

OTTOMAN PACIFICATION OF THE BALKANS 1450-1650 C.E.

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Military History

by  
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## ABSTRACT

OTTOMAN PACIFICATION OF THE BALKANS 1450-1650 C.E., by Major Anthony J. Rudd, 109 pages.

The Ottoman Empire is often portrayed as a bloodthirsty Empire bent on conquering Europe and opposing the great European powers of its time through its military strength. From its beginnings in the thirteenth century the Ottoman Empire expanded its territory over the vast expanses of the Middle East and throughout much of Southeastern Europe, the core of which it held for over 400 years. While Ottoman history is not devoid of acts of rebellion and insurrection, it is curiously sparse over much of that time in terms of significant rebellion in the Balkans. This paper will attempt to uncover the reasons for the relative ease with which they ruled over an area comprised of different cultures and religions.

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## ACRONYMS

DIME      Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economy

USG      United States Government

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

With the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the Balkan States erupted into various conflicts mostly predicated on differences in culture and religion. The basis for these conflicts can be traced to the area's history under the Ottoman Empire, which ruled the area for over four centuries. This paper will demonstrate how the Ottoman Empire was successful in pacifying the area for over 400 years by examining the Ottoman Empire's application of the elements of national power utilizing the Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic (DIME) framework used by the United States Government (USG). For the sake of the paper those that were pacified are defined as the indigenous peoples of the Balkans prior to the arrival of the Ottomans. Because of the Ottoman Empire's reputation as an expansionist power, one would surmise that the Ottoman Empire was most successful in the Military sphere of the DIME. However, this paper will show that the other elements had a greater influence on Ottoman Balkan policy than that of the military, especially when examining the social structures established in local governments and the surprising amount of religious tolerance across the empire.

This paper will examine the ties between the elements of national power (DIME) and the Ottoman Empire's ability to pacify a culturally-diverse area for over 400 years. To do so it will be essential to provide a brief historical background of the Ottoman Empire and its expansion into the area. This paper will not attempt to completely educate the reader on the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States; however, it will be enough to relay the development of both the military and socio-economic structures

that the Ottomans employed in their attempt to rule the area and will attempt to provide context to developments in policy, administration and the military strategy of the Empire.

Chapter 3 examines the role of religion, especially that of Islam, in the expansion of the empire and its role in the development of Ottoman social structures. To a lesser degree this paper will also examine the roles of the other predominant religions in the area in their direct relation to Ottoman governance. There will also be a brief discussion on how religion contributed to slavery and relocation policies. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, religion served as a guiding source to Suleyman the Magnificent and influenced the period of his rule and the rule of the other sultans of the empire.

Chapter 4 describes the governmental, social and economic functions of the Ottoman Empire and is pivotal in the argument that these factors played more of a role in the pacification of the numerous peoples and religions that made up the core of the Ottoman Empire. This chapter provides the essential elements of the argument made in the thesis -- that the social structures, governmental policies and economic factors were more responsible for the pacification of the Balkans than the presence of the Ottoman military apparatus. This paper will also describe the complex system of both national and local government and its ties to the military.

In order to adequately analyze the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, it will also be necessary to provide a description of the Ottoman military apparatus and a brief description of its role in war and expansion. Chapter 5 will look at the military machinery of the Ottoman Empire and its affect on the Balkans. It will also examine its ties to the social and economic structures of the region where, just like in the Anatolian region, it is

impossible to treat it as a separate entity. Chapter 5 will also describe the role of the Sultan's army, and its two major arms, the infantry (*Janissaries*) and the cavalry (*Sipahis*) in the prosecution of their various campaigns.

Chapter 6 will examine the few instances where rebellion did occur and will describe the causes and evaluate the relative success of each. This chapter will also describe the reasons for the relative lack of rebellions in the Ottoman ruled lands in the Balkans. The examples that will be examined include the rebellion of Scanderbeg in Albania and the Banat Uprising of 1594.

Chapter 7 will contain a brief description of the US Government's DIME framework and will categorize each of the elements in terms of Ottoman Empire structures, policies and practices. This chapter will also provide an explanation on how each of the elements is analyzed. This chapter will rely heavily on the US military Joint Publication 1.0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* for the definition of the DIME Model and discussion on each of the elements of national power.

The final chapter will provide conclusions based on the evidence produced and evaluations in relation to the DIME model in order to prove the thesis. This chapter will also provide some discussion on other supporting evidence and other areas for further study on the subject. Finally, this chapter will also provide a discussion as to the relevance of this subject to today's military. This paper includes a number of Ottoman words and phrases in italics that are further defined in Appendix 2; wherever possible Turkish spellings of these words are used for continuity.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In order to understand the influence the Ottoman Empire had in the Balkans it is important to put the events that transpired over the course of Ottoman rule into the greater context of the overall history of the empire. This chapter will highlight the ebb and flow of Ottoman influence in the area as the attention of the Ottoman Sultans vacillated between the East and the West. Additionally, it will serve to illustrate the sources of conflict in the Balkans that contributed to various decisions on the part of Ottoman administrators. This history, when coupled with the enactment of social (including religious), economic, governmental, and military policies, which will be expanded upon in further chapters, will explain how the Ottoman Empire ruled over its Balkan holdings, and how it maintained peace and order.

#### The Establishment of the Empire

The Ottoman Empire originated from the ruins of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm after its defeat at the hands of the Mongols in 1277C.E. This defeat left local warlords to carve out holdings as the Seljuk Sultanate deteriorated over the next thirty years.<sup>1</sup> The Seljuks ruled over a turbulent time in the area and they were constantly at odds with the Christian Byzantine Empire to their west and endured numerous invasions by both Crusaders and the Mongols. Rising from the remains of the Seljuk Empire, a *ghazi*<sup>2</sup> warlord named Osman (see figure 1) acquired a principality or *emirate*, granted to him by the Seljuk Turks. His father, Ertuğrul, was a minor warlord of the Kayi tribe and is credited with establishing the tribe in the city of Söğüt, southeast of the Sea of Marmara

(see figure 2). Bordering Osman's territory to the northwest of Söğüt lay the decaying Byzantine Empire, most of which resided on the other side of the Dardanelles in Europe. Because of the strong Mongol presence in the East, the only real target for Osman to expand in Anatolia was the Byzantine Empire, which inhabited fertile lands near the Sea of Marmara on the southwest edge of the Black Sea. Also making the Byzantine a prime target was that they possessed lands rich in booty,<sup>3</sup> which Osman would use to pay his soldiers. In 1326 C.E. Osman's son, Orhan I, captured the city of Bursa and established the first Ottoman capital.<sup>4</sup> Orhan expanded the Empire to the shores of the Dardanelles, within striking distance of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire.



Figure 1. Osman I

*Source:* Wikimedia Commons, "Osman I," [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:I\\_Osman.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:I_Osman.jpg) (accessed 4 April 2009).



Figure 2. Birthplace of the Ottoman Empire

*Source:* Google Maps, Map of Söğüt, <http://maps.google.com/> (accessed 19 April 2009).

In 1345 C.E. the Byzantine Empire was caught in a power struggle between rival Emperors John VI Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos. In an effort to affect the balance of power, Kantakouzenos formed an alliance with Orhan I against Palaiologos.<sup>5</sup> At the invitation of Kantakouzenos, Orhan I led his troops across the Dardanelles to Gallipoli and established a base of operations that he refused to relinquish (much to the dismay of Kantakouzenos) thus starting the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans.

### Expansion of the Empire

Orhan I's son Murad I continued the work begun by his father and maintained the Ottoman advance at the expense of the remnants of the Byzantine Empire. He then turned further to the West toward the rich lands of the Balkans. After the death of Stephan Dushan, emperor of the Serbian Empire, in 1355 C.E. the Balkans lay wide open for conquest as they were ruled by a number of squabbling princes who were more

concerned with fighting each other than uniting to counter the growing threat posed by the ever-expanding Ottoman Empire. A vast number of these princes chose vassalage over facing the Ottoman raiders. That choice set the stage for their later inclusion in the Ottoman social structure and ensured their compliance for many years. Murad I not only set his sights toward expanding in the west but also the east. The situation in the east proved tricky for him for two important reasons. One difficulty facing Murad I in the east was the prohibition against fighting fellow Muslims and the other was the expectation that the Sultan ride at the head of his army. The latter made maintaining a two-front expansion very difficult, so satisfied with his conquests in the west; he turned toward the east and his closest competitor for power in the region the Karamanids. Utilizing Christian soldiers (conscripts gained from his new vassal states in the west) to fight at the head of his army and thereby skirting the issue of making war upon fellow Muslims, Murad I finally defeated the Karamanids outside the city of Konya, the capital of the former Seljuk Empire, which was located to his southeast.<sup>6</sup> Defeating the Karamanids rid Murad I of his greatest threat in the east and allowed him to concentrate once again on the west and further expansion in the Balkans where his short absence emboldened his Serbian vassals who now allied themselves with the Bulgarian King of Tŭrnovo, John Shishman.<sup>7</sup> Murad I's forces defeated the Bulgarian forces and then occupied Bulgaria, forcing John Shishman to accept vassal status. Having dealt with that threat Murad I then turned to the revolting Serbian princes. On 15 June 1389, on the plains of Kosovo, Murad I defeated the Serbs at the cost of his own life.<sup>8</sup>

### Increased Expansion and Consolidation Under Bayezid I

Upon his succession, Bayezid I, son of Murad I, now had the unenviable task of bringing in line those *Emirs* in Anatolia who refused to recognize his power. Bayezid I's first move was to cement his power in the east and he moved quickly to crush the resistance rising in central Anatolia. He then turned back to the Balkans and rather than returning to the ways of his father of creating vassal states he incorporated those lands into the Empire. This move proved central to the emergence of the Ottoman socio-economic policies and structure that would become the basis to a successful pacification of the entire area. Another important move by Bayezid was to focus on Constantinople, which remained a Christian stronghold situated in between the two halves of the Ottoman Empire and in a strategic location on the Black Sea. This new focus caused a groundswell of support from Europe that raised a crusading army to oppose the Islamic threat. The Crusader army was successful in turning Bayezid I's attention from Constantinople; however it was less successful in its aim to eliminate the Ottoman threat as it was defeated outside the city of Nicopolis, in modern-day Bulgaria, in 1396 C.E, increasing the already great prestige of Bayezid I as a *ghazi* warrior.<sup>9</sup>

Bayezid then faced two more challenges to Ottoman supremacy in Anatolia that distracted him from his goal of taking Constantinople. The first of these two challenges was the rejuvenated Karamanids. Already having been defeated by his father, the Karamanids once again rose to challenge Ottoman authority and like the previous result they were defeated, this time ceding the city of Konya in the loss. Having again beaten the Karamanids, Bayezid I received the title of *Sultan al-Rum* from the Seljuk Caliph who was living in exile in Cairo under the protection of the Mamluks, tying his dynasty

to the Seljuk dynasty that previously held the title. This further emboldened him in his aim of driving the Christians from Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> The second challenge to his authority proved to be a much more formidable threat. Tamerlane, who claimed to be the heir to the Mongol dynasty, marched against Bayezid I in Anatolia, whom he considered an upstart to the traditional powers in the area. Bayezid I's army was crushed in Ankara in 1402 C.E. and he was taken prisoner. Immediately Tamerlane turned much of the Ottoman holdings back over to those *emirs* who Bayezid I dispossessed and the remaining Ottoman lands were split between Bayezid's sons.<sup>11</sup>

### The Resurrection of the Ottoman Empire

Over the next few years Bayezid I's sons, Mehmed I and then Murad II, worked to consolidate what was left of the Ottoman Empire. They were greatly enabled by some of the social and governmental reforms enacted by their father, which would become the basis for much of the social, economic and governmental structures outlined in chapter four. These reforms, which stabilized the central government, encouraged former Ottoman subjects who longed for a return of the Ottoman Empire and its stability and prosperity.<sup>12</sup>

As part of the process to heal the slights, perceived and real, between the dispossessed former emirs and the Ottoman rulers Murad II awarded the former emirs timars in the Balkans. There were two important results from this policy: first it removed those emirs from their power base, and secondly it began the very important process of relocating them to the Balkans in order to aid the expansion of the empire and lead to a drastic change in the social make-up of these newly settled areas. Additionally this process provided for soldiers and money to further expansion efforts.<sup>13</sup>

## The Two Reigns of Mehmed II “The Conqueror”

Mehmed II first succeeded his father in 1444 C.E., at the age of twelve, when his father retired to a life of religious contemplation. This first reign lasted only a short period until his father was forced to return in order to help defend the empire against a European attack at Varna in November of that year. Unhappy with the brief period of Mehmed II’s reign a group of Janissaries revolted and replaced him with his father on a permanent basis until his death in 1451 C.E.

Mehmed II’s second reign began auspiciously. Following the tradition of his ancestors of beginning a reign with a conquest against the *Dar al-Harb*,<sup>14</sup> Mehmed II turned once again toward Constantinople. In May of 1453 C.E., Constantinople fell to the Ottomans and cemented Mehmed II’s place in Ottoman and Islamic history as “Mehmed the Conqueror.” Constantinople, based on its history as a bastion of Christian power and its strategic location between Europe and Asia, was established as the new capital of the Ottoman Empire and its revitalization would become one of the principal efforts in Mehmed II’s government.<sup>15</sup> Mehmed II also immediately consolidated his power now that both halves of the Empire were joined.

Mehmed II’s first move was to crush all those with a claim to Byzantine sovereignty in order to remove the threat of further attacks to regain Constantinople. Next he focused efforts on the Balkans, utilizing a reorganized and strengthened *Janissary* corps to expand the empire all the way to the banks of the Danube River. Mehmed II also turned once again on the Karamanids, this time defeating them and annexing their lands into the Empire. With this victory, Mehmed II established himself as the sole power in the area eliminating any threats and establishing the Empire into a single state.

For the next thirty years of his reign, Mehmed II rode at the head of his army during the campaign season in wars to increase holdings and solidify the Empire both in the East and in Europe, one front at a time. One significant challenge to his rule came from the east in the form of Uzun Hasan, leader of the Ak-Koyunlu Turcomans, who allied with Venice, the Papacy and the Knights of Rhodes. Although Mehmed II quickly routed Uzun Hasan, the alliance employed by the Turcoman became a recurring theme in future Ottoman wars.<sup>16</sup> Mehmed II's reign matched his personality. He instituted reforms, both legislative and economic, that alienated many of his subjects in an attempt to further his bellicose aims. Upon his death in 1481, his two sons, Cem and Bayezid, began a fight for succession with their positions on their father's policies at the heart of their ability to raise support. Cem supported the policies of his father and Bayezid favored an end to most of them. In the end, Bayezid gained the most support and won out and his brother Cem fled to the custody of the Knights of St. John where he remained as a political prisoner and possible claimant to Bayezid's throne.<sup>17</sup>

### The "Peace" of Bayezid II

Bayezid II officially ascended the throne in 1481 C.E. and ruled for thirty-one years. In personality, Bayezid II differed greatly from his father, seeking to avoid war whenever possible. Among Bayezid II's first acts was to reverse many of the policies of his father that left the empire with a devalued currency, took lands from charitable trusts and placed them as military fiefs, and greatly increased taxes on peasant holdings.<sup>18</sup> His dislike of war and the fact that the west held his brother as political prisoner, kept Bayezid II from expanding the empire. From 1483 C.E., Bayezid II began paying the Knights of Rhodes a tribute to keep his brother safe and in 1489 C.E. the tribute was

shipped to the Papacy as custody of Cem shifted to Rome. Because of this agreement Bayezid secured peace with the West, negotiating agreements with the Venetians as well as the Knights of Rhodes and the Pope. In addition Bayezid finalized a treaty with the King of Hungary. This did not mean that there would be no war during Bayezid II's reign as both Moldavia and Herzegovina were invaded with the annexation of the latter.<sup>19</sup>

In 1485 C.E., the Ottomans began a war with the Mamluks over who reigned supreme over the remaining Turcoman tribes that inhabited the lands between the two empires. The Mamluks made numerous peace overtures that Bayezid ignored and he sent his Governor-General of Karaman to invade the cities of Adana and Tarsus, taking them that same year. The next year the Mamluks struck back and retook Adana and captured the Governor-General of Anatolia and other Ottoman nobles. Emboldened by the victory, the Turcoman tribes of the Taurus Mountains rebelled. Ottoman forces stamped out the uprising soon after it began.<sup>20</sup> The repeated Turcoman rebellions and Mamluk victory over the Ottomans at Adana caused Bayezid immediate worry that the Mamluks might seek out Western allies, so he moved quickly and personally to meet the Mamluks in battle. The Mamluks pressed the attack to Kayseri and forced the Sultan to lead his forces into battle. Having limited resources and fearing the approaching Ottoman army caused the Mamluks to sue for peace, returning the borders to their prewar state.<sup>21</sup>

After dealing with the Mamluk threat, Bayezid II turned to Hungary hoping to take advantage of the political instability following the death of its king, Matthias Corvinus, in 1492 C.E. Unfortunately, by the time Bayezid's forces arrived a new king had ascended the throne. Instead Bayezid used his army to quell the rebellion of John Kastrioti in Albania.<sup>22</sup>

Bayezid II was finally forced to account for the loss of his brother as the French King Charles VIII invaded Italy in 1495 C.E. and, with the conquest of Rome, was able to secure Cem. Charles VIII made plans to raise a new crusading army and to use Cem as a weapon in his war against the Ottoman Sultan. Bayezid II scrambled to secure his borders by concluding a peace with Hungary in order to prepare for the invasion that never came. Cem died in captivity in February 1495 C.E and Charles VIII abandoned his plans along with Italy. This allowed Bayezid to ignore his truce with the Hungarians and to capture key forts in Bosnia. Bayezid II intervened on the behalf of Stephen the Great in his conflict with Poland, launching raids with Tatar troops into Poland.<sup>23</sup>

Bayezid II also reengaged the Venetians on the Mediterranean by employing pirate captains to conduct his naval battles, creating Ottoman links to piracy that left an indelible mark on the Ottoman legacy. Bayezid II's new admirals proved very capable and in 1499 C.E. they made significant gains on the Dalmatian coast that caused the Venetians to sue unsuccessfully for peace. Sensing Venice's downward trend in fortunes both the Spanish and the French contributed forces to the Venetians who also allied themselves with Hungary and the Papacy. Their combined forces made headway in the war against the Ottomans, taking several key islands in the Aegean. The Ottomans were able to offset these losses with a key win at Dürres on the Adriatic in 1501 C.E. That victory, coupled with the monetary losses the Venetians suffered in pursuing the conflict caused them to sue again for peace. In 1503 C.E. Bayezid II concluded a peace treaty with the Venetians that allowed the Venetians free commerce in the Mediterranean and returned several key islands to the Ottomans.<sup>24</sup>

The beginning of the 1500's saw the Ottomans shift their focus from the West and back to the East. Bayezid II quelled a Turcoman rebellion in the Taurus Mountains and then dealt with the growing threat that became the Ottomans' chief rival in the east, the Safavid Dynasty from Iran, a Shī'ī Islamic competitor. Bayezid II approached the Safavids cautiously, partly due to his advanced age, choosing to not interfere numerous times as they made inroads into Anatolia.<sup>25</sup>

Bayezid II's reign finally ended with the failure of his chosen successor, Prince Korkud, to quash a rebellion by Shah Kulu in 1511 C.E. Shah Kulu was an ally of Shah Ismail, ruler of the Safavid kingdom and had incited rebellion throughout Anatolia. This rebellion proved costly to Korkud and another brother Ahmed and threatened the city of Bursa before it was cleared of rebels, allowing for a third brother, Selim, to gain entry to the capital and force his discredited father to abdicate in 1512 C.E.<sup>26</sup>

### Expansion in the East and the Reign of Selim I

Upon securing his throne, Selim I's first order of business was to rid himself of the immediate threats to his throne, his two brothers Korkud and Ahmed. After having his two brothers killed he then chose to deal with the greatest threat to his empire, the Safavids. In the past the Ottoman Sultans were reticent to make war on another Islamic nation but this time Selim I obtained a *fetva* that declared the Safavids heretics and obligated him to make war on them as a defender of the true faith.<sup>27</sup>

Selim I began his campaign against the Safavids at Chaldiran in Azerbaijan, winning an important victory and pushing the Safavids eastward to Tabriz. By the summer of 1516 C.E. Selim I's forces extended their possessions to the Mamluk border in Syria and secured all of Anatolia from the Safavids. Selim I also made key gains in

both Kayseri and Adana when he co-opted the influential leaders of those areas into the empire and appointed them governor-generals of their respective regions. This new threat on the Mamluk border forced the Mamluks to seek an alliance with the Safavids against the Ottomans.<sup>28</sup>

In 1516 Selim I set out with his army from Istanbul to deal with one of the two nations threatening his border, unsure which one to address first. The Mamluks made the decision for him by forming an army and marching from Cairo to do battle with the Ottomans. In August the two armies met north of Aleppo and superior Ottoman artillery ruled the day when it crushed the Mamluks and killed their Sultan, Qansuh Ghawri. From there Selim I's forces pushed into Syria without resistance and drove southward to take Damascus, Jerusalem, Lebanon and Palestine. Events that summer caused him to continue southward across the Sinai to Cairo where he defeated the remainder of the Mamluk army. Selim I's ambition to conduct further campaigns against the Mamluks was thwarted by the army's refusal to fight, mostly due to fatigue and the fact that the traditional campaigning season had ended.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of his reign Selim I made serious inroads as a Mediterranean naval power when he secured Tunis and Algiers as semi-autonomous provinces ruled by the pirate Barbarossa and his brother who, fearing the Spanish, sought the protection of the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>30</sup> This, coupled with the defeat of the Mamluks, became a defining point in the Empire's development as a true power in both North Africa and the Mediterranean. The Ottomans, with the addition of Mecca and Medina, the two most important religious cities in Islam, also inherited the title of champions of the Islamic world, carrying with it a heavy responsibility to keep the holy land from both the Christians and the Safavids.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 3. Suleyman I “The Magnificent”

*Source:* Wikimedia Commons [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suleyman\\_young.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suleyman_young.jpg) (accessed 15 May 2009).

Selim I’s eight-year reign ended in 1520 C.E. with his death. In his reign, Selim I greatly expanded the influence of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the Islamic world. His actions as Sultan paved the way for his successors. Selim’s sole son, Suleyman, ascended peacefully to the throne and expanded the empire to its apogee, becoming the most well known of all the Ottoman Sultans in the process.

#### Suleyman I “The Magnificent” and the Height of the Empire

In a well established pattern of Ottoman history, Suleyman I faced an immediate threat to his rule manifested in a rebellion. The Governor-General of Damascus declared himself an independent ruler almost as soon as news reached him that Suleyman I had ascended the throne. Forces loyal to the Sultan quickly disposed of the threat. Suleyman I’s attention turned to the west when the King Lajos of Hungary disrespected an ambassador sent to renew the treaty established by Selim I.<sup>32</sup>

Suleyman I's first victory came as his forces were able to take Belgrade, a key city on the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers that acted as a strategic launching point for further incursions to Hungary. Suleyman I also took advantage of his father's investment in the Ottoman navy as his fleet sailed to the island of Rhodes, home to his adversary the Knights of St. John. His forces laid siege to the Knights' stronghold for five months, finally forcing the retreat of his enemies to Malta. The capture of Rhodes greatly benefited Ottoman shipping as it cleared sea lanes, especially the route between Egypt and Istanbul.<sup>33</sup> These two key successes set the tone for the remainder of Suleyman I's rule.

In 1526 C.E., Suleyman I pressed his advantage by launching an attack from Belgrade into the heart of Hungary. His army was tremendously successful, mainly due to the expertise of the Ottoman artillery. The army continued its momentum all the way to Buda, Hungary's capital. Suleyman I's victory was short lived as two major rebellions of Safavid sympathizers in the east required his attention and a sizable force to put down. Rebellions continued in Central Anatolia throughout the rest of the century requiring a network of informers to keep the peace.<sup>34</sup>

Next Suleyman I found himself once again embroiled in the affairs of Hungary, this time siding with the new king of Hungary, John Szapolyai, who was opposed in his quest for the throne by the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. Ferdinand believed himself entitled to the throne as the brother-in-law of the former king. Suleyman I however, supported the claims of the elected King. A civil war ensued between those who elected Szapolyai and those who supported Ferdinand.<sup>35</sup> Suleyman I and Ferdinand's armies also traded blows, with Ferdinand first occupying Buda in 1528 C.E. and Suleyman I retaking

it in 1529 C.E. Suleyman I's army also attempted to take Vienna but was hampered by both the weather and a fierce defense.<sup>36</sup> The two nations fought back and forth, finally agreeing upon a truce in 1533 C.E. that stipulated Ferdinand rule his portion of Hungary and Szapolyai his.<sup>37</sup> This started a long conflict with the Habsburg's that lasted into the twentieth century.

Suleyman I's attention turned again back to the east and the Safavids. In 1528 C.E., the Safavid governor of Baghdad offered his city to Suleyman I. Even though the rogue governor paid for the offer with his life, this gave Suleyman I a claim to the city. The Ottoman army marched to and occupied Tabriz. The Ottoman force then captured Baghdad without a fight. Suleyman I and the army returned to Istanbul in 1536 C.E., adding Tabriz, Baghdad and Van on the way.<sup>38</sup>

Like his father before him, Suleyman I worried about the Christian presence in the Mediterranean and its threat to Ottoman shipping. He knew that his navy, although vastly improved, was no match for the combined Christian navies, especially that of the Spanish and the Knights of St. John. He realized this fear when Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor captured Tunis.<sup>39</sup> This attack and a new war with Venice convinced Suleyman I to enter into an alliance with Francis I, King of France, who was the enemy of Charles V, and together they planned to make war on Venice. With Barbarossa as his new Admiral, Suleyman I set out to attack Venice at Naples, which coincided with a French attack in Lombardy. Francis I never attacked and Suleyman I instead launched an unsuccessful attack at the island of Corfu. In 1538, Barbarossa captured all of the Venetian islands in the Aegean. This success served to unite the Venetians with the Pope, Charles V, and Ferdinand I of Austria. The alliance set out to

attack the Ottoman fleet and was successful in cornering Barbarossa in the Gulf of Prevesa. Barbarossa defeated their combined fleets at the Gulf of Prevesa and that victory, combined with a few others, forced the allies into a treaty with the Ottomans that ceded the newly captured islands in the Aegean along with some of the Peloponnesus to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>40</sup>

In 1538 C.E., Suleyman I led his troops against the Moldavians who refused to pay tribute to him. Suleyman I annexed the territories along the Black Sea that completed the land link between Istanbul and the Crimea. This important land link gave the Ottoman's control of almost all of the Black Sea and allowed them almost uncontested trade within its waters. Additionally it provided them an outpost to watch their adversaries in the north.<sup>41</sup>

In the next decade, the war with Hungary resumed as the death of King Szapolyai caused a conflict over his inheritance. The previously signed treaty ceded the land to Ferdinand I upon the death of Szapolyai. However, a faction tried to raise his infant son as king. Ferdinand I invaded and laid siege to Buda and Suleyman I was forced to respond, moving with his army and defeating Ferdinand I's forces. Instead of honoring the infant's claim Suleyman I placed an Ottoman governor in charge at Buda. The Habsburg King, Charles V, followed with another attack, this time at Algiers. His attack was repulsed and much of the Spanish fleet was destroyed in a storm, allowing the Ottomans greater mobility in the Mediterranean. Seeing their great success, Francis I renewed his alliance with Suleyman I and promised to support the Ottomans against the Habsburgs. In 1543 C.E. Suleyman I again lead his forces into battle against the Habsburgs, extending his border west of the Danube. In 1547 C.E. Charles V and

Ferdinand struck a five year treaty with Suleyman I in which the two parties agreed to the status quo and Ferdinand renounced his claim to the Kingdom of Hungary and agreed to pay the Ottoman Sultan for continuing to rule there as a vassal to the Sultan.<sup>42</sup> The peace lasted until 1550 C.E. when events in the Mediterranean caused both sides to resume the conflict, each side gaining and losing the advantage over the next year in Tripoli, Malta and Sicily. Suleyman I's newly formed alliance with France's Henry II, Francis I's successor, proved as ineffective as previous joint Franco-Ottoman alliances and concluded with Henry II making peace with the Habsburgs.<sup>43</sup>

Suleyman I faced additional conflict with Ferdinand I. In 1549 C.E. the regent of Transylvania offered to cede the nation to Ferdinand I; this caused the Ottomans to undertake numerous successful campaigns, further extending the western border into Transylvania but doing nothing to diminish Ferdinand I's claim. This continued until in 1555 C.E. after Suleyman I ordered another incursion into Southern Transdanubia which forced its inhabitants to restore the former ruler and to reject Ferdinand I's claim.<sup>44</sup>

One aim of the Ottomans was to take all the lands surrounding the Black Sea and in order to accomplish this Suleyman I undertook another campaign against the Safavids to capture the lands on its eastern shore. Suleyman I's campaign would only be halted in Naxçivan<sup>45</sup> after the Safavid's scorched earth policies forced a retreat of the Ottomans. This campaign ended in the Treaty of Amasya in 1555 C.E. which solidified the existing borders between the two empires for the next twenty-one years.<sup>46</sup>

In 1559 C.E., after the abdication of Charles V in favor of his son Philip II, the French and Spanish concluded a treaty that ended the Franco-Ottoman alliance and allowed the Spanish to conduct a war with the Ottomans without fear of French

interference. This manifested itself in battles in Mallorca and at Jerba, a fortress off the coast of Tunis. As with previous alliances with the French, this one ended when the France no longer needed the Ottomans as a foil to another European power.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to a naval war with Spain the Ottoman's status in the region as the sole controller of the overland trade route to the east was threatened by the Portuguese, who some years earlier opened a trade route around the Cape of Africa. Suleyman I's answer was to build a fleet at Suez to challenge their superiority. The result was a slight uptick in the spice trade. This struggle for control continued throughout Suleyman I's reign, with the Portuguese maintaining the upper hand despite Ottoman attempts to open more ports in Abyssinia and Iraq.<sup>48</sup> Suleyman I's emphasis on securing trade routes also forced him to campaign to in Malta in order to secure Ottoman trade routes through the Mediterranean in 1562 C.E. The attempt to take Malta was unsuccessful; however, the Ottomans took the island of Chios off the Ottoman coastline. This conquest marked the end of Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean.<sup>49</sup>

In 1553 C.E., Suleyman I was forced to preemptively kill his son Prince Mustafa to ward off a revolt of succession. One of his two remaining sons, Bayezid, also rebelled in 1558 C.E. forcing Suleyman I's army to confront him. Bayezid was defeated and fled into the hands of the Safavids in Iran. In 1562 C.E. Suleyman I and the Safavid Shah concluded a treaty and Bayezid was killed, leaving Selim as the sole-surviving heir to the throne.<sup>50</sup>

Suleyman I's final campaign came in 1562 C.E. after the death of Ferdinand I in Hungary. Maximilian, Ferdinand I's son, sued for peace but still laid claim to Transylvania. In 1566 C.E. the Sultan himself, carried in a litter, lay siege to

Maximilian's forces at Szigetvár where he died on the field of battle two days before the fortress fell.<sup>51</sup> With his death in 1566 C.E. the Ottoman Empire reached its peak, covering most of the Balkans, all of Anatolia, and much of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula to include the important religious cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem (see figure 2). The Ottomans remained a predominant player in the spice trade and in the Mediterranean. Much of the successes during the age of Suleyman I can be attributed to the strength of his rule.

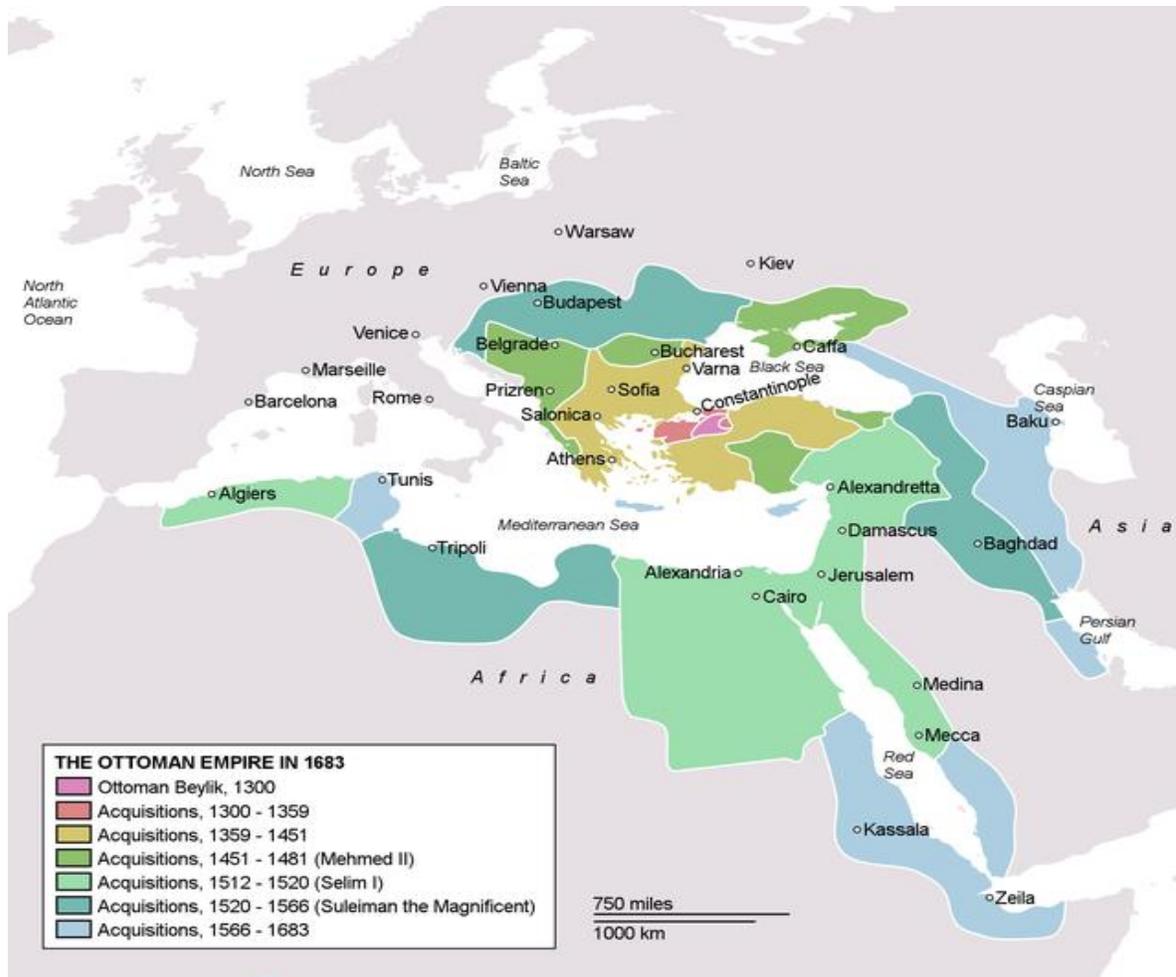


Figure 4. The Ottoman Empire in 1683 (At its Height)

Source: Wikimedia Commons. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottoman EmpireIn1683.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottoman_EmpireIn1683.png) (accessed 2 May 2009).

### The Long Decline and the End of the Ottoman Empire

Following the death of Suleyman I, the Ottoman Empire entered a period of long decline that lasted more than 350 years and spanned the rule of twenty-seven sultans. The next 350 years saw numerous campaigns to expand Ottoman influence both in the Mediterranean and in and around the Black Sea. There were moderate successes;

however, in the general sense the Empire ceded land more often than it expanded. By 1699 C.E. the Ottoman Empire lost even its most prized possession, Hungary, never to be regained.<sup>52</sup> By the early twentieth century, in an effort to thwart continuing Russian and British incursion into their territories the Ottomans sided with the Central Powers in World War I. In 1924 the Empire ceased to exist and modern Turkey was born.

The Ottoman Empire, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, extended over a million square miles,<sup>53</sup> encompassed parts of three continents and held sway over the holy sites of three different religions. It lasted almost 600 years and was an important player in the politics of Europe and the Middle East. Its lasting impact on areas of the Balkans is still felt today and has been manifested in wars in the former Yugoslavia. In order to understand the effects of the influence that the Ottomans had on the area it is important to understand it in the context of its history and its religion. The preceding history is offered as the underlying basis for the social, governmental and economic policies that the Ottomans instituted in the administration of their holdings.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter F. Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 14.

<sup>2</sup>A Ghazi is a fighter for Islam.

<sup>3</sup>Money, livestock, slaves, etc.

<sup>4</sup>Bernard Lewis, ed., *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture* (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1976), 275.

<sup>5</sup>Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 9. Kantakouzenos married his daughter Theodora to Orhan I in order to effect the alliance, a practice that later became commonplace among the Ottoman Sultans.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 276.

<sup>7</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 20.

<sup>8</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 276.

<sup>9</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 15.

<sup>10</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 276.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>14</sup>The Dar al-Harb or “House of War” is the area not controlled by Muslims.

<sup>15</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 29.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 277.

<sup>17</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 37-38.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>19</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 67.

<sup>20</sup>Lord John Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries, The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (New York: Harper Collins, 1977), 163-166.

<sup>21</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 38-39.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 39. This rebellion will be further explored in Chapter 7.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., 47-48.
- <sup>31</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 278
- <sup>32</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 48.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., 49.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 50.
- <sup>35</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 149-150.
- <sup>36</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 50.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., 51.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid..
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid.,52.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., 54.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., 55.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., 56.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup>Lewis, *The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture*, 282.
- <sup>47</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 56-57.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., 58-59.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., 60.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., 59.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., 60.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>53</sup>Peter F. Sugar, "Major Changes in the Life of the Slav Peasantry under Ottoman Rule." *International Journal of Mideast Studies*, 9, no. 3 (1978): 297-305, 297.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The role of Islam in the Ottoman Empire cannot be underemphasized as a driving force in its policies, social structures and daily life. Its inclusion as a guiding principle in all governmental decisions influenced not only those of the same faith but even those of other faiths that enjoyed protected status in the Empire. Because of this nature as both law and faith, the Ottoman Empire is built with Islam at its core and, with only a few exceptions, that core was not set aside in the name of political expediency until later years.

How the Ottomans instituted their particular form of worship and adherence to the teachings of Islam is intrinsically linked to the development of semi-autonomous communities within the empire. These communities, enabled by the religious practices explored in this chapter, were able in many ways to continue their existence as if the Ottomans had never come. Coupled with certain administrative policies, religion played an important role in pacifying the populace, less as a heavy-handed control and more as an enabler that locked people into a hierarchy in which, for the most part, they were comfortable and not likely to rebel.

This chapter will explain the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Islam, starting first with a brief history of Islam and then a general explanation of its tenets and other important facets of the religion. This chapter will also look specifically at Islam in the Ottoman Empire in both its judicial aspect and also its function as a social influence. Finally this chapter will examine the some of the societal impacts of religious practices such as conversion and slavery.

## The Origins of Islam

To understand the Ottoman Empire it is important to understand the basic origins of Islam. The name Islam derives from the Arabic word for submission, as Muslims were submissive to the will of *Allah* or God.<sup>1</sup> Islam began in 612 C.E. when Muhammad began to preach the revelations he received two years earlier just outside Mecca in Arabia. Muhammad received revelations over the next twenty-one years, usually in response to a crisis or question that rose amongst the faithful.<sup>2</sup> The Holy book of the religion is the *Koran* and it contains those revelations revealed to Muhammad over the course of his life. A basic tenet of Islam holds that the other two major religions that came before, Judaism and Christianity were revelations from the same God and that Muhammad was the final messenger. Because of the tribal nature of Arabia and since most of the inhabitants of the region were illiterate, the religion spread slowly across the Arabian Peninsula as it relied on public recitations to spread its gospels. The two most holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina, reside in present-day Saudi Arabia.

## Islamic Tenets as Pertains To the Ottomans

Islam has five basic tenets that are important to understand in the context of the Ottoman Empire. The first of these tenets is that of *Shahada*,<sup>3</sup> or witnessing to faith. The *Shahada* established a person as a Muslim or non-Muslim, and dictated their place in the social hierarchy as a *Reaya* (subjects of the state), *Askeri* (the non-tax-paying professional class) or *Zimmi* (protected members of other religions that subjected themselves to the state). The second tenet is that of *Salat* or ritual worship. This tenet prescribes the requirement for ritual prayer that praises Allah and a daily recitation of the Koran. The third tenet, *Zakat*, or the obligation to distribute one's surplus wealth to

charity, became important in the issuance of *vakifs*, or tax-free charitable enterprises in the Empire. “This broadly defined term went beyond purely pious purposes to include helping fellow human beings in every way possible. *Vakifs* supported inns, baths, hospitals, fountains, bridges, and even markets where people could earn a living.”<sup>4</sup> This became an important measure of how prosperous a person in the Ottoman Empire had become and in the later centuries was used to establish fake *vakifs* so as to avoid paying taxes on the land.<sup>5</sup> The fourth tenet is *Sawm*, or the fasting during the month of Ramadan. Finally, the fifth tenet is *Hajj*, it is the required pilgrimage to Mecca during a Muslim’s lifetime. This final tenet became more significant with the acquisition of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina from the Mamluks and remained an important consideration of the Sultans in their conduct of the various campaigns against the Safavids. Ottoman society, in general tended to follow these tenets wherever possible and much of the public buildings, roads and hospitals in the Balkans were of a direct result of the endeavors of charitable Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

Another basic element of the Muslim faith is that Muhammad was a prophet in the vein of Moses, Abraham and Jesus. However, unlike Christian beliefs, Muslims believe that Muhammad was merely a mortal chosen by Allah to relay his word to the unbelieving Arabs. Muhammad preached to his followers and any who listened that the God of Islam was no different than that of Jews and Christians. This became a major facet that the Ottomans took to heart in the administration of their conquests and its various religious societies and represented itself in the Ottoman *millets*, or religious groups that were granted a certain amount of authority and a protected status in Ottoman society.<sup>7</sup>

Another important element of Islam that manifested itself in Ottoman society was the concept of *Jihad*. Ottoman tradition, passed down from the Seljuks was that the Sultan was a “Defender of the Faith” or *ghazi* and was duty bound to wage *Jihad*,<sup>8</sup> or struggle, against those of the *Dar al-Harb*, “the House of War,” the area outside of Muslim lands. Osman picked up this mantle and passed it down to the succeeding generations of Sultans. The concept of *Jihad* is based on line 193 of the second chapter of the Koran that states, “Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God’s religion reigns supreme.” This is in almost direct opposition to line 191 of the same chapter that reads, “Fight for the sake of God those who fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love aggressors.”<sup>9</sup> This Ottoman interpretation, among other factors such as the need for more wealth to reward the *askeri*, drove the machinery of the Ottoman state toward conflict in the west against Christian lands, specifically the Balkans. Adding to this is the fact that when the Ottomans fought in Anatolia, those landholding families in the east often changed alliances and thus retained their land, leaving the Sultans with nothing to reward the military.<sup>10</sup> With the additions of Mecca and Medina during the reign of Selim I the requirement increased in order to stave off challenges to Ottoman authority as the leading nation of the Muslim religion. Interestingly the obligation to wage war against the nonbelievers of the *Dar al-Harb* did not extend to those of the Empire that were not of the faith, the *Zimmis*. This contradiction, much like the contradiction on making war on the unbelievers, is another example of selective interpretation of the Koran and its teachings that allowed the Ottoman government to style their laws in ways to encompass the wide array of individual societies that made up the Empire. This respect for those religions that accepted Ottoman rule ties directly to the

previous element of respecting all “People of the Book”<sup>11</sup> and is an important element in the *millet* system.

### The Ottoman Religious Legal System

Ottoman law practices are built around two major concepts: *Sharīa* law and *kanun* law. The Ottomans, as Muslims, were obliged to follow the law of Islam or *Sharīa* law as set forth in the *Koran*. *Sharīa* law is composed of the *Hadiths*, those statements by the prophet and the first Caliphs that are considered genuine, the rulings and consensus of the learned, and the *Koran*.<sup>12</sup> Within the Sunni sect of Islam there are four schools of jurisprudence, known as *madhhabs*.<sup>13</sup> The Ottomans favored the most liberal of the four, the *hanifite madhhab*. In addition to those religious laws the Sultans established the *kanun* laws, which were a group of secular laws that fell outside the purview of those as stated in the *Koran*. Many of these *kanun* laws relied on tradition and a few were adopted from the other cultures that the Ottomans conquered such as the Byzantines. The Sultans used these laws where *Sharīa* law did not have an established precedent although they tended to be in line with Islamic law. The *kanuns* issued during a Sultan’s lifetime were only good until his death, however in practice successors almost immediately adopted the laws set forth by the predecessor. In succeeding years, the Sultans used those *kanun* laws to a greater degree to enforce their will.<sup>14</sup> *Kanuns* were also useful along with the great emphasis placed on good treatment of the “people of the book” to keep the *Reaya* in line and happy with their role as producers.<sup>15</sup>

Those who manned the judicial system were of the *Ulema*, or the learned class (also called the *ilmiye and diniye* class)<sup>16</sup> that was educated in Islamic law and Islamic sciences. This class is composed of judges (*kadis*), who administered both *Sharīa* and

*Kanun* law, the *muftis* who interpreted *Sharīa* law, scientists, as well as the cultural and religious leaders of Ottoman society. Among the *kadis* there was a hierarchy with the highest levels occupied by the *kadiasker*, or military judges. *Kadiasker* oversaw the court system and presided over districts called *kazas*, which were subdivided into *nahiyes* that were in turn presided over by sub-judges known as *naibs*.<sup>17</sup> *Kadis* at all levels served at the discretion of the Sultan and were often rotated through posts much the same as other administrators in the empire, often with terms of three years in the sixteenth-century that were reduced to eighteen months by the eighteenth-century.<sup>18</sup> This practice ensured that the local populace a *kadi* administered remained relatively passive in their allegiance to local officials as they were not tenured for long. This process held true for the *timar* holders as well and will be covered more in depth in the following chapter. Among the *muftis*, who were empowered to make rulings based on *Sharīa* law, the most powerful was the *Şeyhülislam* who could issue powerful religious rulings (*fetvas*) that were capable of deposing even the sultans. *Muftis* at lower levels could issue *fetvas* on issues that arose in their territories.<sup>19</sup> Litigants could take their grievances to either the local mufti (or naib) or to their own religious authorities, if they were a member of one of the *millets*, this allowed the populace to “shop around” for the best ruling.<sup>20</sup>

One important consideration in the application of law within Ottoman society is that it was not centrally administered equally across the empire. Rather the application of laws was entirely dependent on the territory in which a person resided, and was influenced by a person’s sex, occupation, religion and status in society.<sup>21</sup> This applicability of laws to single individuals had far-reaching effects across the empire as it

allowed for leniency in the application of laws, generally applying the most liberal interpretations where it suited the government.

### The Millet

Because *Sharīa* law only applies to Muslims, the Ottomans formed the *millet* system, in which a few recognized religious/ethnic groups such as Jews and Armenians as well as the Orthodox were granted authority within their community to enforce their own religious laws.<sup>22</sup> There are at least two precedents for the *millet* system as introduced in the Ottoman Empire. One precedent is Sassanid Iran in which leaders of other religions held a similar status as in the Ottoman system; the other precedent is Justinian whose treatment of the Jews resembles the Jewish *millet* in the Ottoman Empire. In 1453 C.E. Mehmed II formally instituted the *millet* system. The first established *millets* were the Armenian and Orthodox *millets*, the Jewish *millet*, however, was not formally established until 1839 C.E., even though it acted independently and had an appointed head (*millet başı*). Mehmed II's ulterior motive for the creation of the Orthodox *millet* dates back to the conquest of Constantinople, which Mehmed declared as his new capitol and renamed Istanbul. In order to rebuild the capitol Mehmed needed to integrate the existing population, many of which were Orthodox. Also the Orthodox were opponents of Roman Catholics so they provided a potential ally against a common foe. Mehmed went so far as to appoint the first head of the Orthodox *millet*, Gennadius, a monk and outspoken enemy of the Roman Catholics. The creation of only one Orthodox *millet* led to conflict between the different Orthodox groups, especially in the Balkans in the eighteenth century. The *millet başı* of the Orthodox and Armenian *millets* were allowed to appoint their own subordinate leadership and allowed to institute their own rulings to those that fell under

their purview. As already stated the Jewish *millet* was not formally recognized until 1839 C.E., however, Mehmed conferred the title of *Haham başi* on the chief rabbi of Istanbul in the same year that he created the other *millets* and unlike the other two *millets* after the first *Haham başi* passed the rest were elected from within rather than appointed by the Sultan. The *millet* system was instrumental in providing almost complete autonomous rule to many of the outlying areas where the populace may or may not see a representative of the central government; whether a *timar* holder, religious official or *derviş*, or a tax collector, for long periods of time.<sup>23</sup>

### Muslim Resettlement

Muslims resettled throughout the Balkans and elsewhere in the empire as wars were conducted and new lands conquered. Most that stayed in these newly conquered rural areas tended to be *timar* holders and *sipahis* who served the central government in their military capacity. These, however, rarely tended to stay in an area longer than three years, serving to the end of their appointments and then moving on. The armies of the empire brought with them *derviş* that often established schools, hostels (*zaviyes*) and houses of worship (*tekkes*) in the wake of the advancing army and became part of the administration in local areas. These institutions, because of their practices were often able to assimilate to the local beliefs and practices, easing the transition of new settlers and the existing populace.<sup>24</sup> Additionally the Ottoman government forcibly resettled many nomadic tribes of Turcomans into the area to remove their influence from the east and Anatolia. These resettled Muslims were often settled at key locations such as along trade routes, at major cities and fortified strongholds--most often near centers of trade. These resettlements and the addition of the *sipahis*, *timar* holders and administrators had the

effect of increasing the number and influence of Muslims in certain areas of Rumelia and the Balkans.<sup>25</sup>

### Religious Conversion

Most religious conversions, throughout the empire, tended to be voluntary, generally as a means of convenience, as Muslims received preferential treatment for the best jobs and positions in society. Additionally Muslims were exempted from most taxes; so beyond the prestige of being a Muslim in an Islamic nation there were obvious financial gains to be made by converting.<sup>26</sup> Before the major conquests of Selim I in the east, the majority of Ottoman subjects were not Muslim. If they all chose to convert the empire stood to lose a significant number of slaves and revenue, indeed as the following quote illustrates there were significant arguments against pushing for large numbers of conversions. “Their leaders, the *Ulema*, desired to organize and administer the Ottoman Empire in the manner of Syria and Iraq, where the governments were based on agriculture, industry and commerce; and they were more eager to tax unbelievers than to convert them.”<sup>27</sup>

Another, and perhaps the most compelling, reason for conversion is that when the first soldiers ventured into the west they brought with them *akhis*, or members of a mystic fraternity who were responsible for the establishment of the first Islamic institutions in Europe. Both they and many of the Islamic traveling holy men of the Empire, the *derviş*, practiced a form of Sufism that closely aligned with the Christian folk religions already existing in the Balkans and other conquered territories. The similarities in the two forms of religion allowed the populace to retain much of their own heritage and religious customs and therefore conversion was much easier.<sup>28</sup>

Forced conversions in the empire were very rare, but there were important exceptions. In the instance of the *devşirme* they were compulsory, again however the *derviş* that accompanied the officials that levied the child tax tended to be of the Bektaşî order and had customs that were not that far removed from Christian customs, such as baptism and wine drinking.<sup>29</sup> This similarity, along with the other advantages of conversion available to even slaves, made the conversion relatively painless. The *devşirme* will be further examined in following chapters. There are also examples, especially among the Albanians, where mass conversions occurred and the *devşirme* encouraged as a way to support the empire and improve their position.

Persecution of Christians and Jews did occur throughout the empire, however, most cases tended to come from the newly converted persecuting their fellow kinsman as they tended to be the most fanatical in their conservatism.<sup>30</sup> Across most of the empire those of different religions were able to coexist peacefully so long as the *Zimmis* and slaves followed the rules and continued to pay the required taxes. Indeed within these two groups there were certain advantages afforded to them because of their protected status, such as the ability to retain property and the ability to work within the government and its highest administrations.

### Slavery

Slavery was an integral part of Ottoman society because it provided the government with much of its labor force and was considered a source of wealth. Slavery was permitted by *Sharīa* law; however, it was only permitted to take slaves from newly conquered lands and only of non-Muslims usually amounting to one-fifths of the captured.<sup>31</sup> *Zimmis* were protected from becoming slaves as long as they continued to pay

their taxes. According to Sharia law a Muslim woman is only permitted to marry one man and he must be of equal station.<sup>32</sup> A Muslim man, however, is permitted to marry up to four wives and is allowed to marry a non-Muslim. This was important, especially in the case of the sultans who often took more than one non-Muslim wife in order to cement a political agreement. Slaves came to be trusted members of Ottoman society and were often trusted to carry out transactions on their master's behalf. Also slaves often adopted the status of the households in which they served--the slave of an elite ranked above the slave of a commoner.<sup>33</sup> Slaves could be freed by a number of ways with the simplest being a declaration of their freedom by their master. Slaves that converted to Islam remained slaves but their manumission was strongly encouraged. Additionally the children of slaves took the status of their mothers with the children of Muslim slaves becoming free. Because the conversion of slaves to the religion of their masters was commonplace there was always a need for new slaves.<sup>34</sup>

In the Ottoman Empire, religion played an invaluable role in the formation of the empire, its social and governmental institutions, and its strategic aims. Its role in pacification of the various ethnic and religious groups conquered by the Ottomans cannot be overlooked as it was responsible in its many forms for more inclusionary practices than exclusionary ones. Additionally, in many respects, it helps to stratify the population in such a way that it left those on the outside, the *millet*, able to self regulate without impinging in their religious beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup>Caesar E. Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observances*. 5th ed. (Hauppauge: Barron's, 1994), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup>Hina Azam. "SparkCharts: Islam." (SparkNotes LLC., 2004)

<sup>4</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. vol. V*, 19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>7</sup>Hina Azam. "SparkCharts: Islam." (SparkNotes LLC., 2004)

<sup>8</sup>Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observances. 5th Edition*, 154-155.

<sup>9</sup>N.J. Dawood, ed., *The Koran* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 29.

<sup>10</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 18.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>13</sup>The four madhhabs: the hanifite, who followed the teachings of Abu-Hanifa, the malakite who followed Malik ibn-Anas's teachings, the shafi'i after Muhammad ibn-Idris al-Shāfi'i and the hanbalites who followed the interpretations of Ahmad ibn-Hanbal

<sup>14</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 43.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 40. This class will be further described in the following chapter on Ottoman society.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>18</sup>Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994),40.

<sup>19</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 40-41.

<sup>20</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 139.

<sup>21</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 7.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>23</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 43.

<sup>24</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 18-19.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 6. The Ottomans instituted a poll tax, known as *cizye*, that all non-Muslims subjects were required to pay.

<sup>27</sup>Sydney Nettleton Fisher, "Civil Strife in the Ottoman Empire, 1481-1503." *The Journal of Modern History* 13, no. 4 (1941): 449-466, 454.

<sup>28</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 52-54.

<sup>29</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 124.

<sup>30</sup>W. Miller, "Europe and the Ottoman Power before the Nineteenth Century." *The English Historical Review* 16, no. 63 (1901): 452-471, 466.

<sup>31</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 131.

<sup>32</sup>Equal station is defined as being Muslim.

<sup>33</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 130.

<sup>34</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 13.

## CHAPTER 4

### GOVERNANCE, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Never a homogeneous polity, the Ottoman Empire was an enormous and intricate network of social subsystems.<sup>1</sup>

The Ottoman Empire's reputation as a military state cannot be underemphasized. From its beginnings as a small *emirate*, under the leadership of Osman, Ottoman society has been centered on the nation's ability to wage and fund wars. This war-making ability, along with the requirements of religion, was the principal influences on the development of the unique socio-economic and governmental structure that evolved in Ottoman government. These structures, and the variants specific to the various areas in the Ottoman Empire, are the major reasons that they were able to rule over such cultural and religiously diverse areas, rather than the mere threat of military intervention.

#### Society

Below the sultan Ottoman society in general was divided in two different ways. The first way, along religious lines, distinguished between Muslim and *Zimmi* and meant roughly the difference between full and second class citizen. This made a great difference in the opportunities and positions of state open to members of the two groups and in taxation. The second way was the distinction between those who were connected with the state and its institutions, and those who were not.<sup>2</sup>

Ottoman society, at its basest level, breaks down into two main social groups: the *Reaya*, those whose labor produced goods and services required by the Empire, and the *Askeri*, or the professional or "military" class whose responsibility was to administrate and protect the state and wage its wars. These two groups were further broken down based on occupation and economic status. Additionally there is another important

breakdown between Muslim and non-Muslim, as discussed in the previous chapter, which additionally defined social stature between classes. Non-Muslims are also broken down by those who are represented within a *millet* and those who are not. It is this complex stratification of society that provided the framework for assimilation of the conquered peoples within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

The professional class (*askeri*) is composed of four major groups; the *mülkiye*, the *kalemiye*, the *seyfiye* and the *ilmiye*. The *mülkiye*, numbering in the thousands, performed duties in and amongst the royal palace, generally staying within its confines until such time that they achieved sufficient rank or tenure and were transferred to a position of similar standing outside the palace. The *mülkiye* consisted of the *birun* and *enderun* which corresponded with their physical location within the palace. The *birun*, or “outer service” contained a great variety of craftsmen, services, corresponding schools for the craftsmen and services, various governmental offices and the schools for the janissaries, the *Kapıkulu* military units and offices of the central government. Also members of the *birun* were the imperial council, whose members comprised the bulk of the central government. All members of the imperial council (*divan-i hümayun*) held the rank of *vezir* and served under the leadership of the grand *vezir*. The *birun* were located on the outside of the Gate of Felicity (*Bāb-i sa’ādet*). This stood in contrast to the *enderun* who were located within the confines of the Gate and had access to the sultan and the imperial family. Members of the *birun* could be either freeborn or slave unlike the *enderun* in which almost all were slaves, most Christian-born Europeans culled through the *devşirme*. The slaves brought in through the *devşirme* were trained in the school of pages and then progressed through other schools depending on their abilities. Those that

excelled would eventually hold some of the highest offices of the land. The *kalemiye* or the group of scribes were the chief financial officials of the government and were responsible for disbursing funds from the state treasury and indirectly for collecting taxes. Principle members of this group were the *defterdars* and their provincial subordinates. Additionally this class was responsible, much as their name suggests as the drafters of proclamations and treaty and keepers of official records. The third subgroup within the *askeri* was the *seyfiye*, or the military. In the strictest sense there are only two types of military men, the *timarli* (*timar* holders) and the *maasli*, the salaried slaves of the sultan's army. Irregulars represented a third type but were not officially considered *seyfiye*. The *seyfiye* group will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five. The first three groups were historically, since Turkic tribal days, all considered military and hence the *askeri* in general is generally referred to as the "military class". The final subgroup of the *askeri* was the *ilmiye and diniye* class. This group represented the cultural and religious classes and is comprised of the *ulema* which also include for obvious reasons the legal profession as it was primarily based on religious law. Members of this class were educated in schools called *medresses* that were supported by *vakifs* (previously discussed in Chapter 3).<sup>4</sup>

The *Reaya*, consisting of both Muslims and *Zimmis*, were the overwhelming majority of the Ottoman population whose duty was to support the professional Ottoman establishment.<sup>5</sup> The *Reaya* or "flock" were primarily peasants that cultivated the sultan's lands through contractual agreement administered by a fief holder, most often a *timar* holder,<sup>6</sup> thus the family farm was the basic unit of the *Reaya*.<sup>7</sup> Indeed in certain areas taxes were levied if the peasants left the land uncultivated. In some instances this tax

could have the effect of tying peasants to a particular area; however, if the peasant was replaced he was only required to pay tax for the year in which he left. It is apparent that these taxes were clearly aimed at keeping the land cultivated.<sup>8</sup> Most importantly the *Reaya* were the tax-payers of the empire, with the Muslims paying the land use tax and the non-Muslims subject to that tax and all others. Tax revenues and surplus foodstuffs produced by the farms were intrinsically linked to the empire's ability to wage war and perpetuate its economic engine.

In the Ottoman Empire all *Reaya* belonged to an officially listed class that were ranked according to their importance. On the higher end of the *Reaya* were the craftsmen, members of various guilds and merchants, on the lower end, the gypsies and those with no visible permanent affiliation.<sup>9</sup> Structures were very fixed within these classes but there was room for movement within a class. Figure 5, below, shows quite clearly the hierarchal nature of the social structure in Ottoman society with the sultan at its pinnacle and the remainder clearly striated by both religious and class distinctions.

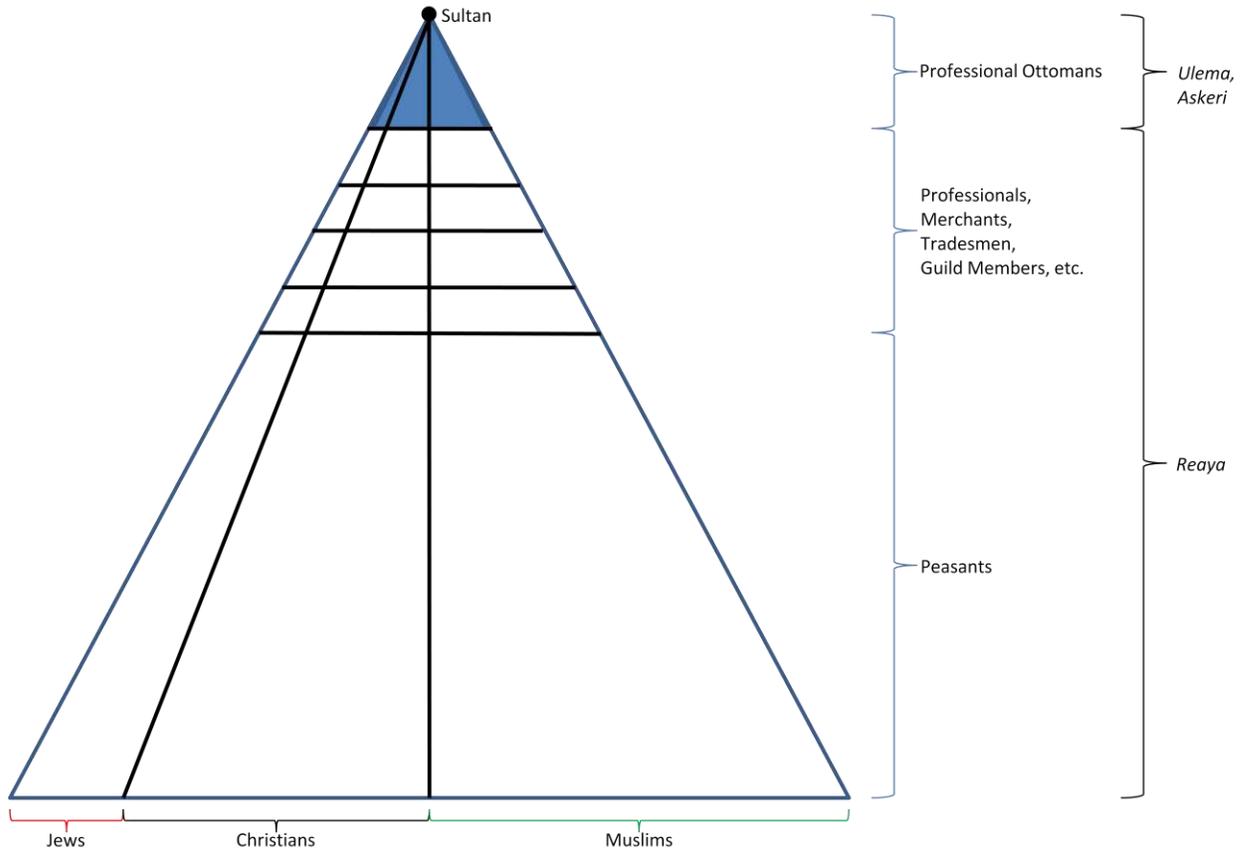


Figure 5. A Visual Representation of the Ottoman Social System  
 Source: Adapted from a similar representation by Peter F. Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 32.

### Guilds and Merchants

Part social system, part governmental structure and part economic engine were the system of guilds that permeated Ottoman society.<sup>10</sup> All but the peasantry lived in the cities and almost all of the inhabitants of the cities in the Ottoman Empire belonged to one of the guilds. The population of the cities was therefore made up of the guild members, soldiers of the local garrison and civil, military, and religious officials. Guild membership was independent of religious affiliation; members had only to be craftsmen

of the same type and often worked in the same areas of the *bedestans*, or markets, in the cities and were treated equally within the guild. At the lowest levels of the guilds, called the *esnaf*, were the groups that serviced the local markets. On the high end of the spectrum were the *tüccars* or *bazirgans*, merchants responsible for trade across the empire.<sup>11</sup> Besides the obvious economic function, the guilds also served a social function in that they acted as a community aid organization, helping orphans, widows and those in need.<sup>12</sup> Guilds had two leaders; the *şeyh* who was responsible for the religious, moral and beneficial activities and was considered the head of the organization, and the *kethüda* who was perhaps the more important leader of the two in the organization. The *kethüda* was responsible as the economic head of the guild and was selected from within the ranks of the guild. Within the guilds there was another important hierarchy that differentiated masters and apprentices. The masters, known as *usta*, were full members of the guild and were afforded the ability to own and run a shop. In many cases *usta* had under them *kalfas*, full-members who were unable to open their own shops, due most often to controls that limited the number of shops in each city. Also in the hierarchy were the *gediks* or journeymen, and the *çiraks* or apprentices.<sup>13</sup>

The complex social system employed by the Ottomans throughout their holdings nested nicely with existing systems already in place in most of their acquisitions allowing them to minimize turbulence as they conquered an area.<sup>14</sup> This coupled with the existence of the *millets* to accommodate differences in religion made for a relatively stable social organization. The stability created by this social structure, when enhanced by the governance structures at the local level greatly inhibited collective action against the government.<sup>15</sup>

## Governance

The Ottoman state was a patriarchal society centered on the Sultan who presided as head of the household with his dynasty constituting his family and his subjects, his flock. In order to achieve a functioning central government it was necessary to institute a level of bureaucracy that enabled the Sultan to control his subjects and the means of acquiring wealth, the ability to wage war. In the process the Sultan was required to provide his subjects the opportunity to prosper and therefore provide a base for taxation. To accomplish these requirements the Sultan needed to provide his subjects with the rule of law and the perception that the central government, and by extension the Sultan, were looking out for the best interests of the common subjects of the realm.<sup>16</sup>

At the national level the Ottoman government begins with the Sultan. As illustrated in chapter two the Ottoman dynasty had relatively humble beginnings outside of Söğüt in northwest Anatolia. Growing from a small *emirate* in the midst of the crumbling Seljuk dynasty, Osman was able to evoke the ideal of the *ghazi* warrior, utilizing it to build an empire that would eventually supplant both the Byzantine and Seljuk empires. The *ghazi* mentality would serve all the Sultans all the way to the height of the empire under Suleyman I in that it provided a focus for the government and succeeding sultans, the expansion of the *Dar al-Islam*, “the realm of Islam.” In order to meet the ideal of the *ghazi* the Sultan was required to raise and support an army and in order to do that must have an adequate tax base. The governments formed by the sultans in the Ottoman Empire recognized this and they built an administration capable of providing sufficient stability for their citizens with a strong central bureaucracy to support its upkeep.

In the Ottoman Empire the sultan was much more than a figurehead. In the beginning of the Ottoman dynasty the sultan was expected to ride at the head of his army in all battles. This, along with seasonal restrictions, limited the expansion of the empire to either the east or the west and would provide crucial periods for the citizens on the opposite side of the empire to assimilate to their new government and its rules or in a few cases to stray from them.<sup>17</sup> Eventually this practice diminished as the sultans became more and more isolated following an incident in which Bayezid II was attacked and almost killed in 1492 C.E.<sup>18</sup> Another important power of the sultan was his ability to make and enforce laws. As already discussed, the Ottoman Empire primarily relied on *Sharīa* law as the law of the land but the Sultan, and in some case some of his appointed officials, were enabled to make laws, known as *kanun* laws, for issues that fell outside of the purview of Muslim law. These laws often served two purposes; one, they allowed the sultan to extend his influence into all areas of Ottoman life; two, they allowed the sultan to institute laws in certain communities that incorporated existing laws so as to lessen the impact of inclusion into the empire. The latter is especially important in the Balkans, when coupled with some of the other liberal religious practices that were implemented in the new territories, in making the transition to the Ottoman Empire. Perhaps the most important of the sultan's powers was his ability to award land. In the Ottoman Empire the concept of private property was absent<sup>19</sup>--all property belonged to the sultan and thus all proceeds from the property were his to do with as he pleased. This concept would be the basis for the *timar* system that will be described in more detail in the economic portion of this chapter and in the chapter on the Ottoman military.

Under the sultan were the immediate members of his court and family. They comprised the imperial court, along with the harem and the slaves that functioned within the royal court at the palace. Most important to the central government were the members of the imperial council, known as the *divan-i hümayun*. Members of the imperial council all held the rank of *vezir* and served under the presidency of the Grand *Vezir*.<sup>20</sup> Almost all were *Kapıkulus* who had been educated in the *enderun* schools and brought up in the palace in the service of the sultan. The imperial council was comprised of the following (in order of rank and prestige):<sup>21</sup>

I. Grand *Vezir*. The Grand *Vezir* served as the president of the imperial council and wielded great authority, including controlling access to the Sultan. Many of the Grand *Vezirs* were of Christian origins and became slaves through the *devşirme*. There is anecdotal evidence that the Grand *Vezirs* often remembered the land of their origins and were sometime sympathetic to its needs.<sup>22</sup>

II. *Kadiaskers* of Rum, Anatolia. The *kadiaskers* of Rum and Anatolia were the highest judicial functionaries of the realm. The *kadiaskers* were described in detail in the previous chapter. In this and all other cases where there was more than one geographical area represented, the precedence went first to Rum, then Anatolia and then Africa.

III. *Beylerbeyis* of Rum, Anatolia. The *beylerbeyis* were the chief provincial administrators of Europe and Asia. Their principal duty was to act as the governor-general for either Rum or Anatolia. They held great power, both administratively and militarily, as part of the *timar* system as they were, in essence, *timar* holders of the greatest magnitude.

IV. Defterdars of Rum, Anatolia, Africa. The *defterdars* held the purse strings of the empire and were directly responsible for disbursing funds from the royal treasury and indirectly for the collection of taxes within their respective provinces. The *defterdars* were members of the *kalemiye* class of the *askeri*. Of all the members of the imperial council the *defterdars* and their subordinates exerted the most direct influence on the populace.

V. Janissary ağa. The *ağa* was the head of the *Janissaries* and an important military member of the imperial council.

VI. Kapudan-i derya. The head of the Ottoman navy was known as the *kapudan-i derya*. He represented both the military and the small Ottoman navy in the imperial council.

VII. Nişancı. Known as chancellor or the secretary of the imperial council, the *nişancı* had the primary responsibility of affixing the sultan's official seal to documents, thus ensuring their authenticity. He was also responsible for ensuring that the clerks and scribes who produced documents adhered to the strict standards established by the *kalemiye* schools.<sup>23</sup> The *nişancı* were most often Muslim Turks in origin and had been educated in the religious schools, specializing in scribal arts rather than religion. This was one exception to having former Christians staff the imperial council.<sup>24</sup> The *nişancı* remained in the palace never left the presence of the sultan.

### Provincial Government

The Ottoman State started with a centralized pattern of direct control through appointed officials, then went through an interim period of mixed center-periphery control, and ended up developing a system of indirect control through local notables.<sup>25</sup>

Provincial governments in the Ottoman Empire were modeled after the central government and had all the divisions of the imperial council represented in the leadership of the province with the *beylerbey* acting as the “sultan” for the province. First and foremost the governors were responsible for controlling the *sipahis* and for fighting smaller engagements or providing forces for larger ones.<sup>26</sup> Below the governors were the district governors and under those the district officials comprising the various subunits of the governor’s province.<sup>27</sup> Within the provincial administration were representatives of the *kalemiye*, responsible for recordkeeping on each of the holdings, another was responsible as the property registrar and treasurer of the province. These were appointed by the central government and were responsible for reporting both to the central government and the governor. Another important personage in the provincial government was the chief of the order executors, or *kâhya* of the *çavuşes*, who was responsible to execute orders from both the central government and the governor or a ruling from one of the *kadis* (judges).<sup>28</sup> Other important functionaries of the provincial government included the various representatives of the *ilmiye-diniye* class, the *kadis*, *muftis* and *naibs* responsible for teaching and administering both *Sharīa* and *kanun* laws, of which the latter could vary greatly from province to province.<sup>29</sup>

Appointments in the Ottoman Empire were almost always based on merit and were rotated generally every three years. This served two purposes, first it allowed the Sultan to appoint positions as rewards, as the need arose. Second, and perhaps more importantly it kept officials from becoming entrenched in a particular location, acquiring wealth and power to rival the sultan.<sup>30</sup> From the perspective of the ruled it often meant that when problems with the local leadership arose they could wait out the current

leadership and hope for better results when new leadership arrived.<sup>31</sup> *Timar* holders also rotated as decided by the Sultan through appointment and therefore did not necessarily build the status of landed-elites with the peasants of a particular area therefore the “landholding cavalry had no structural base for mounting a challenge to the state,”<sup>32</sup> as they were without means to establish enough resources to mount a true challenge had they had a reason to rebel. This system, along with the other self-governing aspects afforded the peasantry, greatly reduced the possibility of revolt and rebellion.

At the local level, much of life remained unchanged with the arrival of the Ottomans as evidenced by the following quote: “This transfer of ownership [conquest] naturally affected the people living on these lands, but in general the people regarded the change of lords as advantageous and became ‘loyal subjects’ of the sultan.”<sup>33</sup> The Ottomans tended to absorb those existing social structures that did not interfere with rule by the central government and adapt the ones that became too strong, leaving life relatively intact.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Ottoman government exhibited strong ties between the administrators and the central government. However, the ties within the local communities were weak as they were split between *millet*, guild, ethnicity and family unit. This strong central government with a weak periphery, enhanced by the opportunity for local control by existing social structures, ensured a relatively contented populace.<sup>35</sup> Add to the weak controls within the periphery a gradual increase in absenteeism of *timar* holders brought on by a change in the mentality of the upper and middle class that strove for the life of “the non-productive gentleman of means” and the citizenry remained relatively unsupervised by the central government.<sup>36</sup>

## Economics

If the ultimate aim of the Ottoman Empire was to extend the *Dar al-Islam* and to rid itself of threats to its hegemony in the near east then the Ottomans required a substantial military presence in order to achieve those goals. Since a robust and well-equipped army requires significant capital to maintain it, it stands to reason that the empire required a robust economic model to keep the military machine running. To do this the empire instituted a reward-based system built around the military machine known as the *timar* system. That system, coupled with the regular trade of goods through the Silk Road that traversed the Anatolian countryside provided the economic model that sustained the empire.<sup>37</sup> Overland trade through the Silk Road eventually gave way to shipping as the predominant trade route between east and west and fueled the Ottoman emphasis on securing shipping lanes in the Mediterranean and both the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden.

The predominant form of income for the empire was the collection of taxes on its citizenry and their goods, services and acquired wealth. To this end the government is heavily tilted toward the levy of taxes and the institutions that support its creation. Taxes were required of almost all citizens of the Ottoman Empire in one way or another. Even though there was a prohibition against taxing Muslims, many were forced to pay a land use tax, known as the *haraç*.<sup>38</sup> Non-Muslims were required to pay a number of taxes including the *cizye*, or poll tax. Taxes were also levied at every stage of a product's development, from raw materials to finished product and the transport thereof. Additionally there were taxes on needed documents, taxes for getting married and taxes for remaining unmarried after a certain age, inheritance taxes--almost every facet of a

*Zimmi*'s life was taxed.<sup>39</sup> Taxation was so prevalent that being afforded an exemption was a major coup for a *Zimmi*. One such group was the *Voynuks* of Bulgaria. The *Voynuks* were afforded tax-exempt status in exchange for the special services they rendered, rearing horses and tending the imperial stables.<sup>40</sup> Other such groups that served in a military function and were loosely considered *askeri* were granted this status.<sup>41</sup> Taxation, however oppressive, also had its perks, as those who paid and were willing subjects of the empire were afforded the protections of the government. In fact, the Sultan and all other Muslim leaders were required by Islamic tradition to serve the best interests of both producer and consumer.<sup>42</sup> Taxes were often considered a communal responsibility in the Ottoman Empire. Some taxes such as those centrally mandated by the state, related to provisioning the army and navy, were levied against the community as a whole with each member paying according to his ability. Rather than having the effect of uniting the community against the central government, complaints registered by villages often concerned forcing freeloaders to pay rather than the unfairness of the taxes.<sup>43</sup>

One of the principal tax-producing entities was the *timar*. The holder of the *timar* was entitled to certain privileges contingent on his performing certain tasks such as providing the requisite number of cavalry (*sipahi*) to serve the Sultan. In return for the performance of these tasks the *timar* holder was entitled to the revenue from the land. On a *timar* there was a portion of land reserved for the *timarli* and his family (depending on the size of the *timar* there was generally enough land for one son and sometime more). This holding was determined by the size of the entire holding and the fertility of the land. Each family farm unit was responsible to pay the *timar* holder a *çift resmi*, which was a combined tax equal to about twenty-two *akçes* that was collected in goods and services.

Additionally some *timar* holders were able to extract additional taxes based on custom, including a tax that paid for the tax collectors.<sup>44</sup> Peasant families enjoyed a certain amount of tenure on the lands they farmed. Provided they paid their taxes and continued to cultivate the land peasants were allowed by *kanun* laws to inherit lands within the family. Additionally they could not be driven from, nor could they willingly leave, their lands unless there was another who was acceptable to both the *timar* holder and the village that could take on the new lands and afford the transfer tax. Because this system discouraged movement it had the affect of stabilizing the peasantry. “The security of tenure and property was something new for the peasants of southeastern Europe, something they did not enjoy before the Ottoman takeover.”<sup>45</sup> The system worked because the peasantry was provided with both economic and legal security and the *timar* holders were provided with the income they desired - the *timar* holders had no interest in the land itself as long as they continued to accumulate wealth. Because they were left to a large extent to their own devices the peasantry prospered, increased in numbers and continued to produce the goods required across the empire.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, “The interests of the *timar* holder were best served when he collected his share of the taxes, which allowed him to live, to feed and clothe his retinue, and to attend to war.”<sup>47</sup>

Price controls were another important facet of the Ottoman economic system. Prices, weights and quality were strictly monitored in the Ottoman system according to the Islamic tradition<sup>48</sup> that also ensured equal rights for both consumers and producers.<sup>49</sup> Prices were regulated according to changes in the markets and demand.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, profits were strictly restricted to ten percent<sup>51</sup> for all but the *tüccars* and *bazirgans*, who enjoyed greater autonomy than most other citizens in order to ensure that goods and

services continued unabated across the empire.<sup>52</sup> Control of the cities, merchants and regulation of prices were the central government's main tool in ensuring that the citizenry were fed and the elites of the government contented.<sup>53</sup>

The complex Ottoman system of governance, its societal institutions and its economic system were the primary tool for incorporating the diverse cultures and peoples of its acquisitions. The social makeup of Ottoman society ensured that everyone had a place and it relied on controls, both economic and religious, to make sure that movement was relatively restrictive. The lack of upward mobility had a stabilizing affect on society and dampened the probability for collective action against either the central government or local ones. When economic factors that make it prohibitive to rise against the administration are added, the populace has no incentive to rise against the elites in society. Additionally, the Ottomans' emphasis in respecting existing social and religious structures as long as they did not interfere with the central government provided the basis for a stable society.

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Nature of Balkan Society under Ottoman Rule." *Slavic Review* 21, no. 4 (1962): 597-616, 597.

<sup>2</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 33.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 34-41.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>6</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 245.

<sup>7</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 109-110.

<sup>8</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 205.

<sup>9</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 77.

<sup>10</sup>The economic and governmental role of the guilds will be covered later in this chapter in the sections on governance and economics.

<sup>11</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 77-78.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>15</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 11.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>17</sup>These instances will be covered in Chapter 6.

<sup>18</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 40. Bayezid II was nearly killed by a derviş near Prilep while returning from a campaign in Albania.

<sup>19</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 40.

<sup>20</sup>This point is disputed by Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 160. In which he states that not all members of the imperial council held the rank of vezir.

<sup>21</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 35-36.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 58. Sugar provides two examples of this phenomenon, Ibrahim paşa and Mehmed Sokollu, who were both cited for endeavoring to provide for their families and native lands while serving as Grand Vezir.

<sup>23</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 160.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>25</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 2.

<sup>26</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 42.

<sup>27</sup>These will be further described in the section on economics and in the chapter on the Ottoman military.

<sup>28</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 42-43.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>30</sup>Karen Barkey, "Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early Seventeenth-Century France and the Ottoman Empire." *American Sociological Review* 56, no. 6 (1991): 699-715, 704.

<sup>31</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 139.

<sup>32</sup>Barkey, "Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early Seventeenth-Century France and the Ottoman Empire." *American Sociological Review*, 707.

<sup>33</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 17.

<sup>34</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 44.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>36</sup>Carl M. Kortepeter, "Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 86, no. 2 (1966): 86-113, 109.

<sup>37</sup>Traian Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant." *The Journal of Economic History* 20, no. 2 (1960): 234-313, 238.

<sup>38</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 43.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>40</sup>Kortepeter, "Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 98.

<sup>41</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 39-40.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>43</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 112-113

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>45</sup>Peter F. Sugar, "Major Changes in the Life of the Slav Peasantry under Ottoman Rule." *International Journal of Mideast Studies* 9, no. 3 (1978): 297-305, 300.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 300.

<sup>47</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 111.

<sup>48</sup>This refers to the Ihtisāb, a body of laws regulating fair trade and public morals.

<sup>49</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 80.

<sup>50</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 42.

<sup>51</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 81.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 81,84.

<sup>53</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 41.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE OTTOMAN MILITARY

The Ottoman military apparatus was such an integral part of Ottoman civilization that it is difficult to separate it from the workings of everyday society and discuss it as purely the war-making arm of the Ottoman Empire. This chapter will break it down into its various parts and discuss its function as both military arm and to some degree its social and economic elements as discussed in the previous chapters. Since one of the stated aims of the Ottoman Empire was to embody the *ghazi* mentality and extend the *Dar al-Islam* it was necessary to field a large enough standing army to acquire and hold territory. To do so required the Ottomans to incorporate the army into every part of society--a practice that served it well as long as it continued to acquire territory.

#### The Askeri

The *askeri* class represented what the Ottomans considered the military class. In truth this class had sub-groups that had functions that today are not considered traditional military functions. Since the terms *Reaya* and *askeri* were also used for tax purposes to denote those that were eligible to pay or those that were tax-exempt, it makes sense to group the latter into a single group. In the true sense of the word, the *seyfiye* subclass is really the class that represents the military. The *seyfiye* constituted the Muslim portion of the Ottoman military, its officers and administrators and the *Sipahi* (cavalry). Additionally there were also the forces comprised of slaves (*kuls*) either gained by conquest or through the *devşirme* that made up a significant portion of the military known as the *Kapıkulus* of which the famous *Janissaries* were a part.

### The *Devşirme*

In order to understand the Ottoman military it is essential to understand how they acquired the human component to staff their forces. As discussed previously the Ottomans often took slaves as part of a conquest. Those slaves of suitable age were often pressed into military service in the *Kapıkulu* corps. Another very important source of manpower was those culled through the *devşirme*, or child levy. The *devşirme* is believed to have started with the reign of Murad I who is also credited with organizing the first *Janissary* unit.<sup>1</sup>

The *devşirme* began with an edict from the Sultan as to the number and area from which the slaves were to be obtained. An officer traveled to the area along with a number ‘drovers’ called *Sürücüü*, a secretary, a supply of uniforms and generally a *Bektaşî* chaplain.<sup>2</sup> There he would be met by a Christian priest who had been charged with assembling the eligible children, generally between the ages of eight and twenty, along with records of their baptism. The requisite number of children would be chosen from among the eligible, exempting those that were already married, members of important occupations such as road laborers, miners, *Voynuks* and *Doğancıs*.<sup>3</sup> Once in Istanbul the recruits would be given a series of tests to determine aptitude. Those that fared well were classified as *Iç Oğlan* or “Inner boys” and were schooled in the Sultan’s palace and had the opportunity to hold high administrative offices. Those selected for service within the palace attended the *enderun* schools. First they were given a general education and were schooled in Islam. This lasted anywhere from two to seven years, depending on the ability of the student. After their initial training they were schooled in subjects that best suited them. Following their training another test was administered determining where

they would serve. The best were retained in the palace and the remainder became members of the *Kapıkulu* cavalry.<sup>4</sup> The other set of boys were classified as *Acemi Ođlan* or “foreign boys” and sent to live in the houses of the elites where they would be trained in Turkish, basic military skills and the Muslim faith for five to seven years. Following their tenure in the homes of the elite they were sent to the training corps as slots became available. The best of the *Acemi Ođlans* were selected to the elite divisions of the Janissaries such as the *Bostancı* or ‘gardeners’ division. Even fewer were selected for special duties as armorers, gunners or naval infantry. Their training in the training corps lasted approximately six years. Following their training they were initiated into a unit as slots became available.<sup>5</sup>

Many communities saw the *devşirme* as a way for their sons to get ahead with some even offering more than the required number. In the case of some Muslim communities who were not required to participate, there were even bribes offered to have their children accepted. For the Ottomans the process was beneficial for a number of reasons, not the least of which, that it provided the Sultan with an able source of soldiers and administrators for his government. However positive the process seems, it did have the effect of removing the best and brightest from many communities that could ill-afford to have their future generations removed.<sup>6</sup>

### The *Kapıkulu* Corps and the *Janissaries*

The term *Kapıkulu* encompasses all slaves that were incorporated into service of the empire, whether on the administrative side or into military service into one of the infantry or cavalry units or into the *Janissaries*. As already discussed in the previous chapter, slaves, whether gained by the *devşirme* or those under the age of twenty gained

by conquest, were often entered into the service of the empire and schooled in one of the many administrative schools or entered into military service. From the Ottoman point of view the system made perfect sense because it put the slaves to good use rather than waste them as many of the Christian armies did by putting captives to death.<sup>7</sup>

The *Kapıkulu* were split into provincial (*eyalet*) forces and the Sultan's forces with the provincial forces being little more than militia type troops, mostly infantry. The Sultan's forces were split into both infantry (*janissaries*) and cavalry troops. In addition there specialized corps such as training, artillery, armorers, water-carriers and musicians.

Primary amongst the *Kapıkulu* were the *Janissaries*, the sultan's infantry. The *Janissaries* were chiefly infantry, starting as bowmen and evolving as weaponry became more advanced into musketeers and riflemen. Amongst the *Janissaries* were elite units such as the elite guard and the *Bostancis*, who were responsible for guarding imperial estates and the Istanbul coasts. In response to the change in warfare caused by the introduction of significant numbers of gunpowder firearms on the battlefield, the size of the *Janissaries* would grow eventually replacing the *sipahi* in terms of importance. In 1527 C.E. their number including trainees was estimated to be 11, 439, by 1670 C.E. this number would grow to over 48,000.<sup>8</sup> This shift from cavalry (*sipahi*) to infantry would lead to the marginalization of the *timar*, thereby contributing to the eventual absenteeism that would occur in later years. Additionally the shift would also lead to instances of class warfare between the *sipahis* and the *janissaries* that would manifest itself in the conflict between Cem and Bayezid in 1481 C.E. in which the *sipahis* began to voice their anger over the perceived favoritism that the Sultan (Mehmed II) had granted them.<sup>9</sup>

Even though the *Janissaries* were considered the sultan's own elite army this did not mean that they held to the sultan without question. In 1526 C.E. the *Janissaries* of Suleyman I rebelled prior to an incursion into Hungary because the lack of campaigning had left them unable to acquire more wealth.<sup>10</sup> In later years the *Janissaries* became a shadow of their former greatness as greed subverted many of their practices. As the empire contracted and slaves became less plentiful, more and more officers tried to have their sons follow them in service. Eventually the *Janissary* Corps had to be disbanded because of practices they undertook in order to increase their own wealth and prestige such as forming what amounted to a guild system.<sup>11</sup>

#### The *Timar* System and the *Sipahi*

Probably the most consequential military element of national power that was exerted in the Balkans was the *timars*. As previously discussed as a social, governmental and economic system, the *timar* were tracts of land awarded to those that had distinguished themselves in the service of the sultan, generally through battle. The *timar* was, in essence, a military fiefdom that produced money and military power and served as an administrative arm of the central government in the provinces. The forces they produced, the *sipahi*, were initially the main forces of the Ottoman Empire and were a key component of the military structure, serving as cavalry and also as local police officers in the provinces.<sup>12</sup>

*Timars* were classified according to the amount of money they yielded. The smallest *timar* was expected to yield between 3,000 and 19,999 *akçes* and in return the *timar* holder (*timarlı*) was expected to appear in armor, with horse, when mustered. 3,000 *akçes* was the minimum amount required to maintain a *sipahi* (cavalryman) and for any

amount over 3,000 the *timarli* was expected to maintain additional soldiers. *Timars* yielding between 20,000 and 99,999 *akçes* were known as *zeamets* and those holders were accounted with greater bureaucratic duties and were responsible for a *sipahi* and troops equal to 1 per 5,000 *akçes* raised. The largest *timars*, called *has*, yielded over 100,000 *akçes* and were reserved for the most important of dignitaries including retired officials and members of the royal family.<sup>13</sup> This hierarchy provided the structural framework for administration of the provinces. Almost all citizens of the empire resided in one of the preceding types of *timar*, however there were a few areas throughout the empire that were administered by traditional leaders such as vassal princes or tribal leaders. These holdings known as *hükümet sancaks*, were hereditary provinces whose only responsibility to the central government, besides oaths of fealty, was to provide a yearly tribute known as a *salyane*.<sup>14</sup> Eventually the general trend towards firearms would shift the emphasis from cavalry toward the infantry (away from the *Sipahi* and toward the *Janissaries*.) This would lessen the importance of the *timars* and the Empire would encourage this through a taxation system in which those who did not send troops, regardless of the fact that they were not requested, were forced to pay a tax which the Empire used to wage its wars.<sup>15</sup>

### Irregular Forces

The Ottomans employed numerous irregular forces in the conduct of their wars and the protection of their territories. Some of these irregular forces provided essential services that the Ottomans could not produce themselves while others were incorporated in order to prevent their being used against the Ottomans. Still others were incorporated in order to co-opt them into Ottoman society. For many of these forces inclusion in the

Ottoman military apparatus afforded them certain advantages, often tax related, others continued to fulfill traditional roles in their home lands and still others enjoyed greater status due to their strategic importance. For the populace of areas that were serviced by their own traditional troops the psychological affect must have been important as it would afford them some semblance of normalcy to see their own people rather than armed Turks. The following are some of the irregular forces of the empire and their importance along with some of the advantages they held:

I. *Akıncıs*. These were volunteers raised in the European provinces among the Turks. They performed scouting duties and were feared as raiders (cavalry). They lived off booty and could become *timar* holders. They were considered part of the *askeri* and afforded the same privileges as them.

II. *Yaya, Piyade and The Azap*. The *Yaya* were irregular infantry troops that first appeared during the reign of Orhan I in Rumelia. They were given land in return for performing local defense duties and performing military service. They were organized into units of roughly thirty men and out of that thirty; five would serve, while the other 25 would provide for them financially. The *Piyade* were similar troops, most often nomads, which served similar functions in Anatolia. The *Azap* were Turk volunteers from Anatolia that served when required and were able to leave service at any time. They most often served as either marines or infantry.<sup>16</sup>

III. *Müsellems*. These were settled Turcomans that were members of the military class and performed regular military duties as cavalrymen. They had small holdings of land and paid no taxes or dues. They farmed their holdings themselves and only one out

of every three or four served, leaving the others to farm his plot for him. Their income was strictly subsistence income.<sup>17</sup>

IV. Uskok, Valachs and Martolos. These were *Zimmi* forces that had the same rights as *Müsellems* and were considered members of the military class by occupation. Their origins are unknown but they are believed to be descendents of Christian allies. Later many of these would become bandits.<sup>18</sup>

V. Voynuks. These were Bulgarians, both Muslim and Christian, that lived in Serbia and Macedonia and received certain tax exemptions in exchange for limited border duties.<sup>19</sup> They were highly organized and had a reserve structure that was used to keep them at sufficient strength.<sup>20</sup> In addition some had special duties to rear horses, tend the imperial stables and perform other related duties.<sup>21</sup>

VI. Doğancis. These were similar to *Voynuks* but instead raised hunting falcons for the imperial court.<sup>22</sup>

VII. Derbendci. These consisted of approximately two thousand families of Rumelia that acted as guards of mountain passes, bridges and other strategic locations in exchange for tax relief. They were not required to leave their districts in times of war.<sup>23</sup>

VIII. Yürüks. *Yürüks* were nomadic Turcoman tribesman that paid taxes for the right to pasture their animals in return for limited military service.<sup>24</sup>

The Ottoman military served as an important factor in the lives of many citizens in the Empire. Its functions however were more important socially, economically and administratively than purely as a military function. The military, like many other aspects of Ottoman society, incorporated much from the lands they conquered out of necessity to promote a smooth transition to a new ruler. This, added to the gradual decrease in the

importance of the *timarli*, would lead to greater autonomy for the Balkans, which when coupled with other social and economic policies would leave the populace little reason to revolt against their rulers, as they, for the most part, were either just as well off or better than they had been previously.

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<sup>1</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 55.

<sup>2</sup>David Nicolle, *The Janissaries* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1995), 12.

<sup>3</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 56. See the later section on Irregular Forces for descriptions of these occupations.

<sup>4</sup>Nicolle, *The Janissaries*, 12-13.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>6</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 58-59.

<sup>7</sup>Nicolle, *The Janissaries*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup>Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>9</sup>Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, 37.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>11</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804*. Vol. V, 210.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>15</sup>Barkey, "Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early Seventeenth-Century France and the Ottoman Empire." *American Sociological Review*, 710.

<sup>16</sup>Nicolle, *The Janissaries*, 45-46.

<sup>17</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 39.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Nicolle, *The Janissaries*, 47.

<sup>21</sup>Kortepeter, "Ottoman Imperial Policy and the Economy of the Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth Century." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 98.

<sup>22</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 40.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 40.

## CHAPTER 6

### BALKAN INSURRECTIONS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Thus far this paper has shown that there was relatively little reason for the populace of the Balkans to rebel. They were generally well cared for by their governments both central and local, allowed a semblance of self-control, had property rights heretofore unknown, had protections afforded them by *kanun* laws and were often surrounded by troops composed of their own kinsmen, either one of the irregular forces that were allowed to continue to serve by the Ottomans or the *kapıkulu* forces of the empire. However, it would be disingenuous to assume that all of the policies of the Ottomans were uniformly successful and that rebellion did not occur. This chapter will explore in some detail two rebellions; Scanderbeg's of 1444-1468 C.E. and the Banat Uprising of 1594 and attempt to explain the underlying causes for each, primarily looking for failures in the Ottoman system that might have contributed to the rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Additionally this chapter will examine how each rebellion subdued and what were some of the lasting effects from each.

#### Scanderbeg (1444-1468 C.E.)

Scanderbeg, also known as Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg (1405-1468) or Iskander Bey was born to Gjon Kastrioti in 1405 C.E. His father was leader of a powerful Albanian clan that stretched between the cities of Prizren (located in present-day Kosovo) and Lezhe (see figure 7). As a young man Scanderbeg was sent as a hostage to the court of the sultan in Adrianople and his father was forced to pay tribute to the Ottomans. There Gjergj Kastrioti was given a Muslim name, Iskander, and was trained as a

*Janissary*. Over the course of many years he distinguished himself as an officer and was awarded the rank of general (*Bey or Beg*) and given a *sancak* in eastern Albania. Despite his successful career in the service of the Ottomans, Scanderbeg remained in contact with his former homeland. In 1443 C.E. Scanderbeg deserted the Ottoman army after its defeat in the city of Nis<sup>2</sup> and headed to the city of Kruja where he reclaimed his father's citadel. He then reclaimed his Roman Catholic faith and systematically started driving out the Muslims that had settled in the area. The Ottomans quickly moved to put down the insurrection forming an army and moving westward. Scanderbeg, knowing that he could not stand up to the advancing army without allies, called for a meeting of Albanian nobles in the town of Lezhe. The League of Lezhe was formed in 1444 C.E. to combat the oncoming Ottoman army with Scanderbeg as its commander-in-chief.<sup>3</sup> Scanderbeg's forces would battle the Ottoman army numerous times, winning major battles at Torvioll (1444 C.E.), Mokër (1445 C.E.) and Oronik (1447 C.E.) with numerically inferior forces.<sup>4</sup> These victories over the Ottomans won Scanderbeg allies among the Papacy, the Venetians and Naples who provided him with money and supplies. In 1450 C.E. the Ottomans laid siege to Scanderbeg's forces at Kruja but were forced to withdraw with the onset of winter. In 1466 C.E. Scanderbeg suffered his largest defeat at Kruja when Sultan Mehmed II led a force estimated at 150,000 to crush the Albanian resistance. Scanderbeg died in 1468 C.E., however Albanian resistance continued until 1479 C.E.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 6. Kastrioti Lands in Albania

Source: Google Maps, “Map of Kastrioti Lands in Albania,” <http://maps.google.com/>, (accessed 3 May 2009)

The rebellion of Scanderbeg gives credence to the argument that those taken in the *devşirme* and as slaves or hostages did not forget their origins despite a renouncing of their faith and years of schooling. There are conflicting accounts as to when Scanderbeg became aware of his heritage, however what is sure is that it influenced his decision to

betray the Sultan and return to free his homeland. Although his father had been forced to pay tribute to the Ottomans and give up his sons as hostages it seems that he never ceased resisting them. In the truest sense of the word it was a rebellion but it could also be looked upon as a continuance of the Ottoman's initial battle to subjugate the Albanians. Because of this it is unlikely that the systems the Ottomans had in effect in other areas were working in Albania, especially so close to Venetian holdings on the coast that neighbored the Kastrioti lands. This rebellion, because it lasted so long, drained Ottoman resources and caused them to shift focus from other areas. Scanderbeg's victories also emboldened other neighboring states such as Venice and the Papacy. Eventually the threat was negated and the Albanians were controlled.

#### Banat Uprising (1594 C.E.)

This rebellion, led by Prince Sigismund Báthory of Transylvania and the Teodor Nestorović, Bishop of Vršac, also known as Teodor of Dazian, started in 1594 C.E. in response to the renewed Ottoman campaign against Hungary. Báthory had been schooled by the Jesuits and wanted to begin a crusade against the Ottomans against whom he harbored a deep resentment. Báthory entered into an alliance with the Habsburgs and stood ready to face the Ottomans in the Banat region in what is today Vojvodina in Serbia (see Figure 7).<sup>6</sup> The Habsburgs, however, were forced to turn their attention to the Tatars who were coming to the Ottomans' aid from the north. The Transylvanian-Habsburg forces were initially very successful capturing Vršac, Bečkerek, and Lipova in the Banat region, as well as Titel and Bečej in the Bačka region. The Ottomans countered with forces led by Sinan *Paşa*. Battles raged across the Banat region until peace was finally concluded in 1606 in Vienna.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 7. The Eyalet of Temeşvar

Source: Wikimedia Commons, “The Eyalet of Temeşvar,” [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elayet\\_of\\_temesvar.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elayet_of_temesvar.png) (accessed 3 May 2009).

The roots of this rebellion are almost completely religious in nature. Báthory, schooled by the Jesuits and supported by the Papacy, looked to begin a holy war against the Muslim Turks. This rebellion started in an area that was only loosely ruled by the Ottomans as a vassal state (Transylvania).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, there were almost none of the systems that were in other parts of the Balkans. As a vassal state, Transylvania was only required to pay a tribute and swear fealty to the Ottomans. It is likely that he, emboldened by the Hapsburgs and the Papacy, believed that he could foment a rebellion and gain his complete independence.<sup>9</sup> While it is likely that those living in the Ottoman administered areas probably revolted, it is also likely that it was in response to outside influence more than starting from within. Once started, the people of the Banat, believing that there was

help from Transylvania, Hungary and the Papacy were quick to pick up the call for holy war. This was exacerbated by the burning of relics related to Saint Sava. In truth, this rebellion should really be seen as part of the greater Ottoman-Habsburg conflict rather than an individual act of rebellion. Following this period of conflict, Transylvania would remain in turmoil as a succession of leaders fought over it, finally stabilizing in 1648.<sup>10</sup>

Both of the rebellions highlighted in this chapter share similar characteristics. The rebels were able to take advantage of an existing conflict in order to start a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. In each rebellion many of the controls that were in place in other parts of the Balkans did not exist in either Transylvania or Albania. Those that did exist in the Banat in 1594 C.E. were set aside because of the perceived help by the Hapsburg and Transylvanian Kingdoms. These two rebellions, along with the rebellion at Tŭrnovo, were planned and resourced, in part, by both the Hapsburgs and the Papacy, both traditional enemies of the Ottoman state. While all three are classified as rebellions it is difficult to say that they truly started from within the Ottoman Empire and were not a product of outside scheming by enemies hostile to the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>1</sup>Research on the subject of rebellions provided one more significant rebellion during this time period, a rebellion in the city of Tŭrnovo in 1598 planned and executed with the help of the Hapsburgs, the Papacy, and the vassal rulers of Transylvania and Wallachia.

<sup>2</sup>Nis is located in present-day Serbia.

<sup>3</sup>Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. LTD, 1995), 7-8.

<sup>4</sup>Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg Biography, <http://vargmal.org/dan3646> (accessed 3 May 2009).

<sup>5</sup>Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>This area was known as the Eyalet of Temeşvar and had been first conquered by the Ottomans in 1552.

<sup>7</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 157-59.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>9</sup>Dusan Batakovic, “Kosovo and Metohija Under the Turkish Rule” <http://www.kosovo.net/batak5.html> (accessed 4 May 2009). The rebellion took on religious overtones with the Transylvanian forces carrying the flag of Saint Sava and the Ottomans countering with the green flag of Muhammad. The Ottomans would burn all captured images and relics of Saint Sava. Saint Sava is considered the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This move angered even Muslim Slavs.

<sup>10</sup>Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V*, 160.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER (DIME)

In order to analyze the Ottoman Empire and its ability to pacify the Balkans from 1450-1650 C.E. it is necessary to apply a model in order to examine each of the requisite parts of the Empire and provide a constructive assessment of their use of the elements of national power. In the preceding chapters; Ottoman history, religion, governance, social structures, military and economic functions have all been laid out in some detail in order to provide a basis for this assessment. Additionally a cursory look at the few recorded acts of insurrection during this time period have been provided and analyzed as far as their underlying cause, actions that each side took, and the eventual outcome and residual actions by each side.

This chapter will apply those elements to the United States Government's (USG) model of the Instruments of National Power also known as the Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME) model. This model will enable the categorization of each of the elements of the Ottoman Empire against one of the elements of the DIME model and thus provide a basis of comparison in order to prove that, of the four elements, the military element was the least important in the pacification of the Balkans.

#### An Explanation of the Military Use of the DIME Model

The DIME model is utilized by the United States Government (USG) as a method of measuring its use of the instruments of national power in achieving its strategic objectives. It is used to ensure the "whole of government" approach to dealing with

situations that impact national strategy by looking beyond a single response along one of the elements.

### Ottoman National Strategy

It is debatable as to the true nature of Ottoman National Strategy as it likely changed with each sultan and his own personal aims. One can surmise from the evidence presented that, as a ghazi, the sultans were expected to extend the Dar al-Islam. Additionally the argument can be made that each sultan probably wanted to protect what he had, wanted to provide for his subjects and their safety and he probably wanted to extend his own personal fame and prestige. Also, because many of his neighbors in the west saw the Ottoman Empire as a threat to Christianity and the memory of the Crusades were still fresh in the collective Muslim mind; there was animosity that drove much of Ottoman National Policy toward the West. These goals, stated and unstated are the basis for the Ottoman use of the elements of national power across their realm.

### Diplomatic

This element includes actions between states/groups that utilize policy and administration in order to affect an outcome. In this study of the Ottoman Empire this element is categorized by the social and governmental policies and actions that the Ottoman government instituted in the Balkans. This includes the Ottoman social structure, the creation of millets as a separate semi-autonomous governing body, the Ottoman judicial system, and the practice of awarding hükümet sancaks and allowing vassal states.

### Informational

This element relies on the exchange of ideas and messages in order to influence. This element of national power, for the sake of this study, primarily uses religion as the core instrument for influencing the populace. This includes the way in which Islam was spread to the Balkans by way of the *Bektaşî* order, the creation of *millet*s, the stated respect for the “People of the Book,” the use of *kanun* laws specific to an area, and the use of the *devşirme*.

### Military

This element of national power includes the use and threat of use of military might in order to affect an outcome. For this study this element examines the stationing of soldiers throughout the empire in the form of *timars* and their gradual decline, the incorporation and use of indigenous forces, and the use of slaves and the *devşirme* to staff parts of the military such as the *Kapıkulu* and the *Janissaries*.

### Economic

This includes a nation’s ability to affect the income and resources of another nation/people. Here the economic policies of the Ottomans and their far-reaching effects of those policies on the populace of the Balkans are included for this study. This includes the Ottoman *timar* system, the merchant and guild system, Ottoman taxation policies, and Ottoman rules on property.

Each of these elements are presented with their perceived impact in the next chapter and then accorded a weight based on the emphasis placed by the Ottomans. The analysis coupled with the weighting will show that, although important, the use, or threat

of use, of the military element of national power, was not the primary cause for the successful pacification of the Balkans for over 400 years. Instead the other elements, especially the governance and social policies, were far more important in providing stable governance of the area and thereby ensuring a compliant populace.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSIONS

...the Byzantine as well as the various Slav states were in decline when the Ottomans appeared in Europe bringing law and order into a chaotic situation; religious strife ceased; insecurity caused by endemic wars and civil strife was ended.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Impact of Societal and Governmental Policy on Pacification (D)

To clarify the lack of rural rebellions in the Ottoman Empire, we must focus on the social structure of society, and on the specific policies of the state that affected society, for both had a role in inhibiting collective action. It was not only the social structural arrangements of Ottoman society, the traditional relations of power and exploitation, but also the way the state made use of these arrangements and responded to crises that made it apparently impossible for the peasants to ally in rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

The Ottomans, in their quest to administer such a large and diverse empire, relied on a rigid social system that created a place for every citizen in the empire. This system, because it often incorporated existing social structures in the areas they conquered, was easily assimilated. Within each social class, a system of resolving disputes existed both through the judicial system and the guilds on the Ottoman side and through the *millets* or sometimes through vassal princes or local rulers on the indigenous side. These policies and class structures when overlaid on the economic and religious aspects of Ottoman influence had the affect of oftentimes creating better conditions for the populace of the Balkans. They created a stability that was prohibitive of rebellion. Indeed, because there were rewards to going along with the system it was beneficial for most involved. When weighted against the other three elements the diplomatic element provides significant impact vice the other three elements. Not every citizen across the empire faced the threat of armed conflict all the time. Religion, while important, was lessened in its impact by

the practices used by the Muslims to incorporate it across the empire. Only the economic policies of the Ottomans affected every citizen like the social and governmental policies did. Therefore, when weighting the four elements, the diplomatic sphere was more important than the Informational and Military and equal to the Economic element.

### The Impact of Religion on Pacification (I)

The impact of religion in the Balkans cannot be underscored. Prior to arriving the Balkans was divided between Jewish, Roman Catholic and Orthodox influence. After the arrival of the Ottomans the influence of Islam was added as well. However, because the Muslims instituted a policy of respecting the “People of the Book” there were allowances to incorporate those people, the *Zimmis*, into Ottoman society rather than kill or drive them away. Indeed, having a population other than Muslims was required to keep their system intact and to provide wealth in the form of taxes, the bulk of which were paid by non-Muslims. The creation of *millet*s in order to maintain a religious structure for the *Zimmis* provided them with an almost semi-autonomous government within the Ottoman government. In areas where the Muslims encroached and attempted conversion they often sent *derviş* of the *Bektaşî* order who had rites that were so similar to Christian rites that conversion to, or at least tolerance of Islam was easy. For non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire there were benefits to conversion that could be gained such as access to better occupations and positions within the government and exemptions from most taxes including a better life for their offspring through the *devşirme* of which evidence shows many families encouraged. Additionally, the Ottomans use and incorporation of *kanun* laws, while mostly judicial in nature, often included local religious laws and observations that again lessened the impact of the Ottoman’s influence in the Balkans. This element,

when weighted against the others, ranks below both the Diplomatic and Economic elements and above the Military element in terms of impact on Balkan society.

### The Role of the Military in Pacification (M)

The Ottoman Empire relied on its military as both a war-making arm of the government and a social structure around which most of Ottoman society is based. The latter was more important in the pacification of areas under Ottoman rule. As Ottoman society looked favorably on the *askeri* and they pervaded much of government it would be easy to assume that the Ottoman military ran the government. However, because of Ottoman practices such as the *devşirme* and the taking of prisoners as slaves, some of which were trained to become administrators in the highest offices of the government, it can be argued that former Christians ran the empire and manned much of the *Kapıkulu* military. Additionally in many provinces in the Balkans, some indigenous troops, such as the *Voynuks* and *Martolos*, were allowed to maintain their roles from before Ottoman occupation. This coupled with a gradual decline in the *sipahi* and *timarli*, exacerbated by the movement toward the infantry and away from the cavalry as main forces in warfare, meant that many people in the Balkans were not subjected to continual supervision by Ottoman (Turk) soldiers. Also in some areas of the Balkans, where urban decline was the most pronounced, the *timarli* could not call on adequate Turkish reserves from the surrounding rural areas because the peasants of these areas were mostly indigenous Slavs or Albanians. This too showed that the influence of the Ottoman Turkish army was far less pronounced than would seem likely considering the area was under Ottoman rule.<sup>3</sup> These declines in Ottoman Turkish influence led to more self autonomy in many areas of the empire. The military, while necessary to the pacification of the Balkans was more

effective as a social and governmental (and therefore a Diplomatic) instrument of the national government than it was as a physical deterrent. Its influence while seemingly far-reaching was, in many places in the Balkans, in name only as a tool for pacification. When weighted against the other elements of national power, the military element falls below the other three in terms of impact on the pacification of the Balkans.

#### The Economic Role in Balkan Pacification (E)

It is most often said that the easiest way to a man's heart is through his purse-- meaning that if you affect a person financially than it becomes more likely that you will evoke an emotional response. This is true in the Ottoman Empire as elsewhere. It seems that the Ottomans must have been cognizant of this as they instituted economic policies that stabilized most local economies rather than affecting them negatively. Prior to the arrival of the Ottomans local economies were often in turmoil as competing governments vied for local trade. The Ottomans, by nationalizing trade practices and stabilizing prices were able to lessen the impact on local economies and provide some stability. The merchant class, who traveled far and wide throughout the empire, bringing news and spreading information, was another stabilizing influence on the Ottoman economy and therefore Ottoman society as evidenced by the following quote:

Their [Greek and Serbian Merchants] attitudes toward the idea of national independence, however, were ambivalent. One – and perhaps the largest group of merchants did not originally think in terms of political independence. Another group favored political independence only if it did not entail social revolution, or entailed only the transfer of wealth from one small group to another, that is, from the Turks and Moslems to themselves. A third group, numerically small but dialectally important, desired national independence even at the cost of social revolution.<sup>4</sup>

Merchants, because they were not regulated the same most citizens were in regard to the amount of profit they could take, were able to amass great wealth within the empire and for most a change in government would not necessarily mean a higher standard of living. Taxation in the Ottoman Empire is often cited as high for non-Muslims, however it is important to recognize the benefits of being a paying member of Ottoman society. They were afforded a certain level of protection under the law and were able to retain property rights easier than under their former masters. Additionally, many complaints registered in the empire were not against high taxes but more related to the perception that another group or individual was not paying his fair share.

#### Insurrection and Its Impacts

Although not unknown, significant rebellions against the Ottomans were few in the period from 1450-1650 C.E. Those that did occur, although categorized as rebellions, were really the continuance of existing conflicts or attempts to subjugate new territory. In the rebellions of Gjergj Kastrioti, also known as Scanderbeg, his homeland had been loosely considered a vassal state. In fact he and his brothers had been ransomed to the Sultan in return for the compliance of Scanderbeg's father. The rebellion was costly on both sides, both in terms of resources and personnel. Additionally, for the Ottomans, it showed that their army was vulnerable and it emboldened their adversaries in the region. For the Albanians this would be a hallmark event in their history, with Scanderbeg emerging as a national hero. Because this rebellion occurred prior to a true incorporation into the Ottoman Empire and by extension before the institution of the elements of national power as described in this paper, it is difficult to say pacification failed.

The Banat Uprising of 1594 C.E. shared a similar characteristic with the rebellion of Scanderbeg in that it is hard to call it a failure of Ottoman pacification. This rebellion was really a continuance of the ongoing Ottoman-Habsburg conflict. It started outside the *Eyalet* of Temeşvar by Sigismund Báthory, the Prince of Transylvania, which at the time was considered a vassal state. This rebellion was so highly sponsored from outside the Ottoman administered area that it is difficult to call it an uprising as most of the emphasis for it to occur came from outside. The Banat Uprising of 1594 C.E. would have far reaching effects for the native Serbs, becoming, until the First Serbian Uprising in 1804, the greatest example of Serbian nationalism. Also, the religious undertones of the battle would also live in the collective consciousness of the Serbs and would lead to further resentment for the Ottomans. For the Ottomans, this battle, while costly in terms of resources and people, showed that they were susceptible to future uprising spurred from outside the Ottoman Empire.

For over 400 years, the Ottoman Empire held much of the Balkans, a land that today is fractured into many nations and peoples. They were able to successfully rule the Balkans because of how they applied the elements of national power in order to pacify the indigenous population as they conquered territory. The Ottomans, faced with a diverse empire, were forced to employ, within the limits of their religion, a system of governance that perpetuated the economic needs of the government and contributed to the stability of the empire. This system composed of a rigid social hierarchy, stabilized areas by providing structure and creating a place for everyone in the empire, often incorporating existing social structures that eased the transition to a new government. Additionally the Ottomans integrated many of the predominant religions of the Balkans

into society by creating semi-autonomous structures that could administer to religious groups within the empire. Where Islam encroached on the Balkans, it often took the form as preached by the *Bektaşî*, that readily integrated, rites and traditions of the local religion. Tax-paying citizens were afforded protections that did not exist prior to the arrival of the Ottomans such as tenant rights on the lands they worked. Additionally, price controls and predictable taxation policies meant that they could count on being able to make a living in their chosen trade. The *devşirme* meant that conscripted children had the capability of bettering themselves and, as some evidence indicates, the lot of their former homelands. Conversely, because the *devşirme* selected the best and brightest, villages were often stripped of the capability to foment capable opposition to the local and central governments. The *devşirme* also meant that fighting the Ottomans might mean fighting a kinsman. In the three documented cases of significant rebellion in the Balkans it is clear that all three were either outside the Ottoman administered areas or were started by forces outside of the empire. Rebellions did not occur in the areas where the Ottomans fully established provincial rule without outside resourcing and/or planning. It is because of the Ottoman's application of the elements of national power that this is the case. The citizens of the Balkans either did not have the means, or more likely, did not have the will or need to rebel, because of the structure the Ottomans set up around them.

### Relevance for Today's Military

Lessons learned abound in the study of wars past, often wrapped up in the conduct of battles and the employment of techniques and tactics. Is there something to be learned in times of relative peace? Looking at the Ottoman Empire from 1450-1650 C.E.

might seem like a waste to the contemporary military officer, however, there are lessons to be garnered here that transcend mere battles. It is the study of the underlying use of the elements of national power to pacify an area with a culture much different than that of the occupiers that is of interest here. Throughout this paper evidence has been provided that shows just how crucial are the employment of the other elements, other than the military, in the occupation of a different land.

Another aspect of this study for consideration is how many of the policies that the Ottomans used in this time period led to the underlying issues that would face the Balkans in the 1990's with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It can be argued that the underlying religious tensions probably date back to the Ottoman settlers and those that converted in order to improve their lot in Ottoman society. These same policies, when applied to elsewhere in the former Ottoman Empire, might lead us to other areas of future conflict. One area that fits this description that is of particular interest is the Caucasus Mountain nations of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Might there be future conflict based on both Ottoman and Russian influences? Additionally, the situation in modern-day Turkey, especially those of both the Armenian, and more importantly the Kurdish minorities that reside in the eastern Turkey reflect back to the policies of the Ottoman Empire.

Understanding a country's motivations based on their terms and their history is important in the context of current political events. The Ottoman Empire touched Iraq, parts of Iran, the Caucasus Mountains and the Balkans. Understanding their lasting influence might be the key to strengthening ties and bringing stability to the area. Recently Ambassador Crocker, former ambassador to Kuwait, Iraq and Pakistan said a

key to arranging a lasting peace involves Turkey and understanding the role that the Ottoman Empire played in their common history.<sup>5</sup>

### Final Thoughts

Few empires in history lasted as long, or had such far-reaching effects as the Ottoman Empire. Their ability to rule over such diverse areas in relative peace is a testament to progressive policies and tolerance that was unheard of in their time. Those policies, however well-meaning, have had long lasting effects on the areas they ruled, as evidenced throughout the Middle East and Southeastern Europe, leading to wars and religious persecution well into the 21st century. The key to understanding the conflicts of today in all of these areas might lie in understanding the policies and history of a fallen empire whose legacy lives on.

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<sup>1</sup>Sugar, "Major Changes in the Life of the Slav Peasantry under Ottoman Rule." *International Journal of Mideast Studies*, 297.

<sup>2</sup>Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, 11.

<sup>3</sup>Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant," *The Journal of Economic History*, 249.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>5</sup>Ambassador Ryan Crocker in a speech given to the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas on 23 April 2009.

## GLOSSARY

Acemi Ođlan: “Foreign Boys.” Those slaves trained for service in the military.

Ađa: Chief; officer; master.

Akçe: Basic silver coin of the Ottoman Empire. 100 akçe were equal to 1 Austrian gold ducat.

Akhi: 1) Mystic fraternity, 2) Leader of mystic fraternity, 3) Trade or craft guild member.

Askeri: 1) Members of the professional class in the Ottoman Empire; 2) the non-tax paying class, in receipt of fiefs or salaries from the sultan.

Bazirgan: Large-scale merchant. See also *tüccar*.

Bedestan: “Bazaar”; covered market, the fortified section covering luxury shops.

Bey: 1) ruler; 2) governor; 3) gentleman.

Beylerbeylik: Province (until the sixteenth century).

Birun: “Outer Service”; Collective term describing all those members of the *Mülkiye* who served in the Ottoman imperial palace outside the residence of the imperial family.

Bostancı: “Gardeners.” One of the elite divisions of the *Janissaries*.

Çarşı: Market. In most Ottoman cities this was centrally located.

Çavuşes: Originally, a courier at the imperial court; later an official charged with executing orders or judgments.

Çirak: Apprentice.

Çift: Basic unit of landholding with size depending on fertility of the soil.

*Dar al-Harb*: All lands not under Muslim rule.

*Dar al-Islam*: The domain of Islam. Literally “House of Islam”

Defterdar: Chief Treasury Official.

Derviş: Wandering Muslim holy man.

Devşirme: Child Levy.

Diniye: Class of religious dignitaries.

Emir: High Arab dignitary; prince. His holding is called an *emirate*.

Enderun: “Inner Service”; Collective term describing all those members of the Mulkiye who served in the inner section of the Ottoman imperial palace containing the ruler’s residence.

Esnaf: Class of artisans and small merchants.

Eyalet: Ottoman province (after the sixteenth century).

Fetva: a legal opinion in answer to a question, issued by a competent authority.

Gedik: Journeyman; licensed craftsman or shopkeeper.

Ghazi: 1) Ottoman border warrior; 2) Holy Warrior for Islam

Hadiths: Muslim religious tradition.

Haham başı: Chief Rabbi of the Jewish *millet* of Istanbul.

Hajj: One of the five tenets of Islam: the required pilgrimage to the holy site of Mecca.

Has: “Fief” of the largest size yielding more than 100,000 *akçes*.

Has Çift: The core section of a *timar* cultivated by the *timarlı* himself.

Hisba: Section of *ihtisāb* important for regulating commerce.

İç Oğlan: “Inner Boys”. Those children selected for service within the Sultan’s Palace.

Ihtisāb: Body of laws regulating fair trade and public morals.

İlmiye: Class of jurist and teachers.

Janissary: a member of the *Janissary* corps; a standing infantry corps levied until the Seventeenth-century from either prisoners of war or through the *devşirme*.

Jihad: 1) struggle; 2) Holy War

Kadi: Judge.

Kadiasker: Military judge; highest rank in the Ottoman judicial system.

Kalfa: Guild member with master’s qualifications, but not owning his own business.

Kanun: 1) a secular law; 2) law based on the ruler’s authority.

Kapıkulu: “Slave of the Porte”; serving as soldier, administrator, or in a variety of other positions; a salaried officer of the Ottoman government.

Kaza: Judicial district.

Kâhya: 1) Steward, supervisor, agent, assistant (used in numerous connections with these meanings); 2) Representative of groups before the central government.

Kethüda: 1) Agent; 2) Chief officer of the guilds dealing with the authorities; 3) “Second-in-command” serving under governors and other major office holders; 4) Agent of the city dealing with the central government; 5) Supervisor of a borough in a city.

Kul: Slave.

Maasli: Salaried; especially salaried Ottoman soldier.

Madhhab: One of the four legitimate schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

Mahalle: Borough, city section.

Millet: a group of non-Muslim people considered as a legal-administrative unit by the Ottomans.

Mülkiye: Class of administrators serving in the Imperial Palace; subgroups include the *enderun* and *birun*.

Müsellem: A person serving in the army in exchange for tax exemption.

Nahiyes: Subdivision of the judicial *kaza*.

Naibs: Low ranking judge serving under a *kadi*.

Paşa: High honorific title of rank.

Reaya: 1) “The Flock” originally all subjects of the state, later only the non-Muslims; 2) a tax-paying subject of the sultan.

Salat: One of the five tenets of Islam. Ritual Worship: combination of the praise to Allah and the recitation of the Koran.

Sancak: Provincial administrative unit, major subdivision of *beylerbeylik* or *eyalet*.

Sancak beyi: Governor of a *Sancak*.

Sawm: One of the five tenets of Islam: fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Seyfiye: Class of military men; men of the sword.

Shahada: One of the five tenets of Islam: the declaration or witnessing of faith.

Sipahi: An Ottoman cavalryman.

Sürücü: Drover. An official sent to escort male children to Istanbul as part of the *devşirme*.

Şeyh: 1) Chief; 2) Religious leader; 3) Tribal leader; 4) Nominal over-all and de facto religious leader of artisan and merchant guilds; 5) Holy man.

Şeyhülislam: Chief of the Ottoman *ulema*.

Tekkes: House of *derviş* orders.

Timar: 1) “care, attention”; 2) a military fief worth less than 20,000 *akçes* per year, supporting a cavalryman and a specified number of armed retainers.

Timarlı: Beneficiary of the income of a *timar*.

Tüccars: Large-scale merchant. See also *bazirgans*.

Ulema: The class of learned men; doctors of law, theology and jurisprudence; educated in Islamic law and other Islamic sciences.

Usta: 1) Teacher; 2) Guild master

Vakif: 1) “trust”; 2) an endowment whose income is dedicated in perpetuity to the charitable purpose specified by its founder.

Vezir: A minister of the sultan, exercising both political and military authority, and a member of the imperial council (*divan-i hümayun*).

Zakat: One of the five tenets of Islam. Obligation of the distribution of 2.5% of one’s surplus wealth to charity.

Zaviyes: Hostel established by the *derviş*.

Zeamet: Medium sized Ottoman military fief with an income equal to or over 20,000 *akçes* per year.

Zimmi: 1) “protected person”; any non-Muslim living in a non-Muslim state and obeying its laws.

APPENDIX A

Table 1. THE HOUSE OF OSMAN			
SULTAN	DATE OF BIRTH	ACCESSION DATE	END OF REIGN
Osman I	ca. 1258	1300	1324 <sup>1</sup>
Orhan I	1288	1324	1360
Murad I	1326	1360	1389
Bayezid I (The Thunderbolt)	ca. 1360	1389	1402
The Interregnum		1402	1413
Mehmed I	1389	1413	1421
Murad II	1404	1421 1446 <sup>2</sup>	1444 <sup>1</sup> 1451
Mehmed II (The Conqueror)	1432	1444 1451 <sup>2</sup>	1446 <sup>b</sup> 1481
Bayezid II	1448	1481	1512 <sup>b</sup>
Selim I (The Grim)	1470	1512	1520
Suleyman I (The Magnificent)	1494	1520	1566
Selim II (The Sot)	1524	1566	1574
Murad III	1546	1574	1595
Mehmed III	1566	1595	1603
Ahmed I	1590	1603	1617
Mustafa I	1592	1617 1622 <sup>2</sup>	1618 <sup>b</sup> 1623 <sup>b</sup>
Osman II (The Young)	1604	1618	1622 <sup>b,c</sup>
Murad IV	1609	1623	1640
Ibrahim I (The Mad)	1615	1640	1648 <sup>b,c</sup>

<b>Mehmed IV (The Hunter)</b>	<b>1642</b>	<b>1648</b>	<b>1687<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Suleyman II</b>	<b>1642</b>	<b>1687</b>	<b>1691</b>
<b>Ahmed II</b>	<b>1643</b>	<b>1691<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>1695</b>
<b>Mustafa II</b>	<b>1664</b>	<b>1695</b>	<b>1703<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Ahmed III</b>	<b>1673</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>1730<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Mahmud I</b>	<b>1696</b>	<b>1730</b>	<b>1754</b>
<b>Osman III</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>1754</b>	<b>1757</b>
<b>Mustafa III</b>	<b>1717</b>	<b>1757</b>	<b>1774</b>
<b>Abdulhamid I</b>	<b>1725</b>	<b>1774</b>	<b>1789</b>
<b>Selim III</b>	<b>1761</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>1807<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Mustafa IV</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>1807</b>	<b>1808<sup>b,c</sup></b>
<b>Mahmud II</b>	<b>1785</b>	<b>1808</b>	<b>1839</b>
<b>Abdulmecid I</b>	<b>1823</b>	<b>1839</b>	<b>1861</b>
<b>Abdulaziz</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1876<sup>b,c</sup></b>
<b>Murad V</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>1876</b>	<b>1876<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Abdulhamid II</b>	<b>1842</b>	<b>1876</b>	<b>1909<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Mehmed V Resad</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>1918</b>
<b>Mehmed VI Vahdeddin</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>1922<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>Abdulmecid II<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>1868</b>	<b>1922</b>	<b>1924</b>

Source: Peter F. Sugar, *A History of East Central Europe: Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. Vol. V* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 317-318.

- a. Became feudal lord in 1281 and independent ruler in 1300
  - b. Reign ended with deposition
  - c. Murdered
  - d. Died by suicide
  - e. Held title of Caliph only
- 
- 1. Year of abdication
  - 2. Resumed reign

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