

Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century

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XVI. Yüzyılın Sonunda İcmal Defterleri, Nasihatnameler ve Timar Sahibi Osmanlı Eliti

Öz ■ Bu makale, icmal defterlerine göre Osmanlı elitinin bir bölümünün değişen kimliklerini incelemektedir. Çalışmada, XVI. yüzyılın sonlarında siyasetname yazarlarının timar sisteminin çöküşü ve Osmanlı elitinin kompozisyonundaki değişim hakkında yazdıklarına odaklanılmaktadır. Siyasetname yazarları, timarlı sipahilerin işlevselliğini kaybetmelerini, sisteme ecnebilerin, yeniçerilerin ve önemli kişilerin hizmetkarlarının dahil olmasına bağlamaktadırlar. Mamafih icmal defterleri 1580 civarında Osmanlı elitinin teşekkül sisteminde ve oluşum sürecinde çok büyük bir değişikliğin olduğunu göstermemektedir. İcmal defterleri, timar sahiplerinin oğullarının hiçbir şekilde çoğunluğu oluşturmadığını, 1560'larda böyle bir artış gözlenirse de bu artışa sebep olanların yeniçeriler, eyaletlerdeki askeri sınıflar ya da önemli kişilerin hizmetkarları değil askeri sınıfa mensup olmayan kişilerin oğulları olduğunu göstermektedir. Zaten timarlı sipahilerin de işlevlerini kaybetmediği sadece kuşatma savaşlarında yeni görevler üstlendikleri ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Nasihatnameler, icmal defterleri, timar sistemi, seçkinler, ordu, Mustafa Ali, gerileme, ecnebiler, kuşatma.

Since the opening of the Ottoman archives, the study of the empire's history has gone through a number of phases.¹ From an initial interest in peasant life and production, attention shifted to the state and administrative systems and more

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recently to the study of the elite. A concept of elite competition drawn largely from the writers of advice literature (*nasihatnameler*) has become central to current versions of the history of the post-Süleymanic period.² While this literature testifies to the views and concerns of its authors as representatives of the elite, for a factual description of the empire's condition we must turn to other sources. This article examines the changing identities of one portion of the elite as depicted in documents produced by the *timar* system, the *icmal defterleri*. While this topic spans the centuries, the focus here is on the late sixteenth century, when the advice writers say elite recruitment altered significantly.

If there is any aspect of Ottoman history that is considered to be well understood, it is the *timar* system, the system through which the revenues of the empire and the oversight of peasant agriculture were awarded to cavalymen (*sipahis*) in lieu of salary. In the mid-twentieth century the *timar* was seen as the core issue in Ottoman history, the characteristic institution of the empire's classical era; the device that united the military system, the political system, the economic system and the social system; that made the empire successful, organized its resources, brought its people together, insured its prosperity, and created its identity. Advice writers' complaints, however, paint a picture of the *timar* system as riddled with corruption and filled with incapable recipients. Sometime after the death of Süleyman the system is said to have suffered a decline; it was replaced by tax farming and the cavalry army by Janissaries, leading to corruption, exploitation, and military collapse. *Timar*-holders supposedly dwindled in numbers and were relegated to support tasks such as ditch-digging. The advice writers attribute the uselessness of the *timar*-holding cavalry to the admission of outsiders (*ecnebiler*).

The discourse of decline in the advice works has been shown to be a long-established trope in the Muslim world, often invoked against political and institutional change.³ These complaints, in other words, are not evidence of deterioration in Ottoman military and administrative systems but strategies of political advice. The

2 Rifaat A. Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: the Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

3 Cornell H. Fleischer, "From Şeyhzade Korkud to Mustafa Âlî: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman *Nasihatname*," in *IIIrd Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey*, ed. Heath W. Lowry and Ralph S. Hattox (Istanbul: İsis Press, 1990), pp. 67-78; Douglas A. Howard, "With Gibbon in the Garden: Decline, Death and the Sick Man of Europe," *Fides et Historia*, 26 (1994), pp. 22-37; Heather Ferguson, "Genres of Power: Constructing a Discourse of Decline in Ottoman *Nasihatname*," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 35 (2010), pp. 81-116.

timar system in such works is a symbol of the order and justice that the empire should exhibit, not a description of *timars* on the ground. For instance, at least until the mid-seventeenth century Ottoman revenue from tax farming did not grow much faster than the inflation rate, suggesting that the farming of *timar* taxation was not extensive.⁴ A fresh look at some under-utilized documentary sources, produced by the elite class but for different purposes, paints a very different picture of the *timar*-holders.

The study of the *timar* system and its workings by an earlier generation of scholars was a model of documentary research.⁵ Scholars such as Barkan, İnalçık, and Beldiceanu examined all the different types of documents that the *timar* system generated, the *mufassal* (detailed) and *icmal* (summary) survey registers (*tahrirs*), *berats* (orders), *kanunnames* (lawcodes), *ruznamçe* (daybook) registers, and more.⁶ Some of these documents showed how the system itself worked, the

4 Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 241.

5 On this historiography see Colin Heywood, "Between Historical Myth and 'Mythohistory': The Limits of Ottoman History," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 12 (1988), pp. 315-45. So much has changed since their time that aside from İnalçık's works, most recent textbooks in English treat the *timar* system in a page or two, and Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*, (London: John Murray, 2005), does not mention it at all. Censure of the uncritical use of the data in the documents has produced several studies on their sources and reliability; see Heath W. Lowry, "The Ottoman *Tahrir Defterleri* as a Source for Social and Economic History: Pitfalls and Limitations," in *Studies in Defterology: Ottoman Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992), pp. 3-18; Elias Kolovos, "Beyond 'Classical' Ottoman *Defterology*: A Preliminary Assessment of the *Tahrir* Registers of 1670-71 Concerning Crete and the Aegean Islands," in *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History: Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander*, ed. Elias Kolovos, Phokion Kotzageorgis, Sophia Laiou and Marinos Sariyannis (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2007), pp. 201-35.

6 Barkan's articles have been collected in two works: Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1990), and idem, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi: Tetkikler - Makaleler*, ed. Hüseyin Özdeğer, 2 vols., (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2000); see also idem, *XV. ve XVI'ncı Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Zirai Ekonominin Hukuku ve Mali Esasları, Vol. 1: Kanunlar*, (Istanbul: Türkiyat Enstitüsü Neşriyatı, 1943). For İnalçık's insights on the *timar* system see Halil İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Vol. 1, 1300-1600*, ed. Halil İnalçık with Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); idem, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); and various collections of his articles. The articles on the *timar* system by Nicoară Beldiceanu, Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, and their students have not been collected, but see his *Le*

parameters of surveying the revenue sources, of awarding *timars*, of assessing and collecting taxes, and of dealing with problems.⁷ These documents also revealed how Ottoman registers and documents were compiled and how to read them, not only paleography but also the capabilities of the writers, their mistakes, the nuances of their intentions, and the reliability of their information. The *mufassal defters* were also used to estimate agrarian, urban, and nomadic population and production, as well as the average tax burden of the peasantry, giving us almost the only insights we have into peasant life before the modern period.⁸ Two other areas addressed through these registers were mining and manufacturing, the production of raw materials for industry and goods for trade. The *ruznameçe* registers were used to investigate changes to the *timar* bestowal process, its personnel and procedures. The *kanunnames* defined the terms used in the system and illustrated the economic activities of different regions, the economic priorities of the state, and the life patterns and responsibilities of the classical elite, the *timar*-holding class. The *berats* disclosed further details on relations between the state and its servants and on issues of governance. The diversion of scholars' interests away from economic and social history in the wake of the literary and cultural turns, however, meant that the scholarship was never properly synthesized and numerous questions remained unanswered.

Questions Raised by the Advice Literature

Although the advice writers' descriptions of the *timar* system are not evidence of its actual condition, their complaints, as well as how these complaints changed

timar dans l'État ottoman: (début XIV^e-début XVI^e siècle) (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1980). The huge body of research on the *timar* system done by Balkan historians before 1989 is quite neglected today.

- 7 See, for example, Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Reglement otoman concernant le recensement (première moitié du XVI^e siècle)," *Südost-Forschungen*, 39 (1978), pp. 1-40; Gyula Káldy-Nagy, "The Administration of the Sanjaq Registrations in Hungary," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 21 (1968), pp. 181-223; Nejat Göyünç, "Timar Tevcihleri Hakkında," *Osmanlı-Türk Diplomatîği Semineri: 30-31 Mayıs 1994: Bildirileri* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Araştırma Merkezi, 1995), pp. 67-74.
- 8 For a convenient overview see (besides İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History*) Fikret Adanır, "The Ottoman Peasantries, c.1360-c.1860," Tom Scott (ed.), *The Peasantries of Europe: From the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 267-304. On these documents see also Feridun M. Emecen, "Mufassal'dan İcma'l'e", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 16 (1996), pp.37-44; Nejat Göyünç, "Timar Ruznameçe Defterleri'nin Biyografik Kaynak Olarak Önemi", *Belleten*, LX/227 (1996), 127-38.

over time, can be regarded as raising questions for research. The most famous of the advice writers, Mustafa 'Ali, wrote his 1581 advice work *Nüshatu'l-Salatin/ Counsel for Sultans* in a tone of outrage, and his harangues colored the image of this period for later generations.⁹ 'Ali became *timar* registrar of Aleppo in 1578, serving not in Aleppo but on the Iranian front with the army.¹⁰ This fact shaped his work, as the chaotic experience of the battlefield was far from the orderly world of imperial ceremony and sultanic regulation. He complained that the men receiving high appointments were greedy and oppressive, while "educated men are not given employment and high standing under the excuse that they had not been trained in the Imperial Palace."¹¹ He considered the palace-trained men of the *devşirme*, then, as uneducated upstarts, tracing their receipt of offices and *timars* to Mehmed II's appointment of Janissaries to provincial offices. He seems to have imagined a hereditary class of *timar*-holders who alone were worthy of high office. The summary *timar* registers provide the identities of *timar*-holders, but the last surviving register for Aleppo before 1581 dates from 1565, before 'Ali's time, so it may not reflect his problem. An analysis of a group of registers, however, allows us to track changes in *timar*-holders' identities during this period.

'Ali also censured the award of *timars* to mercenaries and retainers of governors and officials instead of the sons of *timar*-holders: "In whichever province the governors are appointed to an office, they enter high and low of their own men into the lists, . . . no sooner have their men started to receive a salary when they already designate them for a *timar* and *zi'amet*. In this manner nobody [that is, no former *timar*-holders or their sons] has a chance to receive a suitable position; these are all reserved for the mercenaries and for the slaves of the great."¹² 'Ali alleged that the *beylerbey* of Aleppo gave no *timars* to men who were not his retainers, and he generalized this behavior to the whole empire. Such retainers had formerly been

9 Mustafa 'Ali, *Nüshatu'l-Salatin*: Andreas Tietze (ed. and trans.), *Mustafâ 'Alî's Counsel for Sultans of 1581: Edition, Translation, Notes*, 2 vols, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 137, 158, (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979, 1982), I, 17, 37, 84-86. On this subject, see Linda T. Darling, "The Sultan's Advisors and Their Opinions on the Identity of the Ottoman Elite, 1580-1653," Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent Schull (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Creating, Contesting, and Resisting Ottoman Identity, 13th-20th Centuries*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

10 Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 83. On Mustafa 'Ali's account of the campaign, *Nusretname*, see H. Mustafa Eravcı, *Mustafâ 'Alî's Nusret-nâme and Ottoman-Safavi Conflict*, (Istanbul: MVT, 2011).

11 'Ali, *Nushat*, I, 25.

12 'Ali, *Nushat*, I, 86.

supported by the pashas' stipends, but now they were gaining official and military positions through patronage. Was this true of the *beylerbey* of Aleppo, and if so, was it also true of the empire at large?

There were financial reasons for such a practice: the inflation of the period made officials less able to support large retinues of soldiers, yet its military demands necessitated ever larger forces.¹³ Moreover, muster registers reveal high rates of absenteeism from campaign by timar-holders, which necessitated increasing the fighting strength from other sources.¹⁴ Awarding *timars* to these troops, many of peasant origin, would enlarge the army and address the salary problem, but it would also increase competition for these positions and create a sense that the rewards of service were going to the wrong people.¹⁵ Moreover, 'Ali's story does not match those of other advice writers; although he blamed the problem on the *beylerbey* of Aleppo in the years 1578-80, the anonymous author of *Hırzül-Mülük* (The Agreeable Book), an official and *timar*-holder, claimed it already existed earlier, while Koçi Bey attributed it to Özdemiş Osman Paşa in 1584.¹⁶ This raises questions concerning the process by which timar-holders' identities changed and a locus and starting date for that process.

The author of *Hırzül-Mülük*, probably written in the 1570s, complained about outsiders well before Mustafa 'Ali but described the problem as neither new nor severe in his time. He claimed that outsiders were gaining *timars* through tricks and deceit, by buying their way in or by taking the name of a qualified *timar*-holder who was deceased, and recommended that *timars* should be given only to

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- 13 Christine Woodhead, "After Celalzade: The Ottoman *Nişancı* c. 1560-1700," Andreas Christmann and Robert Gleave (eds.), *Studies in Islamic Law: A Festschrift for Colin Imber*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the University of Manchester, 2007), pp. 297, 299-302. In the sixteenth century a *sancakbey* typically brought 800-1000 slave soldiers to battle; Klaus Röhrborn, *Untersuchungen zur osmanischen Verwaltungsgeschichte*, (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), p. 64. Moreover, some scholars have mentioned a diminution of provincial officials' support which formerly allowed them to pay retainers out of their *has*; Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria: A History of Justice and Oppression*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 154-56.
- 14 V. P. Mutafčieva and Str. A. Dimitrov, *Sur l'état du système des timars des XVIIe-XVIIIe ss.*, (Sofia: Academie Bulgare des Sciences, 1968), pp. 13-14. According to Halil İnalçık, the proportion should have been 90 percent, as 10 percent customarily remained home to oversee production and taxation.
- 15 İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 85.
- 16 'Ali, *Nuṣḥat*, I, 17-18, 47, 53, 84; Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, Yılmaz Kurt (ed.), (Ankara: Ecdad, 1994), pp. 47-57.

former *timar*-holders or their sons. If, however, the outsiders had held their *timars* for more than ten years, he suggested that they not be dispossessed but be regarded as fit and experienced, qualified for a *timar*.¹⁷ His tone was dispassionate, quite unlike Mustafa 'Ali's distressed harangues. Others had already complained about outsiders for several decades; Lütfi Paşa warned against them in 1545.¹⁸ The problem had been alleged even earlier, by some of the rebels under Şahkulu in 1511, and people in the 1520s prevented such outsiders from gaining *timars*, as evidenced by a 1531 order from Sultan Süleyman forbidding anyone to refuse *timars* to outsiders or even to label them as outsiders, since all were his servants. A contradictory edict in 1544 banning outsiders from gaining *timars* did not halt the process.¹⁹ Assessing the impact of late sixteenth-century elite competition requires querying the *timar* records throughout the sixteenth century regarding the origins of *timar*-holders and whether or when specific changes occurred. Another question is the possibility of detecting the deceptions the authors described.

The problem becomes more complex for the seventeenth century, and further research is required to sort out these complexities. Advice writers addressing the difficulties of the Long War with Austria (1593-1606) alluded to the entry of unqualified and incapable people into the military ranks, both *timar*-holding and salaried.²⁰ Aksarayı and Veysi, however, did not accuse the Janissaries but rather those who had *not* come up through the *devşirme*, such as the *sekban* and *sarıca* forces, recruited from the peasants. Between 1580 and the end of the century,

17 Anonymous, *Hırzül-Mülûk*, Yaşar Yücel (ed.), *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), pp. 185-89. On the literature of advice see Ağâh Sırrı Levend, "Siyaset-nameler," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı Belleten*, (1962), pp. 167-94; Ahmet Uğur, *Osmanlı Siyaset-Nameler*, (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2001); Orhan M. Çolak, "İstanbul Kütüphanelerinde Bulunan Siyasetnameler Bibliyografyası," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1.2 (2003), pp. 339-78.

18 Lütfi Paşa, *Das Asafnâme des Lutfî Pascha*, Rudolf Tschudi (ed. and trans.), (Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1910), p. 24.

19 Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 22; Julius Káldy-Nagy, "The 'Strangers' (*Ecnebilir*) in the 16th Century Ottoman Military Organization," György Kara (ed.), *Between the Danube and the Caucasus*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987), pp. 165-69; Douglas A. Howard, "The Ottoman *Timar* System and Its Transformation, 1563-1656" (doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1987), pp. 99-102; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Kanûnî Sultan Süleyman'ın *Timar* ve *Zeamet* Tevcihi ile İlgili Fermanları," *Tarih Dergisi*, 22 (1969), p. 38.

20 Mehmed İpşirli, "Hasan Kâfi el-Akhisarî ve Devlet Düzenine ait Eseri *Usûlü'l-Hikem fi Nizâmî'l-Âlem*," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10-11 (1979-80), pp. 239-78; Veysi, *Khab-Name (Kniga Snovideniia)*, F. A. Salimzianovoi (ed.), (Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Nauka," 1976), p. 113.

therefore, the dominance of the *devşirme* element must have become accepted. ‘Ayn ‘Ali’s *Kavanin-i Al-i Osman* complained about the granting of both *timars* and places in the Janissary corps to “unqualified” outsiders, especially the retainers of officials. Veysi also mentioned awards of *timars* and *zeamets* to noncombatants such as palace women.²¹ Still later writers, such as Koçi Bey, lamented that *timars* were being given even to city boys and Gypsies.²² Which social groups formed a threat to the status quo at any particular time thus becomes an issue, along with changes in the relationship between military and political status.

On the İcmal Defterleri

This study examines some documents of the *timar* system, the *icmal defterleri*, for the light they can shed on changes in *timar* awards. Of the documents on the *timar* system, the *mufassal* (detailed) registers have been by far the most heavily used for their abundant information on village and urban population, land use and agriculture, and the distribution of wealth. So many studies and publications of them have been made that an entire book is dedicated to their bibliography.²³ Much less attention has been paid to the *icmal* (summary) registers, which contain information on the *timar*-holders. Halil İnalçık produced the first scholarly edition of an *icmal defteri* as long ago as 1954, but since then these registers have not been employed for a longitudinal study of *timar*-holders.²⁴ The *icmal defterleri* are occasionally referred to in local studies, but only a handful of them have been published.

The present study focuses on *icmal defterleri* from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth and their picture of the structure of the *timar*-holding elite.²⁵ It is an initial sounding and does not by any means exhaust the study of these registers, particularly for the later centuries. Although these documents may

21 ‘Ayn Ali, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osman der Hülâsa-i Mezâmin-i Defter-i Divân*, M. Tayyib Gökbilgin (ed.), (Istanbul: Enderun, 1979). Since the *icmal defterleri* record provincial awards, they do not address this complaint.

22 Koçi Bey, *Risale*, p. 57.

23 Adnan Gürbüz, *XV-XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Sancak Çalışmaları: Değerlendirme ve Bibliografik bir Deneme*, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2001).

24 Halil İnalçık, *Hicrî 835 Tarihli Sûret-i Defter-i Sancak-ı Arvanid*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954).

25 A few other types of documents were also used, such as *ruzmançe defterleri* and the published campaign register for the Malta campaign, Arnold Cassola with İdris Bostan and Thomas Scheben, *The 1565 Ottoman Malta Campaign Register*, (Malta: Publishers Enterprises Group, 1998), pp. 125-357.

be problematic because of their summary nature and should be compared with the *ruznamçe* registers, the data they present is useful as an indicator of trends in *timar*-holding. This study examines a representative sample of *icmal defterleri*, with special attention to the years 1565-1602, in order to track *timar*-holders' identities, especially in the late sixteenth century.

The surviving *icmal defterleri* appear to be less well preserved than the *mufassal defterleri*, possibly because the information they contain was not of direct relevance to people in later centuries. However, although the *mufassal defterleri* stopped being made at the end of the sixteenth century, except for newly conquered or reconquered provinces, *icmal defterleri* continue into the seventeenth century and beyond, attesting to the award of timars throughout the empire's history.²⁶ The Appendix to this article lists *icmal* registers from the fifteenth century to the early seventeenth held by the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in the Tapu Tahrir and Maliyeden Müdevver collections. This list is doubtless incomplete, being based only on a keyword search of the archive catalogues and some published sources. We know that some registers are mis-catalogued, and there are also *icmal defterleri*, especially for later centuries, in other collections which have not yet been examined.²⁷ These registers do not cover the whole empire; each one includes only a province or a few provinces, so they do not show the whole group of *timar*-holders at any one time. An asterisk marks the registers chosen for this study; the choice was determined by readability of script, typicality of location (away from the frontier, not an island, etc.), and date; the aim was to have a roughly even distribution over time with a focus on the years around 1580, and also to represent each sultan's reign in order to locate possible changes in *timar* bestowal policies. The study also employs data from published registers.²⁸ These registers vary in size from 66 entries to 1,698;

26 See, for example, Yücel Özkaya, "XVIII. Yüzyılın Sonlarında Timar ve Zeâmetlerin Düzeni Konusunda Alınan Tedbirler ve Sonuçları," *Tarih Dergisi*, 32 (1979), pp. 219-54, 959-77; Nathalie Clayer, "Note sur la survivance du système des *timâr* dan la région de Shkodër au début du XXe siècle," *Turcica*, 29 (1997), pp. 423-31.

27 The Kamil Kepeci collection contains a number of seventeenth-century *icmal defterleri*, and Bab-1 Asafi has some from a variety of dates. Those in the Hazine-i Amire, İradeler, Cevdet, and Satın Alınan Evrak are all from the eighteenth and/or nineteenth centuries. Some *icmals* are in the Tapu ve Kadastro collection, but none were listed in the catalog as being in the Defterhane-i Amire collection. On problems with the catalog descriptions of the registers see Kemal Çiçek, "The Earliest Population and Fiscal Surveys (Tahrir Defterleri) for the Anatolian Provinces of the Ottoman Empire," *OTAM*, no. 7 (1996), p. 45.

28 These are İnalçık, *Hicri 835 Tarihli Süret-i Defter-i Sancak-ı Arvanid*; Melek Delilbaşı and Muzaffer Arıkan, *Hicri 859 Tarihli Süret-i Defter-i Sancak-ı Tırhala*, (Ankara: Türk

for the purpose of comparison and to absorb minor counting errors, the data are reported as percentages.

The study traces *timar*-holding by sons of *timar*-holding cavalrymen (*sipahis*) and people of other origins, Muslim and non-Muslim. Fifteenth-century registers identify the previous *timar*-holder and the reason why the *timar* became vacant, but the majority of registers omit that information, so it is not included in the study. The fifteenth-century registers also provide fascinating information on the family and patronage relations of the *timar*-holders which has not yet been investigated. Most *timars* were held by single individuals, but some were shared, especially between sons of a *timar*-holding father or by groups of men in fortress garrisons. *Timars* shared by two or three individuals were counted in this study, but the numerous fortress guardians (up to 8 or 10) who shared a single *timar* were omitted as atypical. Brothers were counted separately, but their father was only counted once. The *has* of the sultan and *beylerbey* was disregarded, but holders of *zeamets* (larger *timars*) were included with *timar*-holders. Religion was determined by the name of the *timar*-holder: individuals with Arabic names were assumed to be Muslim, individuals with Slavic names were assumed to be non-Muslim, and individuals with Turkish names were assumed to be Muslim unless otherwise noted; individuals with Turkish names appeared on some lists marked as *zimmis*. Where the father's name was present, his religion was also noted. Some *timar*-holders or their fathers were given titles in the register, such as *bey*, *kethüda*, or *serasker*, or were identified as *ghulams* of the *dergah-ı ali*, Janissaries, administrative personnel, officers or *ghulams* in the provinces, or retainers of central or provincial officials. Someone with only a placename as a title was assumed to be a *ghulam*. An individual with no title, no office, and no father's name in the register was presumably the son of a nobody, most likely a volunteer (*gönüllü*) to the army who was awarded a *timar* for valor on the battlefield.

Tarih Kurumu, 2001); Hazim Tabanović, *Krajitje Isa-Bega Ishakovića*” *Zbirni Katastarski Popis iz 1455. Godina*, (Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut u Sarajevu, 1964); Feridun M. Emecen, *XVI. Asırda Manisa Kazası*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989); Mehmet Akif Erdoğan, “Akşehir Sancağındaki Dirliklerin III. Murat Devrindeki Durumu ve 1583/991 Tarihli Akşehir Sancağı İcmal Defteri,” *OTAM*, 1, no. 1 (June 1990), pp. 127-62; idem, “Beyşehir Sancağı İcmal Defteri,” *Belgeler*, 13, no. 18 (1988), pp. 117-82. Figures from other published *icmal defterleri*, such as Behset Karaca, *XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Teke Sancağı*, (Isparta: Fakülte Kitabevi, 2002); Gökknur Göğebakan, *XVI. Yüzyılda Malatya Kazası (1516-1560)*, (Malatya: Malatya Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2002); and Enver Çakar, *XVI. Yüzyılda Halep Sancağı (1516-1566)*, (Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi, 2003), match those used very closely.

Muslim and Christian Timar-Holders

One of the questions regarding elite recruitment that prior scholars have addressed and that these registers speak to is the religious affiliations of the *timar*-holders. The standard story is that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries *timars* were granted to Christians, but by the sixteenth century it was necessary to convert to Islam to obtain a *timar*. Table 1 lists *timar*-holders and their fathers by religion, as determined by their names. For the total number of *timars* in each register see Table 3; register numbers are in the Appendix. Table 1 displays the numbers and percentages of Muslim and Christian *timar*-holders and their fathers in each register; percentages are rounded off except where necessary.²⁹ The fathers' percentages are percentages of listed fathers, not of *timar*-holders themselves, as the religion of the fathers who were not recorded is unknown.

As these registers show, the common idea that as time went on it became necessary to be a Muslim to hold a *timar* is somewhat overstated. Until about 1520 there were provinces where Christian *timar*-holders made up 12-16 percent of the total and provinces where they numbered only 2 percent or less. After 1520 Christian *timar*-holders appeared less often, usually less than one percent, but there were always a few. Even into the seventeenth century there were Christian *timar*-holders, especially but not only in the Balkan provinces. This finding may affect our concept of the reasons for conversion, especially after the fifteenth century. The registers also show that Muslim sons of Christian fathers received *timars* in significant numbers throughout the sixteenth century, usually between 3 and 18 percent but occasionally approaching the high of 34 percent recorded for 1431. By the time of the advice writers this was not an issue, but it indicates the flexibility and inclusiveness of the Ottoman system and the influence of the non-Muslim element within it. Later registers can be used to track *timar*-holding among Muslim and Christian provincial elites.

Titles and Positions of Timar-Holders

Table 2 addresses the question of *timars* awarded to people who were not sons of *timar*-holders but whose titles indicated that they held other positions in the

29 On the first of these registers see Halil İnalçık, "Timariotes chrétiens en Albanie au XV. siècle d'après un registre de timars ottoman," *Mitteilungen des österreichischen staatsarchiv*, 4 (1951), pp. 118-38; on the second see idem, "Stefan Dušan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna: XV. Asırda Rumeli'de Hıristiyan Sipahiler ve Menşeleri," in idem, *Fatih Devri üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), pp. 137-84. The latter article studies a number of fifteenth-century registers of various types for the Balkan provinces in which Christian *timar*-holders averaged 20 percent.

Ottoman hierarchy in either the palace or the provinces. *Timar*-holders with titles are divided into the following categories: *ghulam d.a.* (i.e., *gilman-i dergah-i ali*, palace personnel such as Janissaries or other slaves of the sultan), administrative personnel (such as *katibs*), provincial officials or troops (such as *subaşı*s or *ghulams* of the *beylerbey*), and followers or retainers (*adam*, *merd*, *tabi*) of viziers, *beys*, and other important persons.³⁰ The table lists the percentage of *timar*-holders falling into each category.

As Table 2 shows, the percentage of Janissaries and other palace personnel receiving *timars* did not increase during the sixteenth century, even at its end. The highest rate of *timars* awarded to Janissaries occurred in the fifteenth century during Murad II's reign—not Fatih Mehmed's. Mehmed is supposed to have favored the Janissaries, but apparently he did not do so by awarding them *timars*. It was Murad who stocked the *timar*-holding cohort with his slaves, while Mehmed incorporated the provincial forces.³¹ Over time, the percentage of Janissaries and palace personnel receiving *timars* drifted up and down between 1 and 10 except for the periods 1564-66, during and after the Malta campaign, when over 20,000 *timar*-holders and other soldiers lost their lives and had to be replaced rapidly, and 1576-80 during the Persian war.³² Several registers around that time recorded 16-17 percent of *timars* awarded to palace personnel, and in the campaign register itself 36 percent of awards were granted to such people. Since Mustafa 'Ali's distress similarly involved *timar* awards made to Janissaries and retainers while on campaign, perhaps what he was seeing was simply a normal practice of which he was unaware. While in peacetime or at the capital *timars* were awarded according to the regulations (*kanun*), *timar* awards made on campaign went to men who had just proven themselves worthy in battle, many of whom would have been salaried soldiers or retainers of the commanders, and relatively few the sons of *timar*-holders.

30 A series of regulations, largely from Süleyman's time but copied in 983/1575-76, specified the size of *timar* to be granted to officials at all levels of the central and provincial administrative and military forces. Douglas A. Howard, "Ottoman Administration and the *Timar* System: *Sûret-i Kânûnnâme-i 'Osmânî berây-i Timâr Dâden*," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 20 (1996), pp. 46-125.

31 For one explanation, see Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 91; the rest of his argument on pages 91-92, however, is not supported by the *icmals*, which do not record any *timars* granted to women of the palace (understandably, since they record provincial conditions).

32 Cassola, III; Ernle Bradford, *The Great Siege* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 206, 224.

Administrative personnel receiving *timars* never amounted to more than 5 percent of the total, many of them *timar katibleri* and other scribes, who did not become cavalymen but held the *timar* in lieu of salary. Provincial military and officials receiving *timars* hovered between 1 and 6 percent for most of the sixteenth century, although they like palace personnel became particularly numerous in the Malta campaign register and in the late 1550s, for reasons possibly connected with the war between Bayezid and Selim. A slight rise in awards to provincial military personnel in 1583 does not attest to the validity of the advice writers' complaints, since the number fell shortly afterward; moreover, it corresponds neither to Mustafa 'Ali's nor Koçi Bey's account of how the practice supposedly began. In the Malta campaign register, 26 percent of *timars* were awarded to the retainers of great men other than provincial governors. Except for registers produced during and after the Malta campaign, however, the followers of great men receiving *timars* came to between zero and 6 percent, and their numbers did not rise in the years around 1580.

A substantial number of central and provincial officials receiving *timars* were *çavuşlar*, heralds attached to the sultan's court, the provincial governor, military troops, or other bodies. A sultanic ordinance stated that sons of the *çavuşlar* of the imperial divan were entitled to *timars*, but these *timars* were awarded to the *çavuşlar* themselves. Their numbers were significant in the registers of 1518, where they numbered 3 percent of the total *timars*, 1527 (4 percent), 1550 (6 percent), and 1565 (8 percent in Diyarbekir and 14 percent in Haleb), but their place of service was not marked; in Table 2 they were counted as belonging to the *ghulam*s of the palace. There were also large numbers in the registers of 1566 and 1602, most labeled *çavuş-ı dergah-ı ali*, of the sultan's court (10 percent of the total in 1566, 3 percent in 1602). In addition to these, in both registers 2 percent of *timars* were awarded to *çavuşlar* of the province and to a few whose place of service was unmarked. The corollary is that the *timars* awarded to palace personnel who were not *çavuşlar* diminished from 7 percent in 1518 to 2 percent in 1565, rose again to 7 percent in 1566, and dropped to 1.4 percent in 1602. A possible but unlikely reason for this change is that the *çavuşlar* were salaried, and granting them *timars* was a way of reducing the salary budget. This argument would be more convincing if larger numbers of *çavuşlar* were receiving *timars* in the 1570s and 1580s, but in the registers examined their numbers decreased in those years; a credible explanation still awaits discovery.

Some *timar* recipients in the Malta campaign may have been *timar*-holders' sons who had not yet attained a *timar*, or former *timar*-holders who were out of office due to the rotation system that accommodated a *timar*-holding class that was

increasing due to population growth, either of whom might have come to battle in the retinue of a *timar*-holder or official. It was not their fathers' or patrons' status, however, but their own standing and exploits that were the reasons for their *timar* awards. The fact that in the campaign register most of the people awarded *timars* were not sons of *timar*-holders, but palace personnel, provincial military, or retainers of the great, vividly demonstrates the Ottoman practice of rewarding fighters in campaigns by the grant of a *timar*. This was not a corruption of the original intent of the system but a continuation of it; the system was never designed to create a hereditary elite, contrary to what the advice writers implied. As a steppe empire, the Ottoman Empire had no hereditary aristocracy; its elites were recruited from among commoners, local elites, "conquered people," and slaves. They were neither nobles nor landowners, but were chosen by the sultan for reasons of service to the throne; military service was among the best of reasons.³³ Such fighters included sons of *timar*-holders whose fathers were still in active service, *timar*-holders who had been rotated out of *timars*, men at arms (*cebelüs*) who accompanied *timar*-holders and officers to battle, members of fortress garrisons or other troops, and volunteers from the *reaya*.³⁴ As we saw above, it had long been the practice to award *timars* to military volunteers who demonstrated prowess on the battlefield; in 1515, for example, when campaigns to the east demanded increased recruitment, an edict from Sultan Selim enlisted "sons of *timar*-holders or deposed *timar*-holders or anyone who wished to obtain *timars* through his valour."³⁵ Similarly, Süleyman

33 During the conquests of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries frontier *beys* or provincial governors had awarded *timars* to their own servants and retainers, some of whom retained them after the death of their patron; Linda T. Darling, "The Development of Ottoman Governmental Institutions in the Fourteenth Century: A Reconstruction," in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, Vera Costantini and Markus Koller (eds.), (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 17-34; Mario Grignaschi, "Les guerriers domestiques dans la féodalité turque," *VI. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1967), pp. 212-13, 216-17, 219. See also İnalçık, "Stefan Dušan'dan." On steppe practices compare Urgunge Onon, trans., *The History and the Life of Chinggis Khan (The Secret History of the Mongols)*, (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

34 Pál Fodor, *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, (Istanbul: İsis Press, 2000), pp. 116, 276 n.3, 291-93.

35 Order in K. Su, *Bahkesir ve Civarında Yürük ve Türkmenler*, (Istanbul: Resimli Ay, 1938), pp. 1-3, cited in Káldy-Nagy, "Strangers," p. 167. See also the entry in a register of 1522, *Mezkûrların ecdadı raiyyet olub yoldaşlık ile timara çıkub babaları Tebriz seferinde yoldaşlıkda fevt olmuşdur*: "The ancestors of the above [*timar*-holders] were *reaya* who obtained a *timar* by comradeship [in the army]; their fathers died in the forces on the Tebriz campaign." Zeki Arıkan, "Tapu-Tahrir Defterleri Yayınıyla İlgili bir Tasarı," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 13 (1993), p. 74.

in 1552 enlisted “the brave young men who take delight in raiding and in the holy war ... raiders, men at arms, and others.”³⁶ While the sons of *timar*-holders were assumed to be the best-qualified and best-trained warriors, if that proved not to be the case the system was ready to substitute others. Whether the same was still true in later centuries remains to be determined.

Fathers of Timar-Holders

Table 3 addresses the complaint that in 1580 (or 1584) *timars* traditionally awarded to sons of *timar*-holders began to be awarded to unrelated people who had no position in the Ottoman system, such as riffraff and Gypsies. It tracks the percentage of *timar*-holders whose fathers were listed in the registers and the identities of the fathers listed. Asterisks mark *ruznamçe defterleri*, which do not show all *timar*-holders in an area at any one time. The last column reports the percentage of *timar*-holders who have neither a father’s name in the register nor a title identifying them as holders of rank in the Ottoman system, members of the standing military, or retainers of officials. The fathers listed include—as we have seen—Muslims and non-Muslims, palace personnel such as Janissaries and other *ghulams*, and a few men holding other positions in the administration or the provinces. Most fathers listed, however, are not marked in any way; they are assumed to be *timar*-holding cavalymen with no other title or office. The absence of a father’s name in a *timar* appointment is thus understood to indicate that the father had no such position. As Douglas Howard has shown, after 1544 it was necessary for those receiving *timars* to present documentation if they were sons of past *timar*-holders.³⁷ At the time they received their *timars*, then, their fathers’ names were known and recorded. Therefore, *timar* recipients whose father’s names were not recorded were in all probability genuine outsiders. According to Howard’s research on the *ruznamçe* registers, however, some of them had fathers in non-elite military groups such as *sekbans* or considerable military experience of their own.

On average for the entire period, only 42 percent of *timar*-holders had a father’s name listed in the register, and a number of those fathers were not *timar*-holders. That percentage is slightly low, as brothers’ fathers were not counted, but clearly the advice writers’ claim that *timars* were always given only to the sons of *timar*-holders was completely invalid; during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were seldom even the majority of recipients. Across time, the percentage of *timar*-holders whose fathers were named in the register remained remarkably

36 TSMK, Koğuşlar 888, 363b, quoted in Fodor, *In Quest*, p. 292.

37 Howard, “The Ottoman *Timar* System,” p. 9.

stable, around 40-42 percent except for the 1550s, when it rose to 62 percent, and the 1580s, when it dropped to 35 percent. It was undoubtedly the decrease in the 1570s from a high point in Süleyman's reign that inspired the complaints of the advice writers. That high point, however, lasted less than a decade and was not true of every register even during that decade.

These ups and downs can easily be understood as responses to circumstances rather than as corruption; while corruption certainly existed, it was not the main cause of the changes. The registers for 1583 do show a pattern of awards resembling Mustafa 'Ali's complaint about Aleppo in 1581, with large numbers of *timars* granted to outsiders. When compared to the figures for 1580, 1582, and 1588, however, those registers are exceptional and may reflect specific circumstances rather than a general pattern. In much of Süleyman's reign, most *timar*-holders lived to have sons and to see those sons succeed them as adults. On the other hand, the battles of Malta, Lepanto, and the Iran war caused the loss of many *timar*-holders. The population growth of mid-century had left many peasants landless, and they volunteered in large numbers on the Iranian campaign, making themselves eligible for *timar* awards. Howard has hypothesized, on the basis of evidence from the *ruzmançes*, that not only were many *timar*-holders killed in that war, they were killed too young to replace themselves biologically, and that it was this absence of sons of *timar*-holders that led to the inclusion of more outsiders in the ranks.³⁸ The same explanation may hold good for Aleppo. In any case, it is obvious that these registers do not represent the start of a long-term trend, as the outsiders subsequently decreased again.

The sons of palace personnel gained few *timars* except in the years 1431 and 1583; a higher number of sons of palace personnel was found in one register for the latter year but not the other. That register also appears atypical, as the surrounding registers contain few or no *timar*-holders whose fathers were from the palace household. It is possible, therefore, that some palace people's sons were admitted in that specific year to help make up the deficit in *timar*-holders' sons that was noted above. Or perhaps the sons of palace personnel were typically given *timars* in Akşehir, while Erzurum and Bolu seem to be places where most *timars* were awarded to the sons of *timar*-holders. It is possible that different provinces had different priorities in awarding *timars*; perhaps new *timar*-holders who were sons of nobodies were concentrated in certain provinces and/or kept out of others.

An average of 33 percent of *timar*-holders had neither a father's name nor a title listed in the register. Prior to 1560 the percentages averaged 27, while after 1560 the

38 Howard, "The Ottoman *Timar* System," p. 178-82.

average rose to 38 percent. The sons of nobodies always gained substantial numbers of *timars*, and they gained somewhat more in the later period, though not in all registers, and there is nothing to suggest a sudden change around 1580. The highest rate came not in the 1580s nor during the Long War with Austria but in 1568; there were also high rates in 1521, 1527, 1565, and 1572, as well as 1583. The lowest rates occurred in 1531, 1539, 1563, and 1565 (the same year as one of the highest rates); thus, there was no steady trend. The kaza of Manisa presents an interesting case, with two high figures bracketing one low number, suggesting there were reasons for the variation among registers other than a general increase over time. In this case it is probable that the *timar*-holders of 1521 had sons who inherited in 1531, but that by 1572 the depletion of their numbers at Malta and Lepanto created a need for new blood. Teke exhibited the same sequence, but Haleb the opposite; general conclusions based on the study of a single province, therefore, are highly problematic.³⁹ Overall, the observed pattern matches nothing in the advice works, making conclusions based on their statements equally doubtful. While the sons of nobodies received more *timars* after 1560, it was not a general increase but was significant only in certain years and certain provinces, not in others. After each of the high points in the 1520s, 1560s, and 1580s, moreover, the percentage of sons of nobodies receiving *timars* went back to normal. Studies of specific incidents and provinces will be necessary to see the reasons for this pattern, as well as how the pattern changed in later centuries.

From these figures, we can conclude that *timar* awards did not dramatically change, either around 1580 or during the Austrian war; that there was no official long-term policy of replacing the sons of *timar*-holders; and that an unofficial trend in that direction was as likely to have resulted from military needs as from corruption. Howard's research in the *ruzmançe defterleri* likewise disclosed no discrepancies in the recording of *timar* awards that would lend credence to the advice writers' complaints of the forgery of *timar* assignments. If indeed *timar* documents were forged to admit the sons of nobodies on a wide scale, it would have to have been done so perfectly that the forgery could not be detected then or now. If it was real, however, it *was* detected, since the advice writers knew; moreover, the consistency of the recorded distribution of *timar* awards over the century makes it improbable on anything but a quite small scale. That was undoubtedly illegal, but it was not the massive social problem that the advice writers described.

39 Karaca, *XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Teke Sancağı*; Çakar, *XVI. Yüzyılda Haleb Sancağı*.

If Not Corruption, What? The Changing Roles of Timar-Holders

The standard narrative on the decline of the Ottoman cavalry now includes the “military revolution,” the change in warfare in the late sixteenth century involving a shift from bows and arrows to hand-held gunpowder weapons. The Ottomans did employ these weapons, spurred by superior Austrian firepower in field battles such as Mezökerestes (1596; the Ottomans nevertheless won). To do so they expanded the Janissary corps and established salaried infantry units of arquebusiers or musketeers called *sekban*, *sarıca*, *levend*, and *tüfenkendaz*.⁴⁰ The problems caused by the discharge of these hired troops after the campaigning season plagued the empire for some time after the war but were eventually brought under control. Contrary to what was previously thought, the quality of Ottoman firearms was not inferior to those of Europe.⁴¹ The number of artillerymen (gunners, drivers, armorers) quadrupled during the Long War with Austria, and Ottoman cannon were widely feared.⁴² With this growth in the importance of infantry, the cavalry’s preponderance was reduced, but they retained a certain value and *timar*-holders also became useful as siege forces (what the standard view calls “relegated to support services and ditch-digging”). Ottoman miners and sappers were considered highly skilled, and they, along with bombardiers (*humbaracılar*), were often remunerated with *timars*.⁴³ Ottoman siege warfare lacks extensive study, but it was an area in which the Ottomans excelled, contrary to studies on the military revolution which have not consulted Ottoman sources.

40 Gabor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 26-27.

41 Gabor Ágoston, “Habsburgs and Ottomans: Defense, Military Change and Shifts in Power,” *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 22.1 (1998), pp. 138-40. Aksarayi complained that the Ottoman troops were not given the most modern weapons, but Szalontay argues that not their weapons but their tactics were inferior; Tibor Szalontay, “The Art of War during the Ottoman-Habsburg Long War (1593-1606) According to Narrative Sources” (doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 2004), pp. 164-70. The Europeans, moreover, were finally developing successful counters to the Ottoman style of battle.

42 Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, p. 30.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40, 42. For a 1612 work on the reform of the cavalry see Martin C. Mandlmay, “Studies on the Habsburg Ottoman War of 1592-1606: The Modernization of Warfare Exemplified on Giorgio Basta’s Life and Works,” in *IX. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1986-89), II, 995-1000. Basta also wrote a work in 1606 on how infantry with pikes and muskets should coordinate with cavalry; see V. J. Parry, “La Manière de Combattre,” V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (eds.), *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, (Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 228-32.

Sieges of cities and fortresses were well known from medieval times; they involved surrounding the fortified place to starve it out or ramming and assaulting walls and gates. With the improvement of cannon in the late fifteenth century came the *trace italienne*, enhancements in fortification comprised of thick, slanting, star-shaped walls, often of earth or brick, to absorb or deflect cannon shot and protruding bastions, connected to the walls or freestanding, to cover the “dead ground” close to the walls and prevent assault; armies then sought to dig under the walls and blow them up or get close enough to destroy them with cannon. During the 1522 siege of Rhodes, which had been partially modernized, the Ottoman army dug no less than “54 mine tunnels.”⁴⁴ The *trace italienne* reached Central Europe by the mid-sixteenth century in a band of fortifications from Dalmatia into Austria and Hungary along the Ottoman frontier; due to its expense only important fortresses were modernized.⁴⁵ The Ottomans also experimented with the new forms, employing an Italian architect who fortified Budin in 1541 “with bastions, and surrounded the walls with deep and wide ditches which were furnished with casemates and other rearward defences, such as you may see . . . in Italy.”⁴⁶ The new fortifications built by the Knights of St. John in Malta withstood everything the Ottomans could bring to bear against them from the sea.⁴⁷ On land, however, the siege capabilities of the sixteenth-century Ottoman forces were not well-represented by the outcome of Malta.⁴⁸ In 1566 the Ottomans reduced Szigetvar in a month, despite its new bastions, though at a high cost in casualties.

44 Christopher Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World, 1494-1660*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 192; John Francis Guilmartin, Jr., *Gunpowder and Galleys: Changing Technology and Mediterranean Warfare at Sea in the Sixteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 73-74. See also the sieges of Tata and Yanik in Christine Woodhead, *Tā'likī-zāde's Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn: A History of the Ottoman Campaign into Hungary, 1593-94*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983).

45 Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia, 1522-1747*, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, 48, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960).

46 Leone Andrea Maggiorotti, *Architetti e Architetture Militari*, (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1933-39), vol. 2, p. 100, quoted in Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, p. 201. On other Italian military consultants see Rhoads Murphey, Review of Kenneth M. Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks, Archivum Ottomanicum*, 13 (1993-94), pp. 374-75. Lesser fortifications (*palankas*), constructed not of stone or brick but of rammed earth, were cheap and quick to build and absorbed cannon shot very well, but the timber facings were vulnerable to fire; Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, p. 211, illustrations on pp. 212, 216; Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, pp. 9, 217 n.22. On Ottoman forts and their operation see Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007).

47 Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, pp. 193-94 and illustrations.

48 Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, p. 194.

After the siege of Malta, the Venetians fortified Crete and Cyprus with star-shaped fortifications defended by cannon. The besiegers in turn built ditches and tunnels that allowed them to reach the walls under cover and plant explosives. Ottoman siege works were highly regarded by European observers. Descriptions of the siege of Famagusta in 1571 say that the Ottoman “ditches and shelters were so many, and so well arranged, that the whole army could be drawn up within.”⁴⁹ The Ottoman army dug its way to the town’s defenses: “Having burrowed until they reached the level of the floor of the ditch, the enemy pierced a hole in the counterscarp revetment and threw out quantities of earth, little by little, until they had made a double traverse which extended to the rampart.”⁵⁰ After three and a half months of siege, the Venetians yielded. By the end of the century, siege warfare was the dominant form throughout Europe. During the Long War with Austria, despite difficulties in the field, the Ottomans were successful in siege warfare, reducing several of the modern fortifications the Austrians had constructed in mid-century, such as Bihaç (Bihke, in eight days), Yanık (Győr), Eğri (Eger), and Kaniye (Kanisza). The capture of these major fortresses, which demanded very different skills from the Iran campaign, broke the Austrian defense line and opened the road to Vienna.⁵¹ In Sultan Süleyman’s time the job of the Janissaries, the construction of trenches and siege works later employed the hired troops and *timar*-holders.

Although the role of cavalry was lessened with the proliferation of hand-held firearms, there were still military uses for the *timar*-holders. Miners, the “ditch-diggers” of the standard view, were with the artillery a major element of the siege forces necessitated by the advent of more modern fortifications. The Ottomans were ahead of the Habsburgs in their ability to besiege forts and cities protected

49 Paolo Paruta, *The History of Venice . . . Likewise the Wars of Cyprus*, trans. Henry Carey, Earl of Monmouth, (London: Printed for Abel Rober, and Henry Herringman, 1658), quoted in Claude Delaval Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), pp. 35-36, quoted in Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, p. 196. Szalontay, “Art of War,” describes other siege tactics as well.

50 Carlo Promis, *Le Antichità di Aosta, Augusta Praetoria Salassorum, Misurate, Disegnate*, (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1862), p. 120, quoted in Duffy, *Siege Warfare*, p. 196.

51 Géza Pálffy, “The Origins and Development of the Border Defence System Against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary (Up to the Early Eighteenth Century),” Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 3-70; Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp. 7-15.

by the new walls and bastions.⁵² Unlike shooting arrows from horseback, the techniques involved did not require lifelong practice, so the sons of *timar*-holders no longer had an advantage due to their upbringing. *Timars* began to be awarded to non-cavalrymen, the miners and sappers of this mode of warfare. The advice writers claimed that newer *timar* recipients were more reluctant to fight than the sons of *timar*-holders, but logic suggests the reverse, especially if the *timars* had been awarded for battlefield performance.⁵³ When Murad IV ordered reforms to the *timar* system in 1632, he did not restrict awards to the sons of *timar*-holders but required that recipients have military experience, appear for muster, and reside in the area of their *timars*.⁵⁴ Although good reasons existed to maintain the *timar* system, however, it no longer represented the order and justice of the empire or united its administrative functions into a coherent whole as it had in the past.

Conclusion

The *icmal defterleri* can be a useful source for surveying changes in the *timar* system. To better interpret both their data and their silences, a comparison with the more detailed information in the *ruznamçes* is desirable. Still, they reveal the *timar* system as a means of integrating not only new and former elites, but also peasants, captives, and other fighters into the Ottoman forces. Contrary to ideology, or at least our perception of it, it apparently did not matter much who their fathers were. Sons of *timar*-holders outnumbered sons of nobodies overall but not by much, averaging 42 percent to 33, and there was no major change around 1580.

What the *timar* system experienced in the late sixteenth century should not be seen as a decline but as a change in purpose. The reforms of 1632 show that these forces were still valued as fighting men, not only as rural policemen and tax collectors. Although firearms reduced the need for cavalry forces, they did not eliminate it. Moreover, although the *timar* system was no longer central to the Ottoman military as a whole, *timar*-holders acquired a significant role in siege warfare. *Timars* still existed in the countryside, even though the monetarization of the economy made tax farming feasible for agricultural taxes. *Timar*-holders continued to be part of the rural elite, but their relationship to the central elites

52 Szalontay, "Art of War," pp. 79-80 and nn. 4-5.

53 Mutafçieva and Dimitrov, *Sur l'état*, publish inspection registers (*yoklamas*) that show over half the *timar*-holders absent from muster in 1605 and 1607. Further research will disclose the identities of the absentees.

54 Howard, "The Ottoman Timar System," pp. 214-16.

became more distant. The *timar* system continued to function despite losing its ideological role in Ottoman governance.

The *icmal defterleri* do not support the idea of a change in elite recruitment around 1580. In the late sixteenth century, as the records indicate, the percentage of sons of *timar*-holders who received *timars* did decrease from a momentary peak in the 1560s, but not as much as the advice writers claimed and not universally across the empire. The decrease was made up, not by palace personnel or Janissaries, nor by the provincial military or retainers of great men; if the recipients had been provincial military forces or the followers of great men, there is no obvious reason why that fact would not have been reported or recorded, since in some years and in some provinces throughout the century those figures did rise without, it seems, causing reprisals or even dismay. The ranks were filled largely by the sons of nobodies and non-elites with military experience, whose numbers among the *timar*-holding ranks increased, but again, not as much as the advice writers claimed. Even those who may originally have been city boys, riffraff, Gypsies, or peasants had to present evidence of military experience; many of their *timars* were conferred on the battlefield. Koçi Bey is certainly wrong when he says that such a trend began in 1584; it was visible much earlier, in some provinces as early as the 1520s. Those who claim it began in the 1570s, Mustafa ‘Ali and the anonymous author, are also incorrect, as the *icmal* registers for 1573, 1576, and 1580 contain low numbers of sons of nobodies compared to the registers of the 1560s.

Without the training of the sons of *timar*-holders or the Janissaries, recruits of other origins may have been ignorant of the standards of behavior expected in more elite circles, or of the governing norms of the administration into which they had just been admitted. Their presence in the *timar*-holding ranks, however, was not new, and the increase in their numbers was not large. What was new around 1580 was the economic downturn into which the empire was plunged, which may have magnified the consequences of any fall in behavioral standards or induced their well-born peers to imitate rather than deplore them. Also new was the refined court culture of the post-Süleymanic period, into which they clearly did not fit. The problem that faced the empire in this period was not military incompetence or outsiders in the elite so much as a redefinition of the elite’s role in governance and its relationship to military service, a problem that was common across Eurasia at this time with the waning of feudalism.

While *timar*-holders were no longer the elite core of the military, their other functions were sufficiently important that the state did not eliminate them after the “military revolution.” The Europeans’ military successes increased due not to any “decline of the *timar* system” but to improvements in their own military

science that enabled them first to match, and in the eighteenth century to exceed, Ottoman military standards, which changed more slowly. Behind such advances lay their competition for power and religious pre-eminence on the European continent and their colonization of distant lands. The Ottomans, without these incentives, nevertheless retained European respect as siege experts (and even as manufacturers of firearms), and the *timar*-holders contributed to this outcome. Like their military role, the *timar*-holders' role in the countryside as agrarian managers and revenue collectors also altered in this period. We must reconceptualize the *timar* system as dynamic rather than static, transforming rather than declining; the late sixteenth century saw a change in the whole purpose of *timars* and their holders, and the "new" *timar* system should form an object of study as an institution of the later empire.

Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century

Abstract ■ This article examines the changing identities of one portion of the Ottoman elite as depicted in the *icmal defterleri*. The focus is on the late sixteenth century, when the advice writers say the *timar* system declined and elite recruitment altered significantly. They attribute the uselessness of the *timar*-holding cavalry to the replacement of the sons of *timar*-holders by outsiders (*ecnebiler*), Janissaries or the retainers of the powerful. The *icmal defterleri*, however, do not indicate a major change in elite recruitment around 1580. They show that sons of *timar*-holders were never the majority of recipients, and that although they did decrease somewhat from a momentary peak in the 1560s, this decrease was made up, not by Janissaries, the provincial military, or retainers of great men, but by sons of nobodies with military experience. And they did not disappear but acquired new functions, especially in siege warfare.

Keywords: advice literature, summary register, *timar* system, elite, military, Mustafa Ali, decline, outsider, siege

APPENDIX: *İCMAL DEFTERLERİ* IN BAŞBAKANLIK OSMANLI
ARŞİVİ, 15th-17th C.

TT=Tapu ve Tahrir; TD-Tahrir Defterleri; TK=Tapu ve Kadastro; KK=Kamil
Kepeci; MAD=Maliyeden Müdevver; ()=publication

Miladi year (M) is the year in which the Hicri year (H) began.

<u>DATE H/M</u>	<u>DOC. NO.</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
835/1431*	TT1m	icmal	Arnavut (İnalçık)
Murad II	MAD303	icmal	Kırçeva, Pirlepe
Murad II	MAD525	icmal	Eastern Macedonia
Murad II	MAD250	icmal	second part of above register
854/1450	TT15	icmal	Rum
859/1454*	MAD10	icmal	Tırhala (Delilbaşı & Arıkan)
859/1454*	MAD544	icmal	Serbia (Tabanović)
870/1466	MAD241	timar	Karaman
873/1468*	MAD66	icmal	Tırhala
882/1477	MAD16	icmal	Vulçitrin
883/1478	TT5m	icmal	Bosna
884/1479	TT11	icmal	Novoberde
884/1479	MAD16	icmal	Vulçitrin
885/1480	TT39	icmal	Menteşe
885/1480	TT41	icmal	Rum
888/1483	MAD1	icmal	Vidin
890/1485*	TT18	icmal	Bosna
902/1496	TT26m	icmal	İskenderiye
902-6/1496-1500	MAD334	icmal	Crimea, Rum, Kayseri, Trabzon
912/1506	TT34	icmal	Avlonya
917/1511	TT89	icmal	Karesi
921/1515	TT53	icmal	Trabzon
922/1516	TT57	icmal	Bosna
922/1516	TT56	icmal	Bosna
922/1516	TT58	icmal	Kastamonu
924/1518*	TT66	icmal	Aydın, Menteşe

925/1519	TT78	icmal	Hersek
925/1519	TT72	icmal	Saruhan
Selim I	TT89	timar	Karesi
926/1520	TT96	icmal	Hersek
926/1520	TT423	icmal	Şam
927/1521*	TD102	icmal	Manisa (Emecen)
927/1521	TD107	icmal	Teke (Karaca)
929/1523	TD998	icmal	Haleb (Çakar)
931/1524	TT124	timar	Maraş
931/1524	TT125	icmal	Haleb
933/1526	TT137	icmal	Hama
934/1527*	TT139	icmal	Aydın
935/1528	MAD540	mücmel	Bosna
937/1530	TD166	icmal	Teke (Karaca)
937/1530	TD103	icmal	Malatya (Göğebakan)
937/1530	TD135	icmal	Semendire
Kanuni	TD429	icmal	Semendire
938/1531	TT163	“abridged”	Malatya
938/1531*	TD72	icmal	Manisa (Emecen)
943/1536	TT183	icmal	Erzurum, Trabzon
943/1536	TT180	icmal	Anadolu
943/1536	TD422	icmal	Haleb (Çakar)
944/1537	TT190	icmal	Erzurum, Trabzon
946/1539*	TT197	icmal	Erzurum
947/1540	TT209	icmal	Hersek
949/1542*	TT217	icmal	Paşa
954/1547	TD257	icmal	Malatya (Göğebakan)
956/1549	MAD3752	icmal	Şam Türkmen
957/1550*	TT271	icmal	Haleb (also Çakar)
959/1552	TT280	icmal	Diyarbakir
963/1555	TT298	icmal	Temeşvar
966/1558*	TT313	ruznamçe	Rum, Arap (Haleb used)
967/1559*	TT469	icmal	Avlonya
967/1559	TD324	icmal	Malatya (Göğebakan)

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970/1562	TT346	icmal	Kudüs
971/1563*	Ruz.17	ruznamçe	Aydın (Howard)
972/1564*	Malta Campaign Register		(Cassola)
973/1565*	TT356	icmal	Lipova (Macaristan)
973/1565*	TT86	icmal	Bolu
973/1565*	TT358	icmal	Diyarbakir
973/1565*	TT544	icmal	Haleb (not cited by Çakar)
973/1565*	TT562	icmal	Karahisar-ı Şarki
974/1566*	TT212	icmal	Paşa
976/1568	TKA315	icmal	Teke (Karaca)
976/1568*	TT471	icmal	Teke (also cited by Karaca)
980/1572*	TD258	icmal	Manisa (Emecen)
981/1573*	TT677	icmal	Mezistre
984/1576	Ruz.46	ruznamçe	Aydın (Howard)
987/1579*	TD661	icmal	Novigrad (Bayerle)
988/1580*	TT590	icmal	Budin
990/1582*	TT601	icmal	Kastamonu
990/1582	KK240	icmal	Semendire
991/1583*	TK333	icmal	Akşehir (Erdoğan)
991/1583*	TK584	icmal	Beyşehir (Erdoğan)
991/1583	KK323	icmal	Semendire
992/1584	Ankara TD344	icmal	Haleb (Çakar)
995/1586	MAD98	icmal	Erzurum
997/1588*	MAD129	icmal	Mora, etc.
997/1588	Ruz.III	ruznamçe	Aydın (Howard)
998/1589	MAD39	icmal	Haleb (pages 94-197)
999/1590	MAD143	ruznamçe	Erzurum
1000/1591	MAD209	icmal	Kars
1003/1594	TT680	icmal	Gelibolu
III. Murad	TT1108	icmal	Paşa
1009/1599	MAD144	ruznamçe	Şam
1011/1602*	TT728	icmal	Bosna

YEAR H/M	PLACE	T/M	%	T/C	%	F/M	%	F/C	%
835/1431	Arnavut	279	84	56	16	44	66	23	34
859/1454	Tırhala	209	75	71	25	96	83	20	17
859/1454	Serbia	185	71	74	29	42	69	19	31
873/1468	Tırhala	494	98	12	2	351	92	30	8
890/1485	Bosna	296	88	36	12	68	85	12	15
942/1518	Aydın, Menteşe	918	99.8	2	0.2	130	98.4	2	1.6
927/1521	Manisa Kazası	82	100	0*	0	19	100	0	0
934/1527	Aydın	492	100	0	0	50	100	0	0
938/1531	Manisa Kazası	90	100	0*	0	63	100	0	0
946/1539	Erzurum	332	100	0	0	308	100	0	0
949/1542	Paşa	541	100	0	0	293	100	0	0
957/1550	Haleb	327	100	0	0	161	97	4	3
966/1558	Rum, Haleb	175	100	0	0	75	83	15	17
967/1559	Avlonya	539	100	0	0	376	99	3	1
971/1563	Aydın	47	100	0	0	36	100	0	0
973/1565	Bolu	387	99.7	1	0.3	361	100	0	0
973/1565	Diyarbakir	456	100	0	0	265	96	10	4
973/1565	Lipova	83	99	1	1	15	71	6	29
973/1565	Haleb	183	100	0	0	42	97	1	3
973/1565	Karahisar-ı Şarki	980	100	0	0	192	100	0	0
974/1566	Paşa	356	99.7	1	0.3	174	89	22	11
976/1568	Teke	287	99.4	1	0.6	12	67	6	33
980/1572	Manisa Kazası	127	100	0*	0	9	100	0	0
981/1573	Mezistre	85	100	0	0	35	90	4	10
984/1576	Aydın	102	100	0	0	65	100	0	0
987/1579	Novigrad	65	100	0	0	33	100	0	0
988/1580	Budin	117	100	0	0	58	82	13	18
990/1582	Kastamonu	599	100	0	0	185	97	5	3
991/1583	Akşehir	137	100	0	0	14	100	0	0
991/1583	Beyşehir	348	100	0	0	50	94	3	6
997/1588	Mora	47	100	0	0	27	82	6	18
997/1588	Aydın	222	100	0	0	43	100	0	0
1011/1602	Bosna	1693	99.7	5	0.3	725	95	36	5

* There were Christians with *timars* in the fortress garrisons of Manisa: 3 in 1521, 7 in 1531, and 7 in 1572, most with Turkish names but marked as *zimmis*.

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TABLE 2. Positions of <i>Timar</i> -Holders					
YEAR H/M	PLACE	%GHULAM d.a.	% ADMIN.	% PROVINCIAL	% FOLLOWER
835/1431	Arnavut	22	0	6	0
859/1454	Tırhala	0.5	0	19	0
859/1454	Serbia	0	0	54	0
873/1468	Tırhala	5	1	0	0.5
890/1485	Bosna	10	3	1	4
942/1518	Aydın, Menteşe	10	1.5	3	0.4
927/1521	Manisa Kazası	2	5	1	0
934/1527	Aydın	9	3	3.6	2
938/1531	Manisa Kazası	6.6	1	4	2
946/1539	Erzurum	0.6	0.6	3	0.3
949/1542	Paşa	8	2	2	6
957/1550	Haleb	9	0.3	2	3
966/1558	Rum, Haleb	6	0	12	5
967/1559	Avlonya	6	1	13	3
971/1563	Aydın	8.5	2	0	26
972/1564	Malta Campaign	36	3	33	26
973/1565	Bolu	4	0.5	2.5	0.5
973/1565	Diyarbakir	10	0.8	2	5
973/1565	Lipova	16	2	2	10
973/1565	Haleb	16	4	3	4
973/1565	Karahisar-ı Şarki	2	0.1	1	0.2
974/1566	Paşa	17	2	3	2
976/1568	Teke	6	1	5	0
980/1572	Manisa Kazası	6	5	3.5	0
981/1573	Mezistre	2	1	1	0
984/1576	Aydın	12	1	2	4
987/1579	Novigrad	8	5	12	1.5
988/1580	Budin	12	4	3	0
990/1582	Kastamonu	3	1.3	4	1.5
991/1583	Akşehir	7	0	10	0
991/1583	Beyşehir	3	4	5	0
997/1588	Mora	8	0	8	0
997/1588	Aydın	6	?	?	9
1011/1602	Bosna	5	0	3	0.1

YEAR H/M	PLACE	# TIMAR-HOLDERS	FATHER LISTED	%	%FATHER GHULAM	%UN-LISTED NO TITLE
835/1431	Arnavut	330	67	20	19	46
859/1454	Tırhala	280	116	41	0	23
859/1454	Serbia	259	61	24	5	15
873/1468	Tırhala	506	381	75	6	4
890/1485	Bosna	335	80	24	1	25
942/1518	Aydın, Menteşe	920	132	14	0.75	33
927/1521	Manisa Kazası	82	19	23	2.5	61
934/1527	Aydın	492	50	10	0	66
938/1531	Manisa Kazası	90	62	69	5.5	12
946/1539	Erzurum	332	208	93	0	0
949/1542	Paşa	541	293	54	4	20
957/1550	Haleb	327	165	50	3	30
966/1558	Rum, Haleb*	175	0	51	0	13
967/1559	Avlonya	539	379	70	5	18
971/1563	Aydın*	47	36	76	11	4
972/1564	Malta Campaign	66	0	0	0	0
973/1565	Bolu	541	431	80	8	11
973/1565	Diyarbakir	456	275	60	0	11
973/1565	Lipova	84	21	25	5	31
973/1565	Haleb	183	43	23	3	36
973/1565	Karahisar-ı Şarki	980	192	20	0.5	69
974/1566	Paşa	357	196	55	0	23
976/1568	Teke	288	18	6	0	75
980/1572	Manisa Kazası	127	10	8	3	70
981/1573	Mezistre	85	39	46	0	39
984/1576	Aydın*	102	65	64	3	18
987/1579	Novigrad	65	33	51	0	56
988/1580	Budin	117	71	61	0	21
990/1582	Kastamonu	599	190	32	0	56
991/1583	Akşehir	137	14	10	21	69
991/1583	Beyşehir	348	53	15	13	70
997/1588	Mora	47	33	70	0	23
997/1588	Aydın*	222	49	20	0	57
1011/1602	Bosna	1698	764	45	1	44

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