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Tolga Karpuz,

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## Editorial

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The *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* is an Istanbul-based publication dedicated to fostering academic exchange among social scientists from Turkey, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Eastern European countries. We launched the journal in 2018 and have since published twelve issues. The current, thirteenth issue includes five research articles and one book review.

The first two articles in this issue, edited by our guest editor *Dr. Adrian Gheorghe*, focus on the military history of the Balkans. These papers were initially presented at the international workshop "Culture(s) of War between Transcarpathia and the Bosphorus, 14th-16th Century," held online in July 2024 by the Institute for Middle Eastern Studies at Munich University.

This one-day event explored the transformation of war cultures in Eastern and Southeastern Europe during the 14th to 16th centuries, a period marked by the rise of the Ottoman Empire and significant geopolitical upheavals. Adopting a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, the workshop examined the region's military organizations and warfare practices within a broader transregional framework. Key discussions centred on the evolution of war culture, tracing its shift from pre-Ottoman traditions to its integration into the Ottoman Commonwealth. Participants analysed the interplay between military structures, the transfer of knowledge, and cultural practices of war, highlighting areas of convergence and divergence across the region.

The first article, "Warfare in the Serbian State from the Late 14th to the Mid-15th Century" by *Miloš Ivanović*, explores the transformation of Serbian military organization under Ottoman pressure. It examines how rulers like Despot Stefan Lazarević restructured local governance and expanded the pronoia system to bolster defences. The study highlights advancements in fortifications and weaponry, as well as the adaptation of military service to meet the demands of Ottoman suzerainty.

The second article, "War, Innovations and Cultural Transfers in East-Central Europe: The Army of Transylvania in the Age of Transition from Voivodship to Principality" by *Florin Nicolae Ardelean*, investigates military evolution in Transylvania during the 16th century. It discusses the interplay of medieval traditions with foreign influences, such as Ottoman and Habsburg practices, and the adaptation of recruitment

methods, light cavalry, and infantry models. The article situates these changes within the broader political and cultural context of a borderland under Ottoman suzerainty.

In addition to these two thematic contributions, there are three other research articles on various aspects of Southeast European history:

The third article of the issue by *Bilgin Çelik* on "Some Assessments of the Habsburg Ambassador J.M.V. Pallavicini in the Process of Diplomatic Polarisation in Europe in His Istanbul Mission and Reports before the Balkan War" (in Turkish) discusses Pallavicini's tenure as the Habsburg ambassador in Istanbul during a period of heightened international tension over the Macedonian Question. The article highlights his diplomatic challenges, particularly during the 1908 Bosnian annexation, and his respected role as a senior Great Power diplomat amidst rising tensions before the Balkan War.

The fourth article by *Elçin Macar*, titled "Shifting Identities as a Strategy to Remain in the Homeland: The Remarkable History of Kurfalı, Eastern Thrace's Last Bulgarian Village," examines the history of a village inhabited by Bulgarians. Based on Ottoman and Turkish archival sources, it describes the population's response to various population exchange policies. To remain in their village, they initially declared themselves as Greeks. During the population exchange period, they identified as Bulgarians. This strategy allowed them to stay in their village until the 1930s, when they were exchanged with a Muslim village in Bulgaria.

The fifth article of the issue by *Tamás Dudlák* on "Southern Opening: Turkish Soft Power in Sub-Saharan Africa" examines Turkish policy in Africa from 2002 to 2016, analyzing it from political, economic, and cultural perspectives. It highlights the role of Turkish institutions, including governmental, humanitarian, and public initiatives, in shaping relations. Key to understanding this policy are non-governmental actors, such as the so called Anatolian Tigers, whose influence contributed to Turkey's broader engagement and the democratization of its foreign policy in Africa.

Finally, *Tolga Karpuz* offers a comprehensive review of the Turkish translation of Nathalie Clayer's book "The Origins of Albanian Nationalism: The Birth of a Muslim-Majority Nation in Europe".

The articles in this issue offer important contributions to our

understanding of both historical and contemporary issues in the Balkans. First and foremost, I would like to thank the authors of these excellent articles for choosing to publish in our journal. I also wish to express my gratitude to the referees for their valuable efforts during the evaluation process. For the preparation of this issue, I extend my thanks to the editorial board members and Dr. Adrian Gheorghe, the guest editor of this issue, for their support.

Mehmet Hacısalihođlu, Prof. Dr.

Editor in Chief

Research Article

## Warfare in the Serbian State from the Late 14th to the Mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century

Miloš Ivanović\*

### Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the changes in warfare within the Serbian state during the late Middle Ages. Beginning in the 1380s, Ottoman pressure on Serbian territories prompted significant transformations in the military organisation of Serbian rulers. To enhance their defences against the advancing threat, they introduced various forms of military service. Despot Stefan Lazarević undertook a reform of the local government system, establishing new administrative units. Additionally, the period under review witnessed notable advancements and changes in armaments.

**Keywords:** Serbia, warfare, army, Ottomans, *krajište*, *Vlachs*, *pronoia*, armament.

### Introduction

After the Battle of Maritza in September 1371, Serbian territories were gradually more strongly pressured by the Ottomans. This led to significant changes in the military organisation of the Serbian lands over time. The aim of these changes was to strengthen the defensive capability of the state

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against the Ottomans. Some new institutions were adopted by the Ottomans after the conquest of the Serbian state.

To begin, it is important to provide a brief overview of the military organisation in Serbia prior to the Ottoman advance. Most of the available information comes from the charters issued by Serbian rulers and the provisions of *Dušan's Code* from 1349 and 1353/1354. Article 42 of the Code stipulated that patrimonies (*baštine*), the fundamental type of noble estates, were exempt from all obligations except military service and the payment of a tax known as *soće*.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, it can be concluded that warfare was the basic duty of the nobility.<sup>2</sup> Based on several provisions, it can be seen that nobles were supposed to fight as horsemen. The only known provision of the *Military Law*, dating back probably to the late-12<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>3</sup> determined that soldiers' horses were not to be used for carrying loads, and that they themselves could not participate in the transport service.<sup>4</sup> Further, the horse and arms appear in Article 48 of the *Code* as symbols of the noble status.<sup>5</sup> It can be inferred that the number of soldiers a noble was required to provide corresponded to the size of his estate.<sup>6</sup> *Dušan's Code* specified that, alongside the Emperor, voivodes held the authority to command the army. Additionally, voivodes were empowered to resolve disputes arising during military campaigns.<sup>7</sup> Marcher nobles (*vlastela krajišnici*) bore significant responsibilities under *Dušan's Code*. Article 49 mandated that they compensate for any damage inflicted by an enemy army passing through their region onto the ruler's territory.<sup>8</sup> If bandits caused similar harm, the marcher noble was obligated to pay seven

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<sup>1</sup> Đorđe Bubalo, ed. *Dušanov zakonik* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike–Službeni glasnik, 2010), 83, 164.

<sup>2</sup> Miloš Ivanović, "Konj dobri i oružje". in *Vlastela države srpskih despota (1402–1459)* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2024), 27, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Rade Mihaljčić, "Vojnički zakon," in *Izborna vrednost stare srpske građe* (Beograd: Srpska školska knjiga–Knowledge, 2001), 51–52.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Mošin, Sima Ćirković and Dušan Sindik, (eds.), *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćiriličkih povelja i pisama Srbije, Bosne i Dubrovnika*, knjiga I, 1186–1321 (Beograd: Istorijski institut Beograd, 2011), 324, 328, 465; Rade Mihaljčić, "Vojnički zakon," 54, 56; Miloš Blagojević, "Zakon svetoga Simeona i svetoga Save," in *Sava Nemanjić– Sveti Sava. Istorija i tradicija*, ed. Vojislav J. Đurić (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1979), 159–161, 164.

<sup>5</sup> Bubalo (ed.), *Dušanov zakonik*, 85, 166; Ivan Božić, "Konj dobri i oružje (uz 48. član Dušanovog zakonika)," *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke* 13–14 (1956): 85–87.

<sup>6</sup> Stojan Novaković, *Stara srpska vojska. Istorijske skice iz dela "Narod i zemlja u staroj srpskoj državi"* (Beograd: Kraljevsko-srpska državna štamparija, 1897), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Bubalo, (ed.), *Dušanov zakonik*, 101, 197; Teodor Taranovski, *Istorija srpskog prava u Nemanjičkoj državi* (Beograd: Lirika, 2002), 154–155, 215, 378, 545, 586.

<sup>8</sup> *Dušanov zakonik*, ed. Bubalo, 85, 166–167; Miloš Blagojević, "Krajišta srednjovekovne Srbije od 1371. do 1459. godine," *Istorijski glasnik* 1–2 (1987): 31.

times the value of the damage.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates the immense pressure placed upon these nobles, as the Ottomans penetrated the region.

### Serbian Local Rulers under the Ottoman Pressure

Following the death of Emperor Uroš (1355–1371) in early December 1371, the Serbian state ceased to exist even as a formal entity.<sup>10</sup> The Ottomans were confronted by a fragmented resistance led by local rulers, each primarily focused on expanding their own territories. During the 1380s, the most determined opposition to the Turks came from Prince Lazar, the lord of the region in the basin of the three Morava rivers. He was allied with his son-in-law Vuk Branković, the lord of the region encompassing present-day Kosovo and Metohija.<sup>11</sup> Prince Lazar placed significant emphasis on the construction of fortifications. He established Kruševac as his capital in the 1370s<sup>12</sup> and oversaw the building of key fortresses such as Koprijan, south of Niš, and Stalać, northeast of Kruševac.<sup>13</sup> The responsibility for building and maintaining these fortifications fell largely on the dependent population.<sup>14</sup> However, in 1387, Prince Lazar and Vuk Branković imposed an obligation on the Ragusans, who owned property in their towns, to contribute to the construction and defence of fortifications.<sup>15</sup> This measure was clearly a response to the escalating threat from the Ottomans.<sup>16</sup> In response to this growing danger, Prince Lazar initiated the modernisation of his army's weaponry. In

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<sup>9</sup> Dušanov zakonik, ed. Bubalo, 105, 204; Blagojević, "Krajišta srednjovekovne Srbije," 31.

<sup>10</sup> Marko Šuica, "Narastanje novih moćnika," in *Vlast i moć – vlastela Moravske Srbije od 1365. do 1402. godine*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Kruševac: Narodna biblioteka-Centar za istorijsku geografiju i istorijsku demografiju Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2014), 21.

<sup>11</sup> For more details see: Rade Mihaljić, *Lazar Hrebeljanović. Istorija, kult, predanje* (Beograd: Beogradski izdavački-grafički zavod, 1989), 97–100, 108–115; Marko Šuica, *Vuk Branković: slavni i velomožni gospodin* (Beograd: Evoluta, 2014), 80–111.

<sup>12</sup> Momčilo Spremić, "Kruševac u XIV i XV veku," in *Prekinut uspon. Srpske zemlje u poznom srednjem veku* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2005), 108–109; Nebojša Đokić, "Kruševac" in *Leksikon gradova i trgova srednjovekovnih srpskih zemalja: prema pisanim izvorima*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2010), 152.

<sup>13</sup> Marija Korpivica, "Koprijan," in *Leksikon gradova i trgova srednjovekovnih srpskih zemalja: prema pisanim izvorima*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2010), 140; Dušica Minić and Obrenija Vukadin, *Srednjovekovni Stalać* (Beograd: Arheološki institut-Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture Kraljevo, 2007), 7–11, 163.

<sup>14</sup> Marko Šuica, "Gradozidanije" in *Leksikon srpskog srednjeg veka*, ed. Sima Ćirković and Rade Mihaljić (Beograd: Knowledge, 1999), 125–126.

<sup>15</sup> Aleksandar Mladenović, *Povelje kneza Lazara: tekst, komentari, snimci* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2003), 193; Marko Šuica and Tatjana Subotin Golubović, "Povelja Vuka Brankovića Dubrovniku," *Stari srpski arhiv* 9 (2010): 101.

<sup>16</sup> Marko Šuica, "Pripremi o srpsko-turskim okršajima i "strah od Turaka" 1386. godine," *Istorijski časopis* 53 (2006): 119.

September 1386, he entered into a contract with a Ragusan craftsman, Milaš Radoslavić, to produce ballistae and cannons in Serbia for one year.<sup>17</sup>

### Different Forms of Military Service

The Battle of Kosovo in June 1389, which resulted in the deaths of both Prince Lazar and Sultan Murad I,<sup>18</sup> had profound consequences for the Serbian lands.<sup>19</sup> Before the middle of 1390, Prince Lazar's successors were compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the Ottomans. Vuk Branković resisted the Ottomans until the summer or autumn of 1392, when he was forced to submit to Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402).<sup>20</sup> As Ottoman vassals, Serbian rulers were subject to two primary obligations. The first was to provide auxiliary troops for the Sultan's campaigns, and the second was to pay an annual tribute (*haraç*).<sup>21</sup> The requirement to supply auxiliary troops is explicitly mentioned in a charter issued by Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427), the son of Prince Lazar, in 1417 for the Vatopedi Monastery.<sup>22</sup> The exact number of soldiers Serbian rulers were expected to contribute is unclear. According to the Byzantine historian Doukas, Prince Stefan Lazarević sent a detachment of 5,000 lancers to the Battle of Ankara.<sup>23</sup> Another Byzantine historian, Chalkokondyles, claimed that at

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<sup>17</sup> Mihailo Dinić, "Prilozi za istoriju vatrene oružja u Dubrovniku i susednim zemljama," *Spomenik Srpske kraljevske akademije* 161 (1934): 83–84; Šuica, "Pripovesti o srpsko-turskim okršajima," 114.

<sup>18</sup> For more details about the battle see: Rade Mihaljčić, *The Battle of Kosovo in History and in Popular Tradition* (Beograd: BIGZ, 1989), 43–51; Sima Ćirković, "The Field of Kosovo, 15 June 1389," in *Bitka na Kosovu 1389. godine*, ed. Sima Ćirković, Dragoslav Srećević and Oliver Miljković (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti – Istorijski muzej Srbije, 1989), 81–90.

<sup>19</sup> Veljan Trpković, "Tursko-ugarski sukobi do 1402," *Istorijski glasnik* 1–2 (1959): 102; Sima Ćirković, "Godine krize i previranja," in *Istorija srpskog naroda, druga knjiga. Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države (1371–1459)*, ed. Jovanka Kalić (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1982), 48.

<sup>20</sup> Stanoje Bojanin, "Povelja Vuka Brankovića kojom oslobađa manastir Hilandar plaćanja turskog danka," *Stari srpski arhiv* 9 (2010): 149–151, 153–154, 158; Šuica, *Vuk Branković*, 139–148.

<sup>21</sup> Cengiz Ohnonlu, "Kharādj," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 4, eds. Emeri van Donzel, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, Bernard Lewis and Charles Pellat (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1053, 1055; Momčilo Spremić, "Haraç" in *Leksikon srpskog srednjeg veka*, ed. Sima Ćirković and Rade Mihaljčić (Beograd: Knowledge, 1999), 773; Halil Inaldžik, *Osmansko carstvo: klasično doba 1300–1600* (Beograd: Utopija, 2003), 17, 164; Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 13, 913, 180.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Lascaris, "Actes serbes de Vatopedi," *Byzantinoslavica* 6 (1935–1936): 179–180; Cyril Pavlikianov, *Medieval Slavic Acts from Mount Athos 1230–1734. Critical Edition and Commentary of the Texts* (Sofia: "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Press, 2018), 277.

<sup>23</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks: An Annotated Translation of "Historia Turco-Byzantina"*, trans. Harry Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 93.

least 10,000 Serbian soldiers participated in the same battle,<sup>24</sup> although this figure seems exaggerated. The Serbian detachment, which participated in the siege of Constantinople in 1453, consisted of 1,500 horsemen according to the testimony of Konstantin Mihailović, a member of it.<sup>25</sup> This suggests that the size of the auxiliary force may not have been fixed but varied depending on circumstances. The obligation to send troops was burdensome, affecting not only noble estates but also those of monasteries.<sup>26</sup>

After the Battle of Ankara, Stefan Lazarević emerged as a key figure in the Ottoman succession struggle between the sons of Sultan Bayezid I, which lasted from 1402 to 1413.<sup>27</sup> During this period, Despot Stefan frequently clashed with his brother Vuk and the sons of Vuk Branković.<sup>28</sup> Vuk was killed in July 1410,<sup>29</sup> but Stefan reconciled with Đurađ Branković in 1411 or 1412, who later became his successor.<sup>30</sup> Although both Despot Stefan and Đurađ Branković aligned themselves with the victorious faction in the Ottoman civil war, they became vassals of the new Sultan Mehmed I in 1413.<sup>31</sup> The mentioned charter issued by Despot Stefan to the Vatopedi Monastery in July 1417 provides insight into the various types of military service in his realm. The monastery's new possession, the village of Koprivnica (near the mining town of Novo Brdo) was exempted from military duties except in two cases: contributing troops for Ottoman campaigns and defending the border area (*krajište*) of Novo Brdo.<sup>32</sup> Military service in these border regions, already significant under *Dušan's Code*, gained greater importance due to the increasing Ottoman threat,

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<sup>24</sup> Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*. Vol. 1, trans. Anthony Kaldellis (London: Harvard University Press, 2014), 242–243; Maja Nikolić, *Vizantijski pisci o Srbiji (1402–1439)* (Beograd: Vizantološki institut SANU, 2010), 39.

<sup>25</sup> Konstantin Mihailović, *Memoirs of a Janissary*, trans. Benjamin Stolz (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1975), 90–91.

<sup>26</sup> Miloš Ivanović, "Militarization of the Serbian State under Ottoman Pressure," *Hungarian Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (2019): 395.

<sup>27</sup> For more details see: Nikolić, *Vizantijski pisci o Srbiji*, 46–75.

<sup>28</sup> Momčilo Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković i njegovo doba* (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1994) 52–61.

<sup>29</sup> Nikolić, *Vizantijski pisci o Srbiji*, 60–61; Dimitris Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid. Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402–1413* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 152.

<sup>30</sup> Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković*, 61; Miloš Blagojević, "Vrhovna vlast i državna uprava," in *Istorija srpskog naroda, druga knjiga. Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države (1371–1459)*, ed. Jovanka Kalić (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1982), 116–117.

<sup>31</sup> Nikolić, *Vizantijski pisci o Srbiji*, 76–77; Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković*, 62–63.

<sup>32</sup> Lascaris, "Actes serbes de Vatopedi," 179–180; Pavlikianov, *Medieval Slavic Acts*, 277.



particularly the raids of the *akıncıs*.<sup>33</sup> In a 1427 charter, Despot Stefan further clarified the military obligations tied to estates granted to the Monastery of Great Lavra on Mount Athos. These obligations included participation in campaigns personally led by the ruler, suppressing banditry, and waging wars in border regions under the command of a voivode.<sup>34</sup> Campaigns led by the ruler were likely considered the most critical, as exemptions from participation were not permitted. This prioritisation is corroborated by a similar provision in a charter of Bosnian King Stefan Tomaš and his son Stefan, issued to the Serbian nobleman and grand logothete Stefan Ratković.<sup>35</sup> At that time, King Stefan Tomaš was vying for the Serbian throne for his son, with Hungarian support and negotiations with the Serbian court.<sup>36</sup> The Ottomans adopted aspects of this military organisation after the conquest of the Serbian state in 1459. For instance, a legal provision from 1536 in the *Kanun* for the *Sancak* of *Smederevo* indicates that *Vlachs* previously had to send one man with a pack horse for every five households (*petnik*) for the Sultan's campaigns or border service. Under this regulation<sup>37</sup>, *Vlachs* were primarily a pastoral population with certain military obligations in medieval Serbia and later in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>38</sup> A similar recruitment system existed in Hungary. At the Diet of Timișoara in October 1397, Hungarian nobles were required to equip one mounted archer for every 20 peasants.<sup>39</sup> This ratio

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<sup>33</sup> Adrian Gheorghe, *The Metamorphosis of Power. Violence, Warlords, Akıncıs and the Early Ottomans (1300–1450)* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2023), 62–92; Imber, *The Structure of Power*, 190, 252, 254, 256, 260–265, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Aleksandar Mladenović, ed. *Povelje i pisma despota Stefana: tekst, komentari, snimci* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007), 260.

<sup>35</sup> Franjo Rački, "Prilozi za sbirku srbskih i bosanskih listina," *RAD Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 1 (1867): 158.

<sup>36</sup> Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković*, 536–538; Andrija Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2006), 92.

<sup>37</sup> Dušanka Bojanić, ed. *Turski zakoni i zakonski propisi iz XV i XVI veka za Smederevsku, Kruševačku i Vidinsku oblast* (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 1974), 47; Dušanka Bojanić-Lukač, "Ko je učestvovao u zamaničnoj vojsci?," *Vesnik Vojnog muzeja* 6–7 (1962): 241–242; Veselinović, Neven Isailović, "Legislation Concerning the Vlachs of the Balkans Before and After Ottoman Conquest: An Overview," in *State and Society Before and After Establishment of Ottoman Rule*, eds. Srđan Rudić, and Selim Aslantaş (Belgrade: Institute of History Belgrade-Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, 2017), 38; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 168.

<sup>38</sup> Isailović, "Legislation Concerning the Vlachs," 30–31, 36–40.

<sup>39</sup> *Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 2, eds. János Bak, Pál Engel and James Ross Sweeney (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlaks JR., Publisher, 1992), 22; András Borosy, "The Militia Portalis in Hungary before 1526," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, eds. János Bak, and Béla Király (New York: Brooklyn College, 1982), 63; Joseph Held, "Military Reform in Early Fifteenth Century Hungary," *East European Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (1977): 131–132.

varied during the 15th century depending on the wealth of each nobleman. These kinds of troops are known in historiography as the *militia portalis*.<sup>40</sup>

The mentioned charter of King Stefan Tomaš from 1458 emphasises that the estates of Grand Logothete Stefan Ratković were required to contribute to the *zamanička* army, much like all other villages in the state.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the Ottoman *Kanun* from 1536 provides further details about this military obligation. In cases of urgent tasks along the borders or in the marches, one man from each Vlach household would serve as a *zamanica*, either as an infantryman or horseman.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the Ottomans retained the Serbian term suggests that a comparable system existed in the Serbian state.<sup>43</sup> Notably, *Despot's Law* for the *Vlachs* persisted as a legal framework in the *Sanjak of Smederevo* until 1516.<sup>44</sup> It is also believed that this form of recruitment was employed in the border regions (*krajišta*) of the Serbian Despotate<sup>45</sup> and likely extended to efforts aimed at suppressing banditry.<sup>46</sup> It can be assumed that the regulations on *petnik* and *zamnica* were part of *Despot's Law*.<sup>47</sup> However, questions remain about the effectiveness of such troops, as many peasants likely lacked proper military equipment. Historians have concluded that detachments composed of peasants played only a secondary role in military conflicts, particularly in Hungary, where heavy cavalry formed the backbone of the army. This is why Hungarian kings in the 15th century invested substantial resources in hiring mercenaries.<sup>48</sup> The Serbian situation differed slightly due to the involvement of the Vlach population, who typically owned horses. While the *Vlachs* may have been effective against brigands or in defending against smaller *aķıncı* raids, their contribution in

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<sup>40</sup> *Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 2, 78; Borosy, "The Militia Portalis", 64; Held, "Military Reform," 133; Tamás Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács: A History of Ottoman-Hungarian Warfare, 1389–1526* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2018), 22–23.

<sup>41</sup> Rački, "Prilozi za sbirku srbskih i bosanskih listina," 158; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 190.

<sup>42</sup> Bojanić, ed. *Turski zakoni i zakonski propisi*, 47; Bojanić-Lukač, "Ko je učestvovao u zamaničnoj vojsci?," 242, 244; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 190–191; Isailović, "Legislation Concerning the Vlachs," 38.

<sup>43</sup> Bojanić-Lukač, "Ko je učestvovao u zamaničnoj vojsci?," 244; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 191.

<sup>44</sup> Bojanić, ed. *Turski zakoni i zakonski propisi*, 32, 140; Gordana Tomović, "Despotov kanun," in *Srednjovekovno pravo Srba u ogledalu istorijskih izvora*, eds. Sima Ćirković and Kosta Čavoški (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 2009), 291–292, 298–299.

<sup>45</sup> Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 190–192.

<sup>46</sup> Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 165, 193.

<sup>47</sup> Tomović, "Despotov kanun", 292–295.

<sup>48</sup> Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 151–156; Held, "Military Reform," 135–136.

larger conflicts against the organised Ottoman army was likely limited.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, Serbian despots are known to have hired mercenaries.<sup>50</sup> Despot Stefan, for instance, paid his mercenaries higher wages than those offered by King Sigismund in 1432/1433.<sup>51</sup>

### Reform of Local Government and the Expansion of the *Pronoia* System

To strengthen the country's defences, Despot Stefan introduced a reform of the local government system. New administrative units called *vlasti*, led by voivodes, were organised following the model of the earlier marches (*krajišta*). These administrative centres were typically located in fortified towns.<sup>52</sup> The critical distinction between *krajišta* and *vlasti* lay in the status of their leaders: while *krajišta* were governed by the most powerful noblemen of their regions, voivodes were directly appointed by the ruler and could be replaced at his discretion.<sup>53</sup> The primary responsibility of voivodes was military leadership. They led the army in their region, as evidenced by Despot Stefan's 1427 charter for the Monastery of Great Lavra.<sup>54</sup>

The growing pressure from the Ottomans appears to have contributed to the expansion of the *pronoia* system.<sup>55</sup> *Pronoia* was a type of estate granted by Serbian rulers from the Nemanjić dynasty, similar to its Byzantine counterpart, in exchange for military service. Unlike *baština* (patrimony), *pronoia* estates could not be alienated, even when inheritance was permitted.<sup>56</sup> This system maintained its specific character until the fall

<sup>49</sup> Ivanović, "Militaryization of the Serbian State," 396–397.

<sup>50</sup> Sima Ćirković, "Cena najamnika u jugoistočnoj Evropi krajem srednjeg veka," in *Vojne krajinu u jugoslovenskim zemljama u novom veku do Karlovačkog mira 1699*, ed. Vasa Čubrilović (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1989), 16–18; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 184–185.

<sup>51</sup> *Decreta regni Hungariae: Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1301–1457*, eds. Franciscus Döry, Georgius Bónis and Vera Bácskai (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 411; Ćirković, "Cena najamnika", 18.

<sup>52</sup> Mihailo Dinić, "Vlasti za vreme Despotovine," *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu* 10, no. 1 (1968): 237–239, 242; Miloš Blagojević, "Krajišta srednjovekovne Srbije od 1371. do 1459. godine," *Istorijski glasnik*, no 1–2 (1987): 39–40, 42; Miloš Blagojević, *Državna uprava u srpskim srednjovekovnim zemljama* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1997), 294; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 255.

<sup>53</sup> Blagojević, "Krajišta srednjovekovne Srbije," 40–42.

<sup>54</sup> Mladenović, ed. *Povelje i pisma despota Stefana*, 260; Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 165, 193.

<sup>55</sup> Georgije Ostrogorski, *Pronija. Prilog istoriji feudalizma u Vizantiji i južnoslovenskim zemljama* (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1951), 149.

<sup>56</sup> Ostrogorski, *Pronija*, 135, 149–150; Mark C. Bartusis, "Serbian *pronoia* and *pronoia* in Serbia: The diffusion of an institution," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 48 (2011): 191, 207, 210.

of the Serbian medieval state.<sup>57</sup> One example of this shift is found in a charter indicating that, after the Battle of Kosovo, Prince Stefan Lazarević confiscated the patrimony of a nobleman named Obrad for treason and converted it into *pronoia*.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that granting land as *pronoia* was a particularly effective way for rulers to secure additional soldiers.<sup>59</sup> It comes as no surprise that the prominent nobleman and logothete (chancellor) Stefan Ratković held over 20 villages as *pronoia* by October 1458, while he did not possess any patrimonial land.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, approximately 30 years earlier, the powerful nobleman and *čelnik* (comes palatinus) Radič owned as many as 60 villages as patrimony.<sup>61</sup> The *pronoia* system also expanded in Byzantium, particularly at the expense of monastic estates, after 1371.<sup>62</sup>

### Construction of Fortresses and Changes in Weaponry

Serbian rulers placed significant emphasis on fortress construction during the first half of the 15th century. Despot Stefan Lazarević dedicated substantial efforts to developing Belgrade, which he received from the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1403 or 1404.<sup>63</sup> However, his successor, Đurađ Branković, was compelled to return Belgrade to King Sigismund in September or October 1427, as stipulated by a prior agreement.<sup>64</sup> In response, Đurađ chose to establish a new capital at Smederevo. The *Small Town* of Smederevo, which housed Đurađ's court, was completed by 1429 or 1430,<sup>65</sup> while most of the fortifications, including 19 towers, were constructed by 1439.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ostrogorski, *Pronija*, 149–150; Bartusis, “Serbian pronoia,” 207, 210; Miloš Ivanović, “Pronija u državi srpskih despota,” *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 53 (2016): 326–332.

<sup>58</sup> Marko Šuica, “Povelja kneza Stefana Lazarevića kojom se Hilandaru prilaže crkva Vavedenja Bogorodičinog u Ibru,” *Stari srpski arhiv* 3 (2004): 112.

<sup>59</sup> Ivanović, “Konj dobri i oružje,” 122.

<sup>60</sup> Rački, “Prilozi za sbirku srbskih i bosanskih listina,” 156–158.

<sup>61</sup> Pavlikianov, *Medieval Slavic Acts*, 98–100, 103–104; Miloš Ivanović, “Pronija u državi srpskih despota,” 337.

<sup>62</sup> Mark Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 551–558; Ostrogorski, *Pronija*, 108–110.

<sup>63</sup> Marko Popović, *The Fortress of Belgrade* (Beograd: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Belgrade–Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, 1991), 29–37; Marko Popović, “Dvor vladara i vlastele,” in *Privatni život u srpskim zemljama srednjeg veka*, ed. Smilja Marjanović Dušanić and Danica Popović (Beograd: Clio, 2004), 44–45.

<sup>64</sup> Aleksandar Krstić, “Kralj Žigmund u Borči, ili kada je i kako Beograd predat Ugrima 1427. godine?,” *Istorijski časopis*, no. 61 (2012): 115, 118–126.

<sup>65</sup> Marko Popović, *Smederevo Fortress* (Belgrade: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia, 2013), 6, 8, 22–32, 45, 50, 53, 55–56, 60, 62–64; Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković*, 126, 130.

<sup>66</sup> Popović, *Smederevo Fortress*, 57, 64; Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković*, 126, 130.

The first half of the 15th century also saw notable changes in the armament of the Serbian nobility. Under Ottoman influence, it appears that sabres became more commonly used among Serbian nobles. A note in a Ragusan document indicates that sabres were perceived as Turkish weapons.<sup>67</sup> Depictions of sabres appear in frescoes of holy warriors in monasteries such as Manasija and Kalenić,<sup>68</sup> although these representations cannot definitively prove their widespread use in Serbia.<sup>69</sup>

By the late 1420s or early 1430s, the production of crossbows likely began in Serbia.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, Serbian nobles appear to have started using imported plate armour during this period.<sup>71</sup> According to Doukas, Serbian warriors at the Battle of Ankara wore armour made of black iron, which offered substantial protection against Mongol attacks, forcing their adversaries to target the backsides of their horses.<sup>72</sup> Helmets were also imported in large quantities; for instance, the *defter* for the Branković region from 1455 recorded that the Ottomans found 80 Hungarian and 30 Turkish helmets in the fortress of Novo Brdo following its capture.<sup>73</sup>

Firearms were produced within the Serbian Despotate; by the 1430s, a gunsmith was documented as living in Novo Brdo.<sup>74</sup> The importation of saltpeter and sulphur further suggests that Serbia had begun manufacturing gunpowder during this period.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, I-1 (Beograd-Sremski Karlovci: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1929), 223.

<sup>68</sup> Gavro Škrivanić, *Oružje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji, Bosni i Dubrovniku* (Beograd: Srpska akademija nauka, 1957), 63–64.

<sup>69</sup> Miodrag Marković, "Sveti ratnici iz Resave. Ikonografska analiza," in *Manastir Resava. Istorija i umetnost. Dani srpskoga duhovnog preobraženja II*, eds. Vojislav J. Đurić, Miroslav Pantić (Despotovac: Narodna biblioteka "Resavska škola", 1995), 213–214.

<sup>70</sup> Đurđica Petrović, "Oružje," in *Istorija primenjene umetnosti kod Srba I, Srednjovekovna Srbija*, ed. Nada Andrejević Kun (Beograd: Muzej primenjene umetnosti, 1977), 128.

<sup>71</sup> Petrović, "Oružje", 128–129.

<sup>72</sup> Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, 93; Nikolić, *Vizantijski pisci o Srbiji*, 43.

<sup>73</sup> Hamid Hadžibegić, Adem Handžić and Ešref Kovačević, eds., *Oblast Brankovića. Opširni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1972), 208.

<sup>74</sup> Mihailo Dinić, ed., *Iz Dubrovačkog arhiva*, knjiga I (Beograd: Naučno delo, 1957), 71; Petrović, "Oružje", 128.

<sup>75</sup> Petrović, "Oružje", 128.

## **Conclusion**

Warfare in medieval Serbia underwent significant transformations between the late 14th and mid-15th centuries. A key factor behind these changes was the relentless pressure from the Ottomans, which compelled Serbian rulers to conscript as many inhabitants as possible. A similar trend could be observed in Hungary during the same period. The organisation of local administration was also restructured to better support the defence against Ottoman incursions. Additionally, firearms began to play an increasingly prominent role in military operations. Despite these reforms, they ultimately failed to prevent the fall of the Serbian state to Ottoman rule. However, the fact that the Ottomans adopted many elements of the Serbian military organisation suggests that they recognised its potential effectiveness.

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## **War, Innovations and Cultural Transfers in East-Central Europe: The Army of Transylvania in the Age of Transition from Voivodeship to Principality (Second Half of the 16th Century)**

Florin Nicolae Ardelean\*

### **Abstract:**

This article aims to provide an overview of the early modern processes of military innovation and adaptation in Transylvania, focusing particularly on the influence of foreign practices. A former province of the Hungarian Kingdom, Transylvania underwent significant transformation during the second half of the 16th century, emerging as a distinct polity under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. The political and geographical context of this borderland region, shaped by the intense rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, played a critical role in defining the military organisation of the nascent state. The armed forces of the Transylvanian rulers were marked by enduring medieval traditions and customs, especially in terms of recruitment, mobilization and organization. However, some innovations, coming from neighbouring war cultures, were introduced and adapted during the decades following the Ottoman conquest of Buda (1541). The evolution of recruitment methods, the increasing importance of light cavalry and irregular warfare and the evolution of infantry between western and oriental models are some of the most important topics approached in my analysis.

**Key words:** warfare, cavalry, mercenaries, Habsburgs, Ottoman Empire.

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## Introduction

Analysing war and military organization in a broader political, social, economic and cultural context is not a new practice among historians<sup>1</sup>. However, the last few decades have witnessed a systematic effort of building theoretical frameworks and research paradigms, which explicitly seek to further our understanding of war as a complex phenomenon, strongly interconnected with all aspects of the human past. A particular attention has been given to the wider cultural impact of armed conflicts but also to the creation of war cultures defined by specific customs and practices of waging war<sup>2</sup>.

In the case of the early modern period, the “military revolution” thesis has exerted a tremendous influence on historiography, not necessarily as a very successful theoretical model but mostly through the constructive criticism it has inspired during the last seven decades<sup>3</sup>. A significant contribution to this debate has been brought by Jeremy Black<sup>4</sup> who has emphasized the importance of cultural issues in military change rather than the technological and tactical innovations, which played an important role in the argumentation of Michael Roberts<sup>5</sup>, and to some

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<sup>1</sup> In his long term analysis of military historiography, Peter Paret has identified such preoccupations in the works of Thucydides - who saw deep connections between the structure of society and its military organization; Machiavelli - with his complex analysis of the political and social background of armed conflicts and Voltaire - credited with one of the first cultural histories of war in his book dedicated to reign of Louis XIV, see Peter Paret, “The History of Armed Power,” in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*. eds. Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 243-261.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne E. Lee, “Warfare and Culture,” in *Warfare and Culture in World History*. ed. Wayne E. Lee (New-York: NYU Press, 2011), 1-18.

<sup>3</sup> One of the most recent and critical approaches to the “military revolution” thesis, Frank Jacob and Gilmar Visoni-Alonzo, *The Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe: A Revision* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); A more nuanced and diverse perspective on the concepts of revolution, change and continuity in the military history of the early modern world is provided by the essays gathered in the volume *Global Military Transformations: Change and Continuity, 1450-1800*. ed. Jeremy Black (Roma: Nadir Media, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Black has approached the issue in several of his publications, in the particular case of early modern period but also from a wider timeframe and a global perspective, see for example Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London: Routledge, 2004); Jeremy Black, *European Warfare, 1494-1660* (London: Routledge, 2002), especially chapter 3, *A Military Revolution?*, 32-54.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Roberts, “The Military Revolution,” in *Essays in Swedish History*. ed. Michael Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), 195-225.

extant in that of Geoffrey Parker<sup>6</sup>. New questions regarding the validity of the thesis arose as researchers confronted the theoretical model proposed by Roberts with regions situated beyond Western Europe<sup>7</sup>. Looking at the Eastern part of the continent, Robert Frost concluded that there were multiple distinct “military revolutions”, which changed the face of warfare during the early modern age. He also underlined the limits of technological determinism and the need to analyse the adaptation of military innovations in a broader political, social and cultural context.<sup>8</sup>

The interplay of foreign influences and local customs shaped the war culture of medieval and early modern states. In Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, this process was marked by long term interactions (both violent and peaceful) with the Ottoman Empire. As Gábor Ágoston has demonstrated in his publications, the transfer of military knowledge and technology between the Christian states of the region and the Ottomans were not hindered by religious or cultural barriers. Weapons and military know-how were an important part of cultural exchanges in the area and foreign specialists (mercenaries, gunsmiths, architects etc.) were the most important agents in this process<sup>9</sup>. Following a similar logic, but not from

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<sup>6</sup> Parker expanded the discussion initiated by Roberts and added new arguments and examples to the theory of “military revolution”. One of his most significant contributions regarded the evolution of military architecture, namely the development of *trace italienne* fortifications, Geoffrey Parker, “Military Revolution”, 1560-1660-A Myth?,” *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 2 (1976): 195-214; Geoffrey Parker, “The Limits to Revolutions in Military Affairs: Maurice of Nassau, the Battle of Nieuwpoort (1600), and the Legacy,” *The Journal of Military History* 71 (2007): 331-372.

<sup>7</sup> It has been demonstrated that some of the most important innovations associated with the “military revolution” have reached Hungary and Transylvania during the sixteenth century. The construction of bastioned fortifications, the proliferation of firearms and the increasing size of armed forces are identified as the most important changes in the field of military organization, see Jozsef Kelenik, “The Military Revolution in Hungary,” in *Ottomans, Hungarians and Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*. eds. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), 117-159; Tamás Kruppa, “The Military Revolution in Hungary and Transylvania in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” *Dimensioni e Problemi della Ricerca Storica* 2 (2022): 37-54.

<sup>8</sup> Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 310-329; Robert I. Frost, “The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Military Revolution,” in *Poland and Europe: Historical Dimensions Selected Essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary International Congress of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America*. eds. James S. Pula and Marian B. Biskupski, Vol. 1, East European Monographs 390 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 19-47.

<sup>9</sup> Gábor Ágoston, “The Ottoman Empire and the Technological Dialogue between Europe and Asia: The Case of Military Technology and Know-How in the Gunpowder Age,” in *Science between Europe and Asia. Historical studies on the transmission, adaptation and adaptation of knowledge*. eds. Feza Günergun and Dhruv Raina (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 27-39; Gábor Ágoston, “Empires and warfare in east-central Europe, 1550-1750: the Ottoman-

an Ottoman perspective, János B. Szabó has argued in favour of a “common military culture” in East-Central Europe, which was the result of prolonged contacts between the various states and provinces of this region. In his view, this “East-Central European culture of war” adopted influences coming from both Western and Southern Europe and adapted them to the specific conditions of this area. The important role of cavalry warfare and the use of fortified camps (of Hussite inspiration) are some of its dominant features, while the mobility of foreign mercenaries within the confines of this region ensured the spread and consolidation of common war customs<sup>10</sup>.

In this article, my analysis will focus on some of the most important features of military organization in Transylvania, during the complicated decades of transition from a voivodeship within the Hungarian Kingdom to a distinct state, the Principality of Transylvania. The survival of medieval military elements, the influence of the political context (Ottoman suzerainty), the evolution of recruitment methods, the dynamic relation between cavalry and infantry and the importance of irregular warfare (*Kleinkrieg*) are some of the most important issues discussed in the following pages.

### Political context

The birth of the Transylvanian Principality remains a rather complicated topic that has led to divergent interpretations. However, there is some sort of unanimity in acknowledging that it was a long process rather than a distinct event.<sup>11</sup> In the decades following the battle

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Habsburg rivalry and military transformation,” in *European Warfare, 1350-1750*. eds. Frank Tallent and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 110-134; The Ottomans also acted as agents of diffusion for gunpowder technology and tactical innovations in Asia, Gábor Ágoston, “Firangi, Zarbzán, and Rum Dasturi: The Ottomans and the Diffusion of Firearms in Asia,” in *Şerefe. Studies in Honour of Prof. Géza Dávid on His Seventieth Birthday*. eds. Pál Fodor, Nándor E. Kovács and Benedek Péri (Budapest: Research Center for the Humanities, 2019), 89-104.

<sup>10</sup> János B. Szabó, “The Army of the Principality of Transylvania in the Period of the Thirty Years War,” in *The Princes of Transylvania in the Thirty Years War*. ed. Gábor Kármán (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2022), 21-58; János B. Szabó, “Bethlen Gábor, az újjászervező. A kora újkori hadügyi fejlődés Kelet-Közép-Európában: az Erdélyi Fejedelemség példája a XVII. század első felében (1.rész),” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 126/4 (2013): 963-988.

<sup>11</sup> Cristina Feneşan placed this process between the Peace Treaty of Oradea (1538) and the death of Queen Isabella Jagiello (1559), Cristina Feneşan, *Constituirea principatului autonom al Transilvaniei* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), 97-118. According to Pál Fodor and Teréz Oborni, the process began with the separation of the eastern parts of the kingdom after the battle of Mohács (1526) and was concluded with the death of John Sigismund Szapolyai and the ratification of the Speyer Peace Treaty in 1571, Pál Fodor and Teréz

of Mohács (1526), the Kingdom of Hungary was divided in three parts. The southern and central parts, including the royal seat of Buda, became Ottoman provinces. The western and northern parts were reorganized as a Kingdom of Hungary with a Habsburg ruler. The eastern parts, consisting of Transylvania and some counties in Eastern Hungary were gradually transformed into the Principality of Transylvania.<sup>12</sup>

It took several decades for the new state to gain its identity, in a political context marked by the Habsburg – Szapolyai rivalry. In the years after the Ottoman conquest of Buda (1541), the eastern parts of the Hungarian Kingdom, including Transylvania, were ruled by the heirs of King John Szapolyai (Queen Isabella and her son John Sigismund) and their councillors, as vassals of the Ottoman Empire. Among the councillors, the bishop of Oradea, George Martinuzzi, held the most influential position until his death in 1551.<sup>13</sup> Because of his political schemes, the Habsburgs were able to extend their control over Transylvania for a brief period, between 1551 and 1556. The failure of Giovanni Battista Castaldo and his army of Habsburg mercenaries to withhold the Ottoman expansion, and in particular the loss of Timișoara in 1552, amplified the anti-Habsburg attitude among the Transylvanian estates.<sup>14</sup> The return of Queen Isabella and her son John Sigismund in Transylvania in 1556 with consistent Ottoman support, rekindled the old confrontation for the Hungarian Crown, and the two factions engaged into an intermittent military conflict lasting until the signing of the

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Oborni, "Between Two Great Powers: The Hungarian Kingdom of the Szapolyai Family," in *A Forgotten Hungarian Royal Dynasty: The Szapolyais*. eds. Pál Fodor and Szabolcs Varga (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, 2020), 127-161. Recently, the process of state formation has been analysed from the perspective of the foreign dynastic policy of the Szapolyai family, with a particular emphasis on relations with the Valois dynasty, Zsuzsanna Hámori Nagy, "Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség kialakulása és nemzetközi megítélése a dinasztikus külpolitika tükrében (1526–1576)," *Erdélyi Múzeum* 86, no. 1 (2024): 49-62.

<sup>12</sup> Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 35-52.

<sup>13</sup> Adriano Papo and Gizella Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi: Cardinale, soldato e statista dalmata agli albori del Principato di Transilvania* (Canterano: Arcane editrice, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Zoltán Korpás and János B. Szabó, "If they came as a Legation, they are many, if they are soldiers, they are few" - The military background of the 1551 attempt to unite Hungary," in *Isabella Jagiellon Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)*. eds. Ágnes Máté and Teréz Oborni (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 2020), 147-162; Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "On the Foreign Mercenaries and Early Modern Military Innovations in East Central Europe. The Army Castaldo in Transylvania and the Banat 1551-1553," in *Mozgó Frontvonalak. Háború és diplomácia a várháborúk időszakában 1552-1568*. eds. György Bujdosné Pap, Ingrid Fejér, Ágota H. Szilasi, *Studia Agriensia*, 35 (Eger: Dobó István Vármúzeum, 2017), 117-128.



Speyer Peace Treaty in 1570 and death of John Sigismund in the following year.<sup>15</sup>

The election of Stephen Báthory as voivode in 1571 was the beginning of a new phase in the history of Transylvania, marked by institutional consolidation and international affirmation, especially after Báthory became ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1576. In the first years of his reign in Transylvania, Báthory had to deal with the opposition of Gaspar Bekes, which led to two military confrontations, the siege of Făgăraș fortress in 1573 and the battle of Sânpaul in 1575.<sup>16</sup> Afterwards, for almost two decades, Transylvania was spared from direct military conflicts, although many soldiers from this region fought in the Polish-Lithuanian army at the siege of Gdańsk (1577) and in the Livonian campaign of 1577-1582.<sup>17</sup>

The political situation took a radical turn in the last decade of the sixteenth century with the beginning of the Long Turkish War (1591/1593-1606). The major Habsburg-Ottoman confrontation couldn't be avoided by the vassals of the sultan, but the leaders of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia chose to rebel against their liege lord and joined the Holy League. Throughout the duration of this military conflict, the political elite of Transylvania remained divided. It was not uncommon for the prince or for the members of the estates to change their allegiance several times in just a few years. The devastations of war were felt strongly throughout the whole duration of the conflict but in the end, the principality passed this terrible test of endurance and was able to maintain its status for one more century.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> On the military confrontations of this period, see Imre Lukinich, "Az északkeleti várháborúk történetéhez 1561–1565," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 14 (1913): 370–394; 584–605; Nándor Virovecz, "Shifting Allegiances and the Questions of Resilience: Lords of the Hungarian and Transylvanian Border During the Fortress Wars of 1560's," *Politics and society in Central and South-East Europe: life under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire's expansion (15th-16th centuries)*. ed. Zsuzsanna I. Kopeczny (Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2021), 101-117; Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "Political Boundaries and Territorial Identity in Early Modern Central Europe: The Western Frontier of Transylvania during the Sixteenth Century," *Territorial Identity and Development* 6, no. 1 (2021): 21-38.

<sup>16</sup> On the career and reign of Stephen Báthory in Transylvania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, see Felicia Roșu, *Elective Monarchy in Transylvania and Poland-Lithuania, 1569-1587* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ildikó Horn, "A hatalom pillérei: A politikai elit az Erdélyi Fejedelemség megszilárdulásának korszakában (1556–1588)" (PhD Diss. Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Szabó, "The Army of the Principality", 34-35; Kruppa, "The Military Revolution", 51.

<sup>18</sup> This military conflict has been and still is a major topic for both Hungarian and Romanian historiographies. For some of the most recent and relevant contributions, see Ovidiu

Throughout this long period of transition, lasting more than half a century, Transylvania emerged as a consolidated state. Its institutions, including the army, underwent an almost constant process of adaptation. War, in its various forms, was a common occurrence and Transylvanian troops were involved in many military operations, ranging from small skirmishes and raids to major pitched battles and prolonged sieges. Their enemies and allies changed with the political context. In 1551-1552 and during certain phases of the Long Turkish War, they fought against the Ottomans in alliance with the Habsburgs. However, for most of the time they fulfilled their vassal duties and fought against the Habsburg Kings of Hungary, especially between 1556 and 1570.

### **Methods of recruitment: levies and mercenaries**

The composition of the Transylvanian army was influenced by the particular social structure of the country. The three estates (nobility, Szeklers and Saxons) provided the largest military contingent. In addition, the rulers of the eastern parts of the Hungarian Kingdom organized some permanent and semi-permanent military structures, which were placed under their direct authority like the court army (*exercitus aule*), the garrisons of border fortifications and some groups of semi-privileged peasant-soldiers who performed military service in exchange for tax exemptions.

In theory, in case of a major military threat, the ruler could order a general levy and the estates were expected to join the army with all their able-bodied men. In practice, the ruler and the Diet sometimes agreed upon a partial mobilization of military contingents, representing the three Transylvanian estates. For example, in 1540 the county nobility agreed to mobilize 1,000 cavalry, the Szeklers had to provide a similar contingent of mounted soldiers, while the Saxon agreed to contribute

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Cristea, "A Second Front: Wallachia and the 'Long War' against the Turks," in *Europe and the Ottoman World. Exchanges and Conflicts (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries)*. eds. Gábor Kárman and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013), 13-27; Zoltán Péter Bagi, *Stories of the Long Turkish War* (Beau Bassin: Globe Edit, 2018); Sándor László Tóth, *A mezokeresztesi csata és a tizenöt éves háború* (Szeged: Belvedere, 2000); Liviu Cîmpeanu, "'Domnul fie laudat [...] turcii au predat cetatea': Cucerirea Lipovei Otomane de către Transilvănenii în august 1595," *Historia Urbana*, XXVI (2018): 97-111; Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "The Siege of Timișoara from 1596 in the Works of Bernardino Beccari da Sacile," in *Politics and Society in Central and South-East Europe: life under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire's expansion (15th-16th centuries)*. ed. Zsuzsanna Kopeczny (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2021), 117-123; Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "Contested Borderlands: war and territorial disputes between Transylvania and The Ottoman Empire (1594-1595)," *East European History Review* 5 (2022): 31-44.

with 1,000 infantry, raising the total size of the detachment to 3,000 men. It was also implied that these soldiers would receive regular wages for the duration of their service.<sup>19</sup> The size of this military detachment was decreased or increased depending on the level of threat. The smallest size was 1,500 men in 1543<sup>20</sup> while the largest contingents of up to 6,000 men (2,000 soldiers provide by each estate) were mobilized especially after 1556, when the Transylvanian army took part in several campaigns against the Habsburgs.<sup>21</sup> This was an innovation in terms of mobilization and recruitment, justified by the need to support a small force of experienced soldier at the expense of the estates. However, the estates were not able or willing to maintain such a financial burden on the long run and preferred to return to their traditional manner of military service. The nobles would personally attend musters and campaigns with small retinues of armed servants (lesser nobles and conscripted peasants) depending on the size of their estates, while the Szeklers were expected to fully mobilize according to their traditional customs until 1562 when their privileges were suspended<sup>22</sup>. The Saxons were the only ones who continued to provide a pre-established number of mercenary infantry, armed with gunpowder weapons, who would receive regular payment while they were on campaign.<sup>23</sup>

### Locals and foreigners in the court guard

The prolonged periods of war and the prospect of facing a superior enemy (either the Ottomans or the Habsburgs) motivated the prince and to some extent the Diet, to increase the size of permanent military contingents. The best troops available, both locals and foreign mercenaries, were part of the court guard (*exercitus aulae*).

In the troubled years following the battle of Mohács (1526), the size of mercenary units was on the rise. This process was favoured by the climate of political instability and rivalry between the factions who fought for the heritage of the Hungarian Crown. In such a context, political authority was conditioned by the ability to efficiently mobilize

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<sup>19</sup> Sándor Szilágyi (ed.), *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae*, vol. I (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akad. Könyvkiadó Hivatala, 1876), 40.

<sup>20</sup> Szilágyi (ed.), *Monumenta Comititalia*, vol. I, 177.

<sup>21</sup> Szilágyi (ed.), *Monumenta Comititalia*, vol. I, 583.

<sup>22</sup> Florin Nicolae Ardelean, *On the Borderlands of Great Empires: Transylvanian Armies 1541-1613* (Warwick: Helion&Company, 2022), 37-39.

<sup>23</sup> Liviu Cîmpeanu, "The Transylvanian-Saxon University at War: Trabanten in John Sigismund Szapolyai's Campaigns at the North-Western Borders of Transylvania (1561-1567)," *Acta Musei Napocensis* 58, no. 2 (2021): 11-29.

and deploy armed forces. In 1531, King John Szapolyai kept a consistent cavalry retinue of 1,056 men. Among them, 895 were hussars (*Aulici hwzarones*) while 161 were men-at-arms (*armigeri*). Most of them were Hungarian and Transylvanian nobles but there were also many Serbian and Polish retainers.<sup>24</sup> Two decades later, George Martinuzzi had an even larger retinue of paid mercenaries consisting of 4,118 infantry and cavalry. Local nobles but also Croatians, Serbs, Szeklers and a few Wallachian boyars received regular wages for their service to the bishop of Oradea.<sup>25</sup>

The court of Isabella Jagiello and John Sigismund Szapolyai was a “melting pot” of cultural influences and this situation was also reflected in the composition of the court guard. Polish and Italian courtiers were favoured because of the family background of Queen Isabella, daughter of the Polish King Sigismund I and Bona Sforza. Mercenaries from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were a constant presence between 1556 and 1571, and even after that date, with numbers varying between 500 and up to 2,000 men.<sup>26</sup> Giovanandrea Gromo was the most remarkable Italian mercenary captain in Transylvanian service during this period, with a smaller retinue of 100 horsemen and 200 infantry recruited around Venice.<sup>27</sup> These foreigners coexisted for years or even decades with local soldiers, fighting together and sharing their knowledge and experience on the battlefield.

The rulers from the Báthory family maintained a similar approach towards the issue of mercenaries, although the number of foreigners was decreased compared to the previous period. In 1574, French traveller Pierre Lescalopier observed that the court of Stephen Báthory at Alba Iulia was defended by two companies of Polish lancers, four companies

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<sup>24</sup> Zsolt Simon, “Szapolyai János familiárisainak egy lajstroma 1531-ből,” in *Tanulmányok Szapolyai Jánosról és a kora újkori Erdélyről*. eds. Jozsef Besenyei, Zita Horvath and Peter Tóth (Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem, 2004), 315-332.

<sup>25</sup> Teréz Oborni, “Fráter György szervitorainak és familiárisainak jegyzéke a Castaldo-Kódexben, 1552,” *Fons* 25, no. 4 (2018): 435-451.

<sup>26</sup> Giovannandrea Gromo, *Compendio di tutto il regno posseduto dal re Giovanni Transilvano et di tutte le cose notabili d'esso regno* (Sec. XVI). ed. Aurel Decei (Alba Iulia: Tip. “Alba”, 1945), 31.

<sup>27</sup> János B. Szabó, “The Army of the Szapolyai Family during the Reign of John Szapolyai and John Sigismund (Baronial, Voivodal and Royal Troops, 1510-1571),” in *A Forgotten Hungarian Royal Dynasty: The Szapolyais*. eds. Pál Fodor and Szabolcs Varga (Budapest: Research Center for Humanities, 2020), 236; János B. Szabó, Gábor Kármán, “Külföldi zsoldosok az erdélyi udvari hadakban,” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 135, no. 4 (2022), 775.

of local cavalry and 500 infantry, roughly 1,100 soldiers in total.<sup>28</sup> In times of war the size of the court guard was increased accordingly. While he was preparing to join the Holy League in the Long Turkish War, Prince Sigismund Báthory raised the size of his mounted retinue to 2,067 men, while 212 additional horsemen were kept by various officials who performed administrative tasks at court. The local nobility represented the largest proportion among this elite cavalry unit but some South-Slavic and Romanian names are also mentioned in the muster list.<sup>29</sup> Transylvania's involvement in this military conflict determined an unprecedented influx of foreign mercenaries in the region. Italians, Germans, Cossacks, Scots and soldiers from various Balkan nations fought in the armies of Transylvanian rulers during these years.<sup>30</sup>

### **Defence in the borderlands: garrisons and semi-privileged peasant-soldiers**

In order to survive in the hostile environment created by the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry, Transylvania needed a reliable defensive system. Sieges were already a dominant feature of sixteenth century warfare in the South-Eastern European borderlands and the rulers of Transylvania acknowledged the necessity of building a strong network of fortifications, especially on their western frontier. They tried to keep the most important fortresses and the surrounding villages on the so-called "fiscal estate" - the lands, which were placed under the direct authority of the ruling prince.<sup>31</sup>

Keeping a large enough military force to defend these fortifications was a complicated matter from a financial point of view. Permanent garrisons were very costly and thus they were kept to a minimum size. The rest of the manpower needed for military and auxiliary service was provided by various groups of peasant-soldiers, which appear in contemporary documents under various denominations: *harquebusiers* (*pușcași/puskasok*),<sup>32</sup> *guardsmen* (*drabants/Trabanten*) or *freemen*

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<sup>28</sup> Maria Holban, Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dresca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu (eds.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. II, (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1973), 443.

<sup>29</sup> Lajos Merenyi, "Bathory Zsigmond Fejedelem Udvari Lovassaga," *Hadtortenelemi Közlemények* 7 (1894): 108-113.

<sup>30</sup> Florin Nicolae Ardelean, *Organizarea militară în principatul Transilvaniei (1541-1691): Comitate și domenii fiscale* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2019), 179-189.

<sup>31</sup> Ardelean, *Organizarea militară*, 115-127.

<sup>32</sup> Harquebusiers were encountered, for example on the Gilău estate. According to a collective privilege issued by voivode Cristophor Báthory in 1581, they had to join the army

(*libertini/szabadosok*). From a social point of view they can be defined as an intermediary or semi-privileged group, because they were not nobles but not simple peasants either. They were rewarded with a partial or complete tax exemption and some other benefits in exchange for periodic military service at a specific fortification or in the main army.<sup>33</sup> A good example of this dual solution for military defence is provided by Şimleu (*Somlyo*)<sup>34</sup> fortress at the end of the sixteenth century. According to a conscription issued in 1594, Şimleu had a small permanent garrison of 10 ordinary guardsmen (*közdrabantok*) who resided inside the fortification and received regular wages. However, an additional number of 113 free guardsmen and 19 free horsemen lived in the nearby villages and were ready to join the permanent garrison in case of necessity.<sup>35</sup> Those who were recognized as free guardsmen or horsemen were quite wealthy, significantly above the other serfs living on the same estate. Of course they remained landless peasants and thus their most important possession was livestock. According to the same conscription, the average ownership of domesticated animals among the infantry guardsmen was approximately four oxen and five sheep per head of household. At the same time almost half of them also owned one horse. The free horsemen were even wealthier, with each of them owning an average of five oxen, two horses and ten sheep.<sup>36</sup>

Guardsmen (*drabant/trabant*) were a new type of infantry that was widespread in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during the later middle ages and the beginning of the early modern period. They also represent a very interesting case of cross-cultural transfer in the field of warfare. However, there are two divergent interpretations regarding

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on request and in exchange they were exempted from all taxes and work obligations, including the contribution for the Turkish tribute, David Prodan, *Iobăgia în Transilvania în secolul al XVI-lea*, vol. I (Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 1967), 411. In 1590, 94 harquebusiers are mentioned in the villages surrounding Gherla fortress. They were exempted from all taxes and work obligations in exchange for military service. They had to join the army at the order of the prince and join the garrison of the fortress in case of danger, David Prodan, *Iobăgia în Transilvania în secolul al XVI-lea*, vol. II (Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 1968), 193.

<sup>33</sup> Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "Frontiers and Military Organization in Transylvania: The Guardsman (Drabant/Darabont) during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century," in *From Medieval Frontiers to Early Modern Borders in Central and South-Eastern Europe*. eds. Florin Nicolae Ardelean, Liviu Cîmpeanu, Gelu Fodor and Livia Magina, (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022), 177-191.

<sup>34</sup> The main estate of the Báthory family was also an important border fortress during the age of the principality, Rudolf Wolf, "Cetatea Şimleului. Schiţă monografică," *Acta Musei Porolissensis* 5 (1981): 395-409.

<sup>35</sup> András Kovács, "Szilágysomlyó vára a 16. Században," *Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából* 8 (2013): 95-106.

<sup>36</sup> These estimations are based on the data collected by Prodan, *Iobăgia*, vol. II, 599.

the origins of the word designating this specific group of foot soldiers. Many historians consider that the German word *Trabant* to be the original term, which was later adopted in the other languages of the region (*drabant/darabont* in Hungarian; *darabant/dorobanț* in Romanian etc.). The term was first used during the Hussite Wars (1419-1434) and it referred to the infantry troops that defended the wagon forts (*Wagenburg*) of the Bohemian rebels.<sup>37</sup> According to another interpretation, the word has Persian origins, derived from the word *darband*, meaning barred or closed gate.<sup>38</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, a derived term was used to describe the *derbendcis*, an auxiliary military group tasked with the defence of strategic crossing points.<sup>39</sup> Although the precise origin of the word and its spread in the region remains very hard to assess it represents, nevertheless, a case of cultural transfer connected with the changing nature of military conflicts and frontier defence.<sup>40</sup> The Ottoman *derbendcis* and the Transylvanian free guardsmen (*drabants*) share many similarities in terms of social status and military role. Both can be described as semi-privileged groups who enjoyed tax exemptions in return for military service. They were also irregular infantry troops assigned to defensive tasks, particularly in borderland areas.

### **Cavalry and infantry: an attempt of qualitative and quantitative assessment**

Throughout the long period of transition from the medieval to the modern period (roughly from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century)

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<sup>37</sup> Cathal J. Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion 1000–1650: An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilization*, vol. II (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 868; Dimitrie Cantemir claimed that the Romanian word *dărăban* derived from the German word *Trabant*, Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei* (București: Editura Librăriei Socec & Co, 1909), 154; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Curteni și slujitori: contribuții la istoria Armatei Române* (București: Editura Militară, 1968), 116; Caludiu-Ion Neagoe, "Mercenarii unguri (Dărăbani) în oastea Țării Românești și a Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea," *Istros* 27 (2021): 271-274.

<sup>38</sup> Henri Grégoire, "Aux confins militaires de l'orient byzantine. Hussards, Trabans, Tasnaks," *Byzantion* 13 (1938): 279–282; János B.Szabó, "A székelyek katonai szerepe Erdélyben a mohácsi csatától a Habsburg uralom megszilárdulásáig (1526–1709)," in *A Határvédelem évszázadai Székelyföldön: Csíkszék és a Gyimesek vidéke. Szerkesztette és a jegyzékeket összeállította.* ed. József Nagy (Szépvíz: A Szépvízért Egyesület kiadása, 2018), 105.

<sup>39</sup> Adrian Gheorghe, *The Metamorphoses of Power: Violence, Warlords, Akıncıs and the Early Ottomans (1300–1450)* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 65, 73-78, 81-82; Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2009), 62-63; Ayşe Kayapınar and Levent Kayapınar, "Application of Derbend Organization in the Balkans: An Example of Continuity of Balkan Institutions in the Ottoman System," in *State and Society in the Balkans Before and After the Establishment of Ottoman Rule.* eds. Srđan Rudić and Selim Aslantaş (Belgrade: The Institute of History Belgrade, 2017), 205–210.

<sup>40</sup> Ardelean, "Frontiers and Military Organization," 177-191.

the battlefields of Eastern Europe continued to be dominated by mounted troops.<sup>41</sup> This was a major contrast with the “supremacy of infantry” in Western Europe, which represents a fundamental component in the “military revolution” thesis.<sup>42</sup> The importance of cavalry in East-Central Europe has been underlined by many authors. Recently, the research emphasis has been shifted to the interplay of local customs and Western influences, the survival of “steppe warrior” tactics, the high frequency of “small wars” (*Kleinkrieg*) and the adaptation of Eastern European light cavalry models into the military organization of western states.<sup>43</sup>

Early Modern Transylvania offers an interesting and relevant case study for these developments in East-Central Europe. The increasing role of the lightly armed hussars and the significant decrease of heavy cavalry in the sixteenth century have been noticed by cotemporary observers like the Croatian humanist Antun Vrančić. Furthermore, Vrančić identifies the wars against the Ottomans as the main cause for this drastic shift between light and heavy cavalry.<sup>44</sup> The Ottoman/Oriental influence on the evolution of the Transylvanian cavalry was manifested in several ways, from the preference for the swift and resilient Turkish horses to the

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<sup>41</sup> In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the reign of Stephen Báthory, the size of cavalry detachments was usually twice the size of infantry, Dariusz Kupisz, “The Polish-Lithuanian Military in the Reign of King Stefan Bathory (1576-1586),” in *Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1500-1800*. ed. Brian L. Davies (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 74.

<sup>42</sup> Christer Jörgensen, Michael F. Pavkovič and Rob S. Rice, *Fighting Techniques of the Early Modern World. AD 1500 ~ AD 1763. Equipment, Combat Skills, and Tactics* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2006), 7-67; Thomas Arnold, *The Renaissance at War* (London: Cassel&Co, 2001), 53-83; The situation of early modern cavalry has been reevaluated by recent scholarship with a strong emphasis on its capacity to adapt to the new tactical and technological challenges, see for example Gervase Phillip, “Of Nimble Service: Technology, Equestrianism and the Cavalry Arm of Early Modern Western European Armies,” *War & Society* 20, no. 2 (2022): 1-21.

<sup>43</sup> Liviu Cîmpeanu, “Before Hussars: the Cavalry Hosts of Hungary, Moldavia and Wallachia between 1350-1550,” in *Cavalry Warfare: From Ancient Times to Today*. ed. Jeremy Black (Roma: Nadir Media, 2024), 103-140; Michal Paradowski, “Organisation, tactics and the role of the cavalry in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth’s warfare in 17th century,” in *Cavalry Warfare: From Ancient Times to Today*. ed. Jeremy Black (Roma: Nadir Media, 2024), 141-161; Alexander Querengässer, “Croats, Hussars and Uhlands. The influence of the Eastern European military on the Western European military - A research outline,” in *Cavalry Warfare: From Ancient Times to Today*. ed. Jeremy Black (Roma: Nadir Media, 2024), 261-292.

<sup>44</sup> Antonius Wrancius, *De Rebus Gestis Hungarorum ab Inclinazione Regni*. In László Szalay ed. *Monumenta Hungariae Historica: Scriptores*, vol. II., (Pest: Magyar Tudományos Akademia, 1857), 149.



use of specific weapons and pieces of equipment of oriental origin like sabres, wing shaped shields or *sisak* helmets.<sup>45</sup>

Mobility and versatility were defining features for the Transylvanian armies in the second half of the sixteenth century because skirmishes and raids were very common, while sieges and especially pitched battles were rare. This was the situation during the long confrontation between the Szapolyais and the Habsburgs in the disputed borderlands of the Tisa region (1556-1570)<sup>46</sup> and to some extent during the Long Turkish War (1591/1593-1606).<sup>47</sup> This is one of the reasons why infantry didn't evolve into a dominant branch in the Transylvanian armies. However, the role of the foot soldier must not be underestimated. Following the general trends of this region, Transylvanian infantry was lightly equipped and focused on firepower. Harquebuses were considered the main weapon for the various groups of Transylvanian infantrymen regardless of their social background: the blue guardsmen of the court army, the hajduks from the western borderlands, the militias provided by the Saxon seats and districts or even conscripted peasants.<sup>48</sup> In 1557, for example, all nobles were expected to join the army with an additional armed servant for every 16 serfs living on their estates. The conscripted troops had to bring gunpowder weapons and those unable to afford such equipment had to be armed with bows and spears according to their old customs (*quibus se poterunt pixidibus, alij cum arcubus, reliqui cum lanceis, iuxta antiquam eorum consuetudinem*).<sup>49</sup> The detachments provide by the Transylvanian Saxons were almost exclusively armed with gunpowder weapons and are usually designated as *pedites pixidarios*.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout this period (second half of the sixteenth century), the number of mounted soldiers usually exceeded the size of infantry detachments. In March 1562, at the battle of Hadad, Francis Némethy and Stephen Báthory (commander of Oradea fortress at the time) commanded an army of 9,000 soldiers, among which the vast majority were mounted. According to Giovanandrea Gromo the army consisted of 8,000 horsemen

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<sup>45</sup> Florin Nicolae Ardelean, "Hussars, lancers and dragoons: The evolution of cavalry warfare in the Principality of Transylvania," in *Cavalry Warfare: From Ancient Times to Today*, ed. Jeremy Black (Roma: Nadir Media, 2024), 163-184; Ardelean, *On the Borderlands*, 29-34, 37-39.

<sup>46</sup> Imre Lukinich, *Erdély területi változásai a török hódítás korában, 1541-1711* (Budapest: Kiadja a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1918), 79-166; Virovecz, "Shifting Allegiances", 101-117.

<sup>47</sup> Ardelean, "Contested Borderlands," 31-44.

<sup>48</sup> Ardelean, *On the borderlands*, 34-47, 39-45.

<sup>49</sup> Szilágyi (ed.), *Monumenta Comititalia*, vol. II, 85-86.

<sup>50</sup> Cimpeanu, "The Transylvanian-Saxon University at War," 11-29.

and only 1,000 infantrymen.<sup>51</sup> Of course, there were also exceptions, like the 1595 campaign in Wallachia. On the eve of this expedition, Sigismund Báthory and his allies were able to gather an impressive fighting force of more than 50,000 men. About 20,000 of them were cavalry troops including Transylvanian nobles and their mounted retainers, Szeklers, Moldavians, Wallachians, Cossacks, Tuscan mercenaries and a detachment of 1,500 Silesian heavy cavalry dispatched by Rudolf II. The number of foot soldiers was even greater, allegedly 32,000 men, because the Transylvanian prince promised to restore the privileges of the Szeklers. This Transylvanian "nation" alone provided about 22,000 soldiers, most of them on foot and poorly equipped. Among them, only 8,200 were armed with gunpowder weapons.<sup>52</sup>

At the battle of Șelimbăr (28 October 1599), Transylvanian troops were divided between the two opposing factions: Michael the Brave of Wallachia and the recently elected prince of Transylvania, Cardinal Andrew Báthory. The two armies had a similar structure, with a consistent proportion of cavalry. According to the description provided by chronicler István Szamosközy, who was an eyewitness of this event, the Cardinal's army consisted of 5,000 men, among whom 3,200 (64%) were mounted.<sup>53</sup> The outcome of the battle was decided by cavalry attacks. Initially, the Transylvanian cavalry from the vanguard performed a successful assault against the first enemy battle line. Michael the Brave was able to hold back their advance with a counterattack from the flanks, executed by his Polish and Cossack cavalry. In the second phase of the battle, the Wallachian ruler defeated his enemy through a general cavalry assault directed against the second and third enemy battle line.<sup>54</sup>

The tactics of frontal and flanking charges, associated with the virtues of bravery and prowess, were deeply rooted in the military ethos

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<sup>51</sup> Gromo, *Compendio*, 62-63.

<sup>52</sup> Although the total numbers presented by these narrative sources might be exaggerated, we must keep in mind that this was a coalition army that included all the allies of Sigismund Báthory and a general levy of the Szeklers, Ioachim Crăciun, "Scrisoarea lui Petru Pellérđi privitoare la ajutorul dat de Sigismund Báthory lui Mihaiu Viteazul în campania din 1595," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* 6 (1931-1935), 494-502; Andrei Veress, "Campania creștinilor în contra lui Sinan Pașa din 1595," *Academia Română. Memoriile secțiunii istorice* 4, no. 3 (1925): 103-104; Ardelean, *On the Borderlands*, 80-81.

<sup>53</sup> The small size of the Transylvanian army was determined by the political division in the country and by lack of time for a proper mobilization, Sándor Szilágyi, (ed.), "Szamosközy István történeti maradványai (1566-1603)," *Monumenta Hungariae Historica, Scriptorum* 28 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1876), 322-325.

<sup>54</sup> Ardelean, *On the Borderlands*, 86-89.

of the Transylvanian nobility. Sometimes this resulted in a lack of flexibility on the battlefield and impacted the outcome of battles. A very telling episode is the battle of Mirăslau (18-19 September 1600) where Michael the Brave was confronted by a coalition of Transylvanian rebels and the troops of the Habsburg commander Giorgio Basta. Neither faction had a clear superiority in numbers (both armies are estimated at around 12,000 combatants) but Michael held the high ground on hillside along the Mureș valley. Realising this significant tactical disadvantage, Giorgio Basta wanted to perform a fake retreat to lure his adversary away from his favourable position. The Transylvanian nobles led by Stephen Csáki of Cheresig protested against such a shameful proposition, which in their view would decrease the morale of their own troops and give courage to the enemy. The Habsburg commander insisted and eventually won the argument with his allies. Seeing his enemies depart from the battlefield the Wallachian voivode ordered a general cavalry assault. However, his mix of light and semi-heavy cavalry was met by salvoes of muskets from the flanks and a counterattack of the heavy Silesian cavalry, armed with pistols and swords. Michael the Brave suffered a crushing defeat and barely escaped the battlefield alive.<sup>55</sup>

### Conclusion

Recent and older trends in historiography have approached the subject of war from a variety of perspectives. Adding a cultural component to the research of warfare brings new and valuable insights into this complex and global phenomenon. The particular case study approached in this article, Transylvania in the second half of the sixteenth century, illustrates the wide reaching impact of foreign influences and the following process of adaptation. Political context had a major influence on the evolution of military institutions. The Ottoman advancement in Europe not only defined the political status of Transylvania but it also influenced its war culture. The actions of their rivals, the Habsburgs, opened the way for military knowledge and technology coming from the central and western parts of Europe. However, foreign innovations and influences were always adapted to the specific conditions of Transylvania and especially to its enduring medieval customs and traditions in military matters.

The composition of the army reflected the particular social structure of Transylvania and a significant number of soldiers were provided by

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<sup>55</sup> Andrei Veress (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești, Acte și scrisori*, vol. VI (București: Cartea Românească, 1933), 205-213.

the three estates (nobility, Szeklers and Saxons) in the form of levies. However, throughout this period, there was a clear tendency to organize permanent or semi-permanent military groups of experienced soldiers (the court army, the free guardsmen, permanent garrisons etc.) motivated by regular wages or/and tax exemptions. These types of troops, locals but also foreign mercenaries, represented an intermediary phase between medieval military service based on social status and the standing armies of the modern age.

The dominant role of cavalry remains one of the most striking features of war culture in East-Central Europe, strongly linked to the violent and peaceful contacts between the Ottomans and the Christian states in the region. The army of Transylvania is yet another case study that confirms this premise, although its geographical conditions (high hills and mountains) were not ideal for mounted warfare.

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Research Article

## **Avrupa'da Diplomatik Kutuplaşma Sürecinde Habsburg Büyükelçisi J. M. V. Pallavicini'nin İstanbul Misyonu ve Balkan Savaşı Öncesi Raporlarında Bazı Değerlendirmeleri**

Bilgin Çelik\*

### **Abstract:**

*"Some Assessments of the Habsburg Ambassador J.M.V.Pallavicini in the Process of Diplomatic Polarisation in Europe in His Istanbul Mission and Reports before the Balkan War"*

M. Pallavicini was appointed to the Istanbul Ambassadorship at a time when the Macedonian Question was gaining an international dimension. Pallavicini, who started his duty at a time when Russia was turning its attention back to the Balkans after the Japanese defeat, started his duty at a time when the Baghdad-Berlin Railway project, which was a concrete example of Ottoman-German rapprochement, was being implemented. Although he had to deal with serious diplomatic problems in Istanbul, especially due to the rising reactions and boycotts during the 1908 Bosnian annexation process, he was respected as a senior Great Power diplomat after the German and Russian ambassadors were recalled to the capital before the Balkan War.

**Keywords:** Pallavicini, The Balkans, Diplomacy, Ottoman Empire

### **Giriş**

Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkileri özellikle Kanuni döneminde yaşanan rekabet ve savaşlar nedeniyle yoğunlaşmaya başlamış ve genellikle

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savaşların etkisi ile uzun yıllar pek de dostça ilerlememiş bir ilişkiler silsilesidir.<sup>1</sup> Özellikle 17. ve 18.yüzyıllarda Rusya ile işbirliği yapan Habsburglar Osmanlı'ya karşı Avrupa'da en çok mücadele veren devletlerin başında gelmekteydi. 2 Viyana kuşatmasının da başarısız olması sonrasında Habsburgların Osmanlı'ya karşı müttefiklerinin de etkisi ile askeri başarılar kazanması, diplomatik süreçlerde de avantajlar sağlamasına imkan vermişti.

Ancak 19.yüzyıla gelindiğinde şartlar iki imparatorluk için de oldukça değişmiş ve özellikle 19.yüzyılın ikinci yarısında artan milliyetçilik hareketleri karşısında her iki imparatorluk da ciddi tehditlerle karşılaşmış, Habsburglar Rusya ile yapmış oldukları Osmanlı karşıtı ittifakların kendi menfaatlerini olumsuz etkileyeceğinin farkına varmışlardır.<sup>2</sup> Özellikle Viyana Kongresi sonrasında ortaya çıkan Yunan isyanında Viyana Hükümeti bu isyanın teşvik edilmesine ve desteklenmesine sıcak bakmamış ve kongre kararlarına sadık kalmayı tercih etmiştir.Bu anlamda 19.yüzyılda Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkileri genel olarak dostane bir nitelik kazanmış ancak Habsburgların Alman birliği sonrası yayılabileceği tek alan olarak Balkanların kalmış olması ve 19.yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Balkanlar için Rusya ile girdiği rekabet Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkilerinde inişli-çıkışlı bir seyir izlenmesine neden olmuştur.

Avrupa'da diplomasinin önem kazandığı 18.yüzyıl sonunda Osmanlı diplomasisinin batılı muadillerine benzemek üzere kurumsallaşması çabası III.Selim'in ilk daimi elçilikleri kurması ile başlamış, II.Mahmut'un Tercüme Odaları ile bu kurumsal diplomasi oluşturma çabaları nihayetinde Hariciye Nezaretinin kurulması ile sonuçlanmıştır.

Bu makale Avusturya Habsburg arşivinde yer alan İstanbul Büyükelçisi Markgraf Johann von Pallavicini'nin özellikle 1912 yılına ait Viyana'ya yazdığı raporları esas almak üzere İstanbul'daki görev ve çalışmalarına dair değerlendirmeleri irdelemeyi, Büyükelçi Pallavicini'nin özellikle Balkanlardaki gelişmeler karşısında Osmanlı resmi makamlarının olayları değerlendirme biçimlerini ve kendi

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<sup>1</sup> İlk Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkileri hakkında Türkiye'de en önemli başvuru kaynaklarından biri Yusuf Yıldız, *Osmanlı-Habsburg İlişkileri, Kanuni-Şarlken-Busbecq*, Ankara: TTK, 2013; Bir diğeri Uğur Kurtaran, *Osmanlı-Avusturya Diplomatik İlişkileri (1526-1591)*, K. Maraş: Ukde Kitaplığı, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> F.R. Bridge, "Habsburg Monarşisi ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, 1900-1918", *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler*, Ed. Marian Kent, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999

değerlendirmelerini Viyana'ya aktarırken üzerinde durduğu noktaları, hükümetine sunduğu çözüm önerilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Balkan Savaşı öncesinde Habsburg büyükelçisinin İstanbul'daki Osmanlı asker ve sivil bürokratları ile yöneticileri ile yaptığı mülakatlardan edindiği izlenimleri ve diplomatik yetenekleri bağlamında gelişmelerin Avusturya-Macaristan'a yapabileceği etkileri analiz ederek gerekli tedbirlerin alınmasını sağlamaya çalışmış ve zaman zaman da uyarılar yapmaktan çekinmemiş bir diplomattır.

### Kısa Bir Literatür Analizi

Öncelikle Türkiye'de Osmanlı diplomasisi üzerine son dönemlerde yapılan en kapsamlı çalışmalardan biri ve hatta ilki Namık Sinan Turan'ın **İmparatorluk ve Diplomasi** başlıklı kitabıdır.<sup>3</sup> Oral Sander'in ilk baskısı 1987'de yapılan **Anka'nın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü-Osmanlı Diplomasi Tarihi Üzerine Bir Deneme** başlıklı kitabı diplomasi alanında Türkiye'deki öncü kitaplardandır.<sup>4</sup>

Osmanlı Avusturya ilişkileri daha çok savaş süreçleri bağlamında ele alınmış olup özellikle son yıllarda diplomasi boyutuyla da ele alınmaya başlaması önemli bir gelişmedir. Andrew Wheatcroft'un **Kapıdaki Düşman, Habsburglar ile Osmanlıların Avrupa Mücadelesi**<sup>5</sup> başlıklı kitabı Batılı bir kaynak olarak dikkat çekicidir. Fahri Çeliker'in **Avusturya'nın ve Türk Avusturya İlişkilerinin Tarihi** (1983) başlıklı kitabı Genelkurmay yayınlarından çıkmış konuya ilişkin kitaplardan biridir. Hüner Tuncer'in **Osmanlı Avusturya İlişkileri (1789-1853)** kitabı<sup>6</sup> iki ülke ilişkilerini inceleyen önemli akademik kitaplardan biridir. Nurgül Bozkurt'un **1699-1736 Tarihli Ecnebi Defterlerine Göre XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Osmanlı-Avusturya Münasebetleri** (1994) başlıklı doktora tezi görebildiğim kadarıyla Türkiye'de ilk doktora düzeyindeki çalışma olma özelliğine sahiptir. Sonrasında birçok yüksek lisans tezi ve makalenin yayınlandığı Osmanlı-Avusturya ilişkileri konusunda genellikle Osmanlı arşivleri üzerinden çalışmaların yapıldığı görülmektedir. İlk dipnot olarak vermiş olduğum kaynaklarda bu anlamda önemli başvuru kitaplarıdır. Marian Kent'in editörlüğünü

<sup>3</sup> Namık Sinan Turan, *İmparatorluk ve Diplomasi Osmanlı Diplomasinin İzinde*, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Oral Sander, *Anka'nın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü-Osmanlı Diplomasi Tarihi üzerine bir Deneme*, Ankara: A.Ü Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> A.Wheatcroft, *Kapıdaki Düşman, Habsburg ile Osmanlı Mücadelesi*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Hüner Tuncer, *Osmanlı Avusturya İlişkileri (1789-1853)*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2008.

yaptığı **Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler**<sup>7</sup> kitabında yer alan “Habsburg Monarşisi ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1900-1918” başlıklı makalenin yazarı olan Francis Roy Bridge Habsburg diplomasisi üzerine uzman bir araştırmacıdır. Bridge'nin Avusturya diplomasisi üzerine yayınladığı kitapları;

*Great Britain and Austria-Hungary 1906-1914: A Diplomatic History* (1972)  
*The Great Powers and the European States System 1814-1914*, (2005),  
*From Sadowa to Sarajevo The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1866-1914 Volume 6* (2016).

Bu çalışmalar dışında da Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkilerini konu alan yayımlar veya makaleler muhakkak ki vardır, ancak makalenin sınırlılıkları dikkate alındığında tümüne yer vermenin imkansızlığı açıktır.

Makalemizde üzerinde duracağımız asıl konu Avrupa diplomasisinin kutuplaşma sürecinin hızlandığı bir dönemde Avusturya-Macaristan (Habsburg) Monarşisinin önemli diplomatlarından M.J.Von Pallavicini'nin İstanbul Büyükelçiliği görevine atanması sonrasında üstlendiği misyonu ve özellikle Balkan Savaşı öncesinde gelişmeleri değerlendiren raporlarını irdelemek, Viyana hükümetine yönelik tavsiyelerini veya Balkanlara ilişkin tespitlerini ortaya koymaktır.

### **Avrupa Diplomasisinde Kutuplaşmanın Hızlanması**

19.yüzyılın son çeyreğinde II.Wilhelm'in tahta çıkışından kısa süre sonra Bismarck'ın istifası ile Almanya Bismarck'ın Avrupa merkezli diplomasi çizgisinden uzaklaşmış ve küresel bir hegemonya kurma amacına yönelik yeni bir diplomatik ve stratejik hedeflere yönelmişti. Avrupa diplomasisinde ciddi bir değişimin somut göstergesi olan Almanya'nın bu yeni vizyonu diğer ülkeleri de doğrudan etkilemiştir. Avrupa diplomasisi bu değişen dengeler ve politikalar ışığında yeniden şekillenmeye başlamış ve diplomatik süreçler hız kazanmıştır. Bu sürecin en önemli özelliği Almanya ve doğal müttefiki Avusturya-Macaristan (Habsburg) monarşisinin karşısında Avrupalı diğer devletlerin yakınlaşma sürecine girmesi ve Fransa'nın uzun süren yalnızlığından kurtulmak için Rusya ile yaptığı 1894 tarihli ittifak anlaşmasıdır.<sup>8</sup> Bu gelişme öncesinde Alman/Avusturya ittifakına İtalya

<sup>7</sup> *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler*, Editör: Marian Kent, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> S. Lee, *Avrupa Tarihinden Kesitler 1789-1980*, 5. Basım, İstanbul: Dost Yayınları, 2019.

eklemlenirken, Fransa-Rusya ittifakına 1908 Reval görüşmeleri sonucunda İngiltere katılmış ve böylece Avrupa'daki bloklaşma süreci önemli ölçüde tamamlanmıştır.<sup>9</sup>

Feroz Ahmad, “Haziran 1908’de Kral VII.Edward ile Çar II.Nikola’nın Reval’de buluşması, Doğu Sorunu’nun iki büyük hasmının aralarındaki ayrılıkları unutup Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nu parçalama konusunda anlaşmaya varabileceklerini Osmanlıların aklına”<sup>10</sup> getirdiğine dikkat çekiyor.

Bu süreçte her iki blokun odak noktasında “Doğu Sorunu” ve Hasta Adam olarak tanımladıkları Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun topraklarının paylaşılması meselesi vardı. Yani Doğu Sorunu Batılı Büyük Devletlerin Osmanlı toprakları üzerindeki rekabetinin adıydı.<sup>11</sup> 20.Yüzyılın başında artık bu rekabet Avrupa’da somutlaşmış ve Bloklaşmış Büyük Güçler çıkacak bir savaş için hazırlıklarını yoğunlaştırmıştı.

Bu aşamadan sonra iki blok arasındaki rekabet çok daha yoğun ve diplomatik faaliyetler buna bağlı olarak çeşitlenmiştir. Bir taraftan bloklar dışında kalanlar üzerinde nüfuz sağlama çabası hızlanırken, diğer taraftan karşı blokun faaliyetlerinin de kontrol edilmesi gerekliliği diplomasinin önemini ve yükünü arttırmıştır.

Daha önce Osmanlı’ya karşı Rusya ile ittifaklar kurarak savaşan Habsburglar (Avusturya) 18.yüzyılın sonlarında yayılcı bir güç olmaktan çıkmış olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna karşı Rusya ile işbirliği yapmanın doğru bir tercih olmadığını anlamaya başlamışlardı.<sup>12</sup> Rusya’nın Balkanlarda Slavlar üzerinden nüfuz sağlama kapasitesi Avusturya için endişe vericiydi. Avusturya 1866 Sadowa yenilgisi sonrasında Alman bir dizi ticaret anlaşması ile ekonomik sistemine dahil olmuştu.<sup>13</sup> Bu sadece ekonomik bir entegrasyon değildi ve politik, diplomatik süreçleri de kapsayacak güçlü bir Germen ittifakının doğal sonucuydu. Kuzey ve batıya yayılma şansı kalmayan Habsburglar için genişleme hedefi olarak elde Güneydoğu yani Balkanlar kalmıştı. Bu

<sup>9</sup> Büyük Güçler arasındaki Rekabet için bkz. Bonyar Waylet Ernst Jackh, *İmparatorluk Stratejileri*, İstanbul: Chivi yazıları Yayınları, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> F.Ahmad, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Sonu”, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Sonu ve Büyük Güçler*, Editör: Marian Kent, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Smith Anderson, *Doğu Sorunu 1774-1923*, Çeviren İdil Eser, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001, 397.

<sup>12</sup> Bridge, a.g.m, (1999), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Murat Özyüksel, “Abdülhamit Dönemi Dış İlişkileri”, *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, Derleyen: Faruk Sönmezoglu, İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1994, 14.

anlamda Balkanlarda Habsburg çıkarlarını Rusya ve onun doğal müttefikleri olabilecek başta Sırpolar olmak üzere Slavlara karşı korumak adına Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile iyi ilişkiler kurulması esasına dayalı bir diplomasi geliştirmesi bir zorunluluk oluşturmaktaydı. Zira daha 1884 yılında Habsburg Dışişleri muhtırasına dikkat çeken Bridge;

*“Rusya’nın koruması altında biçimlenecek bir Slav Balkan Yarımadası hayat damarlarımızı kesebilir.”* tespiti yapıldığını, 1903 yılında ise Dışişleri Bakanının Rusya İstanbul’a yerleştiği an *“Avusturya yönetilemez hale gelir”* diye II.Wilhem’i uyardığını belirtmekte ve *“Habsburg ve Osmanlı imparatorluklarının kaderi, kopmaz derecede birbirine bağlı görünüyordu.”* şeklinde değerlendirme yapmaktadır.<sup>14</sup>

1897 yılında Almanya’nın İstanbul Büyükelçiliği’ne Marschall von Bieberstein’in atanması Osmanlı-Alman ilişkilerinde yeni bir döneme girildiği göstermekteydi. *“...Yeni büyükelçi II.Wilhem’in yürüttüğü yayılmacı dış politikanın (Weltpolitik) ateşli bir taraftarı olduğu gibi, bu politikada Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun önemli bir yeri olduğuna inanıyordu...”*<sup>15</sup>

İşte Osmanlı İmparatorluğu üzerinde Alman nüfuzunun arttığı, Alman-İngiliz rekabetinin yükseldiği böyle kritik bir döneme girilirken Avusturya-Macaristan İmparatorluğu (Habsburg Monarşisi) 1906 sonbaharında İstanbul’a bir büyükelçi atamıştır. Bu büyükelçi Johann Markgraf Von Pallavicini’dir.

### **M. Pallavicini’nin İstanbul’a Büyükelçi atanması (5 Ekim 1906)**

Markgraf Johann Von Pallavicini İtalyan kökenli bir Habsburg diplomatı (1848-1941) olup, 1906 Ekim ayı başında İstanbul Büyükelçiliğine atanan M.J.Von Pallavicini 1906-1918 arasında Osmanlı başkenti İstanbul’da büyükelçi olarak görev yapmıştır. Bu dönem her iki imparatorluk açısından oldukça zorlu ve çalkantılı bir süreçtir. İki imparatorluk arasında Makedonya sorununun gündemde olduğu bir dönemde göreve başlayan Pallavicini Meşrutiyet, Balkan Savaşları ve I.Dünya Savaşı boyunca İstanbul’da görev yapmış ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Hariciye Nazırları başta olmak üzere birçok üst düzey yöneticisi ile ve tabii ki daha seyrek olmak ile birlikte Padişah ve Sadrazamları ile görüş alışverişinde bulunabilme imkanı bulmuş ve bu

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<sup>14</sup> Bridge, a.g.m, (1999), 36.

<sup>15</sup> Özyüksel, a.g.m, 20.

görüşmeleri raporlayarak Viyana'daki Habsburg Hariciye Nazırına ve dolayısıyla da hükümetine bilgi vermiştir.

1906-1908 döneminde Pallavicini daha çok Makedonya Sorunu ve buna bağlı gelişmeleri, diğer gelişmelerle birlikte raporlamıştır. Mesela Meşrutiyet öncesinde Pallavicini'nin 29 Ocak 1908'de Sancak Demiryolu projesi ile ilgili Dışişlerine yazmış olduğu rapora dikkat çeken Bridge;

*"... 'açıkça bu topraklarda siyasi nüfuzumuzun gelişmesiyle el ele gitmesi zorunlu' olan Avusturya-Macaristan ticari nüfuzuna açacağı fırsatları yazarken, kafasında Balkan Yarımadası vardı."*<sup>16</sup> tespitine yer vermektedir.

Makalede üzerinde duracağımız dönem daha çok 1908 Jön Türk devrimi sonrasında yaşananlar özellikle de Bosna'nın ilhakı ile başlayan ve Balkan Savaşına kadar devam eden gelişmeler olacaktır.

### **Meşrutiyetin ilk Büyük Krizi: Ekim 1908 Bosna'nın İlhakı:**

Bosna-Hersek'in ilhakı konusunda Avusturya-Macaristan Dışişleri Bakanı Aehrenthal, Rus Dışişleri Bakanı İsvolski ile 1908 Eylül'ünde Moravya'daki Buchlau şatosunda buluşmuşlardı. Boğazlar konusunda Rusya'nın taleplerini desteklemesi karşılığında Bosna-Hersek'in ilhakına Rusya'nın ses çıkarmamasını isteyen Aehrenthal, bu konuda yazılı bir mutabakat olmamasına ve tarafların olayı farklı çerçevede değerlendirmiş olmalarına karşın bir emrivaki ile ilhak kararını almıştı.<sup>17</sup> Avusturya'nın bu kararını aceleci bir tavır olarak niteleyen Haluk Ülman'a göre, kararın arkasında Osmanlı yöneticilerinin yaklaşan Mebusan Meclisi'ne Bosna-Hersek'ten de üye seçmeyi planlamaları olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.<sup>18</sup>

Bosna-Hersek'in ilhakı, Avusturya-Macaristan Büyükelçisi Johann Von Pallavicini tarafından 6 Ekim 1908 tarihinde Babıaliye verilen notayla duyuruldu.<sup>19</sup> Bosna-Hersek'in ilhakı Osmanlı siyasi çevrelerinde ve kamuoyunda büyük bir tepki ile karşılaşmış ve Avusturya mallarına boykotaj uygulayarak tepkisini ortaya koymuştur.<sup>20</sup> Osmanlı gazetecilerinin bir Osmanlı ülkesi olan Bosna-Hersek'i Avusturya'nın ne

<sup>16</sup> Bridge, a.g.m, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Haluk Ülman, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Dış Politika ve Doğu Sorunu", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, cilt I, 285.

<sup>18</sup> Ülman, a.g.m, 286.

<sup>19</sup> Erencan Arslan, "1906-1908 Bosna Krizi Bağlamında Osmanlı-Habsburg İlişkileri", DEÜ Sosyal Bilimler Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İzmir 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Boykotaj hakkında Bkz. Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *1908 Osmanlı Boykotu, Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi*, 3. Baskı, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020.



hakla ilhak ettiği sorusuna Avusturya'nın İstanbul'daki elçisi Marki Pallavicini, "hakkımız var, zira kuvvetimiz var" yanıtını vermişti.<sup>21</sup>

M.Smith Anderson bu ilhakin Rusya'yı çok zor bir duruma soktuğuna dikkat çekmekte ve Çar II.Nikola'nın Dışişleri bakanının oynadığı rolden hoşnut olmadığını belirtmektedirken Alman hükümetine danışmadan alınan bu ilhak kararı nedeniyle Almanya'nın da Meşrutiyet'in ilk aylarında kendisinden uzaklaşma riski olduğunu gördüğü Osmanlı karşısında zor duruma düşmüştü. Anderson II.William'ın Habsburg İmparatoru Francis Joseph'e "Bir müttefik olarak daha önce majesteleri bana güvenip haber vermediği için incindim."<sup>22</sup> dediğine dikkat çekmektedir.

Bridge Bosna'nın ilhaki ile ilgili değerlendirmesinde;

"İlhaktan üç gün sonra Pallavicini, hala hareketin büyük ihtimalle bir telaşa neden olmayacağını ülkesine bildiriyordu. Olaylar Avusturyalıların yanlış hesap yaptıklarını gösterdi"<sup>23</sup> şeklinde tespitlerde bulunurken Türklerin ilhaki tepkiyle karşıladığını ve bütün imparatorlukta Avusturya Macaristan mallarını boykot ettiklerine dikkat çekmektedir.

Erencan Yıldız'ın 2024 yılında savunduğu Yüksek lisans tezinde belirttiği üzere boykot eylemleri Osmanlı Habsburg ilişkilerini germiştir.

"Boykotla birlikte daha da gerilen Osmanlı-Avusturya ilişkileri neticesinde Aehrenthal, elçisi Pallavicini aracılığıyla Osmanlı Devletine özellikle boykotla ilgili çok sayıda şikayet bildirmiştir. Gümrüklerin kontrolüyle iştil eden memurlar ve zabıtların yanında devlet görevlisi saydıkları hamallar ve mavnacılar, Avusturya-Macaristan mallarına gümrükte zorluklar çıkartıyor, gelen gemilerden malların nakliyesini yapmayarak hatta engelleyerek ticaretin aksamasını sağlıyorlardı. Hatta bu durum Osmanlı Devleti'nin Viyana Elçisi ile Avusturya Dışişleri Bakanlığı ikinci şube müdürü arasında gerçekleştirilen bir mülakata da konu olmuştur. Bu görüşmede ikinci Şube Müdürü, Osmanlı halkının malları alıp almamakta özgür olduğunu ancak devlet görevlilerinin işini yapmakla mükellef olduklarını, malların gümrükten çıkarılmalarının engellendiğini ve zabıtların Avusturya mağazalarının başında bekleyerek gelecek olan müşteriye engellediklerini söylemiştir. Buna karşın Osmanlı

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<sup>21</sup> Ömer Turan, "II. Meşrutiyet ve Balkan Savaşları Döneminde Osmanlı Diplomasisi", *Çağdaş Türk Diplomasisi: 200 Yıllık Süreç*, Ankara: TTK, 1999, 245 (8. dipnot).

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, a.g.e, 292.

<sup>23</sup> Bridge, a.g.m, 44.

*elçisi ise memurların kanuna iştirak ettiklerini ve kimsenin halkı boykotu sona erdirmeye zorlamayacaklarını söylemiştir."*<sup>24</sup>

Bu boykotun Avusturya-Macaristan tüccarlarını telaşlandırdığı ve Aehrenthal'ı şikayet bombardımanına tuttuklarını belirten Bridge, uzun süre Dışişlerinin mali tazminat ödemeyi hatta boykot bitmedikçe İstanbul ile görüşmeyi bile reddetmesi nedeniyle ortaya çıkan krizin bazı gözlemcilerce "savaşı kaçınılmaz" görece kadar ciddi olduğuna dikkat çekmektedir.<sup>25</sup>

Arslan'a göre Avusturya-Macaristan'ın doğu ticareti ciddi şekilde zarar görmüş özellikle boykotun son zamanlarına doğru, Kasım-Aralık aylarında ticaret neredeyse tamamen durmuş ve önemli zararlar görmüş durumdaydı. Zararın maddi hasarı tam olarak kestirilememekle beraber, boykot öncesi ve sırasında ki ekonomik durum göz önüne alındığında, zararın milyarlarca kronu bulmuştu.<sup>26</sup>

Aralık'a kadar bütün sertliğiyle süren boykot neticesinde Aehrenthal'ı birazda iç siyasetten gelen baskılarla, görüşmelere boykotun devam ettiği sırada devam etmesi için Pallavicini'ye direktif vermiş, görüşmeler sonunda imzalanan protokolle birlikte, en azından, Avusturya-Osmanlı arasındaki ilhak krizi son bulmuştur. Kamil Paşa'nın yerine yeni hükümeti kuran Sadrazam Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, Dışişleri Bakanı Gabriel Efendi ve Avusturya Büyükelçisi M.Pallavicini tarafından imzalanan ve düzenlenen 8 Maddelik anlaşma ile Bosna-Hersek'in ilhakı belli bir tazminat karşılığında tanınmış oluyordu.<sup>27</sup> Bu uzlaşma Osmanlı tarafı için kayıptan bir kazanç sağlama imkanı yaratırken ve en azından tazminatı kabul ettirme noktasında bir kazanım sağlarken Habsburg Monarşisi açısından başta öngörülmemiş bir sonuç olsa da sorunun nihai çözümünü sağlaması açısından önemli bir gelişmeydi.

*"26 Şubat tarihli Avusturya-Türkiye Protokolü'nde somutlaşan nihai çözüm, genel olarak Avusturya-Türkiye ilişkilerinde kayda değer bir iyileşmeye işaret ediyordu."*<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> E. Arslan, a.g.t, 81.

<sup>25</sup> Bridge, a.g.m, 44-45.

<sup>26</sup> Arslan, a.g.t, 84.

<sup>27</sup> Arslan, 93-95. Arslan bu konuda Osmanlı arşiv belgesine yer vermektedir. BOA. HR. HMS. İŞO. 36/4 belge sıra nr. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Arslan, 97; BOA. Y.a.Hus.526/142.

Bosna Krizinin tazminatla çözülmesi sonrasında Osmanlı-Habsburg ilişkileri düzelme yoluna girmiş olsa da özellikle 1910-1911 Arnavut ayaklanmaları<sup>29</sup> sırasında ortaya çıkan yeni sorunlar ilişkilerin yeniden gerilmesinde önemli rol oynamıştır. Katolik Malisörlerin ayaklanması ve isyancıların Karadağ'a kaçması ile birlikte ortaya çıkan kriz hem bir Osmanlı-Karadağ savaşı riskini, hem de Avusturya-Osmanlı diplomatik krizini beraberinde getirmiştir.<sup>30</sup>

1909-1911 döneminde Balkanlarda peş peşe çıkan Arnavut isyanları<sup>31</sup> Osmanlı Devleti'nin Balkanlardaki hakimiyetini ciddi şekilde sarsmıştır. Bu ayaklanmalar ve Osmanlı başkentinde yaşanan çeşitli krizlere veya sorunlara ilişkin Pallavicini'nin Viyana'daki Hariciye Nezaretine gönderdiği raporların her biri tarihçilik açısından çok kıymetli olmakla birlikte makalemizin başında belirttiğimiz üzere Pallavicini'nin çok uzun bir İstanbul Büyükelçilik kariyeri olduğu göz önüne alındığında bu uzun diplomatik misyonun tüm detayları ile makalemizin kapsamını aşacağından Balkan Savaşı öncesindeki gelişmelere ilişkin birkaç raporuna dikkat çekmek yerinde olacaktır.

1911 yılı sonbaharında başlayan Trablusgarp Savaşı ile birlikte Balkanların hareketlenmeye başlaması dikkat çekici olup daha 1911 yılında Osmanlı basınında özellikle bazı Osmanlı mebuslarının gündeme getirdiği "Balkan İttifakı", aslında Belgrad ve Sofya arasında başlayan gizli görüşmelerle hayat bulma yoluna girmişti.<sup>32</sup>

### **Pallavicini'nin Balkan Savaşı Öncesi Raporlarındaki Değerlendirmeler:**

Makalemizde ilk olarak değineceğimiz rapor 27 Şubat 1912 tarihli olup raporunda Avusturya'nın İstanbul Büyükelçisi M.Pallavicini Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa ile yaptığı bir görüşme hakkında bilgi vermektedir.

Avusturya'ya yakınlığı ile bilinen, görüşme sırasında herhangi bir diplomatik görevi olmayan ama Rumeli Müfettiş-i umumiliği görevi nedeniyle Balkanlarla ilgili oldukça ciddi bir birikime sahip olup Bosna Krizinin çözüm sürecinde Sadrazam olarak Avusturya ile yapılan

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<sup>29</sup> G.W.Gawrych, *Hilal ve Kartal, Osmanlı Yönetimi, İslam ve Arnavutlar 1874-1913*, İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2021, 223, 235.

<sup>30</sup> Bilgin Çelik, *İttihatçılar ve Arnavutlar*, İstanbul: Büke Yayınları, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> James N.Tallon, *The Failure of Ottomanism: The Albanian Rebellions of 1909-1912*, Chicago Illinois: The University of Chicago, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Bilgin Çelik, *Balkan İttifakı ve Osmanlı Diplomasisi*, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019, 127.

protokole imza atan Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa'nın görüşlerinin aktarıldığı bu rapor dönemin siyasi atmosferini yansıtmaya açısından da bazı önemli ip uçları vermektedir.

Debre Mebusu Basri Beyin Meclis-i Mebusan'da ifade ettiği üzere "Balkan politikasının en önemli merkezleri olan Viyana"daki Habsburg Hükümetinin temsilcisi olarak H.Hilmi Paşa'nın Balkanlar'daki duruma ilişkin görüşlerini Viyana'ya raporlayan Pallavicini, şu bilgilere yer vermektedir;

*"Kendisine göre şu an durum tehlike arz etmiyor. Zira kendisi Hacı Adil Bey başkanlığında Makedonya ve Arnavutluk'a giden heyetin verimli sonuçlar alacağına inanıyor. Kendisi ayrıca Dahiliye Nazırı'nun yola çıkmadan önce ziyaretine geldiğini ve kendisinin ona bu vesileyle genel durumla, ama özellikle de Arnavutluk ile ilgili görüşlerini açıkladığını anlattı. Kendisi Osmanlı Hükümeti'nin başlıca görevinin Arnavutluğu kendi safına çekmek olduğunu düşünüyor, çünkü Osmanlı'nın Avrupa üzerindeki hakimiyetinin buna bağlı olduğuna inanıyor."*<sup>33</sup>

Bu değerlendirme birçok yönüyle dikkat çekici ve önemlidir. H.Hilmi Paşa'nın Osmanlı hükümetinin başlıca görevinin "*Avrupa'daki (Balkanlar) hakimiyetinin devamı için Arnavutları kendi safına çekmek*" şeklindeki değerlendirmesi, üstelik bu değerlendirmeyi sorunları yerinde görmek ve incelemek üzere Arnavutluk'a gitmek üzere olan Dahiliye Nazırı Hacı Adil Bey'in de kendisini ziyaret ettiğini belirtmiş olması Pallavicini'ye yapılan görüşmenin aslında Osmanlı Hükümetinin de bilgisi dahilinde gerçekleştiğine dair bir işaret olup, aynı zamanda Arnavutluk sorununu yakından takip eden ve İtalya ile ciddi bir Adriyatik rekabeti yaşayan Avusturya-Macaristan'a da açık bir mesaj niteliğindedir. Zira Balkanlarda Osmanlı hakimiyeti kaybolursa bunun Habsburg monarşisi aleyhine bir gelişmeye neden olacağını Büyükelçi Pallavicini'nin de iyi bildiğini ve bu ihtimalin Viyana'daki hükümete de bildirilmesinin gerektiğini düşünerek Arnavutluk'ta Osmanlı hükümetinin yapmayı planladığı reformlar için Viyana'nın desteğini alma yönünde bir nabız yoklama olarak değerlendirmek gerekir.

Trablusgarp Savaşının devam ettiği bir sırada H.Hilmi Paşa'nın Viyana Büyükelçisi ile görüşmesinde Arnavutluk konusunu görüşmenin merkezine yerleştirmesi bir tesadüf olarak değerlendirilemez. Arnavutluk konusunda İtalya ile ciddi bir rekabet

<sup>33</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

içinde olan Habsburg monarşisinin dikkatini ve ilgisi çekmek için Osmanlı'nın Balkanlarda hakimiyeti kaybolursa "...Arnavutluk'un, Yunanistan, Karadağ ve Sırbistan arasında bölüneceğini ve bir yüzyıl içinde geriye hiçbir Müslüman Arnavut'un kalmayacağını büyükelçiye söylerken Avusturya'nın sempatisini kazanabileceği bazı değerlendirmeler de yapmıştır. Örneğin, Osmanlı hükümetinin öncelikle Arnavutların ulusal bilincini uyandırmak için elinden geleni yapması gerektiğini belirtmiş, bu gerçekleştiğinde Arnavutluk'un sınırlarının hem Yunanistan'a hem de Karadağ ve Sırbistan'a karşı koruyucu bir sur görevi göreceğini düşündüğünü ifade etmiştir."<sup>34</sup>

Raporun devamında Büyükelçi Pallavicini Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa'nın değerlendirmelerini özetlemekte;

*"...Bunun dışında Arnavutluk'ta her yerde okulların açılmasının ve bu okulların Arnavutça kitaplarla donatılmasının şart olduğuna inanıyor; hem Latin hem de Arap alfabesine vakıf olması gereken öğretmenlere de şartlara ve ihtiyaca göre istedikleri alfabeği kullanma özgürlüğünün verilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyor. Ayrıca hiç olmazsa insanlara iş imkanı sağlamak için kamu işlerinin de hemen ele alınması gerektiğine inanıyor. Kendisi ayrıca Arnavutluk ve Makedonya'daki tarım sorununa ilişkin düzenlemelerin yapılmasını, ki bunun için 30 milyon frankın yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor, büyük avantajlar sağlayacak başka bir önlem olarak görüyor. Söz konusu sermayenin hükümetin geniş çaplı bir parselleştirme işlemini gerçekleştirmesini sağlayacağını söylüyor. Yatırımın geri ödenmesine gelince, çiftçinin aşar vergisinin yanı sıra aşınma payı olarak bir %5 daha ödemesi, yani üretiminin toplam %15'ini vermesi şeklinde düzenlenebilir diyor."<sup>35</sup>*

Burada Arnavutluk ve Makedonya'daki ekonomik sorunların çözümünün tarıma yönelik yapılacak bazı fonlamalarla çözülebileceğine dair değerlendirme bölgedeki karışıklıkların ekonomik boyutuna dikkat çekmesi bağlamında önemlidir. Habsburg elçisine 30 milyon franklık bir fonlamanın yeterli olacağına dair cümle ise muhtemelen aranan borca dair gayr-ı resmi bir nabız yoklama olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Habsburg Büyükelçisi M.Pallavicini aynı gün Rus meslektaşı Çarıkof ile de bir görüşme yapmış ve yaptığı görüşmeyi de raporlamıştır. Çarıkof 1909 yılında İstanbul Büyükelçiliğine atanmış bir Rus diplomatıdır. En önemli misyonu Rusya'nın Boğazlardan geçişi

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<sup>34</sup> Çelik, Balkan İttifakı..., 180.

<sup>35</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

konusunda Osmanlı ile bir uzlaşma sağlamasıydı.<sup>36</sup> Bosna krizi sonrasında İstanbul'a atanan Çarıkof Osmanlı ile Balkan Slav devletleri arasında oluşabilecek bir ittifaka da katkı sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Misyonunda başarı sağlayamayan Çarıkof 1912 Mart ayında Bulgaristan-Sırbistan arasında Balkan ittifakı kurulduktan sonra Moskova'ya geri çağrılacak ve İstanbul misyonu bitecektir.

Balkanlar konusunda iki rakip devletin büyükelçilerinin görüşmesi Bosna'nın ilhakı kararını hayata geçiren Avusturya-Macaristan Dışişleri Bakanı Kont Aehrenthal'ın 17 Şubat 1912'de ölümünden sonra gerçekleşmiş olup yeni Habsburg Dışişleri bakanı Kont Berchtold'ün göreve gelmesi sonrasında Balkanlara ilişkin izleyeceği politika konusunda nabız yoklama şeklinde değerlendirilebilir. Çarıkof Bulgaristan ile Sırbistan arasındaki gizli ittifak görüşmelerinden haberdardır ve bu gizli ittifak girişimlerini mümkün olduğunca örtmesi gerektiğinin bilincindedir. Meslektaş Pallavicini'nin bu gizli ittifak görüşmelerinden haberi olup olmadığını da görüşme sırasında anlamayı umduğu tahmin edilebilir.

Görüşme sırasında Çarıkof -İngiliz basınındaki aksi görüşlere karşın- durumu eskisine göre daha iyimser değerlendirdiğini ve beklenmedik olaylar ortaya çıkmazsa Balkanlar'da ilkbaharın huzurlu geçeceğine inandığını belirtmiştir.<sup>37</sup> Çarıkof'un bahsettiği İngiliz basınındaki Balkanlara ilişkin haberler 18 Ocak 1912'de Balkanlarda tehlikeye işaret eden Times gazetesi haberi ile başlayan yayınlardır.<sup>38</sup> Bu makaleyi Osmanlı okurlarına duyuran Tanin gazetesi, her ilkbaharda Balkanlar için bir karışıklık devresinin açıldığını hatta savaş durumunun yaşanabileceği iddialarının ortaya atıldığını hatırlattıktan sonra, bu sene her zamankinden daha şiddetli ve daha ısrarlı bir şekilde savaş tehlikesine işaret edildiğini belirtmektedir.<sup>39</sup>

Çarıkof'un Karadağ Kralı'nın Petersburg'da, bölgedeki huzuru kaçırarak herhangi bir harekettten kaçınmasını sağlayacağını düşündüğü bazı tavsiyeler almış olmasının bu fikrini güçlendirdiği yönünde bir değerlendirme yaptığını belirten Pallavicini "...şu anki Bulgar hükümetinin Osmanlı'nın kendi isteklerini, mesela demiryolları ile ilgili olanları, desteklemesi için Osmanlı ile arasını bozmayı düşünmediğini ve Sırp'lardan da bu ilkbahar korkmaya gerek olmadığına inanmaktadır. Kendisine

<sup>36</sup> Ahmet İlker Baş, "Serflik ve Bolşevik Devrimi Arasında Charykov'un İstanbul Yılları", *Turkish Studies*, 2017-Volume 12 Issue 26: 21-40.

<sup>37</sup> Çelik, a.g.e, 180.

<sup>38</sup> Times, "The Balkan Danger", 18 January 1912.

<sup>39</sup> Tanin, "Balkan Tehlikesi", 2 Şubat 1912, Çelik, *Balkan İttifakı*, 124.

göre tek karanlık nokta Girit.”<sup>40</sup> Çarıkof, Girit sorununun bir çatışmaya yol açması halinde bunun ciddi sonuçları olabileceği uyarısı yapmaktadır;

*“Orada durum zormuş, çünkü Yunan Parlamentosuna milletvekillerinin seçilmesinin nasıl engelleneceğini öngörmek mümkün değilmiş. Giritli milletvekillerinin Atina’ya gönderilmesi durumunda, Osmanlı hükümetinin bunu, sıkça da duyulduğu gibi, casus belli (savaş sebebi) olarak görüp önceden savaş ilanında bulunmadan Epirus’u istila etmesi ihtimali olduğunu düşünüyor. Bundan sonra ne olacağını önceden tahmin etmek mümkün değil diyen Bay Tscharykow, bunun sadece koruma güçlerini değil, diğer büyük güçleri de büyük ölçüde ilgilendireceğini düşünümektedir, çünkü o zaman mesele Balkanlar’da barışı koruma meselesine dönüşecekmiş.*

*İç politikadaki duruma gelince, Rusya’nın Sayın Elçisi İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin Türkiye’de istikrarlı ve sakin bir gelişme sağlayacak tek parti olduğunu düşünümektedir. Sayın Elçi bu partinin önümüzdeki seçimleri çoğunlukla kazanacağına ve uzun süre iktidarda kalacağına inanmaktadır. Siz Ekselanslarına bu konu ile ilgili daha önce gönderdiğim raporlardan da bildiğiniz gibi ben de bu görüşe tamamen katılıyorum.*

*Kısa süre önce Makedonya’ya gönderilen reform komisyonuna gelince, Bay Tscharykow bu komisyonun verimli bir şekilde çalışacağına ve çalışmalarının başarıya ulaşacağına emindir.”<sup>41</sup>*

Çarıkof’un seçimleri büyük çoğunlukla İttihatçıların kazanacağı yönündeki tahminine yer veren Pallavicini kendisinin de benzer görüşte olduğunu Viyana’ya bildirmesi mevcut koşullar altında yapılacak seçimlerin sonuçlarının Büyük Güçlerin İstanbul’daki diplomatları tarafından hem yakından takip edildiğini hem de tahmin edildiğini gösteriyor.<sup>42</sup>

Pallavicini yine aynı gün bir başka telgraf ile kendisine ulaşan yeni bir gelişmeyi Viyana’ya bildirerek, Osmanlı Hükümetinin “...baharda her türlü duruma karşı hazırlıklı olmak için Anadolu’dan Rumeli’ye 70 tabur asker göndermeye karar vermiş. Aynı habere göre bir ayaklanma olması veya çete eylemlerinin artması ihtimaline karşılık” Selanik vilayetinden maaş karşılığında askeri birliklerle görev yapmaya hazır olacak, 18-21 ve 45-55 yaşları arasında gönüllü toplama görevi verildiğini belirtmektedir.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Çelik, *Balkan İttifakı*, 180.

<sup>41</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

<sup>42</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

<sup>43</sup> Çelik, a.g.e, 180-181.

Bu bilgi Şubat ayı başında Harbiye Nazırı'nın Balkanlarda çıkabilecek olaylara yönelik hazırlık yapılması talebinin hükümetçe dikkate alındığını ve yapılacak seçimler öncesinde Balkanlarda asayişin sağlanmak üzere gerekli tedbirlerin alınmaya çalışıldığını göstermektedir.

Osmanlı Hariciye Nazırı olan eski Sofya elçisi Asım Bey 11 Mart'ta İstanbul'daki Büyük Devletlerin büyükelçilerini toplayarak güncel konular üzerine değerlendirmeler yapmıştır. Bu değerlendirmeleri Pallavicini 12 Mart günü, yani Balkan ittifakının imzalanmasından bir gün önce Viyana'ya özet olarak bildirmektedir.<sup>44</sup> Hariciye Nazırı Asım Bey, toplantıda en önemli sorunun Girit olduğunu belirtmiştir -ki bu görüş Pallavicini ile görüşen Çarikofo'un da dikkat çektiği bir noktaydı- Osmanlı-Yunan ilişkilerinde Girit sorununun 1908 Ekiminde ciddi bir gerilim yaratmış olduğu gerçeği 1912'de halen geçerlilik taşımaktaydı. Asım Bey bu konuda;

*"Yunanistan hükümeti Girit milletvekillerinin Yunanistan parlamentosunda yer alıp alamayacakları sorununu karara bağlamak için mahkeme oluşturma kararında ısrarlı olur ve bunu uygularsa, o zaman Osmanlı bunu bir savaş durumu olarak kabul edecektir, dedi. Nazır ayrıca Osmanlı hükümetinin bu görüşünü Büyük güçlere bildirdiğini ekledi."* Bundan sonra Karadağ ile ilgili bir değerlendirme yapan Asım Bey, Karadağ Kralı Nikola'nın açıklamalarını çok makul bulduğunu söylemiş, sınır düzeltmelerinin en kısa sürede sonuçlanması için girişimlerde bulunacağını belirtmiş ve Karadağ ile ilişkileri olumlu olarak değerlendirmiştir. Raporun devamında, *"Nazır sözlerine, Osmanlı'nın Sırbistan ile ilişkileri hakkında bir söz söylemeye gerek olmadığını söyleyerek devam etti. İki ülke arasında şu an askıda kalan herhangi bir mesele olmadığını belirtti. Sınır hattı boyunca belli ormanların kullanım hakları ile ilgili yakında çözülmesi beklenen sorunun da herhangi siyasi bir öneminin olmadığını vurguladı. Asım Bey Bulgaristan'ın tutumu ile ilgili de herhangi bir şikayeti bulunmadığını belirtti."* şeklinde bilgi verilmektedir.<sup>45</sup> Pallavicini'nin raporuna bakılırsa Asım Bey Bulgaristan ile Sırbistan arasındaki görüşmelerden haberdar olmadığı gibi Pallavicini ve hükümeti de Balkan ittifakı gizli görüşmelerinden haberdar görünmemektedir.

Bu dönemde Osmanlı hükümetinin Parlamento seçimlerine odaklandığı dikkate alınırca Balkan devletlerinin mevcut fırsatları en iyi şekilde değerlendirdikleri anlaşılacaktır. 13 Mart 1912 tarihinde Bulgar-Sırp ittifakı imzalandığı sıralarda Osmanlı Hükümeti bir taraftan Büyük

<sup>44</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

<sup>45</sup> Çelik, *Balkan İttifakı*, 184-185.



Devletlerden biri ile bir ittifak arayışına girmiş, diğer taraftan Balkan devletleri ile iktisadi ve siyasi işbirliği geliştirme çabasındaydı.

Mart ayı sonuna doğru Osmanlı başkentinden Viyana'ya gönderilen bir raporda Pallavicini, Osmanlı siyasi çevrelerinde ve basında Avusturya aleyhine bir havanın estiğini ve Habsburg monarşisine yönelik bir güvensizliğin bulunduğunu bildirmektedir. Romen meslektaşı ile yaptığı görüşmeyi 25 Mart 1912'deki raporunda aktaran Pallavicini,

*"Bay Mişu'nun en son ziyareti sırasında buradaki hükümet çevrelerinde bize karşı belli bir güvensizliğin yayıldığına ilişkin aldığım devamlı raporların gerçek olduğunu anladım. Sayın Elçi'nin de belirttiğine göre burada Monarşi ile Rusya arasında bir anlaşmanın, Rusya'nın Osmanlıya karşı düzenlediği bir saldırı ile eş zamanlı olarak bizim de Selanik'e saldıracağımızı öngören bir anlaşmanın varlığından korkuluyor. Bay Mişu bu fikre Asım Bey ile görüşmelerine ve başka siyasetçilerin beyanatlarına dayanarak ulaşmış."*<sup>46</sup>

Raporun devamında Pallavicini Romanya elçisinin değerlendirmelerini şöyle özetlemekte;

*"Burada bize karşı bir güvensizliğin olduğunu Türk basınında Bay Çarikov'un görevden alınmasını ele alan makalelerdeki ifadeler de göstermektedir. Bu ifadelerde 1908 yılındaki Avusturya- Macaristan - Rusya politikasının yeniden faal hale geldiğine dair çekinceler dile getirilmektedir ki bu da onlara göre Makedonya sorununun yeniden açılması anlamına gelmektedir."*

Yani Osmanlı hükümet ricali Rusya ile Avusturya arasında bir uzlaşma ihtimalini değerlendirmektedirler, ancak bu gerçekçilikten çok uzak bir yaklaşım, zira daha önce belirttiğimiz Avrupa bloklaşmasında karşı kutuplarda yer alan bu iki devletin mevcut koşullar altında uzlaşmış olması ihtimalini düşünmek çok zorlama bir değerlendirmedir. Burada en önemli tespit Makedonya Sorununun yeniden açılması yönündeki değerlendirmedir. Ayrıca Rus büyükelçi Çarikov'un görevden alınması meselesine dair Osmanlı basınında çıkan haberleri de diplomatik gelişmenin yansımaları olarak raporlamış olması önemlidir.

M. Pallavicini 26 Mart tarihli raporunda bir önceki gün Hariciye Nazırı Asım Bey ile bir görüşme yaptığını ve bu görüşme esnasında

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<sup>46</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

Asım Bey'in Osmanlı kamuoyunun dış politika ile ilgili belli bir huzursuzluk içinde olduğunu, bu nedenle kamuoyunu meselelerin gerçek durumuyla ilgili aydınlatmayı uygun gördüğünü belirttiğini bildirmektedir.<sup>47</sup> Bu amaçla Asım Bey'in Sabah gazetesine bir röportaj verdiğini ifade etmiş ve bu yayının Monarşiyi ilgilendiren kısımları kendisine okuduğunu ve bu yayının kamuoyunu rahatlatacağını umduğunu söylemiştir. Bu haberin özetini de Pallavicini raporunda vermektedir. Yabancı gazetelerde Balkan ülkeleri ile ilişkilerin karışık olduğu yönündeki iddialara Asım Bey, "Bizim bütün Balkan devletleriyle ilişkilerimiz son zamanlarda gözle görülür bir biçimde düzelmiştir. Süregelen sorunlar çözüme kavuşmak üzeredir." şeklinde yanıt vermiş ve Balkan ülkeleri ile ilgili tek tek kısa değerlendirmeler yapmıştır.<sup>48</sup>

Büyükelçi Pallavicini 5 Nisan 1912 tarihli raporunda Osmanlı basından edindiği İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Balkan başkentlerindeki faaliyetlerine ilişkin bilgileri değerlendirmektedir.<sup>49</sup>

*"Buradaki basından öğrendiğime göre İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti üyesi olan Dahiliye Nazırlığı genel sekreteri Şükrü Bey ve Maarif Nazırlığı müfettişi Abdul Kerim Bey, Cemiyetin verdiği görev üzere kısa süre önce Sofya ve Belgrad'a seyahat etmişlerdir. Ekselanslarının de bildiği gibi Cemiyet sıkıntı yaratan çeteler konusunda Bulgar-Makedon ve Sırp örgütü "Milli Savunma Birliği" ile bir anlaşmaya varmak amacındaydı. Adı geçen Cemiyet delegelerinin girişimi sonuçsuz kalmıştır. Aynı güvenilir kaynaktan öğrendiğime göre gayretli bir Cemiyet üyesi olan Senato sekreteri Mustak Bey de benzer bir göreve Atina'ya gitmiştir. Hala orada bulunan Mustak Bey, Bay Gryparis ve Bay Venezialos ile Yunan çetelerinin Makedonya'daki faaliyetlerinin engellenmesi ile ilgili görüşmüş; görüşmenin sonuçları ile ilgili henüz bir bilgi gelmemiştir. Bu heyetlerin gönderilmesini İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin zayıflığının bir işareti olarak görülmesi fikrine katılmıyorum; Hükümet bugüne kadar Makedonya'daki çete faaliyetlerini diğer yollardan bastıramayınca Cemiyetin - seçim amacıyla da olsa - çete hareketine gerçekten bu şekilde bir son vermek istediğine inanıyorum."*<sup>50</sup>

Osmanlı Parlamento seçimleri sırasında İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Balkan Devletinin başkentlerine temsilci göndermiş olması dikkat çekicidir. Bu temsilciler diplomat değildir, Hariciye Nezaretinin resmi görevlileri de değildir. Bu durum Cemiyet/Hükümet ilişkilerindeki çift başlılığın somut örneklerinden birisidir ve Balkan

<sup>48</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

<sup>49</sup> Çelik, *Balkan İttifakı*, 191.

<sup>50</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

başkentlerinde cemiyetin bu gayr-ı resmi girişimleri de karşılık bulamamıştır.

Selanik Valisi Hüseyin Kazım'a Selanik Bulgar Konsolusu Şopof'un eleştirisi ve değerlendirmeleri bu bağlamda dikkat çekicidir; "*...ne garip bir hükümetiniz var. Makedonya meselesinde Bulgaristan hükümeti ile anlaşmak istemiyorlar da bizim vesait-i icraiyemiz olan ve bizden aldıkları emirleri icradan başka bir şey yapmayan adamlarla müzakereye girişiyorlar. Vah vah...*"<sup>51</sup>

Bu değerlendirme Osmanlı diplomasisinin işlevsizliğine işaret etmekle birlikte Sırbistan ve Bulgaristan arasında Balkan ittifakının yapıldığı 13 Mart 1912 tarihten hemen sonra İttihat ve Terakki cemiyetinin bu temsilcileri göndermiş olması sadece bir tesadüf müdür? Buna kesin bir hüküm vermek elde belge olmadığı için mümkün değil ancak cemiyetin uluslararası masonik bağlantıları vasıtasıyla bazı bilgilerin elde edilmiş olma ihtimali de göz ardı edilmemelidir. Cemiyetin temsilcileri Balkan başkentlerinde komitacılar ile görüşerek bir uzlaşma arayışına girerken belki de aynı zamanda bu ittifakın varlığını da somutlaştırmaya çalışmış ve ittifakın detaylarına cemiyet adına vakıf olmaya çalışmış olabilirler. Bu iyimser bir değerlendirme olarak görülebilir, ancak Cemiyetin Balkanlardaki kökleri ve toplumsal dayanakları dikkate alındığında Balkan İttifakı gibi çok önemli bir gelişmeden tamamen habersiz olduğunu düşünmek zor görünmektedir.

15 Nisan 1912 tarihli raporunda Pallavicini, Harbiye Nazırı Mahmut Şevket Paşa ile yaptığı görüşmeyi bildirmektedir. Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın kendisine Yunanistan ve Girit sorunu ile ilgili düşüncesini sorduğunu, kendisinin statükonun korunmasının önemine işaret ettiğini belirtmektedir. Buna karşılık Paşa, "*Yunanistan'ın sınır bölgesine şu ara - güya tatbikat amacıyla - birlikler yığdığını, ancak bulunduğumuz mevsim göz önünde bulundurulursa bu açıklamayı çok garip bulduğunu*"<sup>52</sup> söyleyerek bir anlamda gelişmelere karşı şüphelerini ortaya koymuştur.

Yani Mahmut Şevket Paşa Yunan askeri tatbikatının amaçları konusunda kuşkular taşımaktadır ve Atina Ataşemiliterliğinden gelen raporlar bu kuşkularında haksız olmadığını göstermektedir.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e Hatıralarım*, Yay.Haz. İsmail Kara, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991, 111.

<sup>52</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

<sup>53</sup> ATASE, BLH, 9-9-004-01; Çelik, Balkan İttifakı, 198.

Said Paşa Hükümetinin yılbaşında Balkanlar ve Doğu Anadolu'da reform amacıyla kurmuş olduğu komisyonların beklenen etkiyi yaratmadığı kısa sürede anlaşılmış ve 1912 seçimlerinde Arnavut mebusları seçtirmeme yönündeki İttihat ve Terakki'nin izlediği strateji Arnavutların tepkisine yol açacak ve büyük bir isyana yol açacaktır. Bu bağlamda 1912 yılı yaz ayları oldukça hareketli bir gündeme sahiptir. Özellikle Arnavut isyanı ve Halaskaran Zabitan hareketlerinin yarattığı baskı sonucu Sait Paşa Hükümeti Temmuz ayında Meclis-i Mebusan'da güvenoyu aldıktan hemen sonra istifa etmiş, bu istifa büyük şaşkınlık yaratmıştır.

Sait Paşa'nın yerine Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa sadrazam olarak görevlendirilmiş ve yeni kabine Büyük Kabine olarak tarihe geçmiştir. Bu yeni hükümetin kurulduğu dönemde Arnavut isyanı ciddi boyuttadır ve Hükümet bu soruna çözüm olarak Osmanlı Parlamentosunu fesh etme kararı almıştır.

Habsburg Büyükelçisi M.Pallavicini 15 Ağustos 1912 tarihli raporunda Osmanlı-Karadağ gerilimine dikkat çekmektedir. Karadağ maslahatgüzarı Plamenatz'ın hükümetinin verdiği görev çerçevesinde İstanbul'daki elçilere Çetine'den gönderilen bir telgrafları okuduğunu bildirmektedir. Telgraflarda sınırdaki son olayları betimlediğini ve bu kanlı olaylardaki bütün suçun Osmanlı tarafına ait olduğunu kanıtlama amacını güttüğünü belirten Pallavicini, "*Sayın maslahatgüzar bana ayrıca hükümetinin oradaki elçiliklere vermiş olduğu notadan bahseden bir telgraf da okudu. Söz konusu notanın sonunda sınır sorunu çözülmezse Karadağ'ın kendi takdirine göre hareket edeceği konusunda hiç şüpheye yer bırakmayan bir ipucu da yer almaktadır.*"<sup>54</sup> şeklinde Karadağ'ın muhtemel hareket tarzı hakkında tahmin yürütmektedir. Karadağ'ın Malisör isyanından beri hatta 1910 Arnavut isyanı sonrasında isyancıların bir kısmını ülkesine kabul ederek bir anlamda savaşa davetiye çıkardığı düşünülecek olursa bu sınır geriliminin ergeç bir savaşa dönüşmesi kuvvetli bir ihtimal idi. Böyle bir savaşın nerede biteceği ise belirsizdi ve bu gelişme Avrupayı da derinden etkileyebilirdi. Bu nedenle Pallavicini raporunun devamında Karadağ diplomatına sınır olaylarının çok üzücü olduğunu ve bu kötü duruma bir son verilmesi gerektiğini söylediğini, ama burada diğer tarafı da dinleyelim ilkesinin göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğini hatırlattığını bildirmektedir. Devamında;

*"Karadağ'ın gerekirse çıkarlarını silah gücüyle koruyacağına yönelik tehdidine gelince, sayın maslahatgüzarı bu durumda krallığın kendisini nasıl*

<sup>54</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

*bir tehlikeye atacağı konusunda uyardım, Osmanlı ordusunun hiç kuşkusuz bir dış düşmana karşı birliğini koruyacağını” ve Müslüman Arnavutların da Osmanlı’nın yanında yer alacağını söyleyen Büyükelçiye Karadağ diplomatının verdiği yanıt çıkacak savaşın ip uçlarını vermektedir;*

*“Bay Plamenatz böyle bir durum gerçekleşirse Bulgaristan’ın da saldırıya geçmesinin beklenebileceğini söyledi.”* Bu Balkan devletleri arasında varılmış olan mutabakatın bir nevi ifşası anlamına gelmektedir.

Bu arada Pallavicini’den Osmanlı hükümeti nezdinde aracılık yapması yönünde bir öneri getiren Karadağ diplomatına Pallavicini hükümetinden talimat almadığı için hiçbir şey yapamayacağını bildirmiştir.

Habsburg Büyükelçisi Pallavicini’nin 25 Ağustos 1912 tarihli raporu dikkat çekici bir nitelik taşımaktadır ve Habsburg temsilcisi olarak kendi hükümetinin “adem-i merkezîyet esasına dayalı” Avusturya önerisine yönelik eleştirilerini ve değerlendirmelerini yapmaktadır;

*“Eninde sonunda vilayetlerin özerkleşmesine yol açacağını düşündüğüm adem-i merkezîyetçilik sistemine bana göre hiçbir Osmanlı hükümeti razı gelmeyecektir. Uygulamada da, özellikle Osmanlı’nın Avrupa’daki vilayetleri söz konusu olunca, böyle bir sistemi düşünmek çok zordur. Çünkü bugünkü şartlarda ne Arnavutluk’ta ne de Makedonya’da özerklikle ufak bir benzerliği olan bir şeyi bile yaratmak mümkün gibi görünmemektedir. Büyük güçlerin zamanında yaptığı reform hareketi, Makedonya’daki milletlerin azıcık bir özerklik ihtimali karşısında bile hemen birbirine saldırdığını ve birbiriyle savaştığını göstermiştir... Bu nedenle bana göre hem Arnavutluk hem de bütün Makedonya için tek bir seçenek vardır: ya orada Osmanlı hakimiyeti pekiştirilecek ve bugüne kadar saldırdığından daha sağlam kök salacaktır, ya da Osmanlı Devleti bunu başaramayacak zayıflıktaysa, sonunda bu bölgeleri bölüp sürekli bir düzeni sağlayabilecek durumda ve güçte olan devletlerin hakimiyeti altına sokmaktan başka çare kalmayacaktır.”<sup>55</sup>*

Bu değerlendirme alanına hakim tecrübeli öngörülerini oldukça sağlam bir diplomatın somut ve açık şekilde Dışişleri bakanına ve hükümetine yol gösterici, uyarıcı ve önlem alınması yönünde önemli tavsiyeleri içeren bir rapordur.

Pallavicini savaşın başlamasından yaklaşık bir ay önce 5 Eylül 1912 tarihli raporunda Osmanlı hükümetinin Romanya’ya yeni bir elçi

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<sup>55</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

görevlendirmeye hazırlandığını bildirmekte ve durumu değerlendirmektedir;

*“Bay Mischu ayrıca Rus meslektaşımın kısa bir süre önce Babuli'nin Bükreş'te yeniden Osmanlı elçisini görevlendirme niyetinde olduğundan bahsettiğini bildirdi. Duyumlarına göre elçi, Osmanlı Devleti ve Bulgaristan arasında savaşın patlak vermesi durumuna karşın Osmanlı ve Romanya arasında bir anlaşma sağlanmasının yolunu açmakla görevlendirilmiş. Bay Von Giers söz konusu diplomatın böyle bir görev için yeterliliğinden şüphe duyduğunu bildirmiş, ayrıca bahsi geçen olası durumda Bulgaristan ile anlaşmasının Romanya'nın daha çok çıkarına olduğuna inandığını belirtmiş.”<sup>56</sup>*

Osmanlı Hükümetinin Balkanlarda bir savaşı artık her an beklediği anlaşılan bu rapor içeriğinde Romanya ile ittifak kurulması için görevlendirilen Osmanlı elçisinin yeterliliğinin de sorgulandığına dikkat çekilmektedir.

Osmanlı hükümeti Büyük Güçlerin devreye girerek mevcut krizi önleyeceği beklentisinde olduğundan savaşın önleneceğine dair boş bir inanca kapılmış olmakla birlikte savaş ihtimalini de göz önüne alarak Romanya ile bir ittifak arayışına girmiş ancak bu beklenti ilk aşamada karşılık bulamamıştır.

Büyük Güçler savaşı Balkanlarla sınırlandırmak noktasında uzlaştıkları için artık Osmanlı Hükümetinin yapabileceği fazla bir manevra da kalmamıştır. Artık kaderine razı bir ruh hali ile savaşı en az hasarla atlatabilme umuduyla başladığı savaşta ağır bir hezimet ile karşılaşmıştır.

## Sonuç

Habsburg Monarşisi Osmanlı ile en eski ve köklü ilişkileri olan devletlerden biri ve Osmanlı'nın Avrupa'daki en önemli rakiplerinden biri olarak uzun yıllar Osmanlı ile savaş ve barış süreçleri bağlamında diplomatik ilişkiler içinde olmuş, 19.yüzyıla kadar Rusya ile kurduğu ittifaklar yoluyla Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Avrupa'daki topraklarından pay almaya çalışmıştır. 19.yüzyılda değişen Avrupa dengeleri içinde Habsburg hükümetleri Osmanlı Devleti'nin zayıflığından faydalanarak özellikle Balkanlara doğru yayılma stratejisini Alman yenilgisi sonrasında hayata geçirdiler. En önemli

<sup>56</sup> Haus, Hof-und Staatsarchiv Wien Politisches Archive XII Türkei, 1912.

hedef doğal liman kenti olan Selanik idi ve Avusturya Selanik ile Viyana'yı demiryolu ile birbirine bağlayarak bu stratejik hedefine ulaşmak üzere alt yapı çalışmalarına hız vermişti.

Osmanlı-Alman yakınlaşmasının yaşandığı ve Bağdat-Berlin Demiryolu projesinin hayata geçirildiği bir süreçte Makedonya Sorunu'nun uluslararası bir nitelik kazandığı aşamada İstanbul Büyükelçiliğine atanan M.Pallavicini oldukça zor bir dönemde görev yaptığı İstanbul'da özellikle 1908 Bosna ilhak sürecinde yükselen tepkiler ve boykot nedeniyle ciddi diplomatik sorunlarla uğraşmak zorunda kalmışsa da Balkan Savaşı öncesinde Alman ve Rus büyükelçilerin başkente geri çağrılmaları sonrasında kıdemli bir Büyük Güç diplomatı olarak saygı görmüştür. Özellikle Balkan Savaşı öncesindeki raporları ile hükümetine ve bağlı olduğu Dışişleri Bakanına yol göstermeye ve süreçleri doğru aktarmaya çalıştığı hatta zaman zaman hükümet veya bakanın görüşleri ile çelişme pahasına doğru bildiklerini söylemekten çekinmediği dikkate alındığında Pallavicini'nin önemli diplomatik özellikleri ve yetenekleri olduğunu kabul etmek gerekir.

Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sırasında Osmanlı Devletinin Almanya ve Avusturya ile ittifak arayışı ve müttefiklik süreci Pallavicini'nin İstanbul'daki saygınlığını yükseltmiş ve konumunu güçlendirmiştir. Ancak savaşın müttefiklerce kaybedilmesi her iki imparatorluğun sonunu hazırladığı gibi Pallavicini'nin de İstanbul misyonunu sonlandırmıştır.

### Özet:

M. Pallavicini, Makedonya Meselesi'nin uluslararası bir boyut kazandığı bir dönemde İstanbul Büyükelçiliği'ne atanmıştır. Pallavicini, Japonya mağlubiyetinin ardından Rusya'nın dikkatini yeniden Balkanlar'a çevirmeye başladığı ve aynı zamanda Osmanlı-Alman yakınlaşmasının somut bir örneği olan Bağdat-Berlin Demiryolu projesinin hayata geçirildiği bir dönemde göreve başlamıştır. 1908 Bosna ilhakı sürecinde özellikle artan tepkiler ve boykotlar nedeniyle İstanbul'da ciddi diplomatik sorunlarla başa çıkmak zorunda kalmış olmasına rağmen, Alman ve Rus elçilerinin Balkan Savaşı öncesinde ülkelerinin başkentlerine çağrılmalarından sonra da, önde gelen bir Düvel-i Muazzama diplomatı olarak saygı görmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Pallavicini, Balkanlar, Diplomasi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu

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Research Article

## **Shifting Identities as a Strategy to Remain in the Homeland: The Remarkable History of Kurfallı, Eastern Thrace's Last Bulgarian Village**

Elçin Macar\*

### **Abstract:**

The Bulgarians of the village of Kurfallı in Silivri, who had previously survived the aforementioned wave of migration by asserting their identity as Greeks, also survived the 1923 Population Exchange by reaffirming their Bulgarian identity. However, in the 1930s, when it became evident that they could no longer maintain their identity as the sole remaining Bulgarian community in the region, they chose to exchange places with a Turkish village from Bulgaria in 1935. This represented the final instance of population exchange in the Balkans. The paper is primarily based on Turkish archival sources.

**Keywords:** Eastern Thrace, Bulgarians, Greeks, Population Exchange, Kurfallı

Eastern Thrace has a long history of multiculturalism, with a diverse population that has included adherents of various religions and denominations, including Greek, Bulgarian, Turkish, Jewish, Armenian, and Catholic traditions.

The nationalisms that emerged in the Balkans from the 19th century onwards began to influence this region as well. As wars increased and nation-states were established, the pace of migration between them

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accelerated. Consequently, Eastern Thrace lost its multicultural character during the early decades of the 20th century, resulting in the forced displacement of Christians from the region. One such group was the Bulgarian population.

### The Bulgarian Population of Eastern Thrace

In Eastern Thrace, the Bulgarian population was concentrated in several regions. These regions can be classified as the Edirne-Kırklareli, Keşan-Malkara, and Çatalca-Silivri lines. Additionally, there were settlements in the southern reaches of the Sea of Marmara, situated in the proximity to the coastline, which were inhabited by Bulgarians to a lesser extent than in Thrace, too.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the Balkan Wars, there were 78 Bulgarian villages and 34 mixed villages in Eastern Thrace.<sup>2</sup> As documented in the Ottoman census published by Kemal Karpat, the Bulgarian population in the province of Edirne (Edirne center, Tekirdağ, Gelibolu, Kırklareli) was 70,369 between the years 1881/1882 and 1893. Of this population, 34,000 were in Kırklareli, while the remaining 400 were in Lapseki, 1,300 in Hudavendigâr province, and nearly 6,000 in Catalca (Silivri, B. Çekmece, Çatalca center).<sup>3</sup>

As indicated in the 1902 *Edirne Province Yearbook (Salname)*, the total population of the territories currently comprising Thrace in Turkey was 632,515, of whom 79,634 were identified as Bulgarians.<sup>4</sup> After the 1903 Ilinden uprising, it is also known that there was a Bulgarian migration from Eastern Thrace.<sup>5</sup>

In the official Ottoman records, all Orthodox Christians were recorded as part of the Greek *millet*. Consequently, Bulgarian speakers were also considered Greeks by the Ottoman government and were under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, from the latter half of the nineteenth century onward, nationalism also began to rise among the Bulgarians, with their primary objective being the establishment

<sup>1</sup> On Bulgarian settlements in Eastern Thrace see: L. Miletich, *Razorenito na trakiiskite balgari prez 1913 godina*, (Sofia: Darzka vna Pechatnitsa, 1918); Stoyan Rayçevski, *İztoçna Trakya*, (Sofia: Bilgarski Bestseller, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (BCA)-272 12 63 191 1

<sup>3</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)-Demografik ve Sosyal Özellikleri*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2003), 164,188.

<sup>4</sup> Hümmet Kanal, "Salnâmelere Göre 19. Yüzyıl Sonlarında Kırkkilise (Kırklareli) Sancağı," *Journal of History School*, XXVI (June 2016), 157.

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strandzha\\_Commune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strandzha_Commune) (accessed 15 October 2024)

of an independent church.<sup>6</sup> Following the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, a schism arose within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, dividing it into two distinct groups: those who remained under the Exarchate's jurisdiction and those who aligned themselves with the authority of the Patriarchate.<sup>7</sup> As one moved farther from Istanbul, the influence of the Exarchate grew stronger, while the Patriarchate was more powerful in proportion to its proximity to the city.

The Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 and World War I significantly reshaped the demographic landscape of the Balkans. In pursuit of altering population structures deemed undesirable, states undertook swift and decisive measures, employing a variety of methods to achieve their objectives. During the First Balkan War, the Bulgarian Army advanced as far as Çatalca, carrying out punitive campaigns primarily against Muslims and, at times, Greeks. These campaigns involved killings, the burning of homes, and the forced displacement of civilians. Additionally, all Bulgarians living in territories occupied by the Bulgarian Army were brought under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Believing that Bulgaria had gained excessively from the First Balkan War, the other Balkan states, now joined by Romania, declared war against Bulgaria. The favourable circumstances created by this second conflict allowed the Ottoman Army, under the command of Enver Bey, to reclaim Eastern Thrace, including Edirne, on 22 July 1913. This was accomplished by crossing the Midia-Enos line, which had been designated as the border during the London Conference. However, the Balkan Wars and the events that transpired during this period led the Ittihadists to conclude that the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire in its remaining territories could only be assured by the removal of Christians from these regions.<sup>8</sup> The primary targeting of the Bulgarians was likely driven by the desire to remove "unreliable" elements from a narrow area in close proximity to the capital. This area had previously been occupied by the Bulgarian Army, and there was a prevailing fear of its potential return. Additionally, widespread resentment and hostility towards Bulgarians and Bulgaria further fuelled these actions.

The Balkan Wars prompted some of the remaining Muslim populations in the Balkans to seek refuge in the remaining Ottoman territories, driven by the pervasive oppression and massacres they had

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<sup>6</sup> İlber Ortaylı, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Millet," *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, cilt:4, 997.

<sup>7</sup> Dimitris Stamatopoulos, "The Bulgarian Schism Revisited," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, 24/25 (2008-2009), 105-125.

<sup>8</sup>Taner Akçam, *Ermeni Meselesi Hallolunmuştur-Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Savaş Yıllarında Ermenilere Yönelik Politikalar*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), 11.

endured. In this context, the Christian inhabitants of Eastern Thrace also confronted a similar trajectory of violence, oppression, and victimization. Consequently, the Bulgarian population of Eastern Thrace also commenced a rapid exodus from the region beginning in July 1913. The Carnegie Report, which examined the causes and processes of the war immediately following the Balkan Wars and documented war crimes against civilians, also addressed human rights violations by the parties involved, sometimes citing testimonies to substantiate these claims. The Carnegie Report documents the atrocities perpetrated by the Bulgarian army against the Muslim and Greek populations in Eastern Thrace. However, it also reveals that, following the Bulgarian army's withdrawal, the Bulgarian population in Eastern Thrace was subjected to revenge attacks, kidnappings, deaths, injuries, and looting. These acts were only halted after a considerable period of time with the intervention of the consuls of the great powers.<sup>9</sup> During this period, Bulgarian houses in the Kırklareli and Pınarhisar regions, as well as in the Çatalca province, were largely destroyed during the occupation and subsequent retreat of the Bulgarian army. The lands on which these houses once stood were later allocated to Muslim refugees from Bulgaria, who were in need of shelter at the time.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most significant consequences of the Balkan Wars was the rapid transformation of the population structure in Eastern Thrace, which occurred concurrently with the implementation of new policies towards non-Muslims in this region.<sup>11</sup>

The initial exchange agreement to be concluded in the Balkans was the Istanbul Agreement between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, which was signed on September 29, 1913. The agreement provided for the reciprocal relocation of populations from villages situated within 15 kilometers of the border. Notably, prior to the agreement's conclusion, 48,570 Muslims and 46,764 Bulgarians had already migrated.<sup>12</sup> In accordance with Article 9 of this agreement, the Bulgarian population residing outside the designated zone and who had evacuated their residences during the war would be

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<sup>9</sup>*Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914,) 128-129.

<sup>10</sup> BCA-272 12 63 191 1; BOA-HR-İM 63 56 5

<sup>11</sup> For details see: Ryan Gingeras, "A last toehold in Europe: the making of Turkish Thrace, 1922-1923," in *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, eds. M. Hakan Yavuz with Feroz Ahmad, (Salt Lake City; The University of Utah Press, 2016), 371-404; Darko Majstorovic, "The 1913 Ottoman Military Campaign in Eastern Thrace: A Prelude to Genocide?," *Journal of Genocide Research*. 21 (2018), 1-22.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), 15.

entitled to retain their property rights and to return to their homes within a period of two years.<sup>13</sup>

During this period, the Bulgarian villages of Eastern Thrace were largely depopulated, with only a small number of Bulgarians remaining. These individuals were in urban centers such as Edirne and Kırklareli, as well as in villages along the Silivri-Çatalca line. Following the signing of the Armistice of Mudros in 1918, the population saw a slight increase due to the repatriation of Bulgarians to their villages.<sup>14</sup>

### **Bulgarians of Kurfallı Village in Silivri**

In his 1878 book, Synvet asserts that the Silivri region was home to 9,470 Greeks, 500 of whom were bilingual in Bulgarian.<sup>15</sup> Karpat (2000) cites the number of Silivri Bulgarians as 2,804, as recorded in the 1881-1882-1893 census.<sup>16</sup> Soteriadis provides the 1912 population figures for Silivri as 4,920 Muslims and 10,851 Greeks, with no mention of Bulgarians. Additionally, he includes the figures of 873 Armenians, 2,010 Jews, and 230 Gypsies.<sup>17</sup>

It is well-documented that the villages of Sinekli and Cücesergan (now known as Seymen) in the Silivri *kaza* were exclusively inhabited by Bulgarians, while the villages of Akveren and Kurfallı were home to a mixed population of Turks and Bulgarians.<sup>18</sup> Iliev and Penushev suggest that Kurfallı is the oldest Bulgarian settlement in the region.<sup>19</sup> The Bulgarians of Kurfallı also remained part of the Greek *millet*, retaining their affiliation with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1892, the village was home to 50 Orthodox families and a school dedicated to Saints Constantine and Helen, which had 30 students enrolled.<sup>20</sup> An examination of the Ottoman archives reveals that an application was submitted for the

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<sup>13</sup> Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, "Negotiations and Agreements for Population Transfers in the Balkans from the Beginning of the 19th Century until the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies*, year 1, issue 1, (Fall 2018), 66.

<sup>14</sup> Bilal Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları-1 (1922-1923)*, (Ankara: TTK, 1990), 466.

<sup>15</sup> A. Synvet, *Les Grecs de L'Empire Ottoman etude statistique et ethnographique*, (Constantinople: 1878), 13.

<sup>16</sup> Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu* 170

<sup>17</sup> George Soteriadis, *An Ethological map illustrating Hellenism in the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor*, (London: Edward Stanford, 1918), 6.

<sup>18</sup> BCA-272 12 63 191 1

<sup>19</sup>

<https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D1%83%D1%80%D1%84%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8> (accessed 10 October 2024)

<sup>20</sup> Evstratiou I. Drakou, *Ta Thrakika*, (Atina, 1892), 26.

extension and reconstruction of the Bulgarian school, which was likely destroyed in the 1894 earthquake.<sup>21</sup>

On November 5, 1903, the Ministry of the Interior issued a missive to the *Mutasarrıflık* (county) of Çatalca. It reminded officials of the requirement to register non-Muslims separately by community, as stipulated in the second article of the recently enacted population regulation. If residents of Kurfalı, despite belonging to the Greek community, wished to transfer their records, their requests were to be fulfilled.<sup>22</sup>

The ongoing rivalry between the Patriarchate and the Exarchate manifested in this region as well. In 1907, two men were apprehended in Kurfalı. It was believed that they were involved in spreading Bulgarian propaganda by distributing documents from Bulgarian committees.<sup>23</sup>

It is evident that the antagonism and abduction activities that commenced in 1913 against Bulgarians in Eastern Thrace were also directed against the Bulgarians of the Silivri and Çatalca region, which had not been occupied by Bulgarians, in 1914. In a communication dated May 26, 1914, the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Ministry of the Interior that the Bulgarian Embassy in Istanbul had reported that the village of Kurfalı consisted of 150 households, 35 of which were Muslim. Additionally, 40 Bulgarian households had emigrated to Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War, while the remaining Bulgarian families continued to live in the area peacefully. However, after Easter, a group of bandits raided the village at night, breaking into Bulgarian homes and warehouses. They stole wheat, flour, clothing, and other valuables, as well as livestock, including 2,000 sheep. On the day before Easter, the bandits looted a shop owned by a Bulgarian named Athanas Rusef, taking goods worth more than 40 liras. When the Bulgarians protested, they were told they were free to leave the village. The village teacher reported that Bulgarians were pressured to depart quietly and that gendarmes, who were only present during the day, denied the existence of bandits when complaints were made. Furthermore, he claimed that when Bulgarians expressed a desire to leave the village, they were asked to sign documents confirming their voluntary departure, with some allegedly being coerced into signing. The report stated that 40 Bulgarian families fled to Sinekli train station, carrying only what they could manage on their backs. A railway official, recognizing

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<sup>21</sup> BOA-BEO 539 40405

<sup>22</sup>BOA-DH-MKT 794 3

<sup>23</sup>BOA-Y.PRK.ASK 246 105

them as former employees, placed them in open wagons to protect them from further theft. About 30 families later moved to Silivri and Tekirdağ, hoping to reach Istanbul, but their subsequent whereabouts remained unknown. The Bulgarian Embassy emphasized that these actions violated the Istanbul Agreement between the two countries and warned of the risk of Bulgaria adopting a retaliatory stance. The situation demanded immediate and decisive action to prevent further escalation.<sup>24</sup>

On May 31, 1914, the Bulgarian Embassy reiterated its concerns. The Embassy reported that the District Governor of Silivri, upon learning of the Bulgarians' departure from Kurfallı, visited Sinekli Station and urged them to return to their villages, assuring them of their safety. Subsequently, he proceeded to Silivri, where he conveyed the same message to the Bulgarian refugees who had sought refuge there. The Bulgarians were subsequently compelled to return to their villages, only to discover that the personal effects they had left behind in their homes had been plundered by the Muslim population. As a result of the Bulgarians reporting the circumstances of their homes and belongings to the Silivri officers upon request, the Muslims subjected them to severe extortion, making it impossible for them to remain in the village. For instance, Nikola Todorov was physically assaulted and intimidated, compelling him to evacuate the area with his children. The Muslim forces initiated an assault on the female population, specifically targeting young girls and women. They conducted searches of the residences of Aleksandra Kostantinova, a twenty-year-old girl, and six other girls, with the intention of forcibly relocating them to the mountains for conversion. Upon realizing that the officials had failed to fulfill their commitments, the Kurfallı Bulgarians reached the conclusion that they could no longer continue residing in their villages and opted instead to migrate to Bulgaria. However, local officials impeded their departure and directed all stations to refrain from accepting their belongings. The officials prohibited the Bulgarians from departing unless they obtained a certificate from the Greek Metropolitan of Silivri, Evgenios (Papathomas). Concurrently, the Bulgarians' fields were being appropriated or their crops were being harvested by foreigners. The Embassy lodged a protest against these developments and requested the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue a directive to the relevant officials, instructing them to refrain from impeding the departure of Bulgarians who were compelled to leave their place of birth. Additionally, the Bulgarian Embassy raised the case of ten Bulgarian families in

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<sup>24</sup> BOA-HR-SYS 2073 6



Boğazköy (Çatalca), who were prevented from migrating with their livestock, urging that no further obstacles be placed in their path.<sup>25</sup>

### **“We Are Greeks, Not Bulgarians”**

Upon receiving these complaints from the Bulgarian Embassy in Istanbul, the Ministry of Interior, the Gendarmerie, and the Silivri District Governor's Office initiated an investigation. In order to fulfill this objective, the officials proceeded to Kurfalı, conducted inquiries, and compiled a report dated June 17, 1914. The report indicates that, when the Bulgarian *mukhtar* of the village, the council of elders, and the villagers were assembled in a suitable location and questioned, it was ascertained that approximately 30 households from the village proceeded to Sinekli station and loaded their belongings onto wagons. Furthermore, the report indicated that the loaded belongings were not unloaded by anyone in any way. It also stated that the Bulgarians returned to their villages only after the Metropolitan of Silivri personally came to Sinekli station and instructed them to unload their belongings, which had been loaded onto wagons, and return to their villages until the evening. It was established that some of their belongings were left with Muslim neighbors in their villages on the condition that they would be sold and returned upon their return. The investigation further concluded that no threats or intimidation had been directed at the Bulgarians. The claim that Nikola, son of Todori, was beaten and forced to flee, leaving his children behind, was also dismissed. Nikola informed Nikolaki, son of Yordan, and others that he was traveling to Istanbul to visit his son Todori and had not yet returned. His family remained in the village and allegedly faced no pressure. The claim that individuals in the village were seeking Bulgarian girls to take to the mountains and convert them to Islam was also found to be untrue. This assertion was refuted by the *mukhtar*, the council of elders, and the entire village. In regard to the assertion that they were obstructed from applying for immigration and that directives were issued to refrain from accepting Bulgarian passengers at the stations, understood that no such directive was provided during the investigation. It was determined that no Bulgarian intending to emigrate had applied to the Greek Metropolitan for documentation. Instead, they had declared themselves to be "not Bulgarians, but members of the Greek *millet*." This information was read aloud in the presence of the gathered parties and was formally signed and sealed by the commanding officers of the gendarmerie and police station, along with the *mukhtar*, members of the council of elders, and other notable

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<sup>25</sup> BOA-HR-SYS 2073 7

figures.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the Bulgarians of Kurfallı sought to evade the policy against Bulgarians by asserting their Greek identity in official records.

During this period, Bulgarian diplomatic correspondence with the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs contained both overt and subtle threats. These communications warned that policies targeting Bulgarians and the hardships imposed on them could strain diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria and jeopardize the welfare of the Muslim population living in Bulgaria. Notably, the number of complaints decreased after the outbreak of World War I and the subsequent alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria.

In consequence of the Ottoman Empire's military defeat, the Armistice of Mudros was concluded on October 30, 1918. During this period, the region was placed under the control of the Entente powers, and in 1920, the Greek army occupied Eastern Thrace. As a result, some Bulgarians returned to their villages. A letter dated October 19, 1920, from the *Mutasarrıflık* of Çatalca to the Ministry of Interior indicates that during the occupation of Eastern Thrace by the Greek army, the villages of Akviran, Bekirli, Kurfallı, and Sinekli in Silivri kaza remained outside the occupation. As these villages were situated on the border, the second copy of the population books, which should have been in the possession of the villages in question, was examined. The new *mukhtar* reported that the second copy book had either not been provided to the Greek quarter of Kurfallı village or had gone missing. Consequently, a re-census of the Greek quarter, which had a current population of approximately 450, was deemed necessary. This decision was made in line with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Justice on May 10, 1917. The census was to be carried out by a commission formed in accordance with the relevant directive.<sup>27</sup>

By the fall of 1922, following the defeat of the Greek army in Anatolia, the Mudanya Armistice was signed on October 11, 1922. Under its terms, the Greek army was required to evacuate Eastern Thrace within fifteen days. This decision instilled great fear among the Greek population of Eastern Thrace, prompting many to migrate to Greece alongside the retreating Greek army. As the Lausanne Conference approached, discussions intensified about the possibility of a population exchange between Muslims in Greece and Greeks in Turkey.

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<sup>26</sup> BOA-HR-SYS 2073 7

<sup>27</sup>BOA-DH-SN THR 87 37

In 1913, Exarch Iosif relocated from Istanbul to Sofia, leaving Metropolitan Meleti (Veleshki) as his deputy in Istanbul. A document dated November 20, 1922, addressed to the Vilayet of Istanbul, indicates that the Bulgarian Metropolitan in Istanbul sought to have the inhabitants of the Kurfalı village incorporated into the metropolitanate on the grounds that they were Bulgarians.<sup>28</sup>

In a written communication dated April 5, 1923, the Bulgarian delegate in Istanbul, General Markov, articulated his concerns following a meeting with Adnan Bey, the Ankara Government's representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Istanbul. Metropolitan Meleti had appointed Zhelyu Ivanov as a teacher at the Kurfalı school, and he had assumed his duties in November 1922. However, the school was subsequently closed a few months later. Similarly, Priest Stefan, who visited the village for Christmas, was forced to leave within 24 hours, leaving the village without a priest. Plans to send another priest for Easter were abandoned due to expectations of similar circumstances. On March 15, two soldiers from the 4th Regiment entered Panayot Dimitrov's house, causing distress to his wife and children by firing their weapons indiscriminately. Villagers were unable to farm due to fears of attacks and were compelled to perform daily tasks, feed soldiers without compensation, and grant them access to their homes. On March 28, two horses were stolen from Nikola Petrov's stable. Although a complaint was filed with the local gendarmerie, it was ignored, and the horses mysteriously reappeared in the stable days later. Two unidentified individuals tied Georgi Rachev to a tree while he was traveling to a neighboring municipality, seizing his horses and carriage. On March 21, a 15-year-old farm worker tending oxen in Apostol Nikolov's field was shot and injured, the oxen were stolen, and the youth was sent to a hospital in Istanbul. Markov reported these incidents in detail, emphasizing that the mukhtar and the council of elders were fully aware of the Bulgarian assistance provided to the Turks during the Greek occupation.<sup>29</sup>

In a letter dated July 1, 1923, the *Mutasarrif* (sub-governor) of Çatalca wrote to Adnan Bey, the representative of the Ankara Government in Istanbul. He stated that the village of Kurfalı had been Bulgarian before the Balkan War, Greek Orthodox after the Balkan War due to the exchange of Bulgarians, and that following the decision in Lausanne that Greeks would be subjected to the exchange, the villagers wanted to convert to the Bulgarian sect just to avoid the exchange. The Bulgarian Metropolitan had assigned a permanent priest to the village. The *Mutasarrif* stated that

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<sup>28</sup>BOA-HR-İM 62 62

<sup>29</sup> BOA-HR-İM 70 86

individuals were free to choose their religion or sect, but he himself was uncertain about how to handle such matters. Seeking clarity, he requested guidance from the Ministry of Justice. In response, he was informed via telegram that the issue had been discussed by the Council of Ministers, which decided to postpone establishing official relations with local clerics and religious bodies until after the peace conference. It was deemed premature to take any action at that time. During Colonel Esad Bey's tenure as acting Governor of Constantinople, he unofficially permitted the Metropolitan to send a provisional priest to Kurfallı for Easter. The priest conducted services and returned after the holiday. Later, for another religious feast, the Metropolitan dispatched the same priest, who went directly to the village and began the service. When the gendarmerie inquired about his documents and the purpose of his visit, the priest claimed to have official papers. These documents were collected and forwarded to the relevant authorities, but by then, the feast had ended, and the priest had already departed.<sup>30</sup>

### Population Exchange between Turkey and Greece

On January 30, 1923, the Lausanne Conference reached a decision regarding the exchange of Muslims in Greece and Greeks in Turkey.<sup>31</sup> On March 13, 1924, following the commencement of the population exchange, the Bulgarian delegation submitted a formal request to the Istanbul Representative Office of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This request asserted that the Christians residing in the village of Kurfallı were originally Bulgarian and should not be subjected to the exchange.<sup>32</sup> However, in the official correspondence of the Turkish bureaucracy, it was explicitly stated that the involvement of a representative office in such a matter, which was considered a domestic issue, was not welcomed.<sup>33</sup> In a strongly worded statement issued on May 21, the Bulgarian government cautioned that exchanging the people of Kurfallı with Greece, a nation with which they shared minimal cultural or historical ties, would deeply harm the Bulgarian population.<sup>34</sup> Once again, no response was received from the Turkish side. Consequently, on May 24, the Bulgarian delegation submitted another application to the Turkish authorities. The application detailed that the inhabitants of Kurfallı were of Bulgarian origin and spoke Bulgarian. It was revealed that, in recent days, Turkish refugees arriving in the area had

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<sup>30</sup>BOA-HR-İM 51-13

<sup>31</sup> For details see: Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*

<sup>32</sup> BOA-HR-İM 4 18

<sup>33</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi- 15104548

<sup>34</sup> BOA-HR-İM 4 18

forced the Bulgarians to vacate their homes, which were then occupied by the refugees without any intervention from the authorities. As a result, the Bulgarians were left homeless. Highlighting the Turkish government's purported "positive attitude towards this linguistic and ethnic group," the Bulgarian delegation expressed its expectation that the Turkish authorities would take immediate action to protect the residents of Kurfallı. Additionally, it was stressed that relocating the villagers to Greece, a country with which they had no meaningful connection, would likely lead to significant dissatisfaction among the Bulgarian public.<sup>35</sup>

In a letter dated May 31, 1924, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to the Bulgarian Representative's correspondence from May 21, 1924. The representative had alleged that Bulgarians in the village of Kurfallı had been evicted from their homes and replaced by Turkish immigrants from Greece. The Ministry countered that the information it had received did not substantiate these complaints. On the contrary, it claimed that individuals who had previously identified as Greeks during the census were now asserting Bulgarian identity to avoid inclusion in the population exchange. The Ministry concluded that no further explanation was owed to the Bulgarian Representative and advised him to refrain from submitting such applications.<sup>36</sup>

A letter from the Ministry of Exchange, Reconstruction, and Settlement to the Prime Ministry in early June revealed that the residents of Kurfallı were slated for transfer under the population exchange. However, the villagers had applied for exemption, claiming Bulgarian identity. Consequently, the Çatalca Province was tasked with providing clarification on the matter. If the villagers were indeed Bulgarians, excluding them from the exchange with Greece would have been reasonable. However, the situation was complicated by the unimplemented provisions of the 1913 Istanbul Agreement, which addressed the exchange of Bulgarians in Eastern Thrace. This left unresolved the status of Turkish citizens of Bulgarian descent and Orthodox Bulgarian citizens residing in Thrace. Recognizing the bureaucratic impasse, the Council of Ministers issued a decree on June 18, 1924. It instructed the relevant ministries to investigate further. Should it be confirmed that the individuals were of Greek Orthodox descent and therefore subject to the exchange, or of

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<sup>35</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi -11784517

<sup>36</sup>BOA-HR-İM 106 19

Bulgarian descent, albeit unlikely, no immediate action would be taken, and their status as citizens would remain unchanged.<sup>37</sup>

### **“We Are Bulgarians, Not Greeks”**

On June 21, 1924, a telegram was dispatched to the Ministry of the Interior, signed by Athanas Rusev, the village's *mukhtar*:

*“Despite the fact that the Christian inhabitants of the village of Kurfalı in Çatalca are originally Bulgarian, the Subcommission of Population Exchange has recognized them as Bulgarians. However, the Governor of Çatalca is settling refugees in their households and distributing their crops on the pretext that they were previously affiliated with the Patriarchate and registered as Greeks in the population records. Our previous affiliation with the Patriarchate and our registration as Greeks in the population records had no bearing on our Bulgarian identity. The testimony of all the Turks in the region corroborates the assertion that we have consistently identified as Bulgarians. The prospect of resettlement in Greece would have placed us at significant risk of exploitation and potential mortality. In light of the probable expulsion from Greece, I respectfully request that the relevant authorities issue directives in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy. This would ensure our continued protection under the Turkish state and enable us to remain in our village, while allowing us to retrieve our crops.”<sup>38</sup>*

In a document dated June 22, 1924, the Bulgarian representative Radev reported that approximately 20 Bulgarian households in Kurfalı had been designated for exchange the following day. This decision was based on their registration as Greeks in the population register. Furthermore, even if they were accepted by Greece, their lack of proficiency in the Greek language would prevent them from settling there. As a result, they were likely to be deported to a remote, barren island or to Bulgaria. Radev made a special and humanitarian request for these Bulgarians to be temporarily exempted from the exchange, allowing them to emigrate to Bulgaria at a later date. In light of the ongoing negotiations with Bulgaria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its approval of the request and accordingly requested immediate instructions via telegraph to be conveyed to the relevant parties.<sup>39</sup> At this juncture, the Bulgarian Metropolitan in Istanbul was issuing testimonial certificates to these individuals and attempting to persuade them to relocate to Bulgaria. As a result of the aforementioned circumstances, the Ministry of the Interior directed the provincial

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<sup>37</sup> BCA- 30 18 1 1 10 30 19

<sup>38</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11784515

<sup>39</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi -11784510

authorities in Çatalca to defer the scheduled exchange of Bulgarians.<sup>40</sup> This directive was anticipated and received favorably by the Bulgarian Government. The following information was published in the newspaper *Demokratičeski Sgovor*, which was considered the official organ of the government:

*“The resolution of the issue pertaining to the status of the Bulgarian population in Turkish Thrace represents a pivotal point of contention in the ongoing Turkish-Bulgarian negotiations. The Ankara government's decision to refrain from disturbing the Bulgarian inhabitants of Kurfalı, who were compelled by local authorities to emigrate to Greece on the grounds that they were documented as pro-Patriarchate and therefore Greek, is a welcome development. These individuals should be allowed to reside in their original locations without further disruption.”*<sup>41</sup>

Subsequently, following the issuance of the decree on June 18, an effort was made to ascertain the nationality of these individuals, specifically whether they were of Greek or Bulgarian origin. On July 21, 1924, the Çatalca Province responded to a request from the Ministry of the Interior, stating that, based on research conducted by the General Directorate of Population, the entire Christian population of Kurfalı, which totaled 433 individuals (217 men and 216 women), had been registered as Greek Orthodox in both the 1906 and 1914 censuses. Consequently, the original population records had been destroyed by Bulgarian forces during the Balkan War.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, as evidenced by a letter penned by the Governor of Çatalca on July 22, 1924, when the exchange of Greeks was in discussion at the Lausanne Conference, the Bulgarians of Kurfalı had a Bulgarian priest and a teacher brought to their village. Upon seeking approval for these individuals, the Governor declined, prompting the priest's return to Istanbul. The Bulgarian Metropolitan in Istanbul sought to become involved in the matter and was urged by the Istanbul Police Directorate to refrain from further communication, given that the government did not recognize his spiritual authority. Subsequently, the Bulgarian delegation interceded on the matter. The governor perceived the underlying objective of this intervention to be the establishment of a Bulgarian presence in the Edirne and Çatalca region, with the aim of securing a competitive advantage in Thrace in the future and reactivating the Thracian Committee's operations in Bulgaria. The governor held the view that,

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<sup>40</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11773954

<sup>41</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11773923

<sup>42</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11773905

irrespective of their background, the Christians of Kurfallı were, according to official records, Greek Orthodox and therefore should be subjected to exchange without delay and the country cleansed of such individuals.<sup>43</sup>

However, the circumstances were not conducive to the Governor's request. In a letter dated September 10, 1924, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that negotiations for the signing of a friendship treaty with Bulgaria were still ongoing. The Ministry further stated that the implementation of the decision on the aforementioned persons at this time might have a detrimental effect on the negotiations and that it would be more appropriate to postpone the implementation of this decision until the end of the ongoing negotiations with Bulgaria. Also, the Ministry of Exchange, Reconstruction and Settlement petitioned the Council of Ministers to render a decision on this matter.<sup>44</sup>

Server Cemal (Balısoy), the undersecretary of the embassy in Sofia, transmitted to Ankara that the *Utro* newspaper reported on September 26, 1924, that the Governor of Çatalca had summoned the prominent Bulgarians living in the village of Kurfallı and the priest of the village. The Governor had informed them that the Bulgarians of Kurfallı were guests in the village and that they would soon have to leave. This pronouncement gave rise to considerable apprehension even among the Turkish population in Bulgaria. In light of these developments, the Bulgarian government sought to engage with the Turkish government to ensure the continued presence of Bulgarians in their homes.<sup>45</sup> On October 9, 1924, Server Cemal was duly apprised of the findings of the research via a written communication. The research revealed that the Christian population of Kurfallı village was of the Greek Orthodox faith and that they should be transferred to Greece, in accordance with the terms of the exchange, along with other Greeks. The transfer of the Christians of Kurfallı village to Greece had been postponed at the request of the Bulgarian representative Simeon Radev during the negotiations for a Turkish-Bulgarian friendship treaty. However, the Turkish bureaucracy now had a new concern. Given the imminent conclusion of the exchange with Greece and the likelihood that the transfer of these individuals would not be accepted by Greece even if attempted after its conclusion, it was deemed necessary for the Bulgarian government to make a commitment in advance to accept them with its consent and without objection if an attempt were made to send them from Turkey at a later date. It was imperative to convey to the Bulgarian

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<sup>43</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11773905

<sup>44</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11687653

<sup>45</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi -11692103



government that this obligation had to be fulfilled before the conclusion of the exchange with Greece and within a limited timeframe.<sup>46</sup>

The Minister of Exchange, Reconstruction and Settlement reiterated the necessity of transferring the Christians of Kurfallı, irrespective of their claims, given that their population records indicated they were Greek Orthodox. In a letter dated October 8, 1924, the Ministry of the Interior advised maintaining the status quo until the conclusion of negotiations with Bulgaria.<sup>47</sup> In a written statement, the Legal Advisor of the Ministry of Interior expressed the following opinion: It was demonstrated that the majority of the individuals in question were registered as Greek Orthodox, with some residing in the Greek neighborhood. Additionally, it was noted that a few of them had been identified as Bulgarians for an extended period. Therefore, during the exchange process, those registered as Greek should have been immediately subjected to exchange, while the others should have been exchanged as soon as their Greek descent was confirmed.<sup>48</sup>

In June 1925, the Mixed Exchange Commission was duly informed that the Kurfallı Christians, who had previously claimed Bulgarian identity to be excluded from the exchange, were in fact Orthodox and Greek, affiliated with the Patriarchate. A response from the commission was anticipated regarding this matter.<sup>49</sup> In a document dated June 15, 1925, it was stated that this matter had been discussed with the head of the Greek delegation of the commission, that they would provide assistance in this matter, that the Turkish side would not demand the admission of the individuals in question to the Greek side, that the decision that they were subject to exchange would be sufficient, that upon such a decision they would all spontaneously flee to Bulgaria, that "this situation should be kept very secret" and that it could only be discussed with the head of the Greek delegation.<sup>50</sup> By October 1, 1925, the Christians of Kurfallı were potentially eligible for transfer to Greece, and the relevant authorities were duly informed of this development.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> TC. Dışışleri Bakanlıđı Arşivi - 11692085

<sup>47</sup> TC. Dışışleri Bakanlıđı Arşivi - 11692092

<sup>48</sup> TC. Dışışleri Bakanlıđı Arşivi - 11773860

<sup>49</sup> BCA-30 10 123 877 18 1

<sup>50</sup> TC. Dışışleri Bakanlıđı Arşivi -11687659

<sup>51</sup>TC. Dışışleri Bakanlıđı Arşivi - 11687664

### The Bulgarians Stay

In early 1926, Bulgarian Prime Minister Lyapchev informed the Turkish ambassador to Sofia that maintaining cordial relations with Turkey was in Bulgaria's best interest. He also conveyed that Bulgaria had already begun implementing the provisions of the agreement and expressed hope that the Bulgarians of Kurfallı and Terkos would not be expelled from Turkey. On February 28, 1926, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs relayed this information to the Ministry of the Interior, requesting that the impending ratification of the friendship agreement be taken into account and that the aforementioned requests be fulfilled.<sup>52</sup>

On March 18, 1926, Simeon Radev, the Bulgarian Mission's Chargé d'Affaires, visited the Istanbul Representative Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and requested that the requisite license for the opening of the Bulgarian primary school in the village of Kurfallı be granted with minimal delay, as he had been assured that the school would be permitted to commence operations.<sup>53</sup> In the absence of a response, the Bulgarian delegation reiterated its request to open the school on April 29, 1926. However, the Çatalca Province stated that out of the total population of 778 in the village, 391 were registered as Muslims and 396 as Greeks. Furthermore, no individuals were registered as "Bulgarian" in the village. The population registry indicated that those who desired to open the school were Greeks. Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied the request to open a school under the name "Bulgarian School." In light of these considerations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a negative response on May 26, 1926.<sup>54</sup> The village's ongoing challenge of lacking a permanent priest persisted, too. In a request dated November 3, 1926, the Istanbul Representative Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested that the Istanbul Province issue orders to relevant authorities to permit Bulgarian priest Stefan Dashkov to visit the village, as it was a Bulgarian feast for four days.<sup>55</sup>

In a letter dated May 14, 1927, Hüsrev (Gerede), the Turkish Minister in Sofia, expressed his reservations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the implementation of Article C of the attached protocol to the 1925 Turkish-Bulgarian friendship treaty. This article stipulated that both governments would mutually acquire the immovable property left behind by Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace who had abandoned their homes after

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<sup>52</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi - 11333338

<sup>53</sup>BOA-HR-İM 180 17; HR-İM 185 79

<sup>54</sup>BOA-HR-İM 188 64

<sup>55</sup>BOA-HR-İM 203 30

October 18, 1912, as well as by Muslims who had migrated to Turkey from territories that had separated from the Ottoman Empire. The Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that Turkey was forcing Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace, who had migrated to Bulgaria after October 18, 1912, to leave the country and was confiscating their land. The Bulgarians of Kurfallı village were cited as a key example. Gerede sought clarification from the ministry and cautioned against the potential consequences of interpreting and applying this article in such a manner:

*“In light of this interpretation of Article C, while it is not possible to estimate the quantity of property belonging to Bulgarians that will be confiscated by the government in our country, it seems reasonable to conclude that the total will not be significant. Conversely, it is anticipated that the confiscation of land belonging to thousands of Muslims in the proposed Bulgaria will result in the displacement of approximately twenty to thirty thousand individuals. These individuals, who have made strides towards improving their livelihoods, will be compelled to leave Bulgaria as a consequence of the aforementioned confiscation.”<sup>56</sup>*

As reported by the Embassy in Sofia on March 2, 1928, the Bulgarian newspaper *Posledna Pošta*, in its issue of February 27, 1928, highlighted efforts to protect the cultural rights of Bulgarians residing in Eastern Thrace. The report explained that the only remaining Bulgarian school in the village of Kurfallı had initially been allowed to open but was later closed due to a lack of financial resources. The church faced a similar fate. The newspaper argued that it was inconceivable for Bulgarian schools and churches in Turkey to receive support from the Turkish government, especially given that M. Kemal had not extended assistance to the muftis. In contrast, the Bulgarian government had allocated a significant sum of money to support the mufti offices and Turkish schools.<sup>57</sup>

In 1928, a number of families from the Kurfallı relocated to Istanbul and Bulgaria, primarily due to concerns regarding the availability and quality of educational opportunities.

From 1930 onward, the Bulgarian press showed a marked increase in its focus on Kurfallı, reporting on negative developments in the village. It was claimed that the village church had been closed, Bulgarian girls had been abducted by Turks and forced to convert, Bulgarians had been coerced into attending mosque services, and their lands had been confiscated. In response, the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper countered the Bulgarian press reports,

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<sup>56</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi -10334260

<sup>57</sup> TC. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi -7527586

stating that on-site investigations had been conducted and that none of the allegations were substantiated.<sup>58</sup>

In 1932, a census was conducted in Kurfallı, which revealed that there were approximately 400 Bulgarians residing in the area.<sup>59</sup> In his address to the Bulgarian parliament in 1932, Bulgarian Prime Minister Mushanov asserted that between 1925 and 1931, there was no interest in Bulgarian property in Turkey. He further stated that the property around Edirne was occupied by the Turks, with the exception of the village of Kurfallı, which had a population of 100 households. Additionally, he highlighted a discrepancy in the interpretation of the 1925 protocol and noted the formation of commissions to address these issues following his visit to Ankara.<sup>60</sup> By 1933, there were also reports indicating that the village was without a priest.<sup>61</sup> The *Ataka* newspaper reported that the Bulgarians of Kurfallı had been offended on religious grounds. The liturgy had been performed by a Muslim *Hoca* instead of a priest.<sup>62</sup>

### The Last Population Exchange

However, the Bulgarians' concerns extended beyond the academic and religious spheres. Additionally, they had other concerns regarding their future prospects. The issue of whom to marry began to emerge due to the fact that individuals were related to one another. The demographic shift resulted in the formation of new familial relationships, with boys and girls becoming each other's cousins. Orthodox beliefs, however, prohibited marriages between cousins. Furthermore, there were no longer any Bulgarians residing in the villages of Çatalca and Terkos. Young men from the village traveled to Bulgaria in search of brides and did not return, leading the village to gradually become a predominantly female settlement. This situation prompted the Bulgarian population to consider emigration as a viable option. Upon submitting their request to the Turkish government, it was acknowledged and subsequently referred to the Bulgarian government. In response, the Bulgarian government inquired with 700 Turkish villages to determine which would be interested in relocating to Turkey.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Çatalca havalisinde hiçbir Bulgara haksızlık yapılmamıştır," *Cumhuriyet*, 30 June 1930

<sup>59</sup> BCA-272 11 25 134 11

<sup>60</sup> "Türkiye-Bulgaristan münasebatı yeni bir safhaya girdi," *Milliyet*, 25 November 1932

<sup>61</sup> "Trakya gazetesine gelince," *Son Posta*, 30 September 1933

<sup>62</sup> BCA-30 10 241 629 7

<sup>63</sup> "Turkish Peasants Exchange Village with Bulgarians", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 July 1935

In a letter dated January 14, 1934, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Prime Ministry that during the negotiations between the two governments in January 1934, the Bulgarians of Kurfallı first proposed an exchange with 3-4 thousand Muslims in Bulgarian Macedonia.<sup>64</sup>

Meanwhile, 52 Turkish families residing in the village of Kediören (Rosina) in the Popova district of Bulgaria, intending to migrate to Turkey, contacted Bulgarians in the village of Kurfallı in Silivri and proposed a property exchange. As reported by Bulgarian consul Vanchev, the villagers proceeded to their respective destinations, prepared a list of properties, and attempted to negotiate a resolution among themselves.<sup>65</sup> However, there were also individuals who expressed a desire to remain in their current location. The head of a family from the village stated that he was firmly opposed to being relocated to Bulgaria and would only consider going to Romania if the government compelled him to do so.<sup>66</sup>

The decision regarding mutual migration was reached during the summer of 1934, when the Bulgarian ambassador, Antonov, met with the Turkish Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü. The Bulgarian government agreed to facilitate the transportation of Turkish nationals' belongings by rail at no cost, on the condition that the same provision would be extended to Bulgarian citizens residing in Turkey. Both governments also concurred on the issuance of temporary passports to the emigrants at no charge.<sup>67</sup> To achieve this objective, the Turkish government enacted a decree by the Council of Ministers on February 16, 1935. As a result, it was resolved that the costs incurred by the Bulgarians would be covered by the budgetary allocation for refugees, while the expenses related to the resettlement of incoming Turks would be financed through the Ministry of the Interior's designated budget. Additionally, free passports would be issued to the Bulgarians, and, due to the exchange of real estate among them, a general power of attorney would be provided to an official for the registration of properties in the land registry. Notably, the Ministry of Finance cited the 1934 Settlement Law (No. 2510) as the legal basis for exempting Bulgarian nationals from passport and visa fees. This legislation, which remains in force, grants the Minister of the Interior the authority to take action against individuals considered outside Turkish cultural norms, including the

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<sup>64</sup> BCA-30 10 242 632 5

<sup>65</sup> "Eski başbakan nezaret altında, 60 kişi mevkuf", *Cumhuriyet*, 24 January 1935

<sup>66</sup> "Mübadele edilecek 2 köy", *Cumhuriyet*, 28 March 1935

<sup>67</sup> BCA-30 18 1 2 51 10 9

potential for denaturalization.<sup>68</sup> Now, the Silivri District Governor is responsible for overseeing the process and ensuring its proper progression.

On April 15, 1935, the final exchange took place, completed within a single day. A total of 271 Bulgarians departed for Bulgaria, while 366 Turks arrived in Turkey. The individuals involved traveled on the designated train, accompanied by a property inspector and security personnel, and arrived at the respective railway stations as planned.<sup>69</sup> It was agreed that the residents of both villages would transfer their properties to the respective governments. In return, the governments would issue promissory notes to the residents, which would be offset against the properties they were to receive.<sup>70</sup> A designated government official was tasked with overseeing the transfer of properties that had been bequeathed to the immigrants in the title deed. Upon arrival, the immigrants brought with them 105 heads of livestock, including 12 pairs of horses, 32 pairs of oxen, and cows.<sup>71</sup> In his book *Silivri Tarihi* (History of Silivri), Cemal Kozanoğlu posits that a small number of families remained in the village.<sup>72</sup>

### Conclusion

During their time within the Greek *millet* of the Ottoman state, the rise of the Bulgarian Exarchate and the growth of Bulgarian nationalism placed the Bulgarian-speaking Orthodox population in a difficult position, caught between two opposing forces. The rivalry between the Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate intensified, prompting some Bulgarians to align with one side and others with the other. Following the Balkan Wars, anti-Bulgarian sentiment in the Ottoman public reached such a level that it displaced the Bulgarians of Eastern Thrace. In this context, the assertion "we are Greeks, not Bulgarians" became a practical strategy among the Bulgarian population in villages around Çatalca and Silivri, which had not been occupied by Bulgarians during the war, such as the Bulgarians of Kurfalli, as they were officially registered as Greeks in the population registers. However, a decade later (1923), when the exchange of Greeks was being discussed, they were forced to assert their Bulgarian identity. The changing dynamics of Turkish-Bulgarian relations allowed them to maintain this position for another ten years, enabling them to stay in their

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<sup>68</sup> BCA-30 18 1 2 51 10 9

<sup>69</sup> "İki Türk ve Bulgar köyü mübadele edildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 16 April 1935; "Barter 104 families," *The Portsmouth Herald*, 4 April 1935; "Bulgaria, Turkey trade 52 families," *Des Moines Tribune*, 3 April 1935

<sup>70</sup> "Mübadele edilecek köylülerin malları," *Cumhuriyet*, 25 March 1935

<sup>71</sup> "Göçmenler anavatana hizmete geldik diyor," *Akşam*, 18 April 1935

<sup>72</sup> Cemal Kozanoğlu, *Her Yönüyle Silivri*, (Silivri: Silivri Belediyesi Kültür Evi, ty), 158.

homeland. However, the diminishing Christian presence in the area made it increasingly difficult for the community to survive. In response, the Bulgarians of Kurfalı devised a solution in the form of a mutual exchange with a Turkish village in Bulgaria.

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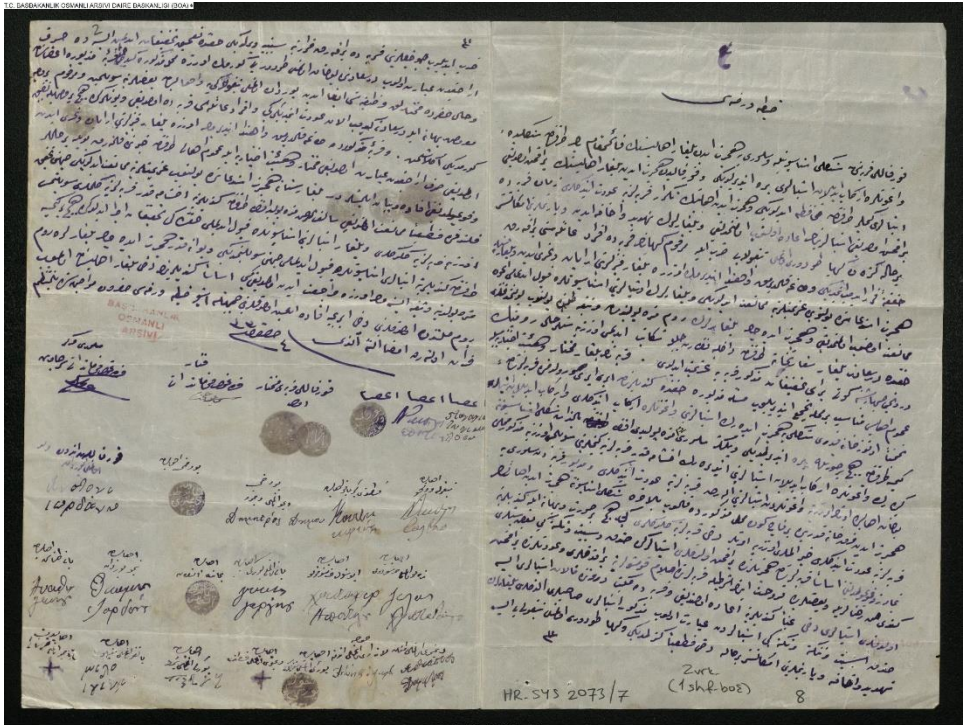
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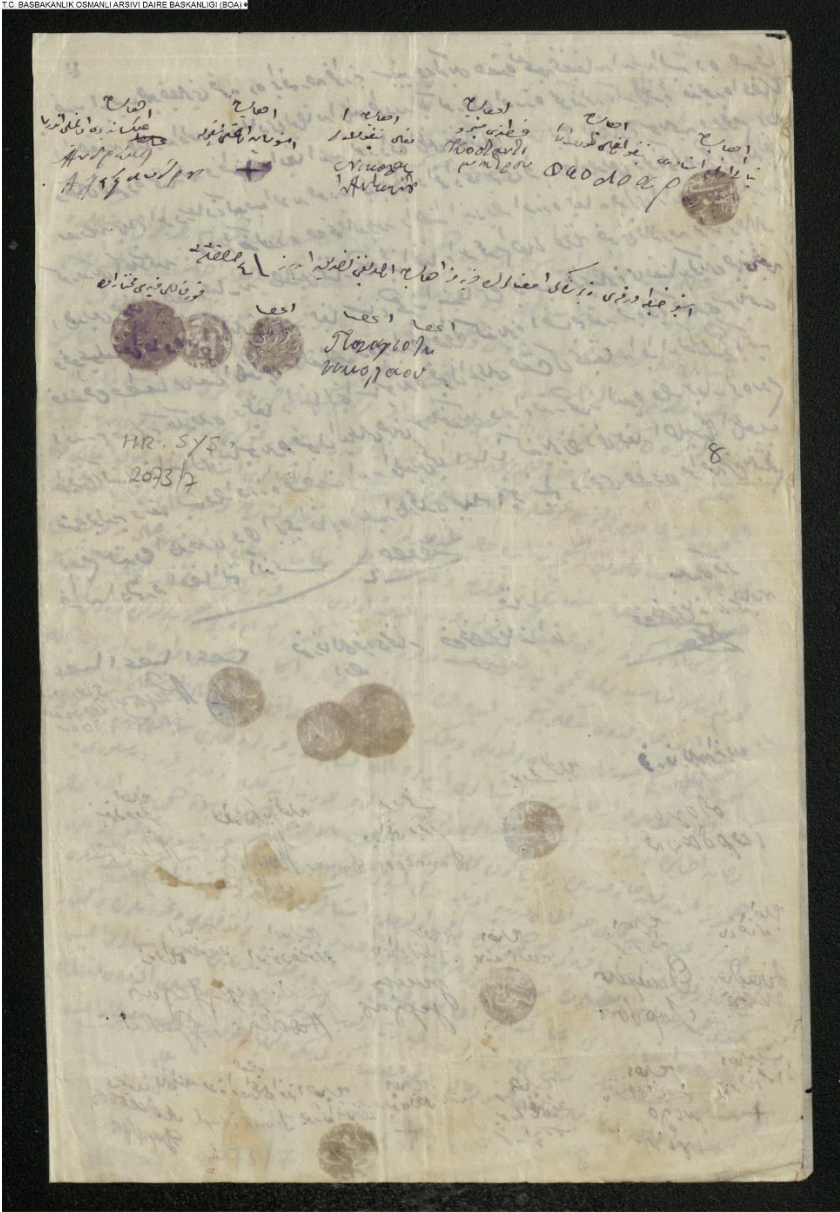
Appendix:

BOA, HR-SYS 2073, 7 Zabıt Varakası (Protocol Sheet) of the population of Kurfalli: "We are not Bulgarians; we are Greeks."



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T.C. BAŞBAKANLIK OSMANLI ARŞİVİ DAİRE BAŞKANLIĞI (BOA)



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Research Article

## **Southern Opening: Turkish Soft Power in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Tamás Dudlák\*

### **Abstract:**

This article discusses the Sub-Saharan relations of Türkiye from 2002 until 2016 from a political, economic and cultural point of view. The focus is on the performance of Turkish institutions on African ground, assessing not only governmental but humanitarian and public initiatives as well. The non-governmental factors are crucial in understanding Turkish African policy: the so-called Anatolian tigers and their associations connected with the Justice and Development Party and outside the scope of traditional state diplomacy exerted their influence on the political activity of Türkiye in general and in Africa, in particular. This new middle class formed the most important social and economic motivations behind Türkiye's opening to Africa, creating space for public diplomacy and thus contributing to the democratisation of Turkish foreign policy.

**Keywords:** Africa, humanitarian aid, soft power, Türkiye

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The following article examines the evolution of Türkiye's relations with Africa until 2016 starting in 2002 when the Justice and Development

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Party (AKP) government came to power. In what follows, Turkish-African relations are presented from a Turkish perspective, and they are placed in a theoretical and spatial context of Türkiye's overall foreign policy aspirations, while a historical account of the relations provides a temporal context. Although this study aims to provide a balanced synthesis of the Turkish political and economic approaches, at the same time, exploring the relations between the two sides is not without a normative intention: the analysis aims to take stock of what has happened so far and enhance the deepening of relations in the future.

The realist approach, which is only concerned with state-to-state relations, does not seem to provide a sufficient explanatory framework. Instead, the study is based on the pluralistic assumption that a multitude of non-state actors contribute to the complexity of relations. Including these actors in the analysis is essential to go beyond state-to-state relations.

This study has drawn on sources in Turkish for the analysis to see how the Turkish state sees its own situation in relation to Africa. Turkish development and foreign policy concepts formulated by Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkish Foreign Minister (2009–2014) and Prime Minister (2014–2016) with academic background (promoting a governmental perspective) and news reports (not necessarily a governmental perspective) serve as primary sources, while the secondary literature is represented by analyses of the region and Turkish foreign policy, mainly in English.

The geographical definition of North African countries used hereafter refers to the African members of the Arab League, including Western Sahara but excluding Djibouti, Somalia and Somaliland and the Comoros Islands in East Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa thus covers all other countries on the continent, including the exceptions mentioned above. This distinction is important because the North African countries and their people, which are geographically, culturally and historically much closer to Türkiye, have traditionally had much stronger Turkish links than those of Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, if we want to look at the changes in Turkish-African relations, the focus should be on the progress achieved in the non-traditional area of Turkish foreign policy over the last two decades.

Turkish-African relations can be divided into four periods based on intensity and international situation:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mehmet Özkan and Birol Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 4 (2010): 530.

1. The Ottoman era, dating from the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.
2. The Republican era maintained the lowest level of relations with Africa from its foundation (1923) to 1998.
3. From 1998, with the formulation of the so-called 'Africa Action Plan,' the opening to Africa began.
4. Since 2005, relations have been steadily expanding.

In what follows, this paper uses this classification to structure the discussion, focusing on the most important developments, which are examined from several perspectives (Turkish foreign policy, Turkish domestic policy, aid and prospects).

### **Historical Relations with Africa. The Republic of Türkiye until 2002**

Analysing historical relations helps examine the possible antecedents of the "opening" of the Turkish foreign policy towards Africa. The establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923 and the abolition of the Caliphate a year later brought a sharp change in the nature of relations with Africa. The Republic of Türkiye became a secular nation-state, thus the religious links with African territories ceased to exist. Ankara became the capital of the new republic, and Istanbul lost its previous international position as a leading Muslim religious authority after 1924.

In the early Republican Era Türkiye's foreign the foreign policy can be described as isolationist, Western oriented and pragmatically neutral. Türkiye recognised the creation of all African states that gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s, although it did not support their independence movements due to Türkiye's close relations with Western states. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the first foreign mission (consulate) in the newly independent states was opened in Lagos in 1956. During the decolonisation period, Türkiye did not initiate new and meaningful relations with African countries. The Cyprus crisis of 1974 brought some change in this respect, as the country's relations with its traditional Western allies broke down, and the Turkish leadership embarked on a process of foreign policy diversification, which partly involved the intensification of relations with African countries, but these have remained dormant and limited to the political sphere.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Isa Afacan, "The African Opening in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 52 (2013): 48.

For a long time, the Turkish public could only associate Africa with the negative images of famine, poverty and disease, and the potential investment and development of people-to-people cultural relations was not discussed. Moreover, the lack of credible knowledge and expertise hindered the development of public relations. The Turkish foreign policy leadership interpreted its own activity as 'Türkiye has traditionally had good relations with the African continent'. This statement can only be justified if we equate good relations with the lack of conflict due to minimal relations.<sup>4</sup>

### **A Planned Opening to Africa: The 'Africa Action Plan'**

After these weak attempts, the Turkish government's first significant step in its relations with Africa was the adoption of the so-called 'Africa Action Plan' of 1998, during the tenure of Foreign Minister İsmail Cem. This development can be seen as a result of Türkiye's disappointment with the decision of the European Union, which did not accept Türkiye as a candidate country a year earlier.<sup>5</sup>

The 1998 Action Plan was developed in consultation with the existing African embassies of Türkiye, the critical actions being summarised in the following points:

- improving diplomatic relations: organising high-level visits (head of state, ministerial, parliamentary) between the parties, increasing the frequency of contacts, establishing permanent forums for contacts
- organisation of meetings with business people
- setting up joint trade councils
- participation of Türkiye in the African Development Bank and the African Eximbank
- access of Turkish banks to bank branches in African countries
- cultural agreements, university contacts, exchange of scholarship students and lecturers
- the establishment of the Institute of African Studies in Türkiye

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<sup>4</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 532.

<sup>5</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 532.

- humanitarian aid in Africa, Turkish contribution to UN economic and technical assistance programs
- military and security cooperation, inviting African partners to train in Türkiye.<sup>6</sup>

As the internal political crisis of the late 2000s and the economic crisis in Türkiye in 2000-2001 caused a severe loss of resources, the implementation of the Action Plan did not start, but it inspired the Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s policy to Africa, . The Republic's minimalist foreign policy thus dominated Turkish-African relations for a long time, with more space for manoeuvre emerging after the end of the Cold War. Even before the AKP government, the number of contacts between African countries and Türkiye had already begun to increase, but the Türkiye's economic weaknesses in the 1990s had not yet provided the necessary stimulus for further deepening relations.

### **The Intensification of Relations after 2005**

In the first years of the AKP, the war in Iraq, the reunification plan for Cyprus and the negotiations with the European Union dominated the foreign policy agenda of the new government, so the actual opening to Africa started only in 2005. When, in March 2005, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Ethiopia and then South Africa, the event marked a historic moment in the history of Turkish foreign policy. It was the first time in the history of the Republic that a Turkish head of government participated in an official diplomatic visit to the South of the Equator in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

In order to provide a permanent framework for relations with Africa, the institutionalisation of relations is essential. As part of this process, Türkiye was granted observer status in the African Union (AU) in 2005. Through this institutional connection, Türkiye could intensify its diplomatic relations with the member countries and become more receptive to the needs and opportunities provided by the local contexts. Subsequently, in 2008, the AU declared Türkiye a "strategic partner." Only Japan, India, Iran, South Korea, South America, the EU and China had such status then.<sup>8</sup> In May 2008, Türkiye joined the African Development Bank as

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<sup>6</sup> Soyaloğlu Tamçelik, *Küresel Politikada Yükselen Afrika*, Gazi Kitabevi, 2014, 388-390.

<sup>7</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 533.

<sup>8</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 534.



the 25<sup>th</sup> non-regional member. It facilitated Turkish companies to join economic and investment projects on the continent.

The policy of confidence-building and foreign policy activism, in general, has been an essential cornerstone of Turkish policy in Africa and the Middle East since the Justice and Development Party (AKP). This has been achieved through the emergence of so-called soft power actors, which in practice has meant that, in addition to the diplomatic role of the state, the proactive elements of society have also been given a role in shaping foreign relations. As a result, public diplomacy complemented traditional state diplomacy, a change especially pertinent to this topic.<sup>9</sup>

On 23-24 November 2005, the first Turkish-African Summit was held in Istanbul, organised by the Turkish Centre for Strategic Studies in Asia (TASAM). The primary objective was to develop economic, social, cultural and political relations, explore the possibilities, and establish the necessary regulatory environment. The Turkish government expressed its willingness to cooperate in solving African problems. Referring to the Ottomans, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül said that Turks and Africans have deep-rooted relations. The event provided an excellent opportunity to establish contacts between the two sides, as neither Türkiye nor African countries had an extensive pool of experts with a thorough knowledge of each other.<sup>10</sup>

The Second Türkiye-Africa Summit, organised by the Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Confederation (TUSKON) on 12-14 December 2006, was the next stage in the process of confidence building and knowledge acquisition. It was attended by 550 representatives (businessmen, ministers, officials) from some 30 African countries and some 1300 Turkish businessmen. As a result, trade agreements were signed between Turkish and African businessmen. The Third Türkiye-Africa Summit was held in Istanbul on 4 December 2007, again organised by TASAM. On this occasion, representatives from 40 African countries (more than 60 ministers, government officials, and 500 businessmen) were present and had the opportunity to meet with around 1500 Turkish businessmen. In the framework of the summit, an agreement was reached to open offices of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) in Addis

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<sup>9</sup> István Tarrósy, "The Relative Importance of the Various Forms of 'Unconventional Diplomacy' in a New Era of Summit Diplomacy," *TradeCraft Review Periodical of the Scientific Board of Military Security Office 2* (2014): 73.

<sup>10</sup> Kieran E. Uchehara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," *Akademik Bakış 2* (2008): 53.

Ababa, Sudan and Senegal. Several agreements concluded by businessmen have also contributed to developing relations on the sub-state level.<sup>11</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Türkiye-Africa Summit 2008 saw a further increase in the number of participants, with more than 3,500 African and Turkish participants from 45 African countries. Türkiye's "friendly" approach and its vision of mutually beneficial relations strengthened confidence between the parties. The conditions for Turkish SMEs to expand abroad were particularly favourable, and these fora provided the perfect opportunity to take the further steps towards Africa. In the same year, a new forum was established: the 1<sup>st</sup> Africa-Türkiye Cooperation Summit, held in Istanbul from 18 to 24 August 2008. The summit brought together six presidents, five vice presidents, seven prime ministers, one deputy prime minister, fourteen foreign ministers and twelve senior ministers from 49 African countries.<sup>12</sup> At the summit, a document entitled "The Istanbul Declaration on Türkiye-Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future" was adopted, detailing the cooperation potential for businesses in many sectors. Continuing this event, a second convention took place in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, on 19-21 November 2014. The delegates of the summit adopted the joint implementation plan of Türkiye-Africa cooperation for the 2015-2019 period.<sup>13</sup>

The shift in Turkish diplomacy is illustrated by the increasing use of unconventional tools in diplomacy. The listed events fall under the umbrella of summit diplomacy, which provides a multilateral platform for deepening relations and simplifying the engagement process.<sup>14</sup>

In 2008, Türkiye was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2009-2010 term, largely thanks to the votes of African countries. In the following years, Türkiye promoted itself as the global voice of Africa, both in the UN and in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).<sup>15</sup> 27 of the 57 OIC member states are African, thus, the organisation also provides a forum for Turkish foreign policy makers to engage with Muslim African countries. Thanks to Türkiye's active

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<sup>11</sup> Uchegara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," 54.

<sup>12</sup> Tamçelik, *Küresel Politikada Yükselen Afrika*, 395.

<sup>13</sup> "Türkiye and The African Union." Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-and-the-african-union.en.mfa>

<sup>14</sup> Tarrósy, "The Relative Importance of the Various Forms of 'Unconventional Diplomacy,'" 85.

<sup>15</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 544.

engagement, African members of the OIC have a positive attitude towards Turks.<sup>16</sup>

If we take stock of the post-2005 phase of trade relations between Africa and Türkiye, we can see a steady increase over the last decade and a half. Turkish trade volume (exports and imports) with Africa has tripled from \$5.4 billion in 2003 to almost \$17 billion in 2008. At the same time, it is easier to go from an initial low to a higher level than to deepen already well-established relations and increase trade flows between two parties that have long been partners. Moreover, if we consider that the total volume of Türkiye's foreign trade in 2008 was estimated at \$300 billion, Africa's role in this was still relatively small. The Turkish share in the African trade volume also seems negligible. According to Donelli, Türkiye's trade with sub-Saharan African countries was worth \$5.7 billion in 2008;<sup>17</sup> whereas trade with China, for example, accounts for \$100 billion and India for \$46 billion.<sup>18</sup> In the first years of African opening the already existing and established relations were strengthened, so South Africa and Nigeria became the largest trading partners of Türkiye in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>19</sup> The following table shows Türkiye's overall trade value with the African countries from 1998 to 2017.

Year	Foreign Trade Volume with Africa (thousand dollar)
1998	3570800
1999	3343100
2000	4086700
2001	4339200
2002	4327300
2003	5150600
2004	7727900
2005	6847718

<sup>16</sup> A parallel to this policy can be found in one of the most important objectives of China's initial Africa policy. Beijing aimed to replace Taiwan as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The support of the independent African countries played a significant role in achieving this goal, so the Chinese lobby in Africa had succeeded by 1971.

<sup>17</sup> Federico Donelli, *Turkey in Africa: Turkey's Strategic Involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa*, I.B. Tauris, 2021, 68.

<sup>18</sup> Özkan, "Does 'rising Power' Mean 'rising Donor'?" 142.

<sup>19</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 534.

2006	8475872
2007	11082880
2008	14659079
2009	14092532
2010	14107073
2011	17100534
2012	19278641
2013	20176653
2014	19692359
2015	18456471
2016	17307944
2017	19419390

Table 1. Türkiye's overall trade value with African countries.<sup>20</sup>

Oil and gas from Libya and Algeria feature prominently among Türkiye's imports from Africa. The total value is around \$1.3 billion, The export commodities are mostly iron and steel, electrical equipment, construction materials, food and textiles. In Africa, Turkish businesses have investment opportunities in the following sectors: construction (hospitals, schools, roads), agricultural equipment, food, fisheries, textiles, leather, energy, and automotive (tractors and trucks).<sup>21</sup>

In the context of Turkish-African relations, it is also worth mentioning the African diaspora/community in Türkiye. Africans currently residing in the country can be divided into three groups based on their origin:

- A small number of Afro-descendants arrived and settled in the country from Africa during the Ottoman Empire. They live mainly in the western and southern coastal provinces.<sup>22</sup>
- Africans who came to Türkiye for educational purposes. In 2005, their number was only 366, but by 2015 it had reached 9,124. Of these, the number of scholarship holders was 333 in 2010 and 1,091 in 2015.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Based on Şükrü Cicioğlu and Ryan Hafız Ahmed İbrahim, "Analysis of Foreign Trade Between Türkiye and Africa," *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 10 (2023): 81-82.

<sup>21</sup> Tamçelik, *Küresel Politikada Yükselen Afrika*, 405-406.

<sup>22</sup> Hasan Öztürk and Hatice Eke, "Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika." *Bilgesam Rapor* 70, 2015, 36.

<sup>23</sup> Öztürk and Eke, "Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika," 36-37.

- The third and most significant component comprises African refugees, whose numbers are difficult to estimate accurately. They are mostly Africans who are temporarily forced to stay in Türkiye on their way to Europe. Some estimates put the number of Africans in Istanbul alone at 70,000. Most of them are in Türkiye legally but find it challenging to meet Türkiye's harsh conditions for employment and are forced to work illegally. Exceptions in this respect are sportsmen of African origin employed in Türkiye.<sup>24</sup>

### **From Domestic Policy to Foreign Policy: The Impact of Soft Power Elements**

With the end of the Cold War, Türkiye's previously unambiguous Western orientation in foreign policy and the bipolar international order began to be replaced by an increasingly open foreign policy and multipolarity? This new orientation has also been reflected in increased activity in various non-Atlantic-initiated organisations: Türkiye has become a member or observer of several Muslim, Arab and African international organisations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, several geopolitical spaces have been 'opened up' in the country's neighbourhood, where previously, due to the dominance of the Soviet Union, external influence was somewhat limited. In addition to this positive external development, internal processes have also played a role in Türkiye's ability to play an active role on the international stage. Namely, by the 1990s, a religious and nationalist elite had emerged alongside the traditional and Western-oriented Turkish elite, which defined foreign policy on a Muslim or Turkish basis and pushed for greater engagement beyond the West. Interestingly, in the run-up to EU accession, which was accompanied by a certain degree of democratisation, both in the 1990s and in the 2000s, the Turkish political space became increasingly receptive to new inputs, meaning that public opinion and civil society became more prominent, and the introduction of alternative approaches, orientations in foreign policy provided an opportunity to reassess the traditional Kemalist foreign policy.<sup>25</sup> The AKP represented this new momentum at the time of its rise to power in 2002.

During the AKP period until recently, foreign policy was influenced by a combination of traditional Kemalist and new conservative religious elites. The former had maintained control over the army, the main element of hard power, but mainly refused to use it in foreign policy. The Kemalist

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<sup>24</sup> Öztürk and Eke, "Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika," 37–38.

<sup>25</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 528.

elite believed in Western military relations (NATO) and a minimalist foreign policy (passivity, non-interference), which they believed would best serve the country's interests. In contrast, the new conservative and religious elite, drawing on its newfound economic and political power, has adopted the idea of foreign policy activism and is pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy worldwide. However, its activism could not rely on hard power – as it did not possess the means for that and would not have been appropriate for its goals – and could only start Türkiye's international expansion with the soft power instruments at its disposal. Soft power is understood as a term in international relations, by which an actor can influence another actor by its cultural and ideological appeal.<sup>26</sup> The foreign policy paradigm of the new elite was established by Ahmet Davutoğlu, a former university professor, foreign minister (2009-2014) and later prime minister (2014-2016), in his influential book, *Strategic Depth*.<sup>27</sup> Davutoğlu believes that the new foreign policy guidelines that Türkiye needs to develop should complement traditional relations, not replace them. On Africa, he argues that as the continent is one of the most neglected regions by the Turkish foreign policy, immediate action is needed to enable Türkiye to seize opportunities.

Türkiye's opening to Africa can be understood in the context of globalisation and changing world order, where relations between middle powers and third-world countries are becoming increasingly intense; the breadth and depth of diplomatic relations play an essential role in international fora and the image-building contest between countries. As we have seen, Türkiye's motivations in the region have historical antecedents, and its more active foreign policy can also be reasoned by its geopolitical position. The increase in the number of Turkish diplomatic missions abroad, especially in Africa, and the international community's increased diplomatic relations with Türkiye in response to Ankara's extensive foreign policy activities and economic success in the 2000s illustrate the very active Turkish diplomacy. However, the booming Turkish economy in the 2000s is only one side of the coin, and the country's geopolitical position makes it a natural bridge not only between Europe and Asia but also between Eurasia and Africa. It is precisely in this direction that Davutoğlu saw the development potential of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> The change in foreign policy ideology was a result of the development of the Turkish internal market and the interest in expanding the country's economic potential – as

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<sup>26</sup> Joseph S. Jr. Nye, *Soft Power. The Means To Success In World Politics*, PublicAffairs, 2005, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre Yayınları, 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, "The Restoration of Turkey: Strong Democracy, Dynamic Economy, and Active Diplomacy," *SAM Vision Papers* 7, 2014, 17.

opposed to the previous policy of isolationism. This evolution has required and continues to require the development of new foreign economic relations. As this is essentially a matter of commercial interests, foreign policy should aim at a peaceful and tension-free policy with neighbours and the world at large in order to ensure the smooth flow of business (Davutođlu formulated this as the principle of ‘zero problems with neighbours’ in his book mentioned above).

Concerning the depth of relations, it is worth noting that the significant increase in the number of Turkish embassies in Africa cannot be a reliable reference point for measuring the effectiveness of Turkish-African relations. Although they certainly provide a reasonable basis for broadening relations, they are mostly limited in capacity, with 2-3 people. However, it must be noted that the number of Turkish embassies in Africa was only 12 in 2002, and it increased to 39<sup>29</sup> by 2014 and 44 as of 2022.<sup>30</sup> Those who exaggerate the role of new directions of Turkish foreign policy often interpret this more diversified Turkish foreign policy activity as a sign of abandoning relations with the West.<sup>31</sup> This new direction is only a shift of emphasis, as the Western relationship remains the priority in Türkiye’s foreign policy security and economic dimension.

The development of trade links with Africa was a natural consequence of the prosperity of the Turkish economy and the international openness of Turkish businessmen over several decades. Türkiye, described in the literature as a ‘trading state,’<sup>32</sup> has increasingly found opportunities for economic cooperation with ‘culturally related’ areas since the 1990s. In this space of activity, we find religiously, culturally and historically similar nations located in the former territory of the Ottoman Empire. Central Asian areas with Turkic peoples can also be linked to this cultural sphere of influence. The booming economic diplomacy was motivated by the rise of a new, religious capitalist business class, the so-called ‘Anatolian Tigers’ (*Anadolu kaplanları*), who developed their capacity for surplus production in the 1980s and thus opened up to these regions with their export-oriented

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<sup>29</sup> Öztürk and Eke, “Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika,” 44–45.

<sup>30</sup> “Türkiye-Africa Relations,” Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-africa-relations.en.mfa>

<sup>31</sup> Mustafa Kutlay, Ziya Öniş, “Turkish foreign policy in a post-western order: strategic autonomy or new forms of dependence?” *International Affairs* 97 (2021): 1085–1104. and Sözen, Ahmet, “A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges,” *Turkish Studies* 11 (2010): 103–123.

<sup>32</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, “The transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The rise of the trading state,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 40 (2009): 43.

policies. The activity of this entrepreneurial class in Africa was aided by the fact that they are religiously and culturally close to certain African actors.

The rise of 'Anatolian Tigers' has led to an increasing expression of commercial and business interests in Turkish foreign policy and to the growing role of public diplomacy in shaping foreign relations. The new Anatolian middle class has become the main base of the AKP regime, and it represents, among other things, the main socio-economic driving force behind the opening to Africa.<sup>33</sup> As a result of their activities, Turkish diplomacy is not only an instrument that primarily works for the security of the country but increasingly became receptive and facilitator of the business interests of economic actors. It is a matter of common motivation, of harmonious action between actors and levels; the interests of NGOs, the government and businessmen in Africa are aligned. These aspirations were complementary and mutually reinforcing.<sup>34</sup>

Over the years, Africa has not lost its value as an investment and trade destination for the Turks. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis and the protracted integration process with the European Union, the Middle East and Africa have also offered favourable investment opportunities beyond the developed world. As Turkish companies will certainly not have access to the favourable conditions offered by the European common market in the foreseeable future, they have shifted part of their activities towards the growing potential of emerging markets. Africa is also important for Türkiye to become a global player beyond its regional role, i.e., to have its 'voice' heard internationally.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the 'opening to Africa' and the new foreign policy activism are certainly not short-term phenomena but steps to adapt to the new global context, both at the state and civilian levels. Türkiye has successfully adopted the role of 'defender of the oppressed,'<sup>36</sup> which has gained the sympathy of African countries and helped it gain recognition on the international political stage.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Mehmet Şahin, "'Anadolu kaplanları' Türkiye'yi Ortadoğu ve Afrika'da etkili kılıyor," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 2 (2010): 95.

<sup>34</sup> Uchehara, "Continuity and Change in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Africa," 56.

<sup>35</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 529.

<sup>36</sup> Moustapha Abdelkerim Idriss, "Analysis - Turkey-Africa partnership: A development-oriented approach," *Anadolu Ajansı*. 2020. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/analysis-turkey-africa-partnership-a-development-oriented-approach/1696640>.

<sup>37</sup> However, recent research suggests that even if African countries supported Turkey's bid for non-permanent membership of Turkey, there has been no significant increase in the voting cohesion of Turkey and African countries since 1998. Elem Eyrica Tepeciklioğlu and Ali Onur Tepeciklioğlu, "Turkey-Africa Voting Cohesion in the UN General Assembly," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 2024: 1-22.



The domestic political dimension of the African opening thus plays an important role in dynamically shaping Türkiye's domestic relations in line with international developments. The formation and consolidation of a new, conservative Muslim investor base and power elite, and the replacement of the old secular leadership, started in the 2000s, in parallel with the opening to Africa. As the African opening strengthens the power positions of the new elite, Africa has become part of the competition between the old and the new establishment.

The domestic political struggle between the AKP and its former political ally, the so-called Gülen movement (Hizmet), affected Türkiye's activities in Africa.<sup>38</sup> Since around the beginning of 2014, Erdoğan's visits and political contacts with African leaders have increasingly focused on implementing a joint action against the Gülen movement in Africa.<sup>39</sup> In countries that have responded to this request, the closure of Gülen-linked schools and, thus, aligning with Ankara's interests can be interpreted as a restriction of sovereignty, and the closure of these educational institutions caused some economic and cultural damage. Indeed, these schools represented the highest quality in these countries, competing with their Western counterparts, but in many cases, representing the only modern version of secondary and university education available to the locals. Since there was no clear and visible propaganda activity by the members of the movement, and they were generally loosely associated with the movement, there was no official administrative oversight over the 110 or so educational institutions associated with the Gülen movement. Identification is also made more difficult by the fact that the educational profile of the institutions is adapted to the national curriculum of the country concerned. In general, members of the Gülen movement and their donations have typically played a greater role at the time of the foundation of these institutions, and some of the teaching staff were Turkish. The dismantling of such a school network was also highly questionable for Türkiye's image: the schools, which have developed a Turkish connection with Africa for about a decade, were educating African intelligentsia who, once in the administration, could promote a positive image of Türkiye, an important factor for its soft power capacities in Africa.

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<sup>38</sup> David Shinn, "Turkey's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting Alliances and Strategic Diversification," *Chatham House Research Paper*, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Cagri Ozdemir, "Analysis: Turkey strengthens ties in Africa," *Middle East Eye*, 2015. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/turkeys-africa-opening-keeps-its-pace-286868208>.

The Yunus Emre Institute has significantly enhanced Türkiye's cultural and educational presence in Africa, serving as a pivotal instrument of soft power. Established in 2007, the institute promotes Turkish language and culture through cultural centres. These centers offer Turkish language courses and cultural programs, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening bilateral relations.<sup>40</sup>

### **Humanitarian Aid and Development Policy**

Institutional and political obstacles to development in Sub-Saharan Africa poses challenges for Turkish activism. There are a series of failed states in the Sahel region and south of it, and the events of the Arab Spring also created a failed state in Libya. This northward move of the problems of the Sahel poses an increasing security challenge in the Mediterranean and calls for a coordination of EU and Turkish policies in crisis management.<sup>41</sup>

On the Turkish side, humanitarian assistance (think of the infrastructure investments in Somalia) is an important step in stabilising the situation in Africa and can be an excellent point for Turkish diplomacy in strengthening relations. In a region in transition as it is Africa, the critical question is which state or political organisation can effectively assist local actors by providing a model to follow in transforming the economy, society and political culture. The crises in Africa cannot be solved by traditional military and diplomatic means but require complete reconstruction projects for some local societies, and Türkiye's soft power projection can play a prominent role in this process.

The aid provided by the Turkish government and the expectations attached to it point to the perennial dilemma in development policy that the practical implementation of 'top-down' development projects can be met with local resistance and even be counterproductive. There are also local, traditional ways of solving problems, but external support for such solutions may be politically questionable. In addition, the international community's tendency to build and 'transfer' institutional capacity as quickly as possible when dealing with crisis zones is a risk factor, is often applied to humanitarian aid policy as well, which seeks to produce quantifiable results in the shortest possible time.

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<sup>40</sup> Abdurrahim Siradağ, "The Rise of Turkey's Soft Power in Africa: Reasons, Dynamics, and Constraints," *International Journal of Political Studies* 8 (2022): 6.

<sup>41</sup> Can Kasapoğlu, "Future MENA Threat Landscape and Turkey's Defense Posture," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 5 (2013): 35-44.

As economic investment and aid increase, politics also enters the areas concerned and spreads its values. At the level of moral politics, Islamic values facilitated by the AKP government as well as the role of Diyanet and Turkish religious foundations can serve as bridges of relations with African Muslims. By strengthening their relations with Türkiye, African countries can gain the necessary experience and resources to implement economic and political transformation effectively without sacrificing their local traditions. Indeed, Türkiye does not condition aid to democratic values and the rule of law as the EU or the US does. The combination of economic sustainability, cultural diplomacy (soft power) and non-conditional assistance in its African relations create the so-called 'Ankara Consensus.'<sup>42</sup>

Regarding concrete steps of assistance, Türkiye started its activities in this field as early as 1985, which began to take a more unified form with the establishment of TİKA in 1992. TİKA's first coordination office was opened in Addis Ababa in 2005, followed by an office in Khartoum in 2006 and in Dakar in 2007.<sup>43</sup>

In 2012, Türkiye spent over one billion dollars on humanitarian aid. The most significant contributions were allocated to Syria, Pakistan and Somalia. This active humanitarian engagement is an integral part of Türkiye's international image-building effort, and it has thus taken on the role of a global peace broker.<sup>44</sup> Türkiye's considerable contribution to international aid is evident: for example, according to Global Humanitarian Assistance, it was the third largest aid donor in the world in 2013 and 2014. At the same time, if we calculate the amount of aid as a proportion of economic performance, we find Türkiye to be the most active aid donor in the world.<sup>45</sup>

For example, the Africa Cataract Project, launched in 2007 by the Turkish organisation İHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation), provided doctors and nurses to treat people suffering from cataracts. The number of people in Africa who have become blind or visually impaired due to cataracts is estimated at around ten million. It is estimated that in half of these cases, the eyes could be cured by simple surgery.<sup>46</sup> Between 2007 and 2011, 52,531 patients were treated free of charge, and some 169,615 patients

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<sup>42</sup> Federico Donelli, "The Ankara Consensus: The Significance of Turkey's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 30 (1) 2018: 57-76.

<sup>43</sup> Özkan, "Does 'rising Power' Mean 'rising Donor'?" 142.

<sup>44</sup> Pinar Tank, "Turkey's New Humanitarian Approach in Somalia," NOREF Policy Brief, 2013, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Öztürk and Eke, "Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika," 40.

<sup>46</sup> Özkan and Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa," 542.

received eye examination services. Under the project, TİKA provided the hospital specialists and paid their expenses.<sup>47</sup> The spectacular assistance was accompanied by a catchy slogan: “Türkiye opens up 100,000 African eyes.”<sup>48</sup>

The year 2011 marked an important milestone in Turkish-African relations: during the expanding humanitarian crisis in Somalia, Türkiye became Somalia’s most active partner. This engagement was marked by intense political and social action: Erdoğan personally visited the country during the worst days of the crisis to assure them of his support, and their plight received international publicity, . On 25 January 2015, Erdoğan repeated his 2011 visit to Mogadishu, where he inaugurated a hospital built with Turkish involvement.<sup>49</sup> Erdoğan’s trips can be regarded as non-traditional forms of diplomacy, i.e. development diplomacy.<sup>50</sup>

Türkiye has not remained idle after the imminent humanitarian crisis was “resolved”: after 2011, development aid replaced humanitarian aid in Somalia. These have been coordinated by around 500 Turkish volunteers, government officials, humanitarian aid workers on the ground. In Somalia, they have concluded the following projects:

- reconstruction of Mogadishu airport
- constructing a road between the airport and Mogadishu city centre
- construction of schools
- construction of a 200-bed hospital
- construction of a 100-bed children’s hospital (by Yardımeli)
- drilling of wells
- renovation of the parliament building (by TİKA)
- donation of garbage trucks

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<sup>47</sup> Fulya Apaydin, “Overseas Development Aid Across the Global South: Lessons from the Turkish Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia,” *European Journal of Development Research* 24 (2012): 270.

<sup>48</sup> Özkan and Akgün, “Turkey’s Opening to Africa,” 542.

<sup>49</sup> Mehmet Ozkan and Serhat Orakci, “Viewpoint: Turkey as a ‘political’ Actor in Africa – an Assessment of Turkish Involvement in Somalia,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (2015): 1.

<sup>50</sup> Tarrósy, “The Relative Importance of the Various Forms of ‘Unconventional Diplomacy,’” 84.

- supplying 15,000 people in a refugee camp (by Turkish Crescent)
- providing scholarships for 1,600 Somali students to study in Türkiye
- Qur'an donations, sending imams, reconstruction of mosques (by Diyanet)
- training Somali doctors by their Turkish colleagues
- building an orphanage (by İHH)
- providing pieces of irrigation equipment (by İHH)<sup>51</sup>

An essential characteristic of Turkish aid is that it delivers donations directly to the beneficiaries without conditions. Turkish organisations work on the ground without intermediaries, bypassing national-level institutions and involving local organisations, providing them with valuable experience by increasing efficiency and reducing the resources taken away from projects through intermediaries. This greater flexibility allows Turkish aid agencies to be active in generally hard-to-reach areas, which lack Western assistance.<sup>52</sup>

There is a difference between Western actors, referred to in the literature as 'traditional donors', and the 'emerging donors.' Traditional donor countries utilise a more strategic approach, working in well-defined, 'safe' areas where the impact of their activities can be well assessed, and unnecessary complications with local powers can be avoided. In contrast, new aid donors have adopted a more structuralist-functionalist approach. They tend to rely on cultural links, shared experiences and identities with locals to achieve their goals based on universal norms and principles. To this end, new types of donors often take risks both in the choice of target area and in the lower degree of embeddedness in the local contexts

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<sup>51</sup> Ozkan and Orakci, "Viewpoint: Turkey as a 'political' Actor in Africa," 6.

<sup>52</sup> Amid the 'second scramble' for Africa, it is interesting to compare the foundations of Turkish and Chinese Africa policy. While China, unlike the EU, does not condition its investments and aid but approaches them in a purely pragmatic way, Türkiye focuses mainly on Muslim countries and builds on more direct, personal relations, and thus - unlike China - presents itself as an equal partner in Africa. While China exports a large amount of human resources to Africa, Türkiye seeks to avoid this kind of 'imposition' and colonialism and thus seeks to respond to local problems through the use of local resources and local staff during the implementation of its aid and investment policies.

(Akpınar, 2015).<sup>53</sup> As the ‘emerging donors’ are increasingly present in African aid policy-making, they are also trying to prioritise their existing state relationships and centrally coordinated strategic aid, operating along the same (political, economic or moral) principles.

Beyond providing aid, Turkish organisations also link humanitarian action to peace-building objectives. In conflict areas, a lasting basis for peace depends on the existence of structural and social factors. The former category includes good governance, strong institutions and the rule of law. Türkiye can contribute to this through infrastructure building, technical assistance and capacity-building programmes for state institutions. In building the social foundations for peace-building, the emphasis is on education programmes, cultural and religious activities, and the implementation of various economic partnerships. In all of these programmes, it is vital to engage all actors in society and the economy, to approach local characteristics in a culturally sensitive way, and to pursue pan-national goals. Therefore, the realisation of effective relations between Türkiye and African countries lies in the depth of partnership rather than in implementing aid from a purely Turkish perspective.

Türkiye’s relations with Africa benefit from the fact that its humanitarian aid and development initiatives are perceived by Africans as far less of a threat than those of the traditional Western actors. With its relatively clean slate and Muslim affiliations, Türkiye is seen as an exceptionally reliable partner in the eyes of African Muslims. Although governmental aid is officially provided on a non-religious basis, in most cases, there is a strong suspicion that recipients are targeted mainly in Muslim-majority countries and areas.<sup>54</sup> In general, Türkiye’s Africa policy has the advantage of implementing Western-style services and techniques with a non-Western historical background.<sup>55</sup>

However, Turkish aid agencies are not free from unilateral and centralised aid distribution. In Somalia, for example, the bulk of Turkish contributions are concentrated in and around Mogadishu, in areas under the control of the Somali government. Of course, there is also evidence that the material and financial assets they provide have not been in the right hands and may even have served the interests of warring parties, such as

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<sup>53</sup> Pinar Akpınar, “Turkey’s Engagement in Africa’s Development,” Workshop Report, Istanbul Policy Center, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Sema Kalaycıoğlu, “Between Mission and Business: Turkey’s New Approach to Africa,” *Journal of US-China Public Administration* 8 (2011): 1295.

<sup>55</sup> Paul R. Camacho et al., “Soft Power: The Turkish Effort in Somalia,” *The GLOBAL. A Journal of Policy and Strategy* 1 (2015): 83.

al-Shabaab.<sup>56</sup> In this way, Turkish governmental and non-governmental organisations could not remain outside the conflicts of local political forces: on 27 July 2013, the influential local terrorist organisation al-Sabab attacked the Turkish embassy in Mogadishu, killing one and wounding three. Moreover, just before Erdoğan's visit in 2015, the hotel where the Turkish delegation was staying was attacked.<sup>57</sup>

### Outlook and Proposals

In this paper, Turkish-African relations was examined as a fundamentally positive development of Türkiye's international relations. The main objective of the partners is to build long-term and lasting relations, and to this end, there is a need to go beyond high-level state-to-state relations and to develop links between economic, cultural and social actors. Inter-state relations are essential, but they cannot be the only dimension of relations between the parties, and only the activity of sub-state actors towards the other party can make the relations organic and meaningful. At the inter-state level, however, greater emphasis should be placed on joint parliamentary working committees between the two sides and on developing friendship associations, which could serve as channels for the business community and those culturally committed to Turkish-African relations.

In many ways, Africa is the continent of the future: the massive population explosion represents both an opportunity (high proportion of young people) and a challenge for both the continent's countries and the international community. International actors such as Türkiye play a crucial role in deciding which of these directions the continent's countries will be able to take. If Africa remains a cluster of problems, it will become a problem for the world in the 21st century. Thus, for Türkiye as an active participant in African affairs, pursuing strategic goals concerning Africa is already at this point of particular importance: Türkiye can benefit even more from the potential of Africa in the future if it further institutionalises its relations and its commitment to Africa.

For Türkiye, it is imperative to emphasise that 'opening to Africa' should benefit Türkiye and its African partners. In 2016, for example, Turkish exports to Africa amounted to \$11.9 billion, while imports from

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<sup>56</sup> Achilles, Kathryn et al., "Turkish Aid Agencies in Somalia. Risks and Opportunities for Building Peace," Saferworld and Istanbul Policy Center, 2015, ii. and 21.

<sup>57</sup> Ozkan and Orakci, "Viewpoint: Turkey as a 'political' Actor in Africa," 2.

Africa were only USD 5.4 billion.<sup>58</sup> Promoting the expansion of Free Trade Agreements can help to create a trade balance.

In order to ease or remove financial and investment barriers, Türkiye should open Turkish bank branches or representative offices of the local state banks in Africa. In the same way, various joint professional and working organisations can facilitate the implementation of business, cultural and aid initiatives towards the other side. It would be worthwhile to set up a joint African-Turkish trade organisation with a representative office in one of the African cities. This organisation could serve as an interface between the different regulatory environments in Africa and Türkiye, as well as for implementing joint investment and trade projects.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to inter-state student exchange programs, it is crucial to develop more cooperation between universities, educational institutions and research centres in Türkiye and Africa, i.e. to establish day-to-day links at the sub-state level, independent of political guidelines. These can facilitate joint scientific and technological research, which could be carried out through various research centres in Africa and Türkiye, with the joint participation of the parties. This scientific exchange should be a two-way process: it should not only be about educating African students in Türkiye but also providing more mobility of Turks to African universities. Joint activities are essential to deepen, broaden and disseminate mutual knowledge and to increase the quantity and quality of scientific research. This is not only of particular importance for the country's image but is also essential for the long-term maintenance of relations: deeper interaction between Turks and Africans is currently less than a generation old.

The basis of any economic and cultural cooperation is to overcome language barriers, which, in the case of Turkish activities in Africa, even if not the local language, means knowledge of English, French or Arabic. Likewise, there is a need to promote Turkish among Africans, for which Turkish television series and Maarif schools that replaced the Gülen schools are excellent tools. In international relations, cultural relations are the level at which the results and products can be most widely disseminated within the host population. In this way, the rich cultural heritage of each other can be disseminated through various cultural promotion programmes (festivals, exhibitions, educational publications). Developing town-

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<sup>58</sup> Cicioğlu and İbrahim, "Analysis of Foreign Trade Between Türkiye and Africa," 82.

<sup>59</sup> Öztürk and Eke, "Gelecek Vadeden Kıta: Afrika," 43.



twinning networks can also play an important role in bringing together local actors to develop and maintain relations.

When establishing new contacts or bringing new actors into the existing network of contacts, it would be helpful to rely on a database based on shared experiences, which would include an evaluation of the previous experiences of Turkish Africa and serve as an information basis for new initiatives. The problem is, however, that in many cases, there are no regular reports made on the activities of individual Turkish organisations and businesses in Africa, or they are not published, so new actors sometimes have to start from scratch to establish their activities in the new area. Sharing information would make it possible to coordinate the activities of NGOs in a more effective and targeted way, preventing inconsistencies arising from overlapping areas of activity.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Nathalie Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Avrupa'da Çoğunluğu Müslüman Bir Ulusun Doğuşu*. Çev. Ali Berktaş (Orijinal Baskı 2007). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013, 611 s., ISBN: 978-605-399-283-7**

Tolga Karpuz\*

Nathalie Clayer'in 2013 yılında Türkçe'ye çevrilen "*Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri: Avrupa'da Çoğunluğu Müslüman Bir Ulusun Doğuşu*" isimli kitabı, Arnavut tarihi ve özellikle Arnavut Milliyetçiliği ile ilgili olarak Türkçe'ye çevirisi yapılmış az sayıdaki kaynağın en önemli olanlarından biridir. Kitapta ağırlıklı olarak Osmanlı Devleti'nin son dönemindeki Arnavut milli hareketi incelendiği için, Osmanlı'nın o dönemde milliyetçi hareketler karşısındaki tutumu ile dağılma döneminde Osmanlı bürokrasisi ve devlet anlayışına dair yaklaşımlara yer verilmesi, kitabı Türk okuyucusu için ayrıca ilginç kılmaktadır.

Tarih profesörü olarak Paris Sosyal Bilimler Yüksek Araştırmalar Okulu'nda (EHESS) görev yapan Nathalie Clayer, aynı zamanda Ulusal Bilimsel Araştırma Merkezi'nde (CNRS) kıdemli araştırmacı olarak çalışmaktadır. Ağırlıklı olarak Din, Milliyetçilik, Osmanlı ve Post-Osmanlı döneminde devlet inşa süreçleri ile ilgili çalışmalar yapan Clayer, özellikle

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Balkanlar, Türkiye ve daha spesifik olarak Arnavutluk alanına odaklanmaktadır. “Kemalizm/Osmanlı Sonrası Dünyada Uluslaşır Siyaset”, ve “Arnavutluk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri (Avrupa’da Çoğunluğu Müslüman Bir Ulusun Doğuşu)” adlı kitapları Türkçe’ye çevrilen Clayer, ayrıca Alp Yenen’in derlediği “100 Kesitle Cumhuriyet Türkiye’sinin 100 Yılı” kitabında “Siyasallaşan Çile: Türkiye’de Arnavut Göçmen Olmak” bölümünü ve “Devlet Olma Zanaatı Osmanlı’dan Bugüne Kamu İcraatı” adlı kitabın “Dayatma ve Uzlaşma Arasında Bir Laiklik? - Tek Parti Türkiye’sinde Din Eğitiminin İdaresi” bölümünü de kaleme almıştır. Clayer’in henüz Türkçe’ye çevrilmemiş olan, Xavier Bougarel ile birlikte yazdıkları 2017 basımı “Europe’s Balkan Muslims: A New History” ve Hannes Grandits, Robert Pichler ile birlikte kaleme aldıkları 2011 basımı “Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building” adlı eserleri de bulunmaktadır.

Dört kısım ve toplamda on bölümden oluşan kitabın ilk kısmında, Osmanlı’nın son döneminde Arnavutların yaşadığı bölgeler, din ve dil (lehçe) farklılıklarını da göz önüne alarak detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilmiş ve sonraki üç kısım Miroslav Hroch’un “Küçük Milletlerin Canlanış Modeli”nde tarif ettiği aşamalar dikkate alınarak oluşturmuştur. Buna göre ikinci kısımdan itibaren Hroch’un A evresi olarak tanımladığı, Arnavut dili ve kültürüyle ilgilenen ve Arnavut halkının varlığını açıklayan ancak fikirlerini dar bir çevre dışına yaymaya çalışmayan entelektüellerin bulunduğu dönem ile B evresinin ilk dönemi yani milli anlamda daha geniş çevrelerin duyarlılık kazanması ve seferber edilmesine geçiş süreci ve B evresinin ikinci dönemi olan matbuatın yaygınlaşması ile milli bilince sahip bir grubun ortaya çıkarak politik bir kampanya başlatması sürecine kitapta yer verilmiştir. Clayer, modelin C evresi olan milli kimliğin geniş kitlelere yayılması sürecinin 1913 yılında Avrupalı güçler Arnavut prensliğinin kurulmasına karar verdiğinde dahi yeterli düzeyde bulunmadığını söyleyerek kitabın Birinci Balkan Savaşı sonrası dönemde son bulması nedeniyle bu evreye yer vermemiştir.

Kitabın birinci kısmı Arnavutların etnik, dilsel ve bölgesel analizine ayrılmıştır. Clayer dönemin Arnavut topluluğunun tamamen klan ve aşiretlerden oluştuğu savını kabul etmemekle birlikte Arnavutların sosyolojik olarak analiz edilmesinde bu aşiret ve klanları detaylı bir biçimde ele almıştır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle o dönem için Arnavutlar arasındaki en önemli ayrım olan Kuzey Arnavutları (Geg) ile Güney Arnavutları (Tosk) ayrımının lehçe, mezhep ve kültürel farklılıklarına değinen Clayer, Hristiyan olan Arnavutların; Katolik (Geg) ve Ortodoks (Tosk), Müslüman olan Arnavutların ise Sünni (Geg), Bektaşî (Tosk) olarak

ayrıldığı tespitinde bulunmuş, ve bu durum nedeniyle 19.yy ilk yarısından itibaren gelişen Balkan milliyetçi hareketlerindeki motor güçlerden biri olan dinin, Arnavutlar açısından bu rolü oynayamadığını söylemiştir. Etnik, dini ve mezhebi farklılıkları ortaya koyduktan sonra bölgesel olarak Arnavutların yoğun olarak yaşadıkları İşkodra, Kosova, Debre, Orta Arnavutluk, Yunanistan'a yakın olan Yanya ve Makedon Sancakları olarak nitelediği Görice/Korçe, Manastır/Bitola, Serfiçe/Servia vilayet ve sancaklarını inceleyen Clayer, bu bölgedeki demografik yapı, Osmanlı'ya bakış açısı, bölgenin ileri gelen ailelerinin analizi gibi detayları oldukça akıcı bir biçimde aktarmıştır. Bölge ve aileler ile ilgili verilen bilgiler, kitabın ilerleyen kısımlarında Arnavutların bir araya gelme çabaları incelendiğinde daha da anlam kazanacaktır. Son olarak 'Diaspora' alt bölüm başlığı altında Mısır, Yunanistan (Arvanitler), İtalya (Arbareshler), Romanya, Avrupa, Amerika ve hatta Güney Amerika'daki Arnavut toplulukları incelenerek özellikle bu toplulukların Arnavutların yaşadığı coğrafyadan göçlerine ait bilgiler verilmiştir.

İkinci kısım, yazarın Arnavut milliyetçiliğini Hroch'un modeline istinaden nasıl tanımladığını tarif ettiği cümleler ile başlamıştır. Bu kısımda yer alan üç bölüm, üç dönemi ifade eden üç anahtar tarihle ifade edilmiştir. Başlangıç (1860 öncesi), Kırım Savaşı'nın sonundan (1856) Doğu krizinin başlangıcına (1876) uzanan yirmi yıl ve son olarak da Doğu krizi ile Türk-Yunan Harbi (1896) arasındaki yirmi yıl. 1860 öncesinde özellikle İtalya'daki Arnavut topluluğu olan Arbareshlerin öncülüğünde başlayan ve Protestanların da katkıda bulunduğu Arnavut dili ile ilgili çalışmalar ele alınmıştır. İlk sözlük ve alfabenin hazırlanması, Arnavutların etnik kökenine ilişkin 'Illiyria' ve 'Pelasgos' teorilerinin ortaya çıkışı ile bu süreçte rol alan ilk Arnavut entelektüellerinin incelendiği 'Başlangıç' bölümünün ardından 1856-1876 arasındaki Kırım Savaşı sonrası dönemin incelendiği ikinci bölümde 1856'da gerçekleşen Kırım Savaşı sonrası Osmanlı devlet yapısındaki değişiklikler ve İtalya'daki Garibaldi hareketinden etkilenen Yunan ve Sırp milliyetçi hareketlerinin hız kazanması sonucu Arnavut kültürel hareketinin tepkisel olarak siyasallaşmaya başladığı süreç ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca Arnavut milliyetçiliğinin en önemli figürleri olacak olan Frasheri kardeşler (Naim, Şemseddin Sami), İsmail Kemal Vlora gibi şahsiyetlerin Yanya Zosimea Lisesi'nden mezun oldukları süreçten itibaren Arnavut kimlik inşasına verdikleri ilk katkılar ile Arnavut dilinin edebileşmesindeki öncü kişilik olan Konstantin Kristoforidhi'nin ilk Latince Arnavut alfabesini oluşturması çabalarına değinilmiştir. Son olarak 1876 sonrası dönemde ise Abdülhamid'in tahta çıkış tarihi ve aynı zamanda 'Doğu Sorunu' nun başladığı tarih olan 1876 tarihinden itibaren Arnavutların, bağımsızlıklarını



kazanan diğer Balkan uluslarının kendilerinin tarihi toprakları üzerindeki tehditlerine karşı Osmanlı devletinden temel siyasi talebi olan 'Arnavutluk Vilayeti' nin kurulması talebi, Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı sonrası 1878' de toplanan 'Prizren Birliği'nin yapısı ve Arnavut milliyetçiliği açısından önemi anlatıldıktan sonra, Abdülhamid'in Arnavut politikasının temelleri ve Sadrazam Saffet Paşanın bu politikadaki rolü açıklanmıştır. Bu politika, Arnavutların bulunduğu bölgelerde tarımın geliştirilmesi, sınırlarda yaşayan Arnavutların vergiden muaf tutulması, zorunlu askerliğin şeklinin değiştirilmesi şeklinde özetlenebilir. Saffet Paşa, Arnavutları, komşularının kendilerini yok etme arzusuna karşılık bu tehditten ancak imparatorluğun himayesiyle kurtulacaklarına dair bir propaganda ile ikna etmeyi amaçlamıştır.

Kitabın üçüncü kısmında ilk olarak 'Makedon İç Devrimci Örgütü'nün güç kazanmasının ardından daha da görünür olan 'Makedon Sorunu'na değinilmiş, burada Arnavutların kendi topraklarına yönelik algıladıkları büyük tehdit ve Osmanlı yönetiminin bu tehdit karşısındaki lakaytlığının Arnavut beyleri arasında Osmanlı'nın yıkılacağına dair inancın kuvvetlenmesine yol açtığı tespiti yapılmıştır. Bu kısmın ikinci önemli tespiti, 1897-1908 arasında en az kırk altı yeni gazete veya derginin daha çıkmaya başlamasıyla matbuatta yaşanan hızlı gelişme ve bunun Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin gelişimine yaptığı olağanüstü katkısıdır. Clayer, yine bu süreçte Arnavut Milliyetçilerinin Jön Türkler ile kurdukları ilişkiyi dikkat çekerek İsmail Kemal, İbrahim Temo, Derviş Hima, Şahin Kolonja, Necip Draga gibi milliyetçiliğin öncü şahsiyetlerinin aynı zamanda Jön Türk hareketi ve sonrasında İttihat Terakki Cemiyeti'nde de önde gelen kişiler olduğunun tespitinde bulunmuştur. Sonrasında İsmail Kemal'in başını çektiği, 'ulusal soruna Avrupa müdahalesini amaçlayan grup' ile Ahmed Rıza'nın başını çektiği Türkçülüğe meyleden grup arasındaki görüş ayrılıkları vurgulanarak, gelişen Arnavut milliyetçiliği ile Türk milliyetçiliğinin karşılıklı reaksiyon içerisine girdiği süreç detaylı olarak anlatılmıştır. 1908 yılına gelindiğinde ordudaki İttihatçılar ve İttihat Terakki Cemiyeti'nin şubeleri içerisinde Arnavutların önemli şekilde temsil edildiği tespitinin yapılmasından sonra kısmın sonunda Clayer'in, Avusturya-Macaristan ile İtalya'nın ve komşu Balkan devletlerinin etkin politikası sayesinde, Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin 1896'dan sonra gösterdiği gelişmelerin bu devletler olmasa gerçekleşmeyeceğine dair iddiası oldukça kritiktir.

Dördüncü kısım, Arnavutça matbuata yapılan baskı ve milliyetçiliğin yükselişinin yavaşlamasının nedenlerinin açıklanmasıyla başlar. Baskıya rağmen Arnavutça yazılı basında örneğin 'Drita', 'Albania' gibi gazeteler

Arnavutların yoğun oldukları şehirlere ulaşmaya devam etmiştir. Bu süreçte Manastır ve Selanik'te gizli bir Arnavut komitesi kurulmuş, bu komite ağırlıklı olarak Arnavutça okuma-yazma faaliyetlerinin yürütülmesi, propaganda ve matbuatın dağıtılması işlerini yürütmüştür. Bu komitenin ardından bu defa "*Arnavutluk'un Özgürlüğü İçin Arnavutların Komitesi*" kurulmuş ve bunu art arda kurulan çete faaliyetleri izlemiştir. 1906'da Çerçiz Topulli idaresindeki bir çete Korçe metropolitini öldürmüştür, 1908'de de aynı çete Ergiri jandarma komutanına suikast gerçekleştirmiştir. Bu çete daha sonra 1908 Meşrutiyet Devrimi sırasında dağa çıkan ve aynı zamanda bir Arnavut olan Resneli Niyazi'ye de önemli bir destek sağlamışlardır. Arnavutların 'Meşrutiyet Devrimi'ne katkısı bununla sınırlı kalmamış, 1908 yılında Ferizovik'te Arnavutların yoğun olarak katıldığı bir protesto hareketinin, İTC (İttihat Terakki Cemiyeti) mensubu Arnavut beyler tarafından manipüle edilmesi sonrası Yıldız Sarayı'na Kanun-ı Esasi'nin ilan edilmesine yönelik yoğun olarak çekilen telgraflar meşrutiyetin ilan edilmesinde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Clayer, Kanun-ı Esasi'nin ilanından sonraki İTC ile Arnavut Milliyetçileri arasındaki ilişkiyi üç döneme ayırmıştır. Birinci dönem Bosna-Hersek'in Avusturya-Macaristan tarafından ilhak edildiği Ekim 1908'den 1909 sonbaharına kadar sürmüştür, 1909 ilkbaharındaki karşı-devrimin (31-Mart ayaklanması) ardından da süreç başka bir noktaya evrilmiştir. Bu dönem Arnavut milliyetçilerinin örgütlenmeye, Jön Türklerin de perde arkasından onun kontrolünü ele geçirmeye veya zayıflatmaya uğraştığı bir dönem olarak değerlendirilmiştir. 1909 sonbaharından 1910 ilkbaharına kadar süren ikinci evre, iki taraf arasında açık çatışma dönemidir. 1910 ilkbaharından 1911 yılının başına kadar uzanan son evre ise Arnavut Milliyetçilerinin parçalanma dönemidir. İki grup arasındaki ilişkiyi etkileyen faktörler olarak; başta İTC'nin Osmanlı'yı bir arada tutma ve bunu yaparken dini yapıları da kullandığı birlik politikası ile Arnavut milliyetçilerinin buna şiddetle karşı çıkışı, sonrasında milliyetçilerin gücünü kıramayan İTC'nin sertlik politikasına, özellikle de Arnavutların kültüründe büyük bir hakaret olarak algılanan silahların toplanması politikasına başvurması, Arnavutların Latin alfabesi kullanma talebine karşılık İTC'nin Arnavutlara Arap harflerini kullanmalarına yönelik yaptığı baskı ve son olarak müzakerelerin sonuçsuz kalmasıyla yoğunlaşan silahlı çatışmalar olarak gösterilmiştir. Yine de bu süreçte İTC, örneğin Hellenizmi durdurmak için Yunan sınırına yakın Arnavut bölgelerde Arnavut milliyetçiliğinin denetim altında gelişmesine izin vermiş hatta bölgedeki Müslüman ahaliye silah dahi dağıtmıştır. Dördüncü kısmın son bölümünde, Arnavutların Meclisi Mebusan çatısındaki faaliyetleri ve İTC tarafından engellenmeleri, İTC ile yaşanan sürtüşme sonucu muhaliflerin Hürriyet ve İtilaf fırkasında toplanması ancak İTC'nin meclisi dağıtarak seçime giderken bir yandan da

seçimde yaptığı açık usulsüzlükler sonucu 1912'de Kosova' da başlayan isyan hareketi incelenmiştir. Son olarak Birinci Balkan Savaşı'nda Osmanlı'nın artık bölgede tutunamayacağını anlaşıldığından 'Büyük Güçler'in yardımıyla bağımsız Arnavutluk Prenslığı'nin kurulması çabası irdelenerek kitabın dördüncü kısmı tamamlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın yapısı ve içeriği ile ilgili verdiğim bilgilerden sonra bazı hususlardaki eleştirilerimi iletmek isterim. Öncelikle kitabın 'Giriş' bölümünde yer alan; "*Kosova' da bir Arnavut ulusal kimliğinin inşası Titocu Yugoslavya çerçevesinde boyutlanan, çok daha yakın tarihli bir hadisedir*" (sf.2) şeklindeki değerlendirme oldukça eksik bir değerlendirmedir. Kosovalı Arnavutların önde gelenlerinden bir grup, I. Dünya Savaşı sonrası Arnavutluk devletinin sınırları dışında kalan Kosova'da, 1915'te bu sınır kararlarına karşı bir araya gelmiş ve 1918'deki Sırp işgalinden sonra 'Kosova Komitesi' (*Komiteti i Mbrojte Kombetare e Kosoves*) adını alan bir komite kurulmuştur. Kosova'nın özgürleştirilmesi ve tüm Arnavutların birliğini amaçlayan bu yapı, Osmanlı dönemindeki Arnavut isyanı sırasında da aktif rol alan ve daha sonra Arnavutluk hükümetinde de fiili olarak bulunacak olan Hasan Priştina, Bajram Curri gibi Kosovalı beylerin önderliğinde hareket ederek 'Kaçak Hareketi' adı verilen silahlı bir direniş hareketine evrilmiş ve yeni kurulan 'Sırp-Hırvat-Sloven Krallığı'na karşı Azem Bejta önderliğinde silahlı mücadeleye başlamıştır. Sırp'ların isyan politikasını büyük ölçüde engellemeyi başaran hareket ancak 1927 yılında bastırılabilmiştir. Bunun dışında 1942 yılında kurulan ve Kosova'nın Arnavutluk sınırlarına dahil edilmesini amaçlayan 'Balli Kombetar' örgütü de cumhuriyetçi ve milliyetçi bir örgüt olarak, Kosova'da Shaban Polluzha önderliğinde 1944 yılında Partizanlara karşı yürütülen silahlı mücadelenin temelini oluşturmuştur. Görüldüğü üzere Arnavutluk devletinin kurulması ile Tito Yugoslavyası arasındaki dönemde Kosova' da Arnavut milliyetçi mücadelesi kesintiye uğramadan devam etmiş ve Clayer'in bahsettiği 'Yugoslavya dönemindeki Arnavut Kimlik İnşası' sürecinin temellerini 'Tito Yugoslavyası' ndan önce oluşturmuştur.

Clayer'in bu hatalı değerlendirmesinin sebebi kanımca kendisinin modern milliyetçilik kuramı gereği savunduğu "*Eğitim ve okul ağı olmadan ulusal kimlik inşasının olanaksız olması*" yargısından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ancak kısaca bahsettiğim bu direniş hareketlerindeki Arnavut milliyetçiliği özelliği, eğitimden çok Kosova'daki ve özellikle Drenica bölgesindeki Arnavutların içe kapalı ve milli özelliklerini sıkı sıkıya koruyan yapısından kaynaklanmış, zaten 20.yy sonunda Kosova'nın bağımsızlığıyla sonuçlanacak siyasi ve silahlı mücadele sürecinde bu bölgedeki Arnavutlar önemli bir rol oynamıştır.

Son olarak, yazarın on yıllık bir araştırma süresince, çok sayıda kaynak kullanarak, Arnavut kimlik inşa sürecini farklı açılardan incelediğini ve bu çok yönlü yaklaşımın da kitabın objektif ve gerçeğe odaklanmış bakış açısını oluşturduğunu söylemek isterim.

