Abstract: After the establishment of the border with the Habsburg Empire, the defense of the Ottoman Empire along the Danube and Sava rivers necessitated the establishment of new mechanisms. This study presents a structuralist attempt to systematize the incoherent military organization at the border in various border provinces; define the structure, means, and forms of administration; and, most importantly, to trace the changes in military organization throughout the 18th century. The frontier was divided into separate sectors in accordance with information collected from archival sources along with minor historiographical additions in accordance with consideration of the longue durée. The institutions of the kapudan and the muhafız, how they were related to one another, and their position within the military organization will be more closely investigated and new interpretations will be given. The question of how the military capacity was organized will be meticulously examined, and lists of fortress garrisons will be presented with a focus on differences between times of war and peace. These will establish frameworks for further research.

Keywords: Danube, Sava, 18th century, serhad, serhad külu, kapudan, muhafız.

Researchers still have not established a fully clear understanding of how the 18th century Ottoman–European frontier along the Sava and the middle of the Danube was organized. Due to changes in various frontier defense systems and command jurisdictions, it is incredibly difficult to trace all the actors involved in local changes or to make credible interpretations. The goal of the study was to carry out a comparative examination of the frontier and the border regions along the rivers within the eyalet of Bosnia and the sancak of Smederevo (Semendire). The basic aim is to outline the structure of the Ottoman defenses, determine various models of military organization, and ascertain a coherent system within which these various systems functioned. This is not a study of the
army, military units, or the number of fortress garrisons, but rather of the organization of the Ottoman military defense against Europe in this region. Contemporary literature has established how the kapudanlık operated in the eyalet of Bosnia as a unified institution. It has also established that the Belgrade muhafız, who had the rank of vizier and the title of pasha, had certain jurisdictions over a significantly larger area than the sancak of Smederevo. What remains largely unknown, however, is how the government and administrative systems in the area around Šabac (Böğürdelen) and the nahiye of Šabac were organized, and which has the subject of recent studies. The interconnectedness of these frontier defense systems and how they functioned during times of war and peace is the basis of the study presented here. During the 18th century, there were significant changes along the frontier between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The decentralization of Ottoman rule caused important and sometimes abrupt changes in military organization and in jurisdictions, command, and the very existence of military units and commands. The nature and extent of these changes will be meticulously examined as part of this study of how the Ottoman defense operated.

1. Frontier Defense System

Research into the Ottoman frontier is invariably connected to the meaning and use of the Ottoman term serhad/serhat. During the period of conquest, the border zone was considerably wider, and before the introduction of Ottoman administrative organization in the conquered territories, the vilayets functioned as specific territorial units organized around the gazis, or fighters for the Faith, led by uc beyleri, or march leaders. By the 18th century, the term serhad had disappeared from the sources and were replaced by the terms nizam-i serhad, or troops of the frontier, and serhad-i/hudud-i islamiyye, or the borderlands of Islam. By this time, it was no longer possible to draw parallels with the organization of the serhad and the institutions dating from the early period of the Ottoman conquests. Therefore, in the sources, this term refers exclusively to the frontier. It is also important to bear in mind that the notion of a state border presented in Ottoman documents dealing with the delineation of a frontier area (hududname or sınırname), did not refer to a strictly defined line. The first time a precise land border was establish through a treaty concluded in 1699 and was based on reports from members of a border committee and from cartographers and military engineers on both sides. If the border fell along a river, the waterway was not divided, and both sides were able to make use of navigable waters. When the Ottoman border was returned to the Šava and Danube rivers after the Great Turkish War (1683–1699), a need arose for new ways to manage the frontier. After 1699,

1 Tričković 1970; Pavlović 2017.
2 The term vilayet has multiple meanings. In the early period of the Ottoman conquest, it was used more broadly to designate a country or territory—for example, the Sırp Vilayeti, or Serbian Land. Vilayet was often used to refer to conquered territory in which Ottoman rule had not yet been consolidated. Beginning in the 19th century, this term was used to indicate an Ottoman province. (Šabanović 1959: 32–35).
3 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Bab-ı Asafı, Divan-i Hümayun, Mühimme Defterleri, No. 186, hükmü 478; 187/97; 157/593 (BOA. A. DVNS. MHM. d.).
Bosnian territory became vulnerable to attack from the Austrian army on multiple sides; however, this was not the case in the sancak of Smederevo. Until the late 18th century, enemy raids originating from the Austrian Banat were not expected, which also determined how this part of the border was defended. A clear yet informal division of the frontier into three defensive lines emerged based on the main points for possible incursions by the enemy army: Belgrade and the lines along the Danube and the Sava rivers. The line along the Sava and east of the Drina, which was legally part of the sancak of Zvornik (Zvornik), was adjoined to the border line within the eyalet of Bosnia, where territories were named according to the most important border fortifications or a river: the Sava Frontier (Sava-i serhad), Bihać Frontier (Bihke-i serhad) and the Kilis Frontier (Kilise-i serhad). There was an exception to this only between 1718 and 1739 when both banks of the Sava and most of the sancak of Smederevo belonged to the Habsburg monarchy.

According to composition and variety, and primarily by the number of military units, the Belgrade fortress was almost equal to all other total military capacities in the interior of the sancak of Smederevo put together. To finance the military defense of the frontier, the Belgrade vizier was given other provinces in the arpalık along with the task of financing the provincial units, known as yerli kulu, or serhad kulu in areas outside of the sancak that he governed. Other than financial responsibilities, it cannot be concluded that this led to the creation of new administrative or defensive structures. Although Belgrade was the most significant defensive position on the middle Danube, the organization of the defensive line in the interior had its own local specificities. Strategically, the protection of Belgrade’s broader hinterland fell to the fortresses on the Danube and the Sava. If war broke out, the main enemy attack was expected to be on the Sava. Because of this, the most significant resources were deployed in Belgrade and Šabac, which required a specific form of military organization for the Sava line.

The Danube line had no elements of a separate command. The system of fortifications along the Danube and in the hinterland served as a line of defense against the enemy, with each fortification functioning independently. Palankas were built in the interior to protect the main trade and travel routes and to ensure the safety of the immediate surroundings. Defense along the rivers was similarly organized. There was a single command of the river fleets, such as those on the Danube and the Sava, but in practice the viziers named the kapudans or “captains” of small river flotillas called şaykas within their own sancaks. For example, the Smederevo captains protected the Danube between Belgrade and the Ram fortress (Hram, Ipek) to the east. There were fifty-four kilometers of waterway between Belgrade and Smederevo, which was similar distance along the roads between two palankas in the sancak. The commanders of the yerli kulu garrisons—the

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5 BOA.A.DVN.MHM. d. 125/8; 125/19.
7 This was a principle of allocating to the vizier administrative authority over another sancak, in addition to his primary one, that was governed by his representative—a kethüda or mütesellim.
9 There were two types of Ottoman fortifications: fortresses and palankas, forts built with wooden palisades.
10 N.B. The kapudan of a fortress and the kapudans of şaykas were completely separate positions and had no relationship to one another.
muhafizes, the unit officers under their command, and the captains of the şaykas—certainly had the authority to patrol their own areas. One of their most important responsibilities was the protection of river crossings, for which the yerli kulu from the nearest palanka were responsible. Some of the river units were deployed in the hinterland along the Great Morava, the final section of the Morava River.\textsuperscript{11}

Significant fortresses along the Danube line dating from the classical period (Smederevo, Ram, Ada Kale, Gradište, Golubac, and Poreč) did not have a strategic role in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Until the 1780s, the muhafız of Smederevo had no need to be constantly on guard, but the establishment of the Banat military frontier and the Austrian army’s appearance on the Danube led to changes in the Ottoman defense. This was best reflected in the appointment of a certain Halil Pasha as the muhafiz of Smederevo in 1789.\textsuperscript{12} At the same time, a dignitary in Niš with the title of pasha carried out the civilian role of mütesellim. Judging by the decision to send a pasha to Smederevo to serve as muhafiz, this strategic move was highly significant for the Sublime Porte. Smederevo protected Belgrade from enemy raids, along with access to Belgrade from the east and south. In the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century it was threatened by Osman Pasvantoğlu’s troops. It had fewer yerli kulu garrisons than Šabac (138 versus 272 after 1739). The first recorded reinforcements made to the Smederevo Fortress began in 1769, when the gates and bridges were repaired. There are records concerning a delivery of stockades from Bosnia to Šabac and Smederevo in 1783, along with cannon for Smederevo that same year. The number of standing yerli kulu was also increased to 150 just before the war in 1788. Other forts were also reinforced around the same time. A garrison of 200 soldiers at Ada Kale was mentioned in 1785, along with gönüliyan, shock troops known as the serdengeçti, and Arnavud eşkiyası.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1699 the frontier in the eyalet of Bosnia was surrounded by enemy territory. However, not every border area was treated equally. Special orders from the sultan indicated which border areas of the eyalet might be accessible to the enemy’s regular army, and which might be to a smaller number of regular units and a larger part of the irregulars, which the Ottoman sources referred to as the serhad kulu (frontiersman) and akinci (Uskoks). During times of war, most soldiers came from the enemy side of the Sava at two crossings: one near the Gradiška\textsuperscript{14} fortress and the other near the Brčko palanka. A smaller number of soldiers crossed near the Brod fortress. The enemy army would also attempt to reach Banja Luka from Gradiška, Gračanica from Brčko, Šabac and Belgrade from the Rača palanka (on the Srem side), and Derventa from Brod. In addition to direct attacks across the Sava, enemy raids across the banks of the river were not uncommon.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{11} Pavlović 2017: 165.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 2019: 87; Ilić Mandić 2020.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 2019: 86–87. The term eşkıya referred to bandits who were often a source of recruitment for volunteers in the service of the vizier during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and served either alongside the yerli kulu or in direct personal service to the vizier as kapu halkı, which rendered the difference in meaning between bandits and troops almost moot.
\textsuperscript{14} The Austrian fortress at Stara Gradiška, where the Habsburg army gathered for an attack on the Bosnian side, was located across from the Ottoman fortress on the left bank of the Sava (Gezer 2020: 73–74).
In the 18th century, not all stretches of the Sava in Ottoman territory were handled uniformly. The capacity of the stretch of the river marking the border with the Habsburg monarchy was overlooked, while downstream from the Raća and Noćaj palankas to the confluence of the Danube was considered a navigable waterway. Throughout the 18th century, the parts of the Sava that passed through Ottoman territory was not given the same consideration. Part of the frontier up to the Brod fortress was secured by the army from the palankas and fortresses along the river and in the hinterland. The border forts built right on the river (Dubica, Gradiška, Brod, and others) were part of defense system that also included those located nearby hinterland (Doboj, Tešanj, Jajce, and others) and those farther afield (Maglaj, Kozarac, Tuzla, and others). The eastern part of the Sava line was more heavily fortified after 1739, when the Kobaš fortress was again repaired and Derventa and Brčko were fortified. In addition to building new fortifications and filling the ranks of the yerli kulu, new detachments were added to the old ones. This mainly pertained to fortifications in the nearby hinterland and was meant to strengthen their defensive capabilities. The yerli kulu at these fortresses were responsible for securing peace and security of the population under threat of Uskok incursions from the left bank of the Sava. Continually reinforcing fortifications, building new ones, and increasing the number of yerli garrisons was meant to increase the overall defense of the frontier during highly uncertain times and in anticipation of continual raids and new wars.16

An enemy army attacking from the east of the confluence of the Drina and the Sava, would be directed toward Šabac and Belgrade, so these two fortresses worked in tandem beginning from the construction of the Šabac fortress. The Šabac fortress served to shield the flank of the Belgrade fortress, and during the Ottoman defensive wars of the 18th century, it became clear that severing the link between the Šabac and Belgrade fortresses would result in either a punishing siege or the Šabac fortress falling into Habsburg hands.17 During peacetime, the population on the right bank of the Sava was constantly harried by raiding parties. The villages in the nahiyes of Upper and Lower Mačva were thus given derbend status.18 This became more of an issue after the 1737–1739 war when the reaya complained of enemy attacks and the mistreatment of the Zvornik kapudan. Consequently, in 1747 the Sublime Porte ordered the vali of Bosnia and the Belgrade vizier to launch an inquiry and oversee the situation. The vali and vizier were firmly reminded they had an obligation to hold and protect (hıfz ve zabt) the Šabac fortress during times of war. The same document states that at some earlier period, the Belgrade muhafız had been responsible for paying the


18 Dangerous areas with access to enemy territory were classified as derbends. Villages with derbend status were those whose population had reaya status and were armed and on standby to provide defense in exchange for a lesser tax burden (Bojanić 1974: 140; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Bab-ı Asafi. Divan-ı Hümayun Sicileri. Bosna Ahkâm Deffterleri, 1/15 (BOA.A.DVNS.AHKR. d.).
wages of the Šabac yearli kulu. The reasoning given for this was that the Sava line was so long that the Bosnian army was unable to carry out its regular duties in a timely manner across such a large distance. The Šabac nahiye was located far from its administrative center in Zvornik. Natural barriers and intense, ongoing pressure from across the border also contributed to this decision.

During war, in addition to the army from the Šabac fortress, which in peacetime was responsible for maintaining law and order, the Sava line was also manned by garrisons from Belgrade under the command of the Belgrade vizier and the serasker of the Rumelian front. This confirmed that, in times of peace and war, the part of the Sava defense line that extended from Rača to Šabac (and quite possibly to Paleş/Palej, now Obrenovac) was under the shared protection of the Belgrade and Bosnian yearli kulu from Šabac and Zvornik. The Šabac yearli garrisons were thus under the command of the Šabac muhafiz but financed by the Belgrade vizier. It can be surmised that the Šabac muhafiz maintained an independent command during peacetime, but he served under the Belgrade vizier as serasker solstitis broke out. How much informal involvement the Belgrade vizier had in the command of the yearli kulu in Šabac beyond his formal authority remains an open question, as it does for the other fortifications with yearli garrisons he financed. There is no information about this in the sources. It should be noted that the funds for the Šabac yearli kulu came from cizye mukataa from the Šabac nahiye, which were transferred to the hazine, or treasury, of the Belgrade vizier. This only increased the chances that the vizier and his representatives would abuse their authority. By the mid-18th century, however, the Belgrade vizier had fewer possibilities to control the yearli kulu within their immediate surroundings.

2. Frontier Defense Administration

Ottoman military organization during peacetime was not the same as during war. During times of peace, there was no unified military command. Military structure and command over the garrisons was not based on territory but rather on a clear hierarchical organization of garrisons and their commanding officers. When military operations began, a serasker named to command the front and was placed in command of all regular and irregular formations and the local mustered population (nefr-i ‘amm). In the 18th century the Bosnian vali, the Rumelian vali, or the Belgrade vizier were not only given the title of serasker (commander-in-chief) of the Sava and Danube Frontiers but were also required to personally carry out the duties of the one. The seraskers sent orders to muster troops, to the commanders of the sipahi, Janissary, and yearli kulu units. In the next phase of preparations,
when the enemy had already entered Ottoman territory and important fortifications were under threat, the vali or the vizier would name a commander or serdar for a section of the front or a particular battle. In these cases, the serdar was in command of all available units at the front. Most often the kapudans in command of the yerli kulu were installed as serdars to defend the Sava line but the defense of the Danube line was more specific.

Until the late 18th century, enemy incursions into the sancak of Smederevo were expected to come from across the Sava and head directly for Belgrade, so the seraskers of the front—either the Belgrade vizier or the vali of the Rumelian eyalet—was charged with the entire defense of this part of the frontier. It appears that the Sava and Belgrade frontiers along with some other less strategically important fortifications along the Danube, were under this serasker’s jurisdiction. It is important to mention that the viziers of the sancaks in the eyalet of Bosnia could fulfill the function of a serdar, but it seems this was most often the case when the army from Bosnia was sent to one of the eastern battlefields.

Defense of the Ottoman frontier along the Danube and the Sava rivers had some other specificities, such as different roles for the Bosnian vali and the Bosnian viziers in comparison to the vizier in Smederevo and his superior, the vali of the Rumelian eyalet. The specific roles of two institutions, the kale-i kapudan (kapudan of a fortress) and the muhafız should be emphasized. As part of the decentralization of the 18th century, the vizier in Belgrade was tasked with organizing the defense of the province and the Ottoman frontier. Apart from periods that were only nominally peaceful, the vali of the eyalet of Rumeli had no real authority in these matters during peacetime. During the transitional period, the military and administrative organization of the Bosnian eyalet was less decentralized than it was in the eyalet of Rumeli or the sancak of Smederevo. The reasons for these differences between the two neighboring provinces lie in the cohesiveness of Bosnian territory and in how all affairs were concentrated in the hands of the vali as the main administrator of the eyalet. The Belgrade vizier had responsibilities that matched the those of the Bosnian vali, but the Bosnian viziers remained in the vali’s shadow. The administrators of the sancaks of Zvornik, Herzegovina, and Klis were also exempt from securing finances for the yerli kulu. Funds came from the Bosnian vali and went directly to the commanders of the armies at the fortresses: the kapudans and the ağas of the Janissaries. As the yerli kulu garrisons took over the defense of the frontier, the office of the kapudan in the eyalet of Bosnia became more important than the role of vizier. The kapudans in the eyalet of Bosnia and the muhafızes in the sancak of Smederevo had very similar responsibilities.

Previous studies have not shed enough light on the office of the muhafız within the Ottoman frontier. In the historiography, the muhafızlık is primarily defined as a specific office within the Ottoman military organization. In this sense, it refers to a specific administrative unit—a serhad—governed according to a particular regime and under the administrative authority of a muhafız who was directly subordinate to the central government.

23 BOA.A.DVNS.MHM. d. 1442/139.
27 This is supported by the fact that no such term appears in the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (Encyclopedia of Islam).
This claim, however, can be challenged by suggesting that the institution of the *muhafız*\(^{28}\) did not have the actual authority that it was believed to have had in previous historiography.\(^{29}\) The basic issues were territory and the nature of this institution’s authority. The sources indicate that the Belgrade vizier, who had also been appointed *muhafız* of the Belgrade *yerli kulu* formations, paid from his own *hazine* the wages of the *yerli kulu* units outside the *sancak* given to him to administer.\(^{30}\) Financing of garrison can rightly be understood as a form of jurisdiction over the command of the units, at least during times of war.

During the 18\(^{th}\) century, the Belgrade vizier became increasingly less capable of controlling the *yerli kulu* within his immediate surroundings, and those outside of his *sancak* certainly had more autonomy to act. Due to financial responsibilities, he often involved himself in certain issues regarding the authority of the vizier in the neighboring *sancak* of Kruševac (*Alacahisar*), but this should not be associated with any sort of formal jurisdiction.\(^{31}\) Finally, even if he did have complete authority over the *yerli kulu*, which is doubtful, this did not mean he had any further jurisdiction over other military affairs, and certainly none over civil matters. For these reasons, it is important to emphasize that the *muhafızlık* should be understood as the service or office of the *muhafız*, who was the commander of the *yerli kulu* at a particular fortress. In other words, the *muhafız* was the commander of the new units rather than a commander of a new military precinct in the frontier.

In the historiography, the term *kapudanlık* refers to territory under the civil and military authority of a *kapudan*. Yet it was, in fact, the office of the *kapudan* of the fortress—the *kapudanlık*—that had strictly military jurisdiction over a fortress’s entire *yerli kulu* or the *yerli kulu* of several *palanka*s and fortresses.\(^{32}\) Starting in the mid-16th century, the first *kapudans*, commanders of local auxiliary fortress garrisons, had jurisdiction over the *yerli kulu* of a particular fortification (Gradiška, Jasenovac, Dubica, Kostajnica, Krupa). These were fortifications on the Sava, located at the busiest stretches of the river. At the time the *kapudans* were first mentioned as infantry commanders, the border with enemy territory was not at the Sava, but this area had a more difficult bridge crossing into the *sancaks* of Požega and Pakrac.\(^{33}\)

Throughout the 17\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) centuries, *kapudans* were given jurisdiction over the *yerli kulu* garrisons at nearby fortresses, which included paying daily wages, installing lower commands, recruiting ordinary soldiers, ensuring the garrisons were properly equipped, etc. There is no mention in the sources regarding the *kapudan*’s territorial jurisdiction nor of any broader authority over other garrisons or civil affairs.

Within the *eyalet* of Rumeli, and primarily within the *sancaks* of Smederevo and Kruševac and parts of neighboring *sancaks*, the commanders of fortifications with *yerli kulu* garrisons, which during peacetime included fortresses and *palanka*s, were *muhafızes* without a clear hierarchy of command. No one *muhafız* was superior to another. Just like

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\(^{28}\) The Ottoman suffix *lık* is often misinterpreted. *Muhafızlık*, *kapudanlık*, and *defterdarlık* should be understood as the service, office, or institution of the *muhafız*, *kapudan*, and *defterdar* respectively.


\(^{30}\) Ibid., 2017: 293–304.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 2017: 118, 233, 301.

\(^{32}\) BOA. A.DVNS.MHM. d. 138/121; Kreševljaković 1991: 52.

the muhafizes, the kapudans did not answer to each other. The kapudan was the direct commander of the yerli kulu garrisons at a fortress and also the commander of the first units (cemaat) of farises or azabs, depending on the service from which he had been named, meaning whether he had previously been the ağa of the first cemaat of farises or the first cemaat of azabs.34 Documents attest to the kapudan being frequently referred to as the muhafiz.35 The term was used within the context of the muhafız-ı kale, the warden or protector of a fortification. It is not clear that the muhafiz was in fact the warden of the fortress, as some dictionaries indicate, but nevertheless the term is mentioned in the context of defense and the office assigned to him in this regard. The term muhafız-ı kale referred to the service of defender or protector, which fell within the duties of a kapudan and was mentioned as synonym for the kapudan’s duties.36 In Rumeli, there were no fortress kapudans, but the muhafiz was seen as an office with similar authority. At some of the smaller fortifications, it was not unusual for the yerli kulu garrisons to be made of up of only the mustahfiz’s units headed by a dizdar, who would then be the only commander.37

The kapudans used the honor and importance they had gained during the wars of the early 18th century to enrich themselves and extend their political influence through tax farming. From the mid-18th century onward, they can be considered as part of the financial elite rather than belonging strictly to the military elite. As the 18th century drew to a close, the kapudans and muhafizes, the commanders of the yerli kulu, and other representatives of the late 18th century financial elite, began to develop rivalries with the already powerful civil elite. There were two basic consequences of this: greater financial pressure on the reaya and the diminishing effectiveness of the yerli kulu as a means to defend the frontier and maintain security. This was how things stood when the Austro-Turkish War broke out in 1788, during which the Bosnian vali and the Belgrade vizier relied almost exclusively on hired troops in their personal service (kapu halkı). It was not uncommon for these mustered soldiers to have been previously known as eşkıyas or levends.38

3. The Army on the Frontier of Islam

The army that fought to defend the frontier along the Sava and the middle of the Danube was basically divided into units of regulars and irregulars. The regular army consisted of imperial units or kapı/kapu kulu. The irregular formations included the serhad kulu or yerli kulu and the nefr-i ‘amm (the local mustered population). The elite infantry and cavalry units of the imperial army were made up of Janissaries and sipahis. By the end of the 16th century, the need for the style of fighting these units were trained in began to gradually diminish. State revenues and territory decreased during the transition to defensive wars, which directly influenced the effectiveness of the Janissaries and the sipahis.

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34 In the year 1748/1749, the ağa of the first cemaat of azabs in Banja Luka was el-hac Mehmed Ağa, who was also the kapudan of the Banja Luka fortress (BOA.D.BKL. d. 32410 p. 10).
35 The ağa of the first cemaat of farises and the kapudan el-hac Süleyman Ağa was also addressed as the muhafiz of the Janissary cavalry and infantry at the Prijedor fortress (BOA.D.BKL. d. 32410 p. 99).
38 BOA.C.AS.927/40082-1-1; Muvekkit 1996: 610; Korić 2016.
Documents also testify to the presence of Janissaries and sipahis in the provinces, but they were not significant military elements of defense. Along the Sava and the Danube lines, the numbers of active Janissary and sipahi soldiers were not the same in the eyalet of Bosnia and the sancak of Smederevo. Some studies indicate that by the end of the 17th century, there were no Janissaries at all stationed at the forts in the eyalet of Bosnia. In the Janissary payroll records, however, there are documents indicating a smaller number of Janissaries stationed at fortifications in the eyalet of Bosnia. In contrast to Bosnia, the Janissaries in the sancak of Smederevo were a significant factor at fortifications, particularly in Belgrade where they numbered around 6,000, or 40–50 percent of the sancak’s total capacity. As is the case with determining the effectiveness of the Janissaries, it is difficult to determine how many battle-ready sipahi there were. According to statistics, it appears that the Bosnian vali was more able to rely on the sipahi than the Belgrade vizier. It is important to mention that the true number of sipahis assembled cannot always be established. Until the 1770s, the response from the sipahi was deemed satisfactory by the central government. Fermans containing warnings that the sipahi would appear when called up were very common in the late 18th century.

The most important and effective border army was made up of the yerli kulu, which had once been a local auxiliary army recruited from among the reaya who were without land or work, or impoverished members of some of the older kapı kulu units. Apart from the reaya, the ranks of the yerli kulu also included relatives of the ulema and administrative officials. The yerli kulu army was made of up different infantry and cavalry detachments divided into units: müstahfızes, azabes, farises, gönnüls (volunteers), and beşlüs. Within the yerli kulu units there were also units of timarlı and zaim, who were under the command of former timar and zaim holders and who were then listed as paid mercenaries at the fortresses. It was not uncommon for organized units to have names like nizam-ı cedid (the New Order) or a captain’s cemaat, etc. All yerli kulu units were under the special command of an ağa. In addition to the ağas, the command also included officers or zabits: kethüda

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40 There are 80 soldiers listed in the Janissary payroll records for the year 1749, but in the 1769 census, only 20 were listed (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Yeniçeri Kalemi Defterleri, 34311; 34349 (BOA. D.YNÇ.d.). This was also mentioned in the chronicles among the units called up for service, although there is no record of how many reported for duty. At the end of the century, they were primarily yamaks, but as a part of the paid forces in personal service to the vali, (Muvekkit 1999: 554, 560; Bašeskija 1991: 74).
41 In Belgrade, there were just over 6,000 Janissaries. The numbers varied between 5,308 (in 1695) and 6,196 (in 1779). One of the major Janissary strongholds on the Danube was the fortress of Ada Kale, or Ada-i Kebir (Pavlović 2017: 281–290).
42 According to a list of the sipahis from 1711 of those sent to the Russian front, there were 1,569 timars, which according to the author was also the number of sipahis (Skarić 1930: 8). Based on the rüznamçe defter of 1769/1770, it is clear there were around 800 sipahis (OIS, Arhiv, AO, 245/1, 104–165). These numbers do not represent the total number of sipahis in the eyalet of Bosnia. In the year 1768, It is mentioned that 4,000 timarlıs and zaıms were called up to put down a rebellion in Montenegro. Within all of the sancak of Smederevo, there were at the most 877 sipahis and 26 zaıms (Ibid., 2017: 268–270; Muvekkit 1999: 58; Bašeskija 1991: 79).
44 Pavlović 2017: 239.
River captains and their units were stationed at the Belgrade and Šabac fortresses to protect the waterways. The captains’ units provided auxiliary defense for river fortifications, which was even more important for preventing the enemy from crossing the river and creating pontoons. The most important river fleets were stationed at Šabac and Belgrade, and foremost along the Danube line. The derbendci played a particular role during times of war, when their officers were tasked with working alongside civilians to protect territories under threat, and particularly those from which the most income came from the cizye.

It was around this time when parts of local volunteer regiments made up of Christians and led by knezes (local reaya representatives) began appearing alongside the Ottoman army on the battlefields along the Danube and the Sava.

The yerli kulu were stationed at fortresses and palanka primarily to safeguard the fortifications in the event of an enemy attack. These small garrisons were tasked with policing duties to maintain law and order. They lived with their families in the mahalles alongside the civilian population and were engaged in farming and other everyday activities. One part of the yerli kulu garrisons were housed exclusively in the fortifications and performed duties related to the fortress itself such as guarding the gates and ramparts. These were units of the müstahfızes under the command of a dizdar. Other yerli kulu units performed duties outside the fortifications. During war, if there were fortress garrisons that were not under attack, one out of every eight or ten soldiers would be chosen from them and sent out to assist other fortifications under threat or to another front. The remaining army stayed remained at the fortification with the müstahfızes. Units were also organized in the same way in the eyalet of Bosnia and the sancak of Smederevo, with some fluctuations in capacity throughout the 18th century.

Along the Danube line, the Belgrade fortress had the largest capacity for the yerli kulu and provided the main support for the Belgrade vizier. The number of yerli kulu at the Belgrade fortress varied between 2,576 (before 1688) and 5,611 (in 1702), or about by two thousand by the end of the 18th century. The same changes in the total number of yerli kulu stationed at all fortifications were also noted in the eyalet of Bosnia. Before the war of 1716, records indicate there was a total of 9,316 yerli kulu, but according to the 1748/49 census, that number had more than doubled to 22,547. However, this was not just a matter of an

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46 Members of the yerli kulu garrisons could not be Christians, but at the river fortresses and the surrounding palanks, there are records of them being coxswains or rowers. This was the case in Golubac (Güvercinlik) and the town of Dobra, where there were 92 rowers, and on the island of Krajina (Old Poreč) 94 Christians were registered, some of whom belonged to şayka units. There is no reason to assume that it was any different at other river forts. In Šabac 21 rowers under only one kapudan were mentioned (Pavlović 2017: 165).
47 BOA.A.DVNS.MHM. d. 126/71; Özcan 2013.
48 At the more important fortresses, along with the yerli kulu, there were also Janissary garrisons. At the smaller palinks, the yerli kulu were the only effective military power. There were 300 of them in Šabac, 100 in Užice and Leskovac, 94 in Hasan Pasha Palanka (now Smederevska Palanka), Karanovac (Kraljevo) 20, Kolari 45‒70, Jagodina 60‒70, Kragujevac 30‒45, Batočina 40–80, Valjevo 40, and so on. (Pavlović 2017: 281–290, 286–292; Tričković 2013: 87–88, 206–207, 307).
49 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Ali Emiri Tasnifi Belgeleri. Ali Emiri Sultan Ahmed III, 052/05193-1-1; 052/05193-1-2 (BOA.AE.SAMD.III);
increase in the number of garrisons stationed at already-existing fortifications. It was also a reflection of newly built ones with larger yerli kulu garrisons.50

The conscripted army primarily consisted of civilians who were called up only when needed. They were divided according to those who were paid and those who were not. The recruitment base for the mustered army was partially the same as for the yerli kulu. The paid mustered units were, for the most part, made up of those first referred to as sarucas/sekbas/seymens, later on as levends, and finally by the end of the century as eşkiyas, who were part of the kapu halka, (men in personal service to the vali or vizier), former commanders, and administrators of the sancak. Various groups of volunteer units were formed from the levends, among whom were the serdengecti, who served as the vanguard. These units were synonymous with the bravest volunteers who stood in the front ranks and were the first to enter carrying banners during the defense or conquest of a fortress. The term itself, in the context of volunteers, appears along with both Janissary and yerli kulu soldiers, and referred to an unpaid mobilized population, although it was most often associated with units of volunteers recruited from the ranks of the levends.51

The precise number of mustered local troops and paid soldiers cannot be established because the lists were compiled by the commanders. Because they were privately financed, usually through funds from the ayans, there are no payroll records available in the state archives. From the very start of the 18th century, the brunt of the fighting in the Sava Frontier and the area within the eyalet of Bosnia was borne by paid and conscripted reaya. Along the Danube Frontier, the need for their increased presence and engagement among the troops was connected to the latter part of the century. This was due to the difference in the level of threat from the enemy in these two areas. The entirety of the eyalet of Bosnia, including all three areas under the most serious threat, was under the same threat of attack throughout the 18th century. Until the latter part of the century, the sancak of Smederevo was not threatened by the Austrian part of the Banat and in the interior, so the yerli kulu, the Janissaries, and small units of mustered troops were able to manage the burden of defense.52

During times of peace when the mustered units were disbanded and only salaried

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50 In the latter half of the 18th century, the number of garrisons at fortifications right on the river was reduced. According to the 1706/7 census, Gradiška had 558 yerli kulu, Dubica 329, and Brod 325 (BOA.D.BKL. d. 32295, p. 2, 3, 5). In the following war, the number of soldiers in Gradiška decreased to 411, in Dubica to 268, and in Brod to 143 (BOA.D. BKL. d. 32318, 2–3). After the 1739 Treaty of Belgrade, the same number of soldiers remained in Gradiška. In Dubica, they were reduced to 152, and in Brod the number dropped dramatically to only 48. (BOA.D.BKL. d. 32410, p. 8, 91, 99). During this time, new fortifications with increased military capacities—the Derventa and Kobaš fortresses and a palanka Brčko—were added to the eastern part of the Sava Frontier. Existing fortifications in the nearby hinterland and in the interior were given new yerli kulu detachments. The largest army was in Banja Luka. In 1706/1707 it numbered 1,225 soldiers, and according to the census of 1748/1749 that number had increased to 2,413 soldiers (BOA.D.BKL. d. 32410, p. 19).

51 They were often also called ölüm eri (pupils of death). A unit of around 120 soldiers was led by an ağa, who often appeared in the mühimme defters as one of the most important officials in Belgrade. The ranks were also being filled in the provinces by enlisting the levends. Like the dahi, ethnic background was very important to them, especially among the Anatolian troops. Another term for these units was dalkılıç. (BOA.A.DVNS.MHM. d. 173/933; Subhi 2007: 484; BOA.A.DVNS.MHM. d. 110/247; 126/78; Novili 2016: 76; Pelidija 2003: 351; Özcan 2009; İşşirli 2001).

troops remained at the fortifications (yerli kulu and Janissary), along with those in service to the provincial elite. In peacetime, the yerli kulu were responsible for maintaining security in the interior and along the banks of the river. They secured roads, bridges, and other crossings; ensured the safety of the palanka; and served as the security force responsible for assisting the kadis (judges) by arresting and interrogating those who had committed criminal acts. By century’s end, they had managed to bring under control those areas that had been previously unsafe due to banditry. When a stronger response was needed, assistance would come from groups of paid irregulars and those in direct service to military officers and provincial administrators. Toward the end of the century, despite increased numbers at the fortifications, the yerli kulu were not able to defend some areas, including the southeastern part of the sancak of Hercegovina and northeastern part of the sancak of Smederevo. Because of this, the troops hired from the Bosnian vali’s and the Belgrade vizier’s personal services were the only ones who offered up resistance to the increasingly powerful army of former ayans, or warlords, such as Osman Pasvantoğlu.

Research into the Ottoman army’s capabilities in the European frontier during the 18th century has pointed to the limited importance of the yerli kulu units and an increasing reliance on mustered troops during times of war. As a result, defensive capabilities became increasingly dependent on powerful private financiers—most often the ayans. The types of defensive structures within the frontier depended on anticipated enemy incursions, the way in which the units and the command structure of the defensive forces were organized in the eyalet of Bosnia did not differ from the neighboring eyalet of Rumeli, as has previously been claimed. In terms of their jurisdiction, the kapudans of the fortresses did not differ significantly from the muhafizes as an element of the Ottoman defense system, and the term muhafiz in fact became synonymous with the office of the kapudan. An important segment of research has pointed to the absence of territories with organized administrations and defenses such as the serhad and has to a significant extent also challenged conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the yerli kulu units, especially concerning their importance in military engagement. It is important to emphasize that the relationship of the viziers toward the muhafizes and the nature of their command jurisdiction over the yerli kulu are not simple matters and thus require further research. Military jurisdictions and command structures should in no way be linked with administrative or governmental apparatuses, but within the volatile circumstances of the 18th century, particular attention should be given to the position and prerogatives of the vizier’s rule and to his officials in the provincial interior.

Translated by Elizabeth Salmore

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**54**
АСАКИР-И СЕРХАД – ЧУВАРИ ЦАРСТВА У ДОБА НЕИЗВЕСНОСТИ: ОСМАНСКА Граница НА САВИ И СРЕДЊЕМ ДУНАВУ У XVIII ВЕКУ

Резиме

Одбрана Османског царства на Сави у Дунаву у XVIII веку, након успостављања границе са Хабзбуршким царством, подразумевала је успостављање нових механизама. Истраживање представља структуристички покушај систематизације некохерентне војне организације на граници у различитим пограничним провинцијама, дефинисања структура, начина и облика њиховог администрирања и посебно праћења промена војне организације кроз XVIII век. Установљена је подела граничног простора на посебне секторе у складу са подацима из архивских извора уз мање историографске допуне у складу са факторима дугог трајања. Посебно су истражене институције капетана и мухафиза, њихов међусобни однос и положај унутар војне организације, са датим новим тумачењима. Минуциозно је испитан проблем функционалности војних капацитета и представљени су пописи посада утврђења са нагласком на разлике током мирнодопског и ратног периода, те су тиме створени овкири за даља истраживања.

Кључне речи: Дунав, Сава, XVIII век, серхад, серхад кулу, капудан, мухафиз.