometimes sentence the

[60] Lewis, 'Everyday Life', 83-84.
[61] Betül Başaran, 'Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century', (Leiden, 2014), 44-45.

accused without trial.[62] Being a police officer implies a certain level of trust and responsibility, the courts and other officials would have to trust the accounts of the janissary police officers as to the facts of a case or an arrest. Zarinebaf further describes how arbitrary the powers of the police were and claims that they had the authority to raid public places merely upon suspicion and did not have to rely on collective testimony to break into a property. She also argues that the records show how arbitrary arrests were, with cases being recorded either as sketches, or on single sheets of paper with very little information as to the name, age, date or place of birth and so on of these involved.[63]

This observation upon the state of the records is something that I can corroborate with my own findings as in the documents I shall discuss, very little of this kind of information is given regarding the people involved. The court system, according to Zarinebaf, was supposed to operate as follows: when a lawsuit was presented by the victim or a police officer, the judge would then carry out an investigation and recommend a sentence. However, in reality, the courts did not follow clear guidelines regarding which cases were to be tried and which were to be convicted without trial. This would largely depend upon who the plaintiff was or the identity of the official who had made the arrest.[64] In the police courts[65] however, the police prosecuted cases against public order and decency.[66] There are two such moral issues which arise frequently in the archives, prostitution and the degenerative influence of wine-houses.

Firstly, I shall examine the issue of prostitution. Galata had long been the 'red light' district of Istanbul, but the vice trade did spread out of Galata over time and this led to

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[62] Fariba Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment in Istanbul 1700-1800' (London, 2010), 146.
[63] Ibid., 107.
[64] Ibid., 74, 76.
[65] An institution separate from, though often heavily influenced by sharia courts. For more details see Lauren Benton, 'Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History 1400-1900' (Cambridge, 2002), 102-114.
[66] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 162.

increased interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim residents of Istanbul. As previously mentioned, the police had the authority to enter properties at will. This included locations they deemed suspicious. Furthermore, they were free to enter at night-time any property which came under suspicion of prostitution and the prostitutes could be arrested.[67] We find one such case in the archives, which details two janissaries arresting a prostitute in the Haffaf Bazaar in 1800 while she was in the middle of intercourse with a client. The document details her being taken to the police station, but then later her pimp and his son followed the party to the station. There they engaged in a violent physical altercation with the police officers, after which they took the woman and fled. It is entirely possible that this woman had been brought in upon her or her pimps' refusal to pay a bribe, such practices being commonplace in many cases. Furthermore, it is possible the woman was released after a show of an altercation; however, this is something there is no evidence for and is only conjecture. One would have to be looking to find fault with the janissary policemen's conduct here. That they allowed the woman to be taken from them does seem strange, but it is always possible that they had been overpowered and that the men brought extra help to free the woman, however this is not specified, and it does seem strange that two men could physically prevail against a whole station of janissary police. The conclusion was that the decision was made to banish these criminals based on these events and following complaints from their neighbours in the bazaar.[68]

Banishment was a very common punishment for prostitution and most other instances of moral misconduct in eighteenth century Istanbul. Banishment often came after complaints from other members of the community. The women were often placed under the control of naval officers who transported them to island towns in Anatolia, Bursa was a particularly

[67] Ibid., 90.
[68] BOA, CZB, 2, 75, 12/8/1214.

popular banishment destination. Zarinebaf, referring to the disorganised system of recording prostitution arrests by the police, suggests that a simplified system of record keeping for prostitution cases had emerged in eighteenth century Istanbul that was practised by the police and was different from the Islamic court records.[69] Another case of 1714 details prostitute named Ayşe, who allegedly had some mental difficulties and who had been involved in the death of her client, a janissary standard bearer. Again following complaints from her neighbours about her behaviour, she was banished to Bursa.[70] Zarinebaf, in her analysis of the above case, suggests that no trial for murder occurred as the victim's family did not press a suit and it was also likely that this was a case of self-defence against a violent janissary, possibly he had been her pimp. It is equally likely that the janissary's family did not wish to make a public scene where it would become widely known that their relative had been involved in such an affair, due to the shame and social stigma associated with it. Zarinebaf goes on to say that banishment to Bursa was a common sentence for prostitutes who could, if penitent, return to their former homes upon the petition of a moral guarantor, usually a local imam.

Interestingly, she goes on to say that sailors and janissaries were often the most common clients of prostitutes[71] and yet in the case from 1800 we see janissary policemen arresting the woman and bringing her to the station. In the absence of evidence claiming that the janissaries had a personal grudge with the woman in question or her men, this case then, details janissaries behaving contrary to the norm expected of them. Scholars Fikret Yılmaz, Marinos Sariyannis and James E. Baldwin have all studied prostitution in the Ottoman Empire during various centuries and all have commented upon the context of Islamic law as to why the punishments administered seem to be less severe than may be expected. The argument is

[69] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 168, 108.
[70] BOA, CZB, 2037, as referenced in Ibid., 86.
[71] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 86-87.

that Hanafi Islamic Law classifies prostitution as adultery, the priority being the preservation of marriage and the property of the womans husband. As many prostitutes were unmarried their transgressions were not treated as harshly.[72] It is also a mark of the confidence which women in the Ottoman Empire felt that in the case examined by Yılmaz the woman in question brought a lawsuit against the men who assaulted her.[73]

Sariyannis comments upon the nature of sources regarding prostitution claiming that female delinquency seems better represented in narrative sources as it may have seemed more scandalous in the eyes of Ottoman writers. He also describes how prostitution cases are rare in *kadı sicils* as none of the parties involved would have anything to gain by going to court.[74] Considering the fact that my examples in this chapter came from *evrak* documents in the BOA and not court registers this is something I concur with. Sariyannis also finds a 1565 case concerning prostitution by the wife of a janissary while her husband was away on campaign, stating that her husband had to lock her up whenever he returned home. On the flip side Sariyannis also mentions janissaries as pimps, referring to a case where a woman was brought to meet men " by an *acemi oğlan* named Ali".[75] Baldwin concurs that punishments were usually less severe than traditional Islamic law prescribed, lashing and stoning not being seen in the *sharia* court cases he examined leading him to conclude that punishments meted out had more to do with local custom than anything else.

Another fact which made it hard to make convictions for prostitution stick was the requirement of at least four male witnesses who have seen penetration occur[76]. This could be a reason why the janissaries allowed the prostitute from Haffaf Bazaar to be taken from them,

[72] See Fikret Yılmaz 'The line between fornication and prostitution: the prostitute versus the subaşı (police chief)', Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 69 (2016), 249-264; Marinos Sariyannis, 'Prostitution in Ottoman Istanbul late Sixteenth – Early Eighteenth Century', Turcica, 40 (2008), 37-65.
[73] Yılmaz 'The line between fornication and prostitution', 250.
[74] Sariyannis, 'Prostitution in Ottoman Istanbul', 38.
[75] Ibid., 54, 58.
[76] James E. Baldwin, 'Prostitution, Islamic Law and Ottoman Societies', Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, 55, (2012), 118-123.

knowing that going through the formal legalities would be a long and arduous process to a likely unsatisfactory end. Baldwin also examines prostitution in relation to marriage and argues that the payment from the client caused an ambiguity as it could be contrasted with the payment of a dowry for a wife, so while prostitution was still considered illegal there was the concept and practice of payment serving as a dowry and short-term sales of a woman after which the client sold her back to her procurer at a lower price. Ottoman jurists seemed unwilling to impose the harshest penalties in situations where any potential for ambiguity existed.[77] The Janissary Ağa was called upon to intervene in a matter of sexual morality in 1786 following a petition from the Chief Rabbi. The petitions demanded an imperial order to stop musicians from going into homes when husbands were absent and having sexual relations with women there. The Sultan orders the Ağa along with other officials to attend to this matter and stop this from happening.[78] Other duties of the Ağa regarding policing included the stationing of guards when crimes had been committed, as was the case in 1796 when Sultan Selim III approved the posting of janissaries in a market where robbery had been a problem.[79] In April 1789 Sultan Abdülhamid I gave a report of suspected sedition on the part of some vagabonds to the Janissary Ağa and ordered him to deal with the situation. These men had allegedly been speaking treason in the marketplace[80] and so this matter fell under the policing authority of the Istanbul Janissary Ağa.

However, there is a suggestion that the janissaries may have taken the role of moral policing beyond the simple boundaries of suspect, investigate and arrest. On a Wednesday morning in 1764, witnesses claim to have seen two janissaries painting tar into the door of a house belonging to Hacı Hüseyin which resulted in all parties involved being sent to the

[77]Ibid., 125-136.
[78] BOA, CADL, 26, 1533, 11/14/1200.
[79] BOA, AE SSLM III, 422, 2416, 29/12/1210.
[80] BOA, AE SABH I, 352, 24626, 10/7/1203.

police station.[81] There is nothing further detailed in the document, so we have no way of knowing how this case was resolved. However, the painting of tar onto the door of a house *(kapıya katran sürme)* was an action that implied the women resident in the house were of low moral character and most commonly sexually promiscuous. It was, indeed, tantamount to an accusation of prostitution. The fact that this happened at all would be shameful, but to the house of a *Hacı* (someone who had completed the Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca) it would be even more damaging to the good reputation and status of the household. It is not clear who the woman was who was being targeted by these actions nor why. It could have been Hacı Hüseyin's wife, daughter or any other female member of the household.

Additionally, it is not certain whether the janissaries who painted the tar to the door were police officers or not, nor is it clear whether the case went to trial. The janissaries in question could have been criminals, possibly bearing a grudge against some member of the household for some reason. Regardless, the janissaries were either attempting to slander the family's name or saw themselves as the distributors of social shaming punishment and guardians of morality. We know from cases of *kapıya katran sürme* in Konya in the earlier parts of the eighteenth century that having this action performed against an individual or their household was a great disgrace and carried a heavy social implication.[82] So looking at the case above, when we consider that the house in question belonged to a man with the title '*Hacı*' this would be a double disgrace to fall upon such an allegedly respectable and godly household. Without knowing the conclusion of this case, it is hard to tell if these janissaries were simply participating in a social shaming exercise, or if they were actually upholding and guarding public morality in the traditions of their time. It is not stated whether or not the house's inhabitants were in fact guilty, or if the individuals involved had a personal grudge

[81] BOA, CAS, 1132, 50289, 2/5/1178.
[82] Cemal Çetin, 'Anadolu'da kapıya katran sürme vak'aları: Konya Şer'iye Sicilleri Işığında Hukukı, Kültürel ve Toplumsal Boyutları (1645-1750)' Turkish Studies, 9 (2014), 133-156.

against the *Hacı* or members of his household and so were seeking revenge.

As expressed by the reported cases, there are fewer which pertain to Jewish or Christian prostitutes and this is attributed to the fact that these communities were largely self-policed on moral issues, unless an offender crossed the boundaries of the religious communities and refused to repent the action.[83] Such actions were taken seriously with a married women in 1615 needing to bring eight witnesses to court to testify to her good character after suffering harassment as a consequence of her door being tarred.[84] Fikret Yılmaz states that Ottoman neighbourhoods were not places for privacy with the community playing an active role in judicial proceedings. He argues that the nature of Ottoman neighbourhoods caused everyone to be involved with and have opinions upon the lives of everyone else[85], and this is something we can see in our cases here.

The second moral societal issue the janissaries were prominently called upon to address was that of alcohol. This is a complicated issue for the janissaries, as the budgetary crisis of the eighteenth century led to problems with their wages, wages which were largely paid from the taxes on coffee and wine.[86] As a general rule, taverns were operated by non-Muslims as *Sharia* law banned the sale and consuming of alcohol, however the non-Muslim population of the city were under no such restrictions and indeed the Byzantines had been famous for their drinking and carousing. In terms of taverns as centres of vice, Ottoman tolerance and compromise often allowed the vice trade to be regulated, we have already seen how those guilty of prostitution were leniently dealt with. Evliya Çelebi in the seventeenth century, commented that he only observed men and women being prostituted in the taverns of Galata, and that said women did work out of sites along the Bosphorus, such as Beşiktaş, but

[83] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 92.
[84] Sariyannis, 'Prostitution in Ottoman Istanbul', 40.
[85] Yılmaz 'The line between fornication and prostitution', 251.
[86] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 62-63.

that male prostitutes were not so unusual in taverns being as they were male spaces. As previously mentioned, many neighbourhoods were becoming more culturally mixed over time, add to that the fact that moral boundaries had relaxed significantly in the eighteenth century and alcohol was becoming a problem. Taverns, (like coffee-houses), were seen to attract and accommodate the criminal classes, which can be viewed as a reflection of the economic situation for many members of the Ottoman working classes. There is also a crossover with prostitution, as taverns were seen to be male spaces, yet often prostitutes of both sexes were plying their trade in these venues. Zarinebaf argues that this was often a factor in their closing as she states, "From time to time, the complaints of residents led to the investigation and closure of taverns."[87] However, much of the law against alcohol banned the handling, selling and consuming of it by Muslims, yet the non-Muslim citizens of Istanbul were still to be accommodated. So, the closing of wine-houses could have had just as much to do with the taverns as venues of prostitution as with the availability of alcohol in such places.

The location of taverns in non-Muslim areas, and the fact that they were run and staffed by non-Muslims, made them more acceptable to the Ottoman authorities, although it was possible for non-Muslim tavern owners to run into legal trouble for selling alcohol to Muslims.[88] This came to a head during the reign of Sultan Selim III, well-known as a reforming Sultan. He sought to revive the moral status quo which had deteriorated owing to the neglect and corruption of officials. This would be achieved by thorough investigation and reform of all inns, taverns, baths, markets and bachelor accommodations in the city.[89] This culminated in a ban being issued in July 1791 which forbade non-Muslims from selling to Muslims in taverns. All the taverns in Galata and Istanbul were to be closed and converted

[87] Ibid., 75, 101, 105.
[88] Ibid., 101.
[89] Başaran, 'Selim III', 98.

into regular shops.[90] Two documents issued in 1791 detail the assignment of 2165 *kuruş* to the Janissary Ağa for him to use in the closing of the wine-houses which he is to oversee. The reason given is that they had become places of bad moral character.[91] In July 1791 a further document states that this amount was given monthly for the closing of wine-houses and that the process involved the treasury granting the money to the Sekbanbaşı who then distributed it. The Sekbanbaşı is requesting the money for the current month in this document.[92] This account of the job being a monthly task suggests that either there was a very great number of wine-houses to be closed or, more likely, that wine-houses promptly reopened as soon as possible after being closed down thus creating a cycle. The closing of the wine-houses was a moral issue for the religious elite just as they were safeguards against social dissent from a political angle, but official bans and government closures were not always successful since many neighbourhoods were mixed, and many people would make alcohol at home and/or smuggle it.[93] The issue of alcohol emerges again in 1799 when the Janissary Ağa is ordered to close five wine-houses in Davudpaşa and to pour all alcohol seized out into the street, presumably to make a very public statement.[94] The issue of wine-houses seems to be not unlike the changing legality of coffee throughout the Ottoman period.

Other penalties that may be imposed in similar cases to those we have addressed here include fines, though what are called fines in the Ottoman context could very well be disguised bribes. These were usually the result of negotiation, indeed, the state preferred fines over corporal punishment for crimes such as drinking and prostitution, as the income largely funded the officials. In Istanbul the fines were not fixed, and this introduced the potential for

[90] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 105.
[91] BOA, CBLD, 98, 4878, 29/1/1206; BOA, CAS, 1139, 50623, 27/5/1206. (It is not clear whether or not these documents refer to the same amount and the instance has been copied into a second document, considering that the documents are dated months apart it is also likely that the order was given for two amounts to be drawn from the treasury, both 2165 kuruş.)
[92] BOA, CBLD, 124, 6196, 29/11/1205.
[93] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 104-105.
[94] BOA, CZB, 16, 772, 6/4/1214.

corruption, as judges and police often used them to supplement their own legal incomes. However, as the number of fines did not rise with inflation, eighteenth century Istanbul was still using the fines laid out in the earlier Ottoman law books and, as such, the fines were often meagre.[95] However, this is only based upon the fines which are recorded, the likelihood of off-record fines/bribes cannot be discounted. There were also cases of janissaries being involved in violent assaults and Zarinebaf claims that they were punished more severely than other citizens when convicted. There is also the question of janissary involvement in the urban uprisings of the eighteenth century, which arguably diminished their effectiveness as law enforcement officials and led to the rise of the *bostancı* corps as a marine patrol.[96]

**2. Firemen**

Working as a fireman, or *tulumbacı,* was an extremely common occupation for janissaries, just as fire was a very common danger in Istanbul. Like in many cities of the period, most of the buildings and housing were made of wood, with the exception of the larger monumental buildings such as mosques and palaces. Some of the fires which occurred in Istanbul during the eighteenth century could be classified as natural disasters/accidental. For example, the braziers with which townspeople would heat their houses. These braziers often had covers under which people could warm their feet, which easily caught fire, or could cause the brazier to be disturbed and knock it over.[97] Fires were also seen as a tool of protest, used to express dissatisfaction with policies, to blackmail authority figures or quite simply to hurt the rich.

Philip Mansel claims that despite the adoption of new fire-fighting technologies from Amsterdam in 1725 fire still continued to be a real danger leading to a fire in 1755 which

[95] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 163-4.
[96] Ibid., 79, 140.
[97] Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire' (London, 2005), 157.

lasted thirty-six hours and devastated a seventh of the city including burning an entire regiment of janissaries in their barracks.[98] This is likely what prompted the 1757 petition stating that one of the two fire-engines the service had was too damaged to fight a large fire, should one again break out in Istanbul. The head fireman thus requested that a new one be built.[99]

A petition in the archives from 1790, tells how the janissary barracks and guardhouses were damaged by fire and they requested funds to replace what had been lost.[100] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa recounts a fire in 1780 which caused damage to five or six troops of janissaries.[101] These two events prove that the janissaries could be frustrated and inconvenienced by fires in Istanbul and thus it can be argued that they had a vested interest in discharging their firefighting duties well. Indeed, it was recorded in the *Topkapı Sarayı* archives that the janissaries performed so well in fighting a fire in the naval dockyard in 1790 that monetary rewards were distributed to them.[102]

There was also an aspect of economic power for the fire-fighting janissaries. Considering how important their work was in a city like Istanbul, where fire was always a ready danger and had the potential to be so devastating, the Ottoman government would be more than willing to finance whatever was said to be needed. This argument is strongly supported by the archival material. Requests for funds and/or repaired or new equipment were addressed directly to the sultan in the form of correctly phrased and suitably respectable petitions. Mostly the funds requested are granted, apparently automatically,[103] but from the 1780s onwards, the responses written upon the same page as the original petition demand that

[98] Mansel, 'Constantinople', 225.
[99] BOA, CBLD, 76, 3784, 5/7/1170.
[100] BOA, CAS, 995, 43479, 19/11/1205.
[101] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi Birinci Cilt', 127.
[102] BOA, TS MAE, 9367/1.
[103] i.e. BOA, CAS, 976, 42536, 8/7/1192; BOA, CBLD, 21, 1038, 29/4/1207.

the requests be investigated and that funds should be awarded only where the sultans investigators find it necessary to repair or replace equipment.[104] Sometimes expenses for equipment are only partially paid as was the case in 1779 when the cost of raw materials to make the tools of firefighting (axes and hooks), came to 236.5 *kuruş* and the treasury pays 230 *kuruş* of the requested amount.[105] The treasury seemed to be good at negotiating discounts for such expenses such as in 1769 when a 20 *kuruş* discount was negotiated for the replacing of firefighting equipment with the blessing of the Sultan.[106] In 1797 a sizeable request was made to Sultan Selim III claiming that the firefighting equipment in Balat on the Golden Horn was in severe need of repair. It had been previously repaired some ten years before for the sum of 2490 *kuruş* and was yet again in need of work, perhaps due to the amount of use the equipment had seen. The Sultan granted the request and repairs totalling 1074 *kuruş* were made.[107]

This change from automatically approving requests is significant as it could signify either a lack of trust on the part of the state, or simply that more careful management of expenses was being implemented at this time. Considering the eighteenth-century economic situation (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4) this latter interpretation seems highly likely. Also, it is not just firefighting equipment the *tulumbacı* seem able to claim for. A successful petition from 1769 details forty *kuruş* being paid out monthly from the imperial treasury for the purposes of covering the rental of a house in Uskudar for the head fireman.[108] Other requests include funds for items which are obviously needed for firefighting, such as pumps and engines, however there are also requests for items such as hooks and axes which undoubtedly are necessary tools for firefighting, but could also be turned to other uses as

[104] BOA, CAS, 411, 16981, 3/11/1196; CAS, 1134, 50380, 29/2/1200.
[105] BOA, CAS, 1079, 47568, 22/8/1193.
[106] BOA, AE SMST III, 327, 26341, 29/12/1182.
[107] BOA, CZB, 36, 1771, 3/4/1212.
[108] BOA, CAS, 346, 14339, 03/7/1187.

well.[109] Another request comes from 1790 and again, seems to have been successful as the annotations on the petition indicate that the necessary instructions and legal documentation were sent to the imperial accountants to be processed.[110] The fact that the state was granting these petitions, and at a time where they seem to be exercising some fiscal care, as evidenced in the investigations which were requested, suggests that the janissaries themselves and the roles they were fulfilling were still deemed essential to the proper functioning of the Empire.

The institution of firefighting in Istanbul was constantly evolving throughout the eighteenth century and throughout the second half of the century there are petitions requesting that more fire engines and associated equipment be placed in more neighbourhoods of Istanbul, as the time spent waiting for equipment to be brought from neighbouring areas was causing too much damage. For example, in 1790 a request was made for two engines to be set up in Kadıköy so that they would no longer have to call for those stationed in Üsküdar.[111]

From primary sources we can see that the state was consistently willing to subsidise the janissary firemen when they requested equipment. In addition, the rebuilding and restoration of buildings damaged by fire during the eighteenth century, regardless of whether or not those buildings were janissary affiliated, would also have cost the treasury.[112] It is highly unlikely, in light of this evidence, that the janissaries would be trusted with such an important job and such valuable equipment if they were perceived to have been corrupt and liable to abuse the position. While I do not have the space to go into a full comparison here, it is unlikely that fires were more frequent or devastating than in any other large city like Cairo, or even London or Rome. In 1785 Sultan Abdülhamid I sent nine ships specially equipped to carry firefighting equipment to the castles on the Bosphorus for the use of the janissaries

[109] BOA, AE SAMD III, 205, 16245; BOA, AE SABH I, 50, 3578, 29/4/1201.
[110] BOA, CAS, 995, 43479, 19/11/1205.
[111] BOA, CBLD, 19, 943, 3/12/1205.
[112] I. e. BOA, CAS, 411, 16981, 3/5/1182; BOA, AE SABH I, 7, 639, 10/7/1203; BOA, CAS, 976, 42536, 8/B/1192 etc.

stationed there. He paid 22 *kuruş* for the transportation of these items by sea.[113]

The state is frequently handing money and resources over to the firemen at this time, and some of the amounts required would have needed to be quite substantial, such as those for restoring buildings and equipment. From this we can conclude that the state powers did not feel that the *tulumbacı* regiments had been shirking their duties. In order to make fire-fighting easier, subsequent nineteenth century urban reforms saw plans to get rid of cul-de-sacs and straighten roads as well as banning the construction of wooden houses. In practice this last measure did not work very well, since the poorer classes could not afford other building materials and the Ottoman elite did not really enforce the use of brick and stone on buildings other than those considered important such as mosques, palaces and schools. In other areas, administrators simply requested fireproof walls and used the fires themselves as a means to straighten roads. Once they had levelled certain areas. reconstruction occurred according to new plans.[114]

## Numbers and Pay

One of the principal arguments given by both contemporaries and historians pertaining to janissaries in society, has been corruption by way of janissary involvement in trades and guilds, which led them away from exclusively military employment to the pursuit of more varied career paths. An evaluation of janissary wages during the eighteenth century is beneficial to this thesis as it will show whether or not the income from military salaries alone would have been enough to live on, thus rendering the other trades in which janissaries participated as unnecessary. As mentioned in the Introduction, the amount of active employment in warfare decreased in the eighteenth century, so while the treasury records

[113] BOA, AE SABH I 309, 20763, 29/4/1199.
[114] Faroqhi, 'Subjects of the Sultan', 255.

show salaries being paid and money designated to janissary salaries for the eighteenth century, there was a reduction both in the amount being paid and in the number of janissaries collecting a salary.[115] That said, we also see peaks in the numbers of soldiers paid at various points during the eighteenth century, usually coinciding with some large military undertaking, for example during the 1730s and 1740s coinciding with Ottoman campaigns against the Holy Roman Empire and the Persian Empire.[116] However we should be wary of treasury records as there were problems with recording accurately including absenteeism and the black market *esame* in circulation.

From this we can deduce that soldiers were being recruited officially on a campaign-by-campaign basis and were being paid as such. The numbers in the treasury accounts support this. In light of this it is easy to see why janissaries would have needed to find employment outside of their official military role, if they were not being consistently paid to be a standing army, yet the peak in numbers at campaign times shows that many clearly desired to be involved in the martial side of being a janissary and were not only in it for the elevated social status that it brought. An alternative interpretation for the variation in these numbers comes from Suraiya Faroqhi, who details yet another form of financial corruption in janissary employment this time perpetrated by the treasury. As the selling of positions to the highest bidder was rife in tax-farming, the Ottoman government soon found themselves in need of money and so soldiers would often turn over their military pay tickets to the treasury in exchange for a role as a guild headsman.[117] Furthermore, as many janissaries had families in the eighteenth century a consistent income would be necessary. Additionally, I would argue that it would be preferable for janissaries to be contributing to the Ottoman economy when

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[115] Erol Özvar, 'Osmanlı Devletinin bütçe harcamaları (1509 - 1778)' in Genç ve Özvar, 'Osmanlı Maliyesi 1', 237-238.

[116] Ibid., 233.

[117] Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Artisans of the Empire: Crafts and Craftspeople Under the Ottomans', (London, 2009), 121.

not on campaign. The role of janissaries as economic actors is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

A petition from the reign of Sultan Mustafa III requests that a Kethüda Hüseyin be appointed to the position recently vacated by the Sipahi Ağa and that he is then endowed with, not only the wage of that role but also the pension allowance.[118] This daily wage was 120 *akçe* which, being an officer rank wage would presumably have covered a comfortable living style and the added security of the pension explains why this position was so appealing. While there are other cases of appointments to vacant positions, and indeed, positions passing from father to son by petition, this case at this point in the eighteenth century is one of several ways in which janissaries were pursuing income. Mustafa III also received another direct petition which requested that the daily wage of a deceased janissary named Çorbaçibaşı Halil be shared among members of his troop.[119] This daily wage was 88.5 *kuruş* and so once it was divided it is unlikely to have made a large difference to each of the recipients, but this does indicate that the janissaries were seeking multiple sources of income to combine together into a living wage. Another case of dividing the wage of a deceased janissary occurred in 1789 by petitioning Sultan Abdülhamid I[120], and so it seems that this was a recurring and acknowledged practice. The wisdom of this practice is that it allows the janissaries an increase in their income and does not cost the treasury extra as it simply continues to pay the same salary amount out each pay day. The need for a janissary corps that was happy with its income is acknowledged by the imperial powers and in 1774 a state document discusses spreading allowances among the soldiers to cover their expenses but advises that care be taken as this could cause financial damage if not properly managed.[121]

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[118] BOA, AE SMST III, 198, 15554, 29/12/1177.
[119] BOA, AE SMST III, 53, 3884, 29/12/1182.
[120] BOA, AE SABH I, 178, 11853, 16/9/1203.
[121] BOA, TS MAE, 7019, 291, 8/Za/1187.

Throughout 1779 the janissaries also seemed to be receiving income in the form of alms given by the sultan to janissary corporals on Fridays as he went to the mosque. The sultan attended a different mosque each time and so was giving money to different troops.[122] Most often the sultan gives 8 *akçe*, however in the May and June of 1770 this had sometimes been 22 *akçe* and sometimes 8 *akçe*.[123] However, during the July and August of 1773 the sum returned to 8 *akçe.*[124]This suggests to me that what might have usually been a traditional ceremonial gift of 8 *akçe* saw an increase due to the financial need of the recipients. This is another indication that janissary incomes were being supplemented in small amounts from multiple sources, the standard wage, the division of deceased comrades' allowances and Friday prayer gifts from the sultan. Again, when put against the increasing cost of living in Istanbul at this time, the irregularity of campaign wages and bonuses as well as being in the wake of a widescale coinage debasement from the previous century, it is easy to see why such measures were necessary for the janissaries to achieve a liveable income. Furthermore, the gifts from the sultans are indicative of support for the janissary institution, as is the provisioning referred to above. This endured throughout the century with the reforming sultan Selim III coming to a disagreement with his Grand Vizier over the number of janissaries. Sultan Selim III wished to increase the number of artillerymen in the janissaries, however the Grand Vizier said that financially it would be better to allow the older janissaries to retire so the state can save money on their salaries and then rehire new men into the roles thirty-five to forty years into the future. The sultan becomes angry arguing that there is a need for soldiers immediately as the Empire is at war and berating the Vizier for refusing to maintain the desired membership numbers of the janissary corps.[125]

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[122] BOA, D 2424, 68, 1193; D 2424, 59, 1193; D 2424, 64, 1193.
[123] BOA, TS MAE,1144/78
[124] BOA, TS MAE, 9961/1005.
[125] Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi Birinci Cilt', 228.

Regarding the state treasury records, overviews from the records for members of the military who were paid from the central treasury divide the army into the following categories: Central Army, Palace Security, Fortress Soldiers, The Retired, Holy Men and Servants. If we take the classification of 'Central Army' to mean those stationed in, or commanded from, Istanbul this may be our starting point. The numbers for the central army during the eighteenth century begin in 1700 at 66,647 individuals being paid a total of 278,406,758 *akçe*. These numbers fluctuate, often dramatically, over the first half of the century coming down again to totals of 83,675 individuals being paid 677,258 *akçe* in salary in 1748.[126]

Looking at some general overviews of this data from the Ottoman state treasury there are records of the numbers of the central army increasing dramatically between 1729-30. From 60,637 soldiers in 1728-29, to 115,535 individuals in the very next year. However, despite the peak in numbers the salary total for 1729-30 is 442,174,632 *akçe* down from 633,753,780 *akçe* the year before. Though salaries increased again the following year to 840,961,820 *akçe* this was still a significant dip originally.[127] A possible reason for this could be the Patrona Halil uprising of 1730. It is likely that in the confusion of conflict army wages were forgotten or just not a priority as, in the earliest weeks of the reign of Sultan Mahmud I, the Empire was in the hands of the insurgents. They might have been expected to just take what they wanted, perhaps they did and account keeping was falsified or just inaccurate. Whatever the reason, salaries increased from that year on for the central army. Out of the totals referred to here records show us that in 1729-30 there were 98,726 janissaries registered being paid a total of 325,482,464 *akçe* in salaries.[128]

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[126] Özvar, 'Osmanlı Devletinin bütçe harcamaları (1509 - 1778)' in Genç ve Özvar, 'Osmanlı Maliyesi 1', 232-233.
[127] Ibid., 232.
[128] Ibid., 238.

Another interesting factor from the early eighteenth century is that, there is an increase in the number of fortress soldiers administered by the imperial treasury. It cannot be determined whether these were men recruited in the localities or sent out from Istanbul to the fortresses. However, with a gradual increase from 63,300 individuals in 1699 to 71,424 in 1705, the salaries do increase with the number of individuals. From 162,167,762 men on record in 1699 to 220,803,707 in number in 1705 their wage does not seem to change too dramatically.[129] However that did not mean that their cost of living did not increase in line with inflation and debasement of coinage. There is ample literature detailing ransom hostage exchanges in the Ottoman military throughout the early modern era,[130] and so it is not such a stretch to say that the men in the provinces still found themselves insufficiently paid and provisioned. This is something that can be substantiated with the requests for provisions which are addressed in the chapter on the janissaries in their roles as soldiers.

The treasury records also reference a currency being paid, called *"Guruş-ı Esedi"* or *"esedi guruş"*, which translates to 'Money of Holland' and is a reference to a Dutch coin called a *thaler* or a lion *(esed)* which was often used for international trade. When we consider the large amounts of trade the Ottomans were engaging in with the rest of the world, as well as the significant presence of the Dutch East India Company in the Ottoman Empire,[131] finding this coin in the Ottoman treasury is not surprising. What may be considered curious is to see such a coin in domestic circulation and being used for domestic payments. Sevket Pamuk has discussed the circulation of foreign coinage in the Ottoman Empire, saying that the Dutch *thaler* was more common in Tripoli and the Eastern Mediterranean.[132] He charts the

[129] Ibid., 233.
[130] See Geza David & Pal Fodor, 'Ransom Slavery along Ottoman Borders' (London, 2007).
[131] İsmail Hakki Kadı, 'Ottoman and Dutch Merchants in the Eighteenth Century: Competition and Cooperation in Ankara Izmir and Amsterdam' (Boston, 2012).
[132] Pamuk also charts this culminating in what he dubs "The Great Debasement" from 1770 onwards. Sevket Pamuk, 'A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire' (Cambridge, 2003), 182.

history of the *thaler* in the Ottoman Empire telling how, for several decades in the middle of the seventeenth century, these coins would be shipped to the Ottoman Empire and exchanged for goods or just with money changers. This explains why, even though Dutch mints ceased to strike these coins around 1680, they were such a prominent presence in the Ottoman economy. It is also likely that due to gradual debasements in their own coinage,[133] the Ottomans kept foreign coins in circulation which still retained value due to their metal content. Also, the fact that the payments in the treasury records using this coinage are largely going to soldiers assigned to provincial fortresses this currency might have been welcome, not only for its silver value, but also for the purchase of goods from local populations who might prefer it or, again, for the previously mentioned ransoming of soldiers.

Haim Gerber, on the other hand, claims that the *eşedi kuruş* was in circulation in the Ottoman Empire for a long time but became especially popular after the loss of what he dubs the *real kuruş* or original Turkish *kuruş*. He also says that, after the 1680s, Ottoman mints began producing their own version of the coins to do with whatever they wanted. Speaking to the question of debasement, Gerber reminds us that debasing coinage was widely practised in Europe at this time also and that the governments in question (including the Ottomans) mostly used debased coinage to pay soldiers.[134] As I have already stated elsewhere, an acknowledged grievance of the janissaries was their being paid in debased coinage and, if Gerber is correct, they were being paid in debased versions of a foreign coin which, while legal tender, may have caused offence to some recipients.

In addition to debasement there was an issue of payment being in arrears. A document from 1789 requests permission from the then newly enthroned Sultan Selim III to pay the retirement payments and the first yearly instalment of wages to the janissaries and other royal

[133] Ibid., 188.
[134] Haim Gerber, 'The Monetary System of the Ottoman Empire,' Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, 25 (1982), 308-311.

household groups. The payment is stated to be from 1787-1788 and Selim III readily granted the permission[135] as being on good terms with members of the royal household and the military would be in his interests at all times, but especially at the start of his reign. It is possible that this payment was a clever way to both pay backdated wages and also cover the traditional accession bonus paid out upon the enthronement of a new sultan. Another issue contributing to the problem of janissary finances occurred in 1798 where the *esame* of some 139 old, ill and retired janissaries were allegedly stolen leading to the loss of 2131 *akçe.* Sultan Selim III declared that the guilty parties had damaged the Ottoman economy by this action and these 119 soldiers were ordered to cover the financial losses.[136]

In contrast to the claims that janissary numbers became so large during the 1700s that recruitment had to be curtailed, a document from the Imperial Council dated 1791 tells a very different story. It was ordered that janissaries be prepared for deployment throughout the Empire. The Grand Vizier had kept the exact details of the order from the officer responsible for preparing the janissaries as he did not wish to be told that older janissaries should not be called to war. The officer then told the Grand Vizier that he would be able to prepare thirty regiments for active service. This totals 6000 janissaries to the 30,000 the Grand Vizier had expected. There is also the expectation of desertion once the regiments have begun their journey. It is stated that these numbers were due to how few janissaries were left in Istanbul in the 1790s. The officer had also promised not to send the old and retired janissaries away for active service. The sources used in this section, aside from the treasury records come from the *Topkapı Sarayı* records as well as *defterleri* pertaining to expenditure, writings of the Imperial Divan and sultanic correspondence all held in the BOA. All of these sources demonstrate the understanding that the Ottoman state had regarding janissary payments and income and would

[135] BOA, HAT, 1400, 56386, 29/12/1203.
[136] BOA, HAT, 204, 10614, 29/12/1203.

have been produced as part of managing state finances during the economic problems of the eighteenth century.

This chapter has demonstrated how the janissaries adapted to the new circumstances of the eighteenth century by undertaking new available avenues of military training and negotiating for provisions as and when required. Further military adaptations shown here include interactions with Europeans and an exchange of knowledge and labour from which the janissaries were able to learn new ways of working and new technologies. The examination of their paramilitary roles as firemen and policemen show how they interacted with wider Istanbul society and participated in civic life in this manner. The assessment of these roles also shows how, even within the scope of their traditional duties, the janissaries were required to be flexible and able to adapt to differing roles. Furthermore, the evidence offered for their wages demonstrates adaptations in how they gained and supplemented their income to a required amount in response to the changing social and financial environment. These adaptations, considering the context in which they occurred and the resources available to the janissaries at the time were the best that they could be. Taking military training from wherever it could be acquired, whether it was securing funding from the state for gun training or taking tutelage from European military men like De Tott may not have completely compensated for the loss of the *devşirme* system but then again, the makeup of the recruits differed in the eighteenth century and so there was no need to apprentice boys out to farms in order to learn the Turkish language. Adaptations in provisioning consisting of petitioning the state for supplies and funds when needed shows careful resource management which, in light of the economic circumstances of the eighteenth century, discussed further in Chapter 4, is the sensible approach. Additionally, placing attention into the police and firemen duties was appropriate in the circumstances as, with an increasing Istanbul population, including many

martially inclined combat trained individuals seeking outlets for their excess energy, focussing on law enforcement would be highly necessary. From this I offer that, while the developments in these traditional military aspects of the janissary role may not have completely compensated for the changing military context, they were the best that the janissaries could manage with the resources they had.

# Chapter 3: The Janissaries as Power Brokers

A key part of the janissary identity has always been the power and influence the institution of the janissary corps had. Members of the corps not only had a social status, but also influence and leverage through their relations, both personal and institutional, with members of the Ottoman domestic power structure. This is a phenomenon that works on many levels of power and influence and is not exclusive to the officer ranks of the corps. There is a long-standing assumption of a unique connection between the sultan and the janissary corps, and in the age of warrior sultans this would certainly have been true as one of the ways a new ascendant to the Ottoman throne proved his worthiness for the role was to add new territory to the Empire. Having a long-established legacy of being a conquering military force, the Ottoman rulers were expected to give great significance to their armies.

However, during the eighteenth century, Ottoman policies and practices changed from being predominantly offensive to defensive and began to emphasise diplomacy and trade over warfare. This required changes in the role and duties of the sultan, as well as adaptation on the part of the army. This chapter shall look at the ideas of the role of the sultan and his relations with the janissaries over time, including how they changed and developed in the context of wider alterations in policy and global events. This assessment shall highlight how both the sultans and the janissary corps were adapting to the new balances of power and adjusting their own relationship in line with these changes.

Furthermore, this chapter shall examine janissary relations with the Sultans and the Ottoman domestic power structure, both with a view to exploring how the janissaries exercised power and also which powers the janissaries were subservient to. I shall also

explore the janissary officer corps demonstrating the power and influence the officers held both over the janissaries under their command and over members of wider Ottoman society through the authority exercises through their positions. This shall show both how the officers of the janissaries adapted to changing roles and responsibilities as well as how the individuals and groups interacting with these officers adjusted their views of, and relations with, the janissary officers. Additionally, this chapter shall include a section on discipline and punishment examining what type of punishments janissaries were subject to and for what crimes as well as who was considered to have the authority to carry out these punishments upon members of the janissary corps. This shall demonstrate how the janissaries, for all of their status were still subject to laws and discipline, but how these punishments were adjusted when applied to janissaries. The evidence here shall also show changes overtime in the types of crimes and transgressions janissaries are accused of, suggesting that the janissaries adapted their actions to their environment no matter which side of the law they were working on. Finally, I wish to examine janissaries in roles of civic moral authority through work in *vakıf* foundations, schools and similar duties. This shall shed light upon questions of social reputation and respect relating to how the janissaries were viewed in and by civilian society. This reflects adaptation on the part of the janissaries, not only in accessing additional income for carrying out civic duties, but also how, as the interests of the janissaries became more entwined with the general urban population through growing integration, the janissaries turned their influence towards these matters.

## Relations with the Sultan

This section will discuss the janissary relationship with the Ottoman sultans. Owing to the changes in the Ottoman power structure and the role of the sultan during the eighteenth century and the period just preceding it the documentation available regarding the sultan having direct contact with the janissaries, excepting the Istanbul Janissary Ağa, and having input into matters dealing with them may very well differ from that available for other periods of Ottoman history.

To carry out this analysis I shall first outline the role of the sultan in the hierarchy of Ottoman power and in doing so I want to explore some recent historiographical theories regarding constitutionalism and absolutism in the Ottoman Empire. There is a consensus that the seventeenth century saw an increasing centralisation in the model of Ottoman rule,[1] thus the power and influence within the Empire began to concentrate even more strongly in Istanbul. In 2010 Baki Tezcan suggested the existence of constitutional tendencies in the Ottoman Empire, notably in the seventeenth century. He acknowledges that the political language of the time might not have used such terminology but argued that retrospectively that is what historians should interpret from the early modern attempts to manage and check the power of the sultan.[2] Tezcan's claims have been considered highly controversial by other scholars and it is true that the groups he defines overlap traditional barriers of absolutists, conservatives and liberals which are classifications most scholars are more comfortable using. However, similar sentiments have also been expressed by Hüseyin Yılmaz[3]. Yılmaz argues

[1] Rifa'at Abou El-Haj, 'Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', (New York, 2005), 30, 40-41; Karen Barkey, 'Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralisation', (London, 1994).
[2] Tezcan, Second Empire, 48.
[3] Hüseyin Yılmaz, 'Containing Sultanic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire before Modernity', Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies, XLV, (2015), 231-264.

that the delegation of sultanic powers to high state officials allowed institutions such as the janissaries to oppose the actions of the Ottoman government without opposing the sultan directly, and thus jeopardising the relationship between the sultan and the janissary corps.[4] In this context the comparison made by Tezcan, between the Ottoman state and the English Civil War, is vaguely plausible. The opponents of the English King Charles I (1600 – 1649, r. 1625 – 1649) did focus their protests and objections upon those they classified as the king's evil advisors, as opposed to the king himself. Both Yılmaz and Abou-El-Haj have studied the *nasihatname* or advice literature as a way of understanding the Ottoman state for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. El-Haj does suggest that such writings should be seen, less as advice to the ruler and more as protest writings.[5] If this interpretation is correct, then there may have been a movement towards increasing participation in the Ottoman power structure, however that does not mean that these tendencies were constitutional. El-Haj further argues that traditional historiographical interpretations of the advice literature as just that, only humble advice, comes from an outdated tendency of Ottomanists to take their source documentation at face value[6], what Suraiya Faroqhi calls 'document fetishism'.[7] There is also the question of contextualising the *nasihatname* literature, while predominantly, though not exclusively, aimed at whoever was occupying the Ottoman throne at the time, owing to changes and delegations within the Ottoman domestic power structure many sultans of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reigned but did not rule.[8] Therefore the protests of this literature may not be aimed at curbing the power of the sultan, especially if it had already been diminished, but at the powerful institutions such as the vizier class, the janissaries and the *ulema*. The latter two often formed alliances in order to legitimise each

[4] Yılmaz, 'Containing Sultanic Authority', 239-240.
[5] Rifa'at About-El-Haj, 'Formation of the Modern State', 25.
[6] Ibid., 26.
[7] Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources', (New York, 1999), 2.
[8] El-Haj, 'Formation of the Modern State', 24.

other's actions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The question then becomes, if the advice literature is not aimed at the sultan, but rather at powerful institutions can it still be dubbed constitutionalism? While constitutionalism is most often associated with monarchies throughout history, in this case it may be more accurate to interpret the writers and reformers of this time wanting a government with wider participation, not a constitutional monarchy. This causes problems with Tezcan's argument of constitutionalism. Considering the socio-economic climate of the Ottoman Empire at this time, the recruitment and promotion practices of these powerful institutions and how rapidly power could shift between them, I believe that a constitution would have been difficult, if not impossible to negotiate, finalise and enforce. Furthermore, these works were penned by the elite classes and not the janissaries. The janissaries were one institution among several, including the *ulema,* who were trying to broaden political participation to include themselves on a collective basis. This does not necessarily make them constitutionalist as there is no evidence for a written set of rules with which to bind the sultan. On this matter I agree with El-Haj, that the advice literature is more reactionary and a form of protest than any early attempts at a written Ottoman constitution. In conclusion, there are not enough markers for the process Tezcan described to be termed constitutionalist.

More recently Marios Sariyannis produced A History of Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Nineteenth Century [9], which studies Ottoman politics and government through the writings of contemporary Ottoman writers throughout the centuries. In discussing the eighteenth century he forms writers into two parties, traditionalists and Westernisers. In summarising the period between the period known as the Tulip Era and the Russo-Turkish Wars Sariyannis argues that the writings of this time are not a simple continuity of the mirror

[9] Marios Sariyannis, 'A History of Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Nineteenth Century', (Leiden, 2018).

for princes' tradition of the previous century. Rather, he claims that there was less urgency in these writings which might seem out of place but could be due to the constant changes in the military and economic institutions creating a need for a new type of reform treatise.[10] The eighteenth century traditionalists, while holding to attitudes still differed from their predecessors by offering specific solutions to specific issues facing the Ottomans at this time and also by borrowing more widely from contemporary philosophy and theology including new concepts regarding how the Ottomans should react to and interact with other states. This shift in political thought enabled discussions to take place between the traditionalists and Westernisers leading to the occasional overlap in beliefs and ideas.[11] The majority of ideas from the Westernisers were, it must be said, not new to the Ottomans, namely European military technology and techniques, but were simply advocated for on a much larger scale than previously. Also, the decision of Sultan Selim III to replace the standing army with new troops instead of reforming the existing order was something of a break with tradition.[12]

Considering these changes in the Ottoman power structure and the increasing distancing of the sultans from direct rule it may be more accurate to speak of janissary interactions with sultanic authority, including that which was delegated. This increasing influence of officers and other high office holders will be discussed below, including the dynamic between the offices of Istanbul Janissary Ağa and the Grand Vizier.

Regarding direct interactions between sultans and janissaries, or at least direct sultanic intervention in janissary matters, interesting cases can be found in the correspondence (*Ali Emiri* collection) of the eighteenth-century sultans which can be found in the BOA in Istanbul. These sources are useful in showing the kind of events in janissary lives in which the sultans became most closely involved.

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[10] Ibid., 137.
[11] Ibid., 138.
[12] Ibid., 154.

In such a case raised in the correspondence of Sultan Abdülhamid I dated 1788, it is brought to the Sultan's attention that there are members of the janissary corps out of work and the request is made by the Grand Vizier for the Sultan's permission to reassign them. During the reign of Abdülhamid I there is strong documentary evidence in his personal documentation for a passionate rivalry between the offices of Vizier and Ağa, each constantly trying to best the other in the Sultan's eyes. This dynamic shall be explored further below. Abdülhamid I's annotations on this document demonstrate his displeasure that the janissaries have been reduced to such circumstances through no fault of their own. The Sultan uses the phrase "…it is unworthy. The reality of the matter is that they are entitled to blame although there is not blame. Even if they deserve blame more are being banished the aforementioned ağas request is in the correct manner and you should give the permission." He goes on to remind the Grand Vizier that any changes in his state structure are to come through him. Furthermore, he states that even if some of the janissaries in question were guilty of something the sheer amount of unemployed janissaries is getting out of hand and it needs to be addressed.[13] Whether or not the janissaries in question had extended families is not specified in this document, however the fact that they are janissaries seems to be enough to encourage an action on the part of the state, albeit with a potentially personal agenda on the part of the Vizier, but the Sultan and his feelings towards the janissaries seem very genuine. It is possible that the Sultan acted out of fear of reprisal from the janissaries and their Ağa and the power those individuals hold. It does seem that Abdülhamid I was a sultan willing to get involved in appointments where the janissary corps was concerned and in 1779 did appoint ex-Kul Kethüda Süleyman to the rank of Janissary Ağa by imperial order.[14] The appointee was said to be of good reputation and character which was the reason for his appointment. A

[13] BOA, AE SABH I, 9, 802, 10/7/1203.
[14] BOA, CAS, 318, 13158, 4/5/1193.

similar appointment was made in 1790 by Sultan Selim III, only in this case it is additionally mentioned that the ağa in question is the Grand Vizier's brother.[15] It is possible that this fraternal relationship is part of giving the ağa good character, however, considering the number of hereditary positions passing through families at this time as well as the rise of vizier households, it is likely that nepotism played a part in networking and appointments in the Ottoman Empire by the eighteenth century. Abdülhamid I was a sultan who also seemed to take a great deal of interest in the minutiae of janissary life under his rule. In 1789 an attendant of the Imperial Divan was deemed too sick to work by his doctor and the Sultan gave permission for him not to go to work for this reason.[16] The attendant in question was also the brother of a Janissary Clerk. Whether this relationship had any bearing upon the permission given it was deemed important enough to be recorded. Possibly it was the Janissary Clerk who brought the report of his brother's illness to the palace. This kind of pastoral care for the janissary institution does not seem to be out of character for Abdülhamid I, for all that he holds his janissary officers to a high standard, as shall be seen in the following section. In 1788 the sultan defends the granting of janissary pensions to the deserving but condemns the fact that men who have never served as janissaries are also being granted these pensions.[17] The fact that this issue was brought to the Imperial Council shows how important it was to the Sultan and also how he seems to be aware of the need to reform. This document reflects the beliefs of Sarı Mehmed Paşa from earlier in the century, that it is outsiders claiming janissary status and benefits who are causing problems, while deserving janissaries suffer because of it, both materially and by reputation. Abdülhamid I was also petitioned by a janissary who requested that he be permitted to repay a loan he owed the

[15] BOA, CAS, 90, 4147, 18/8/1204.
[16] BOA, AE SABH I, 4, 421, 10/7/1203.
[17] BOA, HAT, 15, 602, 29/12/1202.

treasury in instalments as he had fallen upon hard times.[18] The granting of favours to janissaries was something that several Sultans of the eighteenth century engaged in with Sultan Selim III receiving a petition from an old janissary who had suffered great misfortunes and was requesting that the Sultan forgive his debt to the state.[19]

Other matters that were directed to the sultans directly from the janissaries for consideration include the provision of support for old and infirm retired janissaries and their families,[20] confirmation of the status of janissaries appointed to missions by the sultan himself[21] and petitions requesting that debts to the state be forgiven.[22] Sometimes the sultan seemed to come across matters pertaining to the janissaries by accident and take proactive measures regarding them. In 1790 it was brought before Sultan Selim III's imperial council that the sultan had seen thirteen janissaries begging in the marketplace for food and wishes to grant them money. The names and ranks of the janissaries are clearly listed in the document.[23] The janissaries are described as old, ill and not having any income and they all seemed to have held some small officer rank within the janissary corps. The sultan states that it is not appropriate that, owing to the prestige of the janissary institution, its members should be reduced to such circumstances and aid is duly rendered.

'Janissary' relations with sultans during the eighteenth century were complex and a conclusive opinion is largely dependent upon who is considered to be a true janissary. Also relevant are varying ideas about how much power the person of the sultan really held and exercised. Whether Sultans could be said to still 'rule' or simply 'reign'. These issues not only called into question the instances of infant sultans being represented by regents, but also

[18] BOA, AE SABH I, 157, 10520, 19/12/1199.
[19] BOA, TS MAE, 25/6.
[20] Ex. BOA, AE SAMD III, 199, 19228, 29/Z/1135.
[21] Ex. BOA , AE SAMD III, 215, 20804, 19/3/1143.
[22] EX. BOA, TS MAE, 25/6.
[23] BOA, HAT, 1397, 56138, 29/12/1204.

overall shifts in the Ottoman domestic power structure which seemed to change shape, from being a pyramid of power with the sultan at the top, to being more like a spider-web with the sultan in the middle, connected to all powerful groups and individuals and the threads of that web could be pulled on from either end. Furthermore, the cases found in the archive and presented here speak to sultans interacting with specific janissaries each with unique circumstances, although a little is revealed on the opinion of the sultan regarding the corps as a whole. However, the sultans of the eighteenth-century seem to have had very little direct interaction with the janissary corps as a whole institution, instead dealing with janissary officers, as we shall see below, or merely seeing the janissaries on ceremonial occasions such as *ulufe* day. This image fits in with the overall trend regarding changes in the Ottoman power structure and the role of the sultan, especially the distancing of the sultan from all but the highest ranks of the state.

## Janissaries and the baklava event

This section offers a case study pertaining to janissary relations with the sultanate in eighteenth-century Istanbul in the form of the baklava event. The participation of janissaries in the ceremonial life of Istanbul speaks to the extent of their social integration, while still being representative of the janissary corps. This topic also touches upon Ottoman economics as such ceremonies and leisure activities were an expense paid by the state to hold these events. The expenses of such activities must be weighed against the potential political and social benefits such as a happy population, the ability of different interest groups to work together at such events and the opportunities for relationship building and networking which they afforded. These events also held significant propaganda value for the groups involved, such as in 1772 when a large celebration was held on the occasion of the birth of Hatice Sultan (1766 – 1821), the daughter of Sultan Mustafa III. The Ottoman naval forces were used

in the pageant and afterwards the Janissary Ağa was awarded a 100 *kuruş* stipend in thanks for his provision of goods and services for the celebration.[24]

The baklava event during the eighteenth century occurred annually on the fifteenth of Ramadan. The traditional procession had been instituted towards the end of the sixteenth century. Hundreds of trays of baklava were cooked in the palace kitchens, one tray for every ten janissaries. The trays were then wrapped in cloth to protect them from dust and arrayed in the Second Court of the palace. The first tray was presented to the sultan in his capacity as honorary member of the First Janissary Company. After that, two janissaries from each squad would come and claim a tray which they carried suspended on a pole between them. When all of the trays had been collected, the janissaries were led out in a great procession with their standard bearers and officers to their barracks. On the following day the copper trays and cloths were to be returned to the palace.[25] Rumour has it that in later years when the janissaries were feeling insolent, they would refuse to return the trays and cloths claiming they had eaten those too![26]

There is some archival evidence which may be interpreted to support this. A document from 1789 references 300 baklava trays being "lost" *(zayi olduğundan)* and calling for them to be replaced.[27] It is possible these were lost due to being taken by the janissaries, but that is not made clear. This ambiguity of language in primary sources is something I've come across before and so it leaves janissary action open to biased interpretation. Another document from 1768 is an expenses payment register for the repair of baklava trays among other kitchenware.[28] Aside from demonstrating great thrift in getting wares repaired, again the neutrality of the language makes it hard to understand what has happened to make them need

[24] BOA, CSM, 103, 5192, 7/12/1185.
[25] Mary Işin, 'Sherbet and Spice: The Complete Story of Turkish Sweets and Desserts', (London, 2013), 185.
[26] İlber Ortaylı, 'baklava alayı', 'İstanbul ansiklopedisi: dünden bügüne Vol. 2'. (Istanbul, 1993), 5.
[27] BOA, CSM, 126, 6332, 25/12/1204.
[28] BOA, CSM, 115, 5771, 25/11/1182.

repair, are they just old? Did the janissaries damage them during the ceremony? Was it something else entirely?

Most of the archival evidence referencing the baklava event are requests for firewood to be provided for the imperial kitchens in order to make this sweet. As the baklava event was a long-standing tradition with the janissaries the documentation can be primarily found in the military *evrak* collections of the BOA. The standard amount seems to be 25 *çeki* (1 *çeki* = 25 kg) so 625 kg.[29] It is interesting that, considering the fluctuating janissary numbers throughout the eighteenth century this number does not change, suggesting that the same amount is made each year regardless of janissary numbers. It is likely that this firewood order was simply coped verbatim from year to year regardless of how long the kitchen fires burnt to cook however much baklava was required.

Some further more interesting considerations also come out of the *evrak* documents held in the archives, such as one document which states that the baklava ceremony is to be performed on a Monday with Tuesday being the day salaries are to be paid.[30] This document is dated 1788 and was written towards the end of the century, when allegedly the janissary reputation was suffering. It is interesting that the janissaries almost seem to be being manipulated into going through the public ceremony and playing their part before they get their salary. This is suggestive of almost an undercurrent of trying to keep up appearances. It is also possible that there was a fear that men in the middle of a holiday season, upon receiving their salaries would immediately go out drinking and celebrating and they wanted the janissaries to be presentable for the procession.

So, the continuation of this ‘gift’ from the sultans speaks to a desire to maintain the *status quo* in so far as it would be possible and possibly also the hope for reconciliation in the

[29] BOA, CSM, 139, 6990, 29/12/1152.
[30] BOA, HAT, 1390, 55402, 29/12/1203.

matter of any disagreements. The baklava was as much of a symbol as the janissary cauldrons were that all things for the janissaries came from the sultan, including their sustenance. Whether rebelliously minded janissaries would still accept these as their right or supposed compensation for ills done to them, it seems the process continued. It was not only the Sultans who granted gifts at Ramadan. In 1768 the Janissary Ağa is recorded as donating 5000 *kuruş* to be distributed to the population as gifts.[31] However, there was a two-way element to this process, the sultan gifted baklava and the janissaries, at Ramadan and allegedly *ulufe* days, responded with boiled *akide* sweets gifted to sultan and ministers as a sign of loyalty. *Akide* could have been chosen for the fact that it was cheap and simple to make, however the fact that it is made from the waste product of another candy might be significant. The syrup for the making of *akide* is the by-product of *nöbet şekeri,* interestingly the same syrup can also be used to sweeten baklava. So, are we seeing sweets according to the station of the givers or the receivers? Is there a subtle message there? Or is there a hint of fellowship in the subtle shared ingredients?

The baklava event is reflective of Michael Herzfeld's deep qualification of cultural intimacy where he claims "For its part, a government may try to co-opt the language of intimacy for its utilitarian ends of commanding loyalty..."[32] we can see that the Ottoman state, by way of the baklava event was doing just this. The baklava event also provides a tangible and lasting statement to the relationship between the janissaries and the sultan. Even if the gifting of baklava is purely symbolic it is a very public statement of how strong and amiable the relationship between these two powerful institutions are. This is yet another strong socio-political alliance which it greatly benefitted the janissaries to maintain, in addition to the corps connection with trade guilds and the *ulema*. This case study shows adaptation, ironically,

[31] BOA, D, 9670, 58, 16/9/1181.
[32] Michael Herzfeld, 'Cultural Intimacy', (London, 1996), 4.

through the preservation of traditions. The symbolic loyalty on the part of both janissary and sultan is clear in this exchange, the sultan pledges to continue to sustain and support the janissaries, while the janissaries pledge to remain loyal. We have already seen that many sultans over the eighteenth century exerted great effort to ensure that janissaries were provided for and likewise the janissaries continued to go to the sultan. I offer that the baklava event is a clear statement, both to historians and Ottoman contemporaries, that the institutions of the Ottoman power structure were eager to work together in harmony, regardless of the changes that were happening. As a publicity stunt, the baklava event served to reassure the population of Istanbul that all was well and also to remind them of the power holders in their midst. The propaganda from this event would benefit the janissaries' integration into wider Ottoman society as forming relationships, whether business or pleasure, with the janissaries after seeing their status as represented in the baklava event, would appeal to many people. This would mean that many amongst the population became receptive to the growing janissary presence within the capital city.

## The Arm of The State: Janissary Officers and their Authority

This section shall examine the authority held by janissary officers primarily through documentation from the *Topkapı Sarayı* records, sultanic correspondence, military *evrak* papers and *defterleri* pertaining to important matters of state from the BOA. These individuals held power, not only over janissaries of lower rank but also over the Ottoman population as a whole due to occupying high ranking governmental and administrative positions. Arguably, janissary officers were in a better position to both abuse the significant power they held, both because they held more power than a rank and file janissary, and also because they had access to resources and networks capable to creating a greater impact

through their actions.

Janissary officers occupied positions of authority above and beyond those of a 'regular' janissary, even those with police officer or fireman status. The principal example of this is the Istanbul Janissary Ağa. Responsible for overseeing all the janissaries of Istanbul in both their military and civilian occupations, this individual occupied an office not dissimilar to that of the Grand Vizier and, as might be expected, two such powerful men would disagree. The Istanbul Janissary Ağa was also the member of the janissary corps who had the most direct contact with the sultan and due to his rank was delegated some of the sultanic authority discussed above. In turn, this also made him the most subject to sultanic intervention of all of the janissaries as well as working with the Grand Vizier. This section shall explore this triumvirate of Ottoman state power and the relationships between the office holders in relation to the power each held and wielded.

The most documentary evidence for this dynamic comes from the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I, suggesting that tensions were increasing among these powerholders towards the end of the century which would eventually culminate in the reforms of Sultan Selim III. In assessing Abdülhamid I's rule I shall refer to incidents in the reigns of other eighteenth century sultans in order to chart the escalation and continuation of activity surrounding the holding and exercising of the power and influence in question.

The correspondence of Sultan Ahmed III (1673 – 1736, r. 1703 – 1730) shows the sultan becoming involved in promotion through the janissary ranks, particularly of those janissaries serving within the royal household in some capacity,[33] and also in ordering the Istanbul Janissary Ağa and Kadı to attend to matters pertaining to corrupt business practise within the butchers trade and ordering them to force the artisans to obey the customs and rules

[33] BOA, AE SAMD III, 224, 21626, 29/12/1143; BOA, AE SAMD III, 226, 21793, 19/3/1143.

of their profession.[34] This case is interesting as it suggests that Istanbul is being robbed of its allowance of pastirma as the tradesmen are selling it for a higher price in other Ottoman territories. The feeding and provisioning of a growing population in the imperial capital would obviously be of key concern to the sultan as food shortages could lead to a disenfranchised and rebellious populace. Ahmed III also involved himself in the appointment of the *kethüda* for the sheep butchers[35] which was an important role as the *kethüda* facilitated a link between the tradesmen and the Ottoman state. The janissary corps did have a close relationship to the Guild of Butchers which shall be explored further in Chapter 4. These documents indicate that Sultan Ahmed III was still very directly involved in the everyday lives of his people and managing the janissary corps through its officers.

His successor Sultan Mahmud I is also recorded as being involved in the reassigning of janissary duties, sometimes after an office holder has died as was the case of Ali the gun man whose duty in customs was assigned to a janissary named Osman.[36] In the very first months of his reign Mahmud I appoints former Rumeli governor Abdullah Paşa to the rank of Janissary Ağa.[37] This suggests that from the moment he took the throne Mahmud began building networks of men who, if not completely loyal to him, were certainly in his debt for their good positions. Mahmud's interactions with the janissary officer class also included a deal pomp and ceremony with a ceremony being held in 1752 for a janissary ağa who had been awarded the rank a second time due to outstanding service.[38] There is also a record from the previous year (1751) indicating that the İstanbul Janissary Ağa had sponsored the decorating of a room in the sultans palace at Göksu including an inventory of the material he

[34] BOA, AE SAMD III, 192, 18565, 15/3/1134.
[35] BOA, İE TCT, 24, 2549, 26/1/1124.
[36] BOA, AE SMHD I, 130, 9497, 13/4/1157.
[37] BOA, CAS, 848, 36232, 15/5/1143.
[38] BOA, AE SMHD I, 261, 21164, 9/10/1165.

supplied which includes European velvet amongst other luxurious fabrics.[39] These examples suggest that Mahmud I and his janissary officers were on good terms and had positive relationships.

Moving into the reign of Sultan Mustafa III, this sultan is again involved in similar cases but there is a subtle change in tone. For example, when reassigning the position and wage of a member of a janissary marching band the document states that the leader of the band had demanded a certain replacement and it seems more a case of Mustafa III rubber stamping a decision already made by someone else.[40] This agreement with the decisions of others extends higher up the ranks with a case in 1764 where both a Vizier and Ağa are assigned tax collector roles in the provinces and a Janissary *kethüda* is raised to the rank of Ağa.[41] Other examples hint at a state trying to appease janissaries suggesting that concerns over janissary morale and the potential consequences thereof were quite prevalent at this time. One example from 1769 shows the Grand Vizier instructing the Janissary Ağa to ensure that his troops were provisioned with good quality bread. The Vizier flatters the janissaries and argues that they work hard for the good of the Ottoman people and so should be well served by the state and provided with healthy food.[42] This undermining of the capabilities of the Janissary Ağa is a trend we shall see continued for the rest of the eighteenth century, this document suggests that the more overt and direct rivalry dates from the middle of the century and it is at this point that the sultans began to become ever increasingly embroiled in these games of status between these office holders. Just a year after this bread incident there is record of a suspected secret letter hinting at problems in the janissary corps, no detailed explanation of the issue is given but the solution reached was to give payments to the

[39] BOA, D 2643, 1, 00, 1, M/1165.
[40] BOA, AE SMST III, 14, 936, 29/12/1181.
[41] BOA, TS MAE, 651/16.
[42] BOA, TS MAE, 1781/1.

janissaries and it is hinted that something similar occurred in Edirne also.[43]

This is the type of relationship that was in place between the sultanate and the janissaries when Sultan Abdülhamid I came to the Ottoman throne. It is during his reign that matters between the offices of janissary ağa and grand vizier seem to escalate. In 1774, the first year of his rule, there is a document only one sentence long stating simply that the janissary ağa needed to be dismissed.[44] This statement is dated 21st January and is the day before the Grand Vizier had written to the Sultan declaring that the janissary ağa was behaving any way he pleased without thinking of the consequences and was refusing advice to remedy this. The Vizier claims that the ağa has become arrogant and must be dismissed.[45] This dissatisfaction with the Janissary Ağa may have come from an incident in January of 1774 where the Ağa was ordered to capture fifteen criminals and only succeeded in finding five and imprisoning them in the prison at Ağakapısı.[46] However, the new occupant of the office seemed to foster better professional relationships as the following year the Sultan granted a request that the Janissary Ağa's son be appointed to the role of Head Imperial Doorkeeper (*Dergah-ı Ali Kapıcıbaşılık*).[47] This harmonious and peaceful balance seems to have lasted a while but in 1785 the Vizier again writes to the Sultan calling for the dismissal of the Janissary Ağa but claiming it is not urgent and that new candidates for the role should come to Istanbul. The Grand Vizier offers his advice to the Sultan should Sultan Abdülhamid think it necessary to dismiss the current Ağa, but the Sultan responds that it is not a matter of urgency and offers no further opinion on the matter.[48] The issue was raised again in 1788 when the Grand Vizier write to the Sultan that the Ağa at the time, Mehmet Emin, was of a

[43] BOA, TS MAE, 2380/32
[44] BOA, TS MAE. 5001/268.
[45] BOA, TS MAE, 9324/17.
[46] BOA, TS MAE, 5001/148.
[47] BOA, TS MAE, 440/1.
[48] BOA, HAT, 1430, 58534, 29/12/1199.

nervous disposition and was not able to maintain discipline and order amongst the janissaries because of this. Mehmet seems to have been appointed to the role, not due to his merits but simply because no one better could be found when needed, which is not a ringing endorsement of the capabilities of the janissary officer ranks at this time. The Grand Vizier recounts how Mehmet Emin once hid from soldiers who he believed were going to kill him over their displeasure regarding a military posting for the Russo-Turkish Wars, and that he subsequently paid the soldiers two to three times more than they should have got for their duties, thus endangering the treasury.[49] Mehmet seems to be confused by his duties and the Grand Vizier appeals to the Sultan that he be replaced with someone more suitable in order to bring the janissaries in order, to which the Sultan agrees. In this same year Abdülhamid wrote to the Grand Vizier regarding the dispatch of a janissary regiment to Davudpaşa, ordering that the Vizier ensure that the janissaries remain where they are stationed. His reason for involving the Vizier is due to the Sultans opinion of the Janissary Ağa's competence, or lack thereof, in his role. He further ordered to Vizier to communicate this order to the Ağa.[50] This suggests that it was perfectly acceptable for the Ağa to know the Vizier had been charged with this task and why, likely to make him aware of how precarious his position was and how the Vizier was favoured and trusted over him.

It is in April 1789 that this dynamic really seemed to come to a head under Abdülhamid I. The Sultan warns the Grand Vizier not to accept bribes from the Janissary Ağa or other janissary soldiers[51] which, assuming this was common practice for this Grand Vizier, very well explains the Vizier's earlier eagerness to keep replacing the Janissary Ağas. At this time the Vizier has also written to the Sultan declaring that the Janissary Ağa had become lazy in his duties and that this was causing the entire janissary organisation to imitate his

[49] BOA, HAT, 1451, 5, 24/1/1203.
[50] BOA, HAT, 24, 1190, 29/12/1202.
[51] BOA, AE SABH I, 1, 51, 10/7/1203.

behaviour. The Vizier tells of the Ağa trying to take great sums of money from the treasury and requests that the Ağa be replaced and the old one exiled.[52] I shall discuss the use of exile as a punishment for errant janissaries below. The Sultan wrote back to the Vizier agreeing that the Ağa needed to be replaced and asking the Grand Vizier to recommend likely candidates to him, however the implied subtext is that the Sultan shall be the one to make the decision on this occasion.[53] This seems to be a turning point for Abdülhamid I whereas in previous documentation he was happy to acquiesce to whatever the Vizier recommended regarding the janissaries he now seems to be taking a more hands on approach to managing the corps. Further writings from the Sultan show that he was convinced that the janissary institution was not being well served by its officers and that this had to be remedied.[54] This month also sees another Ottoman citizen writing to the Sultan telling him of the need for a new Ağa and recommending multiple candidates for the role. The Sultan accepts both the primary and secondary candidate proposed and states he will act upon these recommendations.[55] This collection of sources certainly shows a more involved and consulted Sultan than had previously been the case, and it is in this period that the groundwork was laid for the reforms, which would become famous under Sultan Selim III. This famous reforming Sultan would meet many of the same challenges his predecessors had regarding the officers of the janissary corps. In 1793 Selim III wrote to his then Grand Vizier telling of how he had to exile the Istanbul Janissary Ağa for accepting bribes and asking the Vizier to warn the new Ağa against the same behaviours. In the same letter there is mention of a kethuda to whom the same warning should be administered as well as the news that a treasurer of the Janissary Ağa was

[52] BOA, TS MAE, 7028/246.
[53] BOA, AE SABH I, 3, 291, 10/7/1203.
[54] BOA, TS MAE, 7029/141; BOA, AE SABH I, 10, 939, 10/7/1203.
[55] BOA, TS MAE, 7028/147.

to be exiled out of Istanbul.[56] While this may seem conspiratorial, when the general reforming tendencies of the era are considered, documentation such as this can be interpreted as reform efforts with the Sultan and the Grand Vizier working together towards the same goals. There is certainly a sense of janissary officers being held accountable and subject to consequences for their actions. This is something I shall elaborate upon below. Regarding adaptation, with the frequent appointing and replacing of office holders there is no question that janissaries needed to be able to adapt to whatever role they found themselves in and the duties thereof, although, as evidenced by the case of Mehmet Emin, they did not always succeed.

Furthermore, the authority of the Istanbul Janissary *Ağa* also seemed to include a great deal of authority in the matter of trade and the marketplace. Not only in regards to policing it but also decision making, cases from the *kadı sicilleri* show the *Ağa* being involved in matters of listing guarantors, being part of the decision when commercial property was rented and/or changed hands and contributing to a decision upon whether or not to raise sheep prices in accordance with a petition from the drovers.[57] Another instance of the *yeniçeri ağası* power over the marketplace is reflected in the case of the *pinyal biçak.* This seems to have been a type of rapier or stiletto and there are multiple entries in the Istanbul *kadı sicilleri* of the eighteenth century detailing that the *yeniçeri ağası* was going around visiting the craftsmen in the markets of Istanbul and forbidding the production of this specific type of blade.[58] The Janissary Ağa also became involved in a case in 1795 whereby bread was being sold to ships at the city gates illegally and it was considered harmful to the economy. The Customs Attendant is instructed not to allow this and the Ağa is called upon to punish anyone found guilty of this crime.[59] Such issues seem to be a longstanding reoccurrence in Istanbul as a

[56] BOA, HAT, 255, 14520, 29/12/1207.
[57] İSTANBUL 24, 1727.
[58] İbid.
[59] BOA, CBLD, 55, 2721, 29/10/1209.

1722 case shows a similar order being given in relation to the buying of fruit and vegetables. It is said that merchants are buying from ships before the provisions for the royal palace are secured and this is not to be permitted.[60] The restrictions being placed on trade could have been a bid to keep production within a certain group, and the discussion of *gedik* licenses, their limits and the repercussions on trade and artisan life are discussed in more depth in Chapter 4. However, I felt it useful to place this information here as a demonstration of how far reaching the power of the janissary officer class was at this time. Other marketplace matters that the Janissary Ağa was called upon to intervene in include the question of taxation on the sale of horses. In 1739 a horse trader petitioned the state arguing that it was unfair to take 10 *para* per horse sold. The Sultan agreed and ordered the Ağa to implement the order that this money was not to be taken from merchants.[61]

However, janissary officers were not above moving against members of the corps. Karademir, writing on Sivas, details that janissaries there were subject to illegal taxes from their own officers and many of them sued and even went to the Istanbul court. Far from the janissaries being the aggressors, he sees the janissaries as being manipulated by others, such as their own commanders and other provincial notables for their own illegal gains.[62]

Further examples of the power wielded by the Janissary Ağa include the case of Andiros *veled-i* Toros (Andiros child of Toros). Andiros was a *zimmi* of Albanian descent judging from his name and one who petitioned directly to the Istanbul Janissary *Ağa* and the Head Imperial Bodyguard in 1763. Andiros is a grower of olives and as such he requests that he be exempt from the *cizye* tax, a tax imposed upon non-Muslims. In exchange for exemption he proposes to donate 80 *vukkiye* of olive oil every year from his own orchards, the

[60] BOA, AE SAMD III, 126, 12409, 13/1/1135.
[61] BOA, AE SMHD I, 93, 6426, 1/12/1151.
[62] Zafer Karademir, 'The Janissaries in the Social and Economic Life of Rum (Sivas) Province in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century,' Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, 7, (2014), 497-499.

oil to be burnt in the lamps of the *mescid* and the chambers of the Imperial Divan. This is a clever way of negotiating to pay the tax in kind, especially at a time of monetary difficulties, which the janissaries are said to also have participated in.[63] Furthermore, it is interesting that Andiros is of Albanian descent. After 1730 Albanians in the Ottoman Empire were subject to stricter monitoring and prejudice. Perhaps Andiros believes that he can bolster his reputation by donating oil in such a manner and in some way redress the disadvantage his Albanian heritage puts him at. His request is granted on condition that he must not open a wine-house or sell wine for profit. However, this does contradict the arguments of Tezcan who claims a greater shift to a monetised economy, especially in urban populations due to their population growth.[64] While Quataert argued that the economy remained largely agrarian despite this urban growth,[65] this case may support the latter argument.

However, if we consider the eighteenth-century Ottoman economic situation it may be less of a question of a remaining agrarian economy, and more a case of returning to this method of payment out of need. Fortunately, as this had been a valid system of trade within the Empire, the Ottomans were able to return to it when required. This is in line with what was discussed above regarding the imposing of penalties on alcohol merchants at this time. However Andiros finds himself being opposed and disturbed by a third party and petitions the sultan to smooth the way for his deal to work.[66] This exemption from the *cizye* tax in exchange for oil to be burnt in these locations is not a new thing, the right having been requested by one Konstantin son of Yanaki, upon the death of Yanaki the right was granted to the son[67] and so we can assume that this was a competitive exemption status only granted to

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[63] Kayaçağlan, 'Yeniçerilerinin Politik ve Sosyo-Ekonimik Rolleri', 62.

[64] Tezcan, 'The Second Empire', 21.

[65] Donald Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922' (Cambridge, 2005), 111.

[66] BOA, CML, 668, 27380, 20/6/1177.

[67] BOA, CML, 245, 10196, 04/7/1116.

one individual at a time and that it may have been easy for the *Ağa* to pit competing petitioners against each other. However, there is no evidence of this and the amount of oil to be donated remains the same year to year, so it seems that this was all perfectly legitimate. The fact that oil was being accepted to a central state institution like the Divan is telling. The donor may get great status from donating to the Divan, but the council's acceptance may be something more than ceremonial, considering again the financial struggles of the Ottoman state at this time accepting payment in kind may well have been equally beneficial to both parties involved. This assessment of the janissary officer ranks show the development of their relationships with other members of the Ottoman power structure as well as how officers had to be prepared to adapt to a new financial and/or professional situation owing to the high number of appointments and dismissals at this time. While this frequent changing of occupations may be more commonly expected from the lower ranks of the janissary corps, discussed further in Chapter 4 below, this chapter demonstrates that the same principles applied to the officer ranks as well.

## Discipline and Punishment

### 1. Sedition and Conspiracy

The theories on janissary sedition and subversion claim that janissary businesses, especially janissary-run coffee-houses were meeting places for rebels and where uprisings were planned. Some janissaries were landlords of bachelor houses or *han* buildings and were often accused of using these houses for organising criminal activities, such as smuggling and prostitution.[68] Similar claims were made against janissary coffee-houses, that they were seditious institutions and that janissaries often plotted rebellions there. In the seventeenth

[68] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 41.

century Sultan Murad IV (1612-1640, r. 1623-1640), had banned coffee houses on pain of execution for just this reason.[69] Zarinebaf has commented upon the shift towards public gathering places like coffee-houses assuming a central role in the policing of Istanbul in the eighteenth century. However, in the aftermath of the 1703 and 1730 rebellions the government was cracking down on public gathering places as we have seen from their orders concerning wine-houses.

The Islamic bans on drinking alcohol and the tavern closures in the eighteenth century all contributed to the rise of the coffee-house culture, and apart from some warnings from certain individuals of the *ulema* class about the health dangers of drinking coffee, there were no specific rulings against coffee-houses pertaining to their produce in the eighteenth century, but simply the fears of them as meeting places for seditious groups. These fears may have been due to the sociological make-up of coffee-house patrons, as they were places where all levels of society as well as different ethnic and religious groups frequently mixed. The janissaries owned and operated many coffee-houses in Galata, a district already with a somewhat dubious reputation. Fears over the immorality and seditious nature of coffee-houses could also come from the fact that they were places of entertainment, not only by way of dancers and prostitutes working out of them, but also the famous shadow puppet shows featuring the characters Karagöz and Hacıvert, two clever working class Istanbulites who often mocked and poked fun at the ruling classes and institutions, contributing to an anti-authoritarian dynamic in such environments. Add to this the fact that during festival seasons such as Bayram coffee-houses were very popular places to celebrate until very late into the night,[70] and it is easy to see where such contemporary fears could come from.

Ali Çaksu's research on the janissary coffee-houses of eighteenth-century Istanbul, and

[69] Ibid., 125.
[70] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 125-127.

whether the janissaries were legitimate businessmen or Mafia-like criminals is somewhat inconclusive. Çaksu claims the coffee-houses functioned as bases for racketeering and Sufi rituals, even sometimes providing lodgings for janissaries.[71] Even if all of the above are true, the only reprehensible action among them is racketeering and that is merely one interpretation of guilds hiring janissary security as previously detailed. Çaksu goes on to admit, to a certain extent, that janissary interests were highly integrated with those of tradesman and craftsmen. However, unlike Tezcan he does not claim that the alliance was a happy one, with the uprisings being a symbol of this unity.[72] Instead, Çaksu believes that while the janissaries shared and reflected the urban population's concerns, they also had no hesitation about intimidating and bullying the populace.[73] Coffee-houses were popular centres of conversation and gossip, which could be a hindrance as well as a help to janissaries, as the spreading rumours of *Bektaşi* rituals potentially practised there show.[74] Their unorthodox religion was a mark against the janissaries in Ottoman society, as it raised fears of what actually went on in the secret meetings of their order.

In further explaining why coffee-housekeeper was an attractive occupation for a janissary Ali Çaksu offers four reasons. Firstly, that it was not a very demanding job and thus could be embarked upon with no formal training, secondly, that coffee-houses did not impinge on businesses associated with the guilds and so the guilds let them flourish. Thirdly, in such a setting the traditional *esprit de corps* of the janissaries could survive in a civilian context and finally, that a coffee-house was a perfect cover under which to hide multiple activities.[75] However, the Swedish ambassador had a different opinion of janissary discontent. Being praised for the accuracy of his reports, he attributed it to his analysing of information. In his

[71] Çaksu, 'Janissary Coffee Houses', 117.
[72] Tezcan, 'Second Empire', 203.
[73] Çaksu, 'Janissary Coffee Houses', 120.
[74] Ibid., 126.
[75] Ibid., 121.

opinion the grumbling in coffee-houses was how the janissaries voiced and purged their discontent and that there was more danger of uprisings if there were no such public complaints being heard.[76] By serving as a venting space for popular discontent, it can be argued that cross words were less likely to become rebellious actions if they met with a friendly and sympathetic ear over a social beverage. Nelly Hanna has argued that historians should consider a coffee-house literacy. Much like in London, Ottoman coffee-houses were likely to attract intellectual and learned members of society. However, Hanna also says that, in considering intellectualism and literacy in the Ottoman lands, studies require a flexible model of literacy.[77] In coffee-houses often one person would read from a manuscript while the assembled group listened and discussed the text. Aydınlı, writing on eighteenth and nineteenth-century annotations of manuscripts is working with heroic narratives, which I believe is a significant as the readers were mostly artisans and janissaries turned artisans.[78] We may consider this type of story to be appealing to these social groups. While this activity may support the idea of the coffee-house being a social space for leisure, as opposed to rebellion, the nature of these tales could be interpreted as inciting violence and encouraging such activities. Furthermore, Aydınlı shows that stories associated with Persian and *Bektaşi* traditions were popular with the janissaries, hinting at their loyalty to their adopted religion.[79] The majority of the annotations discovered by Aydınlı range from criticisms of those who write on the manuscripts (ironically), critiques of the stories, lovers notes and poems. Furthermore, visual doodles very often show janissary readers as they drew their regimental insignia upon the documents as well as weapons. Aydınlı argues that these doodles reflect

[76] Boyar & Fleet, 'A Social History', 47.
[77] Nelly Hanna, 'Literacy Among Artisans and Tradesmen in Ottoman Cairo,' in Christine Woodhead (ed.) 'The Ottoman World', 326-330.
[78] Aydınlı, 'Unusual Readers,' 116.
[79] Ibid., 116.

janissary self-perception.[80] Can we interpret this as janissary self-perceptions as warriors or heroes for justice? Reading and writing upon heroic narratives does align with this idea. Yet again, the argument could be made that these documents riled up the janissaries into sedition and rebellion, not unlike the subversive puppet shows in the coffee-houses. Alternatively, it can be argued that they provided a safe outlet for such discontent. Sometimes simply the suspicion of wrongdoing was enough to incur an official warning as was the case in 1798 when Sultan Selim III cautioned military leaders, including janissary officers, that it was illegal to walk while armed with guns and to sell guns in Istanbul. This was recorded in the records of the Imperial Council and the Sultan states that anyone caught doing so will be punished but does not specify what that punishment might entail.[81] These fears came to realisation the following year when two janissaries fought in a marketplace in Fatih resulting in one of them being shot by the other resulting in injury. They were both taken to the police station and were held there. The problem was that janissaries coming back to Istanbul from active military service would still have their firearms with them. However, there is a reluctance to inspect the markets for guns due to the fact that news would spread about the inspections resulting in more effective concealment of weapons. The order was given that market guards were to refuse admittance to the market to any janissaries carrying guns.[82]

One way of spreading sedition in the eighteenth century was the posting of papers. An increasingly literate population combined with the recent arrival of the printing press in the Ottoman Empire gave discontent another outlet. A letter of Sultan Abdülhamid I from the April of 1789 the Grand Vizier and the Janissary Ağa found a suspicious paper that had been posted to the palace wall during Friday prayer times. The handwriting of the scribes who wrote the notice in question matches that found in two other similar cases. The scribes were

[80] Ibid., 119-125.
[81] BOA, HAT, 220, 12201, 29/10/1212.
[82] BOA, TS MAE, 2361/1.

considered loyal and when questioned claimed that they had done nothing wrong.[83] When we consider the career petition writers *(arzuhalcı)* previously referred to, it is plausible that such papers were penned by scribes under the dictation of the true offenders. However, the fact that the scribes face no consequences for writing such documents and/or not reporting them is interesting. The people who had hired the scribes to write the papers were those that needed to be found but it is not clear whether or not they were ever apprehended.

However, there is the question of janissary sedition turning into actions as opposed to suspicions and words. If we refer to Tezcan's claim that janissary uprisings were representing popular discontent, the question is raised of how far artisans participated in the uprisings because they felt motivated to do so. Their involvement could have been due to their being swept up by the military institution. On the subject of artisan migration into the corps every guild was different; some willingly joined the corps as a whole, while others left to the discretion of their individual members whether or not they wished to join the military. Artisans would take on 'political' roles as individuals, but guilds only did so rarely. Suraiya Faroqhi has claimed that by themselves artisans did not rebel very often but did participate in urban revolts where the main player was another party. Thus, in the writing of history craftsmen are usually seen as somewhat "junior partners" in these rebellions.[84] This could be because artisan representation was via individuals as opposed to guilds, or due to the tendency of historians to over emphasise military factors in Ottoman history. However, Ali Yaycioğlu argues that the janissaries often presented themselves as protectors of tradition and claims that, by the eighteenth century, the corps was not just an army or a trade organisation but also something resembling a political party, with alliances and united actions promoted to the

[83] BOA, AE SABH I, 14, 1210, 10/7/1203.
[84] Faroqhi, 'Artisans of the Empire', 148-150, 157.

wider public as being in their collective interest.[85] This suggests that the janissaries had much more agency in these uprisings than Faroqhi would claim.

## 2. Janissary Criminals

There is, of course, some evidence of janissaries being involved in criminal activity, and I would be remiss if I deliberately left such evidence out of this thesis. As I aim to make my presentation of the eighteenth-century janissary as complete as possible, I shall address this question here. It is likely that any criminal conviction of a janissary was blown out of proportion and used as examples of 'corruption'. However, I would argue that when janissaries formed such a large percentage of the urban population an absence of such evidence would be impossible. In fact, two *evrak* examples from the archive, one from 1706 and one from 1768 give us examples of this.

The first example from 1706, is an order contained in a letter from Sultan Ahmed III for a complaint made against janissaries and those from the ambassadorial guards that they were troubling Christian monks in Fenerkapısı while they were reading their gospel. The exact nature of the persecution is not clear but the words "*taciz"* (bothering, harassing, worrying, troubling) and "*rencide"* (pained, tormented, injured, hurt, annoyed, vexed) are used. It is not clear if physical damage is done to the monks or not, but they seem to just be annoyed by some form of verbal harassment. Also, the phrase: "*Ahmed Paşa namında men olunmuş-iken yine incil kiraatlerine ederimiz*" - Saying, "In the name of Ahmed Paşa while it was happening it prevented/prohibited even our gospel reading."[86] This is suggesting that the harassment was perhaps happening especially during the times that the monks were holding

[85] Yaycioğlu, 'Janissaires, ingénieurs, et prédicateurs', 23-24.
[86] BOA, AE SAMD III, 191, 18491, 18/5/1118.

their services of worship. The monks also declare in their complaint that this would never have happened at the time of Ahmed III's predecessor and that perhaps, is what prompted the sultan to lay down the law and order that these monks were not to be bothered any further. The janissaries in question, being from those assigned to guard foreign dignitaries, were a group famously unhappy with their roles. They were forced to spend time with the 'infidels' and were often allegedly mocked by their peers being nicknamed 'swineherds' for their duties of chaperoning foreigners everywhere, as well as being forced to wear yellow shoes specific to their job assignment which easily marked them out.[87] Considering this, it is not difficult to believe that members of such a group may take out their frustrations by harassing a group of foreign infidel monks, however seeing this as an overly serious offence, while it is annoying and disrespectful, would be to blow it out of proportion. If there was indeed no physical damage, which is not stated but is also not implied, then it is maybe the equivalent of youths shouting obscenities.

The second case from 1768 is somewhat more serious, and so the perpetrators brought down upon themselves a more serious punishment. It is recorded in the military files of the BOA that two janissaries stood accused of "taking by force" *(cebren kaçırır)* two *zimmi* maidens from among the workers of a new store in Üsküdar.[88] Whether this is in fact rape or simply kidnap is not made clear, but the janissaries themselves were subsequently banished to imprisonment in Seddülbahir Castle in Çanakkale and so we cannot discount the possibility that there was sexual assault involved. As janissaries were often punished by their own officers within the institution it is to be expected that records of janissary misdeeds do sometimes appear in the military documentation folios. Traditionally, Islamic law prescribed chastisement, imprisonment or the death penalty for rape and these were sentences often

[87] Nigel & Caroline Webb, 'The Earl and His Butler', 33.
[88] BOA, CAS, 785, 33254, 26/5/1181.

handed down by Ottoman jurors.[89] Looking at the options, it appears that our janissaries here received the lightest of the punishments, suffering only banishment and imprisonment, yet there were also cases of men being simply fined according to their social status and so we can interpret this case as something of a middle ground. The girls in question were *zimmi* and as such under the protection of that status and the sultan, however that meant they were not Muslims and thus it may be tempting to think that the crime against them may be viewed as less heinous than if it had been perpetrated against Muslim women. However, there is no evidence for this. We do not know from the document whether or not this case went to court, but from the work of Najwa Al-Qattan on the *sharia sicilleri* of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Damascus, there is no evidence that Muslim testimony was given greater weight in cases where the accused and accusers came from different religious communities.[90]

Fariba Zarinebaf states that violent assaults commonly increased after economic problems but still only a small percentage of cases for Istanbul in the eighteenth century which made it to court were sexual assault cases. Naturally, just like in any society, rape went underreported due to fear and shame. However, men who were convicted of rape were subject to severe chastisement and scorn according to Zarinebaf, although fines were often instigated in accordance with the financial means of a culprit, it seems to have been more a question of social and public shame than any other punishment which was meant to deter people.[91] Additionally, janissaries famously received lighter sentences owing to the intervention of their influential superiors and such a case may be at work here, the men still had to be punished, but the punishment was moderated to save everyone's dignity and to possibly avoid depriving the state of skilled soldiers and/or workers. Kayaçağlan corroborates that janissaries were

[89] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 116.
[90] Najwa Al-Qattan, 'Dhimmis in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination.' International Journal of Middle East Studies, 31 (1999), 437-438.
[91] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 113-116.

punished by having penalties imposed on their property and that the punishment was dependent upon the seniority of the janissary. Older and married janissaries, it is claimed, were punished by the *kethüda.* Kayaçağlan further argues that janissary executions were not for public viewing but were announced as a deterrent, but that janissaries were only killed if they killed a civilian. Rarely was punishment administered outside of the corps.[92] There is also the chance that the authorities feared that severe physical punishment or execution of the janissaries may result in a severe backlash from their peers and so, again, this moderate outcome worked in favour of all concerned.

As we can see the issue of discipline and punishment is one that is central to the history of the janissary corps. Not only the discipline within the institution but also that inflicted from outside the corps, from the Sultan and higher members of state. In addition to this the janissaries themselves held the power to order and punish members of Ottoman society, as we saw above with the Istanbul Janissary Ağa implementing the laws regarding the production of the *pinyal biçak.* This section is going to discuss how the janissaries were subject to, and also wielded, the power of law in Istanbul during the eighteenth century. I shall discuss the types of crimes janissaries are accused of and the punishments that were deemed appropriate as well as using examples from the *kadı sicils* to demonstrate in which matters the janissaries were subject to these civic law courts. In addition to the cases from the court registers this section shall be mainly formed of an analysis of three Fortress Registers *(Kalebend Defterleri)* as exile and imprisonment was commonly used for a variety of crimes and the details of these cases can be found in these registers. The three registers I have studied span the second half of the eighteenth century being dated 1753-1754, 1768-1774 and 1788-1790. By using examples spanning this period I hope to see any changes in the cases

[92] Kayaçağlan, 'Yeniçerilerinin Politik ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Rolleri', 92-95.

recorded. This section will also feature examples from the *Hatt-ı Humayun* archival records, the records of *Topkapı Sarayı* catalogue and various other *evrak.* Many of these latter examples are representative of the dealing the higher ranks of Ottoman society had with the janissaries, especially officer ranks.

Firstly, I shall begin with an assessment of the Fortress Registers by breaking down the crimes listed in each volume.

| **Crime** | **No. Convicted** |
|---|---|
| Generic/Illegal behaviour | 1 |
| Banditry | 1 |
| Murder | 2 (?) |
| Assault | 5 (?) |
| Crime not specified | 1 |
| Lax in duty | 1 |
| Whoring | 1 |
| Sedition | 1 |

**Table 1: Data pertaining to janissary convictions from the 1753-1754 Fortress Register.**

As we can see from this table there are a total of twelve cases recorded in this register which feature janissary defendants. That is not to say that this was the sum total of criminal cases involving janissaries in Istanbul at this time, only that these were the cases where exile was deemed to be the appropriate response. There is some confusion in one of the cases however, this involves the knifing of a boatman but it is not specified in the register whether or not the boatman died and so it is unclear whether or not this should be recorded as a case of

assault or a case of murder.[93] As can be seen from the table, both crimes were met with exile, though the other murder case involved a plea on the part of the mother in behalf of her son[94] which is potentially the reason for the lighter penalty. From this it might be suggested that the knifing incident only wounded the boatman as assault seems to be more commonly met with exile than murder, but this is only conjecture. The case which I have chosen to classify as sedition was a janissary and his wife both being exiled as they were found to be hiding bomb making equipment.[95] Another example of sedition, which can be found in the correspondence of Sultan Mustafa III occurred in 1771 and recounts the actions of a janissary named Türkmenoğlu Ali who scattered seditious papers in a public area of Istanbul. He was subsequently imprisoned in Ağakapısı to await punishment and it is decided that he was to be jailed in Bursa Fortress.[96] While exile seems to have been used most commonly for janissaries due to assault in this register there is a wide range of other crimes represented, including those that connected to the perpetrators morality such as being lazy in their work and being found in the company of a prostitute. Exile was a punishment also meted out to women accused of prostitution, more information can be found in Chapter 2. Also, like the cases pertaining to the janissaries, the prostitutes were often able to return to their former homes if they were shown to be repentant. This same condition is applied to many different crimes in this register suggesting that exile was intended to be a time of reflection and moral growth, a type of time-out for the criminal in question. In cases of janissaries being caught in the company of prostitutes, punishments seemed to vary. From the table above we can see one case where a janissary was simply exiled for this crime. However, in 1786 another janissary was found in

[93] Fatma Sahin, '11 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine Göre (s. 1-196) H. 1166-1167 / M. 1753-1754 Yılları Arasında Osmanlı Develtin'nde Suç ve Cezalar (Değerlerendirme-Metin)', Yüksek Lisans Tezi, T.C. Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesti, (2017), 145
[94] Ibid., 457.
[95] Ibid., 317.
[96] BOA, AE SMST III, 102, 7733, 29/12/1185.

the company of two Muslim prostitutes and a non-Muslim man. Both men were imprisoned and later hanged by imperial order while the women were simply imprisoned.[97] What is interesting that the janissary was imprisoned and hanged at a different location to the other man involved, suggesting that his trial and conviction was handled by a different group of people. This would be his own officers as it is well known that janissaries could only be tried and punished by their own institution. The fact that this punishment was more severe than in earlier cases suggests either an increase in the importance of morality crimes and punishing them more severely was meant to make an example. Another possibility is that something about this case had an additional aggravating factor making the crime appear worse in the eyes of the law. This could have been due to the fact that the women were Muslim, and this action on the part of the janissary was seen as especially disrespectful, or that the janissary's companion in crime had been a non-Muslim. To be caught engaging in such immoral acts was bad enough but in the company of a heathen, if the state authorities at the time were increasingly concerned about morality crimes, this would surely have exacerbated the situation.

| Crime | No. convicted |
|---|---|
| Cheating customers | 3 |
| Selling lamb to infidels/non-Muslims | 1 |

**Table 2: Data pertaining to janissary convictions from the 1768-1774 Fortress Register.**

The 1768-1774 register shows much fewer cases involving janissaries and as such shows fewer types of crime. Both of the crimes listed here are pertaining to corrupt or illegal business practices. The lack of more violent crimes in favour of financial ones reflects the trend of janissaries further integrating into the artisan landscape of Istanbul. Considering the issues around janissary titulature during the eighteenth century it is highly likely that there

[97] BOA, HAT, 1450, 41, 29/12/1200.

were other cases involving individuals who held a janissary commission but that they simply were not referred to by their janissary title as their position as a tradesman was more relevant to the topic at hand.

| Crime | No. convicted |
|---|---|
| Not specified, possibly lax in duty | 3 |
| Cheating customers | 1 |
| Assault | 1 |
| Breaking and Entering | 1 |
| Disobedience | 1 |

**Table 3: Data pertaining to janissary convictions from the 1788-1790 Fortress Register.**

The 1788-1790 register reflects a wider range of crimes but still shows a low number of convictions. There is also a higher emphasis on crimes that cause no physical harm to another person, except for assault, and more emphasis on moral and financial wrongs. This is an extension of the trend seen in the 1768-1774 Fortress Register and aligns with the image of the janissary corps, not only further integrating into lives of trade but at the same time shifting away from warfare and by extension violence and conflict. Even here, in the types of crimes the janissaries of Istanbul stand accused of there is a pattern of adaptation to a more civilian oriented and less militarised way of life. Regarding the location of the fortresses to which exiles were sent there seems to be no direct correlation between the severity of the crime and how far away a convicted man was sent, or for how long as often their return was precedented either by their own repentance and/or a petition from a family member. There does seem to be a convenience of geography in a lot of cases with the 1768-1774 register analysis stating that Sedülbahir, and Bozcaada Castles were used to imprison criminals due to their proximity to

Istanbul and that Bozcaada and Bursa were used as places of exile for the same reason.[98] However, the cases in the Fortress Registers cannot be said to be representative of all ranks of the janissary institution as the men involved in these cases are often only referred to as rank and file janissaries, sometimes of various trade occupations. Where there is a rank referenced it is usually a ceremonial or petty officer rank with only one case featuring a Janissary Ağa in the 1788-1790 register and this was where he was forgiven and permitted to return home after a petition from his wife.[99] This system of petitioning for forgiveness however, does not seem to be exclusive to the officer ranks of the janissary corps. In 1760 a petition was brought to Sultan Mustafa III on behalf of a Janissary Baker from Istanbul named Hasan. He seems to have been exiled to Limni for the crime of abusing the prices of his wares. The petition was sent by his mother-in-law Ayşe Hatun requesting that he be forgiven and permitted to return home.[100] Returning to the officer ranks, contemporary Ottoman writers, as well as verifying the commonplace use of exile give further examples of the penalty imposed against officers. Çeşmî-Zâde Mustafa Reşîd (? – 1770), writing in the mid to late 1760s, tells how the Janissary Ağa Hüseyin was lax in his duties and made too many mistakes and so was exiled to Tekirdağ and replced by a Kul Kethüda named Osman.[101] The historian Nuri, writing later in the 1790s, recounts the experience of a Kul Kethüda named Pekmezci Mehmet Paşa who became a Janissary Ağa in 1785 and in 1786 was exiled to Dimetoka. However, he seemed to be eventually forgiven as he later returned to Istanbul and held the position of Janissary Ağa again.[102] Further examples of the exile of the Ağa rank can be found in the *Hatt-ı Hümayun*

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[98] Uğur Koca, '17 Numaralaı Kalebend Defterine Göre Hicri 1182-1188 (M.1768-1774) Yılları Arasında Osmanlı Develtinde Suç, Suçlu, Hapishaneler ve Cezalar', Yüksek Lisans Tezi, T.C. Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesti, (2015), 107.
[99] Ramazan Uz, '24 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine (H. 1203 – 1205 /M. 1788 – 1790) Göre Osmanlı Develti'nde Suçlar, Suçlular, ve Cezalar (Değerlendirms ve Metin)', Yüksek Lizans Tezi, T.C. Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesti, (2017), 165-166.
[100] BOA, AE SMST III, 34, 2295, 29/12/1173.
[101] Çeşmî-Zâde Mustafa Reşîd, 'Çeşmî-Zâde Tarihi', Hazırlayan Dr. Bekir Kutukoğlu, (İstanbul, 1959), 77.
[102] Toprak, 'Nuri Tarihi', 258.

documentation. These both occurred in the ear 1790s under Sultan Selim III and in both cases the Janissary Ağa's have been accused of being lax in their duties. The 1793 order sees Selim III ordering the Grand Vizier to exile the corrupt Ağa to Dimetoka in Greece for accepting a bribe[103] while the other case, from 1796, is a further reflection of the rivalry between Grand Viziers and Ağas. In this case the Vizier levels criticism at his predecessor for reappointing a janissary who had been exiled once (to Nigbolu) already for sedition and arguing that he should not have been placed in a high office again as he had shown no remorse and his behaviour had not changed. This led to a second exile to Gelibolu and a change in officers. The Sultan was in agreement with these measures.[104] As well as exiling a great many janissaries, Selim III was also practising the forgiveness subject to a petition. In 1791 a janissary officer petitioned on behalf of a former officer, who had been dismissed from his duty and exiled. The petitioner argued that the convicted janissary had children who were now alone without support and so requested that the Sultan pardon the criminal and let him return for this reason. Sultan Selim III agrees and orders that the man be released a sent to his children.[105] The following year two janissaries were exiled away from Istanbul with the Sultan ordering them to become wiser in their exile.[106] This suggests that they could eventually be forgiven depending upon their future rehabilitation. What these cases reveal is that high office was no protection from these kinds of punishment and that positions were very rarely held by the same occupant for very long. This lack of stability and constant need to be able to take on whatever office was next offered is another example of adaptability, this time on the part of the janissary officer class. It also explains why many janissaries of all ranks held multiples roles and financial interests in order to maintain an income.

[103] BOA, HAT, 271, 15837, 29/12/1207.
[104] BOA, HAT, 258, 14829, 29/12/1210.
[105] BOA, HAT, 1410, 57282, 29/12/1205.
[106] BOA, HAT, 1409, 57164, 29/12/1206.

For cases that do not involve exile examples can be found in the Istanbul court registers. While the entries therein mostly pertain to janissaries and the distribution of their estates after death there are one or two other cases which help the understanding of how janissaries were subject to the *kadı* courts. The first case from 1731 and pertains to a janissary having taken a loan from the money of his regiment before dying and now Abdullah Odabaşı, who is responsible for overseeing the finances of the regiment is requesting repayment from his estate. The family of the deceased janissary request that this be confirmed in court and it is duly confirmed.[107] Another case from 1767 is also about loan repayment and occurs because Osman, the leader of the 10th regiment leant Abdussamed 500 *kuruş* and the latter had only repaid 200 *kuruş* out of this total and so Osman took him to court in order to secure the rest of the repayment.[108] Some cases were taken to higher authorities, such as one in 1784 where a Janissary Ağa brought his issue to the attention of Sultan Abdülhamid I. The Ağa claims that previously he had leant 400 *kuruş* to a man who lived in Macedonia four years before. This debt has not been repaid despite requests for repayment by letter. The creditor then discovered that the debtor had died a year and a half before.[109] It is likely that he wishes the authorities to intercede in his behalf with the heirs of the deceased man. In the case of loans, as in other matters, janissaries were to be judged by their own officers. In 1795 a moneylender demanded that the Janissary Ağa be called to judge upon a loan which he claims to have made to a janissary called Mustafa who is apparently trying to deny the debt.[110] The other main reason janissaries came to the *kadı* courts, aside from inheritance matters, was property and marital disputes. These can be seen in the Üsküdar register for 1782-1783. In one case a woman, Emine Hanim, sued her husband's commanding officer in the janissaries, Mehmet Arif Ağa

[107] İSTANBUL, 24.
[108] İSTANBUL, 29.
[109] BOA, AE SABH I, 180, 12006, 19/5/1198.
[110] BOA, CDRB, 25, 1208, 25/7/1209.

claiming that he had caused her husband to divorce her by being seen talking with her. Mehmet Arif donated 50 *kuruş* to her and that was settled.[111] In another case a couple came to court complaining that four of the windows belonging to their neighbour, one Ali Ağa, a spice seller, could see directly into the women's rooms of their house and that this was forbidden. Ali responded by stating that he had been in his home longer than they had and furthermore, they had built upon his field meaning he could not use the land. The court decided to send out a surveying commission to investigate the matter which was to include a janissary clerk.[112] Istanbul courts were also called upon for mediation purposes. In June of 1755 two janissaries from the Erzincan province came to Istanbul demanding the resolution of an issue that existed between them. The decision was that this problem had to be fixed in their hometowns and so a court attendant was sent with them to deal with the matter. It was decreed that, should these men attempt to bring their issue to Istanbul again after resolution they were to be punished by the Janissary Ağa.[113] These examples show how janissaries in Istanbul and, indeed, across Ottoman society were both subject to the rulings of these courts and subject to their protections as well. There are two cases of complaint against the Janissary Ağa from this time which do not result in exile. One from the collections of Topkapı and one from the *Hatt-ı Hümayun.* They are both written from the Grand Vizier to the Sultan and the case from the Topkapı archives has no clear date but tells the story of an Ağa who failed to find a man who had posted a notice on the palace gate as well as being unable to properly carry out his duties of distributing pay to his janissaries. The Grand Vizier claims that the Ağa had not previously been dismissed as they wished to prevent the rumour of his dismissal due to an issue with

[111] Mustafa Itrı Küçükoğlu, 'Üsküdar Mahkemesi 510 Numaralı Şer'iyye Sicilinin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirmesi: 1782-1783 (H. 1196-1197)' Yüksek Lisans Tezi, T. C. Harran, (2015), 390-391.
[112] Ibid., 102.
[113] BOA, TS MAE, 1196, 21.

janissary wages. The Sultan responds by ordering the Ağa replaced.[114] The fact that the issue of officer incompetence regarding wages was covered up suggests that it was believed the fallout from spreading this information would have been worse than keeping an incompetent officer. Waiting until this was not a danger to dismiss him shows that the power and influence of the janissary institution as a whole, and the possible repercussions of their actions were carefully considered when making decisions about disciplining and appointing the officer ranks. The *Hatt-ı Hümayun* case comes from the reign of Sultan Selim III and shows the Grand Vizier demanding that the janissary officers class declare and have written down the systems for disciplining the soldiers, to which the sultan agrees.[115] This is reflective of the reform efforts which were well underway by this time. The desire to clearly define boundaries of power and influence and assign duties and privileges accordingly. The janissaries were also not immune to the temptations of white-collar crime. In 1764 a case arose where a janissary named Halil Bey had held a position for three years in the Tobacco Customs of Istanbul and its environs subordinate to the Adana office. It was discovered that he had been embezzling money from the customs and was ordered to repay it to the officials.[116]

These cases presented here show a leniency in the punishments applied to accused janissaries, and although many Ottoman judgements fell short of the harshest penalties prescribed by traditional Islamic law it cannot be discounted that janissaries were dealt with especially leniently. In the shift in the types of crime janissaries stand accused of we can see a greater number of civilian or trade related crime in the later centuries signifying the increasing integration into wider urban society. The crimes which result in financial gain for the perpetrator can be seen as another adaptation to the Ottoman economy of the time and the constant quest for a liveable income. In the use of coffee-houses as a space for airing

[114] BOA, TS MAE, 527, 52.
[115] BOA, HAT, 257, 14768, 29/12/1210.
[116] BOA, CML, 460, 18660, 29/2/1177.

grievances there is an adaptation to new ways of demonstrating discontent.

## Civic Authority

In this section I want to briefly address the question of unofficial influence and authority. While there may be some overlap with the social lives of the janissaries the examples I shall present did endow the janissaries involved with a respectability which would stand them in good stead in their communities and because of the nature of these activities, educational, religious, and so on, involvement gave the janissaries influence with the populace. The records of these janissary actions appear, as so many aspects of janissary life does, in various subfolders of the archival collections pertaining to military matters.

The first examples I shall give are the cases of janissary involvement with *vakıf* foundations. The *waqf*, or *vakıf* in Turkish, was an endowment under *Sharia* law which set aside revenue to fund a charitable cause indefinitely. Common endowments in the Ottoman Empire included schools, religious institutions and Sufi hostels as well as some medical facilities and social aid. The establishment of a *vakıf* benefited the donor in several ways: firstly, by securing the favour of God and the prayers of the faithful, secondly, the endowment would be tax exempt and thirdly, the *vakıf* contracts could establish an administrator who would be entitled to a salary. In this way founders were able to secure employment for successive generations of families. There were two types of *vakıf* active in the Ottoman Empire. The first was the one already mentioned which established a pious foundation *(vakıf khayri).* The second was the *vakıf ahili* which arguably also contributed to a pious cause, but not until after the founder was dead. The legality of the latter was debated among Arab jurists as it was very often viewed as a tax shelter which cut certain heirs out of the line of

succession, which was mandated by the Quran. For example, such endowments would very often disinherit female descendants who, according to Quranic law, were entitled to half of the share of inheritance any brothers received. However, women were also able to endow and inherit *vakıf* foundations. Furthermore, the question of accepting cash *vakıf* endowments became problematic as these were used to finance loans, the interest of which would go to pious causes. Ottoman jurists found this acceptable if the said interest did not exceed ten percent.[117] On the face of it this seems unsurprising as pious foundations were exempt from taxation and confiscation by the state.[118] This makes them seem like very worthwhile endeavours, for janissaries to invest in.

One case of janissary involvement in pious works occurred in the Çıkrıkcı Kemal Neighbourhood of Istanbul in 1757. This case details an appointment from the school foundation to the school of Janissary Kethüda Suleyman Paşa. From its name we can assume that this was a school founded and funded by the Paşa in question and it proudly advertises its janissary patronage, most likely a *vakf* endowment. Much like other appointments of office positions as foundations administrator could be hereditary and petitions for who was to be instated were often granted. For example, in 1758 the manager of this janissary foundation successfully petitioned to have his chosen candidate, Mustafa ibn Veliyüddin, to the duty of *cüzhan* (Quran reader) in this foundation to be paid a daily wage of 2 *akçe*.[119] Such small daily sums seem to be the daily income of such positions and several could be held at the same time. The same Mustafa referred to above was also granted the position of clerk in this same foundation, also in 1758, being the son of the recently deceased clerk and for that he received 5 *akçe* per day.[120] The foundation in question consisted of a tomb and Quran learning

[117] Bruce Masters, 'waqf' in ‘Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire’, (New York, 2009), 290-291.
[118] Zarinebaf, ‘Crime and Punishment’, 18.
[119] BOA, CMF, 129, 6401, 29/3/1171.
[120] BOA, CMF, 120, 5965, 21/11/1171.

school and from the documentation seems to have been founded, administrated and staffed exclusively by janissaries. The small sums and holding of multiple appointments was well established by the mid eighteenth century with a case from 1724 recounting the appointment of a Head Cook to the prayer role in a foundation established by a former janissary.[121]

This was followed in 1791, by the appointment of one Rukiye Hanım to the same foundation as Mustafa ibn Veliyüddin. After some opposition to the legitimacy of her claim on the role, she was assigned from the children's foundation to work at this school as a teacher.[122] The accounts we have of the appointment of male teachers to *vakıf* institutions do not seem to have met with opposition, such as the 1710 appointment of Ömer Efendi to such a role at the Hamza Mosque in Yedikule. This foundation was named for a Janissary Clerk, which was not uncommon.[123] This does suggest that it was not only the higher officer ranks of janissaries who had the financial means to endow such foundations. However, the approval of the Sultan is still needed for the appointment, even if this approval may have been a mere formality at this point.[124] Similar cases of women meeting challenged when attempting to assert their right to offices often predominantly held by men occur several times throughout this period. For example, the case of Zeliha, daughter of Ahmet in 1783 for the right to a Mevlevihane foundation[125] or the case of Derviş Fatma Hanım under Sultan Abdülhamid I.[126]

There is the argument to be made that sponsoring the education of young people not only helped the reputation of the donor, but also could have created a bond of patronage via which favours, and loyalty could be leveraged. There was another school in Istanbul in the

[121] BOA, CMF, 157, 7821, 18/8/1136.
[122] BOA, CMF, 84, 4160, 29/12/1205; BOA, CMF, 120, 5965, 21/11/1171.
[123] See for example BOA, CBLD, 82, 4093, 28/07/1213.
[124] BOA, SAMD III, 65, 6552, 24/12/1121.
[125] BOA, CEV, 562, 28368, 8/8/1197.
[126] BOA, SABH I, 10, 869, 10/7/1203.

later eighteenth century named after Janissary Kethüda Ferhat Ağa.[127] Another example comes from a petition dated 1733 and concerns the wish of one Mehmed Ağa, a Janissary sergeant. He wishes to transform the *mescid* of *Bezzaz-ı Cedid Şir Ali Paşa* into a full mosque and was requesting the right to do it with his own money, for which royal permission was duly given.[128] When we consider that this patron comes from the officer class of the janissaries it is perhaps not surprising that he has the money to put into this endeavour. It is not made clear what return he will get, but as previously mentioned pious foundations were not subject to tax or other penalties from the state, so it is possible he is seeking these benefits for his investment. There is of course the possibility that we could simply be dealing with a particularly pious individual. Consider also where the finance is coming from, it is likely this officer had interests in several businesses and so we have to consider that, if some of them were considered less than completely respectable by contemporary popular opinion i.e. wine-shops and coffee-houses to name but two, he could very well be seeking to balance his social value by this action, or perhaps assuage some kind of guilt. The amount of influence a founder wielded over his own endowment extends to his own wishes for the appointment of personnel, as in 1757 when former janissary Ibrahim chose his own mosque manager.[129] Appointments in *vakıf* foundations were very sought after and sometimes competitive. An example of this can be found from a 1785 case pertaining to a mosque and school complex. A janissary called Mehmet requested the position of Assistant in the school while at the same time a janissary called Selim was requesting that a man called Hacı Mustafa be appointed to the role instead.[130] The final decision, however, was not recorded on this document and could not be found elsewhere.

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[127] BOA, CMF, 93, 4650, 23/11/1186.
[128] BOA, CEV, 595, 30025, 29/2/1145.
[129] BOA, AE SOSM III, 39, 2722, 29/12/1170.
[130] BOA, CMF, 181, 9002, 29/6/1199.

The inheriting of *vakıf* positions could begin even before the death of the office holder. A 1731 case states the wished of an income collector for a janissary foundation school to have his chosen successor succeed him in this position at the daily wage of 5 *akçe.*[131] Also in 1734, a janissary clerk is recorded as wishing to leave his position of *cüzhan* in Fatih district to a man called Ibrahim.[132] In some cases the inheritor petitioned for a vacant appointment on the basis of their relationship with the deceased office holder as was the case in 1778 when the janissary Mustafa petitioned for the role of *duagu* (official appointed to recite prayers) at the Orta Janissary Mosque for 33 *akçe* per day on the basis that his recently deceased father had been the previous office holder.[133] Another method of appointment was patronage, an increasingly common practice in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Ottoman Empire. In 1701 the Janissary Ağa petitioned Sultan Mustafa II requesting that the trusteeship of the Orta Cami in Istanbul be awarded to a retired janissary officer instead of himself.[134] The Sultan agrees to this and the appointment is made. This is an example of janissary solidarity, in the Ağa providing a means for retired corps members to support themselves. Such patronage seems to extend to institutions who were janissary allies. For example, *derviş* orders had a long relationship with the corps, janissaries traditionally belonging to the Bektaşı order. In 1703 Janissary Ağa Ibrahim petitions the Sultan detailing how he himself had rebuilt a mosque in a lodge in Edirne, with the Sultans permission, and now wished to station a Derviş named Ahmet to the position. The Sultan readily agreed.[135] This alliance strengthened during the eighteenth-century following changes within the Ottoman *ulema* during the seventeenth century in which they became more politically active as an institution.[136]

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[131] BOA, CMF, 86, 4279, 9/7/1143.
[132] BOA, CEV, 429, 21717, 29/12/1146.
[133] BOA, CEV, 548, 27666, 29/5/1192.
[134] BOA, AE SMST II, 136, 15061, 22/12/1112.
[135] BOA, AE SMST III, 139, 15414, 9/9/1115.
[136] Madeline C. Zilfi, 'The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800'),

One case from 1772 brings into question the classification of different types of Ottoman schools. The janissary founded school is classified as a *mektebi* which is usually defined as a type of school for civil servants. However, the document is dealing with the appointment of a Quran reader at this school.[137] While it is not a religious school it is certainly the case that religious education could and would be provided at such establishments and caring for the religious welfare of civil servants would have been of prime interest to the Ottoman state.

Recently Engin Isin has advocated for examining *vakıf* endowments as acts of citizenship, proposing a new understanding of citizenship as more than a social contractual understanding. Işin claims that in Europe citizenship equates with nationality but in Greek and Roman political law it was a city-based identity. If citizenship is indeed separate from nationality, then we can see signs of it prior to the nineteenth century nation state. Işin argues "In general terms, citizenship can be defined as the art of negotiating difference and claiming recognition through political means rather than using violence to annihilate difference."[138] This is further expanded upon when Isin argues that we need to approach citizenship without orientalism in order to open up new possibilities.[139] Certainly the idea of *vakıf* endowments as a way of gaining, legitimising or promoting an individuals' Ottoman citizenship would be a useful device for the janissaries discussed here.

The tendency of janissaries to become involved with religious and religious education foundations reflects the well-known alliance between the janissaries and the *ulema* during the eighteenth century. It was also just smart investing as it would not only endear them to the general population and endow them with the respectability that being seen as a person of faith

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(Minneapolis, 1988), 40.

[137] BOA, CMF, 137, 6840, 10/6/1186.

[138] Engin F. Isin, 'Conclusion: Ottoman Waqfs as Acts of Citizenship' in Pascale Ghazaleh (ed.) 'Held in Trust: Waqf in the Islamic World' (Cairo, 2011), 209-224.

[139] Ibid., 218.

would grant them but also gave them contact with the next generation and their education. Potentially learning from the *devşirme* whereby the Ottoman state had exerted influence over the early janissaries these investors can be seen as expanding their systems of patronage and investing in them for the future. The influence that these foundations could give is corroborated by Abou El-Haj when he argues that the number of mosques and schools founded by power holders in the seventeenth and eighteenth century demonstrated the waning power and influence of the centralised palace household.[140] This situation created an optimal environment for a janissary-*ulema* alliance and in turn these respective institutions could legitimise each other.[141]

Religion was something which bonded the corps on an institutional basis, and perhaps to a certain extent isolated them from wider society. The Janissaries followed *Bektaşism*. A Sufi mystic order with practising *dervişes,* this more liberal practice of Islam was the one into which young *devşirme* recruits were introduced in the hopes that it might make the transition from their Orthodox Christian lives to their Muslim ones easier and more bearable, thus easing the assimilation of the young recruits into Ottoman society.[142] It was the Ottoman habit, when they conquered a new land, to assimilate existing institutions and structures into their own systems of governance, both to minimise chance of uprisings and rebellions. Furthermore, it would have been easier for the Ottoman state, as a state almost consistently adding new lands to its Empire in the earlier centuries the time. The necessary resources and manpower required to displace existing systems and institute new ones would have been viewed as an unnecessary expense.

The history of the *Bektaşi* connection with the janissary corps has somewhat

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[140] El-Haj, 'Formation of the Modern State', 58.
[141] For a detailed breakdown of the development of the Ottoman ulema as an institution see. Zilfi, 'The Politics of Piety' (Minneapolis, 1988)
[142] Jason Goodwin, 'Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire', (London, 1999), 9.

apocryphal beginnings, with legend claiming that Hacı Bektaş himself was present at the inauguration of the janissary corps and that he personally blessed the first set of prisoners of war recruits. The story goes that he placed his hand on their bent heads and that this action caused his sleeve to hang down the back of their necks, thus giving the inspiration for the unique and distinctive white headdresses worn by the janissaries. The idea that this incident occurred involving the actual person of Hacı Bektaş (1209 – 1271) is an anachronism as he died in the thirteenth century, well before the first janissaries. However, it is possible that the individual conducting the blessings could have been a *Sheikh* of the local *Bektaşi Tekke* where the first prisoners were made soldiers.[143] While this is apocryphal it certainly does lend more legitimacy to the links between the janissaries and *Bektaşism.*

Regardless of where janissary connection with the *Bektaşi* order came from, over time their identities became so entwined that to an outsider they were almost interchangeable. Indeed, when the *Bektaşi* order fell out of favour in the early nineteenth century, around the same time as the dissolution of the janissaries, it does prompt the question of whether the janissaries fell out of favour due to being guilty by association, or whether the *Bektaşi* order was targeted owing to their connection with the janissaries. It is also an interesting point that the janissary affiliation with coffee-houses may have had *Bektaşi* origins. Ralph S. Hattox has traced the origins of coffee drinking the Middle East to Sufi orders in Yemen, where it was consumed for devotional purposes and soon spread to Egypt and Syria. The physical effect coffee has upon the body was thought to aid piety by keeping the drinker awake and focussed upon his task. He stresses that whatever other points of disagreement may exist among sources, the earliest references to coffee drinking are almost always connected to Sufi orders.[144]

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[143] J. A. B. Palmer, 'The Origin of the Janissaries', Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 35 (1953), 456.
[144] Ralph S. Hattox, 'Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East'

There are some examples of janissaries using their own personal wealth for what may be called everyday charity. In 1737 a janissary clerk named Ahmed rebuilt a mescid that had been burnt down and requested that an imam be stationed there.[145] This was an opportunistic event which would have endowed Ahmed with all of the benefits previously discussed regarding involvement with Ottoman religious life. In 1767 a Janissary Ağa named Hasan who lived in the Kadıköy neighbourhood financed the repair of the waterways and fountains in their district and purchased water for the purpose of flushing the system.[146] In addition to endearing him to the people of the district this would also have been beneficial to the health and hygiene of this district, further benefits giving the population reason to be grateful to the Ağa. Furthermore, the state was saved the labour and expense of repairing the system themselves, hence causing the state to be grateful to Hasan also.

This section gives brief examples of janissary respectability via quasi-official social works, it is by no means a comprehensive cover as that is beyond the scope of this project. However, it does reflect janissary adaptability during the eighteenth century as it shows another facet of integration and relationship building, not only with trade colleagues but also with other significant power holders such as the *ulema*. These examples also demonstrate further alternative income sources that janissaries were cultivating in the absence of constant war booty and military wages. The extra financial income and also the ability to bequeath and inherit these roles which came with financial recompense would contribute to the support of janissary families, a style of household which more janissaries were become part of during the 1700s.

In conclusion this chapter has shown how janissaries adapted to changing power structures and cultivated their roles within while also utilising their social connections to

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(Seattle, 1985), 23-25.
[145] BOA, CEV, 453, 22905, 4/6/1150.
[146] BOA, CBLD, 1, 50, 20/5/1181.

empower their positions. This shift from relying on military might and martial skill to more subtle socio-political ways of working is perhaps one of the largest overall adaptations the janissaries demonstrate during this time. Cultivating networks via religious and familial means as well as through the janissary regiments shows a branching out of traditional institutional boundaries, this branching out phenomenon shall be demonstrated further in the following chapter upon the janissaries as economic actors in Ottoman Istanbul.

This involvement in religious institutions, aside from aligning with the janissary adaptations in how they secured their income, is also reflective of the janissary alliance with the *ulema*. This institutional alliance, like the janissary relations with the domestic power structure discussed in this chapter, were an adaptation in themselves. The shift to more diplomatic methods of securing influence when the primacy of military conquests was diminished. The janissaries chose their allies well choosing to cultivate relations with the sultans and their delegates as well as the *ulema*. These alliances can be seen as being the natural progression of the seventeenth-century crisis which Boğaç Ergene characterised as being a period where the elite factions of Ottoman society competed amongst each other for power, a state which Ergene claims lasted into the early eighteenth century.[147] Both highly influential groups which would elevate janissary quality of life and groups to whom an alliance with a citizen militia, such as the janissaries had become, would appeal greatly. In this way the janissary adaptations relating to their power and influence were equal to their need to adapt in this sphere of their lives.

[147] Boğaç Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict (1600-1800)', Islamic Law and Society, 8:1, (2001), 79.

# Chapter 4: The Janissaries as Social and Economic Actors

This chapter examines the ways in which janissaries in Istanbul were affected by, and how they themselves affected, the eighteenth-century Ottoman economy.[1] This is a key aspect of janissary identity and function which should be addressed in this thesis. As janissaries were increasingly participating in trades and guilds, independently of their military commissions, it gave such janissaries a new system by which to influence Ottoman society. It is true that janissaries had been involved in artisan occupations and trades from quite early on in Ottoman history, however, the eighteenth century saw an especially large increase in the number of janissaries in trade. As businessmen and landowners many of these janissaries held material wealth and influence. The question of janissaries in the economic life of the city overlaps with the janissaries as participants in Ottoman society also as the economic status of a group or individual is deeply influential upon the social status and opportunities of those figures. The financial status of a janissary for example, would greatly influence his ability to marry and have a family. This chapter shall contribute to the argument of janissary adaptation by showing the flexibility of janissary skills regarding the differing occupations they were able to turn to. Furthermore, these roles are yet another facet of how janissaries managed their finances by diversifying the positions they held. By adapting to whatever roles were available the janissaries built their multiple sources of income in order to accumulate the financial resources they needed.

In this chapter I shall present primary source examples of the types of appointments that janissaries held in artisan trades as well as within finance. This chapter shall also cover the topic of janissary families, material wealth and inheritance through a study of janissary

[1] Though arguments do exist for a janissary corporate identity' as early as the seventeenth century which was willing to unite and act to project group interests. See Baldwin, 'Islamic Law and Empire', 28.

bequests and estates. These cases will be assessed with a view to the question of how far they can be said to be representative of janissaries adapting to a changing context.

## The Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Economy

Before examining the specific behaviours of janissaries within the economy of eighteenth-century Istanbul I shall briefly describe the wider economic context within which such actions took place. This is important to understand janissary motivations and reactions regarding economic matters. As we have already established, the overall culture of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century was undergoing many changes. The shift from predominantly 'hard power' interactions with the wider world to an increasing use of 'soft' and 'smart power' had a knock-on effect on the Ottoman economy.[2] Fewer campaigns of conquest and fewer new lands being added to the Empire meant a loss of certain incomes, specifically, those from war prizes and the taxation of new lands. On the other hand, it should have meant a decrease in administration and military costs. However, the lands making up the Empire at this time still had to be administered and policed and, as we have seen in the examination of janissaries as soldiers, garrisons and fortresses still had to be provisioned.

A key element of the Ottoman economy in the eighteenth century were the *malikane*[3], an evolution of earlier tax farming methods, they were instituted in 1695 and were lifetime endowments. The holder held the right to the taxes of an area in exchange for paying a fee to the treasury. By 1703, they were widely in use throughout the Empire and were largely held and managed by urban elites, such as Istanbul vizier households.[4] In 1723 Sultan Ahmed III

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[2] For more detail on this terminology see Joseph S. Nye Jr., 'Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics', (New York, 2004).

[3] See Beldiceanu-Steinherr, I., "Mālikāne", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 21 August 2018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4877>

[4] In the case of Egypt, Baldwin argues a shift of power away from the janissaries towards the vizier households

granted this right for an area of land in modern Sadabad to a janissary officer named Mehmet Efendi. The land in question was some thirty by 150 cubits in size.[5] This can be viewed as a way by which Ottoman elites maintained some control in the centre-periphery dynamic, as well as being a way of controlling the elites by threatening to take away their tax farms if they did not submit to instructions from the state officials.[6] Regardless, janissaries managed to retain a presence in tax farming with a case in 1798 highlighting this. In this case Hafiz Salih holds the rights to an area dealing with a janissary mosque and mescid. However, the previous holder of this right had damaged it and so Hafiz is therefore making a request to the Imperial Council that new documentation be written up for it.[7]

Another factor of economic life, which we have documentary evidence for janissary involvement with, is the *vakıf* endowments discussed in the previous chapter. These were sources of revenue set aside by donors for pious works such as maintaining mosques, orphanages and soup kitchens. Donald Quataert has referred to how, in the eighteenth century, there was a system whereby the donations, instead of being given for good works upon the death of the donor, were returned to the donor and their heirs by various dubious methods. Regardless, they could not be confiscated due to their status under Islamic law, which was fiercely guarded by the *ulema.* Unlike *malikane* licenses, which came from the state and which the state could reclaim at any time, pious foundations were immune from state intervention.[8]

The final key system of taxation that is most relevant to the Istanbul economy is the *cizye*. This was the tax imposed upon non-Muslims which allowed them to freely practice their religion. The argument has been made that, due to this tax, Ottoman Christians were

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in the 1750s. Baldwin, 'Islamic Law and Empire', 31.
[5] BOA, CML, 239, 9990, 23/8/1135.
[6] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire', 48.
[7] BOA, HAT, 221, 12355, 27/7/1212
[8] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire', 34-5.

more active in commerce and yet, Ottoman Jews were not even though they were also subject to this tax.[9] We have documentary evidence, which has already been discussed of citizens paying this tax with goods instead of cash.[10]

Another factor which would have contributed to the desire to pay the *cizye* tax in goods rather than coins, would have been the state of the Ottoman economy and the parallel development of the tax. Like all taxes the *cizye* was adjusted in accordance with inflation and in the Ottoman lands, increased by seven times the amount between the end of the seventeenth century and the start of the nineteenth century. This caused problems for the *zimmi* population but was in line with both inflation and the debasement of coinage at this time. Furthermore, the Ottomans implemented the *cizye* tax on a sliding scale, as the payment was made per head in the household, meaning that the amount required from each household varied according to their family size and by extension their financial means.[11] However, Bruce Masters has argued that the Hanafi legal interpretation of the *cizye* tax as practised by the Ottomans meant that these fluctuations were not hard upon the top tiers of payers, but that the poorer classes could suffer and thus tried to come up with creative ways to avoid the tax such as seeking positions of employment from resident European embassies. Other received assistance from *vakıfs* specifically established by richer citizens to help the poor meet the tax demand.

As the *cizye* was an uninterrupted income for the Ottoman government, Masters argues that the state tried to close any possible loopholes to payment, as they required the funds for warfare. In the eighteenth century however, tax registers grow unreliable as the officers collecting the tax often simply record the same numbers year after year.[12] Hence the decision

[9] Ibid., 132.
[10] See the previously mentioned cases of Yanaki and Andiros.
[11] John Iskander, 'Jizya' in ‘Encyclopedia of Islam’, 403.
[12] Bruce Masters 'jizya' in ‘Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire’, 303.

not to utilise such sources with a detailed analysis in this thesis. Whether this issue in the Ottoman tax registers is simply lazy record keeping or symbolic of some larger corruption in the taxation process is not clear from the sources available to historians, but it must be considered a possibility.

Other factors impacting the Ottoman economy at this time include the growing population, Betül Başaran estimates that the population for Greater Istanbul during the late eighteenth century was slightly over 400,000.[13] This occurred especially as a product of migration into Istanbul by many seeking work, which Suraiya Faroqhi has addressed.[14] If we combine this with decreased, (but not non-existent) warfare, meaning that soldiers are resident at home and seeking other work to supplement their peacetime salaries, and the fact that the shift from hard to soft power meant increased trade and consumerism in Istanbul, it is hardly surprising that the Ottoman economy found itself in some crisis during the eighteenth century. The primary source documentation addressing janissaries in trade comes from a variety of sources including *kadı sicilleri, şeriye defterleri* and multiple military *evrak* folios. This diverse range of source is reflective of how janissary participation in trade brought members of the institution into many different spheres of Ottoman life and thus subject to a variety of interest groups.

## Janissaries in Trade

### 1. Roles and Appointments

This section shall discuss the ways in which janissaries could attain appointments and what the prerequisites were for engaging in an occupation in the Ottoman Empire. This will

[13] Betül Başaran, 'The 1829 Census and the Population of Istanbul during the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries' in Robert G. Ousterhout (ed.) Studies on Istanbul and Beyond: The Freely Papers Vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 2007), 53-71, 60.
[14] Faroqhi, 'Travel and Artisans.'

assist in the understanding of how janissaries were able to become such a significant presence within the working population of eighteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul. What must be understood at the outset that janissaries in trade was very much a two-way traffic, with soldiers taking up trades and artisans buying into the corps membership. Suraiya Faroqhi claims that "no special study of this phenomenon has been undertaken for the Ottoman capital, and all statements therefore are approximate."[15]

It is widely established that many janissaries also took up other professions and were involved in trades and crafts.[16] In order to gain an image of what 'janissaries at work' actually means, first we need to look at what kinds of work the janissaries were engaging in. It should be made clear here, I am referring to trades which would be suitable for men with military experience and which may support or provision military campaigns, but the roles I am discussing here are the janissaries non-official or para-state activities. We have already seen how janissaries were employed as firemen and policemen; however, law enforcement was only one sector in which numerous janissaries found employment and was also not the only occupation many took up which could both support and utilise their military skills. Working as porters for example, crossing long distances with heavy loads all day everyday would keep a man strong and fit as well as cobblers, tailors and blacksmiths all being useful trades to an army on the march with short supplies. The latter were all trades that janissaries who were unemployed, either temporarily or permanently, were willing to take up in an urban civilian context in the eighteenth century. We have also seen examples of how small appointments in pious foundations or to any kind of officer or petty officer rank could bring small sums of income for the men involved. Data regarding the type of occupations that janissaries in

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[15] Ibid., 123.

[16] Gülay Yılmaz Diko, 'Blurred Boundaries between Soldiers and Civilians: Artisan Janissaries in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul' in Suraiya Faroqhi (ed.) 'Bread from the Lion's Mouth: Artisans Struggling for a Livelihood in Ottoman Cities' (Oxford, 2015), 175-193.

Istanbul engaged in can be found across a variety of archival sources, from *evrak* examples to *Kalebend* registers and, most commonly for this project, in *tereke* records which detail the assessment and distributions of a deceased persons estate. The types of occupation I shall be addressing here will not include any traditional janissary duties of policemen, firemen or anything pertaining to the administration of a regiment such as officer roles, treasurers and clerks. Even allowing for these omissions there is a wide range of occupations to which janissaries were able to adapt. Common occupations included butchers,[17] bakers,[18] and if not candlestick makers then certainly plenty more occupations which involved the moving and selling of goods, if not the actual production thereof. These supply trades include the sale of coal[19], groceries[20] and slaves[21] as well as what may be termed service roles such as barbers[22] and bathhouse attendants.[23] This tendency for janissaries to favour occupations where they were simply the middleman facilitating the trade of goods is interesting. I suggest that this is a reflection of the janissary networks and contacts by which means members of the corps were able to participate effectively in the supply of goods. Another reason is that such occupations would arguable require less overheads and less material prerequisites which meant that they would be a viable option for janissaries who did not have a great deal of money to invest in setting themselves up in a trade. Furthermore, such a situation would arguably make it easier for janissaries to leave for military campaigns, however disinclined many of them may be. Janissaries also participated in the trade of luxury goods, as is evidenced by a 1775 petition from an ex-janissary clerk named Laleli Mustafa Efendi. He writes that he had been trading with a *zimmi* jeweller for sixteen years but that recently there had been a mistake in the

[17] Uğur Koca, '17 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine'; Fatma Sahin, '11 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine.'
[18] BOA, CBLD, 68, 3378, 15/1/1185;Uğur Koca, '17 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine'; İSTANBUL 29, 1767; Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5412, p. 112; Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5429, p.16.,
[19] Ramazan Uz, '24 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine'; İSTANBUL 201, 1776.
[20] Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5407, p21.
[21] Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 7692, p. 3.
[22] Istanbul Sicil 1731; Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5403
[23] Fatma Sahin, '11 Numaralı Kalebend Defterine.'

financial calculations and the jeweller, Yorgi, had cheated him. Yorgi then died and Laleli Mustafa complains that his estate managers are trying to cheat him out of his rightful repayment. He requests that his superiors get involved to recalculate the debt fairly.[24]

One of the things that made the entry of janissaries into civilian trade problematic was the rise of the *gedik.* A *gedik* was a license that governed, more or less, every aspect of how a business was to be run including the hiring of new staff and the setting up of new businesses. Certainly, by the second half of the eighteenth century a *gedik* was a practically a prerequisite for engaging in any kind of craft in the Empire, although the institution is best documented for Istanbul.[25] The most common way to acquire a *gedik* was by inheritance which, for middle aged men trained as soldiers looking to start their own shops, was not largely suitable. In cases where a *gedik* was held by a janissary evidence can be found in the probate details of their estate, such as in 1791 where Ali Beşe of the 4th *sekban oda* died while in possession of the *gedik* for a pickling shop.[26] In the same year Mehmed Beşe of the 65th regiment died with the *gedik* for a perfume shop.[27] These *gedik* licenses included not only the property at which the business was carried out but also a great deal of the equipment which made its way into the inventories of the deceased estates and was processed along with the rest of their belongings.

There is also documentary evidence of appointments via potential patronage, and two cases in particular from the archive stand out during this period. For example, in 1759 the janissary Superintendent of the Imperial Armoury petitioned for twenty-five workmen of various professions (cauldron makers and button makers and special knife makers and steelyard makers and door equipment makers and knife makers and scissor makers and screw

[24] BOA, TS MAE, 195/32.
[25] Faroqhi, 'Artisans of the Empire', 119.
[26] Sezgin Demircioğlu, '615 Numerali İstanbul Askeri Kassam Defterinin Değirlendirmesi (H. 1205-1206/ M. 1790-1791)', Yüksek Lisans Tezi, T. C. İstanbul Üniversitesi, (1998), 127.
[27] Ibid., 263-264.

makers and saw makers and ironmongers and flint makers and gun makers) to be appointed to his employ in the armoury to undertake necessary work. He asks that men from these professions be assigned and that the state provide the required orders and financing for this to occur.[28] The requested professions, by their nature and the fact that they are asked to come to the armoury, are professions very useful to the support of military institutions. Another request for janissary service comes from 1727 and has a very interesting source. The petition comes from the Greek Patriarch and states that it was traditional for the state to provide a guard for its Greek Orthodox population. The Patriarch states that for seven or eight years this role was fulfilled by a janissary called Ahmet Beşe from the seventh regiment and that he had carried out his duties well. It is requested that Ahmet be reinstated to this position.[29] However, it is not indicated whether or not this came to pass.

We have to consider if these were in fact, janissaries operating in these industries or whether they were janissary-affiliated artisans such as the *lumpen-esnaf* Cemal Kafadar talks about.[30] *Lumpen-esnaf* refers to a sub-class of artisans and merchants with military affiliations, which Kafadar proposed in his thesis *Yeniçeri-Esnaf Relations.*[31] In this request, no specific individuals are named for assignment, simply the professions from which they should be drawn. However, if the state were to provide the order and the money, and the Superintendent made the appointments himself then it is possible that he would be hiring specific individuals he had in mind. This is not necessarily corruption or a bad thing, as it is hard to believe the Superintendent would endanger his own position and his ability to give patronage to his fellow janissaries by hiring men who would provide less than professional work. From this armoury appointment example, it could be assumed that these appointments

[28] BOA, AE SMST III, 124, 9642, 29/12/1173.
[29] BOA, CADL, 60, 3626, 27/9/1139.
[30] See Cemal Kafadar, 'Yeniçeri-Esnaf Relations: Solidarity and Conflict', MA Thesis, McGill University, (1981).
[31] Ibid., 60.

were part of the atmosphere of brotherhood between military men, however the request of the Greek Patriarch is different. This example suggests an amiable, even friendly, relationship between differing cultures within Istanbul. If we compare this to the behaviour of the janissaries associated with the European embassies that was discussed above, the relationship here seems to be much more pleasant. While this is simply an anecdotal case it certainly subverts the stereotypical expectations of janissary relations with minority cultures.

Another case also comes from 1759, during the reign of Sultan Mustafa III, and deals with the death of the *kethüda* of the Sailmakers Guild in Galata. The former *kethüda* Ismail, a janissary, had died without children and so the sailmakers had themselves elected from among their number one they considered a worthy successor to the *kethüdalık* , one Hacı Mehmed bin Osman. Whether or not he was legally a 'janissary' is unclear and yet we may assume some affiliation. This document is a petition requesting that Hacı Mehmed be appointed to the position.[32] What is interesting about this document is that, it is stated that Ismail died without children and therefore the election has taken place, which lends credibility to the argument that janissary positions in guilds and artisan professions were hereditary at this time. That being said, it is unlikely that Hacı Osman would have been appointed by his peers, or that his appointment would be approved by the state which we may assume it was, if he was not considered respectable and capable to do the job. Certainly, his title of '*Hacı'* would lend respectability, both to himself in terms of applying for the position, and by extension the guild as well as those officials who approved his appointment. It is also likely that Hacı Osman gained the status or title of janissary through his appointment to this role. Sail making is a military-support industry and so the presence of janissaries or *lumpen-esnaf* is not surprising. Further adding to janissary integration within trades Yaycioğlu argues that certain rituals and

[32] BOA, AE SMST III, 322, 25977, 29/12/1181.

customs, unique to Ottoman artisan crafts contributed to a feeling of solidarity.[33] For janissaries, who prided themselves on a strong *esprit de corps* this must have been an attractive prospect.

In cases where a janissary died with children the position held by the father could be inherited. This is shown by a 1702 position, suggesting that this practice was well established by this time. In this case Abdurrahman petitioned the Sultan directly, stating that his father, a janissary named Halil Ahmet, had been an attendant in the Istanbul Tobacco Customs earning a small daily wage. The son requested to take over his deceased father's role in this regard and the Sultan agreed and ordered it to be done.[34] This inheriting of positions from father to son could also apply to positions in pious foundations[35], which were discussed in more detail above. In 1767 a man named Hasan petitioned for the right to take over the positions of attendant and janissary clerk in a small Islamic monastery in the Topkapı neighbourhood of Istanbul.[36] This continued throughout the eighteenth century with cases appearing in the archives from as late is 1793 of sons succeeding fathers in foundation positions.[37] This was a way in which a janissary could secure some kind of inheritance and support for his children. The question of janissary inheritances is addressed in more detail below.

It was not only in Istanbul that this social integration via trade occurred. Zafer Karademir examined the janissaries in Sivas through the court registers and concluded that the two-way dialogue of recruitment was occurring there also. He believes that the janissaries possibly took on additional roles as they felt as if they were not needed for military matters, despite being paid. This, as he rightly says, is a contradiction of the traditional image of lazy and unemployed men buying into the corps for a steady income to enable an idle life.

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[33] Yaycioğlu, 'Janissaires, ingénieurs, et prédicateurs', 23.
[34] BOA, AE SMST II, 123, 13539, 17/8/1113.
[35] Ex. BOA, CEV, 413, 20945, 29/8/1136.
[36] BOA, CEV, 610, 30786, 29/1/1181.
[37] BOA, CEV, 451, 22826, 29/3/1208.

Furthermore, he shows that most non-military employment of janissaries in this province was some form of agriculture and that, for those concerned, being a janissary was a kind of side occupation. It was preferable for those classified as poor or with a below average income but could not have been the poorest among the society as money would be required to buy the janissary commission in the first place.[38] This is another example of janissary adaptability across the empire, not only were they diversifying in their military duties and adapting to different ranks and roles within the army and *vakıf* positions, but janissaries also turned to a range of trades and property investments all of which subsidised their other small pits of income.

## 2. Janissaries and Guilds

One of the main issues in the historical representation of janissaries in trade is that, in some cases, sources have been interpreted as claiming that janissaries take over the history of trades and guilds. This has been viewed as a 'corrupt' behaviour on the part of the janissaries involved. However, despite this alleged influx of 'outsiders' Faroqhi has claimed that Ottoman guilds peaked in terms of social cohesion in the late 1700s and early 1800s. She further explains that by the eighteenth-century artisans were demanding sultanic decrees marked by the royal seal to protect their rights.[39] These issues regarding the protection of rights shall be seen in the documentary examples assessed below. In light of these questions an examination of primary documentation concerning the janissaries and the Istanbul guilds of the eighteenth century is beneficial as it can be seen whether there is evidence for these claims.

[38] Karademir, 'Janissaries in the Social and Economic Life of Rum', 493-495.
[39] Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Subject to the Sultan's Approval: seventeenth and eighteenth-century artisans negotiating guild agreements in Istanbul,' in Christine Woodhead (ed.) 'The Ottoman World', (Abingdon, 2012), 308, 316-317.

One example of a complaint brought against the janissaries by a guild can be found in a petition from the *kadı sicil* of 1727 Istanbul. The producers of okra in the gardeners guild complained of janissaries and cebecis making profit from their trade and executing it with little skill.[40] From the way the case is presented it can be seen that the military men in question were not members of the guild and thus not working to the standards demanded and regulated by the guild. This factor exacerbates the frustration of the guild members as they object to, not only the loss of income from amateur tradesmen hustling in on their occupations, but also the negative impact this could have upon the reputation of their craft and guild. The okra growers do not seem to object that janissaries are participating in the trade, simply that they are not doing do in the proper manner. The history of artisans, craftsmen and guilds in the Ottoman Empire is a complex subject in its own right with many historiographical myths of its own that historians are still working on debunking.[41] The historiography of janissaries in trade is slightly surprising, with contemporary sources such as Sarı Mehmed Paşa arguing that it was artisans buying into the corps which led to the degeneration of the institution and he blames the artisans for this,[42] while several contemporary historians have seen the blurring of class lines between the *askerî* and *esnaf* as a positive thing, contributing to the overall development and progress of Ottoman society.

Tezcan also takes a positive view of janissary-artisan interactions, arguing that they contributed to the janissary shift from a wholly military organisation, to a socio-political corporation with significant influence in Istanbul society and politics.[43] There is also the added confusion of the change of recruitment practices at this time. For example, if a silversmith who also held a janissary wage book raised his son to succeed him in both his

[40] İSTANBUL 24, 1727.
[41] See Suraiya Faroqhi, ‘Artisans and Travel’.
[42] Sarı Mehmed, ‘Ottoman Statecraft’, 110-111.
[43] Tezcan, ‘Second Empire’, 199.

trade and his janissary appointment, which side of the trade migration (soldier to artisan or artisan to soldier) does the boy fall? And will this be dictated by whether his father was a janissary who learnt a craft or an artisan who bought a commission? Each historian will make their own interpretations, but such questions create a grey area which only hinders definite clarification. It is also important to set the scene and explain the main factors that potentially could, and in some cases did, have an impact on trade in the imperial capital during the 1700s.

The question of janissary artisans and/or janissary-affiliated artisans and guilds are often difficult to decipher from the primary source material, hinting that, perhaps, the Ottomans themselves were not exactly sure as to the exact status of those individuals involved, or the correct titulature to use for them. For example, a series of entries in the *kadı sicilleri* in 1727 refer to the *kethüda* of the butchers' guild, one Mehmed, "being to a particular oda"[44]. It is clear that Mehmed is affiliated with a certain janissary company stationed within a certain barracks, but whether or not he is a janissary himself is not made clear. He very well might have been, but it seems that his *kethüda* title is the role he is bringing to bear upon these entries, those being lists of various tradesmen who had informed each other they were guarantors. If this is the case, it is interesting that his janissary connection is entered into the record here. He could have belonged to the group that Kafadar defines as *taslakçı* (see Introduction). It is possible that mentioning his janissary connection was supposed give more prestige, power and/or authority to the individual, suggesting that the institution of the janissaries was supporting him in his deeds. Due to this connection there were likely men working in butchers' trades belonging to the janissary regiment in question. Christine Philliou confirms this close connection between the janissaries and the butchers saying that "The chief butcher *(kasapbaşı)* was head of an important guild both for the

[44] İSTANBUL 24, 1727.

janissaries and for the meat provisioning of the city."[45] This agrees with the high number of janissaries found engaging the butchering trade as stated above. Furthermore, the role of janissary butcher was subject, as many marketplace matters were, to the approval of the Janissary Ağa. In 1742 a Rumeli Greek is serving as a butcher but his work does not please the Ağa who wants a man called Nikola to be appointed in his place.[46] Philliou goes on to say that the butcher's guild ended up being effectively disbanded in the wake of the 1826 abolition of the janissaries,[47] which is yet another indicator of how intertwined these institutions were. The case of the butchers' guild does align with theories in the historiography that janissaries monopolised certain guilds to a certain extent.

Another role affiliated with the janissaries during the eighteenth-century was that of *bazırganbaşı* (sellers of cloth to the palace and upper classes of Ottoman society). These individuals purchased imported, expensive cloth on behalf of their masters and in 1746 the position of *bazırganbaşı* to the janissaries was occupied by a Jew named David Zonana, however he was strangled this same year following the deposition of the Grand Vizier, another of his clients. He was subsequently replaced by his son and this position continued to be held by Jewish men into the 1780s. These men were highly influential and powerful in the world of trade and commerce. [48] As a Jew it is unlikely that this man was officially enrolled in the janissary corps, and he did have clients outside of the corps, yet his relationship with the janissaries seems to have been not dissimilar to that of the head butcher discussed above.

Another principal factor for consideration is migration into Istanbul. Urban growth is a constant feature of imperial expansion and, even though Ottoman expansion had slowed

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[45] Christine Philliou, 'Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution', (Berkeley, 2010), 34.
[46] BOA, CAS, 77, 3646, 27/11/1154.
[47] Philliou, 'Biography of an Empire', 80.
[48] Edhem Eldem 'French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century', (Leiden, 1999), 52-54.

during the eighteenth century, urban migration into the capital remained steady leading to population growth. In the middle of the eighteenth century there was an order for janissaries to collect a group of *zimmi* inhabitants from Yanya in Greece and escort them to the capital keeping them safe and protected all the while.[49] However the reason for this, and what happened to these *zimmi* inhabitants afterwards is not specified. Regardless, we may assume that they were integrated in some way into the Istanbul population, thus bolstering urban population numbers.

The subsequent shortage of jobs, coupled with the expected friction between long term Istanbul residents and newly arrived migrants, further complicated the situation. Such movements often have a marginalising effect on societies, yet for some reason in Istanbul integration, at least between local janissaries and businesses, seemed to become the new norm. Fariba Zarinebaf has claimed that a similar phenomenon occurred in other cities of the Empire during the eighteenth century and argues that "The janissaries had become an important part of the working-class population."[50] Zarinebaf does have a tendency towards Marxist terminology in her writings here, which is something to be aware of when referring to her work. We may assume from this that Zarinebaf is focussed upon the lower ranks and social classes of the janissaries, in contrast with the officer ranks discussed in the previous chapter. She also claims an influx of janissaries into the capital from other regions of the Empire, that is, men who were already enrolled and serving members of the corps coming to the city in search of additional work, as for many their wages were barely enough to survive on.[51]

This is a little strange considering that figures demonstrate that the janissary corps was

[49] BOA, CZB, 8, 339, 29/8/1162.
[50] Zarinebaf, 'Crime and Punishment', 49-50.
[51] Ibid., 26.

receiving between 30 and 50% of the total state expenditure in the years 1687 - 1748.[52] Istanbul as a city had the largest janissary garrison in the Empire, while the influx of janissaries and soldiers in this period were largely demobilised troops coming from the war front.[53] As they could not have all found legitimate work, some of them may well have joined gangs, participated in violent acts and generally contributed to the overall crime rate in the city. What is possibly the scariest thing about janissaries in crime is that many of them, unlike other criminals, had the advantage of military training in weaponry, combat and psychological warfare. However, it is generally not clear exactly what percentage of Istanbul artisans were actually janissaries, and vice versa.[54]

Another key factor was the change in the attitude of the state to trades in the eighteenth century, when there was an increased expansion of existing state control over urban production, leading to a type of centralisation seeking to confine manufacturing to artisans under state control.[55] However, this vision was difficult to realise as, while industry was not stagnant at this time, neither did it evolve in a linear manner but was a complex movement due to regional variations in different industrial sectors.[56] In the case of Istanbul, which is the focus of this project, regional variations come into consideration with regards to migration into the city from other regions. While Quataert concurs that there was a significant urban population growth, he claims that the Ottoman economy remained largely agrarian,[57] in contradiction to the hypothesis of Tezcan that the changes of the eighteenth century were largely caused by a shift from an agrarian economy to a monetary one. This latter interpretation is largely based on tax records which, over time, show that more taxes were

[52] Ibid., 63.
[53] Ibid., 39.
[54] Ibid., 40.
[55] Mehmet Genç, 'Ottoman Industry in the Eighteenth Century: General Framework, Characteristics and Main Trends' in Donald Quataert (ed.) ‘Manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey 1500-1950' (Albany, 1994), 63-64.
[56] Genç, 'Ottoman Industry’, 59.
[57] Quataert, ‘The Ottoman Empire’, 111.

being paid in cash, as opposed to by the rendering of services.[58] However, according to Quataert, before the late nineteenth century the Ottoman state counted the wealth of its subjects but not the people themselves, so only those individuals responsible for the payment of taxes (usually male heads of households) or those of military use were ever recorded in the tax records.[59]

The issue of the *gedik* system, as discussed briefly above, coupled with the urban migration could well have been a factor leading to the creation of Kafadar's lumpen-*esnaf* which he presents as an alliance of two outsider classes, namely janissaries and newly arrived migrants to the city. Kafadar claims that this was the group that courted janissary affiliations, being overall a very small percentage of the capitals whole *esnaf* population.[60] Seven Ağır and Onur Yıldırım examined *gedik* as an institution, arguing that it was an eighteenth-century innovation.[61] In addition to providing the right to practise a trade, *gedik* licenses also came with restrictions, either on where the trade could be practised or with very specific instructions as to what was, or wasn't, within the remit of a certain trade. The range of sub-trades this generated can be seen in the court register entries mentioned above, which feature Mehmed Kethüda. They all focus on the Yedikule neighbourhood and separate entries are written based upon which sub-trade of the butchering art the men participate in. The range of specific trades include catgut seller, butchers, liver sellers, slaughterhouse workers, itinerant butchers and oxen butchers,[62] again, reflecting that close relationship between janissaries and the butchering trade. It may be surmised that a blurring of lines between such trades may be expected and not considered a problem, but artisans seemed to take seriously any attempt to

[58] Tezcan, 'Second Empire', 21.
[59] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire', 111.
[60] Kafadar, 'Yeniçeri-esnaf Relations', 60.
[61] Seven Ağır and Onur Yıldırım, 'Gedik: What's in a name?' in Faroqhi (ed.) .Bread from the Lions Mouth: Artisans Struggling for a Livelihood in Ottoman Cities', (Oxford, 2015), 217.
[62] İSTANBUL 24, 1727.

muscle in on their niche trades.

In addition to the petition referred to above from the okra growers, who objected to janissaries and *cebeci* soldiers making a profit by practising their trade, there are other examples in the *sicil* entries which show that such practices were challenged. In 1727 there was a case recorded involving the 64th janissary regiment, who were responsible for the care and training of the imperial hounds. The issue raised was the sourcing and quality of the food being given to the dogs. Tripe dealers petitioned the court claiming that there were dealers outside of their group providing meat for the hounds which violated the standing agreement. Furthermore, they claimed that these other sources were providing a sub-standard product which could be doing harm to the animals. Subsequently, an order was given that traders not included in the prior agreement were not to be allowed to prepare and supply feed to the imperial hounds.[63] Aside from demonstrating how important the welfare of the imperial hounds was, there is also the question of why the janissaries were procuring from other dealers. It is not specified in the court account whether it was because they got a cheaper price and were pocketing the money, or if it was a question of familial connections and/or patronage or bribery. Whatever the reason this is an example of a certain regiment of janissaries trying to circumvent the trade agreements laid down with artisans and as such, it is understandable that many guilds and artisans would view the janissary corps with suspicion. This importance given to the health of the imperial hounds is a lasting factor, as can be seen by another petition from the carers of the dogs in 1793, requesting medical treatment for the animals who have been afflicted with a recurring condition which has successfully been treated before.[64]

Ağır and Yıldırım state that there were two types of *gedik* active in the Ottoman

[63] Ibid.
[64] BOA, CAS, 91, 4195, 4/2/1207.

Empire: firstly, the fixed *gedik* whereby the owner was only permitted to practise his trade in a specified location. Secondly, the moveable *gedik* which was generally issued to itinerant tradesmen as it was not attached to a specific location. Furthermore, they discuss the proliferation of *gedik* licenses in the eighteenth century as being part of the agency of the guilds as they sought to control monopolies and thus the term *gedik* can imply barriers limiting entry to a trade.[65] We have already seen from the *sicil* records how carefully guarded and monitored the *gedik* licenses were, so we have no reason to doubt that control of them was important to the guilds. Also, there are clear documentary examples of janissaries attempting to work around *gedik* restrictions. However, if the *gedik* licenses were being so jealously guarded by the guilds, being used as a means to further guild control over trade, can we truly say that the janissaries were the ones acting in a corrupt manner? There is no suggestion that the janissaries in these cases have been cheating their customers on the price or menacing them into buying from them, if there had been it would surely have been brought as further proof of the janissaries' wrongdoing. Perhaps what these janissaries were doing was illegal, but was it necessarily immoral, even by the standards of the context? If we consider the eighteenth-century Ottoman economic situation, the actions of these janissaries become understandable. Furthermore, they could seemingly be overturned quite quickly by the *kadı* courts with very little fuss, so it does not seem to have been the out of control monopolisation that traditional allegations would have us believe. If anything, in their jealous guarding of their monopolisation of *gedik* rights, perhaps the guilds could be said to be behaving in the manner of a somewhat 'corrupt' institution. However, in the same period there were examples of overt abuse in the marketplace and the Janissary Ağa was called upon to deal with them. One such case is that of Atmacı Hüseyin who was accused of unlawfully taxing the *pastırma*

[65] Ağır & Yıldırım, 'Gedik: whats in a name?', 218-219.

and *sucuk* trades, demanding higher payments from non-Muslim merchants. When found guilty Hüseyin was fined a large sum, though whether or not his position was forfeit is not clear.[66]

Ağır and Yıldırım also discuss how *gedik* licenses pertain to tenancy rights, where the *gedik* bound the artisan to practise his craft in a specific location. Making the connection between *vakıf*-rented properties (*icrateyn*) they suggest that a *gedik* awarded to such a property would pay dividends in the improvement of the property by its designation as a commercial space. Furthermore, it was to be upon the artisan to make improvements to the property and the *gedik* would specify not only where the trade was to be practised, but also where the tools of the trade were to be stored, namely, on the site. Thus, Ağır and Yıldırım claim that by the eighteenth century the term *gedik* not only implied a theoretical right to practise a trade, but also the tangible material aspects of the craft in question such as the property and tools.[67] No example illustrates this material aspect of the *gedik* better than that of *Macuncu Yeniçeri* Mustafa. His trade is given as "*macuncu*" which means he was a maker and seller of medicinal taffy. In 1725 there is a record of Mustafa acquiring a shop from one Hüseyin Efendi.[68]

However, the following year Mustafa is involved in a case brought before the court where he and several other artisans are accused of preparing opium syrup incorrectly and that the syrup had leaked and caused damage resulting in the offending shops being closed.[69] Later the same year a petition was brought by Hüseyin Efendi, likely the same Hüseyin who first gave Mustafa the shop, petitioning for the property of the closed shop, including the tools and

[66] BOA, AE SAMD III, 156, 15287, 25/5/1135.
[67] Ağır & Yıldırım, 'Gedik: whats in a name?', 220-221.
[68] İSTANBUL 24, 1727.
[69] Ibid.

other equipment within, and the permission to make the shop into a greengrocers store.[70] From this we can surmise that Hüseyin lost his *gedik* which was then redefined into a general grocery permit to be granted to another individual somewhere along the line.

The final element of this question is the direction of trade migration. As previously mentioned, there was a two-way traffic of soldiers joining artisan groups and trades and craftsmen signing up for janissary status (not to mention janissary wages and legal protection). One interesting thing regarding janissary involvement in trade during the eighteenth century, is that most historians seem to favour, or at least emphasise, movement one way or the other. Cemal Kafadar seems to favour the thesis that prioritises janissary movement outwards into the guilds, arguing the long history of janissary involvement in trade even prior to this "esnafization".[71] Many janissaries chose to work with their hands in artisan crafts, utilising skills that were traditionally taught to young *devşirme* recruits, ostensibly to support the army on campaign, but also to ensure them a reserve occupation should the need arise. The eighteenth century was obviously a time of just such need.

In the matter of movement into the corps, the janissaries themselves took greater control of their own recruitment and many new members at this time were adult men who already had their own jobs, coming as they did, largely from the urban middle classes.[72] This seizing of recruitment control by janissaries has led to claims of criminal activity in the selling of janissary pay books *(esame)* on the black markets.

There is a plentiful supply of scholarship upon most aspects concerning Ottoman guilds and numerous studies of individual guilds in cities of the Empire, including several focussed-on Istanbul alone. Janissary relations with the guilds of Istanbul are a topic which Professor Kafadar has worked upon at some length, claiming in *Yeniçeri-esnaf Relations* that

[70] Ibid.
[71] Kafadar, 'Yeniçeri-esnaf Relations', 82.
[72] Tezcan, 'Second Empire', 211.

the guilds did not seek political autonomy, but rather by their aims of registering and controlling the population, functioned as government agencies.[73] Gabriel Baer on the other hand, portrays the guilds as a much more independent authority in the city claiming that janissary penetration of the artisan classes caused the guilds to lose their hold over the urban population.[74] Donald Quataert claims that over the period 1700-1922 the importance of guilds in the manufacture of goods fell, but did not disappear, and that the economic crisis of the second half of the eighteenth century did potentially accelerate the formal organisation of the guilds as a self-protective action. He also suggests that the guilds of Istanbul were well developed, possibly more than anywhere else in the Empire, and that the janissaries had a significant role in the life of the guilds right up until their abolition in 1826.[75]

The question of the suggested autonomy of the guilds arises repeatedly, especially with regards to janissary involvement as one of the advantages of being a janissary was that a man could only be tried and convicted for any crime he stood accused of in a court of his own janissary officers. In an eerie parallel, any violation of *nizam* laws or guild rules were judged by, and punishments determined by, guild authorities themselves. So, by having a dual identity as janissaries and guildsmen with fingers in both pies, these individuals did, in theory, have two levels of legal protection against any accusations, which would be useful if any were to attempt criminal activity. This is because the janissaries effectively were Istanbul's sole police force up until the nineteenth century, but also could serve as a safeguard against unjust accusations in a time when prejudice against janissaries and janissaries in trade was running high. The extent to which the guilds seem to have been self-governing is interesting in that, there always were rules of trade that everyone obeyed, but only in the eighteenth century did

[73] Kafadar, ‘Yeniçeri-esnaf Relations,’ 57.
[74] Gabriel Baer, 'The Administrative, Economic and Social Functions of Turkish Guilds', International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 1, (1967), 39.
[75] Quataert, ‘The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922’, 136.

the need arise to put such laws in writing.[76] This does suggest a significant change in the make-up of trade memberships. Perhaps that previously, when guilds were more exclusive, and trades passed mostly through the family, education in such laws would be passed down personally.

The existence of a written document, however, suggests that the laws suddenly needed to reach a wider audience than was possible by traditional in-house trade training. Altintaş has argued that it is important to note the level of autonomy guilds enjoyed while writing their *nizams* or rules. He claims that there were no restrictions on them on the condition that they did not contradict the laws of the state. Guild autonomy should not be contradictory to the rule of general law, but each guild could have completely different *nizam* laws governing the behaviour of their members, which does show a certain extent of autonomy from the state authority.[77] So, there is a very real possibility that, by entering the guild structures, janissaries confused the hierarchies of both institutions. However, being part of a guild was important, especially for migrants, as they often had to provide surety *(kefıl)* guaranteeing their appearance in court if needed and this surety was often supplied by employers. Some of these migrants eventually formed separate guilds, with older retired men calling on sons and nephews to replace them.[78] The formation of these new guilds had to find a niche in trade somewhere, a *ferman* from the eighteenth century shows an individual guild exclusively for weaving ribbons for the fire brigade and by the nineteenth century, there were fourteen different guilds of shoemakers grouped by what kind of shoes they made. Tailors had just as many subdivisions.[79] Obviously such specialised trades would not provide constant employment, but for janissaries merely seeking to supplement their military wage it may not

[76] Abdülmennan M. Altintaş, 'The World of Ottoman Guilds: The Issue of Monopoly', History Studies, 2 (2010), 16.
[77] Ibid., 13.
[78] Faroqhi, ‘Artisans of the Empire’, 113.
[79] Baer, 'Administrative, Economic and Social Functions', 33.

need to have been a constant income. We know from records that janissaries still petitioned the sultan for their entitled military wages,[80] which suggests that they still needed them to make up a living income.

The scarcity of military campaigns especially during the period known as the Tulip Era, made it necessary for some janissaries to work a job in one of these 'niche-guilds' and have at best part-time civilian employment and part-time military employment, owing to lack of campaigns of conquest at this time. Janissaries could be deployed for fortress duty and there is evidence that many were, but the capital's urban janissary population remained largely resident, this, in addition to the influx of migrants would have made job competition fierce and lead to some men engaging in the part-time here part-time there measures I have described. The issue of monopoly is a recurrent theme in the writings on janissaries in trade. Common opinions against the janissaries claim that they sought to take over guild structures and monopolies, but if the guild advantages of autonomy were actually the same as janissary advantages e.g. trial and judgement by their own people, then the extra layer of protection the dual identity offered would be useful, but not compulsory. So, the driving force behind engagement in trade had to be a need. Greed is also a potential motivator and not every janissary-cum-guildsman would have been completely innocent in his motives, but for a group as diverse as the janissaries not every member could be expected to have the same reasons and motivations. Those historians who have claimed that the janissaries served as allies and protectors of the guilds and their monopolies, for example Tezcan[81] and Quataert,[82] argue that so intertwined were the interests of artisans and janissaries that the abolition of the janissaries was a terrible blow for the guilds, as they lost much of their protection against state interference. It is true that many guilds would pay an affiliated corps protection money, but

[80] BOA, HAT, 17, 758, 29/10/1185.
[81] Tezcan, 'Second Empire.'
[82] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922', 139.

this is, in truth, no different to a large corporation hiring security to protect their interests. While the legality of this may be questionable it seems to have been a common occurrence at the time. Kafadar tells us that these operations were mess based in the eighteenth century[83] and so I believe herein lies a possible explanation for the alleged janissary monopolization of some guilds. If they operated their messes as guilds, keeping within a group environment they were familiar with, it would be an easy mistake to interpret trading regiments as guilds themselves. It is statements like that of nineteenth century Ottoman court historian Esad Efendi, who said that "willingly or not" every guild was under janissary protection,[84] which condemn the practice of military security for the guilds.

There is also a possible interpretation, contrary to Kafadar's outsider class thesis, which is an alliance of two powerful institutions recognising the advantages in each other and offering mutual protection against the state. The reasons for why both parties should feel such a need are worth examining. If we cross reference this with Tezcan's claims of developing systems of patronage and the rise of the vizier households in the seventeenth century, it may be possible to see the janissaries mirroring these actions in the eighteenth century with their own developments in recruitment and patronage between the janissaries and the *esnaf*. If we add to this the janissary relationships with the *ulema* we see the janissaries very cleverly networking on an institutional scale to afford themselves better opportunities for advancement and protection. The fact that janissaries not only adapted themselves to trade but also worked with Ottoman guilds is another example of their flexibility and, arguably, an extension of the forming of institutional alliances such as the alliances with the power structure and the *ulema.* By these relationships the janissary corps as an institution has a strong network of influential contacts.

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[83] Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff', 118.
[84] Donald Quataert, ‘Workers, Peasants and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire 1730-1914’ (Istanbul,1993), 199.

**3. Appointed Collectors**

In this section I shall examine evidence I have found of janissaries undertaking roles in which they dealt very directly with financial matters. If janissaries were looking for ways to supplement income for themselves and other members of their institution, then the handling and recording of money would provide ample opportunity for them to do so. From the archives we find documentation that shows janissaries undertaking roles which looked to the administration of their own institution. The most frequent is the assigning to an individual the right to collect the allowance from the Istanbul public revenue for retired janissaries.[85] Those assigned these duties were often retired janissaries themselves and this habit, of appointing retired men to undertake these simple administrative tasks, show that the state was engaged in some form of after-care for its retired soldiers. It is also possible that this was a way to keep these highly trained military men busy and not sitting idling, but to make them feel useful and valued. This is something which pre-dated the 1700s and seems to be well established by the eighteenth century. For example, in 1710-1711 one Mehmed Ahmed, defined only as a janissary, was appointed to collect 8 *akçe* daily from the treasury for the support of retired janissaries. The way the appointment is phrased, with reference to custom and precedent, shows us that this practice was well established by this time.[86] The following year another daily amount of 6 *akçe* per day was granted in order to provide for the soldiers horses and again an appointment was made to manage this payment.[87] Again, we must consider systems of patronage and whether or not these individuals received these positions due to the lobbying of an influential superior, or whether their appointments were completely state initiated. Another interpretation is that, this was an easy position that served as a type of pension for the

[85] I. e. BOA, AE SMST II, 17, 1651, 26/6/1115; BOA, AE SMST II, 131, 14488, 29/12/1111.
[86] BOA, AE SAMD III, 37, 3528, 29/12/1116.
[87] BOA, AE SAMD III, 37, 3535, 29/12/1116.

retired janissaries appointed there. Rather than have them leave to serve as guards on *malikanes* in the provinces, by appointing retired janissaries to these roles the state ensured that they remained easily monitored.

Furthermore, it would not be a bad thing for the reputation of the Ottoman government among the janissaries if word got around that the state was caring for older and retired janissaries in this way. Finally, if we link back to an interpretation that has been raised earlier, that of state control over recruitment, we can see how this would benefit them here. If the position of finance collector was viewed as a nice retirement for janissaries, that would arguably give serving janissaries a reason to remain on good terms with the state in the hopes of securing such a position. There is evidence of good janissary-state relations from the documentation of the sultans showing support for janissary appointments and financial gifts to janissaries, as well as the continuation of ceremonies of loyalty and friendship like the janissary pay-days and the baklava event. By creating a desirable role for janissaries to aspire to in their seniority the state would also hold some leverage and would be able to choose individuals with a good track record of service and loyalty whom they trusted to handle money in this way. Considering the economic context of these appointments, it would have been in the best interests of the Ottoman government to be vigilant in appointing only trusted men to these roles. This regular income during retirement would bolster the lump sums granted to janissaries upon retirement, as in 1745 when a janissary deemed too old for active service was retired with the sum of 40 *akçe.*[88] This evidence regarding janissaries working in finance highlights yet another range of professions members of the janissary corps adapted to as well as showing how the state managed the employment of janissaries in the new environment of the eighteenth century.

[88] BOA, AE, SMHD I, 124, 9040, 22/12/1157.

## Janissary Families

The aspects of janissary life and identity that have been explored so far in this thesis tend towards the exercise of power, influence and status, either on the part of the janissaries, or on the part of others influencing the janissaries. This section aims to address more personal, daily aspects of janissary life. For that reason, great emphasis will be placed on family life. This is in the interests of presenting an image of janissary identity and function which is as holistic and complete as possible. The archival sources for this section again include a range of *evrak* examples as well as a great many entries from *kadı sicilleri* and *şeriye defterleri* as well data from the military probate registers. These sources form part of the Ottoman administration of finances and as such were very important records in the eighteenth century. As usual the objective will be to see how far primary evidence can support the idea of janissary adaptation and if it does not, what other interpretations are available to historians. Furthermore, by discussing the janissaries' daily lives as human actors I hope to offer a more holistic image of the eighteenth-century urban janissary. While the focus here shall be on the more social aspects of janissary adaptation, there is crossovers with earlier sections and chapters regarding economics in the question of inheritances and power, though in this case the power and influence being discussed is that which comes from the possession of monetary and/or material wealth.

### 1. Children and Families

By the traditions of the janissary corps members were not permitted to marry or have children. The janissaries being both soldiers and humans, there were children born out of wedlock in the earlier centuries. However, the eighteenth century saw a great many janissary husbands and fathers, partly due to the practice of tradesmen moving into the corps and in part because of a relaxation of the traditions of janissary celibacy which occurred, as did so many

relaxations of traditions, from the time of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. By the eighteenth century the term '*kul oğlu'* was widely known and used. This is defined by Redhouse as '*Ott hist.* Janissary who is the son of a Janissary.'[89] Family, and the desire to provide for them, would have been a significant motivating factor for janissary actions and so exploring this question is beneficial.

Ottoman chroniclers of the eighteenth century were generally opposed to the sons of soldiers becoming soldiers themselves and wrote against these kinds of hereditary principles. Sarı Mehmed Paşa argued that it was not good for the economy of the Ottoman Empire. By elevating members of the *reaya* to the *askeri* classes the taxpaying population was reduced leading to less state income from tax, which Sarı Mehmed claims is just as bad as overly high taxes and repressive practices. For this reason, he says that sons of the members of the military should not be granted military status, he also believe that this rule should apply to the *ulema.*[90]

A common explanation for janissary involvement in trade has been their need to support families; Janissaries had been free to marry throughout the seventeenth century and by the eighteenth century. Additionally, there are the claims of a hereditary principle in the janissary corps.[91] Karademir shows that the tradition of sons following into their fathers' jobs was present in eighteenth-century Sivas. He also argues that wives and children became targets for people displeased with the janissaries.[92] The guilds also had a hereditary tradition as we have already seen, so while janissaries needed trades in order to supplement their military incomes and support their families in the moment, but offering their sons guild

[89] Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman-English Dictionary, 1999 reprint, 682.

[90] Sarı Mehmed Paşa, 'Ottoman Statecraft', 110-116.

[91] Gábor Ágoston, 'Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450–1800', Journal of World History, 25 (2014), 118.

[92] Karademir, 'Janissaries in the Social and Economic Life of Rum (Sivas), 492, 500.

membership also offered them the chance to inherit both a military commission and a trade protected by a guild, thus safeguarding their futures as well. This was a clever move allowing parents to hedge bets for the future of their children; there was the potential that military or artisan trade would improve in the future, or both, which also gave janissary children choices for the future. A part of this was the policy in the membership of the guilds whereby members had to leave a portion of their estate to the guilds they were affiliated with and, despite decreases in this share over the 1700s,[93] a janissary-artisan who paid his dues would win legitimacy in both the corps and the guilds, thus in turn increasing the legitimacy of any claims made by his children. Janissary probates also made provision for janissary children by way of dues paid to the corps by their fathers. Upon the death of the father the corps could then control the money, presumably until the son came of age, which meant that the corps could use the money until the boy grew up and proved his livelihood. Thus, the amount would (hopefully!) undergo a growth[94], possibly in line with economic inflation, so that the son would inherit a decent sum at the time he chose to claim it. Households also varied by region for example, in Istanbul as in Anatolia, households generally divided on the death of the father, while in Damascus households with siblings continued after the deaths of parents.[95] Tarık Özçelik outlined a case from the seventeenth century where Janissary Ağa Köse Mehmet amassed a great fortune, indicating that high ranking janissary officers could build up a wealthy estate. However, due to making a mistake and falling out of favour, he was executed, and his possessions confiscated, likely going into the central treasury.[96] It is not

[93] Faroqhi, 'Artisans of the Empire', 132-133.
[94] Said Öztürk, 'Askeri Kassama Ait Onydinci Asir: İstanbul Tereke Deferleri (Sosyo-Ekonomik Tahlil)' (Istanbul, 1995), 93.
[95] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922', 113.
[96] Tarık Özçelik, 'Yeniçeri Ağası Köse Mehmet Ağa ve Muhallefatı', History Studies International Journal of History, 5, (2013) 287-310.

made clear whether or not Köse Mehmed Ağa had any family who brought claims to this property or not.

A case from Sultan Abdülhamid I's rule from 1788 deals with the question of hereditary rights. It is a petition on behalf of a woman named *Derviş* Fatma Hanım, so we can infer she was considered a respectable individual, claiming her right to the administrative position of the deceased Ahmed Paşa. The estate was to be the right of three successive generations of Ahmed's *evlad* (children) and Fatma claims herself to have the right to it, and her argument rests largely on the fact that *evlad* is a gender-neutral term. This is a follow up of a request already made and the Sultan and court are irritated that this woman is "bothering" them. This hostility could be due to the fact that she was female, or because she was chasing a procedure, yet she is doing so seemingly legally. They claim that her petition is in the system and will be dealt with in due course. However, the Sultan does not wish to hear of it again claiming the matter is dealt with and it is forbidden to hold another hearing on the matter.[97] There is no indication that her connection to the deceased janissary Ahmed Paşa is what caused her case to be dismissed, rather it is more likely to be her gender, though whether this was a particular prejudice on behalf of Abdülhamid I or a generally held bias is not so clear from this one example.

Another example comes from the Istanbul *kadı sicilleri* and refers to janissary children only indirectly. It recounts the case of a man being brought to court in the neighbourhood of the Süleymaniye Mosque to have a claim brought against him by a woman named Muhassene *Hatun*. The man in question is said to have been entrusted with the care of a deceased janissary's son and that seems to count towards giving him a good character in the court. Indeed, the man against whom the claim was made readily admits he is in the woman's debt

[97] BOA, AE SABH I, 10, 869, 10/7/1203.

and it is agreed that he shall pay. The case seems to have been settled quite amicably.[98] At this time in the Ottoman Empire the legal definition of an orphan was a child whose father had died, regardless of whether or not the mother was still alive, and this applied to both male and female children. When a child was orphaned the task fell to the *kadı* to find them a suitable home and so, as Leslie Peirce has shown for the case of Aintab, this discretionary power often led to appointments of guardians from outside the biological family of the child. She argues that the guardianship of a child had strong moral connotations and that the community played a role, both in informing the judges of such children in need, and in validating the appointed guardians.[99] Women were also equally capable of being appointed guardians and there are examples in Peirce's work of mothers being appointed as guardians to their own children. To be appointed a guardian an individual had to demonstrate a financial capability as often a part of guardianship involved managing the inheritance of children until the orphans came of age. Even then, judges are often seen to be the ones to sanction the sale of inherited property or other transactions by the guardian on behalf of the children.[100]

Peirce also cites a case similar to the one I have found of the janissary guardian, although in the case of Aintab it was a female guardian. "Zeliha, mother and guardian of the orphan boys Hamza and Sadi, is summoned to court by Haci Ali on account of a debt of 200 akces owed him from the boys' father's estate. The father has died "in the land of honor," perhaps while on the pilgrimage. Zeliha acknowledges the debt."[101] Here the guardianship is relevant as the debt owed comes from the inherited estate. However, the fact of the debt does not seem to be in question and Zeliha acknowledges it, just like the janissary guardian did. Though it is not specified in either case we can understand that this was simply a regular

[98] İSTANBUL 18, (unnumbered page, see Appendix 5).
[99] Leslie Peirce, 'Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab', (London, 2003), 138, 185.
[100] Ibid., 210, 220.
[101] Ibid., 219.

occurrence going through the court for the sake of creating a written record, and that the debts are subsequently paid. Iris Agmon claims that registration and division of inheritance in a court was not mandatory and that *sharia* courts were more reactive than proactive, which fits with Peirce's claim that judges depended upon the community to keep them informed of events requiring their attention. Due to this, Agmon claims that the effectiveness of these courts in protecting the rights of orphans was unequal by region across the Ottoman Empire and in some places, was completely absent.[102]

## 2. Janissaries and inheritance

As historical sources the estate inventories of deceased individuals *(tereke)* have a wide range of applications. They have been used in the study of Ottoman material culture and consumerism,[103] migrations and minorities[104] and as a source for price history.[105] There are limitations to the usefulness of these sources, however. Eminegül Karababa points out that probate inventories are not representative of the population as a whole because the life cycle of individuals varies depending upon their wealth and quality of life. Furthermore, the elderly are most likely overrepresented while the poorer classes are underrepresented. There is also the question of the acquisition of wealth and material goods by means unknown and also the fact that perishable items and entertainment expenses are not recorded and so their absence

[102] Iris Agmon, 'State, Family and Anticorruption Practices in the Late Ottoman Empire,' in Ronald Kroeze, Andre Vitoria and G. Geltner (ed.) 'Anticorruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era', (Oxford, 2018), 252.

[103] See Amanda Phillips, 'A Material Culture: Ottoman Velvet and their Owners 1600-1750', Muqarnas, Vol 31, (2014), 151-173; Amanda Phillips, 'The Historiography of Ottoman Velvets 2011-1572', Journal of Art Historiography, No 6, (2012), 1-26; Elif Akçetin & Suraiya Faroqhi (ed.), 'Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century', (Leiden, 2018).

[104] Phokion Kotzageorgis, 'A City on the Move: Non-Salonicans in Thessaloniki and Salonicans Abroad in the 18th Century According to Ottoman Probate Inventories', Archiv Orientalni, 84:1, (2016), 105-228.

[105] Pınar Ceylan, 'Ottoman inheritance inventories as a source for price history', Historical Methods, 49:3, (2016), 132-144.

skews the data.[106] Boğac Ergene and Ali Berker examined such sources for the study of inheritance and intergenerational wealth in Kastamonu and caution to be wary of the titulature used in such sources as it is not often an accurate reflection of the rank or occupation of the individual in question.[107] As much terminology used seems to have become purely customary and ceremonial rather than literal by the eighteenth century, I agree with this assessment. Furthermore, there were means of passing on wealth through systems like the *vakıf* which have already been addressed. Pınar Ceylan, while investigating price histories also advises caution with these sources as they offer a biased view due to wealth imbalances in society, potential omissions from registers and unrealistic valuations, all of which can compromise the data. Indeed, there is a claim that valuers tended to over value the items in an estate in order to cover the administration fees involved in the process.[108]

In the classical Hanafi interpretation of law, the heirs of an estate were split into three groups. Firstly, those entitled to a pre-determined share of the estate as laid down in the Quran. Secondly, the heirs of the patrilineal line and thirdly the heirs of the matrilineal line.[109] Richard Kimber writes that in the Sunni tradition the Quranic decrees did not form a complete system of inheritance and that, while these rules were obeyed they were interpreted in such a way by the Ottomans that they did not obstruct any male heirs from inheriting.[110] It is in the absence of all three of the aforementioned groups that the estate is then handed over to the public treasury.[111]

Phokion Kotzageorgis defines *tereke* records as "cold" historical sources, in that they only show data from one moment in time and argues that they have limited value beyond the

[106] Eminegül Karababa, 'Investigating early modern Ottoman consumer culture in the light of Bursa probate inventories.' The Economic History Review, 65:1 (2012), 194-219.
[107] Boğaç Ergene & Ali Berker, 'Inheritance and Intergenerational Wealth Transmission in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Kastamonu: An Empirical Investigation', Journal of Family History, 34:1 (2009), 26-30.
[108] Ceylan, 'Sources for Price History', 133.
[109] Ergene & Berker, 'Inheritance in Eighteenth-Century Kastamonu', 27.
[110] Richard Kimber, 'The Qur'anic Law of Inheritance', Islamic Law and Society, 5:3 (1998), 291.
[111] Ergene & Berker, 'Inheritance in Eighteenth-Century Kastamonu', 27.

study of economic history. In order for a *tereke* to be registered there was one of three systems. Firstly, if the deceased had no relatives so the estate was to be liquidated. Secondly, if the only surviving relatives were minors, a commissioner was to be appointed to oversee the matter. Finally, for military men property had to be registered for anyone to get a share, no matter the strength of their claim.[112] This last system is beneficial as it increases the number of sources available for the study of the janissaries in this way. As stated above, janissary probates also made provision for janissary children by way of dues paid to the corps by their fathers.

The question of theft and corruption in the cases of janissary death is addressed in a document from the Imperial Council dated 1791. It would seem that the system had been abused during the eighteenth century. According to this source it was the custom that a janissary who informed a superior about the death of a fellow janissary be paid the value of 1/10 of the deceased persons *esame.* This is the first point of investigation, clarifying whether or not the janissary had died as it had been known for people to lie and steal *esame* for the purposes of gaining this payment. Such fraud damaged the Ottoman economy. It is claimed that many people allow their *esame* to be taken in order to perpetuate this fraud and so extra checks are necessary. The officer reporting to the council states that when he met with the guilty parties, they pleaded that they were in dire financial straits and this is why they did it.[113]

The data for this section has been compiled by combining register entries pertaining to the death and estates of janissaries from a combination of sources. Here I have used *defter* entries and *evrak* from the BOA, *kadı sicil* entries from ISAM and the 1790-1791 *İstanbul Askeri Kassam Defter.* Entries have been consulted from across the period of interest (1730-

[112] Kotzageorgis, 'A City on the Move', 105-106.
[113] BOA, HAT, 1392, 55633, 29/12/1204.

1790) in order to chart any changes to either the family make-up or systems of inheritance during the course of the eighteenth-century.[114] This collection is by no means exhaustive as some documents were too disfigured by damage or digitisation errors to read.

Out of the 158 cases examined for this study 81 saw the deceased estate go solely to the treasury. In 36 cases the entirety of the inheritance went to family members alone, while a further 36 cases saw the estate divided between various family members and the treasury. Of the remaining 5 cases one case in 1731 was not clear on whether or not the treasury had taken a cut, a case in 1738 saw the estate left to a man called Mehmet whose relationship to the deceased was unclear. A case in 1743 saw inheritance go to the treasury and one other bequest which was not quite clear. The last two outstanding cases come from 1790 and one simply states that the profits from the estate paid off the debts of the deceased while the other saw the money divided between a payment of debts and the widow of the deceased.

If we include this last case then out of 158 examples there are 72 cases in which the deceased janissary left behind some relations who inherited from the estate, whether this was a spouse, child, parent or other family member. As previously stated in 81 of the examined cases the treasury took sole possession of the estate, if we add to this the 36 examples where the estate was split between relatives and the treasury that is 117 cases whereby the treasury profited from the death of a janissary. Whether or not there were relatives who were disinherited in some of these cases is not clear but what can be seen is that the rise in the number of janissary probates that name family members as heirs is slow and gradual while the number of cases where the treasury solely benefits fluctuates. This suggests that janissary family structures did not change dramatically over the course of the eighteenth century, or that many janissaries did not have their estates recorded. It is also possible, due to the black

[114] For all tables compiled from this data please see Appendix 6.

market *esame* trade, that some individuals who acted and were treated as janissaries, and called themselves such, did not have their probates registered with their janissary title. Linda Colley discusses the idea of identities being like 'hats' that historical figures can change and wear at will.[115] If we assume that such a concept was in practice among the janissaries of eighteenth century Istanbul, and we know that military men were marks to have their estates recorded by the state, then it would have been in the interest of a "janissary" who perhaps did not wish the state to take so much of his wealth, to keep his affiliation to the corps quiet in official documentation.

Where an estate has been divided between a widow and the treasury the widow usually receives ¼ share of the estate, which is in accordance with the traditions of Sunni Islamic inheritance. There is also one case from 1731 where the deceased janissary was divorced, and his former wife is awarded 1/3 of the estate. Where inheritance has gone to both the treasury and the family, it may be that this first payment can be seen as some sort of early modern Ottoman inheritance tax. Though why it is not applied to all cases is interesting. It is likely that cases where the family alone inherit are examples of a janissary having pre-recorded his heirs and his wishes for them before death, while the sharing of an estate between the treasury and the family are cases where the *beytülmal* official has done the work of finding and recording family members and calculating payments to be made.

In terms of processing the estate of a deceased janissary after death, the *İstanbul Askeri Kassam Defter* shows the breakdown of expenses including administrative fees, registrations fees and funeral expenses. In the case of a janissary death an official from the deceased man's regiment was appointed to oversee the processing of the estate, its registration and the distributing of bequests.

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[115] Linda Colley, 'Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837', (Pimlico, 1993), 6.

As previously mentioned, there were different methods for passing on wealth in the Ottoman Empire and some examples can be seen for the 1730-1790 period from the BOA *evrak* collection. It was not only material wealth which was bequeathed, in 1754 a janissary named Mahmut died while holding 25 *akçe* of shares in the taxation of coffee. It was requested that 2 *akçe* of this were given to Mahmut's son, Feyzullah while the remaining 23 *akçe* went to the treasury.[116] An example from the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I shows the distribution of the salary of a deceased janissary to both a janissary colleague and to the deceased janissary's son.[117] These are small amounts but are yet another form of supplementary income to add to the regular earnings of these heirs. Another method of passing on wealth was gifts, while the giver was still alive. This would remove the need for the gift to be added to an estate inventory and for the treasury to take a share in it. In 1767 a janissary named Haydar Ağa transferred his right of ownership upon a field subject to the Fatih Cami foundation to his sons, Mehmet and Mustafa.[118] This overlaps two systems of passing on wealth, the gift aspect and the *vakıf* method. Mehmet and Mustafa would now have connections to the foundation in question giving them further opportunities and status in the future.

**2. Property sales**

Another way in which the janissaries were active in the Ottoman economy was the owning and selling of real estate property. The majority of scholarship on property and property law in the Ottoman Empire focusses on the nineteenth-century reforms of the *Tanzimat* period. However, there are a number of examples of property sales involving janissaries for the eighteenth century which can be found among the archival collections of

[116] BOA, AE SMHD I, 76, 5049, 4/6/1167.
[117] BOA, AE SABH I, 178, 11853, 16/9/1203.
[118] BOA, TS MAE, 467/1-2.

the BOA coming from *Topkapı Sarayı*. They are worth examining here as another way in which the janissaries were active players in the economy of Istanbul and also as another way of property and wealth changing hands. As the majority of these cases involve janissary widows or children selling or otherwise being involved in the property, I have chosen to include this section with the rest of the information on janissary families.

A case from 1717 details the death of a janissary whose only inheritor was his wife who sold the home she inherited to a man named Hasan *Çavuş* for 320 *kuruş*.[119] The size or number of rooms in the house is not specified so there is no way to judge whether or not this is a reasonable price for the property in question. Hasan Çavuş seems to have been very active in the Istanbul property market we there is a record of him purchasing another property in the Fatih District of Istanbul in 1726 for 500 *kuruş*.[120] Another home in Fatih was sold in 1728 for 411 *kuruş* and this one was purchased by Mustafa Ağa who was a *Çorbacı* of the fifteenth regiment.[121] The final property sale in this district which involves the janissaries in this period occurred in 1734 and concerns the sale of the home of Abdurrahman Ağa to the widow of a retired janissary officer. Rukiye Hanım bought the property for 800 *kuruş*.[122] This illustrates the freedom women had to buy and own property in the Ottoman Empire. Another purchase by a woman was that of Fatma Hanım in 1742. She purchased a home from the Janissary Probate Officer of the Imperial Janissaries paying 230 *kuruş* for the property.[123] This price, when compared to the other sales mentioned here suggests either a particularly small property and/or one not in good condition. Another possibility is that this was a symbolic transaction, selling something for well below the value in order to make the property exchange legal and binding. Writing on female property holders in fifteenth and sixteenth century Egypt Shauna

[119] BOA, TS MAE, 1246/87.
[120] BOA, TS MAE, 1247/16.
[121] BOA, TS MAE, 1247/25.
[122] BOA, TS MAE, 1247/43.
[123] BOA, TS MAE, 1280/80.

Huffaker argues that the freedom of women to buy and own property in the Islamic world is often overemphasized. She argues that, while women's property was protected by law it was often mediated by the men in their lives in such a way that cannot always be accurately reflected in the primary source documentation.[124] For example, in the case of Rukiye *Hanım* mentioned above, the fact that she purchased the property soon enough after her husband's death that it was commented upon in the sale agreement, suggests that she was investing a portion of the inheritance she had received upon his death. Furthermore, the fact that she purchased a property from another janissary, as her husband had been one, suggests that the solidarity of the institution extended to the care of fellow janissaries' families. While Rukiye is the property owner in all legal senses the entire transaction is surrounded by the men who have made it possible. Furthermore, Huffaker states that a woman needed the approval of a male relative to sell her property[125], it is likely that a male figure was also involved in the purchase of property also.

The last two examples each deal respectively with the involvement of non-Muslims in property and of buying and subsequently renting property. In 1758 a *zimmi* names Konstantin, then resident in Istanbul, sold his properties in Çatalca to a janissary clerk named El-Hac Ali Efendi for the sum of 1500 *kuruş*. Ali then hired out these properties for 6 months with one month's rent being 3000 *akçe.*[126] The final sales agreement examined here is the sale of a home by Abdullah *Ağa* to Yakup Ağa who was a trustee of the janissary finances for the 87th regiment. Yakup bought the property for 630 kuruş and subsequently rented it out for 94.5 *kuruş* per year.[127]

In summary, the events discussed here demonstrate how the janissaries adapted to

[124] Shauna Huffaker, 'Gendered Limitations on Women Property Owners: Three Women of Early Modern Cairo,' Hawwa, 10, (2012), 127-128.
[125] Ibid., 129.
[126] BOA, AE SMST III, 34, 2306, 29/12/1171.
[127] BOA, TS MAE, 1277/48.

functioning in a domestic urban economy and secured income from a variety of sources. The intimacy between members of the corps was deliberate, since the traditional *devşirme* recruitment sought to replace the biological family from which the boys had been taken and raise them to feel the same (if not stronger) bonds and sense of duty to their Ottoman lives. In many respects we can see the eighteenth-century systems of patronage, which replaced earlier meritocratic systems, as an extension of these bonds. The rise in patronage during this time has met with criticism and yet, it can be interpreted as members of the corps helping each other when in need. Janissaries also provided for their own families in this time and it is in these documents, detailing the inheritance passed down or the securing of positions for their family members after death that we see the janissaries' diplomatic alliances with institutions bearing fruit. The power structure facilitates these wishes of the deceased janissaries along with other members of the corps. The *ulema* also assist in taking members of janissary families into roles in pious endowments. As many offices and appointments, both those discussed in this chapter and those referenced in Chapter 3, were short term during the eighteenth century[128], janissaries would need to be adaptable in order to shift occupations as often as necessary as well as juggle multiple positions.

Regarding sedition and politics, it is interesting that there is documentary evidence for individual or small groups of janissaries breaking the law and being punished, but the allegations of a united institutional 'corruption' are, at best, harder to corroborate. As discussed above, it is not unlikely that janissaries would participate in popular protests as they were more invested in the concerns of the general population at this time. However, I find the idea that a single janissary, or a small group, could rally the entire institution around a cause not directly related to the janissaries, such as military wages and similar, not very plausible.

[128] Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice', 81.

The religious lives of the janissaries offer evidence of piety, judging from the documentary evidence of *vakıf* endowments. Furthermore, the Janissary Ağa being willing to accept payment in kind rather than insisting upon coinage is, partly wise due to the debasement of coinage and the eighteenth-century economic situation, but also suggests an act of kindness. Remembering what was said about petitions in the Introduction, the granting of them reveals generosity on the part of the Ağa. There is also no suggestion that the petitioners were in any way janissary affiliated, only that the petition was received and granted by the most senior officer of the corps. This could also be interpreted as good for the reputation of the *Ağa* in particular and the corps in general, as well as being an example of networking and patronage at play. If such systems facilitated an economically efficient way of gaining supplies as well as supporting the livelihood and financial situation of Ottoman subjects, I argue that this should be seen as an adaptation which brought benefits, not only to the janissaries but to the wider Ottoman urban society as well. This is an example of an adaptation which went beyond what was needed for the janissary institution to survive and in doing so helped others.

# Conclusion: A Changing Institution in a Changing World.

Through my exploration of the literature concerning the janissaries in eighteenth-century Istanbul I have come to the conclusion that a new, or at least different, framework is needed for studying the janissaries. While it is well known that the 'purity/corruption' paradigm is completely defunct, there has not been, to date, any cohesive argument for what should take its place. Scholarship on this subject is in some danger of overcorrecting the theory at the cost of historical accuracy, not dissimilar to the way Marios Hadjianastasis has argued scholarship has turned on the subject of identity and politics, as stated in the Introduction. Historians can accept that this morally loaded terminology is no longer conducive to the study of the Ottoman janissary corps, but modern scholarship needs a new way in which to frame the changes the janissaries underwent through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Throughout each chapter of my thesis, I have argued how my primary source evidence, drawn from documents and registers held in the BOA, Istanbul *kadı sicilleri* from ISAM and elsewhere, does not definitively support the theory of janissary corruption, but rather supports an interpretation of adaptation. By specifically contextualising the janissaries of the Ottoman capital and breaking down their identities into the four categories I have outlined above (military, political, economic and social) I have argued that janissary actions which have been labelled as 'corruptions' in the previous paradigm actually are symptomatic of janissaries who are adapting to the changing circumstances of the eighteenth century.

Due to this, my Conclusion shall focus on substantiating why institutional adaptation is a much more useful approach for studying the janissaries in this period. I shall also clarify how studying the military, political, economic and social aspects of janissary identity during

the 1700s makes clear the institutional adaptation of the janissary corps.

As discussed in Chapter 1 the key theory which bears upon the topic of my thesis is that of historical institutionalism. The question of the janissaries as a key institution in Ottoman society is evident throughout this thesis, as is the presence of both exogenous and endogenous factors in the changes happening in the corps. In my opinion the findings presented here agree with Professor Cappocia's view that institutions impact not only wider political outcomes, but also their own development, though I reject the idea of path-dependency. This is because path-dependency is a gateway theory to teleology which I believe is invalid in historical scholarship as it opens up scholars to biased and agenda-based interpretations. Furthermore, Gerard Roland's arguments of slow vs. fast moving institutions can be seen in the eighteenth-century Istanbul I have uncovered. For example, while I stand by my original claim that janissary actions were largely reactionary, if we see social norms and expectations as slow moving then the image of the 'pure' janissary was sustained, while their alleged 'corruptions' are in fact their adaptations. Indeed, this expectation that the janissaries would be constant and unchanging, in spite of the wider developments within Ottoman society, is the root of the now defunct 'purity/corruption' paradigm. Furthermore, the janissaries were not the first Ottoman institution to change in this manner, as is shown in Madeline Zilfi's treatment of the *ulema.* If we also consider the changes in the Ottoman power structure as an institutional adaptation also, the janissaries were late adapters and were simply following an institutional trend. While Ottoman mentality and expectations were slow moving, Ottoman society in real time was not. These developing institutions are also those with which the janissaries formed alliances with (*ulema,* sultanate etc) in order to secure themselves and to facilitate networks of contacts who could help janissaries when they needed it. This can be seen in the attention given by sultans and Grand Viziers to the pastoral care of

janissaries.

From the changes in warfare, economics and politics outlined in this thesis, we can see the eighteenth century as a period of rapid and great change. This means that the expectation that the janissaries would not react to these changes and remain the same is where we can lay the blame for the existence of the 'purity/corruption' paradigm in the first place. This naïve and unrealistic expectation on the part of both contemporary Ottoman society and secondary scholars is deeply flawed. I argue that scholarship needs to develop an awareness of it and then work towards moving away from it. The claim of historical institutionalism that institutions are a means to chart wider societal changes is something I agree with in light of my findings. Furthermore, I would argue that, due to the reactionary nature of janissary behaviour in eighteenth-century Istanbul, institutions are the products of the society which created them.

From the evidence presented in this thesis it can be seen that, in addition to forming smart institutional alliances, members of the janissary corps had fingers in many different pies. The holding of multiple positions in order to accumulate a reasonable income is an example of this as is the ability of janissaries to take up any appointments or occupations as needed at the time they come along. Furthermore, the constant appointing and dismissing of janissaries from positions shows that in order to survive the janissaries had to be able to adapt quickly and be flexible about the roles they undertook.

Claude Levi-Strauss outlined the concept of bricolage in 1966. He dubs the bricoleur "a Jack of all trades"[1] and states that "The first aspect of bricolage is thus to construct a system of paradigms with the fragments of syntagmatic chains."[2] Bricolage is essentially a

[1] Claude Levi-Strauss, 'The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)' (London, 1966), 17.
[2] Ibid., 150.

method of taking the relevant aspects of existing systems and assembling a new, some may say, patchwork, whole from them. To a certain extent the bricoleur is constrained by what already exists, yet in a postmodern scholarly landscape, I argue that this restriction is not as limiting as it may seem. Furthermore, even allowing for a flexibility of interpretation in the writing of history, even the most liberal interpretation must have a basis in the evidence. Indeed, bricolage is a concept that can be applied to the Braudelian image of the railways goods yard which he offers as an explanation of how civilisations construct their identities.[3] We may call this a cultural or societal bricolage.

What I am proposing is that historians need to view the urban janissary in eighteenth century Istanbul as a bricoleur. The ability to break away from a previously one-dimensional military and servitor identity dictated from cradle to grave by the *devşirme* system shows the growth and adaptability of the successive generations of janissaries. By the eighteenth century a janissary would/could be a soldier, a tradesman/artisan, a property holder, a family man, a politician and a social activist to name just a few faces of the janissaries at this time. As Linda Colley argues, "Identities are not like hats. Human beings can and do put on several at a time."[4] This question of a multi-faceted janissary identity brings an interesting point to bear on the use of primary source documentation in the study of the janissary corps. All of the examples used in this thesis come from sources where the 'janissary' identity of the people involved were clearly stated. However, considering the variety of 'hats' that janissaries could wear in eighteenth century Istanbul it can be argued that these are source where men are choosing to represent themselves as, and be identified as, janissaries. In some cases, such as criminal matters, wearing their janissary 'hat' gave someone as advantage as they could usually only be punished within the institution. In other cases, the use of the janissary identity

[3] Braudel, 'A History of Civilisations', 29.
[4] Colley, 'Britons', 6.

can be said to have benefitted the whole corps by providing them with positive propaganda such as when janissaries became involved in *vakıf* endowments or other philanthropic work. Regarding examples of trade, using the janissary moniker would encourage cooperation from artisans and tradesmen wishing to foster good relationships with the janissary corps as well as institutional alliances forming between janissary regiments and guilds.

The issue which previously arose in the study of the janissaries, is that the adaptation of the institution has been labelled 'corruption', That is, janissary contemporaries labelled the changes as such and subsequent writers, using the documentary evidence that had gone before, simply did not question it until we reached the situation of the janissaries 'purity/corruption' being on a sliding scale. This unquestioning adherence to taking documentary evidence literally without critical analysis has been called "document fetishism"[5] by Suraiya Faroqhi, and, aside from being a prevalent problem in Ottoman history, can I believe, be seen as the cause of the stereotypical 'purity/corruption' binary paradigm which has plagued janissary historiography. The morally loaded nature of this binary's terminology also has the added impact of compromising scholarly objectivity on the part of historians.

It is vital to move away from this binary paradigm of this topic and towards a history of the janissaries as an institutional process. In light of the reactionary nature of janissary actions in eighteenth-century Istanbul, and the changing context in which they found themselves living, I propose that we view the development of the janissary corps as an institutional adaptation. Naturally I am not suggesting that this model is a 'one-size-fits-all' answer to the study of the Ottoman janissary corps in all provinces of the Empire or centuries of Ottoman rule, merely that this is the image I have gathered from my researches on the

[5] Faroqhi, 'Approaching Ottoman History', 2.

urban janissary in eighteenth-century Istanbul.

Beverly Southgate's citation of Christopher Hill is appropriate here as he advises: "wisdom lies, I think, in recognising the complicated interconnexions [in historical events] and not allowing ourselves to be unduly influenced by the categories of analysis we *invent for our own convenience.*"[6] The 'purity/corruption' binary paradigm was an example of this phenomenon, creating simplistic categories and neat boxes for historical actors and their actions to be sorted into and ignoring when they did not quite fit. Another example of these oversimplifications is the tendency to view institutions and wholly homogenous groups. The concept that every member of an institution has the same goals and motivations and feels the same as their fellows on any issue. This is not the case. While the janissaries maintained a pride in their identity, we can see the diverse branching of that members of the corps into various occupations, offices and familial situations. This can be confusing when historians wish to speak of an institution as developing or adapting, it makes it difficult to construct an institutional identity for a group. However, the janissaries did experience this diversifying and so it must be accepted that an integral part of the adaptation of the janissaries at this time was a, at least partial, fragmentation of the janissary corps. Men went into different occupations, some married and some did not, some rose in the ranks, some stayed at the same rank and others were dismissed and demoted. Some janissaries found themselves as part of the Ottoman criminal classes while others did not, others increased their financial means while others barely scraped by. Yet these men were all still janissaries, however varied their life experiences. Historians need to be able to balance the image of a janissary as being both bound by the bonds within the institution of the corps and also being an individual with a unique life experience. Only in this way can a more realistic and holistic view of the

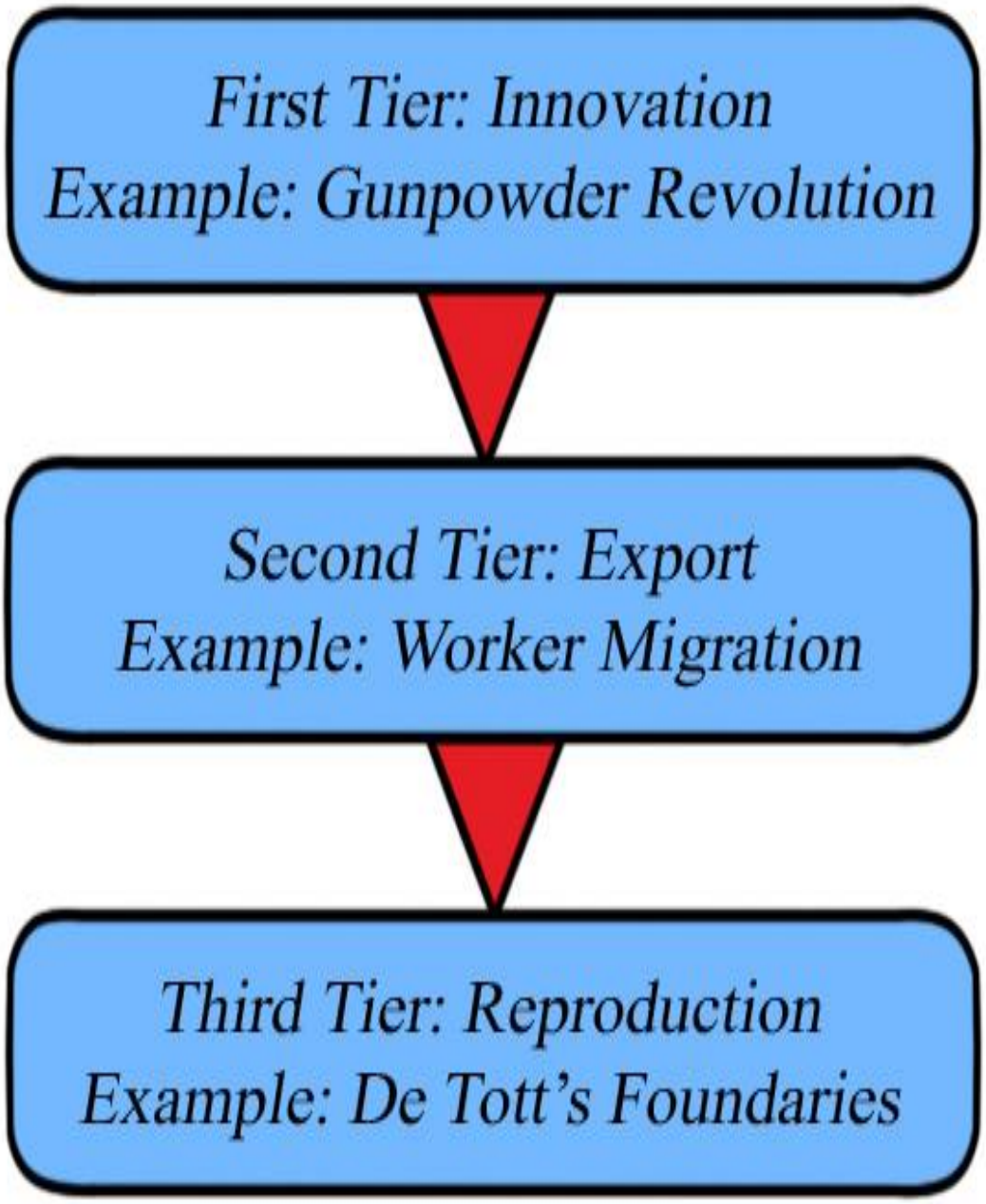
[6] Beverley Southgate, 'What is History For?', (London, 2005), 107. (parenthesis and italics by Southgate).

janissaries be constructed. Furthermore, if historical institutionalism is going to be applied to historical trends, many lasting centuries, the theoretical framework needs to integrate an allowance for such fragmentation also.

Southgate also discusses the concepts of closure and openness in the writing of history, arguing that historians have always sought to bring closure by writing definitive histories and theories which neatly compartmentalise and define answers to questions. Unfortunately, history is rarely that simple and clear-cut. In advocating for an openness in historical writing Southgate argues that this may be an answer to what postmodernism is for.[7] It is my hope that this thesis may generate some discussion regarding, and interest in, challenging existing modes of thought and how they can be reconceptualised, certainly where leading theories encouraging moral judgements upon historical actors and events are concerned. Such frameworks only form barriers to scholarly objectivity. There is much more primary source material existing beyond the scope of this thesis, much of which is still in the process of becoming available to researchers. It is my hope that, as these sources become available and further discourse on Ottoman institutions develops, that new scholarship will emerge that further the idea of the adaptability of institutions and weighs such changes against the contemporary historical environment of said institutions.

[7] Ibid., 110-115.

# Appendices

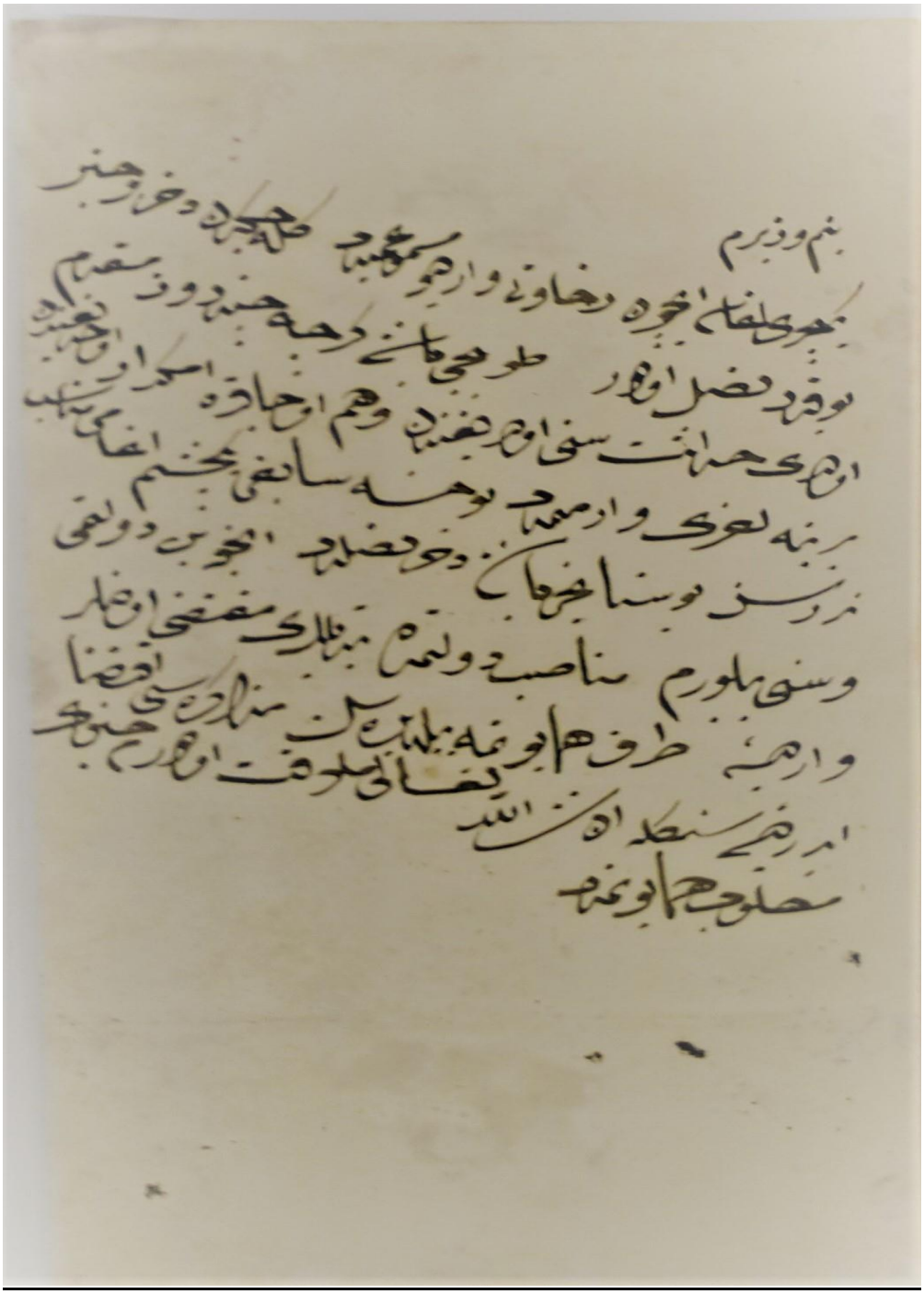



**Appendix 1: Krause's model of diffusion for military technology**

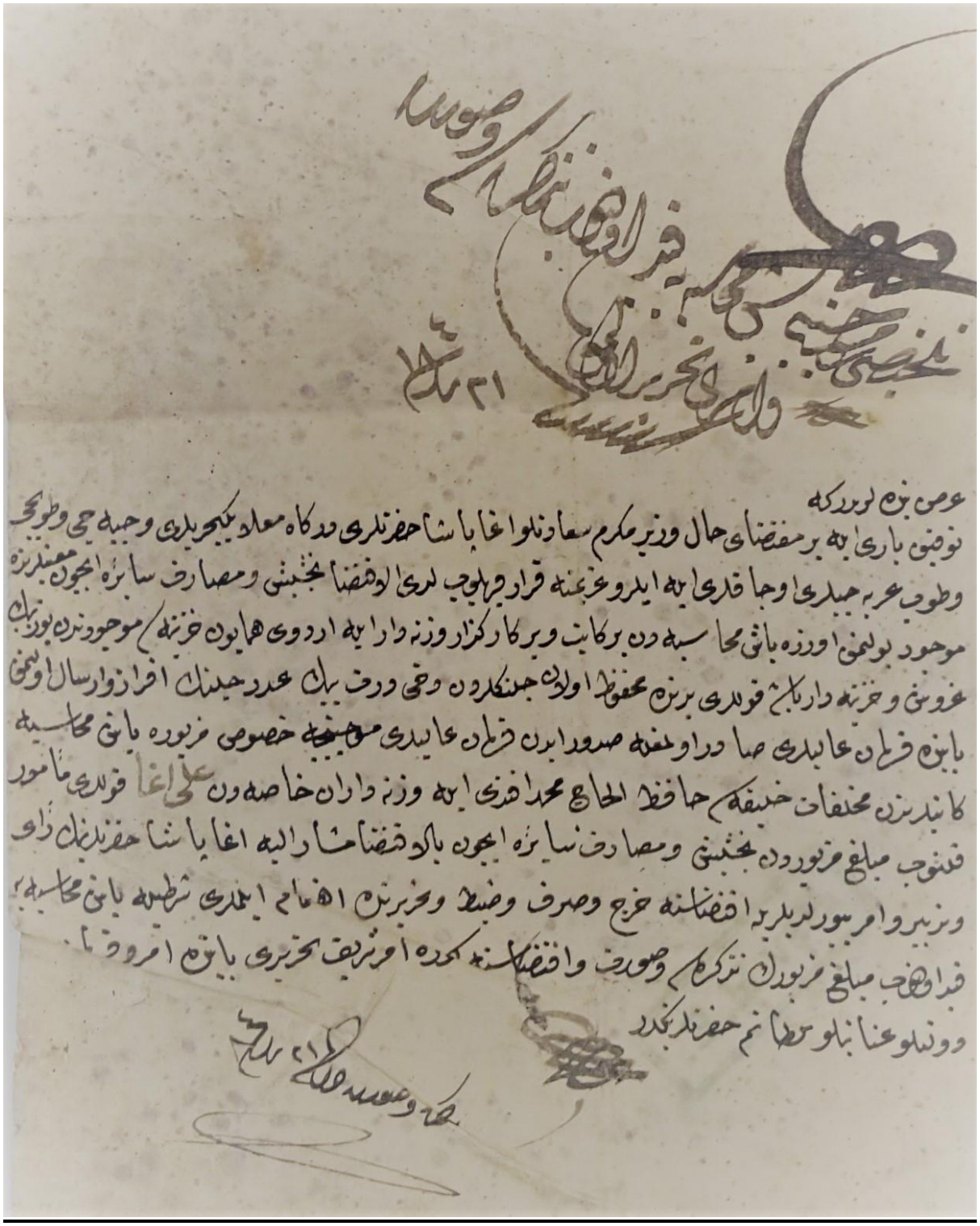
**(adapted from Keith Krause, 'Arms and the State: Patterns of Military Production and Trade' (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 30–31)**

**Appendix 2: Matrakci Nasuh, Janissary Recruitment in the Balkans, 1558**

**Süleymanname, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Ms. Hazine 1517**

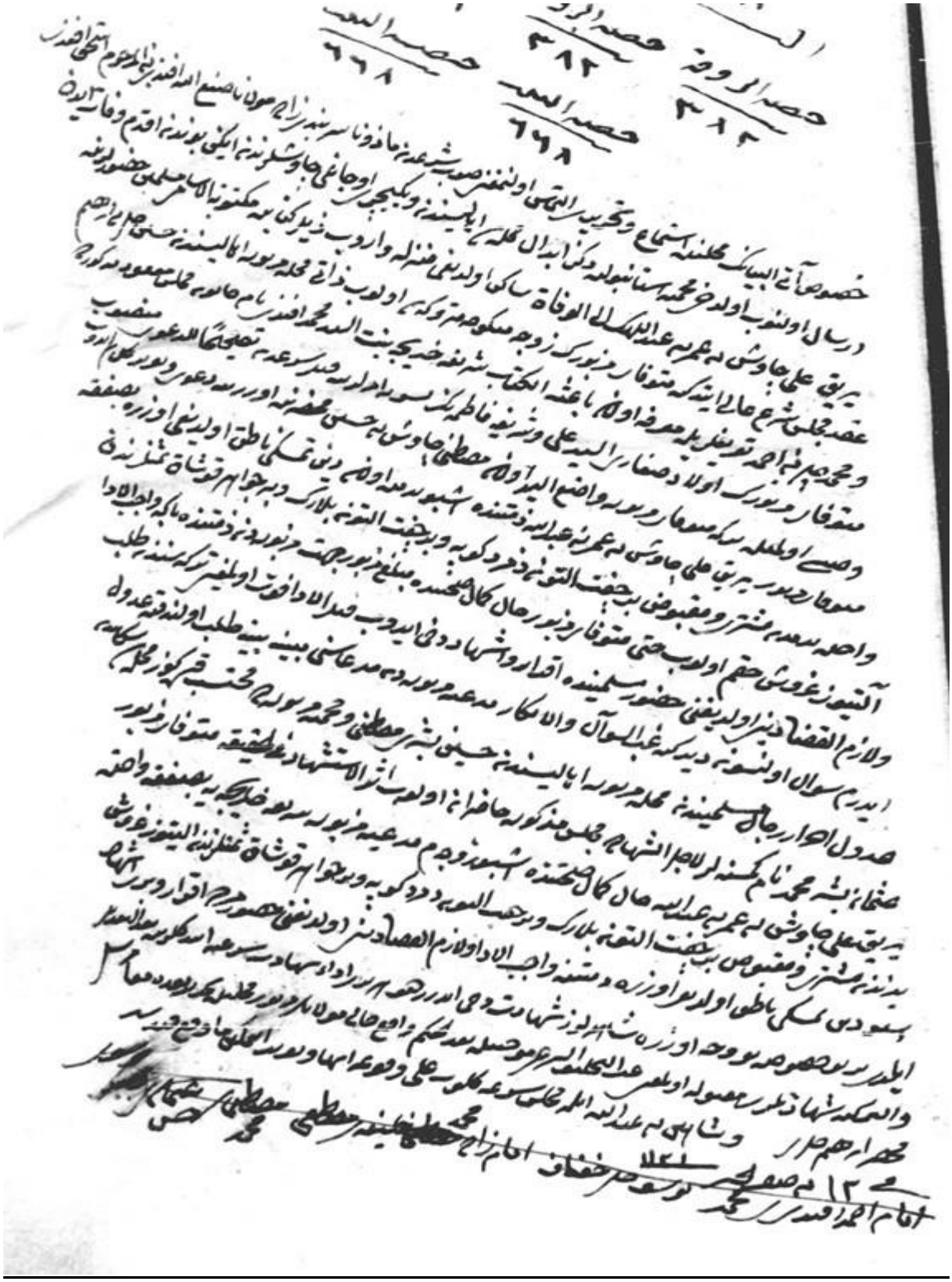


**Appendix 3: Letter from Sultan Abdülhamid I to the Grand Vizier, 1788 (BOA SABH I 3 291 10/B/1203)**



**Appendix 4: Petition requesting supplies for "a journey" including çelenk head ornaments/medals, 1770**

**(BOA, CAS 1036 45461, 21/Ra/1184)**



**Appendix 5: Unnumbered page from İstanbul *kadı sicil*, 1718**

**(İSAM Library, Üskudar)**

## Appendix 6: Tables of inheritors from Janissary *tereke.*

**(Compiled from data from İSAM Library, Üskudar and BOA, Kağıthane.)**

| Year | Treasury | Other Inheritor |
|---|---|---|
| 1730 | X | |
| 1730 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1730 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1730 | X | |
| 1730 | X | |
| 1730 | X | |
| 1730 | X | Small amount to mother |
| 1730 | | Spouse, children and mother |
| 1730 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1730 | X | ¼ to wife, other amounts to other women |
| 1730 | X | |
| 1730 | | Spouse, sister and two girls |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5397 (BOA) and Istanbul Kadı Sicil 1730 (ISAM).**

| Date | Treasury | Other inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1731 | | Sons |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | | 1 son, 1 daughter and mother |
| 1731 | | Sister and brother |
| 1731 | ? | Wife |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | 1/3 to divorced wife |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | X | ¼ wife |
| 1731 | X | |
| 1731 | | Nephew |
| 1731 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1731 | X | X |
| 1731 | | Spouse and children |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5398 (BOA) and Istanbul Kadı Sicil 1731 (ISAM).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1732 | | Sister and brother |
| 1732 | | Spouse and brother |
| 1732 | X | |
| 1732 | | Children |
| 1732 | X | |
| 1732 | X | |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5400 (BOA) and Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5399 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1734 | X | |
| 1734 | X | |
| 1734 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1734 | X | |
| 1734 | X | |
| 1734 | | Wife, son and two daughters |
| 1734 | X | ¼ to wife |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5402 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1736 | X | |
| 1736 | X | |
| 1736 | X | |
| 1736 | | Wife |
| 1736 | X | |
| 1736 | | Wife, children and mother |
| 1736 | 3 shares | Wife and other bequest |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5404 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1737 | X | |
| 1737 | X | |
| 1737 | X | |
| 1737 | | Spouse and children |
| 1737 | | Spouse and children |
| 1737 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1737 | X | |
| 1737 | | Spouse, children and mother |
| 1737 | X | X |
| 1737 | X | |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5407 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1738 | | Spouse and mother |
| 1738 | X | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1738 | X | |
| 1738 | X | |
| 1738 | X | |
| 1738 | | A man called Mehmet, relation not clear |
| 1738 | | Wife |
| 1738 | X | |
| 1738 | X | |
| 1738 | | Children and other individuals |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5412 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1739 | X | |
| 1739 | X | Wife and brothers |
| 1739 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1739 | X | |
| 1739 | X | |
| 1739 | X | |
| 1739 | | Spouse and children |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5420 (BOA).**

| Date | Inheritors |
|---|---|
| 1740 | Distributed to family |
| 1741 | Treasury |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5422 (BOA) and Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5424 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1743 | X | Spouse and a man called Mustafa |
| 1743 | X | |
| 1743 | X | |
| 1743 | X | |
| 1743 | X | Other bequest not clear |
| 1743 | X | Wife |
| 1743 | X | |
| 1743 | X | |
| 1743 | X | Two wives |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5429 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |
| 1744 | X | |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5431 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | Wife |
| 1747 | X | Wife |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | | Wife, brother and sister |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | |
| 1747 | X | |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5434 (BOA) and Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 5433 (BOA).**

| Date | Inheritor |
|---|---|
| 1748 | Treasury |
| 1748 | Treasury |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 6403 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1751 | X | Wife |
| 1751 | X | |
| 1751 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1751 | X | ¼ to wife |

**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 6404 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1753 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1753 | X | ¼ to wife |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1753 | X | |
| 1753 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1753 | X | |
| 1753 | | Sister |
| 1753 | X | ¼ to wife |

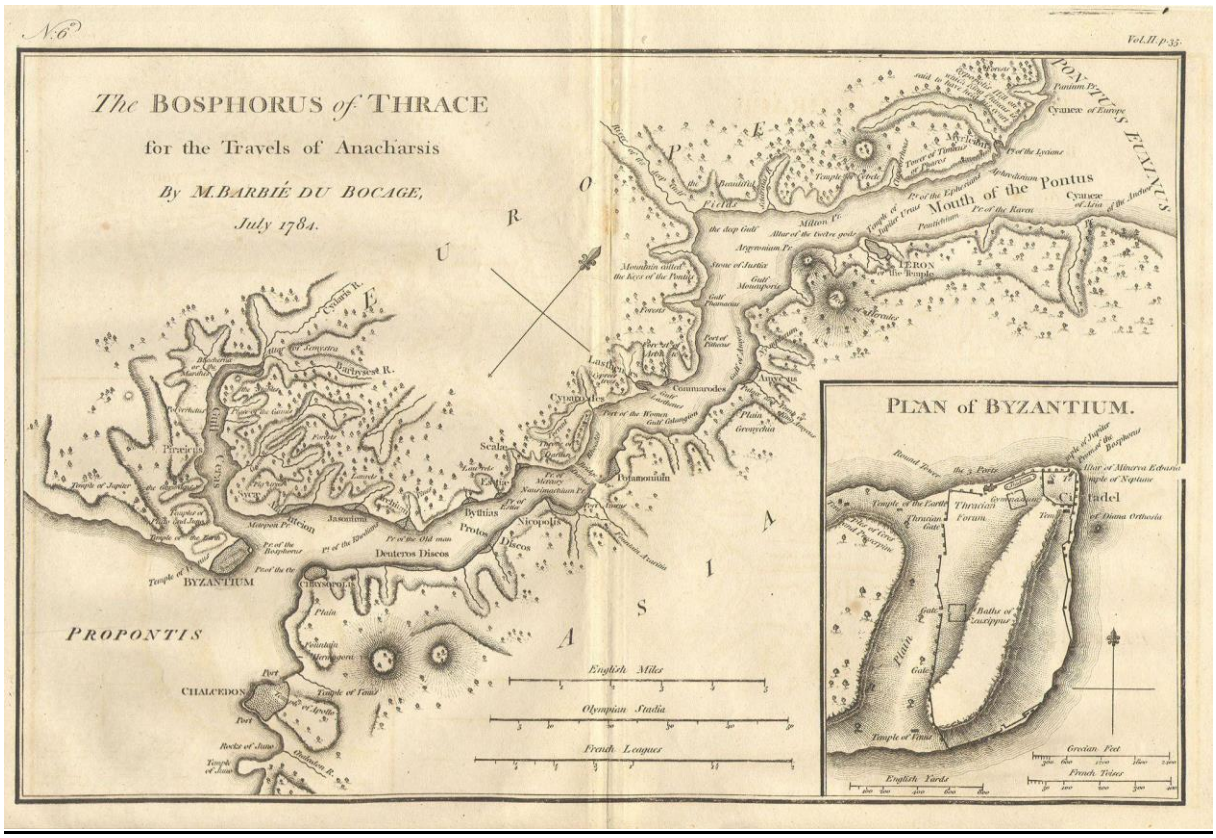
**Data from Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 6418 (BOA).**

| Date | Treasury | Other Inheritors |
|---|---|---|
| 1756 | X | ¼ to wife |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | X | |
| 1756 | | Children |
| 1766 | | Spouse and brothers |

**Data compiled from İSTANBUL 29 (ISAM), Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 7692 (BOA) and Istanbul Şeriye Sicil 7711 (BOA).**

| Family | Other |
|---|---|
| Wife, granddaughter, grandsons | |
| Son and mother | |
| Father and mother | |
| Wife, grandmother, grandsons, granddaughter | |
| Wife | |
| | Debts paid off to various individuals |
| | Treasury |
| Wife, Parents | Treasury, two individuals |
| Parents and sibling | |
| Wife and two sons | |
| | Treasury |
| Wife | Ali Ağa |
| (Wife and children in another city) | Treasury |
| (Wife and children in another city) | Treasury |
| Wife and sons | Treasury |
| | Treasury |
| Wife | |
| Wife and four children | |
| Wife | |
| Wife | |
| Wife | Debts paid off |

**Data taken from Demircioğlu, 615 Numerali İstanbul Askeri Kassam Defterinin Değirlendirmesi (H. 1205-1206/ M. 1790-1791), Yüksek Lisans Tezi, T. C. İstanbul Üniversitesi, (1998).**




## Appendix 7: Bosphorus and the city of Byzantium.

**(Prepared by Jean-Denis Barbie du Bocage, 1784 for the "Travels of Anarcharsis", accessed at Wikimedia Commons.)**

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