

PSEUDO-JANISSARISM (*YENİÇERİLİK İDDİASI*) IN THE OTTOMAN PROVINCES (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ADANA): ITS EMERGENCE AND ITS GEOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS

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Abstract

The privileged status of the Janissaries and the economic/military conditions prevalent in the Ottoman Empire prompted thousands of Muslims to claim a position in the Janissary Corps, often through illegal means. In this article we investigate an important aspect of this process, which we call “pseudo-Janissarism”, and the way it spread on the Ottoman periphery, and discuss the case of Adana, which offers us the opportunity to analyze the social and economic composition of pseudo-Janissaries in the above-mentioned region. We first present a general assessment of the phenomenon in the period from 1600 to 1735, addressing the issue of its rise and early geographical expansion in the empire, its perception by the Ottoman administration, and the reasons behind its development. We claim that the rising numbers of both officially registered Janissaries and pretenders could change the internal dynamics in provincial towns, shape their local politics, and create various struggles over their economic resources. Considering pseudo-Janissarism as a mechanism of tax evasion and provincial networking, we subsequently elaborate on the case study of Adana’s pseudo-Janissaries, who became an important local political pressure group in the course of the eighteenth century, and discuss their socioeconomic profile, with the help of various archival sources.

Keywords: Pseudo-Janissaries, Janissaries, Adana, tax evasion, soldier recruitment

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Osmanlı Taşrasında Yeniçerilik İddiası ve Adana Örneği: Ortaya Çıkışı, Coğrafi Dağılımı ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Yönleri

Öz

Yeniçerilerin imtiyazlı statüleri ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda hüküm süren iktisadi/askeri koşullar, binlerce Müslüman tebaayı genellikle kaidelere aykırı yollardan da olsa Yeniçeri Ocağı'na girmeye sevk etmiştir. Bu makalede, sözü geçen sürecin önemli bir unsuru olan yeniçerilik iddiasının on yedinci ve on sekizinci Osmanlı taşrasında yayılma süreci incelenecek ve Adana örneği üzerinden yeniçerilik iddiasında bulunan bazı şahısların sosyal ve ekonomik profili analiz edilecektir. Bu maksatla, öncelikle 1600-1735 yıllarını kapsayan mühimme defterlerindeki verilere dayanarak, yeniçerilik iddiasının ortaya çıkışı, söz konusu dönemdeki coğrafi dağılımı, Osmanlı idarecileri tarafından algılanışı ile yayılmasındaki muhtelif faktörler tartışılacaktır. Ocağa kayıtlı gerçek yeniçerilerle yeniçerilik iddiasında bulunanların gittikçe artan sayısı, özellikle taşradaki birçok şehrin iç dinamiklerini değiştirerek, taşra siyasetine yön vermiş, bu şehirlerdeki siyasi güç ve kısıtlı ekonomik kaynaklar için yeni mücadeleler doğurmuştur. Bu süreci daha iyi anlamak üzere, vergi muafiyeti elde etme ve taşra ağlarına eklenme mekanizması olarak değerlendirdiğimiz yeniçerilik iddiasının on sekizinci yüzyıl Adanası'ndaki yansımalarına bakılacaktır. Söz konusu dönemde, yeniçerilik iddiasında bulunan ve kentın önemli bir parçası haline gelen kişilerin sosyal ve ekonomik kimlikleri üzerine bir sondaj çalışması yapılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yeniçerilik iddiası, yeniçeriler, Adana, vergi muafiyeti, asker alımı

Introduction

The term pseudo-Janissarism (*yeniçerilik iddiası*) refers to the act of claiming a full Janissary identity by people who were either only drafted Janissary conscripts (being unpaid in times of peace), or were non-Janissaries who had never been officially accepted by the Janissary Corps but pretended to be members of it. The first category is often referred to in the sources as *çalık* Janissaries and the second as *taslakçıs*.¹

The phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism seems to have first appeared on the Ottoman periphery in the late sixteenth century² and was connected to two

¹ For the distinction between these two categories in the late eighteenth century, see Ignace Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'empire ottoman*, Volume 7, Paris 1824, p. 332.

² For a reference to the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism in the provinces in the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, see *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân: Yeniçeri Kanunları*, (ed. Tayfun Toroser), Istanbul 2008, p. 82. For a few cases of pseudo-Janissarism from the second half of the sixteenth century, see Linda T. Darling, "Crime among the Janissaries in the Ottoman Golden Age", *Ottoman War and Peace. Studies in Honor of Virginia H. Aksan*, (eds. Frank Castiglione, Ethan L. Menchinger, and Veysel Şimşek), Leiden and Boston 2020, p. 20-22. Also, for a case from 1594,

major turning points in the history of the Janissary Corps: (a) its gradual opening toward Muslim society as the *devşirme* waned and new recruitment categories started taking its place, and (b) the increasing decentralization of the corps' administrative structure. In a nutshell, the first phenomenon refers to the increasing acceptance of Muslim-born Ottoman subjects in the corps, a practice that helped the numbers of officially registered Janissaries to sky-rocket from 10-13,000 between the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries to around 50,000 in the second half of the seventeenth century, and to more than 100,000 in the beginning of the nineteenth century.³ Additionally to these permanent enrollments, in times of war the Ottoman government also gave permission for the temporary recruitment as Janissaries of a great number of volunteers, sons of Janissaries (*keuloğlus*), and formerly enrolled soldiers who had been ousted from the corps, augmenting the number of Janissary affiliates and boosting the connection of provincial societies with the Janissary organization even further. The second phenomenon (decentralization of the corps' structure), on the other hand, refers to the increasing diffusion of Janissary forces on the Ottoman periphery and – more importantly – to the consolidation of the presence of particular Janissary regiments in specific provinces by the mid eighteenth century.⁴

The development of pseudo-Janissarism was also a reflection of a wider process which was taking place all around the empire from at least the late sixteenth century onward, namely the expansion of the *askeri* class, which included various categories, such as timariots, *seyyids*, and a number of other religious, administrative, and military functionaries.⁵ This expansion was an expression of the desire of large segments of the Ottoman society to break away from their *reaya* status and gain access to financial privileges and social mobility, even if that meant cheating their way into one of the many categories which formed the colorful group of *askeris*. Janissaries were only one of these categories, yet they arguably held the most prominent place in the above-mentioned process, which we will be referring to as “*askerization*”.

Askerization represents only one manifestation of the multiple changes that the Ottoman Empire underwent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

see Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Bab-ı Asaflı Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Mühimme Defterleri (A.DVNSMHHM.d) 72:35, order no. 59 (24 Ca 1002/February 15, 1594).

³ Antonis Anastasopoulos and Yannis Spyropoulos, “Soldiers on an Ottoman Island: The Janissaries of Crete, Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Centuries”, *Turkish Historical Review*, 8/1, (2017), p. 2. The total number of officially registered Janissary pay-tickets in 1815/6 and 1818/9 were 114,497 and 109,706 respectively; Mehmet Mert Sunar, *Cauldron of Dissent: A Study of the Janissary Corps, 1807-1826*, SUNY-Binghamton, Ph.D, New York 2006, p. 57.

⁴ Yannis Spyropoulos, “Janissary Politics on the Ottoman Periphery (18th-Early 19th c.)”, *Halcyon Days in Crete IX: Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire*, (ed. Marinos Sariyannis), Rethymno 2019, p. 449-458.

⁵ For this process and an analysis of who was considered to be an *askeri* by the Ottoman administration, see Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: Ayntab in the 17th Century*, Leiden and Boston 2007, p. 61-67.

These changes, which were once interpreted within the framework of an Ottoman institutional “decline”, are now viewed by the relevant literature as having been part of a broad transformation, many elements of which had deep roots in the so-called classical period of the empire. As far as the Janissaries are concerned, for instance, the works of Mustafa Akdağ and Cemal Kafadar have shown that various elements which were seen as indicative examples of the corps’ institutional decline, such as the participation of soldiers in entrepreneurial activities, had, in fact, already been present since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶ By the same token, phenomena like venality and the outsourcing of tax-collection, which are going to be discussed in this article as factors that played a role in the development of pseudo-Janissarism, came to be understood as transformative processes crucial for the creation of the modern state and not as epiphenomena of an all-encompassing institutional downturn.⁷

The commercialization of *askeri* titles was a phenomenon which can be witnessed as early as the late sixteenth century.⁸ However, it seems that it was the prevalence of new methods of recruitment and taxation in the second half of the seventeenth century that led an unprecedented number of Muslims to pursue an *askeri* affiliation, often through illegal means. The widespread application of *tashih be-dergab* enrollment calls and *malikane* tax-farming auctions acted respectively as pull and push factors leading in this direction by enhancing local agency and venality in the process of recruitment and prompting a great number of Ottoman subjects to escape the ever-increasing demands of tax-farmers.⁹ As we will explain,

⁶ Mustafa Akdağ, “Yeniçeri Ocak Nizamının Bozuluşu”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 5/3, (1947), p. 291-312; Cemal Kafadar, “On the Purity and Corruption of the Janissaries”, *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 15/2, (1991), p. 273-280.

⁷ Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime Revisited: ‘Privatization’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Politics and Society*, 21/4, (1993), p. 393-423.

⁸ See, for instance, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, *Füsûl-i hall ü aked ve usûl-i harc ü nakd (İslam devletleri tarihi, 622-1599)*, (ed. Mustafa Demir), Istanbul 2006, p. 142-143.

⁹ The literature on *tashih be-dergab* is very limited, partially owing to the disproportioned emphasis that scholars have assigned to other recruitment methods, such as the *nefir-i am*, which gained importance in the eighteenth century, and to the rise of military forces such as the *sarıca* and *sekbân*, which were seen as actors of military and social transformation; for a general overview of Ottoman recruitment strategies, see Virginia H. Aksan, “Ottoman Military Recruitment Strategies in the Late Eighteenth Century”, *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia, 1775-1925*, (ed. Eric J. Zürcher), London 1999, p. 21-39. For the role that the recruitment of irregular troops played in the empire’s social transformation, see Halil İnalçık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 6, (1980), p. 283-313; Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, London 1999, p. 190-191. For the most recent and comprehensive analysis on *tashih be-dergab* yet, see Abdulkasim Gül, *18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı*, Atatürk University, Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Ph.D, Erzurum, 2020, p. 108-123. The tax reforms of the late seventeenth century, on the other hand, have been studied extensively. For a few indicative publications, see Ahmet Tabakoğlu, *Gerileme Dönemine Girerken Osmanlı Maliyesi*, Istanbul 1985, p.147-148 and *passim*; Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalm ve Değişim Dönemi*, Istanbul 1986, *passim*; Avdo Sućeska, “Mâlikâne: Lifelong Lease of Governmental Estates in the Ottoman State”, *Prilozi za Orijentalnu Filologiju*, 36, (1987),

to these two crucial determinants for the expansion of the *askerization* process, other factors, such as the circumstantial involvement of the empire in difficult and long wars¹⁰ and the political initiatives of Janissaries in the empire's capital,¹¹ can also be added as elements which played an important role in boosting the numbers of both full-time enrolled Janissaries and pseudo-Janissaries in the period under examination.

Our purpose in this article is not to investigate the complicated phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism as a whole or to explore its long-term repercussions on the economic/political activities of the Janissaries; our intention is rather, firstly, to focus on the way in which it spread on the Ottoman periphery during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and, secondly, to discuss the case of the pseudo-Janissaries of Adana. The latter will offer us the opportunity to depict the profound connection between the emergence of pseudo-Janissaries and the wider socio-economic transformation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as to analyze the social and economic composition of this group in the above-mentioned region.

In the first section of this paper we present an assessment of the phenomenon from 1600 to 1735, delving into the questions of the rise and early geographical expansion of pseudo-Janissarism on the Ottoman periphery, its perception by the Ottoman administration, and the reasons behind its development. In the Ottoman archives one can find several hundred references to the phenomenon, spread out between a variety of sources. However, for the purposes of the study of its expansion until 1735, we have decided to base our observations mainly on one type of source, namely the *mühimme defters* (registers of important affairs), which were being produced by the Ottoman Imperial Council (Divan-ı Hümayun). Given the great volume of *mühimmes* available and for reasons related to the feasibility of our research, the first half of the 1730s was chosen as a

p. 197-230; Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited", p. 393-423; Halil Sahillioğlu, "1683-1740 Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Hazine Gelir ve Gideri", *Osmanlı Maliyesi: Kurumlar ve Bütçeler*, (eds. Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar), İstanbul 2006, p. 149-165; K. Kıvanç Karaman and Şevket Pamuk, "Ottoman State Finances in European Perspective, 1500-1914", *Journal of Economic History*, 70/3, (2010), p. 593-629. For the application of the *malikane* system in the case of Adana, the area of our focus here, see Mehtap Ergenoğlu and İhsan Erdem Sofracı, "Osmanlı Mâlî Sisteminde Bir Gelir Tahsilatı Yöntemi Olarak Mâlikâne Uygulaması: XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yıllarında Adana Sancağı Örneği" *Çukurova Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3/2, (2017), p. 181-198.

¹⁰ For the wars of the second half of the seventeenth century and their impact, which, as will be explained, contributed to the rise of pseudo-Janissaries more than any other conflict in the period under examination, see Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, p. 1-11 and *passim*; Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans*, Santa Barbara, Denver, and Oxford 2009, 82 ff., and *passim*. For the latest and more comprehensive account of the second siege of Vienna (1683), which was followed by an overall restructuring of Janissary recruitment, see Kahraman Şakul, *II. Viyana Kuşatması: Yedi Başlı Ejderin Fendi*, İstanbul 2021.

¹¹ For the 1703 Edirne Vakası, which, as we will explain, played an important role in the recognition of a large number of pseudo-Janissaries as actual members of the corps, see Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics*, İstanbul 1984.

closing limit for their systematic examination, because of its proximity to a number of critical developments for the history of the Janissary Corps, namely the Patrona Halil Rebellion (1730), the outsourcing – sometime before 1736 – of the office of the paymaster of the Janissary organization to wealthy individuals from outside the corps, the subsequent legalization of the buying and selling of Janissary titles of payment in 1740, and the intensification of the decentralization of the corps' organization, a process which escalated around the same time.¹²

The main reason behind the choice of the *mühimme defters* as our source of focus in the article's first part is that they were uninterruptedly produced throughout the entire period under examination, allowing us access to a long sequence of registers covering the years 1600-1735.¹³ This fact gives us the opportunity to linearly track and compare any changes that occurred through time without worrying that a significant amount of data might be either misrepresented or lost due to reasons related to the inadequate preservation of the material and/or differences between the nature and typology of documents. That being noted, the *mühimmes* cannot and will not be used as censuses recording the actual size of pseudo-Janissarism, but rather as sources reflecting its subjective assessment by the authorities and those who petitioned them. Another feature of these sources that needs our attention is that they only record cases which could not be resolved locally and, thus, had to be adjudicated at the imperial court. These incidents represented only a fraction of the actual cases brought to provincial courts, as will also become obvious when we discuss the example of Adana, and their texts usually include far less detail than the cases mentioned in other types of locally produced administrative and judicial documents. All the same, despite the problems inherent in the study of *mühimmes*, the view they offer still constitutes an important index which can help us better understand the phenomenon's empire-wide sociopolitical impact during its formative years.

In order to provide a more focused and detailed analysis, based on a wider range of archival documents, in the second part of this paper we dwell on the example of Adana, a south Anatolian town in which pseudo-Janissarism made its appearance in the last decades of the seventeenth century and flourished in the century that followed. The court and *abkam* registers of Adana provide rich supplementary material which can help us trace the complicated process of the diffusion and numerical rise of these pseudo-Janissaries. In the *mühimme defters* (covering roughly the period 1600-1735), six records are related to the town's pseudo-Janissaries, reflecting only the most serious cases brought to the attention of the imperial authorities. These records are to be found for the period between 1695 and 1718 and demonstrate the gradual rise of the phenomenon in the region, which, however, did not become a source of intense local rivalries for the local population until 1718. At any rate, Ottoman sources inform us that the pseudo-

¹² Spyropoulos, "Janissary Politics", p. 451-452.

¹³ The *mühimme* registers examined here are nos. 75-141.

Janissaries' actual numbers exceeded several hundreds by the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century.¹⁴

The case of Adana allows us to shed more light on the reasons behind the spread of the phenomenon in southern Anatolia and on its socio-economic importance, while providing us, at the same time, with the opportunity to collect more systematic data which can help us reveal the actual identity of a number of these individuals. Adana was a largely agricultural economy and one of the earliest regions incorporated into the *malikane* system (1695),¹⁵ a tax-farming method the development of which seems to have gone hand in hand with the rise of pseudo-Janissarism in the Ottoman provinces. The Adana case thus offers a great opportunity to investigate the connection between the privatization of rural taxation and the claims of Janissary membership by people influenced by it. And last but not least, since Adana was also an area in which many people tried to infiltrate the *askeri* class by acquiring non-Janissary-related titles – most notably the title of *seyyid* – its examination gives us the chance to discuss pseudo-Janissarism as a part of the wider phenomenon of *askerization* of Muslims in the Ottoman provinces.

The rise of pseudo-Janissarism on the Ottoman periphery

a. Causes and development

In our research with the *mühimmes* covering the period from 1600 to 1735 we were able to locate 261 references to the activity of pseudo-Janissaries. In the vast majority of these cases the term used for the phenomenon is “*yeniçerilik iddiası*” (claim of being a Janissary), although in two cases from 1665 the term used for these individuals is “*yeniçeri namında [olan]*” (being a Janissary by name), while in three cases from 1706 and 1727 both the terms “*yeniçerilik iddiası*” and “*taslakçı/lük*” are used. In terms of the phenomenon's expansion through time, the data is quite revealing: for the greatest part of the seventeenth century references to it are extremely scarce, with only two recorded cases in the first decade (1605, 1609), two cases in 1665, one case in 1678, and two cases in 1679. However, in the last two decades of the century, and especially from 1688 onward, this picture changes dramatically, with 105 cases in the years between 1688 and 1700. This general trend-line remains high for around two decades and then drops in the years 1720-1735, retaining, however, a part of its earlier dynamic. What, then, could have prompted this abrupt change in the number of occurrences in the *mühimmes* in the last decades of the seventeenth century? In order to answer this question one has to understand the way in which the Ottoman administration perceived the

¹⁴ BOA, A.DVNSMHHM.d.127:270, order no. 1197 (evahir-i Z 1130/November 15-23, 1718).

¹⁵ More specifically, 95.29% of the revenues of the *sancak* of Adana (comprising 74 villages and *mezraas*) initially came from the agricultural sector. For further details of the application of the *malikane* system in Adana, see Ergenoğlu and Sofracı, “Mâlikâne Uygulaması”, p. 181-198.

phenomenon during those decades and its relation to the empire's pressuring military needs.

Until the late sixteenth century, the Janissaries formed a closed group of people – an elite guard of the sultan – the size and membership of which was strictly regulated by the central administration. However, from the 1580s onward, membership of the corps started opening to potential recruits through fast-track promotions of Muslims into its ranks.¹⁶ This development was a result of both military and political processes,¹⁷ but here we will mainly deal with the first, as they played a much more crucial role in the rise of pseudo-Janissarism in its early phase.

The military realities that the empire had been facing since its impressive growth during the sixteenth century created a pressing need for an increase in the military personnel employed on its advancing frontier, and new opportunities for those Muslims who wanted to participate in the empire's military apparatus. As mentioned earlier, *yeniçerilik iddiası* could refer not only to people who falsely claimed an official connection to the Janissaries, but also to unpaid draftees who were legally admitted into the corps. These recruits were being drafted from among volunteers, sons of Janissaries, and laid-off members of the corps, usually by commanders of Janissary provincial units (*serdars*),¹⁸ shock-troop-unit leaders (*serdengeçdi ağas*), and regimental officers (*orta zabiits*), on account of the empire's need to increase its military manpower.¹⁹ Their recruitment was taking place through mass enrollment calls called "*tashih be-dergal*" under the condition that during war-time they would be summoned by the above-mentioned Janissary officers as active Janissaries (*eşkinçis*).²⁰ Their recruitment was obligatory and its avoidance could be severely punished. As in the case of mercenary and irregular

¹⁶ Rhoads Murphey, "Yeñi Çeri", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, Volume 11, (eds. P. J. Bearman et al.), Leiden 2002, p. 326.

¹⁷ On the political aspects of this phenomenon, see Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge 2010, p. 177-182.

¹⁸ The *serdars* were commanders of Janissaries at the provincial level, commissioned to deal with issues that concerned the affairs of local troops and seize for the corps' treasury the properties of Janissaries who died heirless. Apart from policing the regions under their control, they were also responsible for the summoning and recruitment of soldiers for imperial campaigns, supplying the army with pack animals and grain, as well as protecting the pilgrims and the merchants passing through their region of jurisdiction. For further details, see Saim Yörük, *XV/III. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Adana Şebri*, Ankara 2015, p. 71-74.

¹⁹ *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, p. 82; Gül, *18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı*, p. 97-105.

²⁰ For a case of such a voluntary recruitment described by Fındıklılı Şem'dânizâde Süleyman Efendi, who in 1771 was put in charge of enrolling 1,500 Janissaries in the area of Tokat, see Şemdanizade Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi, *Miir'it-Tenârih*, Volume 2/B, (ed. Münir Aktepe), İstanbul 1980, p. 61. This incident is also described in Virginia H. Aksan, "Whatever Happened to the Janissaries? Mobilization for the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman War", *War in History*, 5/1, (1998), p. 34-35. Uzunçarşılı and Aksan suggest that *levend* (local irregular bands) and *serdengeçdi* forces (shock troops and reserves) constituted two of the sources of Janissary recruitment in the second half of the eighteenth century; *ibid.*, p. 26, 35; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtından Kapıkınlı Ocakları*, Volume 1, Ankara 1988, p. 618-619.

troops (*sekbân, levend*), following each war a number of these recruits managed to become full-time Janissaries, but most of them would be left out of the payrolls as unpaid draftees upon the completion of campaigns, only to be summoned again for the next war.²¹ The process of striking out the names of these part-time Janissaries from the payrolls when their services were no longer required was called “*esami/esame çalmak*” and the persons who were left out were tagged “*çalık yeniçeriler*”.

Until 1703 the exact official status of such Janissary draftees in times of peace was not clearly determined. Upon the completion of each campaign, these pseudo-Janissaries were often reduced to the status of *reaya* and stripped of all tax exemptions associated with an *askeri* membership. It seems, though, that many of them continued to illegally claim a Janissary affiliation in peace time while exercising their old professions. This ambiguous status was eventually addressed following the Edirne Revolt (Edirne Vakası) of 1703 which exercised enough pressure on Sultan Ahmed III to finally recognize the non-permanently enrolled Janissary affiliates as having the same privileges as full-time Janissaries, despite maintaining a distinction between them. Following this development, *çalık* Janissaries were considered to be exempt from all *reaya* taxes (*raiyyet rüsumu*) at all times and regardless of their participation in campaigns, although they still had to prove, like all *askeris*, that they were combatants (*sefer-eşer, seferli, sefer-ber*) in order to avoid paying the various extraordinary taxes imposed at the imperial or provincial level.²²

Prior to the 1703 rebellion, however, the position of these pseudo-Janissaries was quite precarious. Although they were connected to the corps through its networks and their war-time commitment to it, the official acknowledgement of their affiliation was dependent on circumstantial political decisions and, as the *mühimmes* clearly demonstrate, their unwillingness to participate in campaigns was not easily tolerated by the central administration. A lot of this pressure, however, seems to have been alleviated following the years 1699 and 1700, which saw an end to the empire’s war with the Holy League and the Russians, and the subsequent dethronement of Mustafa II by the Janissaries (1703), which, as mentioned earlier, led to a more favorable treatment of *çalık* Janissaries by his successor, Ahmed III. Given the central administration’s acquiescence to not punishing the truant pseudo-Janissaries following these events, we can easily understand that persecutions are more likely to be found in *mühimme* entries preceding the eighteenth century. Indeed, if we examine the reasoning provided by the imperial orders for the persecution of pseudo-Janissaries in the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 330-331, 618-619; D’Ohsson, *Tableau général*, p. 332.

²² Gül, *18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı*, p. 95, 123, 780. For a source explaining the obligation of non-combatant *askeris* to pay “the *avarız*, the *bedel-i niüzül*, the *celeb-keşan-ı ağnam*, the *imdad-ı barçariyye* for the *valis*, and the rest of the extraordinary taxes (*tekâlif-i örfiyye ve şakka*)”, see BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.130:196, order no. 587 (evail-i Za 1133/September 12-21, 1721).

years from 1688 to 1700, we can see that desertion and truancy problems constituted an often-repeated motif, with at least 25 cases referring to soldiers who refrained from marching to the front when called upon to do so by the government (Graph 1); this pattern subsequently drops off in the eighteenth century.

Needless to say, truancy and desertion are problems for all armies in all historical periods.²³ However, the almost complete lack of references to these phenomena in *mühimmes* prior to the late 1680s points to the fact that the intensifying implementation of the above-mentioned changes in Janissary recruitment were connected to an increase in the number of such cases. Indeed, the ongoing state of war following the second siege of Vienna (1683) led to the unprecedented enrollment of several thousand Janissaries every year through *tashih be-dergab* calls, increasing the number of *çahke* Janissaries to around 200,000 by the end of the seventeenth century,²⁴ and it seems no coincidence that it is exactly during that time that the *mühimme defters* record most of the cases of pseudo-Janissary truancy and desertion.

The wrath of the Ottoman administration against those who claimed a Janissary status but refused to fulfill their service was totally justified given the circumstances: in 1685 the Morea was conquered by the Venetians, in 1688 Belgrade fell into the hands of the Habsburgs, and, following the siege of Vienna in 1683, the four major opponents of the empire on the western/northern front, namely Venice, Austria, Poland, and Russia, formed the Holy League (Sacra Ligua), an “*unprecedented quadripartite offensive alliance*”.²⁵ The Holy League was threatening enough at the diplomatic level, but – most importantly – it forced the Ottomans to reorganize and remobilize their army four times over the course of the campaigns until the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699. Furthermore, it discouraged the active participation of Tatar forces – amounting to approximately 40-100,000 troops – in the Ottoman defense of Hungary, since from 1687 onward the Tatars were occupied defending the northern front against Russia’s offensive.²⁶ Under these conditions it is only natural that the Ottoman government felt the need to deal harshly with any cases of desertion which arose among its soldiers.

In other words, the increased need for troops during the two last decades of the seventeenth century drove the Ottoman government to search hastily and *en masse* for Janissary recruits. Given the decline of the *devşirme*, the large-scale and quick-fire implementation of *tashih be-dergab* enrollment calls helped many Muslims

²³ For a reference to Janissary deserters during the war for Kandiye, see Paul Ricaut, *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire: Containing the Maxims of the Turkish Polity, the Most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion, Their Sects and Heresies, Their Convents and Religious Votaries. Their Military Discipline, with an Exact Computation of Their Forces Both by Sea and Land*, London 1686, p. 369-372.

²⁴ Gül, *18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı*, p. 93, 112, 114.

²⁵ Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, p. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9-10; Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870*, Harlow 2007, p. 18.

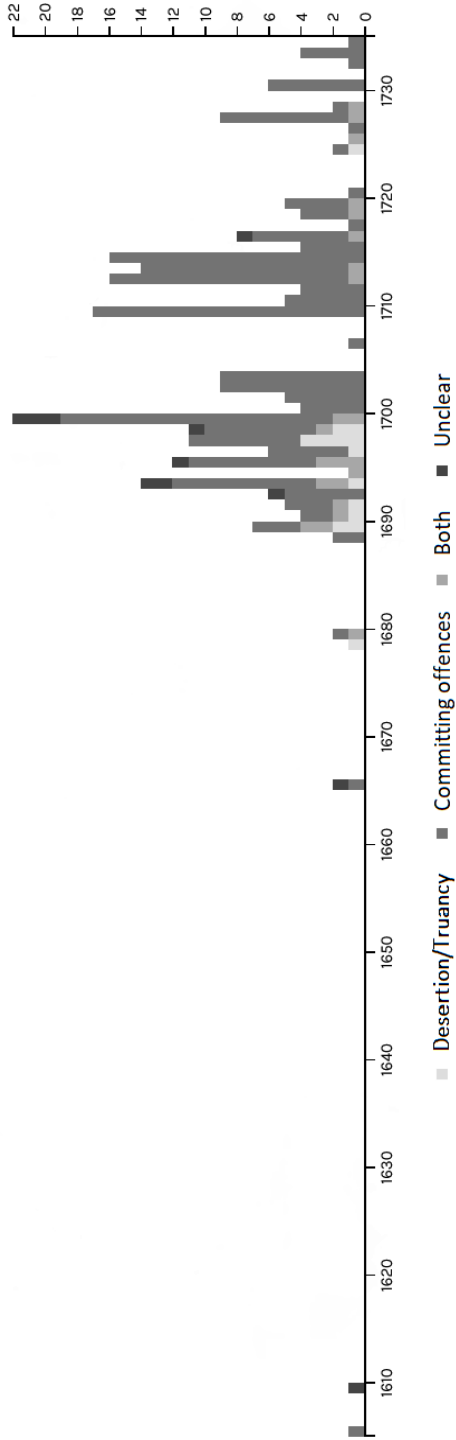
find their way into the corps. However, it also seems that a number of those people who aspired to be Janissaries found it difficult to cope with the hardships of life on the battlefield. Furthermore, the empire's worsening financial condition often resulted in supply issues and privation which, in turn, led to mobilization problems.²⁷ All of these facts seem to have been directly correlated with the rise in the figures of truants and deserters tagged as pseudo-Janissaries by the Ottoman central administration in the following years.

In any case, the orders about draftees deserting or avoiding recruitment still constitute only an approximate 24% of the overall cases referring to pseudo-Janissarism from 1688 to 1700, the majority being connected to phenomena of criminality, banditry, and other offences, including economic ones, such as avoiding taxation (see Graph 1). There is a possibility that the empire's pressing military needs forced the government to devote attention to the phenomenon, leading it to address all transgressive behaviors stemming from it. All the same, most of the imperial orders are presented as responses from the center to petitions sent by the populations of various areas who complained about the increasing illegal activity of pseudo-Janissaries in their regions, a fact that leads us to believe that the rise in the number of cases was not so much the result of a centrally organized plan to deal with mobilization issues, but mainly the reflection of an actual escalation of the phenomenon itself and of the socioeconomic developments it triggered within provincial societies.

Various data coming from centrally produced sources other than the *mühimme defters* show that in the eighteenth century the cases of punishment of pseudo-Janissaries for avoiding recruitment diminished significantly, with an almost absolute majority of imperial orders targeting their criminal behavior. In fact, the connection between the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism and officially recruited Janissary draftees avoiding or fleeing the front continues to be weak even following the recommencement of war on the western front in 1768, after a hiatus of almost three decades.²⁸ It is only in 1790, during the course of the wars with Austria (1788-1791) and Russia (1787-1792), that the Ottoman government started once again to associate the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism with the problem of truancy, and called for "*those who claim to be Janissaries and askeris*" to be brought

²⁷ Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, p. 27. For a similar issue in 1771, see Aksan, "Whatever Happened to the Janissaries?", p. 34-35.

²⁸ See, for instance, BOA, Cevdet Askeriye (C.AS) 1110/49123 (22 R 1183/August 25, 1769); Cevdet Zabtiye (C.ZB) 90/4490 (11 R 1193/April 28, 179); Cevdet Maliye (C.ML) 285/11708 (19 Ca 1194/May 23, 1780); Ali Emiri Abdülhamid I (AE.SABH.I) 153/10255 (20 R 1193/May 7, 1779); 342/23872 (25 Ş 1190/October 9, 1776); 35/2657 (20 B 1197/June 21, 1783). However, the lack of centrally produced sources referring to the phenomenon of truancy and desertion among Janissary draftees from that period should not be interpreted as an indication of suspension of Janissary enrollment for the war against Russia. In Aleppo, for instance, there was a significant increase in the number of Janissary recruits following 1768; Herbert L. Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo 1720-1826*, Chapel Hill 1963, p. 61-62.



Graph 1: Reasons for the persecution of pseudo-Janissaries (1600-1735)

to the front.²⁹ The reasons behind this revival are not clear, but the renewed correlation of pseudo-Janissarism and desertion might have been the result of a culmination of military, fiscal, and political concerns.³⁰ In any case, the general impression given by centrally produced sources is that for the entire eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries *yeniçerilik iddiası* was used by the central administration mostly to describe the actions of Janissary affiliates with non-military-related transgressive behavior.³¹

The picture we thus get is that warfare seems to have prompted a steep rise of the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism in the late seventeenth century and, as the case of Adana will also exemplify, that enrollment for campaigns continued to play a role in its development, most notably in the early and late eighteenth century. However, it also becomes evident that pseudo-Janissarism could be detached from any war-related determinants and still retain a great part of its vigor. One might ask, thus, which were the factors that contributed to the preservation of this dynamic even in times of peace? The answer to this question would be the various socio-economic advantages that an affiliation – even if nominal – to the corps brought with it.

Membership of the corps offered a number of advantages. As we explain when discussing the case of Adana, tax exemptions were perhaps the most important reason why various segments of the Ottoman society – especially those belonging to the poorest social strata – aspired to affiliate themselves with the corps. According to one's social position and occupation, however, other benefits, such as the access to local political and economic networks, inter-provincial connections, and the corps' status of jurisdictional autonomy, could also play an important role. Special jurisdiction, for instance, blocked any interference on the

²⁹ “*bi-mennibi taala işbu ervel baharda sinin-i salıfeye kıyas olunmayub gerek Asitane-i Aliyye’de ve gerek taşrada sahib-i esami olub yeniçerilik ve askerilik iddia edenlerin biri gerü kalmamak üzere iktiza edenlere tenbih ve tekid*”; BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun (HAT) 1388/55236 (29 Z 1204/July 9, 1790). Also see BOA, C.AS.42/1949 (29 C 1204/Mart 16, 1790).

³⁰ At the military level, it is possible that the alarmingly low Janissary participation during the 1768-1774 Russian campaign prompted the Ottoman government to adopt a stricter policy toward truancy in the following wars. At the same time, Selim III's ascension to the throne led the reform agenda of the sultan's advisors to address the problem of certificates circulating in the hands of non-combatant pseudo-Janissaries. Finally, the unprecedented debasement of currency in 1788-1789, which had an impact on Janissary salaries, may have also played a role in the latter's unwillingness to march to the front. For the problem of low Janissary participation during the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war and the reforms of Selim III, see Aksan, “Whatever Happened to the Janissaries?”, p. 27 and *passim*. For the currency debasement of 1788-1789, see Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2000, p. 163, 170-171.

³¹ The last time when the term *yeniçerilik iddiası* was used to characterize the actions of officially recruited Janissaries again was after the corps' abolition in 1826 and the vicious pursuit of its ex-members who resisted surrender to the authorities. See, for instance, BOA, C.AS.596/25109 (29 Za 1241/July 5, 1826); HAT.426/21862 D (29 Z 1242/July 24, 1827); 426/21862 G (30 M 1242/September 3, 1826); 426/21862 R (29 Z 1242/July 24, 1827); 739/35042 (7 L 1242/May 4, 1827).

part of Ottoman officials in the entrepreneurial activities of all sorts of professionals, be they tax-farmers, guild members, merchants, or large estate owners, making a connection to the Janissary Corps a useful way to support one's business.³² As the popularity of Janissary patronage grew, an ever-increasing number of people tried to secure a position in the corps' networks, often bribing their way into them. This rising trend worked well for many Janissary officers, who were more than eager to increase their following, which not only secured them a good income but also augmented their socio-political leverage within local societies.

Janissary regiments, however, could not accept an infinite number of recruits into their payrolls, as the corps' overall budget and the number of its troops were limited by the central administration's efforts to keep state expenditures under control. Often, the illegal accumulation and selling of deceased soldiers' pay-tickets to Janissary wannabes managed to secure payroll positions for some followers of regiments,³³ but the number of Janissary aspirants seems to have been far greater than the available slots. The answer to this practical problem was, thus, found in the unofficial enrollment of those interested through the conclusion of shady arrangements with officers at the regimental level. Through these arrangements, the patron officers saw to the issuance of documents which certified the pretender's enrollment in the Janissary Corps. These certificates were called *sofa tezkiresi* (anteroom certificates) and were used both by the genuine and the false members of the corps as proof of their Janissary identity.³⁴ The difference between the two was that the pretenders bore only a *sofa tezkiresi* but not an *esame*;³⁵ thus, they were not included in the payrolls of the central Janissary administration and were not entitled to any salary.³⁶ However, in practice, they enjoyed the same

³² Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 207. For a characteristic example from Kandiye, where in 1824 the shop owners of the island's three cities, all of whom, according to the local governor, were Janissaries, occupied the shops of Christians with the support and protection of their officers, see BOA, HAT.843/37888 G. A few years earlier, Austrian traveler Sieber was reporting that "each Janissary [in Kandiye], no matter which profession he is in, is obliged to be registered in one of the *ortas* in order to know which party he should resort to when conducting business or committing an offense"; Vasileios Psilakis, *Ιστορία της Κρήτης από της απωτάτης αρχαιότητος μέχρι των καθ' ημάς χρόνων* [History of Crete from the Furthest Antiquity to Our Time], Volume 3, Chania 1909, p. 84.

³³ In the late eighteenth century Janissary pay-tickets were being sold on the black market for prices that ranged between 12 and 20 *guruş* per *akeçe* of daily wage; D'Ohsson, *Tableau général*, p. 337.

³⁴ Sunar, *Cauldron of Dissent*, p. 69; Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, p. 153-154.

³⁵ Every genuine Janissary ought to have in his possession not only a *sofa tezkiresi*, but also an *esame tezkiresi* bearing the seal of the commander (*ağa*) of the Janissary Corps. For such a document, see, for instance, BOA, AE.SMMD.IV.90/10673. For pictures of *sofa tezkiresi*, see Zeynep Emel Ekim, "Üsküdar ve Yeniçeri Remizleri", *Uluslararası Üsküdar Sempozyumu VII, 2-4 Kasım 2012: 1352'den Bugüne Şehir*, (ed. Süleyman Faruk Göncüoğlu), Istanbul 2014, p. 698-699.

³⁶ The pseudo-Janissaries drafted through the *tashih be-dergab* calls did not hold an *esame* either. However, their names were recorded in separate *defsters* which were sent to Istanbul to be used in times of enrollment; Gül, *18. Yüzyılda Yeniçeri Teşkilatı*, p. 93, 99, 104, 112.

privileges as real Janissaries since, given the corps' jurisdictional autonomy, it became very difficult for outsiders to check if these imposters were true members of the corps or not.

As a result, by the third decade of the eighteenth century, the phenomenon of fake enrollment of Janissary pretenders through the issuance of the above certificates had become so widespread that the central government started taking measures to stop this practice, which in imperial edicts is referred to as “*orta sofaya oturtmak*” (to allow [outsiders] to sit in the regiment's anteroom).³⁷ For instance, in an order from 1727 which summarizes the issue we read:

“[A]lthough it is against the law [of the corps] to allow the entrance of outsider tax-paying subjects (reaya) in it... when some regiments are appointed from Istanbul to another place or from one frontier to another and they proceed there with their banner and cauldron, during their passage from settlements, nahiyes and villages, in places where they camp for provisions, due to the unchecked greed of the official [Janissary] agents (mübaşir) who are appointed to see to their transfer, of their colonels (çorbacı) and barrack officers (odabaşı), they allow some reaya, the vilest and scum – people who are oblivious to the Janissary customs and disrespectful of the approved order, laws, and ways of the corps – to sit in the regiment's anteroom. Later, when they depart and move on, the vilest and the brigands that they allowed into the anteroom of the regiment stay behind and say ‘we became Janissaries’, they change their outfit and conduct, and, claiming to be Janissaries, through villainy and mischief they indulge in various immoral behaviors and debaucheries, they pillage properties and violate the honor of the population, the reaya, and other men, with excessive oppression and hostility...”³⁸

These under-the-table agreements at the regimental level characterized the most distinctive type of pseudo-Janissarism until the abolition of the corps, and were able to bolster the figures of unofficial Janissary affiliates independently of any war-related, state-triggered military mobilizations.³⁹

At this point, we should note that the fact that the above imperial edict was issued in 1727 is not a coincidence; this type of networked connections between regiments and provincial populations was supported by the process of decentralization of the corps' structure that was underway at that time, triggered, among other reasons, by the permanent establishment of particular regiments in

³⁷ This expression was probably related to the ceremony of initiation of Janissary novices (*karakollukçü*) by the older regiment members, a ceremony which was taking place in the regiment's barrack anteroom (*sofa*); *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, p. 62-63.

³⁸ BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.134:189, order no. 656 (evasıt-ı M 1140/August 29-September 7, 1727).

³⁹ Yet, it should be noted that, at the official level, every war played an important role in the production of new Janissary pay-tickets which were often used as a means for the ratification of many pre-existing off-the-record agreements between *taslakçıs* and the corps; D'Ohsson, *Tableau général*, p. 337.

specific provinces.⁴⁰ This development gave various provincial societies the opportunity to gain easier access to the above patronage system, and to create deeper and more enduring bonds with the corps.

To sum up, pseudo-Janissaries can be classified into two distinct yet inter-connected categories: (a) those who were drafted temporarily in times of war but remained unpaid in times of peace, and (b) those who had never been officially drafted but pretended to be members of the corps under the protection of Janissary officers. The first category was the one which the Ottoman administration associated with the phenomenon of truancy and desertion. As we saw, the peak of the government's confrontation with these pseudo-Janissaries was in the 1690s, but this conflict was largely resolved in the eighteenth century, and especially after the Edirne Vakası, which, on the one hand, forced the Ottoman sultan to attribute an uncontested *askeri* status to such draftees and, on the other, alleviated some of the state's pressure concerning their participation in military expeditions. This development seems to have contributed to a general drop in the numbers of *mühimme* cases of pseudo-Janissaries persecuted by the government in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

The second category of pseudo-Janissaries, on the other hand, was never included in the cases of truancy and desertion found in the *mühimme defters*, as in the eyes of the government they had always been *reaya* and, thus, were not supposed to go to war in the first place. In the case of this category, the main offences reported were related to their illegal use of the Janissary privileges of tax-exemption and jurisdictional autonomy. The same benefits were also used by the pseudo-Janissaries of the first category when away from the battlefield, something that before 1703 was, however, often considered to be illegal. The combined illicit use of these privileges by both categories surely contributed to the high number of cases related to non-military-related offences which are to be found in the *mühimme defters* in the late seventeenth century, as well as its gradual drop in the eighteenth century, when the Ottoman government acquiesced, under the fear of a Janissary rebellion, to reducing the pressure it previously exerted on *çahke* Janissaries.

These two categories, distinct as they may have been, were directly related and complementary to each other. First of all, their existence is an expression of the Janissary organization's decentralization, which offered the opportunity to Janissary officers at the provincial and regimental level to control a large part of the recruitment process required for manning the corps. Their localization gave them the opportunity to develop provincial networks, that defined who was to gain access to the Janissary privileges – legally or illegally – and who was not. All pseudo-Janissaries had to pass through the same networks to claim these privileges and, depending on a man's previous relation with the corps and his socioeconomic aspirations, he could be included in any of the two above-mentioned categories. Of

⁴⁰ On this process, see Spyropoulos, "Janissary Politics", p. 453-454.

course, *çalık* Janissaries were recorded as such in the corps' ledgers and – at least before 1703 – had no other option but to become *tashih be-dergah* recruits and go to war when called on to do so. However, the thousands of other aspirants who wanted to gain access to the Janissary privileges had two options: they could either choose to bribe their way into becoming *tashih be-dergah* recruits, when this opportunity was given during war time, or they could opt for acquiring a *sofa tezkeiresi*, which offered them protection and did not force them to go to war, but put them in a much more precarious position, since their status could not be easily upheld on the occasion of a centrally instigated inspection. What needs to be stressed, in any case, is that both these categories were part of the same networked environment, were protected by the same patrons, yearned for the same privileges, and largely came from the same pool of Janissary aspirants.

b. Geographical expansion of pseudo-Janissarism (1600-1735)

As far as the early geographical expansion of pseudo-Janissarism is concerned, the following maps are indicative of both the rapid development of the phenomenon after 1688 and of the areas where it first came to be dominant:



Map 1: Pseudo-Janissarium cases in the years 1600-1687⁴¹

⁴¹ In Maps 1 and 2, the size of nodes represents the density of pseudo-Janissarium cases found in *mühimme* registers, the smallest circles representing one reference and the largest eleven references. The nodes have been arranged according to the capital of each *kaza* where the actions of pseudo-Janissaries took place. Also, whenever cases of itinerant/migrating pseudo-Janissaries were to be found, links were created connecting their places of origin to the locations where they were established when the imperial orders were issued

*Pseudo-Janissarism (Yeniçerilik İddiası) in the Ottoman Provinces (with Special Reference to Adana):
Its Emergence and Its Geographic and Socio-Economic Aspects*



Map 2: Pseudo-Janissarism cases in the years 1688-1735

The first thing that one notices when examining the available data is that many of the pseudo-Janissaries came from the empire's Anatolian provinces. Indeed, according to the *mühimme* registers, Anatolia had the highest concentration of incidents, with the Pontus region and the wider area around Aydın, Muğla, İzmir, Denizli, Manisa, and Uşak “overflowing” with pseudo-Janissary activity, and those around Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Malatya, and Elazığ, as well as those in the east and south of Istanbul, turning up in the documents with great frequency. This might be partially owing to the fact that Anatolia had a more compact Muslim population than the European provinces, but can also be witnessed in cases, like Muğla, where – at least in the early nineteenth century for which we have corresponding data – the Christian element represented a significant part of the local population.⁴² However, the phenomenon was also widespread in the northern Balkans, especially in the regions of Western Thrace and the Principalities, while a relatively high concentration can be also witnessed in various areas around Macedonia and Bulgaria. Apparently, due to this rapid development of the phenomenon in the entire Anatolian part of the empire that in 1702 led the Ottoman government to send a *ferman* addressed to “*the kadıs, the ağas, the hatıps, the Janissary serdars, the ayans of the provinces, and the notables of the kazas situated to the right and left of the Middle Road (Orta Kolu) of Anatolia, all the way to its extremes*” and declaring that “*the majority of reaya in the kazas, the villages, the nahiyes, and the sancaks of Anatolia have changed their clothing, they claim to be Janissaries and, as a result of the serdars tolerating and turning a blind eye [to this phenomenon], the reaya are selected as askerî*.”⁴³

Overall, the Black Sea coast seems to have attracted the largest group of pseudo-Janissaries during the first formative years of the phenomenon. The Pontus area not only had the largest concentration of pseudo-Janissaries, but also the most mobile among them seem to have originated from there. In various cases, pseudo-Janissaries of Laz origin are exclusively reported to have travelled to the western bank of the Black Sea – especially in Moldavia and Wallachia – starting in 1679, while a number of people coming from Trabzon, Of, Rize, Sürmene, etc. were active in areas like Köstence, İbrail, İsmail, Silistre, etc. Although in most cases the reasons behind the migration of these people are not clear, two documents issued with a 40-year difference explicitly mention that they had “*invaded*” (*müstevli*) those areas with the pretext of engaging in commercial activities (*kar ü kış/ticaret bahanesiyle*).⁴⁴ These references lead us to assume that the long-

⁴² Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, Madison, Wis. 1985, p. 111.

⁴³ “*Anadolu yakasında vaki kazalarda ve kura ve nevabi ve sancağda reaya tairfesinin ekseri tebdil-i kıyafet edüb yeniçerilik iddia ve serdarların müsamaha ve taamisi sebebiyle reaya tairfe-i askeride mütemeyyiz olmakda*”; BOA, A.DVNSMHH.d.112:360, order no. 1298 (evası-ı Ca 1114/October 3-12, 1702).

⁴⁴ BOA, A.DVNSMHH.d.97:6, order no. 36 (evası-ı C 1090/July 20-29, 1679); 122:141, order no. 408 (evahir-i S 1126/March 8-16, 1714); 129:198, order no. 728 (evail-i R 1132/February 11-20, 1720). Also, for the rise of the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism in the Danube and its

lasting presence of Pontic pseudo-Janissaries in the Principalities was related to the economic privileges they enjoyed by means of their Janissary affiliation.

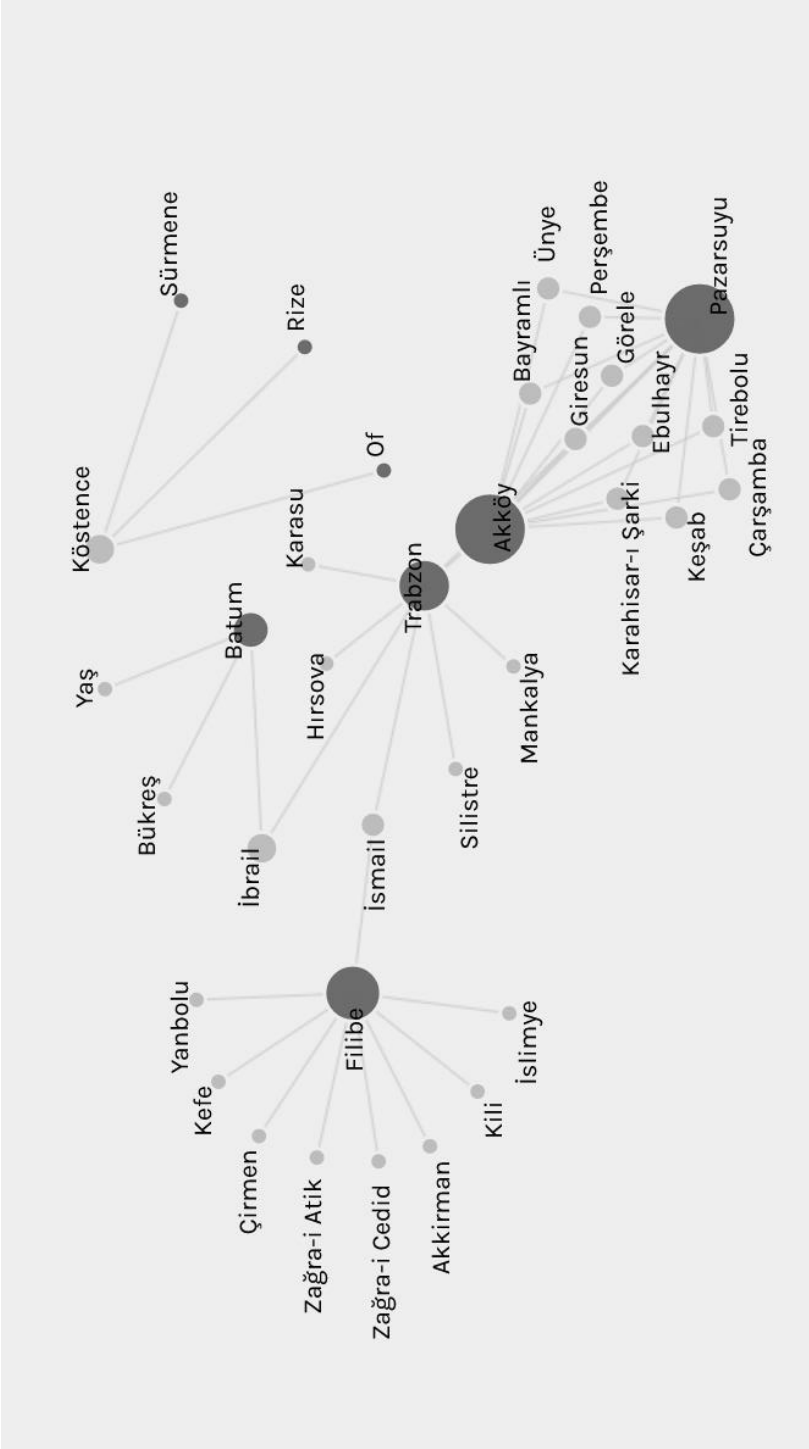
As can be gleaned from the following graph (Graph 2), the Black Sea-related pseudo-Janissary networks were both local and trans-provincial in nature and involved people coming not only from the Pontus region but also from modern-day Bulgaria. Most of the local connections were established in the wider area between Ordu, Giresun, and Trabzon, while the vast majority of inter-provincial connections had the north-west part of the Black Sea as destination.

Interestingly, in the second densest area, Aydın and its surrounding regions, no extended trans-provincial mobility has been recorded, a fact that might be related to the Aegean's later incorporation into Janissary networks. This belated inclusion is obvious, for instance, in the case of Crete: until 1735, the *mühimmes* make no reference whatsoever to the existence of pseudo-Janissaries on the island, although during the second half of the eighteenth century Crete was to become one of the most vibrant points of [pseudo-]Janissary activity in the empire, facilitating the further expansion of Janissary economic and political networks in the Mediterranean.⁴⁵

Another important element is the general lack of references to pseudo-Janissaries in the empire's Arabic-speaking provinces. Pseudo-Janissarism was virtually controlled by regimental/provincial officers and was an expression of their desire to connect – politically and economically – with the societies they were in contact with. As has been noted elsewhere, during the eighteenth century, in Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Aegean, the popularity of the corps became paramount, to the extent that Janissary affiliation allegedly characterized the entire

connection with the local commerce, see BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.138:78, order no. 283 (evahir-i S 1144/August 25-September 2, 1731).

⁴⁵ Yannis Spyropoulos, *Κοινωνική, Διοικητική, Οικονομική Και Πολιτική Διάσταση Του Οθωμανικού Στρατού: Οι Γενίτσαροι Της Κρήτης, 1750-1826* [Social, Administrative, Economic and Political Dimensions of the Ottoman Army: The Janissaries of Crete, 1750-1826], University of Crete, Department of History and Archaeology, Ph.D, Rethymno 2014, p. 225-285.



Graph 2: Black Sea networks of pseudo-Jamissaries (1679-1720)

male Muslim populations of many of their regions.⁴⁶ In most of the empire's empire's Arabic provinces, however, this was not the case: although some parts of their local societies managed to find their way into the corps, the latter stubbornly maintained a much more exclusive attitude toward Arabs, drawing, most of the times, its recruits mostly from Anatolia and other non-Arab-speaking areas. The reasons behind this treatment have not been systematically investigated yet, but assumptions have been made that the preference of the Janissaries to integrate the populations of particular areas into their networks may have been related to these regions' histories of extensive conversion and to the continuation of a *devşirme*-related tradition therein, and that the exclusion of others may have been due to the fear that a large-scale recruitment of Islamic populations in overwhelmingly Muslim lands could fundamentally disrupt the administrative and financial order imposed by the *askeri-reaya* nexus.⁴⁷ On the other hand, one could also claim that the bias that seems to have existed among the wider Ottoman elite against Arabs and the distrust of Arabs themselves towards their Ottoman masters may sufficiently explain why Arabs did not enter the non-Arab-speaking Janissary corps *en masse*.

At any rate, this treatment does not seem to have radically changed until the abolition of the Janissary complex in 1826. All the same, it is obvious that the Janissary officers' willingness to accept certain people in their networks was by far the most important determiner in such affairs and that exceptions were not uncommon. Especially in areas situated on the fringes of Anatolia and close to the empire's Arab lands, such as Adana, Ayntab, Aleppo, etc., the inclusion or exclusion of various categories of local populations was a subject of controversy between the government and the local Janissary patrons. In a case from a 1713

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Fatma Sel Turhan, *The Ottoman Empire and the Bosnian Uprising: Janissaries, Modernisation and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century*, London and New York 2014, p. 178; Ali Yaycıoğlu, *The Provincial Challenge: Regionalism, Crisis, and Integration in the Late Ottoman Empire (1792-1812)*, Harvard University, Ph.D, Cambridge Mass. 2008, p. 52-53; Sunar, *Cauldron of Dissent*, p. 49; Philippe De Bonneval and Mathieu Dumas, *Αναγνώριση της νήσου Κρήτης: μια μυστική έκθεση του 1783* [Description of the Island of Crete: A Secret Report from 1783], (trans. and eds. G. Nikolaou and M. Peponakis), Rethymno 2000, p. 213; Eric Cornell, "On Bektashism in Bosnia", *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*, (eds. Tord Olson, Elisabeth Özclalga, and Catharina Raudvere), Istanbul 1998, p. 14; Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the *Ayans*", *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume 2, (eds. Halil İnalcık with Donald Quataert), Cambridge 1997, p. 664-665; Mathieu Dumas, *Souvenirs du lieutenant général comte Mathieu Dumas de 1770 à 1838*, Volume 1, Paris 1839, p. 180; Guillaume Thomas Raynal and Jacques J. Peuchet, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans l'Afrique septentrionale*, Volume 2, Paris 1826, p. 344; Franz W. Sieber, *Reise nach der Insel Kreta im griechischen Archipelagus im Jahre 1817*, Volume 2, Leipzig 1823, p. 186; J. M. Tancoigne, *Voyage à Smyrne, dans l'archipel et l'île de Candie*, Volume 1, Paris 1817, p. 102; Claude Etienne Savary, *Letters on Greece: Being a Sequel to Letters on Egypt, and Containing Travels through Rhodes, Crete, and Other Islands of the Archipelago; with Comparative Remarks on their Ancient and Present State, and Observations on the Government, Character, and Manner, of the Turks, and Modern Greeks*, London 1788, p. 186.

⁴⁷ Spyropoulos, "Janissary Politics", p. 456-458.

mühimme, for instance, Istanbul condemns the recruitment of Janissaries coming from the Shia Nusayri (Fellah) sect in Adana, tagging them pseudo-Janissaries.⁴⁸ We will now proceed with an analysis related to the above-mentioned region, covering the eighteenth century.

Janissaries and pseudo-Janissaries in eighteenth-century Adana

The Anatolian provinces of the empire were important zones for what has been called the “*inflation of honors*”, referring to the increased efforts of these provinces’ inhabitants to seek social recognition and economic gains by obtaining prestigious state-recognized positions.⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Anatolia’s Black Sea, western, and south-eastern regions witnessed a great upsurge in the number of pseudo-Janissary cases addressed by the Ottoman administration. The zone stretching from the central and southern part of Anatolia also contained a considerable number of pseudo-Janissaries who had become an important component of urban and rural life in areas such as Adana, Maraş, Karaman, Ayntab (Antep), and Aleppo. The rising numbers of both officially registered Janissaries and pretenders changed the internal dynamics, shaped the local politics, and created various struggles for power over the limited economic resources of these cities, in particular leading the rank-and-file among the Janissaries to compete with the local elite.⁵⁰

Even though Adana was not a frontier zone,⁵¹ the pressing need for manpower, provisioning the army, and supplying the Balkan and Eastern frontiers with pack animals (especially camels), which were accompanied by war-related cash levies (*tekalifi şakka*) and a series of conscription campaigns, created immense pressure on the local resources and population. The latter, in turn, tried to avoid such impositions by entering into the tax-exempted status of the *askeri* class (as timariots, Janissaries, or *seyyids*). In this respect, claiming to be a member of the *askeri* class (military, administrative, and religious) can be considered as a form of individual or collective resistance to the socio-economic pressure created at the imperial and local level and as an effective mechanism of tax relief.

The town received migrants both from its own hinterland and from other towns and cities of Anatolia. The dense nomadic population of Adana, which sometimes outnumbered the peasant population, and the existent regional mobility provided a ready pool of Janissary volunteers of rural background. The newcomers either supplied the town with cheap labor and manpower for imperial campaigns

⁴⁸ BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.121:230, order no. 920 (evasıt-ı L 1125/October 31-November 9, 1713).

⁴⁹ Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, p. 62-63.

⁵⁰ Bruce Masters, “Power and Society in Aleppo in the 18th and 19th Centuries”, *Revue de monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 62, (1991), p. 154.

⁵¹ For a historical geography of Adana, see Meltem Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Making of the Adana-Mersin Region 1850-1908*, Leiden and Boston 2010, p. 21-29.

and the private armies of governors, or resorted to banditry which ravaged the countryside. The luckiest ones among them managed to become Janissaries, while others only pretended to be members of the corps. The extensive migration and nomadic mobility, combined with the presence of ethnic groups who were not officially allowed into the corps, such as Kurds, Fellahs,⁵² and Turcomans, also make the case of Adana very interesting for the study of pseudo-Janissarism.

a. Warfare, mobility, and tax relief

For the commoners of Adana, as elsewhere, becoming a *seyyid*⁵³ or a Janissary was also the most widespread practice of infiltrating into the *askeri* class. Relevant documents testify that from the end of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century, a total of 207 individuals petitioned the judicial courts either collectively or individually to prove that they were registered and active Janissaries or *seyyids*.

Period	Number of Janissaries	Number of <i>seyyids</i>	Reason
1688-1717	0	23	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu</i>
1717-1737	14	18	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu (bennak)</i> ; accused of banditry and being of Fellaah origin
1737-1747	17	6	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu (bennak)</i> , <i>baş harcı</i>
1747-1757	4	39	Claiming jurisdictional autonomy from the <i>kadı</i> ; avoiding the payment of <i>aded-i agnam</i> , <i>raiyyet rüsumu</i> , <i>avarız</i> , <i>bağ</i> , and <i>bağçe rüsumu</i>
1757-1767	9	25	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu</i> , <i>baş harcı</i> ,

⁵² In early eighteenth century Adana, there were at least 150 Fellahs who claimed to be registered Janissaries; BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.121:368, order no. 1444 (evail-i M 1125/January 28, 1713-6 February 1714); Adana *Sizâs* (AŞR) 38:220, order no. 339 (M 1126/January-February, 1714).

⁵³ For a general study on the *seyyids*, see Hülya Canbakal, "The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet in Anatolia and the Balkans (c. 1500-1700)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 52, (2009), p. 542-578; for the *seyyids* of Adana, see Saim Yörük, "Adanalı Seyyidler Hakkında Sosyal ve Ekonomik Açından Bazı Değerlendirmeler (1701-1750)", *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Dergisi*, 18, (2011), p. 1-22.

			<i>tekalif-i şakka</i> , and <i>aded-i agnam</i>
1767-1777	22	5	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu</i> ; accused of being of Fella origin
1777-1787	9	37	Avoiding the payment of <i>raiyyet rüsumu</i> and <i>tekalif-i şakka</i>
Total	75	153	

Table 1: Number of Janissaries and *seyyids* petitioning the local courts of Adana or mentioned in decrees addressed to the latter⁵⁴

As can be observed in Table 1, 75 Janissaries and 153 *seyyids* petitioned or were brought to the court in the above-mentioned period. The cases of both categories mostly concerned violations against their *askeri* status through the imposition of the *rüsum-ı raiyyet* (taxation of the subjects), a term referring to all the taxes that only non-*askeri* groups were liable to pay.⁵⁵ It has to be noted, however, that these tax-exemptions notwithstanding, the *askeris* were still expected to pay any levies related to their commercial activities. For instance, they were required to pay the sheep tax (*aded-i agnam*) when they owned more than 150 sheep. In a geography of transhumance and husbandry, tax relief for even a certain amount of livestock was a very attractive privilege.⁵⁶ Though sometimes open to negotiation, as mentioned in the article's first section, under specific conditions *askeris* could also be exempted from various extraordinary levies collected by governors (*tekalif-i örfiyye ve şakka*) and the state (*bedel-i nüzzül, avarız*).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Sources: AŞR.105; 18; 130; 33; 50; 38; 127; BOA, Bab-ı Asaî Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Adana Ahkam Defterleri (A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d) 1-4. The relevant petitions in the Adana judicial courts and the cases found in Adana *ahkam* registers – submitted to Istanbul via the local court or directly by the petitioners, with a view to obtaining a decree from the sultan – amount to a total of 207 documents.

⁵⁵ *Rüsum-ı raiyyet* was perceived as the main boundary between the tax-paying *raya* and the military/administrative groups. The tax included three main categories: *çift resmi*, *ösr*, and *bad-ı hana*. For further details on the *rüsum-ı raiyyet*, see Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlılar’da Raiyyet Rüsümü”, *Belleten*, 23/92, (1959), p. 575-610. In the above table, both groups mostly complained about the illegal imposition of *resm-i bennak* (taxes on peasant holding equal to less than half a *çift*).

⁵⁶ For an example from Adana, see A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.3:169 (evail-i S 1178/July 31-August 9, 1764); for an attempt of the pseudo-Janissaries of Ruscuk, Kule, and Yergöğü to pay their sheep taxes in the same ratios paid by active Janissaries, see BOA, C.ML.212/8704 (14 Z 1133/October 6, 1721). For a reference from Konya related to this practice, see Yücel Özkaya, “XVII. Yüzyılın İlk yansında Yerli Ailelerin Ayanlıkları Ele Geçirîşleri ve Büyük Hanedanlıkların Kuruluşu”, *Belleten*, 42/168ö (1978), p. 697-698.

⁵⁷ Charles L. Wilkins, *Forging Urban Solidarities: Ottoman Aleppo, 1640-1700*, Leiden and Boston 2020, p. 76, 83.

Askeri status also brought social prestige and enabled one's incorporation in patronage networks. If unnoticed by the local or imperial authorities, an *askeri* could claim tax-exemption for his relatives and affiliates as well, although normally only his son(s) and wife were supposed to be tax-exempt. There are numerous examples of registered soldiers or pretenders attempting to break these rules. According to a complaint made by tax-farmers, for instance, some commoners from the Dünderlı *mukataa* in Adana did not pay the required taxes, claiming that they were real Janissaries, *seyyids*, or timariots, and encouraged their own relatives not to pay the required taxes either.⁵⁸ Another example is from Damascus: Mahmud Çorbacı, the military commander (*muhafız*) of the fortress of Damascus and *çorbacı* of the 18th Cemaat (regiment), had illegally recruited two Fellahs, Ahmed and Mansur, into the Janissary Corps. Even though the Janissary identity of these two people was questionable, fifteen relatives of the same Fellahs declined to pay any taxes, claiming "now we became relatives of Janissaries".⁵⁹ As the missing taxes of those fifteen people were imposed on the rest of the population, there were complaints to the imperial authorities.

In a letter to the imperial authorities, the *mutasarrıf* of Ayntab also complained about the immense increase in the number of pseudo-Janissaries and its repercussions on the economic life of the town. He claimed that, while before the Russian campaign of 1710-1711 there were around 150 registered soldiers with "*sahibü'l-esame*" (verified pay-tickets), following the expedition, more than 4,000 people – including those who never participated in the campaign or moved out of the town – began to claim that they were draftees enrolled into the corps in the course of the war. Under the guise of being Janissaries, not only did they not pay their own taxes, but they also prevented the payment of taxes owed by some of their relatives and followers. As the tax-paying residents of the town began to run away due to the extra tax burdens they had to pay on account of this practice, the *mutasarrıf* requested the appointment of a special investigator in order to clear the town from the imposters.⁶⁰ The outcome of this inspection is not mentioned in the relevant document, but in a previous investigation (February, 1703) only 122 people were identified as registered Janissaries while the rest were demoted to the status of a *reaya*.⁶¹

Actually, the controversy between tax-payers, many of whom attempted to evade levies, and tax-collectors or tax-farmers, who sought to maximize their profits, forms the socio-economic background of the cases we have presented in Table 1. The spread of the tax-farming system and the incorporation of larger regions into *hass* or *vakf* lands played a key role in this process. Seeking profit-maximization, tax-farmers and tax-collectors either demanded extra money even

⁵⁸ AŞR.129: page no. unspecified, order no. 145 (26 Ca 1147/October 24, 1734).

⁵⁹ BOA, A.DVNSMHHM.d.116:175, order no. 699 (evasıt-ı Ca 1121/July 11-28, 1709).

⁶⁰ BOA, Ali Emiri Ahmed III (AE.SAMD.III) 197/19071 (4 S 1126/February 19, 1714).

⁶¹ Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, p. 83-84.

from people claiming an *askeri* identity who had less than 150 sheep, or tried to actively increase the number of tax-payers. For that purpose, they brought tighter checks on the claims for tax-exemption in the regions under their control and did not tolerate any claim of exemption unless it was well substantiated. As a response, on the one hand, some commoners tried to challenge these taxation claims in any way possible, while, on the other, the remaining population displayed minimum tolerance for such allegations of tax relief in order to get rid of this extra burden.

Most of the pseudo-Janissaries – and other categories of pretenders – were exposed owing to this double check by tax-collectors and commoners. Consequently, many had to prove that they were registered Janissaries, while the pretenders had a hard time if they were not protected by a powerful local figure. Under the pressure of tax-collectors and tax-farmers, 38 out of 75 Janissaries in the above list petitioned the courts claiming that they were not imposters.⁶² Şamizade Elhac Mustafa, for instance, had to prove that he was a soldier of the 17th Bölük (regiment) of the corps and thus not obliged to pay the *rüsum-ı raiyyet* demanded by the *vojvoda* of an unspecified *bass* in Adana.⁶³ Mehmed Habib and Mehmed from the 13th Cemaat, also petitioned the local court complaining of oppression by a *vojvoda* who claimed that they were commoners from among the Kurds of the Akbaş community in Adana.⁶⁴ Due to the complaint of two tax-farmers, on the other hand, 24 Janissaries were involved in a complicated judicial case that lasted more than ten years (1714-1727): Mustafa Ağa and Bayram Ağa, the *malikane* owners of the taxes related to the Fellahs of Adana, claimed that these people were Janissary imposters of Fellah origin with no official connection to the corps. Consequently, the Janissary officers in Adana (*serdar*) and Istanbul (*odabaşı*) were consulted and confirmed that they were real Janissaries from the 30th Bölük, 17th Bölük, and 62th Cemaat. The final decision came from the *ağa* of the Janissaries ordering the local authorities not to oppress/offend them by claiming that they were Fellahs or Janissary pretenders.⁶⁵ It seems that only in very serious cases were the officers or the *ağa* of the Janissaries in Istanbul consulted or a pay-ticket certificate demanded as confirmation. Less complicated cases were resolved locally.

The impact of warfare and the extraordinary demands due to strained imperial finances also increased the attempts of tax relief and other forms of resistance, while almost unchecked provincial conscriptions increased the number of Janissary claimants. The great majority of the commoners of Seydişehir who attended the Persian campaign under the leadership of the local Janissary *serdar*, for instance, declined to pay the required extraordinary taxes (*imdad-ı hazeriye* and

⁶² In the cases in which the tax-collectors are specified, eight *vojvodas*, two *tumarlı sipahis*, and two *malikane* owners are mentioned.

⁶³ BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.1:240 (evahir-i S 1162/February 10-18, 1749).

⁶⁴ BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.2:302 (evail-i L 1171/June 8-17, 1758).

⁶⁵ BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.121:368, order no. 1444 (evail-i M 1125/January 28, 1713-February 6, 1714); AŞR.127:15, order no. 288 (19 Ra 1140/November 4, 1727); 133: page no. unspecified, order no. 61 (15 L 1138/June 26, 1726); 38:220, order no. 339 (M 1126/January-February 1714).

seferiyye, *avarız*, *nüzzül*, and the provisioning of camels), declaring that they had become Janissaries on account of the military services they had provided to the sultan. As one can guess, they also prevented their fathers, brothers and other relatives from paying these taxes.⁶⁶ In Adana too, around 100 nomads of the Dünderlı and Koyunlu *mukataa* who attended an imperial campaign refused to pay the required taxes by claiming that they had been recruited by the Janissary Corps while they were at the imperial capital.⁶⁷

Forced settlement⁶⁸ and increased taxation made the nomads – the main camel suppliers of the region – particularly vulnerable, causing their massive flight to urban centers as many of them looked for employment and anonymity. Most of the tribal migrants tried to enter the Janissary ranks.⁶⁹ According to a report, more than 300 nomads living around Adana claimed to be members of the *askeri* class and declined to pay their taxes to the *voynoda* of Yenil Hass.⁷⁰ Charged with extraordinary taxes and the obligation to provision the imperial army with camels, the nomadic population of Yüreğir, a *nahiye* of Adana, fled to other regions to seek shelter in *çiftlik*s as share-croppers or moved to cities. Some of them became enrolled in the private armies of governors, while others pretended to be Janissaries or *seyyids*; all refused to return and to pay their required taxes, despite the frequently issued imperial decrees.⁷¹ Imperial and local authorities also struggled to bring back the dispersed nomadic population of the Akçakoyunlu tribe who had already settled around Adana and Maraş in the 1750s. Beşir Ağa, the supervisor (*naẓır*) of the Haremeyn *vakf*, complained that deserters were refusing to pay their *raiyyet riisumu* by pretending to be members of the *askeri* class, thus creating extra burden for the remaining tax-payers.⁷²

⁶⁶ For further details, see BOA, C.ML.185/7747 (evahir-i L 1149/March 22-February 2, 1737).

⁶⁷ AŞR.39:50, order no. 70 (18 Ş 1125/September 9, 1713).

⁶⁸ For a detailed study on the forced settlements of the nomadic tribes of Adana in the eighteenth century, see Özcan Tatar, *XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Çukurova'da Aşiretlerin Eşkiyalık Olayları ve Aşiret İskanı (1691-1750)*, Fırat University, Ph.D, Elazığ 2005. For the later periods, see Andrew Gordon Gould, *Pashas and Brigands: Ottoman Provincial Reform and Its Impact on the Nomadic Tribes of Southern Anatolia, 1840-1885*, University of California, Ph.D, Los Angeles 1973; Toksöz, *Nomads, Migrants and Cotton*.

⁶⁹ Bruce Masters, "Patterns of Migration to Ottoman Aleppo in the 17th and 18th Centuries", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 4, (1987), p. 84-85.

⁷⁰ AŞR.107:46, order no. 110 (1 C 1128/May 23, 1716). For a list of the nomadic tribes bound to the *hass*, see Tatar, *XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Çukurova*, p. 67-76.

⁷¹ Being dependent on the *vakf* of Atik Valide Sultan, these nomads were actually exempt from extraordinary taxes. Yet it seems that the local authorities tried to include them in the payment of extraordinary taxes and the provisioning of camels. For further details, see AŞR.32:24-26 (12 C 1171/February 21, 1758); see also AŞR.50:135-136 (28 L 1181/March 18, 1764); 135: page no. unspecified, order no. 73 (3 L 1152/January 3, 1740).

⁷² AŞR.30: page no. unspecified, order no. 289 (2 B 1139/February 23, 1727). For similar problems in Aleppo, see Masters, "Patterns of Migration", p. 85-87.

b.1. Socio-economic profile of the people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries in late eighteenth-century Adana

So far we have discussed the history, geographical distribution, and socio-economic factors which contributed, in the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, to the rise in the number of claims over Janissary status. We tried to show that both the military/fiscal transformation and tax reforms of the seventeenth century were a turning point toward a process of *askerization*, as they initiated a period of increased taxation propelled by the intensification of tax-farming. In this framework, the attempts of Muslims to infiltrate the *askeri* cadres, particularly those of the Janissary Corps, increased during the late seventeenth century and continued well into the eighteenth century. All of the above, however, provide us mainly with information on wider historical processes which contributed to the rise of the phenomenon and not on the identities of the claimants themselves. Indeed, the most serious challenge in the study of Janissary pretenders is the lack of systematic data which could reveal their social and economic background. This section, therefore, will be devoted to an attempt at delineating the socio-economic profile of the pseudo-Janissaries of late-eighteenth-century Adana, based on a rare source which contains information on 166 people accused of being Janissary pretenders in the year 1774, and the probate estates of a sub-group of 41 people whose properties were confiscated by the governor of Adana on account of this accusation.

38

Through the examination of the residential distribution patterns, ethnic origins, and occupations of all 166 people included in the first list, we will try to enrich the information contained in the estate inventories of the 41 people, for whom more data is provided by the sources. In order to make our findings even more comprehensive we will also compare the latter's wealth with that of 250 Muslim adult males from the same town, and their residential patterns with the neighborhood distribution of 345 Janissary real-estate owners as recorded in 1750. Although the sample available is limited and not always consistent, it is worth examining as it represents a rare instance where sources allow us to peek into the lives of the group under investigation. The tentative results of our study suggest that at least some of them were migrants and newcomers to the town, residing mostly in suburban neighborhoods, and involved in the less prestigious and specialized-skill-requiring occupations of agricultural production and husbandry.

The list of 166 people accused of being Janissaries was submitted to Kuyucu Süleyman Paşa who was appointed as the governor of the town in 1774. He was a man of military background who had served in the Janissary Corps for many years and became the *ağa* of the Janissaries in 1770. In his subsequent provincial duties, his primary task was to resolve the endemic problem of banditry in Anatolia. Following his İçel governorship, he became the governor of Adana on September

14, 1774. He was later appointed as the governor of Karaman (June 17, 1775), where he died the same year.⁷³

Süleyman Paşa was a tough man and infamous for the harsh measures he took to discipline his soldiers. While he was the *ağa* of the Janissaries he had strangled numerous undisciplined soldiers and fugitives and thrown them into wells at the imperial camp. Such practices not only led him to the rank of vizierate (November 29, 1771), but also earned him the nickname Kuyucu (Gravedigger).⁷⁴ His reputation of harsh treatment and sudden executions caused great panic in Adana as soon as his appointment as the new governor – with the special task of suppressing banditry in the region – was heard and, as a result, some people started fleeing the town.⁷⁵

By the *paşa*'s order, those who hid in the town were captured and the properties of some runaways were seized. This was not, however, a random punishment: some time after his arrival, the leading local authorities (*ulema*, *ayan*) and craftsmen (*kaffe-i esnaf*) had submitted a list of 166 people whom they blamed as the main culprits for the disorder in the town. Employing a standard phrasing used for law breakers of all sorts and expounding their suffering, they accused the people on the list of disobedience to imperial orders and involvement in banditry, labeling them as “*bandits*”, “*criminals*”, and “*thieves*”. More importantly for our present study, they were all accused of being pseudo-Janissaries.⁷⁶

Hastily written by the townsmen to guide Süleyman Paşa in his persecutions, the list of 166 individuals accused of being pseudo-Janissaries unfortunately does not offer enough information for a comprehensive reconstruction of the identity of the town's alleged pseudo-Janissaries. Supplementary data prove that at least three of them, Deli Hüseyin,⁷⁷ Kademoğlu Osman,⁷⁸ and Çayıroğlu Elhac Ali,⁷⁹

⁷³ Ibid.; AŞR.48:33, order no. 76 (7 Ş 1188/October 13, 1774); 48:34, order no. 77 (19 Ş 1188/October 25, 1774).

⁷⁴ Şemdanizade, *Mür'î'te-Tevârih*, p. 85; M. Saffet Çalışkan, (*Vekayinivis*) *Enverî Sadullah Efendi ve Tarihinin I. Cildi'nin Metin ve Tablîli (1182-1188/1768-1774)*, Marmara University, Ph.D, Istanbul 2000, p. 303-304. Süleyman Paşa was the second person in Ottoman history to have been given this sobriquet. The first one was Kuyucu Murad Paşa (d. 1611), the Ottoman grand vizier (1606-1611) who got his nickname from the mass graves he ordered to be dug for burying the executed Celalis.

⁷⁵ AŞR.48:69, order no. 117 (undated); 48:70, order no. 120 (21 N 1188/November 25, 1774).

⁷⁶ In the original document preserved in Adana court registers, they are accused of disobeying imperial orders and being bandits. In a later document, however, they are also accused of being pseudo-Janissaries; AŞR.52:127-28 (21 N 1188/November 25, 1174); BOA, C.ZB.72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/February 21-March 1, 1776).

⁷⁷ He served as the *serdar* several times between the years 1771 and 1773; AŞR.47:54, 56. He also served as *mütesellim* from 26 N 1187/December 11, 1773 to 13 L 1187/December 28, 1173; AŞR.48:13 (15 L 1187/December, 30 1173).

⁷⁸ Kademoğlu served twice as the *serdar* of the city for 26 days in 1185/1771. He then served on several occasions from 1771 to 1773; A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.4:248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/October, 8-17 1783); A.DVNSMHM.d.176:8, order no. 16 (evasıt-ı Z 1191/January, 10-19 1778); AŞR.47:54, 56 (15 S 1187/May 8, 1773).

were former Janissary officers of the town. For the socio-economic and professional background of the rest, however, only limited details, including the neighborhoods they resided in, are provided. Some of them are mentioned just by their nickname (Köse, Deli, Kör, Arab, Kürd, Pehlivanoglu, Köroğlan), while their occupations or places of origin are noted only occasionally. Even though the data provided in the estate inventories of some of the people whose properties were seized by Süleyman Paşa in 1774 are invaluable, they are restricted only to a subgroup of 41 people from the list.

Still, however, the residential distribution of the individuals mentioned on the list of 1774 deserves our attention: all 166 persons recorded were urbanites and resided in 32 different neighborhoods of Adana – indicated by the orange circles in Map 3 below.⁸⁰ Even though their residences were scattered across different quarters, the neighborhoods with the most considerable pseudo-Janissary presence were those of Çınarlı (18 people), Bakırsındı (15 people), Sofubahçesi (13 people), Hankurbu (12 people), Kansafzâde (10 people), Eskihamam (9 people), and Yortan (9 people). Half of the 166 people on the list lived in the newly inhabited areas of the town and especially in neighborhoods which had been established during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A survey of house owners in 1750, on the other hand, created as an assessment of the *avarız* tax, reveals a total of 345 *askeri*-owned houses in the town (*askeri*: 292; Janissary: 53), mostly concentrated in the neighborhoods of Bab-ı Tarsus (31 people) and Hamamkurbu (22 people). In the quarters of Yortan, Kasabbekir, and Harabbağçe, the number of *askeri* house owners – indicated by the light blue circles on the same map – exceeded that of the non-*askeri* population.⁸¹

As may also be observed from the map, a spatial segregation pattern characterized the settlement of pseudo-Janissaries and some registered Janissaries. Even though a few quarters where Janissaries lived overlapped with those of the people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries, the latter were still spatially segregated at least from the more affluent Janissaries, while both groups were segregated from the inhabitants of the inner city. The pseudo-Janissaries clustered around the newly settled regions of the south and the north, almost creating an invisible circle

⁷⁹ BOA, AE.SABH.I.307/20623 (22 M 1191/March 2, 1777).

⁸⁰ Thirteen were from the neighborhood of Sofubahçesi, nine from Eskihamam, ten from Kansafzâde, one from Hocavezir, one from Bab-ı Tarsus, seven from Şabaniye, twelve from Hankurbu, two from Hanedan, five from Paşanebi, five from Kayalıbağ, eighteen from Çınarlı, two from Harmanlı (?), two from Yarbaşı, nine from Yortan, four from Harhar (?), two from Helhal, five from Saraçlar, six from Kasabbekir, one from Naccaran, three from Ağamescid, three from Kuruköprü, two from Çukurmescid, one from Sucuzade, four from Şeyhmustafa, six from Sarı Yakub, three from Mermerli, one Mestanzade, two from Taşçıkan, three from Hamamkurbu, two from Cami-i Cedid, one from Hızırlyas, fifteen from Bakırsındı, and six people were from the neighborhood of Sugediği; AŞR.52:127-128 (21 N 1188/November 25, 1174) and BOA, C.ZB.72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/February 21-March 1, 1776).

⁸¹ AŞR.29 (evasıt-ı L 1163/September 13, 1750).

around the inner city, the history of which goes back to the fifteenth century.⁸² The genuine Janissaries, on the other hand, seem to have preserved their settlement patterns by mainly concentrating in the neighborhoods established during the seventeenth century and creating a closer circle around the older part of the town. At least the affluent Janissaries seem to have been more integrated into the life of the town than the pseudo-Janissaries who lived in its outskirts.

Although the sample available is not adequate for drawing any definite conclusions, the segregation pattern of the aforementioned 166 pseudo-Janissaries also suggests a possible connection between migration and the rise of pseudo-Janissariam in Adana. Among eleven people whose place of origin is mentioned, seven were from Harput, two from Aynab, one from Mardin, and one from a town of Adana called Yüregir. Some other clues, including the nicknames and father's place of origin, prove that at least eight people were of Kurdish origin.⁸³ According to a text attributed to the era of Sultan Süleyman I, the conscription of Janissaries from Harput, Diyarbakır, and Malatya into the corps was actually forbidden.⁸⁴ As far as the eighteenth century is concerned, however, the Kurds from the town of Harput in Elazığ constituted an important group among these migrants to the town.⁸⁵

The tradition of migration from Harput to Adana seems to have started at least as early as the eighteenth century and continued in the subsequent centuries.⁸⁶ In the first half of the eighteenth century, 12 from a total of 39 newcomers to the town were from Harput.⁸⁷ No fewer than 100 Kurds of Harput lived in Adana in the 1770s, including Kel Bekir, Kasab İsmail, his brother Ali, İt Hasan, Emin,

⁸² For a history of the neighborhoods of Adana, see Yörük, "Adana Şehrini Tarihi Gelişimi", p. 287-308 and idem, *Adana*, p. 122-36. In Aleppo, too, the Janissaries were mainly residing in peripheral neighborhoods and some were Kurds or belonged to Turkish populations of tribal origin, as opposed to the *aşraf* or *seyyids* from the inner part of the town; Masters, "Power and Society in Aleppo", p. 154. See also Bodman, *Political Factions*, p. 57, 63-64.

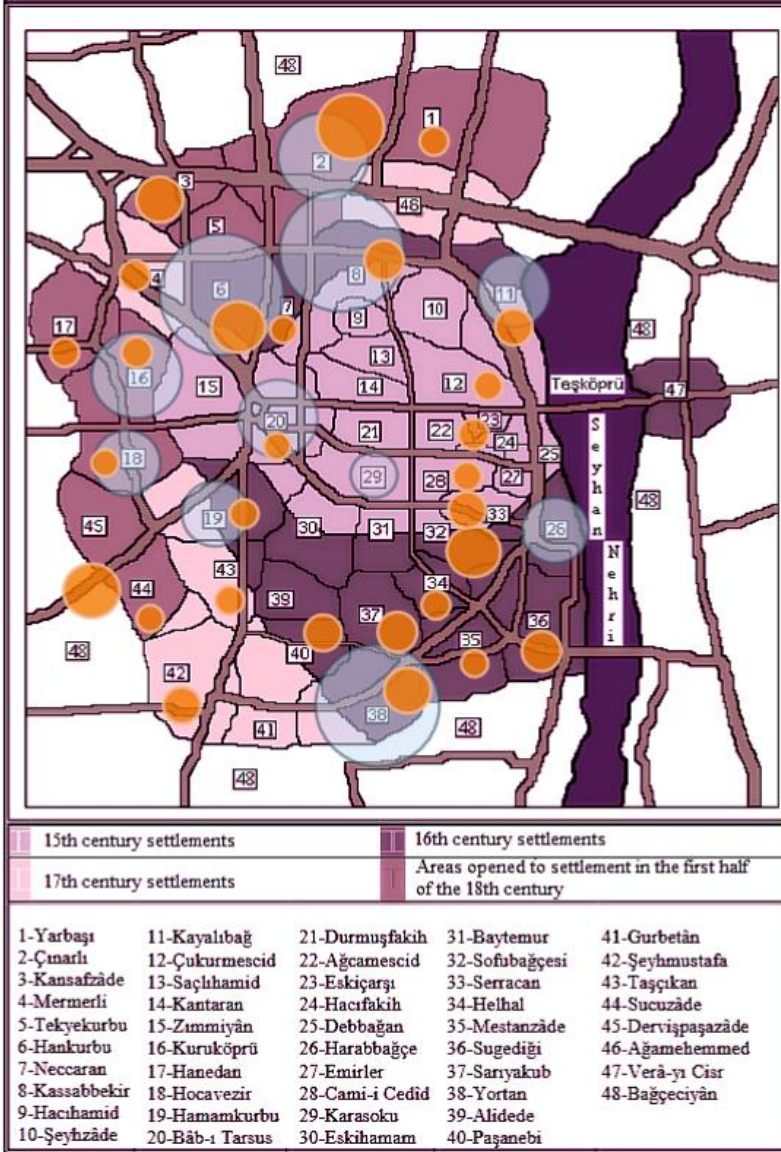
⁸³ There were also two Zazas, three Arabs, two Persians (Acem), one Fellaah, and one Laz.

⁸⁴ "El-İyazü-billab Urus, Acem, Çingene ve Türk reyasının evlâtlarıyle vesair mablükun evlâtlarından Harputlu, Diyarbekirli ve Malatyalı olmaya", as cited in Uzunçarşılı, *Kapıkulu Ocakları*, p. 20. See also Ayşe Pul, "Yeniçeri Teşkilatına Dair Bir Risale (Değerlendirme-Karşılaştırmalı Metin)", *Belleten*, 84/301, (2020), p. 1007.

⁸⁵ BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye (C.DH) 230/11457 (21 Ş 1190/October 5, 1775); A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.4:88 (evahir-i Ş 1190/October 5-13, 1775).

⁸⁶ Harput served as a center of migration not only to Ottoman cities but also overseas. The Armenian residents of the town migrated to North America especially during the late nineteenth century. For further details, see David E. Gutman, "Agents of Mobility: Migrant Smuggling Networks, Transhemispheric Migration, and Time-Space Compression in Ottoman Anatolia, 1888-1908", *InterDisciplines*, 1, (2012), p. 48-84; David E. Gutman, *The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America, 1885-1915: Sojourners, Smugglers and Dubious Citizens*, Edinburgh 2019, p. 10-12; also see his dissertation, *Sojourners, Smugglers, and the State: Transhemispheric Migration Flows and the Politics of Mobility in Eastern Anatolia, 1888-1980*, State University of New York, Ph.D, Binghamton 2012, p. 30-37.

⁸⁷ Yörük, *Adana*, p. 152, 405-406.



Map 3: Neighborhood distribution of the pseudo-Janissaries and Janissaries of Adana⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Source: Saim Yörük, “Adana Şehrinin Tarihi Gelişimi (XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıllar)”, *Ç.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 21/3, (2012), p. 306. The circles in orange refer to the neighborhoods of 166 people in the list submitted to Süleyman Paşa in 1775; the circles in light blue refer to the neighborhoods of house owners belonging to the *askeri* class in the year 1750.

Kürd Mustafa, Kahveci Mustafa, and a Kurdish tribesman called İbrahim, all present on the list submitted to Süleyman Paşa. All were probably migrants as they were accused of causing disorder in Adana in the past eight years.⁸⁹ They had formed an armed group the members of which had developed a sense of group solidarity and lived in certain neighborhoods – a sign of chain migration.⁹⁰ They had contentious relations with other residents of the town, which sometimes resulted in open conflicts and, in one instance, they had even killed five people.⁹¹

It would be very reductionist to describe the 1774 conflict in Adana as a Kurdish–Turkish divide, especially if we take into consideration the overlap or the ambiguity of the lines drawn between ethnicity and tribal identity during that period. Still, however, the above details point to the fact that we should not underestimate these aspects when examining the tensions in the town. Indeed, ethnic or tribal tension was not something rare in the southern parts of Anatolia. As a result of eighteenth-century migration, for instance, an official source asserted that “*one side of Ayntab is Kurdish and one side is Turkoman*”.⁹² In the cases of both Aleppo and Ayntab, patterns of chain migration of tribesmen and peasants have not only played a role in the development of solidarity groups in certain neighborhoods, but also brought the latter closer to the local Janissary officers.⁹³ In Aleppo, for instance, the Kurds and Turcomans of the town sided with the Janissaries in their internal clash with the local *aşraf* in 1798.⁹⁴

The sectoral distribution of 30 out of 166 people whose occupations are provided in the list of 1774, suggests that they were professionally heterogeneous. In the primary sector, one person was involved in agricultural production as a farmer, one was a logger (*ağaççı*), while two people dealt with stockbreeding/husbandry (one was a dealer in lamb meat and one a cattle breeder). In the secondary sector, four people dealt with food production (one cheesemaker, one miller, and two butchers), six people were tanners, one was a blacksmith, one a cap maker, one a silk maker, and one a sieve maker. In the tertiary sector, three people engaged in food services as coffee shop owners and four in transport and communication (one donkey driver [*hımarcı*], one water-buffalo keeper [*camuşcu*], and two horse dealers [*canbaşı*]); while two provided

⁸⁹ BOA, C.DH. 230/11457 (21 Ş 1190/October 5, 1776).

⁹⁰ For the importance of chain migration and the regional connections of Armenian immigrants in seventeenth-century Anatolia, see İrfan Kokdaş, “17. Yüzyılda İzmir’e Ermeni Göçü: Acem Tüccarları ve Hemşerilik Ağları”, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 34, (2021), p. 227-253.

⁹¹ BOA, C.DH.230/11457 (21 Ş 1190/October 5, 1776).

⁹² BOA, C.DH.265 (20 R 1213/October 1, 1798) as cited in Canbakal, “Political Unrest in Eighteenth-Century Ayntab”, p. 43.

⁹³ In Ayntab, for instance, such interaction was observed in the peripheral neighborhoods of Yahni, Şarkıyan, Şehreküstü, and Kurb-ı Zincirli; Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, p. 85-86. In Aleppo, too, three suburban quarters were inhabited almost exclusively by Janissaries; Bodman, *Political Factions*, p. 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118-119.

public/military services (one cavalry troop [*cümdü*] and one prayer leader).⁹⁵ Furthermore, in the list we can also find four servants of the group's leading figures.⁹⁶ Apart from these, a certain Hüseyin is called a "*Kürd fakırsı*", a term probably referring to his religious role among the Kurdish population of the town.

b.2. A review of the probate inventories of 41 people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries

The geo-economic overlap between migrants and lower-income groups who lived on the outskirts of the town and were employed in agricultural production and husbandry is quite instructive. Like most of the early modern cities of Anatolia, Adana's economy was largely dependent on agricultural or husbandry-related activities. The town itself was immediately surrounded by huge gardens (the areas indicated with no. 48 in Map 3) in the south and north, as well as along the shores of the Seyhan River on the east. As elsewhere, these labor-intensive gardens seem to have provided employment for some immigrant gardeners and shepherds.⁹⁷ Moreover, most of the town's settlers were actually tribesmen with deep connections to the countryside and significant involvement in husbandry. This is the reason why Yusuf Ağa, the steward of Kuyucu Süleyman Paşa, described the town as the land of "*Turks and Turcomans*".⁹⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising to find a widespread engagement of the alleged pseudo-Janissaries in occupations related to agriculture, husbandry, animal breeding, and dairy production. Though the case of Adana requires further research, there appears to be a similarity with the Janissaries of Aleppo and Ayntab in this regard.⁹⁹ The Janissaries of Ayntab were also heavily involved in animal-related professions; while the butchers of Aleppo were mainly Janissaries.¹⁰⁰

The concentration of the people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries in agricultural and animal-related sectors is further confirmed from the estate inventories of the 41 people – 3 executed and 38 deserters¹⁰¹ – whose properties were seized by Süleyman Paşa in 1774.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Since the professions of Kel Bekir as a butcher, Avaz Musa as the *bölükbaşı* of Kel Bekir, as well as the occupations of three ex-Janissary officers are not specified in the list of 1774, they have not been included in the above list.

⁹⁶ Çayıroğlu had two servants, while Basatçı Ahmed and Gazi Mahmud had one each. Two others were connected to Kınaoğlu and Kademoğlu as dependent or followers (*etibba*). Finally, five people are referred to as the comrades/friends (*refik*) of certain figures.

⁹⁷ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Migration into Eighteenth-Century 'Greater Istanbul' as Reflected in the *Kadı* Registers of Eyüb", *Turcica*, 30, (1998), p. 162-183; Kokdaş, "Acem Tüccarları", p. 243.

⁹⁸ BOA, TSMA.E.657/13 (11 S 1222/April 20, 1807).

⁹⁹ Masters, "Patterns of Migration", p. 85; Canbakal, *Politics and Society*, p. 87; Bodman, *Political Factions*, p. 64-65; Çınar, "Bir Güç Unsuru Olarak Yeniçeriler", p. 100-101. Also, see Yahya Araz's article in the present issue.

¹⁰⁰ Bodman, *Political Factions*, p. 64-65; Wilkins, *Forging Urban Solidarities*, p. 162-164.

¹⁰¹ Even though in the relevant *mühimme* entry a total of 30 people is noted as having been executed by the *paşa*, the probate inventories list only three of these figures among the executed, the rest

Type of Assets	Total	Average	Percentage
<i>Gross wealth</i>	21197	517	100
<i>Agricultural products</i>	13595	332	64.1
<i>Livestock</i>	4936	120	23.3
<i>Financial assets</i>	1249	30	5.9
<i>Unclear</i>	572	14	2.7
<i>Real estate</i>	400	10	1.9
<i>Consumer or household durables</i>	266	6	1.3
<i>Personal movables</i>	128	3	0.6
<i>Weaponry</i>	40	1	0.2
<i>Agricultural tools</i>	12	0	0.1

Table 2: Distribution of the assets of people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries confiscated in 1774

It is reasonable to assume that most of the deserters had taken their precious items with them while fleeing the town. Therefore, their total wealth should be considered as reflecting a minimum value. It is probably due to this reason that the total wealth of the executed people exceeds that of all the rest: Gülekoğlu Hüseyin b. Abdullah had a property worth 8,480 *guruş*, Berber Mehmed Beşe 1,839 *guruş*, and Gayroğlu Elhac Halil 1,260 *guruş*. This means that, although the average of the total wealth of the people on the list is 517 *guruş*, if we exclude the three executed people, the average decreases to 242 *guruş*.

The wealth distribution of even this limited number of people reflects the hierarchical structure and inequalities which existed between the people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries in Adana. While the confiscated properties of more powerful figures, including two ex-Janissary officers called Çayıroğlu Elhac Ali (2,805.5 *guruş*) and Kademoğlu Osman (536 *guruş*), were above the average, 78

being listed as deserters; BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d.166:244, order no. 559 (evast-1 L 1188/December 15-24, 1774).

¹⁰² Even though the accusation of pseudo-Janissarism – especially with relation to the wars which took place in the seven years preceding the event – is more pronounced in the confiscation orders of the 41 people, the legal justification for the confiscation was rather that the accused had been involved in a rebellion (*buruc*), as rebels (*asi* and *bagi*). In the beginning of each probate estate, the following formula is repeated: “*The following is the record of the possessions of ... [name], a mutineer and deserter who fled after his persecution for being among those individuals and groups who claimed to be Janissaries in the past seven years, as recorded by the Sharia court and through the mediation of el-Hac Ibrahim Efendi, the officer of the imperial treasury (beytülmal) who received the record in question, at the time when Süleyman Paşa, the current governor of Adana and the General Inspector of Anatolia, honored Adana with his presence?*”. For other examples, see AŞR.52:97-98, 103, 103-107.

percent of the group members fell below this average. The wealth of the poorest ones was around 10 *guruş* (four people), less than the price of a horse (25.5 *guruş*) or an ox (13-14 *guruş*), but above the price of a cow (6.5 *guruş*).

In general, agricultural products and animals constituted the overwhelming majority of the 41 people's properties. Unfortunately, the occupations of only four of them are specified in the confiscation list: a barber, a water-buffalo keeper, a blacksmith, and a servant. However, agricultural products of cotton seed and cereal constituted the entire wealth of six people and more than half of the total wealth of six others. Most of them owned considerable numbers of livestock, especially oxen. The average number of cattle in their possession is 7 with an average value of 85 *guruş*. Cattle constituted the total wealth of nine and counted for more than half of the assets of eight people in the list, while 3,210 oxen were owned by these 41 people alone.¹⁰³ As can be recalled, in the longer list of 166 pseudo-Janissaries a number of tanners and other husbandry-related occupations were mentioned: professions which required a continuous supply of animals and hides. Indeed, according to a report on Adana written in the 1870s, the need for such products was met by the nomadic Turcomans who herded their oxen on the southern slopes of the Taurus Mountains.¹⁰⁴

A comparison of the properties of the above-mentioned pseudo-Janissaries with those of 250 Muslim adult males from Adana further confirms our observation,¹⁰⁵ as can be seen in Table 3:

46

<i>Group</i>	<i>Pseudo-Janissaries (1774)</i>	<i>Janissaries (1719-1786)</i>	<i>Other Muslims (1719-1786)</i>
<i>Total number of people per category</i>	41	27	250
<i>Gross wealth</i>	21197	49349.5	366075.9
<i>Gross wealth (average)</i>	517	1827.8	1464.3
<i>Financial assets</i>	1248.5	25535	132311.5
<i>Financial assets (average)</i>	30.5	945.7	529.2

¹⁰³ Apart from oxen, the total number of cows owned by these 41 people is 31 (508 *guruş*), that of calves is 53 (106 *guruş*), and that of water buffalos is three (90 *guruş*).

¹⁰⁴ James Henry Skene, "Aleppo", *Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons: Commercial Reports*, (1876), Volume 75, p. 997.

¹⁰⁵ As the pseudo-Janissaries were Muslim adult males, we have included the probate estates only of people of the latter category, as well as people of Janissary background and *beşes* who, albeit described as "visitors" (*misafir*) in the sources, seemed to have had some stable presence in the town, as workers or inhabitants. These probate inventories are roughly covering the period 1719-1786.

*Pseudo-Janissarism (Yeniçerilik İddiası) in the Ottoman Provinces (with Special Reference to Adana):
Its Emergence and Its Geographic and Socio-Economic Aspects*

<i>Financial assets (%)</i>	5.9	51.7	36.1
<i>Real estate</i>	400	4455	66477.5
<i>Real estate (average)</i>	9.8	165	265.9
<i>Real estate (%)</i>	1.9	9	18.2
<i>Agricultural products</i>	13595	10796	54506
<i>Agricultural products (average)</i>	331.6	399.9	218
<i>Agricultural products (%)</i>	64.1	21.9	14.9
<i>Livestock</i>	4936	1802	33200.4
<i>Livestock (average)</i>	120.4	66.7	132.8
<i>Livestock (%)</i>	23.3	3.7	9.1
<i>Slaves</i>	0	440	2756
<i>Slaves (average)</i>	0	16.3	11
<i>Slaves (%)</i>	0	0.9	0.8
<i>Agricultural tools</i>	12.3	51.5	407.8
<i>Agricultural tools (average)</i>	0.3	1.9	1.6
<i>Agricultural tools (%)</i>	0.1	0.1	0.1
<i>Weaponry</i>	39.5	489.1	3029.1
<i>Weaponry (average)</i>	1	18.1	12.1
<i>Weaponry (%)</i>	0.2	1	0.8
<i>Books and luxury goods</i>	0	31	2068.5
<i>Books and luxury goods (average)</i>	0	1.1	8.3
<i>Books and luxury goods (%)</i>	0	0.1	0.6

Table 3: Comparison between the properties of 41 people accused of being pseudo-Janissaries in 1774 and those of various Muslim adult males from Adana in 1719-1786¹⁰⁶

The average of real estate and financial assets of the 41 pseudo-Janissaries is still below the average of those of the adult Muslim males from Adana, including the sub-category of registered Janissaries. The average of their agricultural products (331.58 *guruş*; 64%), on the other hand, is above that of the adult Muslim males

¹⁰⁶ Sources: AŞR.1; 4-6; 104; 12-14; 16-18; 23; 26-28; 30-36; 38; 44-45; 50; 52; 65; 125; 129-136.

(218 *guruş*; 14.5%), while the percentage of their livestock (120.39 *guruş*; 23.3%) is higher than the percentage of the whole town (132.80 *guruş*; 9.1%).

The most striking peculiarity of the wealth of the 41 people on the list of 1774 as given in Tables 2 and 3 is the virtual absence of real estate assets. Drawing hasty conclusions from the absence of agricultural lands, however, may be misleading, given the considerable amount of cotton seeds (*keoza*) and cereals (wheat and barley) among their possessions. This lack may signify the absence of any agricultural real estate held as a freehold property which could be seized, and that they may have been renting fields for cultivation or just cultivating *miri* lands.

As far as residential estates are concerned, none of the above people owned houses in Adana, except for the two houses (200 *guruş* each) of two of the executed people. The aforementioned 1750 survey of house owners presents a completely different picture, at least for the registered Janissaries of the town, and provides an interesting insight concerning the latter's socio-economic profiles. As the *askeri* groups were also included in this survey, it is possible not only to follow the proprietorship of those people who were considered by the local administration to be registered Janissaries, and their spatial distribution in the town, but also to reach more definite conclusions regarding the socio-economic differences between them and the people accused of being Janissary pretenders. The most striking result of the survey's examination is the overwhelming dominance of people bearing the titles of *beşe* (785 out of 1,297) and *ağa* (124 out of 1,297) as proprietors of houses situated mainly in the neighborhoods of Kasabbekir, Eskihamam, and Çınarlı, but also having a presence in almost every quarter of the town.¹⁰⁷ Titles may sometimes be misleading and the register itself was created for recording the number of townsmen eligible to pay the *avarız* tax, but, if we can trust the distinction made between the *askeri* and non-*askeri* groups listed separately in the same survey of 1750, the registered Janissaries mentioned under the sub-categories of "*askeri*" (292) and "*yeniçeriyân*" (53) make up a total of 345 individuals, all owning houses in different parts of the town (see Map 3).¹⁰⁸ This survey reveals that the registered Janissaries owned a considerable number of residences in the town. The availability of a very limited number of houses in the probate inventories of the 41 accused of being Janissary pretenders, therefore, suggests that at least some of the pseudo-Janissaries probably settled in neighborhoods with a great number of cheap inns and rented shops, barracks, and houses.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, we know that the laborers from Harput "*worked in cities, sometimes for many years, living the lives of bachelors in the corners of inns*".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Our observation is based on the list provided in Yörük, *Adana*, p. 227-228. For the residential distribution of the *askeri* class in Adana, see the list in *ibid.*, p. 419-220 and the map on p. 421.

¹⁰⁸ AŞR.29 (evast-ı L 1163/September 13, 1750).

¹⁰⁹ Adana was home to a considerable number of inns inhabited by pilgrims, merchants, as well as migrants to the town. For the inns of Adana, see Yörük, *Adana*, p. 202-203, 410-412.

¹¹⁰ Manoog B. Dzeron, *Village of Parhanj: General History 1600-1937*, Boston 1938, p. 203, as cited in Gutman, *Sojourners, Smugglers, and the State*, p. 34.

Conclusion

Pseudo-Janissarism can be viewed as an important element of networking and as a springboard for socioeconomic mobility which was used extensively by Ottoman Muslims in the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth. As we tried to show in this article, its development was mainly fueled by two inter-related phenomena: the change in the soldier recruitment methods employed by the Ottoman government, and the wider trend of *askerization* of Muslims in the provinces who sought to acquire socioeconomic privileges and ameliorate their financial condition as the empire's evolving taxation system created challenges for many of them. Ever since the practice of *devşirme* had begun to wane, these two phenomena had become increasingly interdependent, as the turning of *reaya* into *askeri* was stimulated in times of war through the – usually temporary – *en masse* enrollment of soldiers, promoting, in the process, the acquisition of tax-privileges, and the expansion of status claims and social mobility among the Ottoman population.

However, despite its importance as a “push factor”, enrollment for campaigns was not the only path through which the claims of the people who wanted to enter the *askeri* class could be materialized. Even in times of peace, the increasing decentralization of the Janissary Corps' administration offered the opportunity for officers at the regimental and provincial level to develop networks by accepting commoners into the corps through both legal and illicit means. Such methods included the selling of vacant Janissary pay-tickets, the illegal procurement of Janissary garments for commoners, and the issuing of unofficial certificates to all sorts of Janissary wannabes. Backed up by the protection of regiments and provincial officers, these practices flourished and preserved the dynamic of the phenomenon of pseudo-Janissarism both in times of war and peace. The privileged status offered by these networks “pulled” people into this system of relations, to the extent that by the second half of the eighteenth century the Muslim populations of entire cities were characterized by their affiliation to the Janissary Corps. These people were recruited locally and represented an integral part of the Ottoman provinces' social fabric. Given the reach and sheer size of the Janissary organization, it would be no exaggeration to say that pseudo-Janissarism represented the single most important manifestation of *askerization* in the Ottoman Empire.

Pseudo-Janissarism started developing rapidly in the last two decades of the seventeenth century and, in terms of its early geographic expansion, our data shows that Anatolia – especially the areas close to the Black Sea and the Aegean – was the region with the greatest pseudo-Janissary activity. However, even at this early stage, the phenomenon was widespread in a number of Anatolian and European Ottoman provinces, and would expand even further in the course of the eighteenth century.

The study of eighteenth-century Adana supports the above observations, strongly suggesting that the rise of draftees and pretenders tagged in the sources as pseudo-Janissaries was directly related, on the one hand, to the long wars and their socio-economic repercussions in the provinces of the empire and, on the other, to the efforts of underprivileged *reaya* to better their economic and social position by claiming an *askeri* status. Provisioning of manpower, pack animals (especially camels), and war financing through the imposition of extraordinary taxes drove the non-*askeri* inhabitants of the town to various forms of resistance (flight, tax-evasion). In particular, the urgent need for manpower and the arbitrary measures taken by the central government in order to cope with the necessities of warfare led to the arising of an attitude of opposition to the encroachments of the state and its representatives among the people involved in the process. Accompanied by the efforts of tax-farmers and tax-collectors to maximize their profit, the forced settlement and migration of some nomadic communities to urban centers increased the pressure on the available resources, creating new factions, prompting new coalitions, and causing new power struggles. The list of individuals accused of being pseudo-Janissaries in Adana (1774) suggests that at least some of them were among the poorest social strata, often newcomers to the town, and mainly involved in animal-related agricultural professions. Our sources point to the fact that they were either migrants from the empire's eastern provinces or people with deep connections to the countryside who, upon their arrival in Adana, found a niche in humble occupations related to agricultural production, animal breeding, or urban professions associated with these sectors.

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Its Emergence and Its Geographic and Socio-Economic Aspects*

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