PERIODS IN OTTOMAN HISTORY

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I believe we have to consider first whether the Ottoman themselves divided their history into periods, whether they were conscious of a distinction between the age in which they lived and earlier ages, and what ideas they had about periods in history.

In the prologue to the elaborate history which he wrote at the command of Bayezid II, Kemāl Pashazāde compares the Ottoman history with earlier Moslem dynasties and sums up under three heads, *vücūh-i rüchān*, 'the reasons for their superioritiy'.[1] First, he says, the Ottomans unlike other Moslem dynasties, came to power not through the violent overthrow of older Moslem states within the Islamic community, but through the conquest of territories pertaining to the infidel world, the *Dār ül-Harb*. Secodly, in the Ottoman state the authority of the sovereign and the validity of the laws are complete and absolute. Thirdly, the Ottoman state is richer, more populous and more extensive than all others. No other state possesses the military power of the Ottomans; the Ottomans have powerful artillery and a great maritime power; the aims of the Ottoman Sultan are *'tedbīr-i 'imāret-i rūy-i zemīn'* to make the face of the world to flourish', to destroy the foes of the true Faith, and to uphold the Holy Law.

In popular works such as 'Āshik Pashazade's history and the anonymous *Tewārīkh-i Āl-i 'Osmān*, we find the ideas of a distinction between different periods expressed in a more subjective fashion. In the Anonymous Chronicles,[2] for example, we find in the region of Bayezid I (1389-1402) quite a violent expression of the reaction of the classes upholding the traditions of *Uchevligi*,-the Principality of the Marches-against the imperial centralist policies of Sultan.

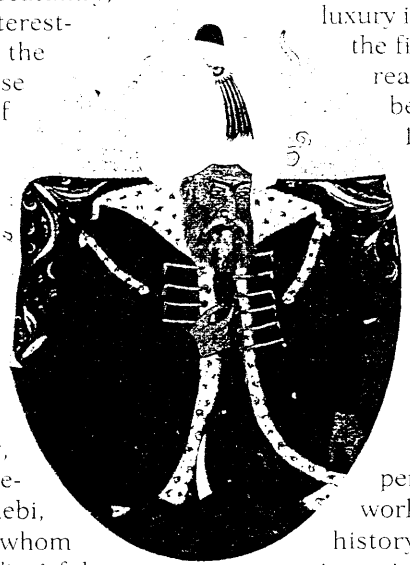
These chronicles contain bitter criticisms of the elaboration of the court ceremonial and the development of a centralized administration, and of the adoption of various "Frankish" customs which occurred during Bayezid's reign. These criticisms contrast sharply the 'new' period with the period that preceded it. In the works written during the reign of Bayezid II, we find similar criticisms of developments which had taken place under Mehmed II.

Mehmed III (1595-1603) toward the end of the 16th century when recounting the abuses in the administration in the famous 'Adāletnāme, 'Declaration of Justice' which he promulgated upon his accession to the throne, points to the reign of Süleyman has an ideal period and demands a return to the laws and principles of that time.[3] Nevertheless, in his own reign the crisis grew still more serious and plunged the empire into half-a-century of complete disorder and degeneration, It is in this period that Ottoman statesmen and writers became sharply aware of a distinction between the former Golden Age[4] and the age of decline in which they live, and in works written in the style of the old *nāsihatnāmes*, "Mirrors-for-Princes', there began to appear various realistic observations and criticisms concerning the defects in Ottoman administration. Though Koçi Beg is the best known writer in this genre, he had several predecessors at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries.[5] Toward the end of the 16th century, 'Âlî, in his *Nushat al-Salâtin*[6] and finally at the beginning of the 17th century 'Ayn-i' Ali, and the author of Kitâb-i Mustatâb,[7] puts forward general views on the breakdown of law and order and insist that in the earlier times things were well and properly ordered. They trace the origin of the breakdown to the reigns of Murad III (1574-1595) and Mehmed III in the last quarter of the 16th century, and in general regard the reign of Süleyman as the model to be followed. From this time until the 20th century, there appears among the Ottomans a fairly extensive



A Janissary

literature on the laws of historical development and the concept of periods in history reflecting the successive ideas on the decline of the empire and the reforms which were needed to arrest it. In general the Ottoman writers follow the political theories of Gazâlî, Fârâbî, Nasir al-din Tusi, Dawânî, and especially Ibn Khaldun.[8] Among them Kâtib Çelebi and Na'îmâ deserve particular consideration. The first, in his treatise *Dustûr'ul-'amal,*[9] postulated a complete parallelism between the character and development of societies and the nature and development of Man. Societies, like human beings, pass through three periods, the first that of growth, the second the stable period of maturity, and the third that of decline. But, in societies with a strong constitution, decline sets in late, and it is possible by taking due precautions to postpone the decline. Nevertheless, it is impossible to escape altogether the inevitable end. Kâtib Çelebi, considering in turn peasantry, that is, the basic producers, the military classes, and financial administration of the state, tries to establish when the weaknesses and decline in each began to appear. His starting-point is that of the old *Nasîhatnâmes*, namely that the ruler is dependent on the army, the army on wealth, wealth on the well-being of the subject-peasantry, and their well-being on justice. It is interesting that he should attempt to diagnose the causes of the decline by examining these special classes. He regards the period of maturity as extending to the time when the Celâlîs appeared in 1593. He also maintains that by about 1610 the villages in the Ottoman realm had been ruined by heavy taxation, abuses of administration, and the farming out of taxes. He, too, regards the age of Süleyman as a period when the various elements which made up the state were in balance.



Sultan Bayezid II, (1481-1512)

In the prologue to his history, Na'îmâ[10] summarizes the ideas on society and history expressed by 'Âli, Kâtib Çelebi, Kınalızâde and especially Ibn Khaldun, whom he regards as the greatest historian. Na'îmâ following Ibn Khaldun, after enunciating the various principles and factors which govern the development of states and civilizations, summarizes Ibn Khaldun's theory of five periods. In his endeavor to reconcile the phases of Ottoman history to this scheme, Na'îmâ interprets the series of defeats following the second Vienna campaign of 1683, and the pacific policy that ensued as being the symptoms of the fourth period-that is, the period of resignation and tranquility, when the principles and laws of the preceding age are followed and in which the older generation is limited and the state tries as far as possible to live in peace with its neighbors.

The ideas of Ibn Khaldun were adopted increasingly by the historians of the period of decline after the time of Na'îmâ, who saw in them a theory which clearly explained the course which Ottoman history was following. Indeed we are justified in seeing the effect of Ibn Khaldun's ideas in the rigid adherence after 1700 by 'Amcazâde Hüseyin Pasha and later still, Râghib Pasha to a policy of peace in the hope of saving the empire from a fatal convulsion. Let us recall too that Na'îmâ wrote his history for 'Amcazâde Hüsevin Pasha and that at the same period the *Mukaddima* of Ibn Khaldun was translated into Turkish.[11]

The first Ottoman historians to endeavor to systematically divide Ottoman history into periods according to the ideas of Moslem political philosophy were Cevdet Pasha[12] and Mustafâ Nuri Pasha[13] in the middle of the 19th century. They, like Kâtib Çelebi, divide Ottoman history primarily into three main periods-youth, that is growth middle-age, that is of stable maturity; and old-age, that is, decline. They then sub-divide each period into stages.

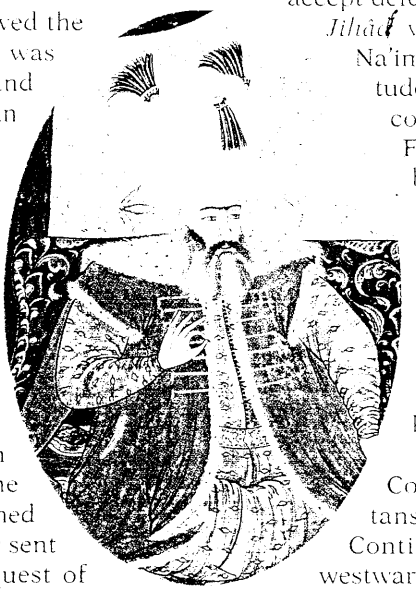
The important characteristic of Mustafâ Nurî Pasha is that in his endeavor to identify the periods of Ottoman history he used the criterion not only of political history but also of the history of institutions and cultural developments. In his view, during the third stage (that is, broadly speaking, the 16th century), the love of luxury increased, moral qualities were lost, and the first signs of decline appeared. But if the real decline set in only after the repulse before Vienna in 1683, the stage from 1595 to 1683 must be counted as belonging to the period of maturity. This anthropomorphic division of Ottoman history into three periods of growth, maturity and decline has been transmitted through 'Abdurrahmân Sheref and Yusuf Akçora to our own day, to become and has become the classic division on which our Turkish school textbooks are based.

In endeavoring to divide history into periods we have no need for a rigid framework based upon a pre-conceived theory of history. I propose now to examine from the viewpoint of the successive stages of firstly, the state of equilibrium established between the Ottoman Empire and foreign powers, then the development within the empire of the ruler's authority and the state of equilibrium which it established vis-à-vis the other forces within the empire, and finally the functioning of the system of land tenure upon which the military, financial and social institutions of the state relied.

Jihâd, or ghazâ, the Holy War, remained the dynamic principle of the Ottoman state until the end of the 17th century. By 1354, the Moslems of İznik (Nicaea) in discussions with their prisoner Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Salonika, already spoke of the occupation of the Christian West as inevitable,[14] and as early as 1333 the Byzantine emperor had begun to turn to the pope for help against the Ottoman menace, and to offer the Union of the Churches in return for assistance.

Nevertheless, it was not until the time of Bayezid I (1389-1402) that the *Jihâd* had ceased to concern only the Byzantine Empire and the Balkan countries, and had become a European question. It was only after the Ottomans had, in the years between 1393 and 1396, reached in one direction the Adriatic and the Morea, and, in the other the banks of the Danube, that Hungary and Venice undertook definite action and were able to rouse the Western Christian world to undertake a crusade.[15] The real question at issue was the dispute for the possession of Constantinople and Balkans between Venice and Hungary on the one hand and the Ottomans on the other. Mehmed II, who represented the culmination of the policy of the *Jihâd*, solved the problem in favor of the Ottomans. He was halted, however, before Rhodes and Belgrade, the gates of the Mediterranean and of Central Europe.

With the fall of Belgrade in 1521 and of Rhodes in 1522 a new stage in East-West relations begins. In this period an important change takes place in the Ottoman attitude to the *Jihâd*, or rather in the structure of the state. The Ottoman state was no longer a border-state of *ghâzîs* on the bounds of the Islamic world: It now embraced the most important countries of the Moslem world and had in fact become the Caliphate itself. Even the powerful Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481) in the letter sent to the Mamluk Sultan after the Conquest of Constantinople (1453) had to recognize the position of the Mamluk Sultan as protector of Mecca, to 'facilitate the fulfillment of the pilgrimage', and claimed for himself only the duty of supporting the *ghâzis*.[16] Selim I (1512-1520) and Süleyman the Great (1520-1566), however, claimed both obligations. Suleyman sent military help to the Sultan of Açe in Sumatra against the Portuguese and to the king of Gujerat in India,[17] while continuing the bitter struggle against the Hapsburgs in the Mediterranean and in Central Europe. We see that by the mid-sixteenth century now the *Jihâd* has become world-wide and that the Ottoman state was active on every front as the protector of the Moslem world.



Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566)

At this point we must emphasize that the guiding principle of Ottoman policy was always to keep the Christian world divided. In the 16th century the Ottomans accepted, both the Hapsburgs and the Papacy who were endeavouring to unit Europe, as their two irreconcilable enemies, and supported every action against them in Europe. The Ottoman alliance with France is well known. Ferîdun's collection of state papers contains a letter of Süleyman to the Lutheran princes of Germany, written in 1552[18] where he bound himself by oath never to attack them as long as they made common cause with his ally, France. The Ottomans supported the activities of the reformers all over Europe. The letter of encouragement which was sent to the Dutch in their rebellion against Philip II is also in Feridun Beg's collection. The Ottomans attached importance to establishing friendly relations with Queen Elizabeth I who was in pursuit of the same aim and supported the English in the Levant trade instead of France which had conformed to catholic policy.[19] In addition they always strongly supported the Calvinists in Hungary.

But in 1683 the overconfident Kara Mustafâ provoked a united attack of the European powers. The Holy League was established in 1684 with the Pope at its head. It was joined by Russia in 1686. After fighting on all fronts for sixteen years, the Ottomans finally had to accept defeat (The treaty of Carlowitz, 1699). The *Jihâd* was now abandoned. We have seen Na'imâ's frank expression of this pacific attitude. In the 18th century Austria and Russia continued the attack. In that period France supported the Ottoman empire because half of her commerce depended on the Levant markets and also because of the alliance against the Hapsburgs. We have before us the beginning of that Eastern Question which was continually governed the pattern of relationships between of the Ottoman empire and Europe in the period 1700-1914.

From the time of Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481) the Ottoman sultans used the title of 'Ruler of the Two Continents and Two Seas'. By expanding westwards into the Balkans and eastwards into Asia Minor Ottoman empire formed these two areas into what they had been in the days of Eastern Rome-a united empire centered upon the Straits. Just as the Ottomans were obliged to wage a long struggle in the Balkans, in Asia Minor they also had to contend with a traditional political situation which had persisted for centuries. The Seljuk Sultanate of *Rum*, had in the 12th century, been regarded as a frontier province of the Great Seljuk empire which ruled in Iran. The Ottoman principality is recorded in the Ilkhanid financial registers as one of the frontier provinces of that empire as late as the time of Orhan Ghâzi.

Only in the reign of Bâyezid I (1389-1402) did the Ottomans attempt to make themselves masters of the old Seljuk territories of Anatolia. Bâyezid applied to the Caliph that he be granted the title of 'Sultân'ur-Rüm'[20] which the Seljuk Sultans of Asia Minor had borne, but at that time Timur was emerging from the East with the ambition of reviving the old Mongol empire in an Islamic garb. Timur laid claim to sovereignty over Anatolia and demanded of Bâyezîd that he should be recognized as overlord. He defeated Bâyezîd near Ankara in 1402, and revived the Anatolian principalitis as vassal states, thereby making the Ottoman realm a vassal state like the other principalities. At this point I should like to emphasize that Mehmed I (1413-1421) and Murad II (1421-1451) throughout their reigns, that is to say, for a peri-

od of about half a century, recognized the Timurids as their overlords. Timur's son, Shâhrukh, sought to preserve the settlement which his father had established in Asia Minor. In a letter which he sent to Mehmed I in 1416, Shâhrûkh warned that he did not approve of the action expelling his brothers and uniting the territories which Timur had granted to them. In the letter which he wrote to Shâhrûkh in 1441-Murad II, while addressing him in the terms appropriate for a vassal sovereign to his overlord, claimed that the territory which the Ottomans recently seized from the Karamanids were not lands granted to his brothers by Timur.[21] In one word, then, the Timurids were still upholding Timur's settlement in Anatolia as late as 1441. It is precisely in this period that the tradition of their descent from *Kayı* and *Oghuz Khan* was adopted by the Ottomans. Uzun Hasan himself, master of Eastern Asia Minor and Iran, was claiming sovereingty over the whole Asia Minor when Mehmed II began to absorb the Anatolian principalities from 1461 onward. This Türkmen sovereign took the expelled princes under his protection and challenged the Ottoman Sultan. The troops which he sent to support the prince of Karaman in 1472 penetrated into the heart of the Ottoman realm. On this occasion the Ottoman Sultan was strong enough to defeat his rival in the East (1473), and Anatolia fell decisively under the sway of the master of Constantinople.[22] Thus, a political situation which had endured for four centuries in Asia Minor, namely the dependence of Anatolia on one of its great neighbors in the East, came to an end. Nevertheless, when the Safavids rose to power in Iran at the beginning of the 16th century, Ottoman sovereignty in Anatolia was again seriously threatened; but in 1514, thanks to the skilful use of firearms, Selim I was able to inflict a decisive blow on the enemy. By occupying the highlands of Eastern Anatolia he pushed back the danger. The struggle with Iran in the 16th and 17th centuries was played on in Transcaucasia, Azerbeijan and Irak.[23]

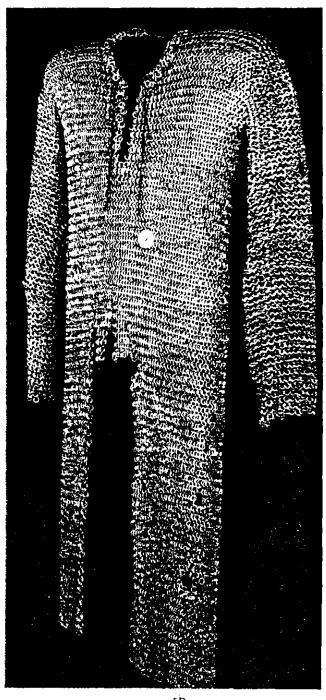
We must point out here that the Western and Eastern enemies of the Ottomans tried to establish contacts with one another. In pursuance of their designs upon the Ottomans, Timur sent letters to the French court, Uzun Hasan made an alliance with Venice, and the Safavids sent embassies to the Hapsburgs of Germany and Spain. The Ottomans took great care to follow a policy of alternate war and peace in order to avoid having to fight simultaneous wars on two fronts. But during the long war aganist the Hapsburgs in the years of 1593-1606 Shah 'Abbâs' attack in Azerbaidjan fozced the Ottomans to fight on two fronts at the same time with disastrous consequences.

Let us now glance at the changes in the internal structure of the Ottoman state.

The Ottomans, in order to carv on a world-wide struggle in both the East and West, were obliged to maintain all their resources in a state of permanent readiness and at the disposal of a single will. Thus, the Ottoman state brought into existence an absolute and centralizing authority, to successful a degree such that theoreticians of absolute government in Europe, hastened to present it as a model.

In the early period, the greatest threat to the central authority of the Ottoman Beg came from the frontiers.[24] The policy of the Ottoman rulers was consciously aimed at preserving control by the center: Thus, the *Uc-begis*, leaders of the frontier forces were prevented from establishing independent principalities in the newly-conquered territoires as, for example, had happened in the principality of Germivan. The *beg* who controlled the border region of İzmid was Osman Ghâzî's comrade-in-arms, Akça-Koca. Orhan appointed his own son Süleyman to govern that region, upon the death of Akça-Koca. Süleyman was later sent to govern Karesi, the most important march area conquered around 1340.

He then crossed the Dardanelles to create the march of Gallipoli on European soil in 1352. Prince Süleyman became the most powerful *uc-begi* of the period and he would have become the natural heir to the Ottoman throne if he had not died before his father in 1357. When Murad I (1362-1389) ascended the throne he placed his most reliable officer, his tutor Lala Shahin, at the head of the border-forces of Rumelia as *Beglerbegi* or commander-in-chief of the Ottoman forces in Europe. But, even at that time the rivalry between the *Beglerbegi* and the *Uc-begis* was evident. The *Uc-begis* seemed to have played an important part in prince Savci's rebellion in Rumelia in 1373. In the period of civil war following the fall of Bâyezid I in 1402 the *Uc-begis* gained comparative independence. The Evrenuz-oghulları in the border region of Serres, Pasha-Yiğit at Üsküp and the Mihal- and Kümülü-oghulları in the Danubian Bulgaria, supported, as they were, by *akıncıs*, *yürüks* and *sipâhis*, who were directly bound to them personally, formed in effect "feudal" families. It was they who played the predominant role in the civil war between 1403-1413.



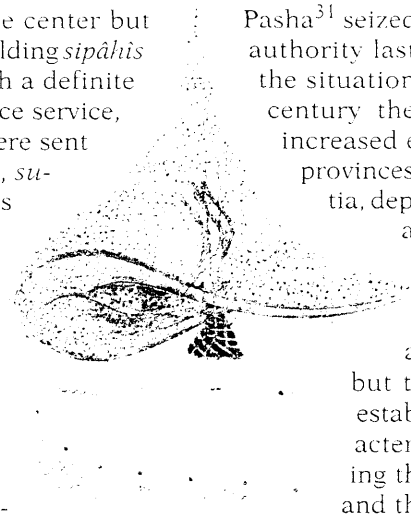
Mail shirt (17th century)

During the reign of Murad II, of 189 timariots in the region controlled by Isa Beg, the Uc-begi of Üsküp, about 160 were his own *kuls*, slaves, and retainers[25] The *Uc-begis* made private agreements with the neighboring foreign states and levied *kharâc* (tribute). But they were unable, however, to preserve their former position in the face of Mehmed II's (1451-1481) vigorous *ghâzi* personality and strong policy of centralization. Mehmed II managed to bring the *Mihal-oghulları*, in particular, under his control.

During the reign of Mehmed II, the strongest power in the state resided not on the frontiers but in the center-in the forces of *Kapı-kulları*. More than any other factor, the *kul* (slave) system[26] ensured the maintenance of the central

and absolute authority of the Sultan. This system had existed at the court of Orhan. When, in the years following 1361, a number of central institutions were set up to meet the demands of the greatly-expanded state, recourse was made to the *kul* system; And the Janissary-force, a paid standing army of *kuls* personally bound to the Sultan, was etablied. This force numbered 1,000 when it was founded, 6-7,000 under Bâyezid I (1389-1402), 4-5,000 under Murad II (1421-1451) but in the reign of Mehmed II (1451-1481) it increased to 8-10,000. Thanks to this force the Ottoman Sultan was always stronger than the *Uc-begis*. Moreover, whenever the border regions were exposed to powerful enemy attacks, the Sultan could use this central force to intervene and strike the decisive blow, as for example, in the battles of Kossova (1389) and Nicopolis (1396). Also these *Kapı-kulları* literally the slaves of the Porte, were under the name *of yasak-kulu* to enforce the Sultan's commands and ordinances in the provinces.[27]

The Janissaries formed only a part of the *Kapı-kulları*. As early as 14th century the *kuls* of the Sultan included not only the military force at the center but also an important proportion of the *timâr* holding *sipâhis* in the provinces. After progressing through a definite series of posts within and without the palace service, *kuls* who had been trained in the palace were sent to every corner of the empire as timariots, *subashis*, *sanjak-begis* and *begler-begis*, that is to say, soldier-administrators who embodied the political and executive authority of the Sultan.[28] The extensive use of *kuls* in the imperial administration began under Bayezid I. The process was completed when Mehmed II granted the highest post of all, the grand vizirate, to *kuls*. In short, the increase of the central and absolute authority went hand in hand with the development of the *kul-system*. In enumerating the reasons for the Ottoman Sultan's superiority over other Moslem rulers Kemâl Pashazâde emphasizes that, thanks to their *kuls*, the Ottoman Sultan were able to enforce their commands everywhere, absolutely, but that they did not allow any *kul* to achieve a privileged position.



Tugra, (1587), (Museum of Topkapi Palace, Archive E. 7777)

The Ottoman Sultans, particularly Bâyezîd I and Mehmed II were careful to remove local dynasties and feodal lords in all regions, and to abolish all local priviliges.[29] In the Balkans, the peasant classes, no longer cooperating with the petty princes and lords who had proved unable to protect them, became the subjects of the Ottomans with the status of dzimmî. Former local military classes and monasteries also found it safer to attach themselves to the new centralized system, which guaranteed their rights over the *pronoas* and *charistias* which they held. In short, the central Ottoman government acted as a focus of power in the Balkans where they revived the old imperial tpaditions. From Anatolia too, ghazis, *ulema*, and land-hungry peasants migrated in every-increasing numbers to enter the service of this reliable and ever-expanding power. Moreover, the incorporation of the Ottoman custom of fratricide by Mehmed II as a clause in his *kanunnâme*, and the abolition by the end of the 16th century of the custom of sending the princes out to govern sancaks are landmarks on the way to the establishment of an absolute central authority. The Ottoman house had thus moved from the old Turkish tradition of sovereignty, by which the suzerainty belonged jointly to all the members of the ruling family, to the old oriental idea of indivisible and sacred authority centered in the person of one ruler.[30]

But from the end of the 16th century onwards, the power upon which this absolute authority rested, namely the palace household and the *Kapı-kulları* grew so much in influence as to bring the state under their own control. Towards 1018/1600 the Janissaries numbered some 35-50 thousand, and in 1622 they even murdered the Sultan Osman II. As the *Kapı-kulları* gained complete power in the state and appropriated the sources of revenue in the provinces to their own use, the provincial troops began to resist them by force, and for a time in 1625, under the command of Abaza Mehmed Pasha[31] seized control over Anatolia. This crisis of authority lasted until Köprülü Mehmed brought the situation under control in 1656. In the 17th century the Janissaries, whose numbers had increased enormously in the capital and in the provinces, and who now formed a kind of militia, deposed Mehmed IV and Ahmed III. Only after the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826 were the Padishah and the palace able to re-establish an independent authority over the state affairs. Not only the Janissary force but the other bodies making up the *kul* establishment changed their original character in the 17th century.[32] In investigating the reasons for the decline of the state and the general chaos that prevailed, Koçi Beg puts at the head of the list the breakdown of this slave system.

Finally we have to consider the system of land-tenure. It is true to say that the social and economic foundation of the centralized regime of the Ottoman Empire was, as it had been in other empires of the Near-East, a special system of land-tenure which ensured close control of all land holdings by the state[33]

State-ownership of land made it possible for the central government to control social order in accordance with the aims of state policy and to apportion revenues according to these aims and the needs of the moment. In pre-Ottoman times, too, under the Seljukids and in the Byzantine empire, the state's control over land had determined the social and political structure of the empire. During the period of the decline of these empires both the land and the peasant had fallen under the control of local officers or notables. During the days of its expansion as a conquering power, the Ottoman empire had been able to universally reenforce the principle of state-ownership of agricultural land. As a rule, it abolished the rights of the former landlords, both secular

and religious, and newly conquered regions as well as lands which were later brought under cultivation were placed under state control.

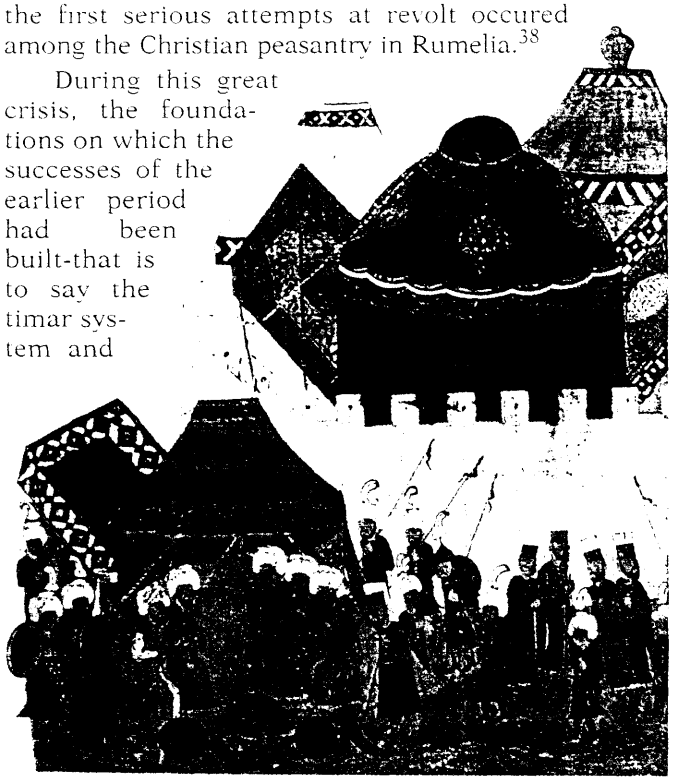
In fact, this was a three-tier system of land-tenure: the right of ownership of the land was reserved for the state; the peasant had the right to use the land as permanent tenant; between the two was the *sipâhi* who, as timar-holder and representative of the state, was empowered to see that state's rights were not infringed. It was he who collected principal land-taxes and enforced the laws that were passed to prevent the land being left uncultivated. The *sipâhi* owed certain military duties to the state, and used certain taxes he collected as his pay. In states in which a money economy had not developed fully, taxes in kind, which formed the state's main source of revenue, could be collected by tax-farming: It was the system of tax-farming that enabled taxes in kind to be converted into cash for the central treasury. But in the Ottoman empire, which, as a *ghuzî* state, needed great numbers of soldiers, these taxes in kind were not made over to tax-farmers but left as timars to support the *sipâhîs* placed in the villages. Thus, under the Ottomans the system of land tenure, the tax system and the military organizations formed an integrated whole.

It was not difficult for the Ottomans to impose this system in regions of the *Dâr ul-harb* which they had conquered, that is, from the Byzantine empire and the Balkan states. But, in the territories of the former Seljukid state in Anatolia, where land had been made over as *mülk*, freehold, and *wakf*, pious foundation, before the Ottoman occupation, and where these transactions had been confirmed by deeds drawn up in accordance with the *Shar'i'a*, various compromises had to be reached.[34] The land-owners were obliged to supply troops to the state by what was called the *eshkinci* system. During the reign of Bâyezîd I (1389-1402) state control over such land was extended: This is probably one of the main reasons for Bâyezid's unpopularity in Anatolia. The period from his reign to the reign of Mehmed II was one of tolerance in this respect: The internal crises of this period compelled the central government to grant large areas of *mülk* to influential leaders in Rumelia as well as in Anatolia. These *mülks*, private estates, were usually converted by the owner into family-wakfs as a precaution against confiscation. But, impelled by his need for more troops, Mehmed the Conqueror, in the years around 1476, brought most of these lands back under state-ownership. He abrogated *wakfs* which evaded their purpose and which had not been confirmed by the Ottoman rulers. He confiscated them for the state and redistributed them as *timars*. As a result of this reform, some 20 thousand (?) villages and estates were taken over.[35] This action caused the religious classes in particular to turn against the Sultan. Upon his death, there was a violent reaction and a large proportion of the land that had been seized was returned to its former owners and *wakfs*. But it was not long before the old course was resumed: During the reign of Süleyman the need for troops, the increase in population, and the bringing of extensive areas of new land under cultivation led to a great increase in the area of the state domains. Records of these additional lands, referred to as *ifrâzât*, fill the registers of this period.

From the end of the 16th century an acute and extensive crisis developed in the country districts, in both agriculture and the system of land-tenure. The main reasons for this were firstly, the flood of cheaper silver from Western Europe from about 1580 onwards and the ensuing inflation which threw the Ottoman finances, the economy of the empire and administrative machine into confusion.[36] When the timars suddenly fell in value, the sipahis tried by various illegal means to extort more revenue from the peasants.

Secondly, the halting-indeed the receding-of the tide of conquest which took place in this period led to an incease in the number of candidates for the available timars and to bitter competition to acquire them. Thirdly, the *Kapı-kulları* were managing to appropriate timar-lands everywhere as private estates, thus making the shortage of timars still more acute. As a result, many landless soldiers and unemployed mercenary companies *sekbans* and *sarıdjas*, began to ravage the villages and twons as bandit gangs; later they gathered around leaders in still greater force and even began to defat government troops sent against them. These rebels are known under the general name of *Jelâlis*.[37] The *Kapı-kullarî* too who were sent to deal with them were no better than another marauding force who afflicted and plundered the peasantry. In the end, the continuing war and inflation compelled the state to impose *'awârîz*-exactions as a regular and heavy money-tax. All these circumstances induced the peasants, especially in Anatolia, to abandon their lands in droves and flee to the towns or join bandit-gangs. This movement, which was particularly strong in the years from 1595 to 1610 is known to Ottoman historians as the Great Flight. In the same years the first serious attempts at revolt occured among the Christian peasantry in Rumelia.[38]

During this great crisis, the foundations on which the successes of the earlier period had been built-that is to say the timar system and



Turk "otak" in the Siege of Vienna, (1529)

the system of land-tenure-crumbled away. Koçi Beg who lived through these years, says 'the timar holding soldiery ceased to exist and the *Kapı-kulları* [were] all powerful'. The state lost its control over the land in the provinces, which subsequently passed largely into the hands of the *Kapı-kulları* and of influential local people connected with the military class.

The *khass* lands of the Padishah more exactly of the central treasury, which formed half the territories of the empire, were generally farmed out as *mukata'a* leases. A large proportion of these *mukata'a* were taken up by members of the military class. In following years this class, which had gained control over the state domains in addition to *mukata'a* gave rise to the *a'yâns*, provincial notables, who lorded over the peasantry.[39] The state was no longer able to carry out the regular land-surveys necessary to re-assert its control over the land. These influential *a'yâns*, who were now in fact masters of the land, began to maintain military forces who were bound to them personally. As the regular timar-holding troops were non-existent for the most part, the state encouraged these local leaders with strong military forces to join the imperial army, and gave many of them the rank of pasha. In the 18th century, in every part of the empire there grew up local dynasties who controlled large tracts of *mukata* 'a-land and powerful private armies. In this period we can speak of a feodalisation of the empire similar to that seen in Europe. At the end of the 18th century the centralized empire had ceased to exist. Not until Mahmud II founded a new army and put down the local *a'yâns* one by one was it possible to re-establish in some degree, at least in Anatolia and Rumelia, an empire that recognized the authority of the central government.

Thus far we have tried to describe the developments that we consider the most fundamental aspects of the Ottoman history, namely ghazâ, power relationship with the outside world, central authorty and finally, land-tenure, as the basis of social structure of the empire.

Notes

1 Kemâl Pashazâde, **Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân, Defter I**, ed. Şerafettin Turan, Ankara 1970; similar points are made by pseudo-Rûhî, Oxford Bodleian Library, Marsh 313.

2 **Tawarîkh-i Âl-i 'Osmân (Die alt osmanischen amonymen Chroniken)**, ed. F. Giese, Breslau 1922, 30; a more complete text: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, M. R. 700.

3 H. İnalcık, "Adâletnâmeler", **Belgeler** (Turkish Historical Society), II/3-4, 105.

4 On Süleyman's reign considered as **Golden Age**, see H. Inalcik, "Suleyman: The Man and the Statesman," ed. G. Veinstein, Paris.

5 For Ottoman memorialists see H. Inalcik, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700", **Archivum Ottomanicum**, VI (1980), note 1; "The Rüznâmce Registers", **Turcica**, XX (1988), 256 note 10.

6 See A. Tietze's edition and translation: **Mustafa 'Âli's Counsel for Sultans of 1581**, I: Text, II: Translation, Vienna 1979-1982.

7 Avnî 'Ali's **Kawânm-i Âl-i 'Osmân der khulâşa-i Meıamin-i Defter-i Dîvân**, İstanbul 1280 H.; this edition is a popular one, a new edition with critical apparatus is prepared by Douglas Howard; for Kitâb-i Mustatâb see Y. Yücel's edition: **Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar: Kitâb-i Müstetâb, Kitâbu Meşâlihu'l-Müslimîn ve Menâfi'l-Mu'minîn, Hirzü'l-Mulûk**, Ankara, 1988.

8 Now see C. Fleischer, "Royal authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and Ibn Khaldûnism in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters," **Journal of Asian and African Studies**, XVIII (1983), 198-220; Farâbi, Tûsi, and Dawânî's influence, see Kınalızâde 'Alâ al-Dîn 'Alî, **Akhlâk-i 'Alâ'î**, Bulak 1248 H.; II, 5, 105-112.

9 Mustafâ b. Abdullâh known Haji Khalîfe or Kâtib Çelebi, **Dustûr al 'amal ü-lslâh al-khalel**, Istanbul 1280 H.; translation into German W. F. A. Behrnauer, **ZDMG**, XI (1857), III-132.

10 Mustafâ Naimâ, **Târîkh-i Na 'îmâ** I-VI, Istanbul 1280 H.; Introduction in vol. I.

11 Translated by Pîrizâde Mehmed Sâ'ib, **Mukaddime-i Ibn Haldûn**, I-II, İstanbul 1275 H.; Completed by A. Cevdet Paşa, İstanbul 1277 H.

12 A. Cevdet (Paşa), **Vekâyi'-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye** (Târih-i Cevdet), İstanbul 1271-1301.

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14 G. G. Arnakis, "Gregory Palamas among the Turks and Documents of His Captivity as Historical Sources, "**Speculum**, XXVI (1951) 104-118.

15 For a new interpretation, see H. Inalcik, "The Ottoman Turks and the Crusades, 1329-1522, "**A History of the Crusades**, general ed. K. M. Setton, vol. VI: The Impact of the Crusades on Europe eds. H. W. Hazard and N. P. Zacour, Madison 1993, 221-353.

16 See A. Feridun, **Munsha'ât al-Salâtin**, I, İstanbul 1275 H.; 23o.

17 See H. İnalcik, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire, "**Cambridge History of Islam**, eds. Holt, Lambton and Lewis, Cambridge 1970, 320-323; , ed., **An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire**, Cambridge, 1994, 327-331.

18 A. Feridun, op. cit., II, 542-544.

19 H. İnalcık, ed. **An Economic and Social History** mentioned in note 17, 367-372.

20 See "Bâyâzîd I, "'**Encyclopaedia of Islam**, 2nd ed. (EI2).

21 For the correspondance of Mehmed I and Murad II see Feridun, I, 150-152, 177-178.

22 See "Mehmed II, "**İslâm Ansiklopedisi** (İA), 523-527.

23 Now see "Selim I", EI2.

24 On the crucial role the **Uc-begis** played until Mehmed the Conqueror's time, see **Gazavât-i Sultan Murad Han**, eds. H. İnalcık and M. Oğuz; and "Mehmed I", EI2, "Murad II," **İA**.

25 H. İnalcık, **Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar**, Ankara 1954, 149-150.

26 See "Ghulâm," EI2.

27 See **Kânunnnâme-i Sultâni ber Müceb-i 'Örf-i 'Osmânî**, Ankara 1956, nos. 2-5, 8-12, 20-24, 30, 32, 36, 39, 40, 45.

28 See H. İnalcık, **The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600**, second reprint: London: Phoenix, 1995, 76-118.

29 H. İnalcık, "L'Empire Ottoman," **Studies in Ottoman Social and Economic History**, London: Varionim II, 1985, 85-87;-, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire," **Cambridge History of Islam**, I, 295-303.

30 H. İnalcık, "The Ottoman Succession and its Relation to the Turkish Concept of State", **The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society**, Bloomington 1993, 60-61.

31 See "Mehmed Paşa, Abaza" **İA**.

32 See H. İnalcık, "Military an Fiscal Transformation "mentioned in note 5.

33 See **An Economic and Social History** mentioned in note 17, 103-154.

34 **Ibid.**, 126-131.

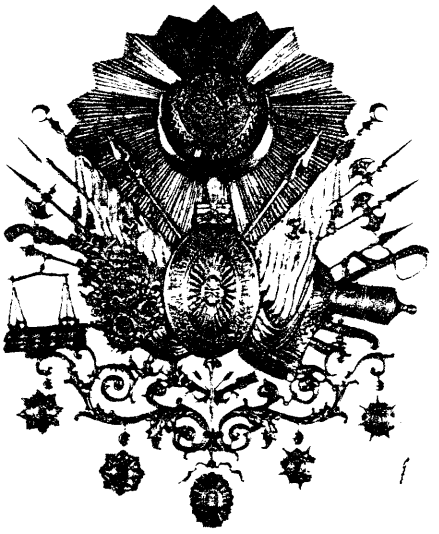
35 "Mehmed II" **İA**, 75, Cüz, 53.

36 H. İnalcık.

37 For **djelâlîs** see M. Akdağ, **Celâlî İsyanları**, Ankara 1963; cf. H. Inalcik, "Military and Fiscal Transformation..." mentioned in note 5.

38 See I. Khassiotis, "Sull' organisazione, incorporazione Sociale e ideologia politica dei Greci a Napoli, dal XV alla metâ del XIX sec.," Epistimoniki Epetiris is Philosoftkis scholis tou Aristoteliou Pamepistimiou, Thessalonikis 20 (1981); "The European Powers and the Problem of Greek Independence from the Mid-fifteenth through the Early Nineteenth Century", **Ellada: Istoria kai politismos**, Salonica 1981.

39 See H. İnalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," **Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History**, eds. T. Naff and R. Owen, London 1977, 27-52.



THE TURKS

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