OTTOMAN ARMY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: WAR AND MILITARY REFORM IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN CONTEXT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

MURAT ÇINAR BÜYÜKAKÇA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
HISTORY

FEBRUARY 2007

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

OTTOMAN ARMY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: WAR AND MILITARY REFORM IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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February 2007, 123 pages

This thesis attempts to challenge the way military historiography deals with the state of the Ottoman army between 1683 and 1792 and the military reform attempts prior to the Nizam-ı Cedid army. Western military historians have ascribed to the inferiority of the Ottoman military technology the waning of the Ottoman military power in the post-1683 period. Any attempt at reform was allegedly obstructed by religious reaction against borrowing European methods and technology.

This thesis argues that technology was not the decisive factor in the Ottoman failure against the Austrians and Russians since those two were not too far ahead of the Ottomans with regards to the level of military technology to justify such a conclusion. The comparison with the Russian army, the archenemy of the Ottomans in the period under question, reveals that the Russian success in such

departments as conscription, logistics, military leadership and continuous tactical adjustments made to accommodate the needs of steppe warfare, rather than outright application of Western methods of warfare, resulted in victories against the Ottomans. The Ottomans in the meantime were bothered by instability at the Porte, which could neither provide the necessary leadership on the battlefield nor carry out the military reforms. As a result, the vestiges of the Ottoman military organization in its classical form continued to take up economic resources and block any attempts at reform. Religion in this process served as nothing more than a rallying cry for a certain group who vied for power in Istanbul at a time of state formation.

Keywords: Ottoman Army, Military Revolution, Military Technology

ÖZ

ONSEKİZİNCİ YÜZYILDA OSMANLI ORDUSU:

DOĞU AVRUPA BAĞLAMINDA SAVAŞ VE ASKERİ REFORM

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Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi : Doç. Dr. Mustafa Soykut

Şubat 2007, 123 sayfa

Bu tez askeri tarihçiliğin Osmanlı ordusunun 1683 ve 1792 yılları arasındaki durumunu ve Nizam-ı Cedid ordusu öncesindeki reform girişimlerini ele alış şeklini sorgulamaktadır. Batılı askeri tarihçiler 1683 sonrası dönemde Osmanlı askeri gücünün azalmasını Osmanlı askeri teknolojisinin döneminin gerisinde kalmış olmasına bağlamaktadırlar. Bu görüşe göre reform girişimleri Avrupa kaynaklı yöntem ve teknolojileri kullanmaya karşı dini nitelikli bir tepki tarafından engellenmiştir.

Bu tez, Avusturya ve Rusya'nın teknoloji bakımından Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çok ilerisinde olmamasından yola çıkarak Osmanlı ordusunun bu ülkeler karşısındaki başarısızlıklarında teknolojinin belirleyici etken olmadığını savunmaktadır. Osmanlı ordusu söz konusu dönemde başlıca düşmanı olan Rus

ordusuyla kıyaslandığında, Rusların askere alma, lojistik, askeri liderlik gibi alanlarda elde ettikleri başarıyla ve Batılı savaş yöntemlerini olduğu gibi kabul etmek yerine bunları step savaşının gereklerine uygun hale getirecek taktiksel değişiklikleri yaparak Osmanlı ordusu karşısında zaferler kazandıkları anlaşılmaktadır. Aynı dönemde Osmanlı idaresindeki istikrarsızlık sonucunda ne savaş alanında ne de reformların gerçekleşmesi için gerekli olan liderlik ortaya konabilmiştir. Sonuç olarak klasik dönem Osmanlı ordusunun kalıntıları iktisadi kaynakları tüketip reformları engellemeye devam etmişlerdir. Din ise bu devlet oluşumu sürecinde iktidar mücadelesine giren taraflardan biri için bir savaş çağrısından ibaret kalmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Ordusu, Askeri Devrim, Askeri Teknoloji

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Mustafa Soykut for his support throughout the period during which this thesis was written. His remarks on the drafts of the thesis and the perspective which his previous studies on the image of the Ottoman military power in the West throughout the early modern period brought under scholarly attention proved invaluable for the organization of my thoughts.

I offer my thanks to Ömer Turan and Erdoğan Yıldırım for reading my thesis and commenting on it. Ömer Turan's guidance in using Ottoman sources and Erdoğan Yıldırım's comments on interpreting the social transformation of the Ottoman Empire in the early modern age are greatly appreciated and will guide my further studies.

My special thanks go to Professor Pieter Emmer of the Leiden University. Professor Emmer was kind enough to provide me with guidance on the methodological aspects of the thesis and the critical approach with which he evaluated the first draft of the thesis was decisive for the later stages of the thesis writing process.

I am grateful to Professor Virginia Aksan of McMaster University who discussed with me the periodical boundaries of the thesis. The extensive bibliography she provided became the foundation upon which the body of this text was built.

I am indebted to my friend Frank Castiglione, who facilitated the thesis writing process by helping me contact Professor Virginia Aksan and reach the electronic sources that proved vital for the arguments I tried to make in the thesis.

I would like to thank my wonderful friend M. Sarper Göktürk who spent with me his precious hours trying to solve the problems with the word processing software despite his pressing scholarly obligations.

I feel obliged to thank my friends Ozan Emre Şahiner, Mustafa Sakalsız, Onur Alişan, Barış Engin Aksoy, Kostas Chalkias and Yunus Emre Gürbüz, for this thesis would not have come into existence if it were not for the moral support and encouragement I have received from them. Their company made the life bearable for me.

My deepest feelings of gratitude go to my family for encouraging me in my studies and supporting me in the decisions I made. They provided me with the luxury of focusing on my studies only and gave me a chance to pursue my aspirations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Military history is a field that most social scientists underestimate especially when its scope does not extend beyond tactics, types of weapons and numbers of soldiers, who perished for a cause that they neither understood nor had a stake in. However, there is more to military history than just such details and it is indispensable to understanding the early modern society in general and the Ottoman society in this period in particular within which the army was like a "microcosm of the state."[1] Before the emergence of the modern civilian state, the army took care of the internal security in the absence of a police force and collected taxes since the civilian bureaucracy was too small to deal with such a task.[2] The Ottoman army, too, undertook tasks that were not directly related to control and use of violence. It was the foremost purchaser of the products of some certain sectors in the economy and constructed roads and bridges that were left to civilian use after the campaign time.[3] After men of artisan background who passed themselves off as Janissaries and mercenaries of peasant origin came to replace the *devshirme* recruits of the

1 Rhoads Murphey, *The Functioning of the Ottoman Army Under Murad IV(1623-1639/1032-1049): Key to the Understanding of the Relationship Between Center and Periphery in Seventeenth-Century Turkey*, Ph.D. diss., (University of Chicago, 1979), p.300.

2 William C. Fuller Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*, (New York: Free Press, 1992, cop. 1992, Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada), p.97.

3 Murphey, *The Ottoman Army Under Murad IV*, pp.vi-vii.

earlier times, the army became the most important platform for the masses to make their voice heard by the ruling elite.[4] Therefore, the army, with the link it established between the ruling elite and the subjects, the center and the periphery, and the career opportunities it presented to the subjects, is the best choice for studying the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period.

An analysis of the Ottoman army in the eighteenth century should start with an account of the evolution the army went through from its days in the late sixteenth century when it was regarded by the Europeans as invincible to the eighteenth century when it was merely a mainly defensive force trying to stand against its Russian and Austrian foes. The second chapter focuses on this transformation and attempts at historicizing the problems concerning different corps in the Ottoman army in the period after the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. It dwells upon the evolution of the Janissary corps and the *timar* system and the factors which brought into being an army of mercenaries of peasant origin. Rather than dealing with each corps in isolation, the chapter puts special emphasis on the interaction between three forms of military recruitment and how macro level influences triggered a chain reaction that ultimately transformed the imperial army of Süleyman the Magnificent or Murad IV, which were composed predominantly of *timarlı sipahi*s and Janissaries, into the untrained mob that the Porte was able to put in the field against the Russians in the second half of the eighteenth century.

No matter how profound an analysis of the Ottoman army may be, it is necessary to place it in a wider context. The long-disputed Military Revolution paradigm and the ensuing debate have produced extensive literature that assigns

[4] Ibid., p.300.

the Ottoman military organization a certain place by either totally ignoring it or incorporating it in a serious assessment. This thesis in the first place is a critique of the orthodox military historiography which relied more on stereotypes associated with the Orient than historical research in presenting the Ottoman military organization. A comparison of the transformation of the Ottoman army with the Persian and Russian armies and their respective methods of warfare could help the historian understand the Ottoman case in its own historical, cultural and topographical conditions, which, by either applying to the Persian and Russian cases or not, result in more meaningful similarities and differences than the stereotypical and superficial observations of European travelers of the past. While a comparative study of the Ottoman and Persian ways of warfare still awaits scholarly interest, Virginia Aksan's numerous works on the Russo-Turkish confrontations of the eighteenth century sets the basis upon which the second section of the third chapter of this thesis is built. This section, by focusing on the way the Russians dealt with the problems peculiar to war in the Eastern European theatre, aims at adding a new dimension to the studies on the Russo-Turkish Wars in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is hoped that the Russian solutions to problems related with conscription, personnel and tactics will lay out a set of parameters which may account for the reasons of the Ottoman military failures in the eighteenth century.

The Ottoman attempts to bridge the gap between the Ottoman and the European armies, and the Russian army in particular, and how historiography treated such attempts constitute the subject of the last section of the third chapter. Instead of anecdotes presented as historical facts and descriptions of a stagnant

society which defied any notion of progress in the European sense that feature prominently in the European assessment of the Ottoman attempts to reform the army, this thesis points to the social and economic causes of the failure of the eighteenth century military reform that should be regarded as a part of state formation process in the Ottoman Empire. Deconstructing the stance of European historiography on the Ottoman military reform and understanding the conditions which brought this historiography into being have wider ramifications than just replacing myths with the truth and contribute to an understanding of the perspective with which the West have preferred to see the East.

The eighteenth century that this research focuses on is not the eighteenth century in the literal sense but the period between 1683 and 1792. The choice of 1683 comes as no surprise since this date marks the second siege of Vienna by the Turks and the beginning of a series of wars that resulted in permanent loss of territory for the Ottomans. It would be just as appropriate to deal with the Ottoman army during the *long eighteenth century*, that is the period starting with the second siege of Vienna in 1683 and ending with the abolition of the Janissary organization in 1826. However, the Revolutionary Wars in Europe and the *levee en masse* changed the way the war was fought in Europe, triggering similar changes in the other armies of the continent. Having put an end to the *ancien régime* warfare, the universal male conscription and the resulting citizen armies transformed the warfare forever, putting on the field armies of unprecedented size and zeal. The theoretical size of the French army by the autumn of 1794 was 1,169,000 and real size 730,000,[5] almost equal to the combined size of the armies of Russia, Austria,

[5] Jeremy Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, (London: UCL, 1994), p.168.

Prussia, Sweden and the Dutch Republic in 1764.[6] This growth in the size of the army dwarves the armies of Louis XIV in the previous century and, by erecting a barrier between warfare in the *ancien régime* and the post-1792 period, renders useless the context into which this thesis attempts to place the Ottoman military organization. That the period between 1683 and 1792 did not witness radical changes associated with the conduct of warfare and the size of the armies for the Ottomans and their enemies lets the historian bring under the spotlight other factors such as the mobilization level, tactics and leadership as the reasons that defined success and failure in the eighteenth century wars.

A few words need to be said on the choice of the sources used for this thesis work. This thesis was planned, written and completed as a critique of the way Western military historiography dealt with the Ottoman army. However, this only partially explains the dominance of the bibliography by the works of foreign scholars. That Turkish military historiography has not grown into a field on its own account, studied independent of the state apparatus, is another reason why the number of scholarly works written in Turkish in the bibliography is not as high as one would like it to be. Works of such Turkish scholars as Ömer Lütfü Barkan, Halil İnalcık, Yavuz Cezar, Şevket Pamuk and Mustafa Cezar were extensively used especially for the sections concerning the economic and the social transformation in the Ottoman Empire in the early modern age, but studying the nuts and bolts of a military campaign, that is, mobilization, logistics and tactics was only possible by using works of non-Turkish scholars like Caroline Finkel, Virginia Aksan, Rhoads Murphey and Gábor Ágoston produced works with

[6] Jurgen Luh, *Ancien Régime Warfare*, (Groningen: INOS, 2000), p.13, Figure1.

astonishing amount of detail extracted from documents in the Ottoman archives. Most Turkish historians writing on such topics limited their works to an analysis of an institution in isolated form, ignoring how that particular institution interacted with other institutions and the way similar institutions in other countries evolved. Ignoring effects on the Ottoman warfare of Austrian, Russian or Persian ways of waging war may not qualify the validity of the arguments but may leave them up in the air, which this thesis attempts to avoid by analyzing the success of the Russian army in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER II

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSICAL AGE

2.1 DISSOLUTION OF THE *TİMAR* SYSTEM

The Ottoman *timar* system, together with the *devshirme* practice, was the pillar of the Ottoman administration in its heyday. It was based on the bestowal by the state on the *sipahi*s of land, whose revenue was used to support the *sipahi* and his armed retainers with whom he was supposed to join the imperial army. The *timar* system involved administrative, economic and military functions. It enabled the state to extract resources from the subjects in forms of tax in cash and tax in kind and provided the state with a body of horsemen that formed the bulk of the army come campaigning season.[7] Three basic principles that governed the functioning of the *timar* system can be expressed in Weberian terminology as such: the central appointment of people to the prebends, the fact that the prebends were conditional on the performance of the duty and the categorization of the prebendal duties parallel to the income of a prebend. The last principle brought about the need

[7] Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe*, (Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.47.

for the state to establish a system to monitor the performance of the *timar* holders, thus adding to the bureaucratic cadre.[8]

The *sipahi* performed both an economic and an administrative function. He was to preserve the state land title, rent the land to farmers, collect taxes, and make sure that the land was cultivated.[9] In peacetime, he served as the extension of the state authority in the countryside. He was obliged to join the imperial army on campaign with a given number of troops and supplies. A *sipahi* was supposed to bring with him a fully armed horseman (*cebelü*) for every three thousand *akçe*s of *timar* income.[10] This would be one *cebelü* for every five thousand *akçe*s in case of a *bey*.

The *timar* system had both similarities and differences with the European feudal regime. Both systems were based on the principle that the tracts of land were bestowed upon people in return for loyalty to the overlord and the commitment to join the future campaigns with the cavalry raised by the land revenue although the Ottoman system was a more centralized one compared to the European example,[11] since all the land within the borders of the empire belonged to the sultan, who exclusively possessed the right to bestow it upon individuals. This prevented individuals from establishing their own power base at the expense of the sultan and

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Kemal H. Karpat, *Structural Change and Historical Foundations of Contemporary Turkish Politics, Social Change And Politics In Turkey: A Structural-Historical Analysis*, Kemal H. Karpat and contributors, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp.32-3.

[10] Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), p.113.

[11] Jan Lucassen and Erik Jan Zürcher, "Introduction: Conscription and Resistance. The Historical Context," in *Arming The State, Military Conscription In The Middle East And Central Asia 1775-1925*, ed. Erik Jan Zürcher, (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 2-3.

diminishing his role to one of a suzerain in the Ottoman domains. However, the centralization in the bestowal of the *timar*s should not be overstated. The role of the central government remained one of ratification until 1632, except for the cases of the appointment to the provinces of administrative-military bureaucrats, while the provincial governor and the field commander enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy.[12] The provincial governors had the authority in the initial grants of *timar*s, whereas the field commanders came to enjoy more discretion in bestowing *timar*s on soldiers after 1580. That the central government, provincial governors and field commanders all shared the privilege gave way to duplication in *timar* grants.[13]

Until the mid-seventeenth century, the principle that the son of a *sipahi* was not to be assigned a *timar* while his father was alive was carefully observed with few exceptions.[14] Another principle effectively practiced was that of the rotation. The *timar* holders were to periodically return their *timar*s to the state and remain in a state of dispossession for a maximum of seven years before being assigned a new one, though the procedure for this is not clear.[15] Those *sipahi*s were not entitled to receive the *timar* of a deceased *sipahi* unless they spent two years without possessing a *timar*.

[12] Douglas Howard, *The Ottoman Timar System and Its Transformation, 1563-1656*, Ph.D. diss., (University of Indiana, 1987), pp.123-4.

[13] Ibid., pp.116-7.

[14] Ibid., p.92.

[15] Ibid., pp.85-7.

Changes in the landholding regime

The *timar* system was still intact in the period 1572-1582, in the wake of serious social upheaval and almost twenty-five years of continuous wars. In this period, 75 per cent of the *timar* estates were still in the hands of the prebendal cavalry, the complaints about misdeeds in the assignment of *timar*s were few, the rotation practice was still in use and sons of the deceased *sipahi*s were not given the same *timar*s as their fathers but different ones with less income.[16] However, conditions must have changed in the next hundred years. The archival work carried out by Howard in the *ruznamçe* registers of the province of Aydın reveals that both the make up of the *timarlı sipahi*s as a class and their role in the Ottoman warfare changed in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. While the sons of the *sipahi*s formed the majority among the initial bestowals in the year 1576-7, three-fifths of the bestowals were made on the basis of prior service in 1588-9.[17] By 1610, inheritance from father to son of the title of *sipahi* had become an exception: just two out of twenty-one initial *timar*s had been given to the sons of *sipahi*s.[18] Accompanying this was a discernible change in the role of the *timarlı sipahi*s during the campaigns, from a combat role to a logistical one.[19] By 1654-5, being a *timar* holder had become a titular role with few corresponding obligations. As the state's need for cash increased, the obligation of the *sipahi* to join the army became negotiable and was replaced by a payment-in-lieu (*bedel*) for those *sipahi*s who did

[16] Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: the Ottoman Route to Centralization*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.64-5.

[17] Howard, *op. cit.*, pp.169-72.

[18] Ibid., p.174.

[19] Ibid., p.176.

not want to fight.[20] The fact that *kılıç timarı*, the basic unit of a *timar* land, was always assigned intact and it became the building block for larger estates effectively put a ceiling on the number of *sipahi*s that could be raised when the Ottoman expansion was checked both on the Eastern and Western fronts.[21] The demand by the aspiring *sipahi*s for the *kılıç timarı*s surpassed the supply of the latter and created conflicts. Thus began a period of vilification on the part of the people who regarded the deposition of a *timar* holder as the only opportunity to enter the ranks of the *timarlı sipahis*.[22]

What were the reasons behind this change that the *timar* system went through in the eight decades between the 1570s and 1650s? The inflationary tide in the last quarter of the sixteenth century had a tremendous impact on the *timar* holders whose cash income as registered by the state remained fixed while they became unable to extract from the peasantry the necessary amount of tax in kind. The state was unwilling to give up this classical organization which would require a complete overhaul of the administrative system, but remained content with a quick fix that converted *timar* estates into tax farms. This secured cash inflow into the treasury without inflating the bureaucratic cadre but resulted in the gradual dissolution of the *timar* system.[23] The prebends formerly assigned to the *timarlı sipahi*s were returned to the state, which reassigned them to dignitaries. The latter passed the brunt of the financial risk onto the lower tier subcontractors. These

[20] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.66.

[21] Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: The Ottoman Military Campaigns In Hungary 1593-1606*, (Vienna: VWGÖ, 1988), p.29, n.16.

[22] Ibid.

[23] McGowan, *Economic Life*, p.57.

entrepreneurs were able to alienate these estates from the treasury with the help of the scribal class, who distorted the records or converted the estates into pious establishments with the entrepreneurs being the main beneficiaries.[24] The tax-farming practice put such a heavy burden on the peasants that most of the peasants in the Danubian region had to flee due to indebtedness, thus leaving their lands to encroachment by the *çiftlik*s (farms).[25] The deeds of these lands were granted to those willing to invest money, but the estates soon became heritable and gained private property characters. The principle that the *timar* holdings were to be assigned in return for military service only was already breached in the sixteenth century. However, this became the order of the day in the seventeenth century, when the state, faced with a severe cash crisis, had to sacrifice proper administration of the land in favor of cash savings achieved by substituting land grants for salaries to pay for the services of the higher bureaucrats. The fact that the *timar*s were being assigned to absentee lords or some "fictitious people" and that the income from the *timar* estates was no longer enough to support a *sipahi* resulted in *sipahi*s' aspirations to become *çiftlik* owners by opting out of military service.[26]

Probably the *timar*s were never assigned on a meritocratic basis after the sixteenth century.[27] The *kapıkulu*s were granted *timar*s as part of the regular promotion procedure rather than a reward to the most successful.[28] *Timar* bestowal

[24] Ibid., p.58.

[25] Ibid., p.138-9.

[26] Ibid., p.142-3.

[27] Ibid., p.148.

[28] Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler*, (Istanbul: 1965), p.149.

had also become a way to expel from the capital the Janissaries who had committed a crime.[29] The incomes of the *timarlı sipahi*s were in decline in the seventeenth century, making it difficult for them to join the campaigns targeting distant frontier regions. Out of the 14,058 *timar* holders who joined the Polish campaign in 1621, 4,181 had administrative duties, a fact which indicates the changing nature of the *timarli sipahis* as a class.[30] Murad IV, who had reenergized the empire in the 1630s, also attempted to reform the *timar* system. *Timar* lands were given to peasants, although this was contrary to the tradition. Envisioning a large cavalry force, Murad IV reorganized the system with the criteria being that the *timar* holders should remain on their lands and join the campaigns.[31] Upon his orders, general surveys were conducted which revealed that a surprisingly high proportion of *timar*s in the empire were vacant without any petitions from applicants, the reason being desertion by the peasants, which left *timar*s uninhabited and unable to generate revenue.[32] The solution found was the merger of small *kılıç timarı*s into a large *timar* that could support a *sipahi* and his retainers. Vacant *timar*s in Rumelia were given to salaried personnel who petitioned for *timar* grants rather than to the sons of the *sipahi*s.[33] Youth of peasant origin were also given *timar*s depending on their contributions in war. However, the sultan's efforts fell short of bringing about a lasting change in the *timar* system. By 1654-5, the *bedel* payers had formed the

[29] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtından Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1984), p.179, quoted in M. Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler*, p.150.

[30] Ömer Lütfü Barkan, "Timar," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v.12/I, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1974), pp.327-8.

[31] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.70.

[32] Howard, *op. cit.*, pp.221-2.

[33] Ibid., p.215.

majority of the *timar* holders, thus violating the second criterion on the sultan's agenda.

The trend that brought down the number of the *timars* from 63,000 in 1475 to 45,000 in 1610 prevailed well into the eighteenth century.[34] However, the Ottoman conservatism resisted the idea of officially abolishing the *timar* system until 1834. The eighteenth century saw four reform attempts by the Porte: in 1707, 1732, 1777 and 1792. The *ferman* (imperial writ) of 1732 dates the start of the decline of the *timar* system to the Hungarian campaigns of probably the year 1718,[35] which is a curious point when one considers how much the system had already deviated by that date from its original form at the beginning of the sixteenth century. A set of directives issued in 1777 outlawed the venal character of the posts of regimental officers, asserting that the regimental officers would be elected by the *timar* holders in each *sancak* and a reserve army formed by the candidates for new *timar* grants would be established.[36] The *timarli sipahi*s had all but disappeared from the battlefield by the mid-eighteenth century. The hope on the part of the state to rehabilitate this organization lasted until the catastrophes of the Russian war of 1787-92. Having seen the *sipahi*s garrisoned at the fortress of Ismail surrender the stronghold to the Russian army, the Porte initiated another reform movement that was aimed at reviving the reform project of Murad IV a century and a half ago. The purpose this time was to improve the economic conditions of the holders of the smaller *timar*s and to prevent the bestowal upon the higher bureaucrats and

[34] Halil İnalcık, *The Breakdown of the Ottoman Economic and Social Structure* (unpublished paper), quoted in K.H. Karpat, *op. cit.*, p.35.

[35] McGowan, *Economic Life*, p.147.

[36] Barkan, "Timar," p.329.

members of the imperial family *timar*s and *zeamet*s.[37] However, the military reform proposals presented to Selim III regarded the *timar* system as a financial source that would support the plans to build a modern army, rather than a part of the latter.[38] From that point on, the efforts were made to bring an end to the ongoing situation without further social disruptions. The last *timarlı sipahi*s were employed as salaried gendarmerie and their sons were encouraged to become officers, by which the *timar* system became defunct.

The role of the *sipahi*s as a cavalry force

As the social and economic conditions changed, so did the style of warfare. The Ottoman expansion into central Europe came to a halt in Hungary, with this vast plain becoming a borderland where a low-density attrition war continued. Decisive field battles such as the one fought in Mezokeresztes (1596) or Szelenkamen (1691) became rare incidents and both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans relied on garrison troops so as to consolidate their gains in Hungary. In the Ottoman case, Janissaries and mercenary troops were used to man the fortresses in the Danubian basin. In the period 1683-1792, strongholds such as Vienna, Belgrade, Buda, Ochakov, Ismail and Mosul became the theatres of siege warfare and relief operations. In siege warfare, the besieging army would attempt to starve the defenders by encircling the fortress and cutting the latter's supply lines in order to force the fortress to capitulation or storm it in a final assault. Infantry served the needs of siege and trench warfare better than the cavalry. Recruiting infantry rather than cavalry, which cost more, also eased the financial burden on the state that had

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., pp.329-30.

to mobilize a vast army to encircle a fortress. The Janissaries were better suited to do the trench work that the cavalry resented and they had a clear edge over the cavalry in assaulting a fortress. These two must have played a significant role in the increasing importance of the Janissaries at the expense of the cavalry.

As in other military orders, the *sipahi*s had developed a conservative military ethos by that time and refused to give up cold steel that had won battles for them in favor of firearms, which worked against them in the eyes of the field commanders. Deteriorating economic conditions that made for them impossible to afford a musket must have solidified this conservative approach. They remained equipped with a bow, sword, shield, lance, mace, and armor in case of the wealthy *timarlı*s.[39] One should also consider the possibility that arming the *sipahi*s with muskets was not a policy that the Ottoman government whole-heartedly pursued, since this would mean arming the countryside and could encourage centrifugal movements. That the Janissaries who were given *timar*s were disarmed supports this argument.[40] Contrarily, sultan's household cavalry, the *kapıkulu sipahi*s, were armed with pistols.[41] By the turn of the seventeenth century, the *sipahi*s were already struggling against the firepower of the Habsburg infantry, as indicated by the letters of the grand viziers, who called for an increase in the number of Ottoman musketeers during the wars of 1593-1606.[42] In the 1660s, the Habsburg imperial commander-in-chief Raimondo Montecuccoli had reformed the Habsburg army by

[39] Inalcik, *The Classical Age*, p.113.

[40] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, p.162.

[41] David Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1976), p.28, 40.

[42] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.69.

increasing the number of the musketeers at the expense of pikemen.[43] In the eighteenth century, Ottomans fought against the Austrian and Russian armies that relied on musket fire, and the introduction of the socket bayonet nullified the effectiveness of the Ottoman cavalry without sacrificing firepower. The opposition of the *sipahi*s to use firearms rendered them less reliable under these circumstances.

The role of cavalry in European armies dwindled in the face of infantry tactics and firearms in the eighteenth century. The infantry gained maneuverability with the introduction of lighter and handier flintlocks and socket bayonet.[44] The states also took into account the cost associated with putting a cavalry in the field, which was substantially higher than the cost of an infantry. Although the proportion of cavalry employed in Western European armies gradually declined and leveled around a quarter of the total number of troops, the cavalry element in the Turkish army remained well-over two-fifths of the army, which can be regarded as a consequence of both the ancient nomad tradition and the geographical necessities.[45] Throughout the eighteenth century, the Austrians and the Russians, the archenemies of the Ottomans, preferred to follow the Western European practice of using a proportionally smaller cavalry force when fighting against Western or Central European power. Turkish participation in wars significantly increased the number of horsemen put in the field, as illustrated by confrontations at Szenta (1697) and Belgrade (1717), where 37.3 and 50 per cent, respectively, of the troops were

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[43] Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution?: Military Change and European Society*, (London: Macmillan, 1991), p.22.

[44] Chandler, *op. cit.*, p.28.

[45] Ibid., p.29.

cavalry.[46] However, it is reasonable to think that most of the Turkish cavalry in these battles were mercenary horsemen, rather than *timarlı sipahi*s. Although the heyday of the cavalry was long gone by the beginning of the eighteenth century, this does not change the fact that the Turkish cavalry remained one of the best in the world, probably only second to the Swedish cavalry until the Battle of Poltava led by Charles XII.[47] The Turkish tactics involved engaging the Europeans in relentless skirmishes, forcing the enemy to lose their calm and break formation. In case they achieved this, the following step would be a quick encirclement and annihilation of the enemy.[48] The elite of this cavalry force came from among the experienced *sipahis* from the non-registered zeamets, the *timars* that were augmented through successful service and whose revenue exceeded the threshold of 20,000 *akçes*.[49]

Changes in the European warfare rendered the decline of the *timar* system an unimportant detail in terms of the battlefield performance of the Ottoman army. It is difficult to think that the *timarlı sipahi*s would be difference makers in the eighteenth century warfare which was dominated by compact formations of infantry and light artillery had the system been preserved in its classical form. The Ottomans had already chosen a different path than their European counterparts when they did not commit themselves to a radical reorganization of the cavalry, which they preferred to leave in a situation of gradual decline. What made this decision a critical one was the two-fold consequences that followed from the decline of the

[46] Ibid., p.30.

[47] Ibid., p.57.

[48] Ibid., p.58.

[49] Howard, *op. cit.*, p.152.

timar system: firstly, disorganized, almost bandit-like character of the mercenary troops that replaced the *timarlı sipahi*s became little more than cannon fodder in the face of Austrian and Russian armies that became more professional. Secondly, the Ottomans lost in the *timar* system not only a cavalry force but also a police force that penetrated the countryside, administered the land and collected taxes. After the provincial notables (*ayan*s) stepped in with their financial and social capital to fill the void left by the *timar* system, it was only automatic that the mercenary troops, most of whom belonged to the retinues of the *ayan*s, would become an integral part of whatever army the Ottomans were able to put in the battlefield.

2.2 DEGENERATION OF THE JANISSARY ORGANIZATION

The Ottoman *kapıkulu* organization anticipated by centuries the European standing armies. The *kapıkulu* army consisted of the sultan's household cavalry (*altı bölük halkı*), which comprised of six different regiments, namely *sipahiyan*, *silahdaran, ulufeciyan-ı yemin* and *ulufeciyan-ı yesar*, *gurebayan-ı yemin* and *gurebayan-ı yesar*, and infantry that included the Janissaries, armourers (*cebeci*), canonneers (*topçu*) and those in charge of the gun carriages (top arabacilari). Janissaries were the most important of the troops grouped under the title *kapıkulu*.[50]

The Janissary organization is undoubtedly one of the most interesting phenomena in military history. A corps made up of slaves, the Janissaries virtually dominated the battlefields in the Balkans and the Middle East for nearly two centuries. They won victories against the infidel for their sultan and, particularly for the case of Mehmed II, helped him eliminate the Turkish aristocracy of Anatolia.

It is difficult to compare Janissaries to the soldiers of other European armies during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Not only they were recruited in a different fashion than the mercenary troops in Europe, but also their training and discipline distinguished them on the battlefield. In their heyday, they were not allowed to marry while serving as Janissaries, and nor were they permitted to practice another occupation.[51] They were isolated by the *devshirme* practice from their ethnic roots, and the ban on marriage and trade kept them distinct from the rest of the Muslim Ottoman society.

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[50] Finkel, *op. cit.*, p.32.

[51] David B. Ralston, *Importing the European Army*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press 1990), p.44.

The *devshirme* was a human levy that the Ottoman state exacted on the Christian subjects of the sultan and it was a widely hated practice among the latter. The procedure started with a *ferman* of the sultan, and continued under the supervision of the local *kadı*s and *sipahi*s. The boys summoned in the villages were registered and sent to Istanbul to begin their training. They were dispatched to different parts of Anatolia where they learned Turkish customs and language. The testimony of an early seventeenth century Ottoman source reveals the reasons why the *devshirme* was limited to Christian villages: "If they (the Turks) were to become slaves of the sultan, they would abuse this privilege. Their relatives in the provinces would oppress the *reâyâ* and not pay taxes. They would oppose the *sancak beyi*s and become rebels. But if Christian children accept Islam, they become zealous in faith and enemies of their relatives."[52]

Despite the name they made for themselves, the Janissaries never formed the bulk of the army. They were used as a special corps to give the enemy the decisive blow or to assault a fortress. As their proportion to the other units of the army increased, so did the symptoms of ineffectiveness.

The orthodox wing of Turkish historiography assessed from the perspective of the Ottoman ruling elite the degeneration as a military force of the Janissaries. According to Donald Quataert, the Janissaries were presented in such accounts as "… vulgar, crude, bloodthirsty 'canaille', an unreasoned, avaricious mob who routinely abused and raped women", which made them anti-Muslim.

[52] İnalcık, *The Classical Age 1300-1600*, p.78.

Their reaction against the reforms made them anti-Christian, too.[53] A book by Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, became the authoritative text for this particular type of arguments despite the fact that Esad Efendi, the imperial historian at the time of the abolition of the Janissaries, was not an impartial observer, but "a participant in the events that he records, a partisan who substantially benefited from their outcome."[54] Thus, his account of *Vaka-yi Hayriye* was an effort to legitimize the sultanic initiative to reform the army.

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and, more recently, Abdülkadir Özcan echoed these views in their accounts as to the degeneration of the Janissaries.[55] These historians emphasized the absence of charismatic leaders among the successors of Süleyman the Magnificent, who led his troops as a warrior monarch and died among them, or the mystic impact on the Janissaries of some incidents in history, such as the infiltration of the Turks into the ocak, among the reasons for the degeneration of the Janissaries, although European nation states in the early modern period were demonstrating how armies consisting of mercenary soldiers could become effective fighting forces. Interestingly, Murad III's bestowal on people who were not from the ocak the title of Janissary during the festivities for the circumcision ceremony of the young prince Mehmed (later to become Mehmed

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[53] Donald Quataert, "Janissaries, Artisans And The Question Of Ottoman Decline 1730-1826," in *Workers, Peasants and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire 1730-1914,* ed. Donald Quataert, (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1993), p.197

[54] Ibid., p.198

[55] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, v.1, (İstanbul, Üçdal, 1976), pp.127-8, 136-9; Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1, p.482; Abdülkadir Özcan, "Osmanlı Askeri Teşkilatı," in *Osmanlı Devleti ve Medeniyeti Tarihi*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, (İstanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat, Kültür ve Araştırma Merkezi, 1994), pp.344, 356-7.

III) features as the first sign of the violation of the ancient kanun in all three accounts. However, none among the three historians explain the reasons why an arbitrary decision made by Murad III became the norm in the centuries to come. Why did the Ottoman government resort to recruiting these increasingly more degenerate troops and what made it let the kanun regulating an allegedly perfect military institution be violated? Today historians are in a better position to assess the factors that led to the decline of this late medieval military system and the views which attempted to account for this decline by isolating the Janissaries from the rest of the society are challenged by a new perspective that takes into account the role played by international currency movements, social conflicts in the Ottoman lands and the changes in warfare that forced the governments to put more infantry on the battlefield while explaining this phenomenon, which cannot be achieved by providing a basic chronology of the events.

The effects on the state finances of inflation

The process that turned the Janissaries from the elite corps of the sultan into a social welfare network began with the inflationary tide briefly mentioned in the previous section. The Ottoman *akçe* went through a devaluation between the years 1584 and 1586, by the end of which it had lost 44 per cent of its silver content.[56] This drastic depreciation is the subject of debates among scholars, who try to account for the causes. Among the monetaristic explanations given, the one that has the most currency regards the issue as an offshoot of the silver influx into Europe from Spanish colonies in America and the emergence of an Atlantic

[56] Şevket Pamuk, "Money in the Ottoman Empire," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire Volume Two 1600-1914*, eds. S. Faroqhi, B. McGowan, D. Quataert and Ş. Pamuk, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.960.

economy in the northwestern edge of Europe, which cost the Mediterranean powers such as Venice and the Ottoman Empire significant loss in trade revenue resulting from the emergence of the oceanic routes at the expense of the Middle Eastern land routes. According to this view, this process decreased the value of silver in Europe compared to that in the Middle East. As a result, silver became the main medium for the European traders to pay for their purchases in the Levant. The strong European demand for the relatively cheaper commodities in the Ottoman markets drove up the prices of products like wheat, copper and wool.[57]

The period from the 1580s to the 1640s was a period of extreme instability in the Ottoman economy: in addition to the fluctuations in the silver content of the *akçe*, there were at times different types of *akçe*s with different amount of silver in circulation. The grand viziers of the Köprülü family can be credited for restoring the stability in the economy in the third quarter of the seventeenth century but their efforts did not culminate in a structural transformation of the Ottoman economy. Ottoman *kuruş* lost 40 per cent of its silver content from 1690s to 1760s. By the 1790s, the *kuruş* contained less than one-third of the silver it contained in 1690s.[58]

Another scholarly view suggests that the inflationary movement in the Ottoman Empire did not result from an inflow into the Ottoman market of silver since there also was an outflow of silver of the same proportions to the Iranian market and that demographic growth in the Ottoman Empire was responsible for the

[57] Ömer Lütfü Barkan, "The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 6, no.1 (Jan., 1975), p.6.

[58] Pamuk, *op.cit.*, Table A:7, p.967.

high inflation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[59] Whatever the reason was, the Ottoman currency lost a significant portion of its value in a process starting in the second half of the sixteenth century. This dramatic depreciation of the Ottoman *akçe* hurt the fix income groups more than anybody else.

Military expense remained the single most important category among the expenditures of the Ottoman state throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It accounted for 62 per cent of the cash outflow in the budget of the year 1669/70, with the salaries of the *kapıkulu*s covering 57 per cent of the total state expenditures.[60] By that time, the share in the imperial budget of the Janissary salaries had increased to 21.01 per cent, from 10.26 per cent in 1527/8, although the number of the Janissaries had increased seven-fold over the same period. Barkan argues that a Janissary earned 34.38 gold pieces in 1582 and that the amount was no more than 11.05 gold pieces in 1669, after factoring in the effects of the devaluation.[61] As the Janissary ranks swelled, the salary of an individual Janissary dwindled down. Budgetary figures from the years 1784 and 1785 indicate that the burden on the treasury arising from the military expenditures only aggravated in the peaceful interval between the two Russian wars at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1784 and 1785, military expenditures accounted for three quarters of all state expenditures and the share of the *kapıkulu* expenditures in total state expenditures in these years was 53.5 and 51.5 per cent, respectively. These figures are lower than that of 1669/70 cited above, and considering the fact that the number Janissaries

[59] Haim Gerber, The Monetary System of the Ottoman Empire, *Journal of the Economic History of the Orient*, vol.25 (1982), pp.316-7.

[60] Barkan, *Price Revolution*, Table 4, p.19-20.

[61] Ibid.

had risen from 53,849 in 1670 to 128,000 in 1785, the economic conditions of Janissaries must have deteriorated severely during this period.[62]

The strengthening of the Janissary-society bond

The payment of the Janissary salaries suffered during the macroeconomic crisis of the Empire; Janissaries who received pay twice a year, much less four times, were deemed fortunate. It was thus impossible to prevent them from becoming integrated to the society as butchers, bakers, boatmen, etc. The eighteenth century saw the Janissaries turn into a rarely paid militia from a standing army.[63] As the economic conditions worsened, they refused to honor their obligations against the state that had failed to fulfill the responsibility of taking care of its elite corps. This provided the conjunction where their interests met with those of the masses. People refusing to pay taxes by claiming that they were Janissaries or Janissaries who deserted the army to become bandits were common scenes in Anatolia in the eighteenth century. The *fermans*, directives and official letters of the period condemned the recruitment of "strangers" into the Janissary ranks, as opposed to the *ocaklı* recruits of the past, as the major cause of this degeneration,[64] but the Ottoman ruling elite was not aware of the social and economic dynamics that governed this process.

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[62] Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi (XVIII. yy dan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih)*, (İstanbul: Alan, 1986), pp.94-7, Table 8.

[63] Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the Ayans," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire Volume Two 1600-1914*, eds. S. Faroqhi, B. McGowan, D. Quataert and Ş. Pamuk, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.659.

[64] Yücel Özkaya, Anadolu'daki Yeniçerilerin Düzensizliği ile İlgili Belgeler ve İzmir'de Yeniçeriliğin Kaldırılması ile İlgili Bir Belge, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 1-2 (1965), p.77.

The strengthening of the bonds with the society of the Janissaries was a two-way process. While the Janissaries became artisans and shopkeepers to make a living, being a member of the Janissary corps was still attractive for the peasants due to the privileges that defined the Janissaries as a special military cast. Traditional Janissary privileges, namely tax exemption and judicial immunity, attracted Muslim craftsmen, who hoped to gain an edge over their Christian peers with the help of their new titles.[65] The line between the military and the non-military classes became blurred.[66] The Janissaries emerged as the protectors of the rights and privileges of the urban producers, penetrating the society at the grassroots level. On the other hand, their roots in the *ocak* entitled them to a respectable place among the elites, and their leader, the *ağa,* remained an important figure in the decision-making mechanism of the state.[67] This dual identity, both elite and common, was the main reason behind their enormous influence in the state affairs which culminated in events such as the Patrona Halil rebellion, which was the reaction of the Janissaries against the reform attempts aiming at regulating the salaries and the rations and ended the reign of Sultan Ahmed III and the grand vizier Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa. The Janissary-guild link, which was a product of the seventeenth century but gained more strength in the next century, was the manifestation of this dual identity. The guilds of major urban centers such as Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo and Baghdad were under Janissary control by the

[65] McGowan, *Ayans*, *op. cit.*, p.702.

[66] Ibid., p.660.

[67] Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.45.

eighteenth century.[68] The Janissaries in those cities worked as smiths, saddlers, butchers and virtually dominated grain transport in Istanbul and Aleppo. The post of the *çorbacı* of the 56th Janissary *orta* was the most demanded officer post, since they supervised the transport of the food for the population of Istanbul, and made fortunes by selling the food to foreign ships at Yemiş quay.

Slowing the pace of the Janissary recruitment and relying on mercenary irregulars became a financial necessity for the Ottomans in the second half of the seventeenth century: by 1666, the *devshirme* recruitment target was as low as 300-320 for the whole of the central and western Balkans.[69] The last *devshirme* enrollment was in 1703. In Egypt, the *devshirme* practice was in time replaced by recruitments from the Turks, Egyptians and Circassian slaves. This restoration of the *memluk* system was inevitable since the *kapıkulu*s were too few to permit the Ottoman state to undertake large military operations in the region. The low salaries paid the Janissaries made way for the protector-tributary relation between the Janissaries and the artisans.[70] According to the contemporary historian Cebertî, a Janissary would simply hang over the door of a shop of his choice a plate indicating the *nişan* and the color of his *orta*, declare himself as the partner of that particular shop owner and share the revenue.[71] The Janissaries were able to gain a foothold in foreign trade by offering protection to caravans traveling to Mecca and buying venal offices at customs. By the 1700s, important customs, including the one in

[68] Quataert, "Janissaries, Artisans and the Question of Ottoman Decline ," p.199.

[69] Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, (London: UCL Press, 1999), p.45.

[70] André Raymond, *Yeniçerilerin Kahiresi*, trans. Alp Tümertürk, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), p.25.

[71] Ibid., p.34.

Suez, which was the gate to 60 million *akçe*s worth of coffee trade, were under Janissary control. İbrahim Kethuda, the leader of the Janissaries in Cairo, had made 15.4, 19.8, and 14.6 million *akçe*s of revenue in years 1748, 1749 and 1753, respectively. These figures are significant compared to the annual tax revenue transferred to Istanbul from Egypt, which was around 30 million *akçe*s during this period. The dual identity and power associated with it attracted the great merchants of Cairo who regarded the Janissary organization as an engine of social mobilization.[72] They allied themselves with the *ocak* in order to gain shelter against confiscation by the state of their goods and to guarantee access to tax-farming opportunities. Important merchant families had managed to convert this relationship into a hereditary one: when the great coffee merchant Kasım eş-Şeraybî died in 1734, the administration of his commercial operations was left to his brother, Abdurrahman, who became an officer at the *ocak* in one month.[73]

The Janissary- *timarlı sipahi* link

There is no doubt that the decadence of the Janissaries cannot be comprehended through a limited institutional analysis that regards the *ocak* in isolation from the rest of the army and the society. It is necessary to understand the way the society evolved during the five centuries from the establishment of the Janissary *ocak* to its demise. In this respect, the interaction between the Janissaries and the *timar* system may provide some of the explanations that the historian is seeking. Although the two were clearly distinct entities and rival to each other's cause, the fate of the Janissaries was closely linked to that of the *timarlı sipahi*s. As

[72] Faroqhi, "Crisis and Change," p.595.

[73] Raymond, *op. cit.*, p.82.

favoritism began to play a crucial role in the distribution of *timar* estates by the 1600s, many estates ended up in the hands of absentee landlords, which brought about a decline in the efficiency of the *timar* system.[74] Parallel to this decline was a decrease in the number of the provincial cavalry who reported for campaigns. The void left behind by the *timarlı sipahi*s was too big to be filled through the customary *devshirme* practices. Thus, the admission of the Turks into the *ocak* was not an arbitrary practice, but the only viable way to implement to fill in the gap in manpower, since an army of 100,000 non-Turk soldiers would be unacceptable for the empire of the caliph.[75] By the mid-seventeenth century, the proportion to the *kapıkulu*s of the *timarlı sipahi*s, which was 9:1 a century ago, was reversed. Instead of rehabilitating the *timarlı sipahi*s, the Porte chose to increase the number of salaried troops and completely lost control over the crowds recruited as Janissaries.

The Janissaries throughout the eighteenth century

In the eighteenth century, the Janissaries were no longer the nucleus of the Ottoman army. They were rather an urban infantry force with firearms, their positions inherited from father to son, who was born Muslim.[76] The Crimean Tatars and the *levends*, mercenary troops recruited from among the *reâyâ*, had assumed the central role in the military operations. The rule of the Janissary junta that ruled the empire during the first half of the seventeenth century came to an end after the Porte consolidated its authority during terms in the service as grand viziers of the members of the Köprülü family. Köprülüzade Fazıl Mustafa Paşa, grand vizier

[74] Özkaya, *op.cit.*, p.84.

[75] Mustafa Akdağ, Yeniçeri Ocak Nizamının Bozuluşu, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergis*i, vol.5, no. 3 May-June 1947, p.296.

[76] Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, p.45.

between 1689 and 1691, dismissed 30,000 Janissaries who were completely unfit for the elite corps.[77] Following the treaty of Karlowitz, Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa attempted to reform the Janissaries and a *ferman* dated 1701 had some insightful remarks as to the problem at hand: it ordered the dismissal of peasants who registered themselves for the Janissary privileges and tax exemptions. It also stated that those who had willingly given up their jobs would not be restored to their previous status and that those who did not earn their salaries at the campaigns would be removed from the Janissary rolls.[78]

Grand Vizier Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa's directions to rehabilitate the Janissaries can serve as normative evidence and help us understand what the problems were from the perspective of the most important bureaucrat of the empire from 1718 to 1730. The grand vizier wanted to prevent Janissaries from receiving payment on behalf of their comrades who were not alive and he promised to pay those people who informed the state officials about the bequests one *akçe* for every ten *akçe*s worth of the bequest of that deceased Janissary. The amount of bequests, together with the names of those soldiers who were to be retired and reasons for retirement, would have to be presented to the sultan for approval. This measure aimed at preventing the young Janissaries from early retirement. In 1716, the number of the retired personnel was well over 32,000 and their salaries amounted to more than three times the salaries of the active Janissaries.[79] At the end of the eighteenth century, only one-third of the retired Janissaries were the products of the

[77] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1, p.490.

[78] Ibid., p.491.

[79] Ibid., pp.492-3.

ocak. In the Morea, the number of the active Janissaries was reduced so as to be able to pay the pensions of the retired personnel, which could no longer be paid from the bequests.[80] However, the implementation of such measures as were proposed by Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa was neglected due to continuous warfare on the Iranian, Austrian and Russian borders throughout the century.

The unexpected success in the Morean campaign of 1739-1740 and the subsequent decision by the Porte to reward the Janissaries upon the success further complicated the Janissary question.[81] The Janissary pay certificates (*esami*) were allowed to be bought and sold, virtually becoming government bonds in the hands of people who had nothing to do with the corps. At some point there were 400,000 pay certificates in circulation although the number of Janissaries on active duty was no more than 40,000, thus adding to the financial burden on the state treasury.[82] Some artisans ended up collecting salaries of more than one Janissary. Those salaries were no longer paid in return for military service, as it is illustrated by payroll vouchers (*esami senetleri*) worth of 12,700 *akçe*s and 9,000 *akçe*s that were discovered during the confiscation of the estates of Kalafat Mehmed Paşa, grand vizier and former *ağa* of the Janissaries.[83] Obtaining Janissary pay certificates was the foremost aim of the crowds in time of Janissary revolts. Historian Abdi informs us of people who arranged Janissary pay certificates for "men and women and their

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[80] Ibid., p.493.

[81] Howard A. Reed, "Ottoman Reform And The Janissaries: The Eşkinci Layihasi of 1826," in *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik* Tarihi, eds. Osman Okyar and Halil İnalcık, (Ankara: Meteksan, 1980), p.194.

[82] Virginia H. Aksan, Whatever Happened to the Janissaries?, *War in History*, vol.5, 1998 (1), p.27.

[83] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1, p.498.

retinues and even fetuses in the wombs of pregnant women" during the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730.[84] According to Şemdanizade "…the entire population was passing itself off as Janissaries" during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774.[85] These people wanted their share of the Janissary privileges, though most of them were unfit for fighting. By the time of this war, the Janissaries had already ceased to be a field force. The ones on active duty were deployed in the capital and in some border fortresses,[86] though most of the time it was the Janissaries who decided what to do at their garrisons. In 1769, all but eighty-three of the Janissaries, who were sent to Khotin with a total allowance of 24,000 *akçe*s, ended up in Bender to pursue trade in that city.[87]

A decree dated February 1782 issued by Halil Hamid Paşa claimed that Janissary officers registered as Janissaries people who were not trained in the *ocak*, in exchange for five *okka*s of coffee and other items of bribery.[88] However, it is interesting to see that Halil Hamid Paşa wanted the names of those troops who collected salaries but failed to serve as soldiers, in order not to dismiss them but to send them to the front in case of war. This demonstrates the dilemma the Ottoman military organization was facing. The continuous warfare demanded contributions from every individual capable of fighting, and the state did not have the luxury to distinguish *false* Janissaries from the real ones. The Ottomans, who, despite

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[84] Faik Reşit Unat, *Abdi Tarihi*, (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), p.43.

[85] Virginia H. Aksan, Mutiny and the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Army, *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, v.22, no.1, (1998), p.117.

[86] Aksan , Whatever Happened to the Janissaries?, p.35.

[87] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1, p.500.

[88] Ibid., p.494.

outnumbering the enemy, had suffered defeats in the hands of Eugene of Savoy, still preferred the "quantity" of troops to the "quality".

Halil Hamid Paşa estimated that the abolishment of the pensions of people who somehow ended up holding the payrolls and channeling the funds to the *ocaklı*s would save the state the cost of 20,000 Janissaries. However, his efforts to increase his control over registered personnel caused grumbling in the ranks of the Janissaries, and he had to give up any reform attempts in fear of a revolt.

The war against Russia and Austria in 1787-1792 delivered another blow to the Ottoman army. The written orders by the grand vizier to the *ağa* of the Janissaries were actually confessions of an impotent state bureaucracy: the Treasury was unable to pay the Janissary salaries; unfit people received payments; some of them were entitled to twenty salaries of the officers of higher rank.[89]

There were attempts to reform the Janissaries in the years 1701, 1709, 1716, 1728, 1739-40, 1768, 1782, 1785 and 1790.[90] However, these attempts faded away in the face of a coalition of Janissaries, the *ulema*, the bureaucrats of the higher rank and the immediate subordinates of the sultan, who all had a stake in sustaining the corrupt system that kept the Janissaries, thus depriving the sultan of a reliable staff to carry out the necessary reforms. This explains why it took Mahmud II eighteen years to abolish the Janissaries and he changed so many *ağas* and grand viziers.

Mustafa III, convinced after the defeats against the Russians that the Janissaries were well beyond the point of rehabilitation, focused his attention on the

[89] Ibid., p.496.

[90] Reed, *op.cit.*, p.194.

artillery corps and hired Baron de Tott to train these troops. The Janissary corps during the reign of Selim III was a non-factor in confrontations against the European armies, but they were very influential at home. Selim III was stunned by what he inherited as the elite corps but later proved to be plunderers. He must have been shocked when his barbers professed that they possessed gunner pay certificates (*topçu esamisi*).[91] However, the Janissaries successfully blocked his attempts by murdering the agents of the reforms. Efforts to dismiss the Janissaries who did not honor their military obligations but received payments were defended by the whole body of the corps. In addition to their resistance to new weapons and Christian military experts, the Janissaries also refused to serve with the mortar and mine-laying corps, who had been subject to reform for some time.[92] Selim III's Nizam-ı Cedid regiments perished with himself since Janissaries would not tolerate any attempts that could undermine their positions.

[91] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.1, p.504.

[92] Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp.84-5.

2.3 MERCENARIES IN THE OTTOMAN ARMY

The peasant recruits in the Ottoman army was not a novelty of the eighteenth century. Peasants who had left their lands were enrolled in the army as *yevmlü*s in the fifteenth century and the imperial army under Süleyman the Magnificent included peasant recruits,[93] thus violating the strictly observed segregation of the *reâyâ* and the military class in the society. The succession crises in the sixteenth century also saw the peasantry become a recruitment pool for the princes who made a case for the Ottoman throne. Prince Ahmed, son of Bayezid II, relied on an army of peasant recruits to fight his brother, Selim I, who had replaced his father by way of a *coup d'etat*. [94] During the succession struggle between the sons of Süleyman the Magnificent, the younger prince, Bayezid, led an army of 10,000 *timarli sipahis*, tribesmen and peasants against his brother, Selim, later to become Selim II, who was backed by the sultan. Bayezid paid the peasants salary and promised them entry into the Janissary corps once he won the struggle for the throne, which never realized.[95]

The social and economic transformation of the Empire, explained in the previous sections, increased the number of men seeking a living in the army and peasant recruits had become an integral part of the Ottoman army. Manning the garrisons in an empire covering vast territories in three continents and waging war on two fronts and sometimes at the same time were tasks that exceeded the capabilities of a *kapıkulu* army, numbering 35,000 Janissaries and 17,000 cavalry of

[93] Barkey, *op. cit.*, pp.163-4.

[94] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, pp.31-4.

[95] Ibid., p.35.

the sultan's household (*kapıkulu sipahileri*) by the end of the sixteenth century and a prebendal cavalry supported by a declining *timar* organization. Added to these was the internal disorder, which the Ottomans called the *Celali* rebellions, named after a certain Şeyh Celal who revolted against the state in 1519. The sixteenth century was a period of low-level militarization, in which the peasants sold their land and oxen to buy mounts and arms. The internal disorder aggravated with the rural unrest among the religious students (*suhtes*) of higher education who were frustrated by the increasing competition for a limited amount of administrative and judicial posts.[96] When the actions of these mobs became effective over the whole Anatolia, the state encouraged the peasants to buy arms to defend themselves against these mobs.[97] The main tide of rural militarization came in the seventeenth century and Barkey regards this as the single most important transformation of this century. According to her, this was not a natural process but one planned and directed by the state which aimed to consolidate its control over the countryside, although armed bandits could at times organize into armies of considerable size and jeopardize the existence of the state itself. Canbuladoğlu, who led a bandit army of 30,000 men armed with muskets and Abaza Hasan Paşa, who overpowered with his armed men the government forces led by Murtaza Paşa in 1658 posed serious threat to the state authority.[98] The process had apparently spiraled out of the control of the state, even if one assumes that the state had actually initiated the militarization of the countryside. That 80,000 muskets were confiscated in Anatolia by the state

[96] Barkey, *op. cit.*, pp.160-1.

[97] Ibid., pp.154-6.

[98] Mücteba İlgürel, "Firearms in the Ottoman State," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, *Vol.3*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), p.730.

during an inspection conducted after the revolt of Abaza Hasan Paşa demonstrates how the firearms had spread in the Ottoman society.[99]

The peasants encouraged by the state to bear arms were recruited as mercenary troops for the campaigns.[100] Whether the state regarded the bandits as a threat to social order or a reserve of armed men who could instantly be deployed on the battlefront depended on the political circumstances: the state was both the enemy and the client of its armed subjects. Ottoman administration was notorious for its flexibility in defining the means to secure desired ends. The fact that there was not any established rule nor a customary preference based on hierarchy for the appointment of the *levend* officers or as *serçeşme* of one of the *bölükbaşı*s (captains) of the *levend*s rendered these soldier-turned-bandits a valuable tool in the state politics. *Serçeşme* was an important position since it involved negotiating on behalf of the *levend*s with the government when the *levend*s were to be mobilized for the campaign. Although *serçeşme* was ordained with the title of *bey*, his rank being subordinate to a pasha, achieving this rank just like becoming a *bölükbaşı* did not require to have gone through certain education and training.[101] Thus, Yeğen Osman could easily rise within months from being a bandit leader to the post of the governor of Afyonkarahisar in April 1687 and end up with the command of the Ottoman forces fighting the Christian alliance of the Holy League in July 1687. By sending Yeğen Osman and his 4,000 *levend* troops to the front, the Porte aimed at

[99] Ibid.

[100] Virginia H. Aksan , "Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies in the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Arming The State: Military Conscription In The Middle East And Central Asia 1775-1925*, ed. Erik Jan Zürcher, (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), pp.26-7.

[101] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, pp.290-3.

clearing Anatolia of bandits and using them against the rebellious Janissaries whose mutiny had brought down Mehmed IV. When it was ordered by a *ferman* that the bandit leaders would be killed wherever they were found, the bandits responded by besieging Ankara and plundering Eskişehir region. This brought about a change in the strategy of the Porte, from one of extermination to cooptation. The bandit leaders, who were comrades of Yeğen Osman, were appointed as governors to different provinces. The Porte started playing the *kapıkulu*s and the *levend*s off against each other, with a hope to divert their energies from taking action against the government. By 1689, Yeğen Osman and other important bandit leaders were dead, leaving the Porte victorious in the struggle for authority in the Empire.[102]

The local irregular troops that joined the Ottoman army went by a number of names such as *sekban*, *saruca* and *levend*. The former two were musketeers serving as infantry. *Levend*s, the landless peasants who sought a living in a more adventurous way of life,[103] referred to the crowds from among which the musketeers were drawn.[104] The *levend*s who were part of the retinue of a regional commander were called *kapılı* (household) *levend*s, those directly recruited by the state, *miri* (state) *levend*s.

Household *Levend*s *(Kapılı Levend*s*)*

A regional commander had a personal interest in furthering the aforementioned militarization of the countryside. He made sure that his retinue was as large as he could support since his prestige rested on his contribution in the

[102] Ibid., pp.222-9.

[103] Ibid., p.17.

[104] Aksan , "Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies," p.26.

sultan's war effort, which also determined his chances of advancing his career.[105] The large household retained by Silahtar Hacı Ömer Pasha, the governor of Diyarbekir in 1670-71, provides a case in point. This governor was paying for the services of twenty-three captains in his retinue and the salaries of his mercenary troops constituted 12.7 per cent of all the expenditures incurred in the province.[106] He certainly was not the only high profile bureaucrat having such a large personal army. In 1694, at Peterwardein, Sürmeli Ali Paşa had 6,751 troops under his command as his household *levend*s.[107]

This certainly posed a dilemma for the state which welcomed the contributions from the pasha households while finding it increasingly more difficult to prevent these households evolving into loci of power that could challenge the state authority and cause decentralization. Peasantry became the new source of men joining the retinues of the regional commanders, replacing the slaves. The competition among commanders caused the process to spiral out of control and resulted in further oppression of the peasantry through random levies and taxes to feed the growing retinues.[108] There were not any official regulations with regards to the finances of the household *levend*s. The ruling elite relied on the revenue they received from their own estates, the revenue that members of their households generated on their own lands and illegal levies exacted from the peasants. *Kapı harcı*, *kapı resmi* and *mübaşiriye* were the taxes levied for the purpose of

[105] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.164.

[106] Metin Kunt, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin Gelir-Gideri 1670-71*, (İstanbul: 1983), p.48, quoted in S. Faroqhi, *op.cit.*, pp. 568-9, Table:II-23.

[107] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, p.275.

[108] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.165.

supporting the households of the ruling elite. Added to these taxes was another one, called *imdad-ı seferiye*, levied in time for campaign.[109]

The regional commanders were not bound by any rule or regulation in hiring and firing men for their retinues. The *levend*s were neither slaves nor *cebelü*s, the retainers raised by the prebendal cavalry.[110] Regional commanders' ability to hold on to their official positions and to pay for these troops determined the fate of the *levend*s. They were hired and fired at will, which added to the number of vagrant peasants wreaking havoc in Anatolia. However, as local and personal a decision as the recruitment of these *levend*s might seem, it is still possible to discern a pattern observed throughout the Empire. In the face of increasing rural violence, the state encouraged the establishment of a militia (*ileri*) which did not turn out as planned since the peasants refused to join due to security concerns. The central authority then turned to *levend*s at the expense of the civic character of the militia. This militia was modeled after the *kapıkulu* organization, with the ranks of captain (*bölükbaşı*) and head captain (*başbölükbaşı*) and roles corresponding to them being borrowed from the Janissaries.[111]

The Bosnian militia, made up of mercenary soldiers, illustrates this point. Just the fact that the local militia successfully fought against the Austrian army during the war of 1737-39 without much support from the Ottoman imperial army, which had its hands full against the Russians, indicates that the regional armies in the eighteenth century were more than mobs of *levend*s gathered around a

[109] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, pp.283-7.

[110] Barkey, *op. cit.*, p.166.

[111] Ibid., pp.172-3.

commander. The Bosnian militia, which Michael Robert Hickok argues to have been designed as the effective extension of the Ottoman state power in Bosnia, rather than the personal retinues of regional commanders (*kapudan*s) cooperating with the Porte,[112] had an institutionalized command structure characterized by a minimum number of unnecessary officers, which indicates that the positions were not regarded as "sources of guaranteed salaries."[113] The Ottoman provincial government in Tvarnik and the Porte had the right to approve or reject any personnel decisions regarding recruitment or promotion. The *kapudan*s were held accountable for their choices of individuals for vacant positions and they had to justify such decisions even if the decisions concerned lower ranks.[114] The regional command does not seem to be hereditary, at least for the eighteenth century, with merit being an important criterion for the appointment to this important post.[115] The Bosnian militia served as the engine of social mobility, as Muslims from all classes could join and advance through the ranks.[116]

The Bosnian militia was recruited by the state, for the needs of the state. By controlling the financial resources available to the *kapudan*s, the state could do what it could not achieve by deploying a field army in the region, that is, keeping Bosnia as part of the Empire.[117] Until the fiscal policies changed at the end of the

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[112] Michael Robert Hickok, *Ottoman Military Administration in the Eighteenth-Century Bosnia*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), p.41.

[113] Ibid., pp.64-6.

[114] Ibid., pp.68-9.

[115] Ibid., p.71.

[116] Ibid., p.67.

[117] Ibid., pp.78-9.

eighteenth century, this effectively prevented *kapudan*s from inflating the ranks with personnel for whose services they did not possess the means to pay. The provincial troops were paid first by the provincial treasury which was at the governor's disposal. Any deficiencies were to be covered by the channeling of provincial resources not under the governor's discretion. The Porte issued an *ocaklık beratı*, a certificate to describe the means of generating the necessary amount and who the recipient would be.[118] A similar situation was in place in Palestine. The Ottoman governors of Palestine were not allowed to pay for the Janissaries in their region since the Porte did not want them to develop an independent power base.[119]

State *Levend*s *(Miri levendler)*

The state recruited *levend*s for the first time in the late 1580s. The orders regarding the recruitment of the *levend*s addressed to the *kadi*s, governors, commander-in-chief, *sancak beyi*s and the *ayan*s. In these orders, the number of the infantry and cavalry, their salaries, how the grain that would be given to the troops and the beasts would be procured and the size of the retinue that *ayan* was supposed to bring with him were outlined.[120] The *levend*s recruited by the state were paid salaries (*ulufe*) and a sign-up bonus (*bahşiş*). While the former remained constant over a period of two and a half centuries, the latter, which was aimed at enabling the soldier to pay for his immediate necessities before the campaign, increased

[118] Ibid., p.81.

[119] Amnon Cohen, The Army in Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: Sources of Its Weakness and Strength, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 34, No.1 (1971), p.40.

[120] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, p.351.

significantly. Mustafa Cezar argues that one-time sign-up bonus was intended for the purchase of firearms by the troops. The fact that there are no written orders by the state for the wholesale procurement of firearms supports this hypothesis.[121] The officer ranks, in the ascending order, were the *çavuş*, *bayrakdar*, *odabaşı* and *bölükbaşı*. From the second half of the 1730s, the officer ranks changed, the commander of a 100-man unit being called a *yüzbaşı*, a 500-man unit, *beşyüzbaşı* and a 1000-man unit, *binbaşı*.[122]

The *ayan*s, the provincial gentry whose social capital grew parallel to the wealth they made by tax-farming, came to play a prominent part in the mobilization efforts after the 1720s. They were expected to register the troops, send them to the front or lead them in person, and played an important part in that capacity during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. Whereas there were approximately 10,000 *miri levend*s at Vienna in 1683, they had become the backbone of the Ottoman army during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, numbering around 85,000-90,000 men.[123] During the campaign, a *levend* infantry was given the same daily ration as a Janissary: two loaves of bread and more than 600 grams of meat. The cavalry got half the amount of meat but was compensated with rice, cooking fat and 6.5 kilograms of barley per day for his mount.[124] The *levend*s were recruited for an initial period of six months, with ensuing two-month renewals of the contract, and they were paid from the central treasury despite the *ayan*s' role in mobilizing the

[121] Ibid., pp.353-4.

[122] Ibid., pp.360-1.

[123] Virginia H. Aksan, Locating the Ottomans among the Early Modern Empires, *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol.3,no.2, (May 1999), p.122

[124] Aksan , "Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies," p.29.

troops.[125] This should come as no surprise considering the Ottoman policy to bottleneck the influence of provincial forces at some point.

The attempts at abolishing the *levend*s did not come to fruition until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The *ferman*s issued in 1687 and 1689 ordered the abolition of the *levend*s but those directives were nullified by the ongoing war in the Balkans. The *ferman*s such as the one issued in 1709 encouraged people to join the ranks of *delis*, *gönüllü*s, *farisan* and *azeban*. Without taking action to change the social and economic conditions out of which the *levend*s arose, the effect of such orders was limited to bringing about a change in terminology. Banditry was to be continued under different names. What brought about the end of the *levend*s were the reforms carried out by Comte de Bonneval and Baron de Tott, and the catastrophic result of the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774.[126] The *levend*s were abolished on paper in the year 1775. The *delil*s, *gönüllü*s and *tüfenkçi*s who replaced the *levend*s were also abolished in 1791, although the terminology was still being used to describe the bandits as late as 1824-5.[127]

[125] Ibid., pp.26-7.

[126] M. Cezar, *op. cit.*, pp.306-7.

[127] Ibid., pp.251-2.

CHAPTER III

WHAT THE OTTOMANS LACKED: LIMITS OF TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND THE OTTOMAN REALITY

3.1 EUROPEAN MILITARY TRANSFORMATION AND THE OTTOMANS

Michael Roberts, in his inaugural lecture at Queen's University in Belfast in 1955,[128] put forward a new paradigm to explain the transformation of military affairs in the early modern Europe. According to him, the emergence of infantry, the increase in the army size, new strategies to produce decisive victories and the increased effects on the society of warfare added up to a "military revolution", thus starting one of the most fruitful debates in the recent historiography. Not every scholar agreed with Roberts' emphasis on the period 1560-1660 and the roles as initiators of Maurice of Orange and the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus II in this transformation, which most scholars agreed to have taken place, however with different dynamics. Geoffrey Parker lingered on the borders of technological determinism, arguing that the *trace italienne* style fortifications, with angled bastions providing enfilading fire in support of each other, first introduced during

[128] Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution 1560-1660," in *The Military Revolution Debate. Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp.13-35.

the Italian Wars (1494-1559), were the engines of change in the European warfare.[129] He argued that the presence or absence in a certain part of Europe of *trace italienne* style fortresses determined the extent of military revolution and that bastioned fortress was the main reason behind the increase in army size, the latter of which was exploded by Mahinder S. Kingra, who underlined that *trace italienne* was part of a larger change rather than an independent variable.[130] Clifford Rogers contributed to the ongoing debate with his "punctuated equilibrium" theory, which dates the seeds of transformation in the Hundred Years' War, pointing to a succession of revolutions in infantry, artillery, fortress design and military administration.[131] All these theories focused on changes taking place in the Central and Western Europe, ignoring the interaction between the European and non-European ways of warfare, and periods during which the European armies did not gain a decisive edge over their non-European counterparts. Thus, Jeremy Black's emphasis on the period 1660-1720, when novelties such as bayonet and flintlock musket gave the Europeans the edge to start to decisively expand at the expense of non-Europeans, and among them, the Ottomans is an invaluable contribution to military history,[132] and it incorporates into European history the warfare in the colonial world and the lands to the east and south of Hungary, which is also one of the main objectives of this study.

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[129] Geoffrey Parker, The 'Military Revolution,' 1560-1660- A Myth?, *Journal of Modern History*, 48 (June 1976), pp.197-201; *The Military Revolution: the Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[130] Mahinder S. Kingra, The *Trace Italienne* and the Military Revolution During the Eighty Years' War, 1567-1648, *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 57, no. 3 (Jul., 1993), pp.431-46.

[131] Clifford J. Rogers, The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years' War, *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 57, (April 1993), pp.241-78.

[132] Jeremy Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, pp.7-14.

Military history, usually regarded as a supplementary chapter to the volumes written on the rise of the West, has been prone to Eurocentric explanations. Linguistic abilities of the historians must have played an important part in establishing the frame of military history as it is today.[133] As a result, Western scholars have had a very vague idea of the military culture of non-European peoples, the role war played in those societies and the institutions in place to support the war effort. The Orientalist discourse feeding on the memoirs of the European travelers to the Levant in the early modern age culminated in little-questioned views of the Eastern armies, led by a despotic monarch and consisting of soldiers fanatically attached to a cause, as indicated by the familiar portrayal of the Janissaries, although these soldiers were as much motivated by worldly rewards and led by a military strategy as their Western counterparts.[134] The teleological nature of this kind of historiography presented the non-European peoples as in a state of constant decline and waiting to be conquered by the European armies. In the Ottoman case, at least two historians argue that the *nasihatname*s, "mirrors for princes" written by the Ottoman intellectuals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which presented a moralistic view of the problems of the Empire, had played a significant role in the emergence of this decline paradigm in the Western historiography, which adopted them without questioning their historical value and depended on these sources since the eighteenth century.[135] The decline paradigm

[133] Jeremy Black, *War and the World*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.1.

[134] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, pp.25-6, 142-3.

[135] Douglas Howard, *The Ottoman Timar System and Its Transformation, 1563-1656,* Ph.D. diss., (University of Indiana, 1987), pp.18-9, 26-9; Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-raising and Legitimacy. Tex Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660*, (Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996), pp.2-8.

retrospectively looks into what happened after the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, supposedly the golden age of the Ottoman history, but fails to explain how the Empire survived for so long. In reality, the period from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century was one of a transformation and adaptation for the Ottoman Empire. This adaptation enabled the Empire to find and tap into new sources of power instead of the traditional ones that no longer functioned and protected the heartland of the Empire from the danger of foreign invasion until the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The Ottoman Empire, whose impact on Europe was mainly transmitted through military conflicts, surprisingly remained neglected in the Western military historiography. Like most other non-European societies, the Ottoman Empire featured as part of the periphery of the Western European core and was accordingly incorporated into the military revolution debate. This view ignored the common dynamics that transformed both the Western European and Ottoman societies. Thus, the *ayan*s and the role they played in mobilizing masses to enable the state to rise to the challenge of putting larger armies on the field did not attract that much attention, while military entrepreneurs, such as Wallenstein, appear as the prominent figures of the early modern European warfare. The challenge, building larger armies, and the solution, using intermediaries to raise troops from among the subjects of a sovereign, were similar but the process remained to be presented as a European one towards absolutism. The crown-nobility consensus, which made possible the absolutist rule of the European monarchs,[136] had its counterpart in the relationship between the Ottoman sultan and *ayan*s. While the European aristocracy

[136] Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, pp.89, 92.

became integrated as military leaders to the state mechanism, the Ottoman provincial notables gained significance as power shifted from Istanbul to the provinces in the meanwhile keeping the vast Empire intact, just to give way to the absolutist rule of Mahmud II and his successors after the 1830s.

In Sweden, the vanguard of military revolution in Roberts' view, Charles XI ordered the nobility to provide a cavalryman for every 500 *marks* of income in 1686, which produced a regiment,[137] in similar fashion to the Ottoman prebendal cavalry. Though smaller in scale, this example illustrates that social transformation does not follow a linear model and that the most progressive states resorted to feudal institutions throughout the *ancien régime*, which indicates that the core probably was not as revolutionary as it is claimed to have been. The meshing with the society of Janissaries and their involvement in civilian trades, something that is cited as one of the indicators of the degeneration of the corps, was not peculiar to the Ottoman Empire. The Prussian army relied on a reserve army raised according to a cantonment system, and a Prussian soldier served in the army for two months a year and spent the rest of the year pursuing his trade in his canton.[138] French soldiers were so immersed in the civilian life that they were deemed unreliable during the French Revolution.[139] Military service was a part-time job in Ireland and Sweden. The fact that barracks were introduced in Russia in 1765 and in England in 1793 implies the universality of a strong army-society bond across Europe.[140] This

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[137] John Childs, *Warfare in the Seventeenth Century*, (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), p.95.

[138] John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe 1648-1789*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p.53.

[139] Ibid., p.58.

[140] Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, p.225.

obviously was something the early modern state could not avoid: taking thousands of young men from productive sectors and permanently keeping them under arms would be disastrous for the economy.

The implications of the centre-periphery scheme are further strengthened by the view that the European military innovations and the resulting transformation were the products of intra-European conflict only.[141] However, the conflict with non-Europeans turned into fruitful contacts when problems associated with fighting the non-Europeans brought about change in European armies. Long before the reforms of Peter I, the Russians deployed *strel'tsy* regiments, harquebusiers first recruited in the mid-sixteenth century under Ivan IV,[142] that were modeled after the Janissaries.[143] The Habsburgs were, too, forced to go out of their way and put more emphasis on infantry formations and positional warfare after the defeat of the Habsburg cavalry against Turkish firepower at Mohacs in 1526, which explains why they avoided field battles against Süleyman the Magnificent during the rest of his reign. The mobility of the Turkish light cavalry, their effectiveness in foraging sorties, encirclement maneuvers and disturbing enemy supply lines encouraged the Europeans to recruit similar troops in addition to heavy cavalry, the elite units of the feudal order. The Venetians employed Albanian and Greek *stradioti* (light cavalry) against the Turks in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.[144] For one scholar, the

[141] Jeremy Black, Military Organizations and the Military Change in Historical Perspective, *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 62, no. 4, (Oct., 1998), pp.875-76.

[142] Michael C. Paul, The Military Revolution in Russia 1550-1682, *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 68, (Jan., 2004), p.20.

[143] Black, *War and the World*, pp.91-2.

[144] Ibid., pp.93-4.

adoption by the Western armies of light troops was "the greatest tactical innovation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."[145] While hussars and Cossacks became integral parts of the Russian army in the eighteenth century, the Austrians paid for the services of *pandour*s and Croatians and prevailed against the light cavalry of Frederick II (the Great).[146]

This work is intended to place the eighteenth century Ottoman warfare in the European context, something which the Turkish historians are not enthusiastic about, while transcending the technological determinism and teleological approach of Western scholarship. To achieve the first objective, the Ottoman struggle against the Russians will be emphasized. The main focus of the next section will be on the widening gap between the effectiveness of the Ottoman army and its archenemy in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Seven Years War, which the Ottomans did not participate, looks like a turning point in changing the course of warfare in the Balkans and Eastern Europe due to the changes it initiated in the Russian army.[147] Confrontations with the Prussian army, the war machine created by Frederick William I and Frederick the Great, brought about serious organizational and tactical reforms in the Austrian and Russian armies in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. These changes, combined with the experience the Russians gained in tackling the logistical problems thanks to a century of operations in the steppes and marshes of the Ukraine, Crimea and the Principalities, translated into victories against the Ottomans.

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[145] Childs, *Armies and Warfare*, p.116.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Virginia H. Aksan, "Ottoman War and Warfare, 1453-1812," in *War in the Early Modern World*, ed. Jeremy Black, (London: Routledge, 1999), p.166.

Technological inferiority and tactical inflexibility undoubtedly played an important role in the retreat of the Ottomans. However, the problem with putting heavy emphasis on technological factors is that it not only understates the Ottoman technological capabilities but it also exaggerates the impact technology had on the eighteenth century warfare. The innovation that had the most impact on how war was fought in the eighteenth century was bayonet, a simple tool by all measures. It encouraged close quarter fighting and played a bigger role in the increase in casualty rates than did the increase in the theoretical effectiveness of firepower.[148] The figures regarding how well Frederick the Great's highly skilled *Leibkompagnie* fared in training proves that even the best musketeers were far from being lethal. Frederick the Great had his man shoot at a wooden wall of ten paces wide and ten feet high from a distance of two hundred paces and the soldiers were successful in 16.6 per cent of the attempts when kneeling and just 3.3 per cent when standing.[149] The battlefield conditions undoubtedly brought about even less success in individual fire at a specific target. The weight of the bayonet and the excitement of the moment made it difficult for the individual soldier to aim as well as he would like to and the production defects associated with muskets also caused the hit ratio to be lower than desired.[150] Artillery also did not go through a revolutionary change in the period with effective range being 500 paces as opposed to the theoretical

[148] M. E. Yapp, "The Modernization of the Middle Eastern Armies in the Nineteenth Century," in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East: [papers of a conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, September 1970]*, ed. V. J. Parry, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) p.332.

[149] Luh, *op. cit.*, p.144.

[150] Ibid., pp.152-3.

range of 2,000 paces. It was the lighter frames and the increased mobility that turned artillery into a more effective weapon, not an innovation in ballistics.[151]

The Ottoman failure against Nadir Shah of Persia, who led a force of similar technological capability and tactical tradition with the Ottomans, proves that victory did not always require technological superiority.[152] Therefore, one has to consider the alternative commitments of a military power, the factions within the leadership and the internal security demands before reaching grandiose conclusions about the military capacity of a state.[153] In the Ottoman case, the pressure exerted by the defense of the lands in the Balkans, northern Black Sea littoral and the Eastern Anatolia, and the continuous domestic problems meant that war on a particular front was probably only one of several military tasks that the Ottomans had to undertake and this reality came to define the limits of what could have been achieved in the battlefield. The Ottoman territorial expansion until the second half of the sixteenth century had pushed any military target in the eastern and western fronts to the geographical limit of what could be achieved within a campaign season, which traditionally lasted from late April to the end of October.[154] Marshes and river crossings in the Balkans required pontoon bridges to be assembled and dismantled several times during a campaign and put in danger the lives of thousands of troops by hindering mobility and exposing them to the enemy attack, as illustrated by the military catastrophes at St. Gotthard in 1664 and Szenta in 1697,

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[151] Yapp, *op. cit.*, p.333.

[152] Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, p.78.

[153] Black, *War and the World*, pp.88-9.

[154] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, pp.20-1.

when the Ottoman army was attacked by the Habsburg armies. Heat and rough terrain in the East added to the already daunting task of the army to cover hundreds of kilometers to the front before engaging the enemy.

The way the European politics shaped after the Thirty Years War had a tremendous impact on the wars of the Ottoman Empire entering the eighteenth century, which deserves to be the focus of another study on its own right. However, an analysis of the state of the Ottoman military might would not be complete without a brief summary of what the Ottomans had to face. The second half of the seventeenth century saw the tide in international relations turn against the Ottomans. The Ottomans had skillfully exploited the schism in Christendom in the aftermath of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. However, the Westphalian settlement in 1648 put an end to the clash between the Catholics and the Protestants. The heretic question in the eyes of the Papacy was over and the alliance of Christian powers could take on the infidel question when the opportunity presented itself with the Ottoman attack on Vienna in 1683.[155] The Catholic high clergy found in the Ottomans a common foe to unite against and a successful war against the Ottomans could also bring the Greek Orthodox Church under the Papal authority. The intellectual justifications of an offensive war against the Ottomans were already in place as indicated by the letters of Marcello Marchesi, a member of the Roman Curia, to Pope Pius V written not long after 1606, and the treatise written by Angelo Petricca da Sonnino, the patriarchal vicar of Constantinople, in 1640.[156] From 1683

[155] Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy. A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe: 1453-1683*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2001), p.108.

[156] Ibid., pp.67-111.

on, the Ottomans had to fight against Christian alliances on different fronts such as the Morea, Serbia, the Principalities and the northern Black Sea shores. The end of the eighteenth century also saw Russia emerge for the first time in history as a serious contender in the power struggle in the Eastern Europe. To make the things even worse for the Ottoman Empire, Peter I of Russia forged an alliance Leopold I of Austria in 1697 against the Ottoman Empire, which was to determine the balance of power in the Eastern Europe in the century to come.[157] The instability in Persia in the aftermath of the collapse of the Safavid rule meant that the Ottomans would be active on the eastern front, too, to block the Russian expansion into the southern Caucasus if for nothing else. One would be seriously mistaken by assessing the Ottoman military power in the eighteenth century without taking the changes in the international context into account.

The correlation between the Ottoman military success and energetic and vigorous leadership provided by some grand viziers is another point that verifies the reservations against a technologically deterministic explanation. How Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa Paşa was able to turn around the situation in the Balkans in less than two years of service after a long series of defeats and loss of Buda and Belgrade when he was appointed as the grand vizier in 1689 illustrates the point. Fazıl Mustafa Paşa, like other members of his family who had served as grand viziers in the previous four decades, showed exceptional leadership in dire straits and his capture of Nish, Smederevo, Vidin and Belgrade, and his expulsion of the Habsburgs to the other bank of the Danube, which had left the Habsburgs with Buda only to show for

[157] B. H. Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Emergence of Russia*, (London: English Universities Press, 1950), p.193.

the war effort of the previous eight years, meant that the Ottoman army was still more than capable of holding its own against the Holy League. The personal command of Mustafa II was also impressive since he managed to regroup his forces, who lacked a capable leader since the death of Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa Paşa in the battle of Szelenkamen in 1691, and the sultan led a successful offensive for two years which came to a halt at Szenta in 1697 when his army was ambushed by the forces of Eugene of Savoy during the crossing of the river Tisza. Thus, military leadership, upon which more will be said in comparison to the Russian case in the next section, geographical constraints and changes in the international relations are parameters that have to be factored into the equation for a satisfactory explanation of the twilight of the Ottoman military prowess.

3.2 WARFARE IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN THEATRE: THE RUSSIAN AND THE OTTOMAN CASES

Two non-European powers, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, took the same way in deliberately and programmatically westernizing their military organizations. The Ottoman Empire, which still was a formidable military power at the end of the seventeenth century, always remained open to utilizing western methods and technology when the need arose but westernization of the Ottoman army became a political program almost one and a half century after her northern neighbor introduced the first foreign regiments in her army. Although the two took the same direction, Russia achieved superpower status in the eighteenth century whereas the Ottoman army fell into complete disarray. A comparison between these two military powers can give the historian insight as to which factors played part in bringing about this drastic difference in the outcome and enables him to better understand the Ottoman military modernization process by using the Russian example as a benchmark. This section will shed light on how the particular geography in which the Ottomans and Russians operated necessitated a change in the Western European methods, thus objecting to a normative reading of military history. Rather than singling out the westernization of the Russian military as the sole reason of the Russian success against the Ottomans, this section of the thesis will point out the indispensable local component in the process and emphasize militarization levels of the Russian and the Ottoman societies, military leadership provided by commanders and the opportunity for the Russians to have first-hand knowledge of the Western European technology and techniques as the parameters that brought about the Russian military supremacy in this struggle, which was able

to push southwards the common border separating the two empires in the eighteenth century.

As Carol Stevens rightly states with regards to the westernization of the Russian army under Peter the Great, there are different ways to look at the modernization experiences of non-Western countries.[158] It is possible to both admire the will and efforts of an enlightened ruling elite and the drastic transformation that take place in a relatively short period of time, but the setbacks and the societal costs paid by people can be just as striking. In the Russian case, the overwhelming presence of Peter I overshadows the realities of the process and most accounts of Petrian reforms offer little more than hero worship. However, Peter's reforms were not the result of the inevitable unfolding of divine revelation. It had historical precedents implemented during the reigns of Ivan II, Ivan IV and Alexis:[159] the Russians already had a standing army in the seventeenth century, Dutch gun founders were brought in to renovate the artillery train in the 1630s and foreign officers and infantrymen were recruited throughout the seventeenth century.[160] Peter's famous tour in Europe provided him with an understanding of what was to be achieved but the plans did not proceed as smooth as he wished. His reforms were carried out step by step in a trial-and-error fashion and at times overwhelmed by the unintended consequences that they produced, much like in

[158] Carol B. Stevens, "Evaluating Peter's Army: The Impact of Internal Organization," in *The Military and Society in Russia 1450-1917*, eds. Eric Lohr, Marshall Poe, (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), p.148.

[159] John L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar. Army and Society in Russia 1462-1874*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.96.

[160] Marshall Poe, The Consequences of the Military Revolution in Muscovy: A Comparative Perspective, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.38 no.4 (Oct., 1996), p.609; Thomas Esper, Military Self-Sufficiency and Weapons Technology in Muscovite Russia, *Slavic Review*, vol.28, no.2, (Jun., 1969), pp.200, 203.

other social engineering projects. Those reforms were actually pragmatic decisions taken to beat the challenge posed by Sweden and the Ottoman Empire and to fill the void left behind by the *strel'tsy*.[161] The cavalry of the Swedish king Charles XII gave Peter the inspiration for the increase in the number of the Russian cavalry and the Prut defeat suffered at the hands of the Ottomans brought about the deployment of regiments along the southern frontier for defensive purposes, which meant a deviation from the policy of concentrating the military power in the core areas of the Empire.[162] The conclusion to draw from the Russian military reform, which also applies to the Ottoman case, is that regarding the westernization process as the struggle of the progressive forces against the reactionary focuses on an idealized level of military transformation, ignoring the realities and what in fact is achievable. One has to remember that the state apparatus functions under such constraints as external threats, internal power struggles and social values, which altogether may make an army less European but not necessarily less effective than the one which went through a full-fledged westernization program.

Battle in the steppe, battle against the steppe

The Russian military transformation, more complete and strongly pursued compared to the Ottoman case, is important for the students of Ottoman military transformation since it demonstrates how topographical and climatic conditions of the Eastern European theatre imposed their impact on the westernization programs in this particular part of the continent. The Russian army, much like its Swedish,

[161] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp.95-7.

[162] Stevens, *Evaluating Peter's Army*, p.149; John Ledonne, "The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831," in *The Military and Society in Russia 1450-1917*, eds. Eric Lohr, Marshall Poe, (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), pp.193-4.

Polish, and Turkish counterparts, retained a cavalry force as large as 40 per cent of the size of the army, a figure which does not take into account the irregular Cossack and Kalmyk cavalry, and higher than their Western European counterparts. This figure points to an important characteristic of the Eastern European warfare that defies the perspective through which Western historians try to assess it. Rather than writing off as backward or antiquated this practice of using a predominantly cavalry army, one has to consider the duties, such as reconnoitering, skirmishing, gathering supplies and forage and disrupting the enemy communications, which cavalry successfully carried out in the endless plains of the northern Black Sea littoral.[163]

Vasily Vasilievich Golitsyn's two Crimean campaigns in 1687 and 1689, about which Peter undoubtedly knew in detail before he started his efforts to expand into the southern steppe, provide us with examples of the difficulties an army should expect while operating in the steppe. The first Russian expedition into Crimea in 1687, led by Golitsyn, who was regent Sophia's favorite, was the proof of the catastrophe an army could face when the general staff did not take the measures steppe warfare required. The unusually slow march of the Russians did not encounter much difficulty until the Crimean Khan Selim Giray appeared and ordered his men to burn the steppe between Konskaia voda and Perekop, which effectively deprived the Russian army of fodder. Obviously counting on the plunder they would carry out in Crimea, the Russian army lacked the supplies to enable them to retreat back to Moscow, losing as many as 30,000 troops. Golitsyn did not fare any better in the 1689 campaign to the Crimea. This time, he had secured enough supplies for the return journey, had his men burn in advance the grass in the

[163] Stevens, *Evaluating Peter's Army*, pp.152-4.

Crimean steppe so as to allow it grow sufficiently until the time he would set off early in the spring but this was not enough precaution against the Tatars, who constantly harassed the Russian army of 112,000 troops and 700 pieces of artillery and denied the Russians a pitched battle. The Perekop isthmus was divided into two by a canal, which further demoralized the already exhausted troops. Golitsyn could do nothing but retreat.[164]

The Battle of Prut (1711) is another important encounter that featured a Russian army, which had been going through a series of reforms for more than a decade, against a Turkish army which still used traditional tactics. However, the outcome was to be decided by the rules and conditions of steppe warfare rather than Western military methods and technology. Peter had won a victory in 1709 at Poltava against Charles XII, who was wounded and had a numerical disadvantage as high as 1:5. Having pacified his archenemy, Peter moved against the Turks with 56,000 men, counting on the troops and supplies he would get from Constantin Brâncoveanu of Wallachia and Dimitrie Cantemir of Moldavia. The Russian army, consisting of 26 infantry and 4 guards regiments, was organized into six divisions each one of which comprised infantry, cavalry and grenadiers. That only one of the six generals commanding the divisions was of Russian origin, the rest being foreigners, is an important indication of the Western orientation of the Petrian army.[165]

The Ottoman army, on the other hand, consisted of 120,000 men, excluding the Tatars, according to the accounts of the British, French and Russian

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[164] Fuller, Jr., *Strategy and Power in Russia*, pp.17-9.

[165] Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Prut Seferi ve Barışı v.1-2*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1951), pp.352-56.

ambassadors, plus a Tatar cavalry force of 30,000-35,000 men predominantly equipped with bow, arrow and spear, and a foreign contingent consisting of 10,000-15,000 troops of Cossack, Polish and Swedish origin. The most striking difference was between the numbers of guns each army possessed: the Ottomans had 407 guns at Prut while the Russians had 122.[166] We can conclude from this figure and the Ottoman efforts to strengthen the pontoon bridges for the crossing of the giant *balyemez* cannons, each one of them pulled by 36 pairs of oxen,[167] that the Ottomans were anticipating a siege war rather than a pitched battle in the wake of the Battle of Prut.

Peter's plan to prevent the Ottomans from crossing the Prut was spoilt by the swift movement of the Ottoman army. Stuck in between the Ottoman main army in his front and the Tatar auxiliary in his rear, Peter could not withstand the inefficient but still superior firepower of the Ottoman artillery and was forced to sue for peace.[168] Contrary to the contemporary opinion which blamed Brâncoveanu and Cantemir for the defeat, climatic conditions and crop failures played a bigger part than did the two vassals of the sultan.[169] Peter had ignored the primary rule of steppe warfare by keeping his force as a single body and was soon faced with a lack

[166] Ibid., pp.420-3, 429-32.

[167] Ibid., p.483.

[168] Ibid., pp. 475-7.

[169] Radu Florescu, "Contemporary Western Reaction to the Battle of Stănileşti," in *East Central European Society and War in the Pre-Revolutionary Eighteenth Century, War and Society in East Central Europe Vol.II*, ed. Béla K. Király, (New York: Boulder, 1982, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.422-4.

of supplies. On the Turkish side, key to the victory at Prut was the mobility of the *sipahi* and the overwhelming superiority of the Turkish artillery. [170]

An early modern army could not expect to be more successful in the operations it undertook in places so far away from its bases and along routes over which it did not have political control. The preparations made in advance to gather the necessary amount of supplies always fell short of expectations since the timing of the campaign was not predictable, and nor were the path that the army would take and the number of the troops that would join the campaign.[171] It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that the system of establishing bakeries at five-days march distance from the supply magazines became the common practice.[172] Relying on wagons to transport the supplies like Golitsyn did by carrying 20,000 supply carts with him could create even bigger problems by slowing down the march, which took no less than two and a half months of the campaign season to reach the Crimea and return to Moscow, and making the army vulnerable to Tatar raiding parties.[173]

The low population density, low level of agricultural production and the lack of advance Russian supply magazines in the steppe created an insurmountable obstacle for the Russian army until Catherine II's colonization program in the south

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[170] Jeremy Black, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, gen. ed. John Keegan, (London: Cassell, 2002), p.65.

[171] Carol B. Stevens, Why Seventeenth-Century Muscovite Campaigns Against Crimea Fell Short of What Counted, *Russian History*, 19, Nos 1-4 (1992), p.490.

[172] G. Perjes, Army Provisioning, Logistics and Strategy in the Second Half of the 17th Century, *Acta Historica Academiæ Scientiarum Hungaricæ*, 16 (1970), pp.27-8.

[173] Stevens, *Seventeenth-Century Muscovite Campaigns Against Crimea*, p.503.

began to produce results.[174] Even as late as the second half of the 1730s, the Russian military operations failed to produce long lasting advantages. Münnich, the commander-in-chief, had to cope with both the desert-like terrain and the overflowing Dniestr in the Crimean campaign in 1739. He had set off with a baggage train of 27,862 oxen. One contends that he must have taken a lesson from the failures of 1736 when he had to retreat due to the scorched-earth policy of the defenders who poisoned wells and burned the granaries and of 1737 when he had to abandon Ochakov due to lack of forage.[175] However, the dangers of the steppe were not limited to problems in provisioning. Münnich lost to disease 30,000 troops in 1736 and 15,000 in 1737. Plague in 1738 and cholera in 1771 cost the Russian army dearly, probably claiming the lives of more men than were killed fighting against the Turks.[176]

On the Ottoman side, supply problems seem to have been the major cause of the Ottoman defeats during the Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792. According to Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, the war of 1787-1792 saw severe grain shortages in almost every fortress in the Balkans and the northern Black Sea littoral. Having been unable to secure enough grain for the imperial army, the Porte could not order the army to march to any forward position in the Balkans.[177] The Balkan fortresses like Yergöğü and İbrail were severely undermanned and people from Balkan towns such as Plevne and Lofça were sent to the front by force. However, those troops, having

[174] Ibid., p. 494.

[175] Fuller Jr., *op. cit.*, pp.110-1.

[176] Ibid., p.113.

[177] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *op. cit.*, v.3, (İstanbul, Üçdal, 1983), pp.1187-9.

discovered that they would starve in the garrisons, deserted not long after they arrived in their destinations.[178]

The steppe remained as the main bulwark that protected the Ottoman lands from the Russian aggression until the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. Having lost the political control over the Black Sea and territories in the north during this war, the Ottomans were shorthanded in their struggle against the Russians in the War of 1787-1792. The steppe and problems with regards to logistics hurt the Ottomans more than they did the Russians, who had improved by leaps and bounds in the aforementioned areas in the previous three decades. It took more than a few tactical innovations for the Russians to beat the challenge of sustaining the war effort in the steppe, which they first had to conquer before conquering whatever lay beyond.

Militarization and mobilization

The eighteenth century was a period of militarization for the Russian society. Although extreme Petrian measures such as starting a manhunt for the children of nobility, sometimes as young as ten years old,[179] who were absent from registration for the military service, or mustering one man from every two households, a staggering ratio, in Moscow and some other towns in the aftermath of the defeat at Narva were no longer used,[180] the Russian state was able to tap into the manpower resources of the vast country. As a result, in the 1760s, 3.3 per cent of

[178] Ibid., p.1190.

[179] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp.120-1.

[180] Ibid., p.195.

the eligible male population in Russia was under arms whereas the European average was 1.5 per cent.[181]

The Russian practice of conscription was not a universal one. It involved the lower classes, with exemptions given to many privileged classes. During the 1730s, the conscription rate was in average 1 out of every 179 souls. At the beginning of Catherine II's first Turkish War in 1768, the size of the army was 50,747 men. The conscription continued with levies of one man in 150 in 1769 and 1770, one in 100 in 1771.[182] All in all, the Russians recruited 300,000 soldiers during the war of 1768-1774.[183] Catherine II legislated the establishment of a 500-soul recruiting unit in 1775. The Turkish War of 1787-1792 saw three levies of 5 and one levy of 4 men from each recruiting unit.[184] The recruitment age, which was set at 15 and 30 in 1730 and raised to 20 and 35 in 1754, was defined by Catherine II at 17 and 35.[185] Recruitment spelt death for Russian men. A recruit was to serve for lifetime until 1793, after which the service was limited to 25 years. The men would probably never see their families again since homeleave was not a usual practice and their kins might not be informed of their death until 1800.[186]

The militarization of the society was the general trend in continental Europe during the era of the enlightened absolutism. Much like the Russian society,

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[181] Virginia Aksan, The One-eyed Fighting the Blind: Mobilization, Supply and Command in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, *The International History Review*, vol.15, no.2, May 1993, p.226.

[182] Ibid., p.226.

[183] Aksan , "Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies," p.24.

[184] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, pp.145-8.

[185] Ibid., p.153.

[186] Ibid., p.156.

the Austrian society became militarized during the 1760s, undoubtedly in an effort to counter the Prussian militarism. The Austrian crown instilled in its subjects the idea that national defense was a responsibility of the citizens against the fatherland.[187] Prussian military system became the norm in the Austrian army after the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). Prussian basic training and drill system, tactical movements and the deployment of the troops on the battlefield imitated the Prussian model.[188] The Austrian artillery train grew by five times from 1756 to 1788 and the crown was able to raise 315,000 men for the Turkish War of 1788-90. Another indication of this process was the institutionalization of the military education in Austria starting from the 1740s. Military entrepreneurs and nobility lost ground to a service nobility raised from among the professional soldiers trained in the military schools.[189] Artillery and officer corps were the focus of attention in the institutional context. The Austrians established in 1752 a Military Academy to train officers and a military engineering school in 1760.[190]

All these facts and figures are in stark contrast with the condition the Ottoman society and army were in. The Janissaries, *timarli sipahi*s and *levends*, their conditions and the historical process that brought about these conditions are already dealt with in detail in the second chapter. The mobilization of the Ottoman army became slower and more problematic as the Janissaries dispersed all over the

[187] Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence 1683-1797*, (London, New York [etc.]: Longman, 2003), pp.310-2.

[188] Manfried Rauchensteiner, "The Development of War Theories in Austria at the End of the Eighteenth Century," in *East Central European Society and War in the Pre-Revolutionary Eighteenth Century, War and Society in East Central Europe Vol.II*, ed. Béla K. Király, (New York: Boulder, 1982, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.77.

[189] Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, pp.129-130.

[190] Hochedlinger, *op.cit.*, pp.306-7.

Empire, the *timar* system deteriorated and mercenary soldiers, who were originally peasants, came to assume a prominent role in the war effort.[191] When these contingents were somehow sent to the front, it appeared that they were fewer than planned due to high desertion rate and fictitious soldiers. One concludes that the numerical superiority of the Ottoman forces, which is often counted among the reasons of Ottoman military achievements, no longer held in the second half of the eighteenth century against the Russians and when it did, it was not sustainable for long. The Ottomans, fighting the problem of fictitious soldiers for a long time, failed to reach the targeted mobilization level for the 1769 campaign, and thousands of troops mustered deserted due to lack of food.[192] Desertion was also partly responsible for the loss of the fortress of Ismail, often described as the key to the Danube and the most important Ottoman base on this river. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa states that homesickness was one of the pretexts of the troops who deserted after the grand vizier had ordered them to march towards Ismail.[193] In the case of northern fortresses such as Ochakov, the mercenary troops plainly refused to go since the climate in such northern regions was hostile and war in those poor regions offered little prospect of booty.[194] According to Ahmed Resmi, the Ottoman forces in the war of 1768-1774 looked more like a mob than an army. The Anatolian troops joining the campaign were too old to fight and there were tens of thousands of camp

[191] Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Sefer Organizasyonu," in *Osmanlı, Vol.6*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 1999), p.591.

[192] Virginia Aksan, , *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700-1783*, (Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp.135-7.

[193] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *op. cit.*, v.3 , p.1221.

[194] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *op. cit.*, v.2, (İstanbul: Üçdal, 1983), pp.959-79.

followers who were a burden on the treasury. Actually it is difficult to talk about an Ottoman imperial army in the eighteenth century like the one in the seventeenth century. We have seen that it was the Bosnian local militia who had fought against the Austrian army in the war of 1737-1739. The local forces remained an important part of the military effort until Mahmud II curbed their influence. The *ayan*s helped Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa to suppress the Greek revolt in the Morea in 1770, which earned him promotion to the grand vizierate for a second time.[195] The Porte turned to the *ayans* to solve the supply problem of the army. Especially the *ayan*s of Edirne, Niğbolu and Rusçuk played important roles to supply the army with grain, biscuit and war material during the war of 1768-1774. The *ayan* of Edirne supplied Ochakov and Akkerman, two important Ottoman strongholds in the north, with biscuit and grain. The *ayan* of Rusçuk was instrumental for the repair of the Danubian flotilla.[196] The *ayan*s came to assume roles in military capacity as well. Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa, fearing that the peace negotiations would end without a result during the War of 1768-1774, wrote to the *ayan*s of several *kaza*s, ordering them to lead their men to the front at their own expense. This was probably in recognition of the eighteenth century phenomenon of invasion of the state land by the provincial notables. The state, though unable to dictate its will on the *ayan*s, still acted with the instincts of the sole possessor of land. This mobilization attempt did not only aim at mobilizing the *ayan*s but anybody wealthy enough to send to the front a few troops, although the quality of the troops did not benefit from this

[195] Yuzo Nagata, *Muhsin-zâde Paşa ve Ayanlık Müessesi*, (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1982), p.100.

[196] Ibid., pp.74-6.

practice.[197] According to an anonymous historian, this, too, was not without a historical precedent: the Ottoman state had turned to the wealthy individuals prior to the Szelenkamen campaign in 1691 and of the 8,000 troops that the grand vizier Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa Paşa mustered, 4,000 were paid by the state and the other 4,000 by the grand vizier, officers and high bureaucrats.[198]

General command and leadership

The institutions and leaders overseeing the military effort were among the factors that gave the Russians the edge over the Ottomans. The Russian military effort in the eighteenth century was led by war councils assembled under different names under different monarchs. Peter I's military councils were emulated by Anna Ivanovna's Kabinet and the *Konferentsiia* during the Seven Years War (1756-1762). The *Sovet pri vyoshaischem dvore* during Catherine II's reign was responsible of the preparation and implementation of military plans. The *Sovet* symbolized the institutionalization of the Russian military experience. In addition to preparing a three-year plan including four different scenarios for the first campaign in 1768, this council, both in 1768 and 1787, made use of the archival records with regards to the previous wars against the Turks. Thus, overoptimistic plans of Münnich to conquer Istanbul in three years after the operations in the Crimea started in 1736 gave way to more realistic expectations during the two Turkish wars of Catherine II.[199]

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[197] Ibid. p.78.

[198] Abdülkadir Özcan, *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099-1116/1688-1704)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), p.9.

[199] Fuller Jr., o*p. cit.*, pp.140-1.

The eighteenth century saw a number of commanders, from Eugene of Savoy to Napoleon Bonaparte, who made history on the battlefields. The Russians got their fair share of these commanders, by either developing them from within or exporting them from the European countries. The training in the institutions of military education and the chance to practice on different battlefields against enemies with different styles of warfare must have played an important part in the emergence of people such as Burchard Christoph von Münnich (1683-1767), Petr Aleksandrevich Rumiantsev (1725-1796) and Aleksandr Vasilievich Suvorov (1729-1800).

Münnich was a German military engineer who was the director of the construction of the Ladoga canal under Peter I and he later became the president of the War College in 1732. He was the foremost general in the army during the period 1732-1741. Despite having failed in operations in the Crimean peninsula due to supply problems, he won an astonishing victory with his 48,000 men over 80,000 Turks at Stavuchany in 1739, which he later attributed to using aimed fire,[200] but this came to no avail due to the Austrian failure in the Balkans and the following collapse of Russia's ally in the war. Although his career is no match for that of Rumiantsev's or Suvorov's, he was still good enough to draw praise from Frederick the Great, who described him as the "Prince Eugene of the Russians", which is probably one of the highest compliments an eighteenth century general could pay to another.[201]

[200] Ibid., p.158.

[201] Ibid.,pp.154, 156.

Count Petr Aleksandrevich Rumiantsev was a product of the Seven Years War, much like the officer corps and tactics that would define the Russian style of warfare in the remaining part of the eighteenth century. An officer at the age of 16, he saw service during the Seven Years War, towards the end of which he became a divisional commander who had already fought in historic battles such as Gross Jägersdorf, Kunersdorf and Kolberg.[202] He was the commander of the Russian First Army during the war of 1768-1774. It was Rumiantsev who had incorporated the Cossacks into the Russian army as a force to balance the Tatar cavalry and set up a light infantry corps, and the Russian general command proved superior to that of the Ottomans throughout the war of 1768-1774, although it was not until 1774 that Rumiantsev gained full autonomy on the battlefield, which had compromised his discretion in a way similar to the split of command between the grand vizier and the *kaymakam* caused in the Ottoman case. Speed, night attacks, forced marches and relying on bayonet rather than firepower were to be the main tenets of Russian warfare that Rumiantsev bequeathed to his successors.[203]

Count Aleksandr Vasilievich Suvorov, one of the most interesting figures in the history of warfare, was a man who embodied everything that the court life at St. Petersburg disdained. He lived more like a soldier than a general and was respected as a strict father figure by his soldiers. Having made a name for himself during the war of 1768-1774, he had the leading role in Catherine II's Second Turkish War (1787-1792). He aimed to totally destroy the enemy in pitched battles

[202] Ibid., p.156.

[203] Aksan, The One-eyed Fighting the Blind, p.234.

rather than wasting time to invest strongholds.[204] Suvorov was anxious to engage the enemy any time he could with the force available to him at the moment and this legendary confidence in his troops won him the Battle of Kozluca in 1774, when he had accidentally engaged the main Turkish army with a small force and routed the Turks with the help of rain which spoilt the cartridges in the cloth pockets of the Turkish soldiers.[205] A firm believer of concentrating force on one point, he was undoubtedly inspired by Frederick the Great's oblique order attack, who strengthened one flank to crush the enemy's strongest flank while pinning down the enemy with his weaker flank, and Suvorov anticipated, at least in theory, the *Blitzkrieg* of the German army in the Second World War. Aimed fire and bayonet, which he turned into a cult, were the main instruments in this type of offense. At the end of his career, he had received numerous honors and won victories against Poland, the Ottoman Empire and the Revolutionary France, having never suffered a defeat.

Military leadership on the battlefield had been a role assumed by the Ottoman sultans until the death of Süleyman the Magnificient during the siege of Szeged in 1566, which was probably the epitome of icon of the warrior monarch. However, as the Ottoman government became more sophisticated and leaving the capital became more difficult for the sultan due to political insecurity, the sultan deferred to the grand vizier, who grew to become the sultan's *alter ego* in both

[204] Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory. The Life and Achievements of Generalissimo Suvorov 1729-1800*, (London: Constable, 1965), pp.307-9.

[205] Ibid., p.93.

military and administrative capacity.[206] Among the successors of Süleyman the Magnificent, Mehmed III, Osman II and Murad IV assumed personal command of the army and Mustafa II's defeat at Szenta in 1697 marked the last time an Ottoman sultan took the field. This is not to say the eighteenth century wars could have ended more favorably for the Ottomans had the sultans led the army in person: Russia triumphed in the battlefield during the reign of Catherine II, who probably had never had to leave her palace for military purposes, and Franz Stephan of Lorraine, Charles of Lorraine and Joseph II were members of the Habsburg dynasty who undertook command of the imperial armies, but had little success in their careers as generals.[207] A warrior monarch did not guarantee success, but the Porte, which emerged as the office to govern the Ottoman military affairs, has itself become a source of instability in the eighteenth century, which caused enormous problems for the Ottoman war effort. Forty-eight appointments were made to this office from 1730 to 1798, the average duration of service being as short as seventeen months.[208] As a result, the grand viziers did not have enough time to establish a power base that would enable them to become leaders of both mobilization and the reform attempts. This instability became even more critical at times of war. The war of 1735-1739 had seen five different grand viziers serving while Münnich was the indisputable leader of the Russian army. Six different grand viziers served during the war of 1768-1774 against Rumiantsev's army and the seal

[206] Irina Petrosyan, "The Janissary Corps in the Late 16th and Early 17th Century: the First Attempt at Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation, Vol.3*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), p.751.

[207] Hochedlinger, *op. cit.*, p.112.

[208] Avigdor Levy, Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century, *Middle Eastern Studies*, v.18, 1982, p.244.

of the grand vizier changed hands four times during the war of 1787-1792. To make the situation even worse, the Ottoman military hierarchy included two chanceries, one accountable to the grand vizier and the other to the substitute grand vizier in Istanbul.[209] Such an arrangement compromised the grand vizier's authority and set the stage for court intrigues around a potential suitor for the grand vizier's office. According to Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, jealousy and politicking had spread to the lower ranks in the command structure, which caused some commanders to refuse to fight on the grounds that they had not been rewarded as they deserved.[210]

The eighteenth century also saw the encroachment by the scribal bureaucracy upon the military sphere. The process had started when civilian bureaucrats were appointed in place of military commanders as peace negotiators for the first time in the Ottoman history at the peace conference held in Karlowitz in 1699.[211] It continued with appointment as commanders and governors of scribal bureaucrats who no longer went through a period of apprenticeship in the frontier provinces.[212] The grand vizierate also came to be dominated by scribal bureaucrats, which paralyzed the decision making mechanism at critical moments. This point is illustrated by the imperial war council assembled at Isakçı in May 1769, when the grand vizier Mehmed Emin Paşa deferred to the other participants and no one other than the Chief Accountant Osman Şehdi Efendi dared to make a suggestion about

[209] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, p.130-1.

[210] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *op. cit.*, v.3, p.1259.

[211] Aksan, "Ottoman War and Warfare," p.164.

[212] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, pp.130-1.

the next action the army would take.[213] Similar moments of helplessness must have occurred during the Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792 since Ahmed Cevdet Paşa complains about people who were appointed as viziers and given military command although they had never fought in a war before.[214] There were times when the grand vizier's seal was in the hands of an able commander who could successfully lead a campaign, but it could be that the financial situation of the state would not allow him to lead the army since the pomp of a campaign led by the grand vizier would be a serious burden on the treasury, just as it happened to the grand vizier Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa, who did not take the field against Nadir Shah due to financial concerns.[215] Of the grand viziers who served during the war of 1768-1774, the only able commanders were Silahdar Mehmed Paşa and Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa. The latter, who had served in the army during the Bender campaign in 1737-1739, was an expert on the defenses of Rumelia defenses and also one of the last grand viziers who rose through the ranks of provincial governorship.[216]

The Ottoman military leadership in the eighteenth century lacked a commander of the same caliber with the Russian generals mentioned above. Although the Ottoman army had had some success against the Russians, Venetians and Austrians in the first four decades of the century, the Ottoman war effort became decentralized as the century wore on and the concept of an imperial army, which led a campaign with support of provincial troops, lost its meaning since it

[213] Ibid., pp.131-2.

[214] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *op. cit.*, v.3, p.1259.

[215] Robert W. Olson, *The Siege of Mosul and Ottoman-Persian Relations 1718-1743*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1975), p.154.

[216] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, p.103.

was the provincial governors and *ayan*s who assumed responsibility for the defense of the Ottoman domains in the second half of the century. Thus, the process the Ottomans went through during the century bears a striking contrast to the Russian experience: while the Russian military effort became more centralized, institutionalized and the society more militarized, the Ottoman military initiative was delegated to the provincial administrations, the institutional character of the Ottoman army eroded and the military body as a whole gained a civilian character.

The Ottoman struggle against Nadir Shah of Persia is a clear example of this process. The Ottoman military organization was not in a position to put up concerted resistance against the Shah. Contrarily, while the eastern provinces were getting ready for Nadir Shah's attack in 1741, Ahmed Paşa, the governor of Baghdad, sent one of his commanders, Kürt Osman Paşa, to besiege Mosul, another Ottoman town, during a struggle between the governors of Baghdad and Mosul for the control of Basra. Hüseyin Jalili, the governor of Mosul, had already repulsed a Persian assault in 1733 and he had only 30,000-35,000 men, all of them inhabitants of Mosul, under his command when he faced Nadir Shah's army of 200,000 men.[217] However, he was successful in moulding ordinary people into a militia force, which exhibited cohesion unprecedented in the Ottoman imperial army of the eighteenth century. Mosul was saved, but the imperial army did not take the field in 1743.[218]

An account by a certain Ömer Efendi, the *kadı* of Bosnia, of the Austro Turkish War provides another example of how local forces managed to defend their land against the Austrian attacks despite having received little help from the capital.

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[217] Olson, *op. cit.*, pp.169-70.

[218] Ibid., p. 195.

This account reveals that a continuous form of *petit guerre* went on between the Bosnian and the Austrian forces. This struggle, involving plundering raids by groups of a few hundred mounted men into the Austrian territory, resembles the *gazi* type of warfare that was conducted during the foundation of the Ottoman principality.[219] Military operations were led by the leaders of the civilian community, whose relationship with the community was more like one between a father and his children, rather than one between a commander and his troops.[220] This similarity to Hüseyin Jalili's role as the leader of the defense of Mosul makes one think that in the absence of central government authority, the local elder had to depend on their personal relations with the community and gifts and honors gained significance to boost the morale of the militia forces.[221]

Tactics and operations

Frederick the Great's wars against Maria Theresa's Austria had demonstrated that speed, mobility and discipline in the army could make up for the scarcity of economic resources and manpower and put a small country in the league of European superpowers. The Seven Years War gave the Russians an opportunity to acquaint themselves with this trend in the European warfare, which dominated the European battlefields from the time of Frederick the Great to Napoleon.[222] The Russians did not wait for a clash with Frederick the Great to introduce the Prussian style infantry tactics, which they did in 1755, before the Seven Years War

[219] Ömer Efendi, *Ahvâl-i Gazavat Der Diyar-ı Bosna. Bosna Savaşları*, ed. Mehmet Açıkgözoğlu, (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1977), pp.77-9, 86.

[220] Ibid., pp.44-6, 73.

[221] Olson, *op. cit.*, p.172; Ömer Efendi, *op. cit*., pp.84-5.

[222] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, pp.126-7.

erupted.[223] Years of fighting against Frederick the Great transformed the Russian army and raised it to a level on par with the Prussian army, at least with regards to tactics. The Russians were not innovators but they had great success in adopting the Prussian principles of warfare and adapting them to the demands of the Eastern European theatre. Prussian influence which the Russians distilled created a Spartan style army, highly maneuverable on the battlefield and lacking items of pomp.[224] But the eventual Russian style of warfare that significantly differed from the European practices was a result of the Russian struggle against the military problems in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, that is, the Turkish wars.[225] The mobile field artillery and light cavalry became indispensable in the Russian struggle against the Turks.

The Russian military practices went through a change from the archaic practices of a feudal army to the pragmatic formations of an armed tool of imperial expansion. Golitsyn had formed his army marching towards Crimea in 1687 into six squares moving as a single gigantic square without paying attention to the mobility and supply problems this mass would encounter. Münnich arranged his army in 1736 into five squares independent of each other to increase the speed of the march towards Perekop.[226] The hollow square became the formation the Russians used for the next half century after his victory Stavuchany in 1739. This formation actually had evolved from the Western European linear formations and was made suitable

[223] Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, p.131.

[224] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, p.127.

[225] Bruce W. Menning, Russian Military Innovation in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century, *War & Society*, v.2, (1984), p.30.

[226] Fuller Jr., o*p. cit.*, pp.161-2.

for use against the mobile Ottoman and Tatar cavalry. The infantry lines would fold into a box-like formation to cover the flanks with the grenadiers and artillery deployed on the corners, which otherwise would be vulnerable to enveloping by the *sipahi*s and the Tatars.[227] The square formation also increased the mobility of the army since it enabled smaller groups of soldiers to defend themselves in case of an ambush. Thus, marching in parallel or converging columns was possible, just as Rumiantsev, who relied on divisional squares and columns, did with six columns in the campaign of 1770.[228] Suvorov used even smaller squares of one or two battalions deployed in checkerboard formation.[229] In this formation the first two lines were infantry, third and fourth, cavalry. Cossacks, hussars and light infantry were deployed on the flanks and rear. In an offense, a few squares would march forward to pin down the enemy while the others attacked from the rear and the flanks.[230] This formation had a better chance to stand against the Turkish infantry charges since the squares would move forward and backward to support each other.

Columnar formations had become the order of the day by the end of the eighteenth century. This put more pressure on the officer corps since commanding compact, independent bodies of soldiers under the chaotic conditions of the battlefield required greater harmony between the rank-and-file and the officers and improvisation on the part of the latter. The precision in collective moves was to be pushed to the highest point attainable and increasing the time average soldier spent

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[227] Menning, *op. cit.*, pp.31-2.

[228] Ibid., p.33.

[229] Fuller Jr., o*p. cit.*, p.162.

[230] Menning, *op. cit.*, p.32.

in drills was the only way to achieve this.[231] Rumiantsev and Suvorov emphasized training under realistic battle conditions. Suvorov even exposed his infantry to flanking attacks from cavalry who used real ammunition and had his man construct walls in the Russian camp to practice scaling the walls of İsmail during the siege of this stronghold.[232]

At least two scholars state that the Ottoman battlefield formation remained as the reflection of the power relations rather than a rational setting to achieve a strategic goal.[233] The banners, the proximity to the sultan of certain troops and their commanders on the battlefield, and deployment of siege artillery was part of a discourse through which the Ottoman body politic expressed itself. In the meantime, the Western European military strategists had experimented with the deep *tercios* formation, linear, square and columnar formations. However, an account by an anonymous historian written after the successful relief operation carried out by the Ottomans to break the Habsburg siege of Timišvar in 1695-1696 reveals some points that the Ottoman military art emphasized. Among the points listed by the writer, who claims to have asked the opinions of veterans in the Ottoman camp and the Christian captives, constant consultation among the commanders, the authority over the soldiers of the Ottoman officers, reconnoitering

[231] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, p.164.

[232] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, p.165, quoted in Bogdanovich, *Russkaya armiya*, p.35; Longworth, *The Art of Victory*, p.165.

[233] Virginia Aksan, Breaking the Spell of the Baron de Tott: Reframing the Question of Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1760-1830, *The International History Review*, XXIV.2: June 2002, pp.272-3; S. T. Christensen, "The Heathen Order of Battle," in Violence and the Absolutist State, ed. S.T. Christensen, (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University Press, 1990), pp.95-6.

and surrounding the camp with wagons were vital to the Ottoman success.[234] Although not listed by the writer, personal valor was the single most important element in the Ottoman military ethos. Deeds of heroes such as Mehmed Kapudan, who, after losing three horses, went on to fight on foot and was rewarded accordingly during a brief respite to the battle during the defense of Banaluka in the Austro-Turkish War of 1736-1739, or a certain Hasan Beşe, a Janissary *serdengeçti* from the 31st regiment, who moved with ten comrades to kill five Shiites and capture two of them during the siege of Revan in 1724, were widely-known and lavishly praised by the commanders and the rank-and-file alike.[235] This contributed to a military ethos that demanded sacrifices from each individual, even if such moves could endanger the cohesion and tactics.

In the Ottoman context, mobilizing the troops and keeping them on the battlefield required constant rewards and bribes. The main auxiliary force in the Ottoman army, the Crimean Tatars, was especially difficult to work with. It cost the Ottoman sultan a small fortune to convince the Tatar Khan to join the imperial campaign: the cost of Tatar services to Ottoman sultan was around 3.5 million *akçe*s between July 1602 and February 1603, plus a gift of 2.8 million *akçe*s to Gazi Giray Khan, which probably included jewels and robes of honor.[236] After the War Council that assembled at Belgrade on September 17, 1694 decided that the army should cross the Sava and attack the enemy, the Tatar Khan was presented with an extravagant assortment of gifts sent to him by the sultan: a robe of honor, a plume

[234] Özcan, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[235] Ömer Efendi, *op. cit.*, p.51; M. Münir Aktepe, *1720-1724 Osmanlı İran İlişkileri ve Silahşor Kemani Mustafa Ağa'nın Revan Fetihnamesi*, (İstanbul: 1970), pp.50-1.

[236] Finkel, *op. cit.*, p.105.

ornamented with precious stones, a golden quiver, a charger equipped with a harness inlaid with gold, a silver yoke and a saddle ornamented with gold. Added to these were gifts from the grand vizier to the Khan and other gifts to the sons of the Khan.[237] These examples may give one an idea about how difficult it was for an already depleted Ottoman treasury to entice the Tatars for joint military operations in the eighteenth century. However, even this kind of expense could not guarantee that the Tatars would stick to the imperial strategy with regards to the military operations. The Tatars tended to break formation and lose discipline whenever prospect of gaining booty was high. On September 28, 1694, the 5,000 Tatars raided the tents in the Habsburg camp, captured 2,000 enemy troops, and a total of 6,000 sheep and cattle. The Tatars split into two groups so that one group had the chance to flee with the exploits while the rest stayed behind to fight with the Habsburg soldiers who followed behind.[238] That the Tatars, almost with improvisation, undertook such a risky operation just for the sake of plunder is an indicator that they were moved by quite different motives compared to a regular army.

One should take with a grain of salt all the literature on military tactics and operations. Although battles were presented by the commanders as sequences of events that unfolded according to a rational plan, it was the individual soldier, most of the time poorly trained, who decided the fate of the battles at the point of a gun, either belonging to a superior or an enemy.[239] It is hard to believe that tactics were

[237] Özcan, *op. cit.,* p.68.

[238] Ibid., p.79.

[239] John L. Keep, "Russia in the Seven Years War," in *The Military and Society in Russia 1450-1917*, eds. Eric Lohr, Marshall Poe, (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), p.206.

the difference makers in the Western European battlefields where all armies used variations of linear formations and could learn from eachother.[240] The trade in arms and commanders serving for different monarchs throughout their careers facilitated the diffusion of military knowledge. As a result, different styles converged on a common understanding of how war was to be fought. As one scholar puts it, "… all contemporary armies became so much alike in their tactics that victory or defeat was no longer primarily the result of the commanders' ability or the quality of the armies but often a matter of pure chance."[241] However, the clash between the Russian and the Ottoman armies was a different story. The Ottomans definitely were familiar with the Western European tactics but they never took the necessary steps to establish a notion of tactical effectiveness over personal valor that had been a part of the Ottoman military ethos for centuries. They did not adopt pike and bayonet on the grounds that these arms were associated with tactical changes that would bring about change in the organization of the army, although this put them at serious disadvantage against the enemy.[242] In Europe, socket bayonet had turned the infantry into a defensive and offensive force since it could be used as a pike while allowing the soldier to fire at the enemy. Bayonet was not just an arm the Russians used but it came to define the Russian style of warfare once its psychological impact on the enemy was discovered. The Russian victories at Kagul, Larga, Fokshani, Kinburn, Ochakov, Rymnik and Adda owed much to the infantry charges

[240] Ibid., p.208.

[241] Rauchensteiner, *op. cit.*, p.77.

[242] Levy, *op. cit.*, p.230.

and use of cold steel.[243] Bayonet charges nullified the effectiveness of the Ottoman cavalry and cleared the danger of encirclement. At Larga, Ottomans suffered 3.000 casualties against 100 Russians and at Kagul, 20.000 to 1.470 during the war of 1768-1774 and the Russians were able to draw the Ottomans from the field on several occasions with determined bayonet charges.[244] The Russian military ethos also allowed the commanders to capitalize on speed by way of forced marches, marches during the night and through wooded areas which the Western European commanders avoided due to concerns that such operations would encourage desertion among soldiers.[245] This was unthinkable in the Ottoman army which had severe discipline problems. The forced marches led by Suvorov during the war of 1787-1792, one towards Fokshani at a pace of forty miles in twenty eight hours and the other towards Martineshti at a pace of sixty miles in thirty-six hours, illustrate how decisive a factor speed can become throughout the course of a long war.[246] These two feats bailed out the Austrians in difficult circumstances, thus preventing a collapse of the alliance, and resulted in the defeat of the Ottoman army.

None of the aspects of the Russian warfare cited above, i.e. forced marches, night attacks, using bayonet and adapting the formations to the needs of the circumstances, involved a ground breaking scientific innovation or some sort of industrial capacity that the Ottomans were lacking. However, simply transplanting European military organization and tactics into the Ottoman context was a project

[243] Fuller Jr., *op. cit.*, pp.164-5.

[244] Black, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, p.69.

[245] Fuller Jr., o*p. cit.*, p.163.

[246] Longworth, *op. cit*., pp.152-7.

destined to fail. This, of course, does not mean that it was not tried over and over again. What this process involved and why it failed the way it did are the subject of the next section.

3.3 THE OTTOMAN MILITARY REFORMS

European impact on the periphery of the continent was felt in the first place through military affairs. Military reforms were the first step in a long process that brought the Russian and Ottoman empires within the European political system. Peter the Great had taken the radical way and built a navy in the European fashion, recruited foreign troops and experts for the army and renovated the whole political system in a new fashion to support the modern army he had built. The Turkish example turned out to be much longer and more painful than what the Russians had gone through.

The catastrophic results of the War of the Holy League and the treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz brought about a drastic change in the way the Ottomans perceived themselves and the Europeans. The legal ramifications of the process, such as a new perspective that regarded the European monarchs as the equals of the Ottoman sultan and the loss of territory necessitated a change in the way the Ottoman dynasty preserved its legitimacy. The Ottomans gave up their unilateral approach in diplomacy and came to realize the gains that could be achieved by establishing diplomatic relations with the European powers. The first few diplomatic missions to European countries gave indications of Ottoman interest in European methods of warfare. Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, the first Ottoman ambassador to a foreign country, France, in 1720-1721, was ordered by the Porte to focus on French military organization and technology and to secure books written on this issue. The ambassador came back with a detailed account of the military maneuvers he attended and military hospital he visited. He was impressed by the discipline shown during the maneuvers, the cleanliness and the order in the military

hospital. He also had a chance to see some 125 models of the Vaubanesque fortification style.[247] Ahmed Resmi's visit to Frederick the Great's court four decades later was not only an attempt to search possibilities of a Turco-Prussian military alliance but also a chance for the open-minded bureaucrat to have a better idea about the best army of the time, in addition to conversing with the most celebrated commander of the continent. Ahmed Resmi was definitely impressed by the drills conducted in the Prussian army for the Ottoman army of the time did not have any such practice. Soldiers spending hours loading their rifles and firing volleys, marching as a unit and practicing how to charge and retreat in that fashion must have been something new to him.[248] Ahmed Resmi's attention to details of the punishment given to the soldiers who were absent at the roll call becomes more meaningful when evaluated in the context of the chronic problem of fictitious soldiers in the Ottoman army.[249]

The ever-expanding borders had shrunk, the ever-victorious army was defeated and questions were raised as to the best way to tackle the infidel in the coming wars although it was not until the peaceful interval between 1740 and 1768 that this Westernization was formulized into a political view in Istanbul.[250] The discourse of the Ottoman decline evident in the products of mirrors for princes

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[247] Mehmed Efendi, *Le Paradis des Infidèles: Relation de Yirmisekiz Celebi Mehmed Efendi, ambassadeur ottoman en France sous la Régence* (ed. G. Veinstein), Paris 1981. pp.108-9, 114-5; Mehmed Efendi, *Yirmisekiz Mehmed Celebi'nin Fransa Seyahatnamesi* (abridged by S. Rado), Istanbul, 1970, pp.37, 41-2, quoted in Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West. France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.57-8.

[248] Aksan, *Ahmed Resmi*, p.93.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Aksan, Ottoman Political Writing, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol.25, no.1 (Feb., 1993), p.56.

literature, which argued that restoration of traditional institutions would bring back the days of glory, was already more than a century old by that time and the Tulip Era witnessed emergence of a new intellectual party who sought in Europe the cure for the problems of the Empire.[251] The observations of the Ottoman ambassadors to European countries must have provided the reformist wing of the Ottoman bureaucracy with new ideas as to how to revive the Ottoman military power. However, until after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, which saw the total collapse of the Ottoman army, the reformist party went no further than suggesting the use of European arms and techniques and shared with the conservatives the belief that there was nothing wrong with the traditional institutions of the Empire, which only needed to be restored according to the laws and regulations of the Ottoman golden age.[252]

The "technological dialogue"[253] and the Ottoman military production

The mid-eighteenth century saw the Ottoman orientation towards Europe gain a political character, but this does not mean that the Ottomans were isolated from Europe until that time. The Ottomans never shied away from using European military technology and recruiting foreign experts. German, Italian, English, French and Dutch experts assumed responsibilities particularly in the corps associated with gunpowder prior to the eighteenth century.[254] However, the role of foreign gun

[251] Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), p.25.

[252] Berkes, *op. cit*., pp.30-1, 58.

[253] The expression is borrowed from Arnold Pacey, *Technology in World Civilization: A Thousand Year History*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp.73-88.

[254] V. J. Parry, "Barud," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, v.1, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), p.1062.

founders and technicians in the Ottoman Empire was not necessarily more important than the one such people played in other early modern kingdoms of Europe. Spanish reliance on German, Italian and Flemish craftsmen, French interest in the services of technicians from Italy and Liège and the fact that Russian artillery was reformed under the administration of a few Dutchmen prove the commonality of the phenomena.[255] Much like in foreign personnel, the Ottomans relied on the imports of war materials, which peaked during the terms of the Köprülü grand viziers and Selim III's reforms. However, being a net importer of war equipment may be a sign of mere lack of self-sufficiency in production capacity rather than a technological inferiority.[256] Portugal, Spain and France all relied on foreign supplies of firearms at the peak of their military power and it would be unfair to expect a state to be self-sufficient in every aspect of military production before the leap in mass production capabilities before the industrial revolution.[257]

Recent revisionist histories of the European expansion point to the cultural and technological interaction between Western Europe and other parts of the world which fell prey to the European imperialism. This approach brings about a demand for a reconsideration of the military history and the purely European claims to improvements in military technology. When deconstructed to its components, it becomes visible that a crude calculation of trade surplus or deficit in war materials dominates the military historiography and results in blanket conclusions that regard technology exchange as a one-way process, emanating from Western Europe to

[255] Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.46-8.

[256] A. Z. Hertz, Armament and Supply of Ottoman Ada Kale, 1753, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, Anno 1972, pp.100-1.

[257] Ibid.

other parts of the world. Nevertheless, there are proofs refuting the claims that the non-European world did nothing but imported and imitated the Western European techniques and technology. The emergence of the Turks as suppliers of firearms in the early phases of these weapons and the fact that they had the largest share in world firearms exports through their contacts with Central Asia, India and parts of Africa state that the non-European arms industry had an internal dynamism, of which the Turks were a big part.[258] Having started to use matchlock almost simultaneously with the Europeans, the Turks also contributed to arms production by developing a trigger mechanism.[259] The European interest in Turkish musket barrels, which were stronger than their European counterparts, and the Turkish appreciation of the mechanical parts of European muskets illustrate the reciprocal character of the flow of know-how between Europe and the non-European world.[260]

The Ottoman artillery was the focus of the reform attempts and it features as the most important aspect of the Ottoman military reforms. The orthodox historiography puts special emphasis on the condition of the Ottoman artillery to show that it signified how outmoded the Ottomans were in manufacturing artillery and grasping the military needs of the age. The alleged Ottoman obsession with giant *balyemez* cannons, some of them measuring 8.2 meters in length and weighing 17 tons, is claimed to have put the Ottomans at a serious disadvantage in pitched battles against their Habsburg and Russian enemies who had lighter and more mobile artillery. This assumption follows from the idea that the Ottomans lacked

[258] Arnold Pacey, *op. cit.*, p.74.

[259] Ibid., pp.74-5.

[260] Ibid., p.80.

mass production capabilities and relied on fewer but larger cannons to make up for this shortcoming.[261] The statistical evidence clearly refutes this viewpoint. The manufacturing of such giant cannons had become a rarity after the mid-sixteenth century, as indicated by the fact that only two out of the 104 cannons cast in Istanbul in 1685-86 were *balyemez* cannons.[262] The most commonly-used Ottoman guns, the *kale-kobs* (castle-smashers) firing shots of 15-20 kg, and *kolunburnas* were lighter than their English equivalents and the Ottomans had *darbzen* cannons, two of which could be carried by a horse and might indicate a practice towards mobile field artillery.[263] That the majority of pieces manufactured in the 1680s and 1690s and three quarters of those manufactured during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 were small pieces indicate that the Ottomans were responsive to the change from siege warfare to pitched battles.[264] Paul Grant's view that it was the Russian speed and shock power in the second half of the eighteenth century that forced the Turks to adopt lighter artillery does not hold against the production figures of the Imperial Arsenal during the War of the Holy League (1683-99). This period saw a series of pitched battles and the Ottomans responded to this by completely abandoning the manufacturing of mortars in years like 1695-6, much earlier than the Russo-Turkish wars of the eighteenth century.[265] Contrary to the belief that most of the Ottoman guns were giant pieces, the Ottomans had a variety

[261] Ágoston, *op.cit.*, p.164.

[262] Ibid., pp.77-8.

[263] Ibid., pp.73-4, 82-3.

[264] Ibid., pp.185-6, Table 6.6.

[265] Jonathan Grant, Rethinking the Ottoman "Decline": Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries, *Journal of World History*, 1999, Vol. 10, No.1, p.194; Ágoston, *op. cit.*, p.70.

of guns: parabolic-trajectory mortars, flat-trajectory siege cannons and howitzers and small-and medium caliber guns of the culverin class.[266] The Ottoman guns were neither larger nor very different than the European guns. One difference was the lack of standardization on the part of the Ottomans and the Ottoman insistence on using bronze rather than iron to cast medium and large size guns.[267]

The Ottomans were self-sufficient with respect to the gunpowder production during the War of the Holy League.[268] However, they had become dependent on Swedish, English and Spanish gunpowder in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, since production in state gunpowder works was devastated by private production and clandestine import of gunpowder.[269] The gunpowder production in the second half of the eighteenth century was one-fifth of what it had been in the 1680s.[270] It was only after the establishment of a hydraulic gunpowder work in Küçükçekmece in 1794 that the Ottoman Empire regained most of its productive capacity with regards to gunpowder.[271]

Military reforms in the eighteenth century

Recruiting foreign experts was the most common way for the transmission of European military practices to the Ottoman context throughout the eighteenth century. Foreign officers appeared in the Ottoman domains with a claim to lead the Ottoman army to modernity as early as the beginning of the Tulip Era. A French

[266] Ágoston, *op. cit.*, p.195.

[267] Ibid., pp.197-8.

[268] Ibid., pp.164-5.

[269] Ibid., pp.159-60.

[270] Ibid., p.160.

[271] Ibid., pp.162-3.

Huguenot officer, de Rochefort, was the first foreigner to offer his services alongside a group of military technicians but his plan did not materialize due to the influence of the French ambassador in Istanbul, Marquis de Bonnac, and a fear of Janissary opposition. The Hungarians who had escaped from the Catholic persecution in the Habsburg lands were another source of military assistance.[272]

In 1729, a French aristocrat, Alexander Comte de Bonneval, arrived in Bosnia and offered his services to the Porte. Bonneval was probably the highest profile soldier among those who defected to the Ottomans throughout the Ottoman history. A talented soldier and a versatile man who was forced out of the retinue of Louis XIV and ended up in Austria, he was the second-in-command after Eugene of Savoy at Peterwardein in 1716 against the Ottomans. His military skills were well known across the continent and were praised by the Swedish king, who told the Ottoman ambassador to Stockholm, Mehmed Said Efendi, that "Bonneval had been his companion in battles; Bonneval's skills in battles could only be matched by at most two or three men in the entire West (Frengistan)."[273] Bonneval was recruited after he converted to Islam despite opposition from the Austrian ambassador Talman, who had received strict orders from Eugene of Savoy to use every possible means to discredit Bonneval in the eyes of the Ottomans. Bonneval was supported by the grand vizier Topal Osman Paşa, and appointed as the chief bombardier (*humbaracıbaşı*). He presented the sultan a report describing "the recruitment, organization and tactics of the French and German military forces and advised the

[272] Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp.31-2.

[273] Iskender A. Hoci, 'Sadr-ı azam Said Mehmed Pasa merhumun hacegan-i divan-i humayunda iken Istokholme vuku' bulan sefareti,' *Tarih-i Osmanni Encumeni Mecmuasi*, I (1911), pp.658-677, quoted in F. M. Göçek, *op. cit.*, p.93.

organization and use of smaller units and new training and discipline", advocated the establishment of a special medical corps and regular payments of the salaries of the soldiers and received help from subordinates such as the Irishman Macarthy, the Frenchman Mornai and the Scotsman Ramsay.[274] Bonneval had inherited a bombardier corps which had three types of troops: armourers (*cebeciler*), gunners (*topçu*) and *timarlı*, the prebendal troops that formed the majority of the bombardiers. With the support of Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa, who replaced Topal Osman Paşa as the grand vizier, another corps of bombardiers who would be paid a salary of eighteen *akçe*s was established.[275]

Bonneval's term in the service of the Porte lasted until his death in 1742 and saw the establishment of the first engineering school in the history of the Empire and the translation into Turkish of some books in addition some other works on trigonometry and geometry produced by the Turks. However, his reforms did not have a lasting influence in the Ottoman army. Had military leadership only been a matter of knowledge and skill in military issues, Bonneval could have single-handedly transformed the Ottoman army with his expertise in strategy, battlefield tactics, artillery, cartography and international relations. Having once been described by Eugene of Savoy, the President of the Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*), as "the foremost commanding general not only among the Germans but among all the imperial vassals",[276] Bonneval undoubtedly was the most

[274] Berkes, *op. cit.*, p.47.

[275] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.2, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1944), pp.117-8.

[276] Karl A. Roider, Jr, *Austria's Eastern Question, 1700-1790*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), p.61.

important figure among the foreign soldiers and engineers whom the Ottoman depended on for the military reforms in the eighteenth century. He proposed to extend the military reforms from the technical troops such as the artillerymen to the more traditional ones, the infantry and cavalry. He wanted to reorganize the Janissaries into smaller tactical units and increase the number of junior officers, steps which would allow for better maneuverability on the battlefield.[277] He was not as successful in implementing the reforms as he was in diagnosing what needed to be done, due to politics in Istanbul and his personal traits. A man known to be difficult to work with and notorious for his stubbornness, Bonneval had had serious problems in his military career in Europe where he was familiar with the culture and the language. A totally different culture and language barrier could not have helped his situation among his peers Istanbul. The bombardiers were neglected after his death. Halil Hamid Paşa tried to revive the corps four decades later by increasing from 20 to 50 the number of troops coming from Rumelia to Istanbul for training. Selim III brought the corps totally under the control of central administration by abolishing the prebendal type of the bombardiers.[278]

Baron de Tott's recruitment by the Ottomans marks the first time a Christian was recruited to reform the Ottoman army in the European sense and thus, is a landmark in the history of the Ottoman military reform.[279] Baron de Tott was sent to Istanbul by the French government as an inspector to provide intelligence about the state of the Ottoman army in the face of a Russian advance that could

[277] Levy, *op. cit.*, pp.232-3.

[278] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.2, pp.119.

[279] Berkes, *op. cit.*, p.58.

threaten the French interests in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. He built a gun factory and modernized the fortifications of the Dardanelles and the Danube.[280] However, he is widely known for his role in establishing a rapid-fire artillery corps. The reorganization of the artillery corps had started during the reign of Mustafa III under a Frenchman, Obert, with 250 troops.[281] The corps was abolished after Obert's return to France but the new grand vizier, Halil Hamid Paşa (1782-1785), revived it, increased the number of the troops to 2,000 and appointed the men among the first group of students as instructors and officers to train new troops.[282] These troops would not get married and they would devote themselves to their profession, practicing three times a week. The state held the rapid-fire artillery corps in high regard and took steps to ensure that it would remain so. The salaries of the troops increased from twelve to fifteen *akçe*s and a soldier would be entitled to a salary of 20 *akçe*s after three years of service. The retired personnel were allotted thirty *akçe*s per month and 40 *akçe*s if they were forced to retirement due to injuries resulting from fighting on the battlefield. Ten men would be assigned to a gun during the war.[283]

Halil Hamid Paşa is one of the native reformers overshadowed by the presence of Bonneval and Tott. He was one of the few men in the ruling elite with the sound judgment as to the current state of affairs with the Russians. He opposed to waging war against the Russians after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 1783

[280] Shaw, *Between Old and New*, pp.10-11.

[281] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi IV. Cilt I. Kısım*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1956), p.481.

[282] Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, v.2, pp.67-8.

[283] Ibid., p.68.

on the grounds that such a move would not only bring more financial and territorial loss for the Ottomans but also ruin his reform attempts. He had taken steps to strengthen the fortifications of Ochakov and Soğucuk and hoped that his efforts to rehabilitate the Janissaries by eliminating the fictitious soldiers and prohibiting the trading of the Janissary pay certificates would pay off shortly and enable the Porte to avenge the loss of Crimea.[284] Halil Hamid Paşa is the man to be credited with having founded the Imperial Naval Academy (*Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümâyûn*), which was actually founded in 1776, since this school was not an institution of higher education with respect to enrolment and the status of its graduates until the grand vizier's reforms.[285] French engineers Lafitte-Clavé and Monnier, who also inspected the Ottoman fortresses in the Black Sea littoral, joined the teaching staff, though their specialty was sieges and fortifications, not sea. The students lacked the fundamental education that would enable them to absorb what was supposed to be taught at such an institution of higher education and the teaching staff was not capable of offering a complete range of courses such an education would require. That the students were named as attendants (*müdavim*) and enthusiasts (*heveskar*) tells us much about how much the school was away from producing the officer corps to command the imperial navy.[286]

Baron de Tott's fame as the reformer of the Ottoman army was much out of proportion compared to what he actually achieved and this point becomes clearer

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[284] Alan, W. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of Crimea*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.107 ; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Sadrazam Halil Hamid Paşa, *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, v.5 (1935), pp. 231-2.

[285] Kemal Beydilli, *Türk Bilim ve Matbaacılık Tarihde Mühendishâne, Mühendishâne Matbaası ve Kütüphânesi (1776-1826)*, (İstanbul: Eren, 1995), p.24.

[286] Ibid., p.25-6.

as one considers people like Halil Hamid Paşa, who faced more serious risks while struggling to carry out reforms than did Tott. Tott's role in the Ottoman military education was definitely exaggerated. The curious story of the foundation of the Imperial Naval Academy (*Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümâyûn*), which gained its institutional character during Halil Hamid Paşa's grand vizierate as we have seen, is a case in point: The school was claimed to have been founded by Tott in 1773, although Kemal Beydilli proved that it was actually founded in 1776, much later than Tott's departure from Istanbul in March 1775.[287] Despite having been regarded by historians as an expert on artillery, Tott was not an artillerist. In fact he admitted in his writings that he had never been to a gun foundry before coming to Istanbul and that he owed his knowledge of artillery to "The Memoirs of Saint Remi and the Encyclopédie".[288] However, this fact did not qualify in the eyes of the later historians his criticisms as to the condition of the Ottoman artillery.

Then, what made Tott so famous? He undoubtedly benefited from the European curiosity towards the Orient. He served well the Western European public demand for Oriental experiences. His memoirs carved a clear figure of *the* other, a stupid, ignorant, coward Turk, out of the vague European myths of the earlier periods. He was the French aristocrat who happened to find himself in the Ottoman lands and tried to enlighten this imbecile people on issues with regards to the military whereas his responsibilities as an agent could be ignored. His anecdotes about how he lectured the ignorant Turk on gun founding confirmed the prejudices

[287] Ibid., p.23.

[288] Tott, *Mémoires de Baron de Tott sur les Turcs et les tartars*, v.2, p.3, pp.116-9, quoted in V. H. Aksan, "Enlightening the Ottomans: Tott & Mustafa III," in *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World*, Istanbul, 12-15 April 1999, ed.Ali Çaksu, preface by Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, İstanbul, 2001, pp.166-7.

against the Orient and dressed in flesh and bone the imaginary Orientals. He did not possess the means to understand the reigning psychological conditions in the Ottoman lands which resulted from contracting borders.[289] Nor was he able to understand that religion by itself was not the cause of the Ottoman resistance to change and that it rather provided the discourse for a particular group whose opposition to military reforms was more related to politics of state formation than to actual hostility to European technology and technique.[290] Despite all his shortcomings as a military expert and foreign observer, Baron de Tott's observations laid the foundations of a discourse that would dominate the way the Turkish modernization was dealt with in the later periods.

Deconstructing the historiography of the Ottoman military reforms

The historiography of the Ottoman military reforms dealt with the issue in rather simplistic manner. It built on the assumption that the Ottoman state was a war mechanism and that society and army were identical in the Ottoman context, refusing to see the much more complicated power relations that blocked Ottoman military reform. Having fixed the Western European trajectory of technological development as the norm, the orthodox wing of the Western military historiography attributed to Islamic fanaticism or Oriental lethargy anything short of this kind of technological improvement. Such blanket conclusions are rendered useless when the emergence of this discourse is scrutinized from a historical perspective.

The discourse that presented the Ottoman rule as a stagnant absolutist rule unable to rejuvenate itself due to factors inherent in Islam and being Oriental

[289] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.257.

[290] Aksan, "Enlightening the Ottomans," pp.166-7.

emerged in the eighteenth century France, where Ottoman Empire was evaluated in the context of the Eastern Question and the discourse of Oriental despotism became a tool by which the French intellectuals criticized the French absolutism.[291] The Ottoman Empire was the living example of the despotism that the Western Europeans knew about but did not have easy access to in the ancient history or the distant civilizations of the Eastern Asia. For the French intellectuals, it stood for what the European absolutism would end up with if the trend initiated by Louis XIV were not stopped. Aware of the political agenda of the constitutionalists, the crown countered with an effort to prove that the Ottoman sultan was not a despot. The power vacuum resulting from the decline of Poland, Sweden and the Ottoman Empire dictated the French government the need to make a choice between either helping the Ottomans to recuperate from their losses against the Austrians and the Russians or dismembering the Ottoman Empire in a way favorable to French interests.[292] The French opted for the first option and the dispatch to Istanbul of military engineers was the practical result of this choice. Nevertheless, the French finances were too weak to help revive the Ottoman army and the failure in North America forced the French government to look elsewhere for compensation, which meant supporting the plans for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The emerging group of hardliners included such people as Choiseul-Gouffier and Saint-Priest, both of whom served as ambassadors to Istanbul, and Baron de Tott.[293] Tott

[291] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.254.

[292] Thomas Kaiser, The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture, *The Journal of Modern History*, vol.72, no.1, New York on the Old Regime and the French Revolution: A Special Issue in Honor of Francois Furet (Mar., 2000), p.25.

[293] Ibid., pp.7-8, 21-6.

is the critical link in this context since he was both a member of a select group who made the history of the early periods of Ottoman modernization and a source on whose memoirs was built an entire historiography.

The propaganda of Ottoman despotism lasted longer than the conditions of the international context from which it was born and came to dominate the way modern historiography accounted for Turkish modernization. When the theory that the Ottoman regime was one of violence and slavery which was bound to destruct itself was refuted by the mere longevity and power of the Ottoman Empire,[294] the Frenchman Baron de Tott stepped in as the pivotal figure to explain the curious decline of the Ottoman army.

The modern day historian should replace this traditional historiography with one that takes into account the power relations and the values of the Ottoman system as the question remains: why did the reformists fail? The Ottoman military history does not give us an indication of Ottoman resistance stemming from moral concerns to borrowing military technology. The Ottomans had been as receptive to foreign military technology and experts as any other early modern state. The Ottoman adoption of European technology and methods was a big part of their rise as the premier power in the Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although this was a result of a pragmatic approach to stay ahead of the international rivalry in this particular part of the world, not a product of a consciously-pursued Westernization program.[295] The Ottomans benefited from the contacts that the Balkan nations had with Italy and the

[294] Ibid., p.9.

[295] Hertz, *op. cit.*, pp.101-2.

Central Europe and this link played an important role in the transmission to the Ottomans of knowledge with regards to the manufacturing and use of firearms.[296]

That the Ottomans had more problems in adopting the military methods and technology of the eighteenth century than they did in the earlier periods had much to do with the fact that societal costs associated with this process had rose dramatically in the previous two centuries. The Ottomans had developed an elaborate military bureaucracy in the Late Middle ages and carried this into the Early Modern period but the social bonds keeping this military mechanism intact was not built to accommodate the tactics and organization of a European army in the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, a change in the traditional value system was needed: the unconditioned obedience a general in a European army would demand from his soldiers did not have much in common with the relationship between the sultan and the Janissaries, which is symbolized in a father-son iconography.[297] The latter involved a continuous bargaining process between the Porte and the Janissaries, which was more like a social network of artisans and craftsmen than a military corps. Thus, the prime cause of the Ottoman resistance to change was the Ottoman aversion to the European way of discipline rather than religious obscurantism.[298] The observations of George Frederick Koehler, a German in the British artillery, illustrate how serious the difference between two cultural systems was in the eyes of the contemporaries:[299]

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[296] Ibid., pp.98-9.

[297] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.270.

[298] Ibid., p.269.

[299] Koehler to James Bland Burges, Under Secretary in British Foreign Office, 21 Apr. 1792, Koehler; memorandum, Present military state of the Ottoman Empire, Bodl. BB, 36, ff 99-160,;

> […] They come when they like; go when they please; have no kind of restraint, no exercise, no roll calls… they ridicule the European manner of exercising, marching, etc. and notwithstanding the recent experience they have had of its effects, they think it contrary to every principle both of reason and honor [that] they should attempt the same themselves. […]

Fixing the problem that Koehler pointed to required a shift from an organic structure in which individual valor was the defining characteristic to a mechanical one in which soldiers surrendered to the discipline and command structure. Such a drastic shift would take more than a reform: the traditional institutions that fed on the organic structure had to be completely destroyed before it would be possible to create a new military ethos. Had the Ottoman bureaucrats focused their efforts to understand the economic causes that brought about the conservatism, or corruptness, as a member of the Ottoman ruling elite would put it, of the beneficiaries of the traditional system, masses who were moulded into a united front to defend their privileges at all costs and to fight for avoiding the dreadful end that reform would eventually bring, could become integrated to a rational system.[300] However, the Janissary organization was abolished by use of force and until then the European and Ottoman armies continued to proceed in opposite directions along the same trajectory: while the former became effective tools strongly attached to an imperial idea, the Ottoman army dissolved in the

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Koehler to Burges, 10 Jan. 1793f.7. ff. 23, 130-31, quoted in J. Black, *European Warfare 1660-1815*, pp.204-5.

[300] I am indebted to Dr. Erdoğan Yıldırım of METU Department of Sociology, who shared with me his opinions as to the material causes of the Janissary conservatism.

society, whereby it severely compromised the authority of the Porte by turning the lower classes into beneficiaries of the privileges of the military class.[301]

The deep-rooted value system had much to do with the failure the Ottoman military reformers suffered. However, the domestic and international political developments also hampered the efforts of the reformist wing in Istanbul. The Russian expansion at the expense of the Ottomans and the French encroachment upon the Ottoman economic, diplomatic and religious sphere of influence created hostility in the Ottoman society against anything related to Europe.[302] Actually it was the military failures against the Russians that signified the need for reform in the army, but the same phenomenon fed a certain state of mind which perceived the Ottoman struggle against the Russians as jihad. The conservative wing advocated the restoration of traditional institutions which had proved their effectiveness against the infidel in the past rather than building a new army in the European fashion. Added to these factors was the change in the French attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. The French activities in the Levant caused distrust among the conservatives and provided them with the discourse to oppose the reform attempts. The plan by Choiseul-Gouffier, the French aristocrat and later ambassador to Istanbul, to dismember and annex the Ottoman Empire, Baron de Tott's inspection activities in the Ottoman fortifications, and Maréchal de Montmerency's plan to land with an army on the Rhodes or Crete with the pretext of modernizing the Ottoman army did not go unnoticed by the Ottoman ruling

[301] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.270.

[302] Berkes, *op. cit.*, p.51.

elite.[303] The reformists were not strong enough to fight a two-front war against their domestic opponents and the French diplomacy which was becoming more ready to sacrifice the Ottomans for the settlement of the Eastern Question in a manner that would not endanger the French interests.

Even more important was the difference in foresight and motivation between the reformists and the conservatives. The first important obstacle to overcome on the part of the reformists was the idea that civilization and culture were two distinct entities and a society could borrow the material products of the former while preserving its own culture.[304] This idea was still alive at the time Ziya Gökalp was preaching the ideological pillars of the new Turkish Republic in the 1920s. The naïveté of the Ottoman bureaucrats in the first half of the eighteenth century, who did not take into account the social and cultural adjustments that had to be made in certain aspects of the Ottoman society, such as receptiveness to European discipline and the social welfare system under the name of the Janissary corps,[305] to accommodate the European methods and equipment, and that the conservatives proved more far-sighted than their antagonists to oppose any sort of reform is striking and a big part of why the Ottoman attempts at military reform failed.[306] Secondly, the reformists did not have a class interest in defending the reforms and easily fell apart in the absence of a common value which could have

[303] Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp.64-6.

[304] Berkes, *op. cit.*, p.53.

[305] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.258.

[306] Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp.62-3.

transformed them into a "pressure group" as their counterparts in Europe.[307] Contrarily, the conservatives fought for their existence. The *ulema* and the Janissaries joined hands in a formidable alliance which defended the right of the higher *ulema* to sell offices and enabled the crowds to pass themselves off as Janissaries and reap the benefits of the institution without serving in the army.[308] The reformists could have a chance to make a lasting impact on the Ottoman state mechanism in the second half of the eighteenth century if they had links with a domestic industry that had a stake in the furthering of the reforms, which was non-existent at the time.

The Ottoman treasury was too weak to make up for the lack of private initiative. Warfare, which was a source of revenue during the period of Ottoman territorial expansion, had become the most prominent cause of economic crises in the eighteenth century. That the Ottomans would always be victorious in their campaigns, which would not turn into protracted encounters that might keep the *timarlı sipahi*s away from their lands for too long, and that the state would not have any liquidity problems in paying for the war expenditures seem to have been the two premises on which the Ottoman fiscal-military system was built.[309] The Ottoman treasury proved to be too inflexible to turn around the circumstances when these two premises were breached.[310] The low efficiency in agriculture and manufacturing, the high costs and hardships associated with transportation and low

[307] Ibid., p.63.

[308] Ibid., pp.61-2.

[309] Yavuz Cezar, *op. cit.*, pp.29-30.

[310] Ibid., p.31.

volume of monetary exchange were the causes that rendered the state inflexible to intervene in and manipulate the market.[311] As a result, the share that the Ottoman state extracted in the form of taxes from the national production was not any higher than three per cent.[312] The reader was presented in the second chapter with a comparison between the revenue the Janissary leader in Cairo made from the taxes levied on the coffee trade going through the Suez and the annual amount of taxes that the Porte was able to receive from Egypt, which was an indicator of the inefficiency of the Ottoman fiscal administration to establish authority over provincial sources. Under these circumstances, the funds necessary for paying for the army, much less reforming it, were no where to be found. The Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 displayed scenes of how an army could disintegrate when the soldiers were not paid and kept well fed. Undertaking a thorough reform in the army, navy and the fortifications was beyond the capability of the Porte at the end of the eighteenth century. That the expenses of the British East India Company on the sepoy army of 4,000 British officers and 26,000 natives in 1770 amounted to three times as much as the budget of Mustafa III in 1768 according to a rough estimate indicate the challenge the Ottomans were facing at the time.[313]

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[311] Mehmet Genç, "Osmanlı İktisadî Dünya Görüşünün Temel İlkeleri," in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, (İstanbul: Ötüken,2000), pp.50-1.

[312] Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy:The Nineteenth Century*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), pp.18-23, quoted in Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History*, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p.14.

[313] Aksan, Baron de Tott, p.256.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study can be grouped into two. The first category involves contextualizing the eighteenth century Ottoman military organization both historically and geographically and bringing an explanation to the waning military power of the Ottoman army. The Ottoman army in the eighteenth century had inherited a Janissary organization which had turned into a praetorian guard with strong ties to popular masses, a *timar* system which was no longer able to perform the administrative and the military functions it was supposed to carry out, a mob of untrained, undisciplined peasant recruits under the name of *sekban* or *levend* who stood no chance against a professional army and the increasingly unruly Tatar auxiliary. This snapshot view of the Ottoman reality at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when combined with the military developments taking place in the monarchies neighboring the Ottoman domains form the context for an assessment of the evolution of the Ottoman military organization. One of the conclusions of this research concerns the perspective with which the Ottoman military history has to be evaluated. Western military historians tend to leave the Ottoman Empire out of any assessment of European military transformation. When the Ottoman army finds itself a place in Western historiography, it is generally presented as a primitive or backward version of its Western European counterparts, rather than one that was built to cope with different

problems, and the constraints on the Ottoman warfare are ignored. The Turkish historians, on the other hand, do not seem to be much interested in placing the Ottoman military organization in a bigger picture to compare and contrast its transformation with what the armies in other parts of the world went through. Neither imposing on the Ottoman military organization the assumptions of the Military Revolution discourse nor accepting this organization as *sui generis* provide us with the right context within which to evaluate the Ottoman warfare. The right context has to be the Eastern European warfare. Campaigning in the endless steppes of northern Black Sea littoral where one could ride for days without seeing a residential settlement or the rough terrain of the Danubian basin which was cleaved by hundreds of rivers and covered with marshes was much different from operating in the Low Countries and France where the population density made the supply problem less severe and transportation was easier compared to the Balkans. A comparison between the Ottoman and the Russian armies is thus meaningful since both of them operated under similar conditions though the latter did it with increasing effectiveness as opposed to the former. However, the difference maker in the relative performances of the two armies was not technology: despite Baron de Tott's account on the pitiful condition of the Ottoman artillery in the 1770s, the Russians were only a decade ahead of the Ottomans in adopting "cannon-boring techniques and the casting of light artillery".[314] The Russian improvement in warfare was the combined result of the colonization program Catherine the Great carried out in the southern borderlands which eased the supply problems, the institutionalization of the state war mechanism, the increased ability of the state to

[314] Grant, pp.193-4.

extract from the society more human and economic resources, and the cadre of high profile officers who were raised in the clashes against the Prussian armies during the Seven Years War. The Ottomans could catch up with the Russians in terms of technology but they were devoid of the means to counter the Russian advance in the areas listed above particularly during the eighteenth century, which was a century of decentralization in the Ottoman lands and of instability at the Porte. In this context, understanding the reasons behind the Russian expansion is the key to an understanding of the military failures of the Ottoman Empire, not the least because the former occurred at the expense of the latter.

Another point that this thesis tried to make was that the technology component in the eighteenth century warfare in general and in the Ottoman warfare in particular is overstated in the Western military historiography. War in the early modern period was more about invading productive areas and protecting the supply lines than capturing fortresses.[315] Supply problems even determined the strategic importance of territories and military objectives.[316]

The eighteenth century did not witness any technological breakthrough to warrant the claim that the Ottoman military technology was much inferior to what the Russians and the Austrians had access to. Even the best musketeers did not provide firepower with high enough accuracy to win a battle by themselves and it was the bayonet charge that decided the fate of the encounters. The fear on the part of the Janissaries that bayonet would bring about organizational changes in the corps fueled the opposition to this simple but very effective tool. Other than that,

[315] Murphey, *The Ottoman Army Under Murad IV*, p.119.

[316] Hochedlinger, *op. cit.*, p.143.

the Ottoman Empire was not an isolated entity on the periphery of the continent, which the section on technological dialogue aimed at arguing against. The Ottomans remained open to European technology and techniques as long as such imports would help them in their struggle against the infidel. However, they also possessed a dynamic domestic industry, although it had a hard time competing with the foreign supply of war materiel in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Battlefield tactics provide us with the unique interface where human and technology are used as inputs to achieve desired ends. Tactics used in the Russian and the Ottoman armies were brought into the attention of the reader to show that while the Russians kept experimenting with and making adjustments to battlefield tactics, the Ottomans stuck to the age-old tactics which were expressions of social values and how power was shared within the military rather than tools of military strategy that continuously evolved according to the circumstances. The Ottomans had access to foreign technology, know-how and personnel to make the shift to the tactics to counter the Russian offensive but the Ottoman value system was too rigid at the time to adopt the European notion of discipline.

The second group of conclusions of this research involves the Ottoman attempts at reforming the army and how these reform attempts were presented in the historiography. The reformers in the eighteenth century were devoid of a popular base to counter the masses that the Janissaries and the *ulema* could mobilize, the backing of a domestic industry to support the reforms for economic reasons, an imperial treasury capable of paying for the reforms and class interest in carrying out the reforms that would keep them together in the face of the Janissary-*ulema* alliance. The inability on the part of the Porte to monetarize the economy combined

with its unwillingness to forego the authority over the distribution of land created the ongoing inertia with regards to the inefficient *timar* system and thus another pillar of the Ottoman army of classical age managed to survive well into the nineteenth century.[317] Moreover, at an individual level, the Ottoman aversion to military discipline and training in the European sense made it impossible for the reform attempts to have a lasting influence on the Ottoman soldier. Religion was not the real cause of the resistance to reform, if it played a role at all, but served as the discourse for the groups which had much to lose had the patrimonial system collapsed and gave way to a rational order. Hence, the reforms must be assessed from the perspective of state formation which started to bear fruit only in the 1830s with the elimination of the Janissaries, and the crowds, as important actors in the state mechanism, the centralization of power in the hands of the sultan and the emergence of a bureaucracy in the European sense. However, the patrimonial system which entitled every high official to his own power base within the state, thus turning them into actors in the court intrigues, remained in place until the end of the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-76).[318]

This thesis does not claim to have said the final word on how historiography should assess the Ottoman military organization and its decline. However, it endeavored to state that the neglect on the part of the Western historiography of Ottoman military history on the grounds that the Ottoman army is one of a kind with regards to composition, tactics and motivation is unwarranted. Although military historiography has taken long strides in explaining the social and

[317] Murphey, *The Ottoman Army Under Murad IV*, pp.309-310.

[318] Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp.45-6.

military transformation that took place in Europe during the early modern period, the centuries-old views of an Asiatic despotism guided by frantic Islamic zeal that motivated hordes to fight against the Christians within a stagnant institutional frame still reign in the analyses regarding the Ottoman military history. Despite having dubbed the Ottomans a military society, historiography had shown little interest in studying how the Ottomans after the end of the seventeenth century executed in a campaign from the beginning of the mobilization to the military operations that would follow.[319] By focusing on a comparison of the Russian and the Ottoman armies, this thesis attempted at pointing out what it was that the Ottomans lacked among the factors that mattered for an army to succeed in the Eastern European theatre, which may be defined as taking a small step towards scaling the ideological barrier between the Ottoman military history and the rest of Europe, to whose construction the Military Revolution discourse contributed immensely.

[319] Aksan, Locating the Ottomans, pp.103-4.

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