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Janissaries and Urban Notables in Local Politics: Struggle for Power and Factional Strife in the Late Eighteenth-Century Anatolian Town of Adana

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Abstract: The transformations that occurred in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, summarized by one author as more army, more taxes, more bureaucracy, and more state intrusion in the Ottoman provinces, radically changed provincial life in the Ottoman domains. Growing tax and manpower demands not only increased socio-economic pressure on the provinces but also redefined the sultan's relationship with local authorities. Accompanied by the increasingly frequent stationing of the Janissary corps in the Ottoman provinces, especially in the seventeenth century, the Ottoman cities and towns saw new elite configurations and new types of power struggles and came under greater economic pressure. The rising number of registered Janissaries changed the internal dynamics of the towns, shaped local politics, and created new struggles for power in the cities where corps regiments were stationed, pushing the Janissaries into local politics, whether as rivals or allies of the local elite. As elsewhere, the southern Anatolian town of Adana witnessed such changes in its social structure, local politics, and relations with the imperial authority. Although similarities are to be seen with the eighteenth century provincial power struggles in the Anatolian and Arabian cities of Gaziantep and Aleppo in terms of intense factional strife and the active involvement of the Janissaries and their pretenders in local politics, the power struggle in Adana was between several Janissary officers, one of whom subsequently managed to become the urban notable (ayan) of the town.

Keywords: Janissaries; political magnates; factional strife; Adana; Ottoman history



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1. Introduction

Virginia Aksan has aptly encapsulated the basic axis of transformation during the eighteenth century in four concepts: more army, more taxes, more bureaucracy, and more state intrusion in the provincial countryside (Aksan 1999, p. 22) Indeed, the enormous pressure on Ottoman finances and the military system apparent since the seventeenth century, especially in its latter half, had serious repercussions for provincial life, which were clearly manifested in increased state demands on the provinces. Running the decentralized and underfinanced empire led the imperial authorities to negotiate and bargain with local power holders for taxes and manpower. The privatization of state revenues via increased tax farming (*iltizam* and *malikane*) and the collection of extraordinary state levies (both in cash and in kind) with the aid of local authorities increased the opportunities for provincial elites of various backgrounds to achieve their local surpluses, cooperate with the imperial authorities, and play a leading role in local politics. Indeed, most of the urban notables were gradually incorporated into the imperial elite via state-sanctioned positions and honorific titles. Even though this helped them to increase their social, economic, and political power in the provinces, they were still dependent on the imperial center for the approval of tax collection, social recognition, and, most importantly, for survival.

One of the main agents of state intrusion into the provinces were the imperial Janissaries. Although they had been in the regions since the 16th century, their presence became more marked over the course of the subsequent century. In the long run, many leading figures of Janissary background had a hand in factional strife as rivals or allies of the local

elite (Masters 1991, p. 154). The availability of increased numbers of Janissary soldiers, their officers, and pseudo-Janissaries¹ created a new dynamic in the local struggle for power and prestige in the cities or towns where they were stationed. As elsewhere, the Janissaries changed the social fabric in the town of Adana, especially in the eighteenth century. Considerable numbers of urban notables in the town came from the military establishment, mostly from a Janissary background, acting from time to time as warlords,² factional leaders, and state agents. Both serving and, most especially, retired local Janissary officers were actively involved in Adana local politics, sometimes even clashing with the provincial governors. This was the case in an incident in 1718, when local magnate Arpacızade Hüseyin and his armed men attacked the governor and killed 200 servants in his retinue. Though still modest in comparison to the great households of the same period, such as the Azmzades of Damascus, the Jalilis of Mosul, Tepedelenli Ali Paşa of Janina, or Alemdar Mustafa Paşa of Ruscuk, Adana also boasted local elite households and witnessed fierce factional strife, most markedly manifested in the year 1774. Deep rivalry between two Janissary-affiliated groups in that period created serious disorder in the town, eventually leading to state intervention on the initiative of Hacı Bey, one of the factional leaders and a future town *ayan*.

The purpose of this paper is to shed some light on the nature of factional strife in eighteenth-century Adana in terms of leadership, affiliates, and the strategies employed by antagonists to eliminate the rival party. Especially through the study of the 1774 incident, an attempt is made to show that individuals of military background were a key component of the factional strife and *ayan* infighting in the town. Most were local Janissary officers who drew their manpower from the pseudo-Janissaries and recruited volunteers into the corps to add to their followers. The study also aims to underline the fact that acquiring state offices and imperial titles was a key way for local notables to boost their prestige and shore up their power vis-à-vis rival factions.

2. Provincial Notables and Factional Strife in Ottoman Provinces

Considerable literature is available on the transformation of Ottoman provincial life in the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Arabic provinces, as well as on the resultant configurations of elites, especially during the eighteenth century. Since each case has its own peculiarities, general conclusions do not always tally with empirical studies, and empirical studies do not always permit us to make broad generalizations. In very general terms, however, there is now an academic consensus that the urban notables came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and that their rise as local magnates and power brokers was mainly due to the commercialization of the economy and the transformation of the tax collection system and administrative structure, as well as to the socio-economic impacts of seventeenth and eighteenth century warfare. It is now also widely accepted that the rise of local notables recast the relationship between the center and the periphery.

In macro terms, several academic approaches provide a general framework to account for the emergence and nature of urban notables in the Ottoman Empire: the decline and decentralization paradigms, the urban notables paradigm, and the Asian mode of production theory. Based on an institutional and centralist understanding of imperial governance, the starting point for these approaches is the basic assumption that absolute/despotic rule and a command economy were defining features of the Ottoman Empire, referring to powerful central control over the imperial domains, with the legitimate right to extract the surplus.³ The adherents of the decentralization paradigm, for instance, consider the rise of any local power as a symptom of decentralization and thus a weakening of central imperial power. In this scenario, the local notables are the very products of state decline, acting as the embezzlers of local surplus. They are thus considered to be centrifugal forces with the inherent intention of challenging central authority as soon as the opportunity arises.

The capacity of pre-modern states and especially of empires to establish absolute control over their domains is always open to question. The threat of centrifugal forces may be felt at any time and by any political entity, a fact that renders the applicability of centralization/decentralization and decline paradigms questionable.⁴ Moreover, the rise of local notables is neither a product of the Ottoman Empire nor of the eighteenth century. Fikret Adanır (2006), for example, builds his explanation on the rise of provincial forces within the structural availability of a tradition of self-rule in Ottoman towns that has a history stretching back to Byzantine times. The author not only emphasizes the historical continuity between the two empires but also draws our attention to the non-Muslim counterparts of urban notables (*kocabaşıs*) under Ottoman rule (Adanır 2006, pp. 163–64). In a similar vein, Donald Quataert includes the old ruling families of the pre-Ottoman period in his classification of local notables. Some of these households were able to survive under Ottoman rule and succeeded in re-emerging as provincial political actors during the course of the eighteenth century.⁵ Even though the author does not mention them specifically, the *Germiyanzâdes/Germiyanoğulları* (12th–15th centuries) are the perfect example of a pre-Ottoman family that managed to survive under Ottoman rule.⁶ On the other hand, Yaşar Yücel argues that it was actually the administrative and economic structure of the classical Ottoman system that somehow paved the way for decentralization over the subsequent centuries, creating a decentralized system akin to the feudalism of medieval Europe.⁷ For him, therefore, the basic classical provincial administrative structure of the Empire actually laid the groundwork for the decentralist tendencies of later periods.

However, the most serious challenge to the above paradigm came from Ariel Salzmänn. As an answer to arguments on fiscal and political decentralization in the Empire, she introduced a groundbreaking explanation that also restored the local elite to the socio-economic fabric of Ottoman provincial life, by arguing that the privatization of the *iltizam* and *malikane* tax collection system as a means of fiscal decentralization actually “helped cement loyalty to the dynasty” (Salzmänn 1993, pp. 393–423; Salzmänn 2000, p. 134). While Salzmänn attempted to account for socio-economic incorporation, Toledano supplemented it by emphasizing the cultural and political integration and cooperation of imperial and local agents, as clearly expressed in the following words: “a proper study of those elites should be grounded in the interaction that took place from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth between the Ottoman elite and the local elites”, which was the process that produced “Ottoman-local elites” (Toledano 1997, pp. 148–49). A further contribution was made by Dina Rizk Khoury, who questioned the problems inherent in the clear-cut divisions between local and imperial elites or provincial notables and the imperial authorities. According to her, it was the state that created the provincial power elites and expanded Ottoman political culture and rule to the provinces. Thus, provincial actors operated within the broader imperial framework, while the imperial authorities had to create policies within the constraints of the provincial milieu (Khoury 1997, pp. 7–8, 135–37).

Albert Hourani’s “urban notables paradigm”⁸ is the most influential and perhaps most overused approach employed to explain the rise and nature of the provincial local elite in a locality, especially in the Arabic provinces of the Empire. Inspired by Max Weber’s concept of “patrician rule”, Hourani defines local notables as leaders of the urban population with access to power independent of the ruler himself, who can thus assume the role of political intermediaries between the local population and the government. “Access” and “patronage” and the role of the intermediary are key concepts in Hourani’s paradigm. The imperial government depended on their local expertise, while the local population depended on them to represent their interests. Drawn from religious and secular segments of society and from among Janissary garrison chiefs, these notables had varying sources of power. As Hourani rightly underlines, the power of the local Janissary chiefs stemmed from their command of armed and disciplined forces directly bound to Istanbul and independent of the local governors (Hourani 1968, pp. 48–49; Khoury 1990, p. 215).

Since Hourani considered that the “purest form” of urban notables were to be found in Syria and Hijaz (Hourani 1968, p. 52), his examples are drawn exclusively from the Arabic provinces, and subsequent historians usually followed his path in this regard. Placing undue emphasis on the urban notables of the Arab realm, however, intensifies the uniqueness or exceptionalism of the Arabic provinces, though Hourani’s intention was obviously quite the opposite. The Balkan or Anatolian provincial notables and power holders were not in essence that different from their counterparts in the Arabic provinces. These regions also produced great households and a number of powerful urban notables (*ayans*), such as the Cabbarzades, Caniklizades, and Karaosmanoğlus in Anatolia and Pazvandoğlu, Tirsiniklioğlu, and Tepedelenli Ali Paşa in the Balkans.⁹ They also acted as intermediaries and had access to power and patronage. The Anatolian or Balkan power holders basically played the same game, too, which involved eliminating local rivals, obtaining grants, posts, or titles from the imperial center and controlling local resources. A certain degree of capital accumulation helped them to establish a household, invest in tax collection, and feed their personal armies. Once in power, they became a force to reckon with, thanks to their social, economic, and military clout and prestige in a town or city. Depending on their location, degree of local power and particular regional and imperial circumstances, they could also prove “selective” in terms of obedience to the sultan¹⁰.

Not all regions produced powerful and famous *ayans* or elite households, however. It was actually the “lesser local notables”, including those of Janissary background, who were more heavily present in almost all parts of the Empire, though sometimes subordinated to more powerful local magnates.¹¹ According to Khoury, it was these lesser, diffused and less politically visible elites that probably remained loyal to imperial authority even when the great provincial notables began to mount their challenge to it in the second half of the eighteenth century. Less prominent notables transformed provincial life by buying or usurping military and administrative posts and titles (Khoury 2006, pp. 135–37).

Concerned basically with the relations between imperial authorities and local elites, neither Hourani’s paradigm nor the other approaches mentioned above leave much room for strife among the urban notables themselves. The basic contribution in this regard comes from Jane Hathaway’s works, by introducing the concept of “bilateral factionalism” as an analytical tool for the study of power struggles in the eastern Mediterranean and Iran from ancient times to the Ottoman period. The significance of her argument lies in the fact that power struggles were not restricted exclusively to local elites or the great households but extended to wider provincial society. As factions were defined not just by their leaders but also by members drawn from different segments of society, including soldiers and tribesmen, the concept is more inclusive and has the potential to contextualize factional strife in Ottoman provinces in broader terms (Hathaway 2005, p. 31). More importantly, Hathaway considers bilateral factionalism an umbrella concept that would also cover not only the Arabic provinces but also those in Anatolia. According to the author, symbols (colors, flags) and political parades were commonly encountered in the urban or rural settings where bilateral factionalism prevailed (Hathaway 2005, pp. 33–34). Hathaway also underlines the influence of Janissary culture on bilateral factional conflicts in terms of use of colors or insignia; more importantly, she stresses the widespread presence and deep involvement of Janissaries of various ranks in these struggles (Hathaway 2005, pp. 36–38). The author includes the janissary–*seyyid/ashraf* struggle in Ayntab (modern Gaziantep in southeastern Anatolia) and Aleppo¹² and the strife between local (*yerliye*) and new imperial troops (*kapıkulları*) in Damascus in the factionalism of the above type (Hathaway 2005, p. 37); the deep Bayezidli–Dulkadirli divide in Maraş (modern Kahramanmaraş in southern Anatolia) could perhaps be added to the same picture.¹³ The active involvement of the Janissaries in local politics and factional strife in eighteenth-century Adana show similarities with the abovementioned cases. As we shall see in the subsequent sections, however, conflict between *seyyid/ashraf* and the Janissaries was much less pronounced in the case of Adana.¹⁴ Moreover, rather than a bilateral faction, it was more a case of *ayan* infighting between several Janissary officers in the town.¹⁵

The replacement of the rotation system by the permanent stationing of imperial Janissary regiments in the provinces during the first half of the eighteenth century¹⁶ brought about the gradual, relative detachment of local imperial Janissaries from their commanders in the capital. In the long run, they began to be localized and establish broader ties with the townsmen, while commoners began to infiltrate the corps. As an offshoot of that process, the number of Janissary pretender/imposters increased in the eighteenth century due to a “bottom-up” networking process (Spyropoulos 2019, pp. 449, 455), attracting internal migrants from the lower ranks of provincial society¹⁷. Janissaries and the pseudo-Janissaries of Adana also represented the disadvantaged groups that sometimes came into conflict with the more dominant families living in the inner parts of the city (Spyropoulos and Yıldız 2022, pp. 40–43). The case of Adana proves that the most neglected group of pseudo-Janissaries were also an important social group that manned if not fueled the factional struggles there, at least in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

3. Economy and Society in Eighteenth Century Adana

As in the rest of the Empire, one issue vital to understanding the socio-economic background to factional strife and the strengthening of local notables in Adana is the introduction of the *malikane* lifetime tax-farming system. Though subject to some subsequent, mainly ad hoc changes, the *malikane* system was firmly established in the Empire from the seventeenth century onwards and became the most widespread practice in the collection of local revenues in Adana just as elsewhere. The resulting tax regime was not without economic and political consequences. It minimized the interference of local governors in their administrative units, as the *malikane*-holders were independent in terms of financial and administrative rights over their regions they farmed and were directly answerable to the central administration.¹⁸ In addition to that, important local state agents, such as the judges and treasurers (*defterdar*), were also directly answerable to the sultan, which further reduced the authority of local governors. In a similar vein, the Janissaries’ access to means of violence and jurisdictional autonomy made them virtually unanswerable to non-Janissary local and imperial agents (Spyropoulos 2019, pp. 449–66).

Adana was one of the earliest regions incorporated into the *malikane* system, via an imperial decree issued in 1695. Until the early seventeenth century, the town had family estate (*yurtluk-ocaklık*) status under the rule of the governor general (*beylerbey*) of Aleppo, but this was lost to a centrally appointed governor in 1608. In accordance with the 1695 decree, some hamlets (*mezraas*) and villages were initially included in the *malikane* system. In the subsequent century as well, the lion’s share of revenue still came from the agricultural sector¹⁹. As capital accumulation was the principal criterion for purchasing the tax farming rights of a given revenue, *malikane*-holders or sub-lessees (*mültezim*) could belong to any social group. In Adana, a total of 302 tax-farms (*mukataa*) were leased to 432 people as *malikane* in the eighteenth century. Seventy percent of them were from the Istanbul-based *askeri* class (bureaucrats, ulema), while the sub-lessees were mainly local figures,²⁰ including some local Janissary officers. For instance, Musa Ağa, the shock-troop commander (*serdengeçdi ağa*) of Adana, subleased the *malikane* of Kamyşlı and Gürhay *mezraa* from a *malikane*-owner called Mehmed (1730) (Ergenoğlu 2016, p. 154).

One further change in the tax collection system in Adana in the late eighteenth century was the fiscal centralization of revenues from the lands reserved for the imperial-administrative class (*hass*). By imperial order, the *hass* revenues of provincial administrators (*sancakbey*) and other high-ranking state functionaries, as well as the royal domains (*havass-ı hümayun*), were seized by the imperial treasury and leased together to the governors of Adana province.²¹ In cases of oppression or abuses by governors or the unproductivity of a certain tax-farm, however, some regions attached to the governor’s *malikanes* were excluded and then auctioned off to private individuals. The tax-farm of Yassıviran, for instance, was detached from the governors of Adana and tax-farmed to private individuals, while unproductive mines in the district (*nahiye*) of Sarıçam were likewise excluded, to be auctioned and leased to three individuals at a later date (1696).²² The governors were thus

not only treated as distinct from the local administrative units they were assigned to but also lost part of their revenue sources.

If we also take into consideration the virtual absence of most governors during the eighteenth century in particular, due to the long wars they were expected to fight in, it would not be misleading to argue that the majority of provincial governors ruled as absentees. As an established rule, they had to appoint a deputy (*mütesellim*) to administer the provinces in the interim period. This post was not actually a product of the eighteenth century. In previous centuries, too, the Ottoman governors (*beylerbeyi* or *sancakbeyi*) had appointed deputies when absent for whatever reason, the basic difference being that most deputies were chosen either from the governor's own household or from members of the imperial troops (*kapıkulus*) rather than from among local figures. In the eighteenth century, it became a more common practice to appoint a figure with knowledge and vested interests in community affairs as the governor's delegate. Whereas the provinces remained subordinate to the governors in the classical period, the eighteenth-century practice of appointing *mütesellims* from among the local notables on the one hand weakened governors' ties and authority over provinces and on the other hand increased local notables' participation in local administration and strengthened their ties with the imperial center (Ergenç 2012, pp. 397–98).

Mobilization for imperial wars and regional security meant that the local notables had to have access to local military and mercenary forces. Those assuming the duty of *ayan*ship needed armed forces not only to compete with the rivals but also to subordinate bandits, protect commoners, and attend military campaigns. This entailed having access to the means of coercion and establishing regular connections with armed men. Unsurprisingly, many magnates came from a military background.²³ To give an example, Kanlızâde Halil Ağa, the *ayan* of Balıkesir in the late eighteenth century, was a retired Janissary from the 19th regiment in the Janissary corps. He later became *müteselim* (1779) and then *serdar*²⁴ (1780), serving as town *mütesellim* yet again in 1780 and 1781. In subsequent years, Halil Ağa succeeded in becoming the *ayan* of Balıkesir and was ordered to furnish 150 soldiers for imperial campaigns.²⁵

Guaranteeing public security and providing troops enabled local notables to recruit armed forces and forge close links with the local military corps and militia forces. The Jalilis of Mosul were allies with the Janissary corps commanders, and one branch of their family was in the corps (Khoury 1997, pp. 61, 97). İzaklızâde İbiş Ağa, the *ayan* of Hacıoğlu Pazarcık (present day Dobrich in Bulgaria), tried to establish ties with the local Janissaries to profit from the privileges and influence of corps members and increase his manpower. Responsibility for maintaining public security in the town also meant those in power were able to keep a large retinue of mercenaries. The Müderriszâdes and the Nakkaşzâdes, two dynastic families in mid-eighteenth-century Ankara, for instance, recruited mercenaries from the *levends* and the *sekbans*. The Nakkaşzade family had 200 *sekbans* soldiers under its command, whereas the Karaosmanoğlus employed *levend* forces as their military power. Molla Mustafa, the *voivoda* of Karaferye, had 400 Albanian irregulars under his command, while Ali Ağa, the *ayan* of İçel in southern Anatolia, kept 2000 armed *sekbans* (Adanır 2006, pp. 176–77; Özkaya 1978, pp. 687–91, 696–98, 708; Anastasopoulos 2002, pp. 78, 83, 88; Ergenç 2012, p. 399; Khoury 1997, pp. 62–63).

The military power of the local magnates in Adana was so considerable that they occasionally even confronted the governors, whose mansions were stormed at least twice, once in 1718 and then in 1787. The first incident was mainly due to the heavy demands made by the imperial center and its agents: at a time when the town was already preoccupied with collecting an emergency war tax (*imdad-ı seferiye*) and provisioning the governor's household, a state agent arrived in Adana to receive an unspecified number of camels demanded by the sultan. The following day, Arpacıoğlu Hüseyin, the local *ayan*, delivered the animals to the agent. Considering the camels old and "crippled", however, the governor sent them back and ordered the delivery of better ones. The same day, another state agent called Küçük Çavuş visited the city to conscript soldiers. Not surprisingly, the next day,

300 armed men led by Arpacızade Hüseyin, his son Abdülcelil, Balcıoğlu Elhac Mustafa, and a certain Kefelioğlu stormed the governor's palace, killed 200 men in his retinue and plundered their residences.²⁶

In the relevant documents, Arpacıoğlu, Balcıoğlu, and Kefelioğlu are presented as the town's magnates (*ayans*) and the leaders of 300 "bandits" claiming to be Janissaries. The first in the trio was originally a shopkeeper and military artisan with the right to establish a shop in Ottoman army markets (*orducu esnaf*).²⁷ Serving as the *serdar* of the city for a while, he became the *mütesellim* of Tarsus and then of Birecik.²⁸ While it is not entirely clear whether all of his armed men were Janissaries or not, at least some of them do appear to have been pretenders. Once order had been restored in the town, a Janissary corps special inspector was appointed to track down and punish the culprits.²⁹ Ten of those falsely claiming to be soldiers in the 17th regiment (*17 bölük yoldaşlığı iddiasında*) were imprisoned in Adana Fortress before being exiled to Cyprus.³⁰ As for the incident in 1787, another leading figure called Kel Bekir (see following page) and his armed men murdered the town's former *mufti* and deputy marshal of the descendants of Prophet Muhammed (*nakibü'l-eşraf*). The same group subsequently stormed governor Ömer Paşa's mansion (1787). In the ensuing clash with the Paşa's forces, Kel Bekir and all ten of his men were killed.³¹

These clashes confirm the observation that power struggles involving the local elite were an important factor in provincial disorder and instability, not only between notables themselves but also sometimes in direct confrontation with governors (*Adanır 2006*, pp. 176–77), as occurred in 1718 and 1787, when tensions boiled over into open conflict. Social unrest in the town also manifested itself in 1774, though on that occasion, factional strife between several ex-Janissary officers culminated in state intervention on the initiative of a rival leader. As this particular incident gives us an insight into the factions, leaders, and affiliates, as well as into the strategies employed by the rival parties, it deserves further attention.

4. Disorder and Factional Strife in Adana

In addition to the abovementioned administrative and fiscal transformations and the increased number of Janissaries, rapid changes also occurred in the socio-economic life of eighteenth-century Adana. Since the seventeenth century, the impacts of ongoing warfare, the extraordinary demands of strained imperial finances, the increase in *iltizam* and *malikane* practices, as well as the forced settlement of tribes from southern Anatolia had a direct impact on public order and the town's social fabric. Young men who had fought in imperial campaigns resorted to banditry due to the limited job opportunities available upon their return. The towns and cities of Adana, Karaman, İçel and Maraş, Aleppo, and Ayntab were marauded by gangs of bandits consisting of *sekbans*, *levends*, or claimants to Janissary status. Disorder in the countryside and better job opportunities in the towns swelled the urban population and led to the emergence of new neighborhoods in Adana during the eighteenth century. These districts became home to seasonal migrants and newcomers of assorted ethnic backgrounds, places where increased competition over resources led to further tension between members of various groups.

The sultan and his functionaries considered open conflicts, social disorder, and the rise of banditry and Janissary pretenders to be the direct consequences of a loosening of imperial control over the provinces due to prolonged warfare, at least in the periods prior to 1739 and after 1768. For the sultan, the virtual absence of provincial governors in their administrative units and the incompetency of their deputies (*mütesellim*) provided fertile ground for reprobates who engaged in nefarious activities and oppressed innocent people.³² A powerful governor named Süleyman Paşa was finally appointed to the town in 1774. A man of military background who had served in the Janissary corps for many years, he became the Janissary ağa in 1770. Following his dismissal in August 1773, he was appointed steward of the imperial court (*rikab-ı hümayun kethüda*).³³ The main reason behind his appointment was to restore some order to the imperial capital as well.³⁴ As

Sultan Abdülhamid I himself complained, however, Süleyman Paşa tried to administer the city in the same manner he treated his own soldiers. He immediately executed several Istanbulites and placed the craftsmen under strict surveillance. Not pleased with his harsh disciplinarian methods, the sultan transferred Süleyman Paşa to provincial duties, focusing on the suppression of banditry.³⁵ Consequently, he was sent to Anatolia to undertake administrative and military tasks under the title of General Inspector of Anatolia (*Anadolu Müfettişliği*), with the specific goal of suppressing disorder in its provinces.³⁶ He was appointed governor of Adana on 14 September 1774.³⁷

Süleyman Paşa was a tough man, infamous for the harsh measures he took to discipline his soldiers. While serving as Janissary ağa, he had strangled numerous undisciplined soldiers and fugitives and thrown them down the wells at the imperial camp. His success led him to the rank of vizierate (39 November 1771) but also contributed to him being the second person in Ottoman history to earn the sobriquet *Kuyucu* (Gravedigger). The first was *Kuyucu Murad Paşa* (d. 1611), the Ottoman grand vizier (1606–1611), who had picked up his nickname from the mass graves he ordered to be dug for burying executed *Celalis* (Çalışkan 2000, pp. 303–4). Süleyman Paşa's reputation for harsh treatment and summary executions caused great panic in Adana as soon as it became known he had been appointed governor tasked with suppressing banditry in the region. As people began to flee the city,³⁸ rising tensions and the escalating sense of alarm among the town-dwellers finally forced the Paşa to write a letter a short time before his arrival. In it, he tried to calm the public by noting that there was no need for them to be frightened due to some "gossip and hearsay" about himself. He assured them that he would never harm innocent people and would even forgive some of their minor offences. At the end of his letter, he also announced he would grant a general pardon to the entire city.³⁹

The Paşa's promise did nothing to calm the residents of Adana, nor was it ultimately kept. Some individuals referred to in contemporary sources as "bandits" ran away to Tarsus, a town close to Adana, or sought shelter in mountainous regions. On the Paşa's order, those who hid in the center of Adana were captured and the properties of some runaways were seized. This was not, however, an indiscriminate punishment: some time after his arrival, the leading local authorities (*ulema*, *ayan*) and craftsmen (*kaffe-i esnaf*) had submitted a list of 166 people they blamed as the main culprits for disorder in the city. They accused those on the list of disobeying imperial orders and being involved in banditry, labeling them "bandits", "criminals", and "thieves", and accusing them of being pseudo-Janissaries.⁴⁰ It was this list that offered the newly arrived governor the information he needed for the executions and confiscations that followed. Sometime after the purges in the city, Süleyman Paşa also made the townsmen sign monetary pledges (*nezir*) to the effect that, should any of them protect the culprits, the dignitaries of the town would pay 25,000 *guruş* and residents in the miscreants' neighborhoods a total of 338,000 *guruş* to the Imperial Kitchen.⁴¹

It is possible to identify four individuals—Deli Hüseyin, Kademoğlu Osman, Çayıroğlu Elhac Ali, and Kel Bekir—as the leading figures on the list submitted to Süleyman Paşa, each with their own followers and dependents. Kel Bekir was a butcher who had migrated from Harput in Eastern Anatolia. Backed by at least one hundred armed men, he was relatively powerful; like others, his band was a stratified organization with an internal hierarchy of its own. He had a steward (*kethüda*) called Kanlı Mustafa⁴² and nine squad commanders (*bölükbaşı*), including his own nephew, Süleyman. Following their persecution in Adana, his *bölükbaşı*s, Avaz Musa, Aznavur Süleyman, Muşlu, Çayıroğlu Koca, Hasanoğlu, Harputlu Kasab İsmail, Bacaksız, Kasab İsmail, and Küçük Usta fled to Tarsus and sought shelter under the protection of a "bandit" called Turoğlu.⁴³ After surviving the purge of 1774 and being pardoned under the general amnesty of 1776⁴⁴, he and his men were killed in their clash with Ömer Paşa.

The remaining names on the same list reveal the similarities between the power elite of Adana and that in certain other cities, such as Egypt, Damascus, Aleppo, or Mosul, where “eighteenth-century political elites were often drawn from the ranks of the Janissary or paramilitary leadership.” (Khoury 2006, p. 148). While Kel Bekir represented the paramilitary leadership of the period, the other three ringleaders on the list, namely Deli Hüseyin, Kademoğlu Osman, and Çayiroğlu Elhac Ali were professional soldiers and former Janissary officers with a group of followers not only from the Janissaries but also some outlaws and Janissary pretenders. Deli Hüseyin Ağa was an *ex-turnacıbaşı*⁴⁵ who had served as the *serdar*⁴⁶ of Adana several times in 1771–73 and assumed the position of *mütesellim* in the same town for a short time.⁴⁷ Kademoğlu Osman had also served as *serdar* several times, though for shorter periods.⁴⁸ The third figure, Çayiroğlu, was also an *ex-serdar* of Adana.⁴⁹ Previously affiliated with Ahmed Paşa, the old governor of the city, he had convinced the latter to eliminate his own rivals, including the bailiff (*muhzirbaşı*) of Adana.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Çayiroğlu was the leader of another band that included Döleklioğlu Mustafa, Kel Müderris Molla Mehmed, Bastacı Ahmed, and Ağaççı İsmail, among many others.⁵¹ All four leaders on the list managed to survive the purge of 1774 but were to be executed later. Following a sultanic decree, Deli Hüseyin and Kademoğlu Osman were captured and executed by the governor of Adana in the year 1778. Çayiroğlu Elhac Ali managed to escape but was later arrested and executed.⁵² After these executions, eleven men in the ringleaders’ bands, including Deli Hüseyin’s uncle, were pardoned on condition they had no part in further unrest and paid sureties for each other. In the meantime, Hüseyin Ağa’s son Deli Ahmed fled to the imperial capital with his two servants.⁵³

In addition to the above individuals, others on the list compiled in 1774 belonged to the ringleaders’ households. Çayiroğlu, for instance, had two servants, while Basatçı Ahmed and Gazi Mahmud had one each. Two others on the same list were connected to Kınaoğlu and Kademoğlu as followers (*etibba*). As Hathaway also underlines, the term *tabi/etibba* seems to have been a way of identifying a person by those whom they followed, as well as indicating a patron–client relationship with a superior person, particularly one of military background.⁵⁴ In our case, it obviously refers to dependents of some former Janissary officers, even though the exact nature of their relationship remains unclear to me.

The main axis around which the conflict of 1774 seems to have revolved was the struggle for power between the four leading figures on the list and the rival faction led by Hacı Bey, the town *ayan* of the time. Hacı Bey also had a Janissary background. After serving as *turnacıbaşı* of the local Janissary corps, he obtained the title of chief gatekeeper (*kapıcıbaşı*) and subsequently became the *ayan*. The rise of Hacı Bey and the afore-mentioned Arpacıoğlu is highly illustrative of the crucial role played by a military/Janissary background and previously existing Janissary networks when ascending the ladder of local politics.⁵⁵ If we add other ex-Janissary officers such as Deli Hüseyin, Çayiroğlu, and Kademoğlu to the same picture, it becomes even easier to notice how effective the Janissaries were in shaping the local political scene. In the early decades of the eighteenth century (1727–28), the local Janissary officers of İzmir were also involved in a struggle with the *sekbans* of the *voyvoda* over control of the city, which led to open clashes between the two sides (Aktepe 1956b, pp. 674–81; Aktepe 1956a, pp. 71–98). In Ayntab and Aleppo, too, Janissary officers, especially *serdars*, were extremely active in local politics.⁵⁶ In these towns, the rival group mostly consisted of *seyyids* or *şerifs* who were often in competition with the Janissary factions.⁵⁷ Adana seems to have been less polarized in terms of the Janissary-*sadat/ashraf* strife that prevailed in these cities. Indeed, Hülya Canbakal has followed Ahmed Cevdet Paşa in arguing that such city-wide polarization is only to be observed in Ayntab, Aleppo, and Maraş (Canbakal 2012, pp. 34, 39–40; Ahmed Cevdet 1991, pp. 22–23).

Factional strife in Adana and the rise of Hacı Bey are important for other reasons too. Hacı Bey combined three advantages—his military background, being the member of an established family, and his administrative duties as *mütesellim*—that enabled him to become the *ayan*. He was from the well-established Hasan Paşazade/Karlızade family, one of the town's most powerful households from the 1750s to the 1830s, whose members had close ties with the local Janissaries: Elhac Ömer Ağa was a *serdengeçdi ağa*, and Hasan a *haseki*⁵⁸, while Hüseyin was also a Janissary. Hasan later became the governor (*beylerbey*) of Adana. Some family members also served as *mütesellim* or *mültezims* in the same town. The Hasan Paşazades suffered a setback following the death of indebted Hasan Paşa in 1771–72.⁵⁹ The similarity between the history of this family and that of the Çapanoğlu, who dominated Central Anatolia, is worth mentioning here. Ahmed Ağa, a member of the Çapanoğlu family, fell into disgrace and was executed in 1765. As the household was “disciplined but not destroyed”, Mustafa Ağa later revived their fortunes by gaining the rank of *kapıcıbaşı*, a significant title in the provinces (McGowan 1994, pp. 671–72). The Çapanoğlu went on to become the most powerful household in central Anatolia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The rise of Hacı Bey, then, signified that the Hasan Paşazade family had consolidated its power and was back in favor, as evinced by his obtaining the title of *kapıcıbaşı*. Even though the household remained prominent in the town, the relative weakening of its authority probably led to the emergence or strengthening of the above-mentioned factional leaders. Hacı Bey's family background and Janissary origin might have already furnished him with some political clout in Adana,⁶⁰ but it was the granting of the title of *kapıcıbaşı* that lent him the edge over his rivals, probably further incorporating him into the imperial elite. Central government recognition and local support were the keys to power for a local notable (Barbir 1980, p. 73), especially considering the important fact that the sultan remained the main dispenser of power and prestige at the head of a huge empire.

Işık Tamdoğan rightly notes that power play in Adana local politics accelerated during the eighteenth century, when rising to supremacy or losing it became much easier (Tamdoğan 2005, p. 94). Under these conditions, having a well-established network and armed followers or dependents was of vital importance. In this regard, the monopolization of recruitment into the corps was obviously not only a good source of income but also of the utmost importance for increasing personal political and military might. In Adana, factional leaders tolerated Janissary pretenders and enrolled others as ways of adding to their armed followers. During his *ayanship*, Hacı Bey interfered in local Janissary affairs and tried to recruit his own advocates into the corps. To that end, he dismissed the local Janissary scribes commissioned to recruit new soldiers into the Janissary army, illegally assuming the task himself. If we rely on a relevant report, he recruited 400 men into the corps to join the 8000–10,000 town's Janissaries, forbidding others to recruit new soldiers.⁶¹ It is noted that this action offended (*tahkir*) the active and former Janissary officers as well as the members of established families. Offensive and improper treatment of the Janissaries was always taken as an insult and dealt with accordingly in the Ottoman domains.⁶² Even though the details of Hacı Bey's actions are not clearly spelled out, it is at least obvious that he excluded the local Janissary officers from the affairs of their corps, thereby heightening the animosity between his own faction and the aforementioned ex-Janissary officers.⁶³

In 1770s, as the *ayan* of the city, Hacı Bey was also better placed to organize the residents to submit a list of “*culprits*” to Süleyman Paşa, with whom he had closer contact. Indeed, the Paşa himself was later criticized by some local and imperial authorities for oppressing some innocent people following a provocation by some of their opponents (“*erbab-ı agrazın sevk ve igvasıyla*”), evidently referring to Hacı Bey and his affiliates.⁶⁴ We may argue, albeit with some reservations, that most of the people on the list submitted to Süleyman Paşa in 1774 were likely Janissary pretenders or draftees introduced into the corps while Deli Hüseyin, Çayıroğlu, or Kademoğlu were serving as the *serdars* of Adana. As may be recalled, their rival, Hacı Bey, had also recruited 400 people into the corps. All

of these details strongly suggest that the key figures in recruiting volunteers into the ranks or tolerating fake Janissaries were the local Janissary officers, especially the *serdars*.

Abuses by local Janissary officers can be observed throughout the region's history. Even so, some unconventional changes and abuses in the appointments of *serdars* became more widespread in the eighteenth century in particular. According to the Janissary corps regulations, to become the *serdar* of a certain place, one had to be a Janissary and be given a sealed certificate of appointment on which the appointee's name was clearly written. The duration of the office was usually three months, and the new *serdar* was to pay an appointment fee called *caize*. In some 18th century letters of appointment, however, the name section was intentionally left blank,⁶⁵ just as it was on letters for various local officials such as the *mütesellims* in the same period. The result was that the most powerful claimant could become a *serdar*, leaving the position open to abuse and local power struggles.⁶⁶ It seems that even people of non-Janissary background or Janissary claimants could become *serdars*. A certain Salih from Yenipazar, for instance, informed the imperial center that the local *serdar* was a pseudo-Janissary. In response, the *serdar* imprisoned the complainant and seized his property.⁶⁷

In Malatya, Ayntab, and Aleppo, abuses by local *serdars* caused an increase in the number of Janissaries, draftees, or pretenders, with some unlikely people infiltrating the ranks.⁶⁸ Apparently, most imposters were known to the local Janissary commanders and their questionable affiliation to the corps was tolerated by the latter only due to their networked patronage connections and the economic gains involved in this protection. When a certain group of people from Payas, for instance, made a business trip to Istanbul and returned in Janissary regalia, they were tolerated by the local *serdar*.⁶⁹ The *serdars* of many provinces were accused of recruiting people such as Kurds and nomadic people, who were categorically banned from the Janissary corps, and permitting them to wear the symbolic *destar* and *sarik* headgear, in order to boost their profits.⁷⁰ Indeed, one of the initial steps a civilian had to take in order to trespass into a different category of the immediately visible hierarchy of the Ottoman world was to wear one of these special Janissary outfits.⁷¹

As was the case elsewhere, orders and letters were repeatedly sent to Adana to prevent abuses by those holding the post of *serdar*.⁷² In two of his letters, the Janissary ağa emphasized that only experienced and trustworthy Janissaries should be appointed as *serdars* of Adana. Backed by members of the imperial elite, he noted, some people had illegally managed to become *serdars* by means of obtaining letters in which the appointees' names had intentionally been left blank. They abused their remit by recruiting commoners and undeserving people in exchange for money and other gains. In light of this, the above-mentioned elite was warned not to interfere in the affairs of the Janissary corps. The ağa also ordered the Janissary officers in the imperial center to explicitly note the name and regiment of the appointed *serdars* in appointment letters, and, finally, not to dismiss any *serdar* without reason ("*bila-muceb*").⁷³

Even though the Janissary ağa blamed the imperial elite for corrupting the *serdars*, this phenomenon was in fact directly related to the increase in the appointment fees (*caize*) required for the post. Although the frequency of rotations in this official position remains obscure to us for other time periods, in the late eighteenth century, we know that *serdars* were to rotate every three months, in return for a 200 *guruş* fee.⁷⁴ To avoid paying the charge, some people resorted to the solution of illegal self-appointments, without obtaining any official letter from the Janissary ağa. In Mihaliç, for instance, a certain Patkozoğlu held the office for 5–6 years without any recognition from the imperial center—without, of course, paying any appointment fee. To compensate for the loss, the imperial authorities tried to get him to pay the accumulated debt in a lump sum.⁷⁵

The increase in the cost of appointment fees meant that *serdarships* became financially less rewarding. In Adana, for instance, seven appointments were made to the post from 12 August 1771 to 8 May 1773, including those of İnce Mehmed Ağa, Kademoğlu, and Deli Hüseyin Ağa.⁷⁶ Musa Balizâde Elhac Ömer Ağa, from a local *mültezim* family,⁷⁷ was another figure to serve as *serdar*. All of the appointees resigned shortly after assuming the position, leaving the post vacant for long periods. Kademoğlu, for instance, quit the *serdarship* of Adana because the revenues of the office were not sufficient to cover his expenses (“*iradı masarîfına vefa eylemediğinden*”).⁷⁸ Therefore, it is very likely that the recruitment of volunteers into the corps or the toleration of pretenders in return for financial gain was used as a means of paying the high *caizes*. This is the exact reason why the author of *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan* complains that:

“Now people pay money to be appointed as *serdars*. If such a man does not exact that money from local soldiers enrolled for military campaigns, from non-Janissaries wearing Janissary garments, or from those the salary-payment of whom has been interrupted here (in Istanbul), but locally maintain their Janissary identity, then from whom is he to collect it? Who is to pay for the bribe he gave?”⁷⁹

Nonetheless, it still remains unclear to me whether it was the *caize* issue that broke the relative balance of power among the local elite in Adana. In 1773, they were able to act collectively to send a petition complaining about the increase in appointment fees and disorder in the town, due to the reluctance of Janissaries to be appointed to the post. Just one year later, however, Hacı Bey resorted to state intervention by presenting the list of his rivals to Süleyman Paşa.

Even though the main causes of the factional strife between Hacı Bey and his Janissary rivals are not still clear, it is obvious that Hacı knew the rules of the game, which involved gaining the sultan’s approval and being legitimate in the eyes of the locals. In 1774, Hacı Bey established his power base by employing rhetoric on the oppression of commoners and innocent people due to disorder, a list of rivals submitted to Süleyman Paşa, plus a promise of better rule and cheaper administration. With the help of the Paşa, he succeeded in eliminating his rivals and recovering his family’s power in the city. Over subsequent years, more than 30 leading figures in Adana sent collective petitions to the imperial court confirming that they were pleased with his administration as the town’s *mütesellim*.⁸⁰ Following these petitions, which further strengthened his local power and prestige in the eyes of the sultan and other imperial authorities, he went one radical step further and petitioned the sultan to grant him direct rule over the town for a certain period of time.⁸¹ As said earlier, from the seventeenth century onwards, Adana was ruled by governors directly appointed by the imperial center. In this petition to the sultan, however, Hacı Bey claimed that due to oppression and the miserable condition of the townsfolk, the town could not afford to be administered by a governor (*vizier* or *mirimiran*) and thus asked to run Adana as the *mütesellim* for a number of years, until it recovered from its economic woes. His request was granted by the sultan, and on 1 Şevval 1199/7 August 1785, Hacı Bey was delegated to assume responsibility for the town for three years—without a governor—on condition that he paid the *imdad-ı hazeriye* apportioned to the governors.⁸² He died while still the *mütesellim*, as he is mentioned as deceased in a document dated 1787.⁸³

5. Conclusions

The importance of factional politics ultimately lies in its capacity to problematize loyalty, the chain of command, and the connectivity between military, administrative, and domestic households (Brummett 2010, p. 78). Whether engaged in bilateral factionalism or any other kind of strife, the background to most provincial elite or power struggles is the impact of the collective presence of the Janissaries in the Ottoman provinces in Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Arabic lands from the sixteenth and seventeenth century onwards, either by or as part of state planning (as in the case of Damascus) or due to the influx of the Janissaries for various reasons (as in the case of Egypt). Thus, they gradually became an

important component of power politics, struggles within the elite, and potential rivalry over local resources (Barbir 1980, p. 34; Rafeq 1975, pp. 277–79, 302–5).

Eighteenth-century Adana did not produce a great household or witness bilateral factionalism but was not immune from factional strife either. It was mainly the lesser *ayans* and local Janissary officers that dominated the local political scene, at times attempting to eliminate their opponents (1774) and at others directly confronting the governors (1718). As an important group among the urban notables, the Janissaries of Adana were frequently involved in factional strife and *ayan* infighting, tolerating the Janissary pretenders to increase their own affiliates and obtaining imperial titles to bolster their political power and prestige vis-à-vis their opponents. As evident in the incident of 1774, one party—Hacı Bey—could even apply the more radical tactic of inviting direct government intervention to eliminate his opponents.

The dilemma of the eighteenth century lies on the one hand in the potential of provincial notables to challenge central imperial authority and on the other in the increasing dependence of the sultan on local authorities for economic, political, and military cooperation. From another perspective, however, this was also relevant for local notables. State intrusion in provincial affairs changed life and politics in the periphery, but at the same time, it accelerated integration and the dependence of local elites on the sultan and his functionaries.

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Notes

- ¹ Pseudo-Janissaries were commoners who claimed to be Janissary corps members, even though they were not registered soldiers. For further details, see (Syropoulos and Yıldız 2022, pp. 9–54).
- ² For a definition of *ayans* as the warlords in the Balkans, Anatolia, Syria and Egypt who used the wars as a “cover”, see (McGowan 1994, pp. 662–69).
- ³ (Tülüveli 2005, pp. 131–33). In the World-System theory, too, the author underlines that peripheralization is equated with decentralization, p. 139. For the decentralization-decline paradigm, see also (İnalçık 1980, pp. 283–337; İnalçık 1977, pp. 27–53; Yücel 1974, pp. 657–708).
- ⁴ For a similar argument, see (Khoury 1997, p. 8).
- ⁵ The other groups consisted of slave soldiers and the descendants of state officials, (Quataert 2005, p. 47).
- ⁶ For the re-emergence of the same household as a lesser *ayan* family in the eighteenth-century, see (Dağlı 2000, pp. 145–80).
- ⁷ Yücel (1974), “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Desantralizasyon”, pp. 668–71. He gives the examples of some provinces with privileged status (*salyaneli*), the semi-autonomous (*hükümet*) *sancaks* of Eastern Anatolia and the provinces ruled as khanates or *voyvodaliks*. He also mentions some rights the timariots had over the lands under their control and the Ottoman practice of delegating tax collection in the *hass* and *arpalık* lands to *voyvodas* (pp. 671–72, 677); the extensive administrative and economic rights of individuals in private or *vakf* lands (pp. 673–74); and, finally, the taxfarming system (*iltizam*) itself (pp. 681–83).
- ⁸ For a critical analysis of the paradigm, see (Gelvin 2006, pp. 19–29). For a list of historians influenced by this paradigm, see (Khoury 1990, pp. 215–30).
- ⁹ For the origins and history of the great *ayan* families of Anatolia, see (Özkaya 1992, pp. 809–45; Özkaya 1978, pp. 667–723).
- ¹⁰ I have borrowed the concept of “selective obedience” from (Zens 2011, p. 440).
- ¹¹ Zens rightly considers the lesser *ayans* mainly as the allies of grand *ayans*, or those in their service. (Zens 2011, p. 435).
- ¹² On Aleppo, see (Masters 1991, pp. 151–58; Masters 1978, pp. 75–89; Bodman 1963, pp. 103–40). On Ayntab, see (Canbakal 2012, pp. 33–59).
- ¹³ For more information, see (Canbakal 2012, pp. 39–40).
- ¹⁴ For *seyyid/ashraf*-Janissary conflict/factional strife in eighteenth-century Ayntab, see (Canbakal 2007, pp. 88–89; Canbakal 2012, pp. 33–59). For Aleppo, see (Bodman 1963, pp. 103–40; Masters 2011, pp. 159–75).
- ¹⁵ For some examples of *ayan* infighting and the disruptive role of the lesser *ayans* in Karaferye see (Anastasopoulos 2002, pp. 73–88); in Balıkesir, see (İlgürel 1973, pp. 63–74); in İçel, see (Köse 2013); in Kütahya, see (Dağlı 2000, pp. 156–67). For the examples of Janissaries as political actors, see (Spyropoulos 2019, pp. 449–81).
- ¹⁶ Up until that period, the Janissary regiments in any given locality rotated every three years, (Spyropoulos 2019, pp. 450–51, 454).

- 17 (Batafu 1981, p. 337). For the connection between migration, the expansion of Janissary networks and the rise in the number of Janissary pretenders in the eighteenth-century Crete, see (Spyropoulos 2019, pp. 468–71); for the representation of the pretenders as “bandits, usually converts, detached from the rest of society”, see (p. 476).
- 18 The *hass* lands administered by *voyvodas* also curtailed both the administrative authority of the provincial governors in general and also their revenues, (İnalçık 1977, pp. 29–30; Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 123, 164).
- 19 (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 72, 95–96). For a mapping of the *tımar* and *malikane* zones in the Adana, see the same source, p. 92. The map bears out the rapid rise and spread of lands incorporated into *malikanes* at the expense of the *tımar* lands.
- 20 (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 165, 167–169, 175–177). For the list of eighteenth century *malikane* owners, see (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 177–79, 182–88), and for a list of *mültezims*, see (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 192–95). In the list provided by the author, Serturnai Mehmed Ağa and Karakollukçu Mehmed Ağa were local Janissary officers.
- 21 For further details on the administrative structure of Adana province, see (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 70–88). For some examples concerning the revenues granted to governors, see pp. 88–99.
- 22 It seems that it was usually lucrative *malikanes* who were detached from the governors, see (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 100–3, 114).
- 23 By the early eighteenth century, the local *ayans* had assumed the task of maintaining public order, (İnalçık 1980, p. 311).
- 24 The *serdars* were the officers responsible for recording the names of the drafted unpaid volunteers in registers they kept locally, a fact which made them the virtual overseers of the entire process, (Uzunçarşılı 1988, p. 330).
- 25 Halil was later exiled to the fortress of Seddülbahir, only to be released with help from his Janissary comrades. He did not send the soldiers demanded by the imperial authorities. He was a wealthy person who held *çiftlik*s in the vicinity of the town, (İlgürel 1973, pp. 67–71).
- 26 BOA, Mühimme Defterleri (henceforth: A.DVNS.MHM.d), no. 127, fl. 270, order no. 1797 (evahir-i Z 1130/15–23 November 1718); A.DVN.SMHM.d. 132, fl. 386, order no. 1433 (evail-i S 1138/9–18 October 1725), fls. 329–330, order no. 1175 (evahir-i L 1137/3–11 July 1725); Adana Şerhiye Sicilleri (henceforth AŞR.), no. 20, fls. 9–12 (22 Za 1137/2 August 1725).
- 27 AŞR. 103, fl. 9 (evahir-i S 1125/ 19–27 March 1713).
- 28 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 119, fl. 213, order no. 881 (evahir-i Ca 1124/26 June–4 July 1712).
- 29 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 119, fl. 213, order no. 881 (evahir-i Ca 1124/26 June–4 July 1712); A.DVNS.MHM.d., no. 127, fl. 270, order no. 1797 (evahir-i Z 1130/15–23 November 1718); A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 132, fl. 386, order no 1433 (evail-i S 1138/9–18 October 1725), fls. 329–330, order no. 1175 (evahir-i L 1137/3–11 July 1725); AŞR., no. 20, fls. 9–12 (22 Za 1137/2 August 1725).
- 30 AŞR. no. 30, fl. 111, order no. 187 (evahir-i B 1138/25 March–2 April 1726).
- 31 BOA, Cevdet Zabtiye (henceforth C. ZB). 32/1585 (13 Ca 1201/3 March 1787).
- 32 AŞR., no. 5, fl. 216 (28 L 1184/14 February 1771).
- 33 BOA, Bab-ı Asafi Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Tahvil (Nişan) Kalemi Defterleri (henceforth: A.DVNS.NŞT.d), no. 16, fls. 263–264.
- 34 He served as *rikab kaimmakam* from Z 1187/February–March 1774 to 22 M 1188/4 April 1774); (Abdülhamid n.d.), fl. 3.
- 35 BOA, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi Evrakı (TSMA.e) 806/19 (22 M 1188/4 April 1774).
- 36 BOA, A. DVNS.NŞT.d., no. 16, fl. 94.
- 37 Following his dismissal, on 17 June 1775 he was appointed governor of Karaman, where he died in the same year, BOA, A. DVNS.NŞT.d., no. 16, fl. 94; AŞR., no. 48, fl. 33, order no. 76 (7 Ş 1188/13 October 1774); no. 48, fl. 34, order no. 77 (19 Ş 1188/25 October 1774).
- 38 AŞR., no. 48, fl. 69, order no. 117 (undated); fl. 70, order no. 120 (21 N 1188/25 November 1774).
- 39 AŞR., 48, fl. 69, order no. 117 (undated).
- 40 AŞR., no. 52, fls. 127–128 (21 N 1188/25 November 1774); BOA, C.ZB.72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/21 February–1 March 1776).
- 41 AŞR., no. 52, fl. 62 (1 N 1188/5 November 1774), BOA, C.ZB.72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/21 February–1 March 1776). In the latter document, the *nezir* of the neighborhoods is specified as 337,900 *guruş*. For some examples of *nezir* from eighteenth-century Adana, see (Tamdoğan 2006, pp. 135–46). For the legal, social, and economic significance of *nezir* practices, see (Canbakal 2011, pp. 127–42).
- 42 BOA, C.ZB. 32/1585 (13 Ca 1201/3 March 1787).
- 43 BOA, C.ZB. 32/1585 (13 Ca 1201/3 March 1787).
- 44 All persons on the list were pardoned and permitted to return to Adana by imperial order. For further details, see BOA, C.ZB. 72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/21 February–1 March 1776).
- 45 Turnacıbaşı literally means “the head keeper of the imperial cranes”. Before the late seventeenth century, the title was only conferred on one officer of the Janissary corps, i.e., the leading officer of the 68th regiment. However, from that point onward the title was given to a number of Janissary officers who acted as agents of the Janissary corps in the Ottoman provinces, as well as to the heads of provincial Janissary garrisons.

- 46 He served as the *serdar* several times: 1 Ca 1185/12 August 1771–22 Ca 1185/2 September 1771; 19 Z 1185/24 March 24 1172–11 S 1186/4 May 1772; 15 S 1187/8 May 1773 to 20 Ra 1187/11 June 1773. AŞR., no. 47, fls. 54, 56. He served as the *mütesellim* from 26 N 1187/11 December 1773 to 13 L 1187/28 December 1173, AŞR., no. 48, fl. 13 (15 L 1187/30 December 1173).
- 47 He served as *mütesellim* from 26 N 1187/11 December 1773 to 13 L 1187/28 December 1173, AŞR., no. 48, fl. 13 (15 L 1187/30 December 1173).
- 48 Kademoğlu served as the *serdar* of the town 26 days in 1185/1771. He then served on several occasions: 11 B 1185/20 October 1771; 7 L 1186/1 January 1773–15 Z 1186/9 March 1773; 11 M 1187/4 April 1773–21 M 1187/14 April 1773, AŞR., no. 48, fl. 13 (15 L 1187/30 December 1173); BOA, C.ZB.91/4515 (evail-i S 1192/1–10 March 1778); Adana Ahkam Defterleri (Henceforth, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d.), no. 4, fl. 248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/8–17 October 1783); A.DVNS.MHM.d., no. 176, fl. 8, order no. 16 (evasıt-ı Z 1191/10–19 January 1778); AŞR, no. 47, fls. 54, 56 (15 S 1187/8 May 1773).
- 49 BOA, C.ZB. 91/4515 (evail-i S 1192/1–10 March 1778); A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d. no. 4, fl. 248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/8–17 October 1783); A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 8, order no. 16 (evasıt-ı Z 1191/10–19 January 1778).
- 50 BOA, Ali Emiri Abdülhamid I (henceforth: AE. SABH.I.) 307/20623 (22 M 1191/2 March 1777).
- 51 BOA, AE. SABH.I. 307/20623 (22 M 1191/2 March 1777).
- 52 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 8, order nos. 16–17 (evasıt-ı Z 1191/10–19 January 1778); no. 176, fl. 9, order no. 20 (evail-i S 1192/1–10 March 1778); BOA, C. ZB. 91/4145 (evail-i S 1192/1–10 March 1778).
- 53 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 10, order no. 23 (evahir-i Ra 1192/19–27 April 1778); BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d., no. 4, fl. 248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/8–17 October 1783).
- 54 For a discussion of connotations of the term *tabi/etibba* in Ottoman Egypt, see (Hathaway 1997, pp. 21–24; Hathaway 1995, pp. 42–43).
- 55 For an analysis of the socio-political networks of eighteenth-century Adana, see (Tamdoğan 2005, pp. 77–96).
- 56 Devecizâde Yusuf Ağa and Dülüklüzâde Bekir Beyzâde Elhac Ömer Ağa, for instance, had served as the *serdars* of Ayntab and later became two of the most powerful figures in eighteenth-century local politics. For further details, see (Çınar 2000, pp. 108–10).
- 57 For the rivalry between the Janissaries—mostly of tribal origins—and the *ashraf* for the control of the town, see (Bodman 1963, pp. 103–39; Masters 1978, pp. 84–85).
- 58 *Haseki* literally means the “private guard of the sultan”. The title, which ranked lower than that of a *turnacıbaşı*, was originally given only to the head officers of four Janissary regiments, the 49th, 66th, 67th, and 68th regiments. However, by the eighteenth century the title was widespread among a number of Janissary officers. Abovementioned Hasan is noted as an *ex-haseki* in 1760s, BOA, AE.SMST.III. 87/6503 (10 Ş 1173/22 January 1766).
- 59 BOA, AE.SABH.I. 175/11711 (evasıt-ı L 1199/17–20 August 1785); AE.SABH.I 62/4365 (7 Z 1192/27 December 1778). For further details on the Hasan Paşazade/Karlızade family, see (Ergenoğlu 2016, pp. 196–203; Kurt 2016, p. 539; Ünlü and Kurt 2012, pp. 57–115; Kurt 2010, pp. 1259–78).
- 60 He was appointed as the *mütesellim* of Abdi Paşa, BOA, Cevdet Maliye (henceforth: C. ML.) 766/31217 (4 S 1195/30 January 1781).
- 61 “Adana’da sekiz on bin nefer yeniçeri mevcut iken mir-i muma-ileyh bundan akdem yeniçeri neferatı tahririne memur yazıcı ve mübaşir ve çavuşu def ve dört yüz nefer tahrir etdirdiüb maâda her kim tahrir olunur ise katl ederüm”, BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d., no. 4, fl. 248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/8–17 October 1783).
- 62 The execution of 200 Janissaries by İbrahim Paşa was also considered as an offense by the Janissaries: “Such a treatment of ocaklus was unheard of”. For further details, see (Canbakal 2012, p. 38).
- 63 BOA, A.DVNS.AHK.ADN.d., no. 4, fl. 248 (evasıt-ı Za 1197/8–17 October 1783).
- 64 BOA, C. ZB.72/3569 (evail-i M 1190/21 February–1 March 1776).
- 65 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 61, order no. 172 (evail-i C 1193/16–25 June 1779).
- 66 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 61, order no. 172 (evail-i C 1193/16–25 June 1779).
- 67 BOA, Bab-ı Asafi Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Özi ve Silistre Ahkam Defterleri (henceforth: A.DVNS.AHK.ÖZSİ.d) 4, fl. 290, order no. 1210 (evail-i Ca 1161/29 April–8 May 1748).
- 68 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 176, fl. 329, order no. 1010 (evasıt-ı Ş 1194/12–21 August 1780); fl. 257, order no. 790 (evahir-i R 1194/26 April 26–4 May 1780); fl. 286, order no. 872 (evasıt-ı B 1194/13–22 July 1780).
- 69 BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d., no. 116, fl. 158, order no. 632 (evasıt-ı Ra 1121/21–30 May 1709).
- 70 For an example from Adana, see AŞR., no. 45, fl. 30 (25 Ca 1198/16 April 1784); from Bosnia, see BOA, C. AS. 334/13854 (evasıt-ı S 1161/11–20 February 1748); from Erzurum, see BOA, A.DVNS.MHM.d. no. 126, fl. 262, order no. 1031 (evahir-i M 1130/25 December 1717–2 January 1718); from Ayntab, see BOA, A.DVNS.MHM.d.no. 176, fl. 329, order no. 1010 (evasıt-ı Ş 1194/12–21 August 1780). For the appointment of an inspector to investigate abuses by the Janissary commander in the fortress at İskenderiye, who gave the locals Janissary outfits in return for two vukiyyes of coffee, see BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d. no. 122, fl. 57, order no. 177 (evahir-i Ca 1126/4–12 June 1714).
- 71 For an analysis of the social and political impact of clothing laws in the Empire, see (Quataert 1997, pp. 403–25).

- 72 AŞR., no. 13, page unspecified, order no. 231 (1 N 1135/5 June 1723); no. 22, fl. 86 (evasıt-ı L 1133/5–14 August 1721); no. 18, fl. 9 (1 Ra 1131/22 January 1719), fl. 124 (1 B 1131/20 May 1719).
- 73 AŞR., no. 18, fl. 9 (1 Ra 1131/22 January 1719), fl. 124 (1 B 1131/20 May 1719).
- 74 BOA, AE. SABH.I. 95/6516 (evail-i S 1189/3–12 April 1775).
- 75 BOA, AE. SABH.I. 95/6516 (evail-i S 1189/3–12 April 1775).
- 76 The appointments to the post are as follows: 1 Ca 1185/12 August 1771–22 Ca 1185/2 September 1771: Serturnai Esseyid Hüseyin Ağa; 22 Ca 1185/2 September 1771–1 B 1185/10 October 1771: İnce Elhac Mehmed Ağa for 41 days. Following his resignation, the office was left vacant for 44 days, until Kademoğlu Osman assumed the post for 26 days. Upon Kademoğlu's resignation on 11 B 1185/20 October 1771, the office was left vacant for 98 days until the appointment of Hüseyin Ağa on 19 Z 1185/24 March 1172, only to become vacant again for 132 days following his resignation on 11 S 1186/14 May 1772. On 1 B 1186/28 September 1772, Musa Balizade Elhac Ömer Ağa became the new *serdar*, but resigned after a month (1 N 1186/26 November 1772). Following 37 days of vacancy for the same post, Kademzade Osman served as the *serdar* for two months (7 L 1186/1 January 1773–15 Z 1186/9 March 1773). 15 days later, Kademzade again became *serdar* for 15 days (11 M 1187/4 April 1773–21 M 1187/14 April 1773). Following a new period of vacancy, Hüseyin Ağa assumed the duty from 15 S 1187/8 May 1773 to 20 Ra 1187/11 June 1773, AŞR., no. 47, fls. 54, 56.
- 77 Musa Balizâde Ömer was from an established Adana family. Another member of the same family, Musa Balizâde Hasan, was a *mültezim* who had leased farming of the Sheep Tax in Dünderlı and Koyuncular, (Ergenoğlu 2016, p. 143). Mustafa, a member of the 17th Janissary regiment, served as the *serdengeçdi ağa* of the same town in 1730s. He resigned in the year 1734. For further details, see BOA, A.DVN.SMHM.d. no. 140, fl. 92, order nos. 338 and 339 (evahir-i M 1147/23 June 1734–2 July 1734), fl. 339, order no. 1202 (evahir-i L 1147/16–24 March 1735).
- 78 AŞR., no. 47, fl. 56 (15 S 1187/8 May 1773).
- 79 “Şimdi akçe ile serdar olurlar. Oradaki seferlilerden almasın, yeniçeri olmayıp da yeniçeri kıyafetinde olanlardan almasın, bu tarafta ulûfesi kesilip de orada yeniçeri kimliğinde olanlardan almasın, kimden alsın? Verdiği o rüşveti kimden çıkarsın?”; *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, p. 82.
- 80 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 253/12641 (29 Z 1198/13 November 1784).
- 81 BOA, AE. SABH.I. 175/11711 (evasıt-ı L 1199/17–20 August 1785).
- 82 BOA, AE. SABH.I. 175/11711 (evasıt-ı L 1199/17–20 August 1785); AE. SABH.I. 159/10609 (evahir-i C 1197/24 May–1 June 1783); AE. SABH.I. 365/25504 (undated).
- 83 BOA, C. ML. 698/28543 (7 C 1201/21 March 1787).

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