

# THE OTTOMAN *SERHAD* IN THE *SANJAK* OF KLIS IN 1665

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This study employs detailed examination of different archival collections due to the unstandardized record-keeping practices of the Ottomans to analyze various archival records, presenting the military capacity and defense costs of a border *sanjak*. Among the primary sources, mainly two distinct *defters* – a roll-call register and a poll tax register compiled towards the end of the Cretan War (1645–1669) – allow us to determine the total number of garrison soldiers who served in the fortifications of the Sanjak of Klis. This is particularly valuable due to the rare instance in Ottoman records where two particular types of soldiers, *ulufeli* (paid) and *timarlı* (fief-holding), are documented simultaneously. To provide a broader perspective, the study takes a comprehensive approach that includes the formulation of defense strategies, the composition of military units, a comparative analysis of garrison personnel numbers, a projection of the religious and ethnic origins of the soldiers, the role of fortresses within the sanjak, and annual defense costs. Despite its temporal and regional limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the Ottoman local military during a period of critical challenges for the empire. Furthermore, it offers valuable information about Ottoman military capabilities and defense policies at the regional level, contributing data for future studies on the overall structure and composition of the Ottoman army.

**Keywords:** *Sanjak* of Klis, military history, *serhad*, frontier, garrison, fortress, roll-call register, poll tax register, 17th century.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1665, just one year after the Treaty of Vasvár officially ended the Ottoman–Habsburg War (1663–1664), a general roll call was conducted within the *Eyalet* of Bosnia. Despite the conclusion of the war, the Ottomans faced precarious situations, particularly financial strain, while fighting a prolonged war with the Republic of Venice. This situation forced the Ottomans to comprehensively assess not only their military power, but also their financial resources. As a result, they conducted comprehensive surveys of both their local military forces and economic resources. This simultaneous evaluation aimed to optimize provincial expenditures by ensuring the timely payment of border garrison salaries, among other important expenditures. These surveys yielded two specific *defters* that Western historians had limited access to until now. Dependent on more readily



available narrative sources, they lacked the detailed information that these archival records and other materials provide for this study.<sup>1</sup> As will be seen below these sources provide a wealth of data on the structure and deployment of Ottoman garrisons in the *Eyalet* of Bosnia in 1665 and offer new insights for researchers.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE *SERHAD* IN THE *SANJAK* OF KLIS

Established in the early 1530s, the Ottoman *serhad* in the *Sanjak* of Klis had expanded steadily over the next five decades, with alterations in both 1539 and 1573. The defense system in the *Sanjak* of Klis focused on a defensive network of 22 fortifications that protected both the borderlands and the internal peace of the *sanjak* against the Habsburgs and the Republic of Venice, the main adversaries of the Ottoman Empire in this region. While fortresses in this *sanjak*, such as Vrčevo, Zemunik, Polešnik, Obrovac, Nadin, Karin, Vrana, Rakitnica, Kašić, Daslina, Vrana, Drniš, Klis, Lončarić and Kamengrad, were financed via money transfer system (*havale*), Nečven, Sinj, Vrh Rika (Vrlika), Drniš, Knin, Zvonigrad and Boričevac were funded through *timar* allocations.<sup>2</sup>

The second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century marked a relatively peaceful period, without major military operations in the region. However, during the Long Turkish War (1593–1606), the fighting between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans intensified, culminating in the Ottoman defeat in the Battle of Sisak in 1593. Another significant event was the temporary loss of Klis in 1596, which necessitated the strengthening of border defenses and led to the prominence of two strategically important border fortresses: Perušić and Zemunik. The construction and utilization of new fortresses in the *Sanjak* of Klis greatly enhanced the defense of the western borders in the first two decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of fortifications in this *sanjak* remained relatively stable.

<sup>1</sup> A new article by Nikola Markulin, which has made a substantial contribution to the field by utilizing Venetian archives for the same period, warrants mention here. This article stands as a valuable exception, drawing upon Venetian archival sources that provide new and detailed information on the approximate ratio of Ottoman forces in the Dalmatian Hinterland for the period 1645–1718. Nikola MARKULIN, Venetian–Ottoman Wars in the East Adriatic Theatre of Operations (1645–1718): Determining the Ratio of Forces, *International Journal of Military History and Historiography* (published online ahead of print 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1163/24683302-bja10055>.

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed information on the early period of the defense policy of this *sanjak*, please see: Aladin HUSIĆ, Vojne prilike u Splitsko-Zadarskom zaleđu u 16. stoljeću (Osmanski serhat 1530. – 1573.), *Prilozi za Orijentalnu Filologiju*, vol. 56, Sarajevo, 2006., 125 – 144.



However, there was a notable increase in the number of garrisons, accompanied by the construction of additional structures in some of the older fortifications.<sup>3</sup>

The Ottomans incorporated former Habsburg and Venetian defensive strategies into their frontiers by capturing old medieval towns, fortifications, and passages. The essential medieval strongholds were the same fortresses that the Ottomans fortified and garrisoned during their control over the area. Inland fortresses controlled the surrounding lands and important transport routes, while fortresses near the borderland with the Republic of Venice defended the frontiers. In 1643, the most significant fortresses in the *Sanjak* of Klis based on the number of soldiers were, respectively, Klis, Lončarić, Bilaj Bunić and Kamengrad. Compared to these pivotal fortresses, the other fortifications, such as Donja Kula, Īvranköy?, Kozjak, Vranograč, Prolog, Ključ, Blagaj, Stari Bilaj Bunić, and Novi Bilaj Bunić, were relatively small. There were 1,089 *ulufeli* (paid) soldiers in the Sanjak of Klis garrisons in 1643.<sup>4</sup>

The Ottoman defense strategy in Klis was essentially the same as in the other *sanjaks* in the *Eyalet* of Bosnia. *Ulufeli* garrisons were deployed along the borderlands, while *timarlı* garrisons (fief-holding) were stationed in the interior zone. This strategic approach underwent continuous reform over the centuries, marked by the construction of new fortifications, the dismantling of the existing ones, and adaptations to meet the evolving needs of the time. These alterations involved reinforcing fortifications with wooden parts, incorporating new sections, constructing wooden towers, and employing various practical techniques to enhance their defenses. Throughout this dynamic process, which lasted several centuries, the defensive strategy in Klis evolved in response to the changing circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Fehim DŽ. СПАHO, Vojna organizacija turske vlasti u Kliškom sandžaku u XVII. stoljeću, in: *Zbornik Cetinske krajine*, ed. Ante Milošević, book 4, Sinj, 1989., 73 – 79.

<sup>4</sup> Kornelija JURIN STARČEVIĆ, Vojne snage Kliškog i Krčko-ličkog sandžaka pred Kandijski rat-Osmanska vojska plaćenika, u: *Zbornik Mire Kolar-Dimitrijević: zbornik radova povodom 70. rođendana*, ed. Damir Agičić, Zagreb, 2003., 88 – 90. Despite Starčević's count of 1,015, the total number of soldiers according to officers who supervised the roll call was 1,089. Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Kamil Kepeci 4893, 244b. Henceforth KK.d. 4893.

<sup>5</sup> Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Defterhane Büyük Kale Kalemî Defterleri 32182, 8 – 9. Henceforth D.BKL.d. In 1646, the Ottoman scribe recorded nine out of the seventeen fortresses in the Sanjak of Klis and Krka as ruins. On the other hand, there was no mention in the records of their condition in 1665. For a novel approach to Ottoman fortress architecture and fortification systems in the early modern period, please see: Özgür KOLÇAK, *Ok, Tüfek ve At 16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askerî Deürimi*, Ankara, 2023., 87 – 134.



The prioritization of paid garrisons on the frontiers was a strategic decision influenced by several key factors. Using *ulufeli* garrisons offered a practical advantage, as these troops did not need to make regular journeys to fief lands, ensuring a more consistent and unwavering defense of the borderlands. The Ottomans adopted a meticulous approach to border defense, implementing strict measures to prevent soldiers from abandoning their posts. Ottoman archival documents reveal the determination of the Empire to maintain discipline and the integrity of its defense system, as evidenced by the severity of the penalties imposed on those who neglected their duties.<sup>6</sup> This strict enforcement was intended not only to deter soldiers from deserting their posts, but also to emphasize the great importance of maintaining a solid and attentive border force.

The decision to prioritize *ulufeli* garrisons was further supported by the administrative efficiency of the *havale* system. This bureaucratic advantage facilitated the allocation of state revenues directly to the borderland posts where they were collected, resulting in a more practical and faster administration. The simplicity of this system enabled effective fiscal management and served as a preventive measure against unforeseen delays, ensuring that funds were efficiently directed to critical defense areas. Although financing garrisons with cash often faced difficulties, treasury officials favored this method for centuries. The reliability of this option shows a consistent appreciation of its economic and administrative benefits.

*Timarli* garrisons, on the other hand, often fell short of expected service efficiency due to various unpredictable circumstances. Factors such as lower-than-expected revenues, revenue reductions due to natural disasters or wars, delayed return of soldiers from fief lands, and other unforeseen issues consistently challenged the reliability of the fief-based defense system. While land was considered the most reliable and consistent source of revenue in this period, it is understandable that treasury bureaucrats were hesitant to issue payments in the form of land allocations. Consequently, the strategic decision of the Ottoman Empire to prioritize *ulufeli* garrisons in its borderlands encompassed considerations of consistency, discipline, administrative efficiency, and economic pragmatism. Despite the enduring challenges, the choice of this

<sup>6</sup> Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Mühimme Defterleri 14, 169/242 henceforth A.DVNS.MHM.d.; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 14, 970/1438; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 35, 128/355; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 73, 223/734; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 69, 227/453; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 81, 71/153; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 90, 64/203.



approach highlights its ongoing effectiveness and the ability of the Empire to adapt and refine its defense strategies over time.

## SOURCES

Apart from the *mevacib* defters (roll-call registers), *tahrir defters* (imperial tax registers) and various archive registers, the primary sources of this paper will be KK.d. 4893 and MAD.d. 5449.<sup>7</sup> These two defters are kept in the Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey in Istanbul. KK.d. 4893, consisting of 229 pages in total, contains information on the fortified places and *ulufeli* garrisons serving in the *Sanjaks* of Pakrac, Bosnia, Bihać, Krka, Klis, and Herzegovina, as well as in the *Sanjak* of Požega, which was then part of the *Eyalet* of Kanije. It should be noted that although the *Sanjak* of Požega existed as an administrative unit under the *Eyalets* of Buda, Bosnia, and Kanije in turn, the military financial affairs related to the fortified places in this sanjak were kept under the authority of Bosnia's treasury.<sup>8</sup>

The presenting (*arz*) recorded at the very beginning of the KK.d. 4893 provides valuable information for understanding the purpose of this defter. This introductory note clarifies that the defter was compiled with the specific intent of documenting newly recruited soldiers and addressing official matters that were not documented in the existing register. Additionally, the absence of fortresses such as Knin, Vrh Rika, Sinj, Nutjak, Zadvarje, Imotski, Sedd-i Islam, Kule-i Havale (High Tower), and Cisir-i Çetine (Bridge of Cetina) from the previous defter necessitated new documentation.

MAD 5449, originally a *cizye* tax register consisting of 60 pages, is divided into two parts. The initial section details the poll tax imposed on dhimmis in the *Eyalets* of Kanije and Yanova. Transitioning from page 55, the records shift to document the number of *timarlı* units in the fortresses of the *sanjaks* within

<sup>7</sup> Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Kamil Kepeci Defterleri. Henceforth KK.d.; Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Maliyeden Müdever Defterler. Henceforth MAD.d. Although Nenad Moačanin was the first to use this source, his focus remained on the Požega section, leaving the rest unused. In the relevant footnote in his book, the catalog number is mistakenly written as 5459, which may have contributed to the defter's previous obscurity. Nenad MOAČANIN, *Požega i Požeština u sklopu Osmanlijskog Carstva (1537 – 1691)*, Jastrebarsko, 1997., 86.

<sup>8</sup> Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Baş Muhasebe, Bosna Hazinesi Defterleri 16767. Henceforth D.BŞM.BNH.d.



the *Eyalet* of Bosnia. In this section, the records provide summaries of fortress names, the number of units (*cemaats*), and the corresponding salaries, lacking detailed information. It is noteworthy that studies often face challenges in determining the total number of soldiers serving in frontier garrisons. However, the last section of this unique defter provides precious information to determine the overall number of soldiers serving in this part of the Venetian – Ottoman border.

## OTTOMAN GARRISON MEMBERS

According to the roll-call registers and paylists, the total number of *ulufeli* soldiers stationed in the *Sanjak* of Klis fluctuated between 776 and 1,089 from 1627 to 1683.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the garrisons stationed on the Habsburg – Ottoman border in Hungary, those in Bosnia had relatively fewer technical specialists. Auxiliary units (*müteferrika*) that performed technical, religious, and entertainment services in Hungarian garrisons are rarely mentioned in Bosnian records. Auxiliary unit members, such as armorers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bomb makers, gunpowder makers, and cannon carriage makers, may have been omitted from Bosnian records because they were summoned only when needed or because they were paid through *timar* allocations, which exempted them from roll call. In the following, we will provide brief information about the members of the units recorded in the two defters that are our primary source.

*Dizdars* were high-ranking military officers, who commanded all types of fortifications, including forts, towers, parkans, and palankas. They were subordinate to *sanjakkbeyis* and *beylerbeyis*, but were also responsible to the *kadı* for ensuring that their actions complied with Sharia law. In appointing a *dizdar*, the authorities preferred experienced soldiers. Because of the importance of their post, *dizdars* were chosen from among those with military experience, administrative abilities, and respect for justice and the rule of law. The majority of *dizdar* assignments were done following the death of the former officeholder, which indicates that they stayed in their positions for extended periods. They were paid with *ulufe* (most often in the fortifications near the borderlands) or were given a *serbest timar* (especially in inner and safer strongholds).<sup>10</sup> At

<sup>9</sup> Please see Table 1.

<sup>10</sup> Serbest i.e. free *timars* were a type of allocation outside the jurisdiction of local authority. It was forbidden for the local authorities to enter the free *timar* zones when it came to tracking perpetrators and collecting fines.





the same time, their salary rates varied depending on the size, location, and importance of the fortification. There have been instances where the number of *dizdars* increased from one to six, depending on the size and importance of the fortification in question. The *dizdars* performed various duties, such as: defense of their strongholds and the security of the surrounding settlements; supervision of soldiers who served under their responsibility; identification of those unable to serve; protection of weapons and ammunition; attendance of military campaigns when necessary; security of mountain passages and guidance of the Ottoman forces; supervision of tax collection and protection of the tax money; repair of the fort, etc.<sup>11</sup>

*Kethüdas* were deputies for various state officials in the Ottoman state organization. *Kethüdas* stationed in the fortifications were deputies to the *dizdar* and served as the *mustahfiz*'s second commander. Their responsibilities included ensuring the troops' daily work, maintaining orders in the stronghold, keeping accounts of the fortress treasury, paying the soldiers' salaries, and conducting inspections as ordered by the *dizdar*. They were paid in *ulufe* or *timar*, while their appointment requirements were the same as the *dizdar*'s. Other units that served in the garrison also had their own *kethüdas* as military officers, such as janissaries, *cebecis*, *azebis*, *martoloses*, *topçus*, etc.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from the *kapudans* (captains), who served on the seas and major rivers such as the Danube, Sava, Krka, or Neretva, different types of *kapudans* also served as senior officers of the *azebis* in fortresses. According to Šabanović, the very first examples of fortresses' *kapudans* in the Western Balkans served in the fortresses of Golubac and Smederevo.<sup>13</sup> According to Nenad Moačanin, the first

<sup>11</sup> Yusuf OĞUZOĞLU, *Dizdar*, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9, Istanbul, 1994., 480 – 481; Klára HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization in Hungary. Fortresses, Fortress Garrisons and Finances*, Berlin, 2018., 120; ÖZER ERGENÇ, *Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi Kent Tarihçiliğine Katkı. XVI. Yüzyılda Ankara ve Konya*, Ankara, 1995, 78 – 79; Cengiz ORHONLU, *Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nda Derbend Teşkilatı*, Istanbul, 1990., 31, 70; Orhan KILIÇ, *Teşkilat ve İşleyiş Bakımından Doğu Hududundaki Osmanlı Kaleleri ve Mevâcib Defterleri*, *OTAM: Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi / Journal of the Center for Ottoman Studies*, vol. 31, Ankara, 2012., 102; Eftal Şükrü BATMAZ, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kale Teşkilatına Genel Bir Bakış*, *OTAM: Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi / Journal of the Center for Ottoman Studies – Ankara University*, vol. 7, Ankara, 1996., 4.

<sup>12</sup> Mehmet CANATAR, *Kethüdâ*, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 25, Ankara, 2002., 332–334; Ahmet ŞİMŞİRGİL, *Kızılelma'nın Muhafızları: Osmanlı Uyvarında Resmi Görevli Hizmetliler*, *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 11, Ankara, 2002., 92 – 96.

<sup>13</sup> Hazim ŠABANOVIĆ, *Vojno uređenje Bosne od 1463. godine do kraja 16. stoljeća*, *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, vol. XI, Sarajevo, 1961., 219.



*kapudan* in Bosnia served in the fort of Gradiška around 1540.<sup>14</sup> Most of the *kapudans* who served in the fortresses were located in the Dalmatian hinterland, where the Uskok raids were heavily damaging the Ottoman settlements.<sup>15</sup> In order to create safer settlements for their subjects, who were their primary source of tax revenue, the Ottomans increased the number of *kapudanlıks* (captaincies) to make the borderlands more stable. The *kapudans* were the highest senior officers of the *azeb*s, who formed the operational forces in fortifications, and the aghas of the *azeb*s were obliged to report directly to them.<sup>16</sup> The *kapudans* were mainly chosen among the aghas of the *azeb*s. Sometimes, however, they were appointed among the *farises* or *martoloses*, as they were the leaders of the operational forces. The *kapudans* were in charge of the protection of a wider area that was susceptible to enemy raids and attacks.<sup>17</sup>

*Mustahfiz*, *merd-i kale* or *hisareri* were terms used interchangeably to refer to the infantry troops that served as defenders or guards in fortifications. *Mustahfizes* were chosen among the Muslims and mainly recruited from the local population; this is why Ottoman sources widely described them as *serhad kulu*,<sup>18</sup> i.e., frontiersman, or *yerli kulu*,<sup>19</sup> i.e., local soldiers. While there were various ways to join a *mustahfiz* unit, the two most common ways were to be son to a military man or to prove oneself a useful soldier in battles. They usually resided in the stronghold with their families, either in a cottage provided for them or in a makeshift dwelling erected against the fortress walls. Although they were strictly forbidden to leave their place of duty, they frequently did so – either for legitimate reasons, such as military expeditions, pursuing fugitives, guiding other military units, or for prohibited reasons, such as trade, farming, or smuggling. The *mustahfizes* serving on the frontiers were given *ulufe*, while those serving in the interior were given collective *timars*. Nonetheless, in the

<sup>14</sup> Nenad MOAČANIN, Exposing Existing Fallacies Regarding the Captaincies in the Bosnian Frontier Area between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, in *Constructing Border Societies on the Triplex Confinium*, eds. Drago Roksandić and Nataša Štefanec, Budapest, 2000., 76.

<sup>15</sup> Kornelija JURIN STARČEVIĆ, Osmanski krajiški prostor: rat i društvo u jadransko-dinarskom zaleđu u 16. i 17. stoljeću (doctoral dissertation, University of Zagreb) Zagreb, 2012., 106 – 109.

<sup>16</sup> A.DVNS.MHM.d., 48, 111/295.

<sup>17</sup> Nenad MOAČANIN, Some observations on the *kapudans* in the Ottoman Northwestern frontier area, 16-18 c., in *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica. Akten des 13. CIEPO Symposiums*, Vienna 1999., 241 – 246.

<sup>18</sup> Abdülkadir ÖZCAN, Serhad Kulu, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36, Istanbul, 2009., 560 – 561.

<sup>19</sup> Abdülkadir ÖZCAN, Yerli Kulu, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 43, Istanbul, 2013., 484 – 485.





*sanjaks* near the borderlands, such as Klis, both *ulufeli* and *timarlı* *mustahfizes* served together.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the lack of conclusive evidence in favor thereof, it is widely assumed that the Ottomans had been stationing *topçus* (artilleryman) in important fortifications from very early days.<sup>21</sup> The *topçus*, though small in number, was one of the most crucial units in the garrisons. They were stationed particularly in fortifications along the borderlands. Like the *mustahfizes*, the *topçus* were responsible for the general defense of the stronghold, and were not permitted to leave it.<sup>22</sup> While their chief commander was the *dizdar*, they were under the direct command of *ser-topis* (head of artillerymen) and his *kethüda* (deputy).<sup>23</sup> Initially, the Christians from the Balkans were in the majority in the artillery. However, starting from the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslims became the only human resources in these units because of government incentives and demands.<sup>24</sup> Artillery was a profession passed down from father to son, so candidates were learning their profession from their fathers. Before being named a *topçu*, a candidate first had to be tested by the *ser-topis* and the *dizdar*, after which he had to prove himself either in Istanbul or to a specialist sent from Istanbul to test the local *topçu*'s capabilities. Artillery gradually became one of the most important parts of the Ottoman garrisons, whether they were *kapıkulus* (the Sultan's household who served in the military, the administration, and the palace) or locals.<sup>25</sup>

*Azebs* were introduced to the Ottoman army before the janissaries, serving as light archers, and participating in wars as advance forces.<sup>26</sup> They were divided into two branches: *kara azebs* (those who served on land) and *deniz azebs* (those who served at sea). *Kara azebs* began to be stationed in fortifications as early as

<sup>20</sup> K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 117 – 120; Mark L. STEIN, *Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe*, London, 2007, 87 – 89; Adem HANDŽIĆ, O organizaciji vojne krajine Bosanskog ejaleta u XVII stoljeću: Sjeverna i sjeverozapadna granica, Prilozi IIS, vol. XXIII, nr. 24, Sarajevo, 1988., 52; Stjepan SRŠAN, ur., *Popis sandžaka Požege 1579. godine/Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Pojega 987*, Osijek, 2001., 157; Nenad MOAČANIN, *Town and Country on the Middle Danube 1526-1690*, Boston, 2006., 92.

<sup>21</sup> Gábor ÁGOSTON, Firearms and Military Adaption: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution 1450-1800, *Journal of World History*, vol. 25/1, Hawaii, 2014., 89.

<sup>22</sup> A.DVNS.MHM.d., 46, 254/568.

<sup>23</sup> A.DVNS.MHM.d., 42, 219/683; A.DVNS.MHM.d., 58, 98/275.

<sup>24</sup> Göksel BAŞ, XV. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Balkanlarda Osmanlı Serhad Organizasyonunun Oluşumu Kaleler Ağı Askeri Personel Finansman ve Mali Külfet, *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 33, Istanbul, 2018., 162 – 163.

<sup>25</sup> Mesut UYAR, Edward J. ERICKSON, *Osmanlı Askeri Tarihi*, trans. by Mesut Uyar, Istanbul, 2014., 82 – 87.

<sup>26</sup> İdris BOSTAN, *Azeb, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4, Istanbul, 1991., 312 – 313.



in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and thus became one of the most crucial infantry units in the Balkans. During the first centuries of the Empire, the *azebs* were young peasants selected for a certain campaign and returned to their villages afterwards. However, over time, with the continuation of the campaigns, most of them broke the ties with their villages. They turned into semi-mercenaries in constant pursuit after military business in provincial towns. *Azebs* were required to provide their own weapons and equipment, which were strictly controlled when the soldiers were mobilized.<sup>27</sup> Following the rapid expansion of the Ottoman state in the Balkans, *azebs* started to be stationed in forts, palankas, bridges, towers, passages, etc. in increasing numbers.

The composition of the *azeb* units in the garrisons was similar to the one in other units – the *farises* and *martoloses*. Their units consisted of *cemaats*, and each *cemaat* had several smaller divisions called *odas*. *Azebs*, especially those under the command of *kapudans*, were regularly employed to provide armed protection for water transport, ships, harbors, and shiploads, thus becoming similar to the *azebs* serving at sea.<sup>28</sup>

*Farises*, i.e., horsemen were probably stationed in fortifications from early days. These troops were usually recruited from local human resources; they were part neither of the cavalry units of *kapıkulu* nor of the *timar*-holding *sipahis*. *Farises* were widely stationed in locations where there were frequent clashes with enemy troops. As their weapons and equipment were not well suited for defense, they primarily served for raids or for countermeasures like tracking down, capturing, and disarming light cavalry enemies who happened to attack the surrounding area. During enemy attacks or sieges, to help defend the fortification, they would leave the fortress to try to breach the blockade. A *faris* unit consisted of *cemaats* and *odas*; while *farisan* aghas were the commanding officers of the *cemaats*, *ser-odas* were serving under them as heads of the *odas*. *Farises* were better paid than other units that served in garrisons, as they were paid for the maintenance of their own equipment, including the horses.<sup>29</sup>

*Martoloses* were one of the oldest military institutions of the medieval Balkans. The origin of this semi-military establishment dates back to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>30</sup> A fair number of *martoloses* were stationed along the western border

<sup>27</sup> M. UYAR, E. J. ERICKSON, *Osmanlı Askeri Tarihi*, 36 – 37.

<sup>28</sup> M. L. STEIN, *Guarding the Frontier*, 75 – 77; K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 134 – 135.

<sup>29</sup> Abdülkadir ÖZCAN, *Fârisân, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. EK-1, Ankara, 2020., 560 – 561.

<sup>30</sup> Milan VASIĆ, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Martoloslar*, translated by Kemal Beydilli, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, vol. 31, İstanbul, 1977., 47 – 64.



of the Ottoman Empire. Moačanin states that the only actual militiamen paid in cash were fortress *martoloses*. Therefore, some confusion arises from the fact that large Vlach groups occasionally performed *martolos* duties, particularly in raids on enemy land. The majority of the *martoloses* were probably Vlach converts or Christians.<sup>31</sup> While the commanding officers, aghas, were Muslims, the lower officers, the *sermiyes* (literally head of 100; captain), were mainly Christians. However, until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Muslims became the majority, since a growing number of them joined the *martolos* troops, whilst those who were of Christian origin began converting to Islam.<sup>32</sup>

*Martolos* units consisted of *cemaats* and *odas*. At the head of each *cemaat*, an agha served as officer, and a *sermiye* as his deputy. Apart from these two, occasionally *alemdar* and *çavus* served in these units. *Martolos* units were also noteworthy for the high number of *kılavuzes* (guides) they contained. Their responsibilities included espionage, raiding, and scouting. Since members of these units were well versed in the topography of the frontier area, they were widely employed as *kılavuzes* when Ottoman raiders ventured deep into enemy territory.<sup>33</sup>

Auxiliaries were members of garrisons assigned to a unit or a *cemaat* according to their profession. They had no particular officers, and were supervised by an officer of the *cemaats*, such as *dizdar*, *azeban* agha or *farisan* agha. They were recorded in the *mevacib defters* at the end of the list of *cemaat* members. Below, brief information will be given about the auxiliaries who served in the fortifications in Bosnia during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries:<sup>34</sup>

1. *Anbari* (warehouseman): officially responsible for overseeing warehouses. Their duties included ensuring the security of stored materials, tracking the arrival and departure of goods, and timely delivery to the required destinations.
2. *Bevvab* (gate guard): responsible for the opening and closing of the fortification gates and its security.
3. *Cebeci* (armorer): responsible for crafting, repairing, and maintaining the tools and equipment essential for warfare. This encompassed items such as arrows, bows, swords, shields, gunpowder, bullets, etc.
4. *Haddad* (blacksmith): skilled professional entrusted with creating and repairing various tools, including pickaxes, shovels, bellows, axes, saws, spades, and other similar equipment.

<sup>31</sup> N. MOAČANIN, *Town and Country*, 155 – 157.

<sup>32</sup> K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 137 – 141.

<sup>33</sup> Göksel BAŞ, *Ottoman Serhad Organization in the Balkans (1450-1500)*, master's thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2017., 68.

<sup>34</sup> K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 125 – 128.



5. *Meremmetçi* (repairperson): person recruited from the local population to repair the fortress or the roads in exchange for a tax exemption or a fee.<sup>35</sup>

6. *Neccar* (carpenter): responsible – in addition to usual carpentry tasks – for repairing the wooden components of strongholds, tending to wooden bridges when necessary, and restoring the ships affiliated with the fortification along the riverfront.

7. *Paspan*: sentinel responsible for maintaining order and security within a fortress.

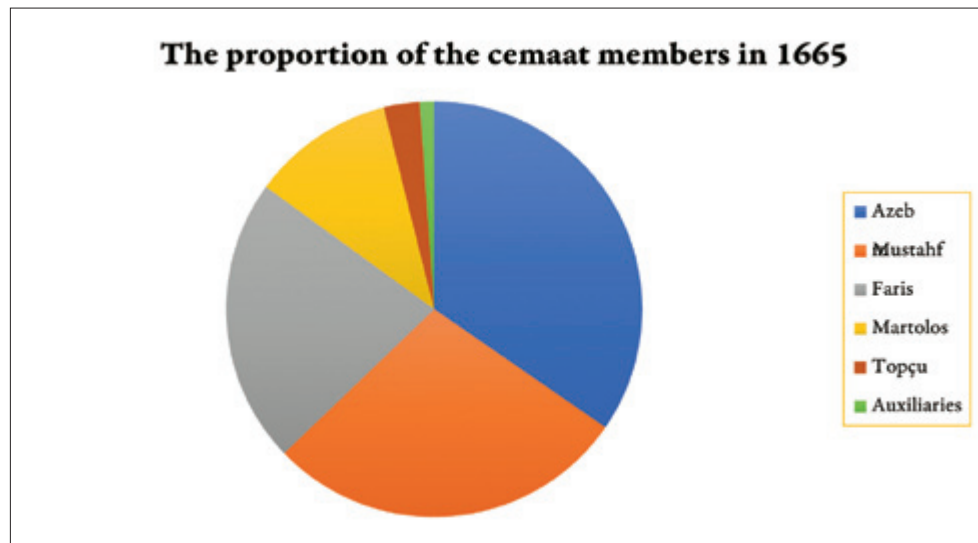
Although they had no military duties, *imams*, *hatips* and *müezzins* were considered military personnel in the Ottoman system, since they were put into service by the Sultan's decree. *Imam* leads the prayer performed in a congregation. *Müezzin* calls Muslims to prayer by chanting the *ezan*<sup>36</sup>. *Hatip* was a senior employee of a mosque, who delivered the Friday sermon.<sup>37</sup> Apart from leading the daily prayers, *imams* and *müezzins* were also engaged in the religious education of garrison members. In addition, death and burial, birth registration, marriage contracts, and divorce procedures were carried out by *imams*. *Imams* and *müezzins* serving in borderland fortresses were likely to be appointed from former and experienced soldiers who had sufficient knowledge and experience in the field of religion. It is believed that these officials, who worked in harsh conditions of the Ottoman frontier, were expected to help in matters such as transferring their experience to soldiers and helping with defense-related duties when necessary, apart from training soldiers in religious matters and performing prayers. Supervising *imam*'s service was the responsibility of the local *kadı*, who regularly reported to the central authorities and proposed necessary measures. A new *imam* would be appointed when the *kadı* decided that the *imam*'s state of health was no further suitable for service. Since *imams* were not always satisfied with their positions, they often left the service and abandoned their fortresses.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Midhat SERTOĞLU, *Osmanlı Tarih Lügati*, Istanbul, 2015, 377.

<sup>36</sup> Mustafa Sabri KÜÇÜKAŞÇI, *İmam*, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22, Istanbul, 2000., 178; Kemal BEYDILLI, *İmam*, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22, Istanbul, 2000., 181 – 186.

<sup>37</sup> K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 580.

<sup>38</sup> Aladin HUSIĆ, O imamskoj službi u tvrđavama Bosanskog sandžaka u 15. i prvoj polovini 16. stoljeća, *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Sarajevu*, vol. XIV/1, Sarajevo, 2010., 91.

GRAPHIC 1: *Uluġeli* garrison units in the *Sanjak* of Klis in 1665

## OTTOMAN FORTIFICATIONS IN THE *SANJAK* OF KLIS

The Cretan War (1645–1669), fought between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire, quickly spread to Dalmatia, where the two states shared a *defacto* borderland. In the summer of 1645, Halil Bey of Vrana led an attack on the villages of Ražanac, Grusi, in Dalmatia. In 1646, Ottoman incursions in Dalmatia intensified, with Šibenik, Novigrad, and Zadar becoming their primary targets as they continued to raid Venetian territory in the Zadar hinterland. The year 1647 was marked by the failed siege of Šibenik. The siege of Šibenik was the largest Ottoman military operation in Dalmatia during the Cretan war. A force of 15,000–16,000 men surrounded the town, which led to a brutal battle. During the siege, both sides endured heavy casualties. The siege reached a critical point on September 8, when the Ottomans launched a full-scale assault. After grueling hours of combat, the Ottomans were decisively repelled. Their inability to breach the town's defenses and the threat of Venetian reinforcement arriving forced them to retreat.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> N. MARKULIN, *Venetian – Ottoman Wars*, 22; Domagoj MADUNIĆ, *Defensiones Dalmatiae: Governance and Logistics of the Venetian Defensive System in Dalmatia during the War of Crete (1645–1669)*, doctoral dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2012., 89 – 92; Franjo DIFNIK, *Povijest kandijskog rata u Dalmaciji*, Split, 1986., 138 – 158. I would like to express my gratitude to MHist Davud beg Mešinović for his help in providing the necessary sources.



On the other hand, the major Venetian offensive in Dalmatia began in 1647 and led to the capture of 11 Ottoman fortresses, including Zemunik, the center of the *Sanjak* of Krka.<sup>40</sup> In 1648, the Ottomans continued to suffer in Dalmatia, losing the fortresses of Drniš, Knin, Klis, and Sinj in rapid succession. The fall of Klis, the region's most prominent and strategically important fortress guarding the western entrance to the Balkans, was the largest blow to the Ottomans. The mutual battles in Dalmatia between 1649 and 1653 remained inconclusive, with neither side gaining a decisive advantage. In 1649, the Venetians captured Bilaj, prompting the Ottomans to initiate the reconstruction of Sinj, previously destroyed by Venice. In 1650, the Republic occupied Zadvarje, but the Ottomans later recaptured it and simultaneously embarked on the reconstruction of both Zadvarje and Knin. After a three-year period, in 1653, the Venetians set Glamoč ablaze, but the Ottomans promptly rebuilt it and stationed a small garrison there. In 1654, the Venetians suffered a devastating setback in their military campaign as they unsuccessfully attempted to conquer Knin. This defeat marked a significant event in the context of the Cretan War, which was one of the major endeavors undertaken by the Venetian forces, alongside the notable siege of Klis.<sup>41</sup> Despite amassing a large army and stockpile of ammunition in Dalmatia, the Ottomans failed to achieve their desired results in the region.<sup>42</sup>

After 1665, the situation remained practically unchanged in Dalmatia. The strategic situation remained largely static, and the military actions conducted during this period failed to deliver any decisive outcome. This stalemate continued the following four years, culminating in the final conclusion of the war in 1669. The conflict during these final years devolved into a series of minor Ottoman incursions, involving forces of 1,000 to 5,000 men and sporadic *Morlacchi* raids that lacked any significant military impact.<sup>43</sup> These local battles in Dalmatia may be summarized as a prolonged period of mutual incursions characterized by the systematic destruction and reconstruction of the captured fortresses. The historical significance of these conflicts is underscored by their role within the broader context of the Cretan War and the complex relations between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire.

Examining the number of fortifications and their garrisons before and after 1665 is crucial for understanding the military situation in the *Sanjak* of Klis.

<sup>40</sup> Zemunik, Novigrad, Lukovari/Luccovari, Sedd-i Islam, Polišane/Polissani, Obrovac, Tin, Nadin, Vrana, Skradin, Solin/Salona, Kamengrad.

<sup>41</sup> F. DIFNIK, *Povijest kandijskog rata*, 227 – 231.

<sup>42</sup> Tea MAYHEW, *Dalmatia between Ottoman and Venetian Rule: Contado di Zara 1645–1718*, Roma, 2008., 29 – 47.

<sup>43</sup> D. MADUNIĆ, *Defensiones Dalmatiae*, 127 – 128.





Fortunately, we have adequate sources to see the *status quo* established in the *Eyalet* of Bosnia after the Long Turkish War (1593–1606). The choice of this specific period as the starting point of our analysis is deliberate. During this long and multi-front war, the Ottomans witnessed a changing balance of power, with the Habsburgs gaining an equal or even advantageous position in some areas. Following the conquest of Bihać, the last major victory in Bosnia, the Ottomans subsequently abandoned their ambitions for further territorial expansion and adopted a policy centered on maintaining their existing borders. The 40% expansion of borderland garrisons in the aftermath of this war is one of the most straightforward explanations of this fact. This shift in strategy marked a turning point in Ottoman history in the context of Bosnia.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, we will primarily use sources compiled after 1590 to make more accurate comparisons, except for one specific example (T.T.d. 440).

Despite its location behind the *Sanjak* of Krka, the *Sanjak* of Klis remained a *serhad* territory due to its extensive frontier with the Republic of Venice. This fact is evident in the composition of the *sanjak*'s fortifications and garrisons. As mentioned earlier, *ulufeli* garrisons were strategically deployed along the borderlands, while *timarli* garrisons were stationed in the inland. The data presented in the tables below clearly show that the fortifications in the *Sanjak* of Klis guarded by *ulufeli* soldiers were manned by nearly three times as many soldiers as those guarded by *timarli* soldiers. This underscores the status of Klis as a *serhad*, where a larger military presence was essential for safeguarding the border.

The number of fortifications defended by *ulufeli* soldiers in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century remained consistent. However, it is important to note that the military setbacks experienced before 1665 led to significant changes in both the locations of these fortifications and the total number of soldiers. This decline in military strength became particularly evident by 1683, as the number of soldiers continued to decrease. These changes reflect the evolving military landscape and the challenges faced by the Ottomans in maintaining their border defenses. On the other hand, while the number of fortresses with *timarli* garrisons and their

<sup>44</sup> For more detail on this topic see: Okan BÜYÜKTAĞU, *Ottoman Garrisons in Western Slavonia (1550–1680)*, doctoral dissertation, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, 2022., 64 – 69, 89 – 94. Scholars have produced a wealth of literature on Bosnian *serhad* over the past five decades. For a comprehensive work on this topic, please see: Elma KORIĆ, *Stepen izučenosti rubnog pojasa osmanskog serhata u Bosni naspram habsburških vojnih krajina Hrvatske i Slavonske na temelju osmanskih izvora do kraja 16. stoljeća u dosadašnjoj bosansko-hercegovačkoj historiografiji*, u: *Franz Vaniček i vojnokrajiska historiografija*, ed. Stanko Andrić and Robert Skenderović, Slavonski Brod, 2017., 103 – 120.



locations remained stable over 115 years, there were notable exceptions, such as the substitutions of Zvonigrad and Ključ for Livno and Prozor.

TABLE 1: The fortifications with ulufeli garrisons in the Sanjak of Klis

1627 <sup>45</sup>	1643 <sup>46</sup>	1665 <sup>47</sup>	1683 <sup>48</sup>
Klis	Klis	Nutjak (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )	Nutjak (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
Lončarić	Lončarić	Sinj (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )	Sinj
Kamengrad	Kamengrad	Palanka-i Karaorman	Palanka-i Karaorman
Vranograč	Vranograč	Vranograč	Vranograč
Prolog	Kule-i Prolog (Tower of Prolog)	Prolog	Prolog
Ključ	Ključ	Ključ (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )	Ključ
Blagaj	Blagaj	Blagaj	Blagaj
Bilaj Bunić	Bilaj Bunić	Bilaj Bunić	Bilaj Bunić <sup>49</sup>
Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić	Atik Bilaj Bunić (Old Bilaj Bunić)	Atik Bilaj Bunić (Old Bilaj Bunić)	—
Ostrovica-i Cedit (New Ostrovica)	Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić	Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić	—
Cuka (Đukanov Vrh?)	Kule-i İvranköy? (Tower of İvranköy)	Atik Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić (Old Palanka of Bilaj Bunić)	—
Kule-i Vrankovci (Tower of Vrankovci)	Kule-i Kozjak	Cisr-i Çetine (Bridge of Cetina)	Cisr-i Çetine
Kule-i Zîr (Lower Tower)	Kule-i Zîr	Kule-i Havale (High Tower)	Kule-i Havale
Kule-i Kozjak (Tower of Kozjak)	Kule-i Cedit-i Bilaj Bunić (New Tower of Bilaj Bunić)	Kule-i Cedit-i Bilaj Bunić (New Tower of Bilaj Bunić)	—
—	—	Vrhrika <sup>50</sup>	—
Total number of <i>ulufeli</i> soldiers <b>776</b>	Total number of <i>ulufeli</i> soldiers <b>1.089</b>	Total number of <i>ulufeli</i> soldiers <b>970</b>	Total number of <i>ulufeli</i> soldiers <b>866</b>

<sup>45</sup> Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi Defterleri 1356, 128a-143b. Henceforth TS.MA.d..

<sup>46</sup> Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Vienna AT, Cod. mixt 627, 219b-244b. Henceforth MXT.

<sup>47</sup> KK.d. 4893, 157a-180b.

<sup>48</sup> D.BKL.d. 32208, 8.

<sup>49</sup> The entire defense complex of Bilaj Bunić is recorded under the same name in this register.

<sup>50</sup> Vrhrika is recorded among the fortresses of the *Sanjak* of Herzegovina in KK.d. 4893.

TABLE 2: The fortifications with *timarlı* garrisons in the *Sanjak* of Klis

1550 <sup>51</sup>	1594/1595 <sup>52</sup>	1665 <sup>53</sup>
Livno	Livno	Zvonigrad
Prozor	Prozor	Ključ (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
Susid	Susid	Susid
Akhisar/Prusac	Akhisar/Prusac	Akhisar/Prusac
Fenarlık	Fenarlık	Boričevac
Göhlisar/Jezero	Göhlisar/Jezero	Göhlisar/Jezero
Sokol	Sokol	Sokol
Belgrad/Glamoč	Belgrad/Glamoč	Belgrad/Glamoč
Sinj	Sinj	Sinj (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
Vrhrika	Vrhrika	Vrhrika
Knin	Knin	Knin
Drniš	Drniš	Drniš
Nečven	Nečven	Nečven
—	—	Nutjak (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> ) <sup>54</sup>
Total number of <i>timarlı</i> soldiers 275	Total number of <i>timarlı</i> soldiers 290	Total number of <i>timarlı</i> soldiers 260

## OTTOMAN GARRISONS IN THE *SANJAK* OF KLIS IN 1665

The *Sanjak* of Klis had 26 garrisoned fortifications in total, out of which, in 1665, 12 were *ulufeli*, 11 were *timarlı*, and 3 (Nutjak, Ključ and Sinj) were both *ulufeli* and *timarlı*. The joint service of these units in the fortresses is not unusual, as evidenced by the same situation in the *sanjaks* of Bosnia and

<sup>51</sup> Fazileta HAFIZOVIĆ, ed., *Opširni popis timara mustahfiza u tvrđavama Kliškog sandžaka iz 1550. godine*, Sarajevo, 2014. Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Tapu Tahrir Defterleri 440. Henceforth TT.d..

<sup>52</sup> TT.d., 647.

<sup>53</sup> MAD.d. 5449, 55 – 57.

<sup>54</sup> Nutjak is recorded among the fortresses of the *Sanjak* of Herzegovina in MAD. d. 5449. The recording of the same fortresses in different *sanjaks* presents a methodological challenge in determining their true *sanjak* affiliations. To address this, I examined the *sanjaks* in which these fortresses were listed in previous and later defters, and concluded that, for historical continuity, Nutjak and Vrhrika should be categorized under the fortresses of Klis.



Požega. Comparing the total number of soldiers in 1665 to the previous defters from 1594/1595 and 1643 reveals a notable decrease in both *timarlı* and *ulufeli* garrisons. This decline in military personnel may be attributed to several factors. First, the replacement fortresses of Nutjak, Sinj, and Karaorman were smaller than the key fortresses, i.e., Klis, Lončarić, and Kamengrad. Secondly, the ongoing war in the region likely hindered the effective mobilization of troops. Additionally, the destruction of Ottoman fortifications during the war impeded the timely restoration of defense structures to operational status. As mentioned earlier, MAD 5449 lacks detailed information, while KK 4893 provides more comprehensive and elaborate data. We will therefore primarily rely on the latter as our key source to delve into the military situation in the borderland of the *Sanjak* of Klis in 1665.

KK 4893 holds a distinctive position among the cataloged *mevacib defters* related to the Eyalet of Bosnia, standing out as a rare source with an unparalleled richness of details. Before 1699, roll-call registers of the *Eyalet* of Bosnia kept in Istanbul often lacked the detailed information found in this defter. Therefore, KK 4893 offers a wealth of details, including cash allocations (*ocaklık*)<sup>55</sup> for garrisons, procedures for new recruitments or discharges, the redeployment of garrisons from fallen fortresses, officers' seals, information about the origin and appearance of newly recruited soldiers, various official correspondences, and more. These details provide a window into the administrative procedures of the time and serve as a valuable source for understanding the military dynamics and organizational structure within the *Eyalet* of Bosnia.

The first observation about Klis that may be drawn from the KK 4893 is the presence of a significant number of new recruits, which indicates an essential change in the military situation before/during the roll call. Although most of these new recruits are listed as members of the fallen fortifications such as Klis, Kule-i Zîr, and Kamengrad, they were, in fact, assigned to different locations. The headings of the units reveal that the *mustahfiz*es of Kule-i Zîr and the *azeb*s of Kamengrad were assigned to Cîsr-i Çetine, the *cemaats* of the *azeb*s and *martoloses* of Klis were assigned to Nutjak, and the *farises* of Klis were assigned to Kule-i Havale. Apart from them, 68 out of 178 soldiers, i.e., about 40% of the Bilaj Bunić fortress, was serving in the Bihac fortress during the roll call. Furthermore, all the soldiers stationed at the reconstructed Sinj and Karaorman were newly recruits as well. A comparison of the figures in the defter shows that 509 of the 970 soldiers listed were new recruits, making up 52% of the total. The note in the

<sup>55</sup> Any cash income allocated for certain expenses in the Ottoman administrative organization.



defter, that *each of them received a berat*<sup>56</sup>, on the other hand, confirms beyond any doubt that these soldiers were newly recruited. The mentioned conditions indicate that the ongoing conflicts in the region disrupted the existing military organizations, necessitating continuous adjustments and adaptations, as the extraordinary wartime conditions required a dynamic reorganization of the *sanjak*'s military structure.<sup>57</sup>

TABLE 3: *Ulufeli* garrisons in the *Sanjak* of Klis in 1665<sup>58</sup>

	<i>Mustahfiz</i>	<i>Topçu</i>	<i>Azeb</i>		<i>Faris</i>	<i>Martolos</i>	Total	Daily Salary
Nutjak (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarli</i> )	—	—	42		24	39	105	642
Sinj (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarli</i> )	—	5	81		75	50	211	1,664
Palanka-i Kara Orman	40	—	40		40	—	120	1,139
Vranograč	6	—	—		—	—	6	45
Prolog	35	—	—		—	—	35	213
Ključ (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarli</i> )	34	9	—		—	—	43	324
Blagaj	6	—	—		—	—	6	40
Bilaj Bunić <sup>59</sup>	71	16	50		30	11	178	1,083
Atik Bilaj Bunić	—	—	19		30	—	49	296
Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić	16	—	22		—	—	38	227
Atik Palanka-i Bilaj Bunić	—	—	16		—	—	16	89
Kule-i Cedid-i Bilaj Bunić	15	—	—		—	—	15	81
Kule-i Havale	—	—	—		24	—	24	168
Cisr-i Çetine	31	—	42		—	—	73	422
Vrhrika	—	—	51		—	—	51	437
Total	254	30	363		223	100	970	6,870

<sup>56</sup> *Her-râ berât-sitâde*.

<sup>57</sup> The roll call and the new recruitments in the *Sanjak* of Klis were also documented in a separate defter and kept in the central treasury: MAD.d. 2621.

<sup>58</sup> In 1665, 9,446 *ulufeli* soldiers were serving in the fortifications of the Eyalet of Bosnia.

<sup>59</sup> Certain parts of the *mustahfizes* and *topçus*, the first *cemaat* of the *azeb* and the first *cemaat* of *farises*, 68 soldiers in total, were serving in the fortress of Bihać.

TABLE 4: *Timarlı* garrisons in the *Sanjak* of Klis in 1665

Yearly <sup>60</sup>	Total	Religious officials	Fortress troops	
20,525	12	4	8	Zvonigrad
36,320	21	8	13	Ključ (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
5,110	5	—	5	Susid
32,650	26	5	21	Akhisar/Prusac
14,000	9	—	9	Boričevac
27,000	20	10	10	Gölgisar/Jezero
13,110	7	—	7	Sokol
37,800	26	3	23	Belgrad/Glamoč
66,185	50	4	46	Sinj (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
35,200	22	2	20	Vrhrika
46,000	27	3	24	Knin
15,900	10	1	9	Drniš
15,200	11	1	10	Nečven
27,000	14	—	14	Nutjak (both <i>ulufeli</i> and <i>timarlı</i> )
392,000	260	41	219	Total

Numerous records of new appointments due to death, renunciation, misconduct, or other causes during the period 1668–1699 show that the *defter* was used by the central treasury for an extended period. The *mevacib defters* I found in the Ottoman archive for the period after 1665 consisted only of summary paylists; hence, the existence of this *defter* may help explain the absence of detailed roll-call registers for that time period.<sup>61</sup> While delving into the details of these various appointment records exceeds the scope of this paper, it is important to briefly outline their standard content. These notes serve as regular administrative records, documenting the reason for the previous soldier's discharge, the identity of the newly recruited soldier, the person who recommended the appointment, and the date of their enlistment.

<sup>60</sup> Due to the lack of distinction in the annual wages listed in the *defter*, calculating an exact total is not feasible. Therefore, an effort has been made to estimate the most accurate figure possible. The author would like to thank Göksel Baş for help with the calculations.

<sup>61</sup> For the Bosnian roll-call registers and paylists between 1563 and 1687, see: O. BÜYÜKTAPU, *Ottoman Garrisons*, 125.





An examination of the defter reveals that there were 100 non-Muslim soldiers in the *ulufeli* garrisons of the Klis.<sup>62</sup> Should the 42 Muslim soldiers registered as sons of Abdullah were included in the non-Muslim ratio, the number of Christian-origin soldiers would rise to 15% of the total number of soldiers. The names of these newly recruited non-Muslim soldiers, such as Grgur, Pavle, Marko, Radoje, Petar, Ivan, Martin, Stepan, Luka, Nikola, etc., are frequently encountered in the region.

It is a known fact that the Ottomans strategically used the Vlach population in the Balkan territories, especially along the borderlands, as a militia force linked to their settlement policy.<sup>63</sup> This pragmatic use is evident not only in the *tahrir defters*, but also in the *mevacib defters*. The majority of soldiers in the *martolos* units were drawn from this ethnic group, and this is certainly true in the case of Klis. The aforementioned newly recruited troops were clearly from the local Vlachs known as Morlachs or Kara Vlachs. Despite the Vlachs' recent rebellion against the Ottomans and their subsequent support for the Venetians during the Cretan War, the Ottomans' recruitment of these groups suggests that Vlach interests might have shifted in favor of the Ottomans by the end of the war. Frustrated by insufficient Venetian support and facing a severe depletion of resources, the Vlachs likely prioritized economic stability and security. Joining the Ottoman ranks offered them a relatively steady income, an opportunity to enrich themselves through raids and smuggling, and the prospect of advancement within the Ottoman military hierarchy.

The origins of recruited soldiers offer a valuable insight into the priorities of the recruitment process. The annotations above the personnel names show that the new soldiers deployed in Cisir-i Çetine originated from various towns in the surrounding area. Notable among these were Cetingrad, Banja Luka, Obrovac, Vrana/Vranjica?, and Jablanica. However, the recruitment network extends beyond these nearby locations to include soldiers from more distant towns, such as Izvornik, Kostajnica, and Subotica. The garrison of Karaorman was largely composed of locally recruited soldiers. Ključ and Glamoč functioned as the main military forces outside Karaorman itself. Same as Karaorman, the garrison of Sinj was predominantly composed of soldiers recruited from the town of Sinj

<sup>62</sup> Non-Muslim soldiers according to units: *Mustahfiz*es and *Topçus*: 2; *Azebs*: 36; *Farises*: 38; *Martoloses*: 24. Given that such recruitment was *strictly prohibited*, the presence of non-Muslim soldiers among the *mustahfiz*es is rather interesting.

<sup>63</sup> For a concise study of the Vlachs, see: Vjeran KURSAR, Being an Ottoman Vlach: On Vlach Identity(ies), Role and Status in Western Parts of the Ottoman Balkans (15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Centuries), *OTAM: Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi / Journal of the Center for Ottoman Studies-Ankara University*, vol. 34, Ankara, 2013., 115 – 161.



itself, comprising nearly 80% of the total force, a small portion of the remaining soldiers originated from other towns, such as Nutjak, Obrovac, and Banja Luka.<sup>64</sup>

Recruitment strategies for fortified locations in this region demonstrate a combination of local and regional approaches, influenced by factors such as military needs, demographic patterns, and strategic priorities. While a significant proportion of soldiers were recruited from nearby towns, the authorities used a wider net to include those from more remote areas, demonstrating the need for sufficient manpower or specialized skills. The preference for local recruitment for Sinj and Karaorman fortresses emphasizes their strategic importance, while Ključ, Glamoč, Banja Luka and Nutjak served as secondary resources of manpower, providing reserve or auxiliary forces where needed. Overall, the recruitment patterns reflect a balanced approach between utilizing local resources and expanding the recruitment network to meet military requirements and strategic objectives.

According to the roll call dated 1643, the defense of Klis heavily relied on four key fortresses: Klis, Bilaj Bunić, Lončarić, and Kamengrad. However, the fall of Klis prompted a strategic shift, as evident from roll-call records of 1665 and 1683. Taking on the role of Klis in 1665, Bilaj Bunić, a fortification complex with several strongholds and a tower, became the new defense backbone with 292 soldiers.<sup>65</sup> Its strategic importance remained undiminished in 1683, with a garrison of 280 soldiers. Conversely, the defensive roles of Lončarić and Kamengrad, being the second and third largest fortresses, were replaced by the Sinj and Karaorman fortresses in 1643. The destruction of Ottoman fortresses in the battles and Ottoman retreat towards the inland contributed to this shift in defense strategy.<sup>66</sup> As indicated in Table 3, numerous fortifications of varying sizes were present in the area. Notably, Nutjak and Cetingrad emerge as medium-sized fortresses based on their troop capacities. The remaining forts, aside from the ones previously mentioned, were primarily auxiliary fortifications clustered around larger strongholds, where their garrisons varied from 45 to 6 soldiers.

<sup>64</sup> KK.d. 4893, 157a-162b, 169a-170b.

<sup>65</sup> As Milan Kruhek pointed out, the mentioned military garrison in Bilaj Bunić cannot be the same fortress topographically, as Bilaj is in Lika and Bunić is on the northern side of the Krbava field. It is also not topographically clear to which fortress Cedit (New) Bilaj Bunić refers. This is possibly the settlement emerging in Bunić, where the Ottomans built a new fortress, a tower with external defense protection, ensuring the safety of the Bunić settlement. Milan KRUHEK, *Turske utvrde i kule u Lici i Krbavi 1527-1683, Senjski zbornik, prilozi za geografiju, etnologiju, gospodarstvo, povijest i kulturu*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2013., 481 – 482.

<sup>66</sup> Total numbers of the largest fortresses: 1643 – Klis: 279, Bilaj Bunić: 262, Lončarić: 176, Kamengrad: 129; 1665 – Bilaj Bunić 292, Sinj: 257, Karaorman 120; 1683 – Bilaj Bunić: 280, Sinj: 198, Karaorman: 120.



## PROVISION AND AMMUNITION

During my examination of the archival collection, which covers not only the years 1664–1666, but also the earlier and later decades, I was unable to find any data regarding the logistical support of the Klis garrisons. Nevertheless, according to my estimation, the provisions for these garrisons had probably been made through different ways. First – similar to other military units that joined the campaign to fight in the imperial army, garrison soldiers must have been responsible for providing their own sustenance. This was particularly the case during the times of peace or when the garrison was located in a relatively self-sufficient area. In such situations, soldiers would either supplement their rations with food grown or raised locally or purchase supplies from local markets.

From the available *tahrir defters*, we learn that the garrison soldiers were engaged in agricultural production, but it is also very likely that they developed commercial relations with the local population. Engaging in agriculture and trade allowed these soldiers to supplement their official rations and earn additional income to meet their needs. This was especially important during the times of economic hardship or when the supply of military rations was limited. By developing commercial relationships with local merchants and artisans, soldiers could access a wider variety of goods and services than those directly provided by the military. This possibly included food, clothing, tools, and other necessities. In some cases, soldiers may have engaged in illegal or unauthorized trade with the local population. This might have included unauthorized consumption of stored grain, smuggling goods, engaging in black market activities, or accepting bribe in exchange for favors. The limited amount of documentation on how the basic needs of the soldiers were met is most likely due to the circumstances mentioned above.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, there were also times when garrison soldiers required additional support from the central government or from the local authorities. This was especially true during the times of war or when the garrison was located in a remote or resource-poor region. In these cases, the government or local authorities might have provided soldiers with additional rations, supplies, or financial allowances to help them meet their needs. In my estimation, garrison provisions must have been supplied through a combination of the following two methods: the *nüzul* and *sürsat* practices. *Nüzul* was primarily used to fund the provisioning of the Ottoman armies, including food, fodder, and other essential

<sup>67</sup> A.DVNS.MHM.d. 12, 288/592.



supplies. It might also have been used to cover expenses related to transportation, accommodation, and construction of military infrastructure. *Sürsat* refers to the practice of requisitioning provisions from local communities in the times of war or emergency. This was a common practice in the Ottoman Empire, in order to swiftly secure the necessary supplies for its troops. In the *Sanjak* of Klis, *sürsat* was likely used to acquire food, fodder, and other essential goods.

Ottoman archival documents remained silent about the types and quantities of weapons found in the fortifications of the Sanjak of Klis. The Ottoman Empire, known for its meticulous organization, established centralized supply hubs for ammunition and weaponry. In the case of Bosnia, the primary hubs were located in Smederevo and Belgrade, both strategically positioned on the Danube River. These hubs served as crucial distribution centers for fortifications and garrisons throughout the *Eyalet* of Bosnia. While Smederevo and Belgrade provided central support, additional supply routes were established to cater to specific needs. The *Sanjaks* of Klis and Herzegovina, located further south, received their supplies primarily through Banja Luka and Srebrenica, located closer to their borders. This network of hubs and routes ensured a steady flow of weaponry and ammunition to frontier fortifications, keeping them adequately equipped.<sup>68</sup>

## THE COST OF DEFENSE

The majority of the expenses in the Eyalet of Bosnia were devoted to salaries for the garrison troops. The Ottoman financial structure successfully funded the borderland fortresses through three primary methods: *timar* allocations, *havale*<sup>69</sup> from nearby revenues, and direct transfers from the central treasury. Due to the distance from Istanbul, transporting collected taxes to the frontier zones proved to be challenging. Hence, the Ottomans implemented a widespread payment practice known as *havale*. Furthermore, Ottoman officials preferred not to directly fund the garrisons from the central treasury to prevent money outflow from it. Different units within the fortresses received their salaries through various means. Although this may vary from fortress to fortress and from period

<sup>68</sup> A.DVNS.MHM.d. 9, 71/191-1922; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 14, 754/1070-1071; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 27, 365/872; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 48, 131/353; A.DVNS.MHM.d. 69, 210/419.

<sup>69</sup> *Havale*: Transfer of funds to the garrison from the income sources. Payments were always made in cash with the knowledge of the trustee, the *kadı*, and the government representative. The *kadı* gave a *hujjat* to the supervisor, with the name of the *mukataa*, its amount, and to whom it was given on what date.



to period, *mustahfizes*, for instance, received *timar* allocations for their service, while other troops, such as *azebes* and *farises*, were paid in cash.

The salaries of the *ulufeli* soldiers were calculated daily and paid quarterly at the end of every three months according to the *Hijri* year. These payments were called *kıst* (share, or percent). For the first *kıst*, *MASAR* was used as an abbreviation of the Islamic months of *Muharram*, *Safar* and *Rebîülevvel*. For the second *kıst*, *RECEC* as an abbreviation of the months of *Rebîülâhir*, *Cemâziyelevvel*, and *Cemâziyelâhir*. *REŞEN* as an abbreviation of the months of *Rajab*, *Shaban*, and *Ramadan* for the third *kıst*; and finally, *LEZEZ* were used as abbreviations for the months of *Şevval*, *Zilkade*, and *Zilhicce*.<sup>70</sup> The departments that were under the *Defterdarlık* (Financial Office), *Büyük Kale Kalemi* (Big Fortress Office), *Küçük Kale Kalemi* (Small Fortress Office), and the *Anadolu Muhasebesi* (Anatolian Accountancy) would manage the transactions related to the payment of garrison salaries across the Empire. Records of paid groups, such as appointments and resignations, deaths, etc., were kept in both the *Eyalet* treasures and these departments.<sup>71</sup> Payments to paid garrisons in the Sanjak of Klis were also made quarterly, but a different practice was followed, corresponding to 238 days per year as in other *sanjaks* in the Bosnian eyalet. The Ottomans referred to this payment method as *gayr-i ez seb'in*, which means that soldiers received only 70% of their salary, while 30% remained in the treasury. Although we know that the Ottomans started this practice as early as in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, we still do not have more detailed information.<sup>72</sup> Although salary payments were planned to be paid in certain periods, garrison troops on the frontier often had difficulty with receiving their pay on a quarterly basis.<sup>73</sup> Insufficient data prevent us from identifying which garrisons in the *Sanjak* of Klis were financed by which sources and determining precise figures in border protection finances. It is however possible to calculate the total amount of money paid – by using the data from the two defters.

According to KK 4893, 14 *ulufeli* garrisons in the *Sanjak* of Klis were paid a daily salary of 6,870 *akçe*. Should we multiply this total by 238 days on the basis of the calculation of the *gayr-i ez-sebin*, we arrive to the conclusion that these

<sup>70</sup> MAD.d. 826; MAD.d. 528.

<sup>71</sup> Erhan AFYONCU, *Mevâcib*, in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 29, Ankara, 2004., 418 – 420.

<sup>72</sup> Baki ÇAKIR, *Osmanlı Mukataa Sistemi (XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıl)*, Istanbul, 2003., 89 – 93; K. HEGYI, *The Ottoman Military Organization*, 192.

<sup>73</sup> Topkapı Hat 1446, 8; MAD.d. 22300, 3; Ottoman Archives Complex of the Directorate of State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey İbnülemin Dahiliye 4/340 henceforth (İE. DH.); A.DVNS.MHM.d. 58, 113/307.



soldiers were paid 1,635,060 *akçes* annually. This figure corresponds to 10% of the 16,906,492 *akçes* paid to *ulufeli* garrisons in the same year.<sup>74</sup> Simultaneously, the salaries of 260 soldiers stationed in 14 garrisons paid via *timar* allocations amounted to a staggering 392,000 *akçes*.<sup>75</sup> These figures highlight the substantial financial investments made to ensure the security of the *sanjak*'s borders and internal stability, reaching 2,027,060 *akçes*. As seen in the figures, the *ulufeli* garrisons received a significantly higher share of the total salary budget compared to the *timar*-based garrisons. While the *timar* system played a role in supporting the *sanjak*'s defense, its contribution was significantly smaller compared to the *ulufeli* garrisons, highlighting the limitations of the *timar* system in providing sufficient resources for large-scale military operations.

## CONCLUSION

Following the Austro–Turkish War (1663–1664) and during the ongoing Cretan War (1645–1669), the Ottomans surveyed their garrisons defending their European borders. This initiative produced two registers, offering rich data still valuable today. Examining these registers and various archival records revealed a wealth of information about the garrisons stationed in a border *sanjak*'s fortifications. The data include details on the number of garrisons, recruitment processes, total salaries, soldiers' religious and ethnic backgrounds, and a comprehensive understanding of border defense policies. The information we have gathered from the archival collections empowers us to make valuable calculations and predictions regarding the complex nature of the frontiers.

This paper defines and analyzes the defensive capabilities of the Ottoman military formations in the *Sanjak* of Klis in 1665. To gain deeper insight into the underlying conditions of defensive dynamics in this *sanjak*, I strengthened the narrative with tables comparing the number of soldiers and fortifications before and after 1665. By approaching the topic from various perspectives, I aimed at

<sup>74</sup> According to the 1664 revenue and expenditure calculations of the Bosnian Treasury, the total amount of cash salary payment for *ulufeli* soldiers was 14,817,434 *akçes*. MAD.d. 4718, 11. Financial records from 1665 reveal a noteworthy increase in military expenditures compared to the preceding year. The disbursement for soldiers' salaries amounted to 16,906,492 *akçes*, exceeding the total sum allocated in 1664 by 2,089,058 *akçes*. This significant rise in payment proves a corresponding augmentation in troop recruitment throughout the *Eyalet* of Bosnia.

<sup>75</sup> These figures include only those defenders who received salaries through the allocation of fiefs and served in fortifications. They should not be confused with the timariot army, i.e., *sipahis*, for whom a significant portion of state revenues were still allocated.





understanding the nature of the defense system established by the Ottomans in a specific region of the Dalmatian hinterland.

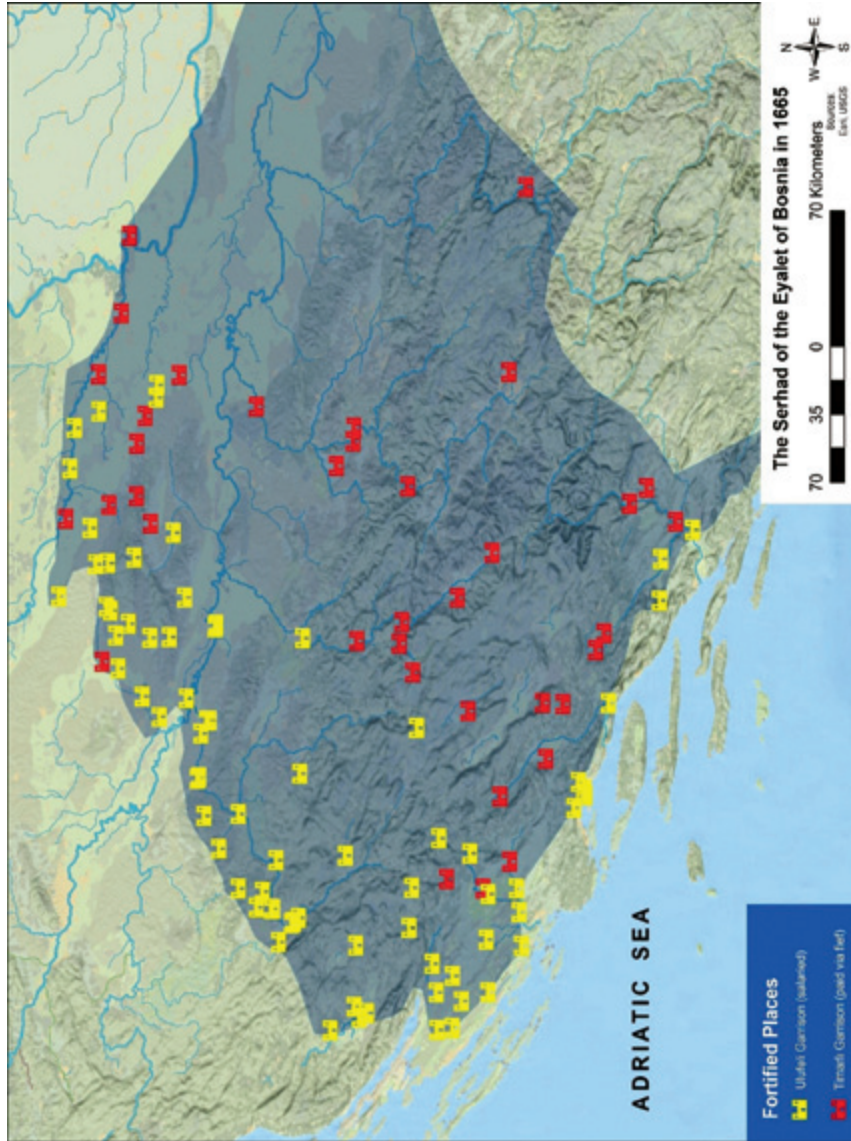
Despite nearly a decade of inconclusive conflict and strategic losses, the Ottomans demonstrated remarkable resilience in rapidly compensating for their setbacks and maintaining much of their pre-war military strength. By leveraging a diverse array of resources, they efficiently recruited new soldiers while meticulously considering regional balances throughout the process. Notably, Bosnia's self-sufficiency played a pivotal role, enabling the Empire to support its garrisons independently – both financially and in terms of provisions. This ensured a robust defense without burdening the already strained central resources.

In the context of the ongoing Cretan War, the Ottoman detailed roll-call data reveal the strategic importance of the *Sanjak* of Klis. Despite the obstacles, the Ottomans maintained a reasonably sized garrison in Klis, representing 7% of the 13,600 paid soldiers stationed in the fortresses of the Eyalet of Bosnia. Furthermore, they emphasized their financial commitment by allocating 8% of various local revenues to support these forces. On the other hand, the military importance of the Dalmatian hinterland becomes even more prominent when we consider the total troop strength that the Ottomans assigned to protect the entire Dalmatian coast, which amounted to 40% of the Bosnian frontier forces.

Considering the significant investments in the frontier garrisons, encompassing not only numbers, salaries, and resources, but also our collective commitment to security, it is crucial to look beyond mere statistics. Borderlands are more than blurred lines on maps; they are dynamic and ever-evolving entities demanding constant vigilance. Fortifications and their garrisons are not only a result of human permanent struggle for security, but also centers that broaden people's horizons due to the way of life they offer, expand lives materially and spiritually, and sometimes even shape destinies through challenging experiences.



## APPENDIX 1: Garrisoned fortifications along the borderlands of the Eyalet of Bosnia in 1665<sup>76</sup>

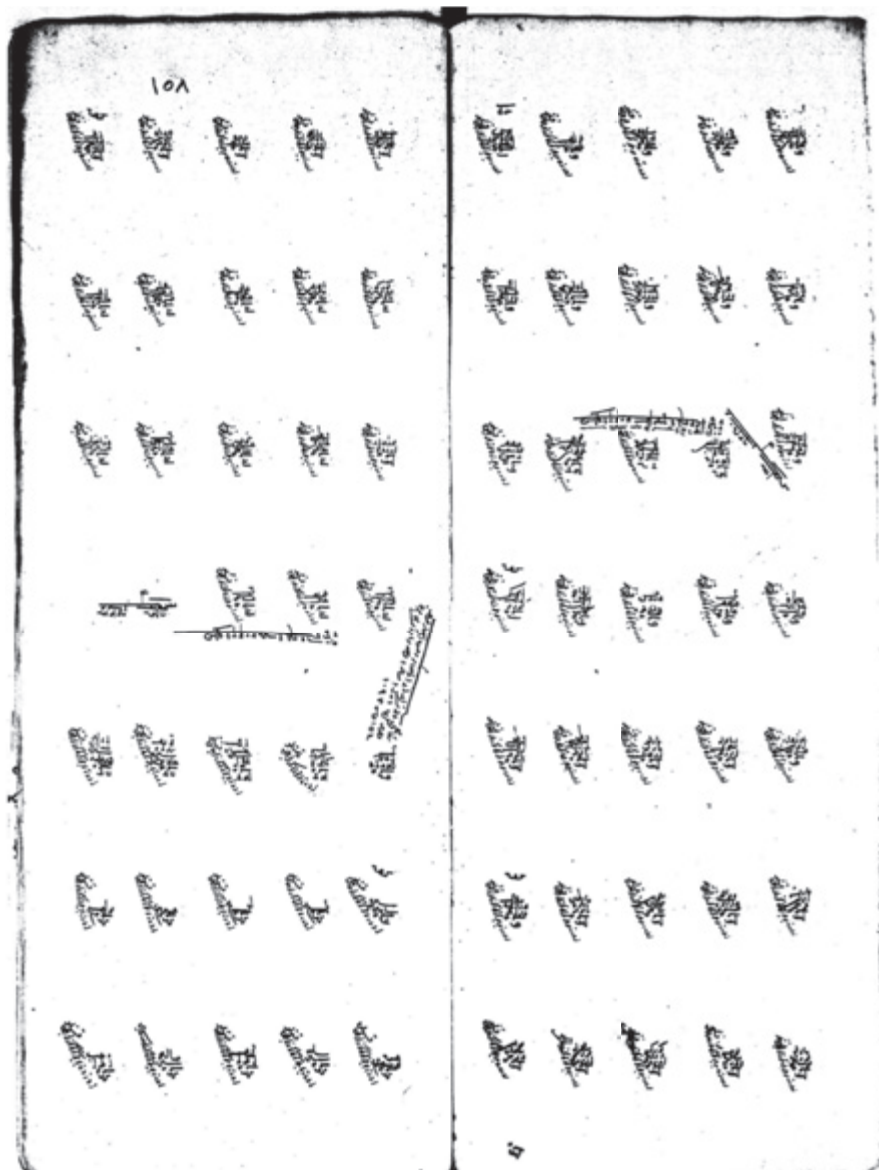


<sup>76</sup> There are around 30 fortified places, such as forts, palankas, bridges, towers, mines, etc., that are not depicted on this map, as I was unable to decipher or pinpoint their names or locations. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Fazileta Hafizović for her invaluable help in deciphering the fortification names and to Prof. Dr. Mehmet Akif Erdoğan for his support with sections of the *defters* that I found challenging to read. Finally, I am profoundly indebted to Seyfullah Aslan, whose assistance in mapping the data extracted from the *defters*.



**APPENDIX 2:** Records of the newly appointed *azeb*s stationed in the tower of Cisir-i Çetine and the *farises* stationed in the fortress of Sinj. The physical descriptions of the new recruits were written above their names. According to these notes, the soldiers were described without exception as *tall, with colored or hazel eyes, and wide or frowning eyebrows*

(*Uzun boylu, gök/ela gözlü, açık/çatuk kaşlı*. KK.d. 4893, 157b-158a)





APPENDIX 3: Records of the *timarlı* garrisons stationed in the *Sanjak* of Klis (MAD.d. 5449, 56-57)



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Okan BÜYÜKTAPU

OSMANSKO KRAJIŠTE (SERHAT) U  
KLIŠKOM SANDŽAKU 1655. GODINE

## SAŽETAK

Istraživanje veličine i financijskih aspekata osmanskih vojnih snaga zahtijeva detaljan pregled različitih arhivskih zbirki zbog prakse vođenja zapisa kod Osmanlija. Ova studija koristi taj pristup kako bi analizirala različite arhivske zapise, predstavljajući vojne kapacitete i troškove obrane jednog pograničnog sandžaka. Među glavnim izvorima su dva deftera – registar poziva na službu i registar glavarine sastavljeni na kraju Kandijskog rata (1645-1669). Oni omogućuju utvrđivanje ukupnog broja vojnika u posadama utvrda Kliškog sandžaka. Ovo je posebno vrijedno zbog rijetkog slučaja u osmanskim zapisima gdje su istovremeno dokumentirane dvije posebne vrste vojnika, ulufedžije (plaćenici) i timarlije (posjednici timara). Radi šire perspektive, studija koristi sveobuhvatan pristup koji uključuje formulaciju obrambenih strategija, sastav vojnih jedinica, komparativnu analizu broja posadnih snaga, projekciju vjerskog i etničkog podrijetla vojnika, ulogu utvrde unutar sandžaka i godišnje troškove obrane. Unatoč vremenskim i regionalnim ograničenjima, studija pruža dragocjene uvide u osmansku lokalnu vojsku u razdoblju kritičnih izazova za Carstvo. Nadalje, donosi vrijedne informacije o osmanskim vojnim sposobnostima i obrambenim politikama na regionalnoj razini, doprinoseći podatke budućim istraživanjima o ukupnoj strukturi i sastavu osmanske vojske.

**Ključne riječi:** Klis, sandžak, vojna povijest, serhat, granica, vojna posada, granične tvrđave, popis glavarine, 17. stoljeće.

