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COLLATERAL DAMAGE: WAR AND CIVILLIAN CASUALTIES IN ISLAM AND THE OTTOMAN PRACTICES

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Abstract: The well-known perception of war-hungry Muslims who had the Qur'an on the one hand and sword on the other offering a choice of either accepting Islam or losing one's head has easily been created in the literature by the Orientalist scholars. Today the stress on the *Jihad* controversy by mass media in Europe and America is important and needs to be corrected. That jihad has usually been translated by the Western media as "holy war" is a greatly misunderstood principle in Islam. There is no term in Arabic which means, "holy war". War is not "holy" in Islam.
I would like to divide this study into two parts: In the first part, the issue of conquest and its religious, ideological and theoretical references will be dealt with in reference to basic Islamic sources and the previous Islamic state's practices. In particular, what are the limits of warfare and the position of civilians in the wars and wartimes according to the Islamic law will be looked for. In the second part, as a typical Islamic state, to what extend Ottoman conquests in the Balkans followed and practiced the legal way that opened up by Islamic law will be analyzed according to the available chronicles.

Key Words: War, Civillian Casualties, Islam, Ottoman Practice, Voluntary Surrender

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The Meaning and Nature of Islam

From the Muslims' point of view, Islam is the religion appointed by God for the welfare of mankind, individually and collectively, in both worlds. It is based on belief in and worship of God, without associating with him any partners whatsoever. Belief in and worship of God requires on the part of a believer deep concern with creatures, animate or inanimate. The deeper one's belief in and submission to God is, the deeper one's concern for all creatures. Belief in the unity of God allows no one on the earth to enjoy and exercise absolute freedom in dealing with creatures.[1]

Islam, literally meaning peace, salvation and submission, came to establish peace, first, in the inner worlds of human beings themselves, making them at peace with God, nature and themselves, and, then, in the entire world and universe. For reason, peace and order are fundamental in Islam. It always seeks to spread in a peaceful atmosphere and refrains from resorting to force as much as possible. Islam never approves injustice in whatever form it is, and severely forbids bloodshed. According to the Qur'an: "Whoever slays a soul not to retaliate for a soul slain or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had slain all mankind, and whoever 'gives life' to a soul, it shall be as if he had 'given life' to the whole of mankind."[2]

According to Bernard Lewis there are different meanings of the word "Islam" in the contemporary world. In order to avoid misunderstandings in any discussion of Islam and its practices, we should be aware of all of these. There are at least three different meanings. "In the first place, Islam means the religion thought by the Prophet Mohammed and embodied in the Muslim revelation known as the Qur'an. In the second place, Islam is the subsequent development of this religion through tradition and through the work of the great Muslim jurists and theologians. In the third meaning, Islam is the counterpart not of Christianity but of Christendom. In this sense Islam means not what Muslims believed or were expected to believe but what they actually did."[3]

At this point, the above explanation is very important to note here, especially, for the people who are not familiar with Islam and the Islamic world that require an extensive research to understand the nature of Islam as a religion and its practices among the people. If one does not know exactly what Islam says about the issue of war and its various aspects, one can easily reach insufficient conclusions that may affect his ideas either negatively or positively.

War in Islam

There are strict rules regulating how war may be conducted. For example, the following is the order given by Prophet Muhammad to come until the present day to armies dispatched for fighting:

> "Always keep fear of God in your mind. Remember that you can not afford to do anything without His grace. Do not forget that Islam is a mission of peace and love. Do not destroy fruit trees nor fertile fields in your paths. Be just, and spare the feelings of the vanquished. Respect all religious persons who live in hermitages or convents and spare their edifices. Do not kill civilians. Do not outrage the chastity of women and the honor of conquered. Do not harm old people and children. Do not accept any gifts from the civil population of any place. Do not billet your soldiers or officers in the houses of civilians."[4]

The practice of killing and of taking the whole population captive is also prohibited with the hope that in the future they might accept Islam on their own free will. War conditions are regulated by some verses in the Qur'an. Though the Qur'anic regulations are very realistic, there is still a room for the different practices which can be found in the history of Islamic states. Since Qur'an, as all the other holy books, does not explain everything in detail and mostly gives the basic idea and tries to draw the limits of morality, interpretations of new situations were made under the influences of several historical factors.

The Arabic term *feth* (conquest or victory) simply means, "to open". It is used to imply both a territorial gain (a city or a geographical area) and a spiritual effect, submission to and spread of Islam in the heart of people in reference to a verse in the Qur'an as follows: "Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory".[5] Therefore, in the Islamic literature "conquest" does not bear the same meaning with "occupation" or "invasion". The difference between the two words is explained by putting more emphasis on "conquest" as the cause of salvation, peace and justice. Islam never approves any injustice in any part of the world. For this reason, Islam orders its followers to fight for the cause of the feeble and oppressed among world people: "And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? - Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!'"[6] Since the basic feature of Islamic conquests was the continuity and permanenity, once

taken over the conquered land was not treated as a colony but considered as their own motherland by the Islamic states.

Where fighting is absolutely necessary and inevitable, the Qur'an exhorts believers not to avoid fighting. All the wars were defensive wars during the Prophet Mohammad's time. It is clear in the Qur'an and has been witnessed by history, that Islam resorts to force in order to defend itself and establish the freedom of belief. So, under the rule of Islam, the followers of other religions – Christians, Jews, and Hindus etc. -- are free to practice their religion.

In the second sura of the Qur'an, if it is necessary, waging defensive war against the enemies of Islam and of its followers is allowed and perceived legal. Although according to Qur'an, war is not a requirement for the spread of Islam, considering the 7th century realities it was an inevitable outcome. Transformation from defensive war to ideological war called as "*Jihad*" (holy war) after the prophet followed a parallel pattern with the expansion of first Islamic state in the Middle East.

Jihad denotes, literally, doing one's utmost to achieve something. It is not the equivalent of war. It has a wider connotation and embraces every kind striving in God's cause. There are two aspects of *Jihad*. One is fighting against carnal desires and evil inclinations, and therefore enlightenment both intellectually and spiritually, which is called the *greater Jihad;* the other is encouraging others to achieve the same objective and is called the *lesser Jihad.* In a general sense of definition, *Jihad* means a call to Islam and to work for the spread of Islam and to eliminate any obstacle in the way of spreading and introducing Islam. This transformation was affected by the idea that every Muslim has a responsibility of the spreading of Islam as a religious duty. Defending Islam and the Muslim community is a primary aspect of the physical *jihad*, which involves taking up arms against an enemy. Islam allows the use of force in the following cases: If unbelievers or polytheists or those who make mischief and corruption on the earth resist the preaching of Islam and try to block its way of conquering the minds and hearts of people, Islam offers the enemy side three alternatives: either they will accept Islam, or allow its preaching or admit its rule. If they reject all three alternatives, Islam allows the use of force. It is worth mentioning that the controversy between scholars is about what is called *Jihad* as a 'defensive' strategy and 'offensive' *Jihad*.[7]

First, *Jihad* as a 'defensive' strategy means to strive in order to evacuate the Muslim land from the occupiers who attack it and occupy any part of the Muslim land. Undoubtedly, there is no disagreement regarding such a kind of *Jihad*. It is agreed upon by old and modern scholars that this kind of defensive *Jihad* is an obligation on all Muslims. They with all its doctrines, schools, and sects agree that armed *Jihad* should be resorted to in order to expel the occupier and emancipate the Muslim lands from the evils inflicted by him. The legitimacy of such a kind of *Jihad* and combat is universally accepted.[8]

Now we move to the 'offensive' *Jihad*. In this kind of precautionary *Jihad*, Muslims march into the lands of the disbelievers in order to avoid the harm they may cause in the future, and to secure the Muslims from the disbelievers' mischief. Muslims may resort to this *Jihad* to get through to the people in the non-Muslims lands to propagate Islam and convey to them its teachings. Further, Muslims may march into a non-Muslim territory to make it submit to the Islamic state and to the supremacy of the Islamic law which governs human life with its just legislation, and superior guidelines and instructions.[9]

War Booty

The issue of the legality of war booty in Islam constitutes another important point of discussion and paved way to the misperception of Islamic states as if they wage war only for booty and worldly gains. According to Islamic understanding, booty is a result rather than a reason of a war. Any reason such as taking booty, domination of any race or tribe and gaining honor and dignity, other than for the sake of God, is rejected and also prohibited by the Qur'an. First of all, fighting in a war or armed struggle is the first requirement for acquiring of booty. Otherwise, according to Islamic understanding it is illegal to take anything as war-booty. God decrees in the Qur'an: "Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. God does not love transgressors." The first regulations of the conditions of war-booty and of its practice were made after the War of Bedr. In the Qur'an it is explained as follows: "And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to Allah, - and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer,- if ye do believe in Allah and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Testing,- the Day of the meeting of the two forces. For Allah hath power over all things."[10] In another verse: "But (now) enjoy what ye took in war, lawful and good: but fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." Moreover, this verse was supported and strengthened by the traditions of the Prophet. Details of the conditions for war-booty can be found in the practices of the Prophet. Basically, any kind of property, prisoners of war and sometimes land are considered war-booty. Most of the time conquered land is not considered as war booty and not distributed among the soldiers. Though vacant lands were taken over by the state, the lands in the possession of conquered native people are left to the owners in return they have to pay a state tax called *cizye* (capitation tax). Anything that is valuable (domestic animals e.g.) is considered as war-booty after the war.[11]

The only condition for this is to acquire these properties after the armed struggle. One fifth of booty was taken for the state treasury and the rest was distributed to the soldiers. Practically, the soldiers who actively

participate in war can acquire booty regardless of their rank. Those who are in the army such as women, slaves and non-Muslims, though they fight, are not entitled to booty. Non-Muslim soldiers can be rewarded or paid. Infantry and cavalry soldiers acquire different rate of booty. While infantry soldiers get one share, cavalries most of the time get two or three shares.[12]

Prisoners of War

Apart from the enemy soldiers, taking women and children as the prisoners of war was allowed by the Islamic law because of their economic value for selling and the perception of dissuasive factor. Elderly people men and women, religious men and women and those who retired into seclusion are prohibited to be taken as prisoners of war. Among those who are taken as prisoners of war, only the adult males under certain conditions and with the sound reasons such as being caught in spying could be killed. Killing the women and children as prisoners of war is strictly prohibited. Most of the time, all of the prisoners of war are enslaved by selling or putting them in household services. Only exception for one's not becoming captive is to embrace Islam right before his capture. Once an enemy soldier becomes Muslim, he cannot be killed or enslaved. Food and clothing have to be supplied to the prisoners of war by the state or owners according to a verse in Qur'an which says: "And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, - (Saying), 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks'."[13] Any sort of mistreatments to the captives are forbidden. Special attention is paid to the women and children captives. To separate children from their mothers is strictly prohibited by the traditions of Prophet. Also torture and cutting of any part of the body of a captive either live or death, though for the purpose of extracting information from him, is not allowed by the Islamic law. The Islamic law forbids rape and any sort of sexual harassment to the captive women during or right after the end of war. Only after the slave status is given to the captive women and in certain conditions such as making sure that the woman is not pregnant, can slave owners make sex with the captive women.[14]

In Islam a slave was, however, distinctly better off than Greek or Roman slave, since Islamic jurists took account of humanitarian considerations. In the matter of rights, slaves could not enter into a contract, hold property, or inherit. If a slave incurred a fine, his owner was responsible. For example, a master must give his slave adequate upkeep and support him in his old age. The master was forbidden to overwork his slave. If a master defaulted on these or other obligations to his slave, he was liable to a penalty, which was prescribed by law. A slave could enter into a contract to earn his freedom. A slave could marry. Theoretically, a

male slave could marry a free woman, but this was discouraged. A master could not marry his own slave woman unless he first freed her. Abandoned and unclaimed children could not be adopted as slaves. Free non-Muslims who remained faithful to their religions could not, if free, be legally enslaved.[15] Needless to say, these regulations of Islam were made according to the contemporary perceptions of life, understandings and values and should not be viewed according to those of today.[16] On the issue of slave soldiers Lewis says: "The professional slave soldiers, so characteristic of later Islamic empires, were not present in the earliest Islamic regimes. During the great expansion of the Islamic faith, many of the peoples of the conquered countries were captured, enslaved, converted, and liberated, and great numbers of these joined the armies of Islam. Sometimes, the slave kings were ruled in Cairo, in Delhi, and in other capitals. Even in the Ottoman Empire, most of the sultans were themselves sons of slave mothers."[17]

Ottomans in the Balkans

The story of the Ottoman Empire has its beginning around the turn of the 14th century, in a corner of northwestern Anatolia where a group of Muslim Turkish tribesmen led by their chieftain, Osman, started to expand beyond their small principality on the Byzantine frontier. Their territorial base eventually grew into a great world empire that was named after Osman and was ruled by his descendants in unbroken succession throughout its nearly six and a half centuries of history.

When the Ottomans emerged on the scene as a political force, Anatolia was divided into a number of principalities ruled largely by Turkoman chieftains and families. The population was a mix of Muslims and native Christians, many of whom were the converts. This situation was the outcome of a long process, beginning in the 11th century, by which Muslims, primarily western (Oghuz) Turks originating in central Asia, steadily broke through the Byzantine defenses and conquered Anatolia. New waves of Turkish and Muslim refugees fleeing from the Mongols entered Anatolia in the 13th century.[18]

İnalcık describes the early formation of Ottoman State as follows: "Information on the early Ottomans remains very patchy, and legends woven around their origins and exploits further complicate the task of reconstructing their formative years. Ottoman chroniclers portrayed them as Muslim ghazis, or holy warriors, driven to conquest and expansion by their religious zeal for the struggle against the infidel. This view, which modern scholarship has often perpetuated, appears to have been very much an idealization created by later writers and servants of the royal house. In reality the early Ottomans, like other Turkish nomads in the milieu of western Anatolia, conquered land and engaged in predation to meet the economic needs of their pastoral society rather than as part of a

strictly religious campaign. They expanded at the expense of fellow Muslims, did not force conversion on the conquered Christian peoples, and maintained friendly ties with the Byzantine population, even using Christians in their armies."[19]

> "The early Ottomans were nomadic pastoralists with an elected chieftain and an armed force made up of bands of tribesmen on horseback. But as the territory under their rule expanded and the tasks of governing and fighting became more complicated, their tribal organization was transformed into a settled state. In the course of the 14th century, they developed a standing army and a bureaucracy, shifted from pastoral life to agriculture, and transformed their chieftains into sultans who ruled as despotic monarchs. The result was a complex imperial system fashioned from a blend of Islamic, Turko-Mongol, and Byzantine institutions."[20]

Since Ottomans first sought to establish some sort of suzerainty over the Balkan states and wanted to keep local dynasties in place, initial wars in the Balkans were not destructive. Ottoman relations with Byzantium and other Balkan states appear first to have been in the nature of an alliance, than of a vassalage. A policy of gradual incorporation of the Balkan lands into the Ottoman Empire continued even after the establishment of direct rule.[21] Therefore, during the armed struggle and afterwards, Ottomans avoid giving much harm and paid special attention not to be harsh towards civilians in the conquered lands. Although war was the main instrument of the state, the empire emerged, at the same time as protector of Orthodox Church and millions of Orthodox Christians. With the application of Islamic principles, lives and property of Christians and Jews were guaranteed with tolerance by the Ottomans on the conditions of obedience and payment of a poll tax. By this way, Ottomans tried to gain the voluntary submission and confidence of the conquered people, before resorting to warfare. The policy of the protection of peasantry as a source of tax revenue paved way to an attitude of tolerance.[22]

As Professor İnalcık explains it very well, the ease and speed of Ottoman expansion in the Balkans can be understood by looking at several factors. "When the Ottoman conquest of Balkans began, political situation in the region was unstable. There were the serious political fragmentations among small Balkan Principalities. Ottomans took advantage of this situation very well by making alliances and supporting one power against another. Respecting the principal of Feudalism, treating the indigenous nobility and military class with tolerance and taking them into their own military organization as soldiers in return for tax

exemption, levying soldiers from vassal states without having accepted Islam, establishing a centralized administration with a more just and general taxation system, abolishing the old privileges and protecting the peasantry against exploitation[23] and finally officially recognizing the Orthodox Church were the basic factors of Ottoman expansionist doctrine."[24]

The feature of Ottoman military actions in the Balkans can be described as the sieges of several fortresses of strategic importance. The evolution of siege craft helped much to the expansion of Ottomans in the Balkans. Some of these fortresses were demolished while some of them were kept and fortified by stationing small garrisons in the area. Ottomans' another security practice was the employment of native population as auxiliary forces. Exemption from certain taxes was the main instrument of Ottoman administration to encourage these native populations for more collaboration with the new administration. "In some special cases the population of a whole town was given exemption from taxes to insure continued faithfulness."[25] This practice was very meaningful for both the conquerors and conquered, when we take the negative aspects of life into account during political fragmentation of the region. For the conquered, it was also a bit surprising to have better positions and more rights under the Ottoman administration after a war or a bitter resistance.

Table 1: Showing Ottoman Military Movements and Outcomes in the years 1288-1396

Name of fortress	Date of conquest	Method used in subduing	Action taken
Karacahisar	1288	siege	made it capital city
Geyve	1289	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
İnegöl	1290-99 (?)	siege	made it prosperous
Bilecik	1290-99 (?)	siege	made it prosperous
Yenişehir	1290-99 (?)	siege	made it capital city
Bursa	1326	voluntary surrender	made it capital city
İznik	1331	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
İzmit	1337	siege	made it prosperous
Çimpe	1352	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Gelibolu	1354	siege	fortified
Bantoz	1357	voluntary surrender	fortified
Çorlu	1357	siege	Fort set on fire
Silivri	1357	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Dimetoka	1359	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Edirne	1361	voluntary surrender	made it capital city
Filibe	1363	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Kavala	1371-72	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Serez	1371-72	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Kareferye	1371-72	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Sofya	1385	siege	made it prosperous
Niş	1386	siege	made it prosperous
Selanik	1387	voluntary surrender	made it prosperous
Üsküp	1391	siege	made it prosperous
Niğbolu	1396	siege	made it prosperous

Was Conversion Forced or Voluntary?

Forced conversion to Islam is strictly prohibited in the Qur'an. On this issue Qur'an says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, which never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things."[26] The people in the conquered lands were free to remain and practice their religion when they accept the rule of Islam and pay a special tax (called *cizye*) for the security of their life and property. This practice of Islam was first applied by the prophet and later on became a basic and unalterable rule which followed by the subsequent Islamic states.

Like all the great religions, Muslims wanted to convert everyone to the faith that they believe to be the only true one. According to Islam, the people of the book are those who still follow one of the older revelations given before Islam, which is Jews and Christians, each of whom has a book to show for their belief. They may keep all their customs and social arrangements, and are quite free with regard to their religion. From the time of the first conquests of Islamic state the tolerant treatment of the

non-Muslims was set as a rule in which forced conversion or extermination of non-Muslims was prohibited. The prevailing policy was the attitude of aloofness to the conquered people because the teachings of Qur'an commend it.[27] Thus, this tradition was followed by almost all of the Muslim successor states. As in the case of Ottoman Empire, for instance, one can find many Christian and Jewish both contemporary and academic accounts which clearly point out the tolerant nature of treatment to the non-Muslims.[28] After the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottomans continued the previous Islamic states' general policy of granting and recognizing the non-Muslim communities' extensive privileges respecting to their internal organization and communal affairs.[29] Since Islam regards Christianity as a religion and respects the Christians as the "people of the book" and the Bible as a holy book and Jesus Christ as a prophet, the Orthodox church was recognized as an official body to supervise both the religious and civil affairs of the community in the Empire. According to Professor İnalcık, from the beginning, protections of the rights of the non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were considered "a command of God and a duty of the State" by the Ottomans.[30]

Forceful conversion, in other words "Islamization", as was preferred to be used by some nationalist historians of the Balkan states, has still been a hotly debated issue. It is argued that Islamization was pursued by the Ottomans as a state policy in order to achieve Balkan peoples' mass conversion to Islam.[31] It is interesting to note that the first converts were not the ordinary people but the noble families and the Christian soldiers who were worrying about their status under the new administration and seeking some sort of privileges. Although it was not a necessary prerequisite for entering Ottoman military class and even the Ottoman state did not seek it as a rule, conversion to Islam was the reality during the Ottoman conquest of the region.[32]

There was not a process of forced conversion but that of institutionalized conversion says S. Vryonis.[33] Exercise of social function with an efficacy by the Islamic institutions over the Christian and Jewish institutions provided prestige and propaganda for the prospective converts to Islam.[34] The rise of *sufizm* and spread of the *derwish* orders in these appropriate conditions could be seen as an example of the institutionally well-organized conversion in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nehemia Levtzion also points out that since the conditions after the conquests provided kind of a psychological superiority for the Muslims, conversion to Islam became a positive-cultural-phenomenon among the conquered people.[35]

Vryonis equates the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans with the so-called Islamization. According to his point of view, the sole purpose of Ottoman conquests in the Balkans was to gain converts to Islam or in more general terms for the spread of Islam. Naturally, he sees "a picture of cultural change and of a single line movement of Christians and Jews into

the fold of Islam."[36] However, to assert that the ideology of Ottoman expansion in the Balkans was the Islamization is to twist the historical facts. The later centuries following the early conquests clearly reflected that the Ottomans did not use the state's means and efforts to make all the peoples of Balkans Muslims. The movement of mass conversion was realized in certain areas where either there was not an institutionalized religious order or the people were under religious persecution. Another point has been made in the studies so far is that most of the time conversions were realized for the worldly advantages or to escape from mostly religious persecution (like in Cyprus and Crete).[37] Religious alienation was another factor to induce some Christian sects for conversion to Islam like Bogomils. For instance, some religious groups such as Nestorians, Monophysites and Copts living on the borders of Byzantine Empire were under serious religious persecution during the spread of Islam.[38] Most importantly, the Orthodox Church, which must have been seen as the biggest obstacle stood in front of the Islamization, was not destroyed and even strengthened by reviving the ecclesiastical seats in the Balkans. The highest authority of Orthodox Church, patriarchate in İstanbul was made an administrative body of the Ottoman state. Therefore, the issue of conversion should be viewed not other than an individual and private act.

The Practice of Voluntary Surrender (Eman)

Not all the wars were ended up with clashes and armed struggle. According to Islamic tradition, enemy side may avoid war by asking for mercy and make a peaceful surrender. Therefore, the enemy soldiers and civilians acquire certain rights. Most of the time, this Islamic tradition was applied during the sieges of fortresses and surrendering of cities.[39] In Ottoman period, particularly during the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans, which were the densely populated area with towns and villages scattered around and the cities inside the walls, most of the conquests were made through the application of this Islamic tradition. In Ottoman chronicles, there are many accounts of the surrender of fortresses and cities in the Balkans.[40] A document of surrender (called *eman* or *vire kağıdı*) was prepared by the commander of the Ottoman army explaining the certain rights of the surrendered people. These rights are the security for lives and properties of the people, permission to go wherever they want. Arrangements were made for providing wagons and a military escort to the people and for their belongings to transport them to the nearest friendly fortress.[41] They were free to choose to stay when they accepted to pay a special tax (capitation tax) called *cizye*. When a document of surrender was handed out to the people, taking of booty and of prisoners of war and also any mistreatment to the people were forbidden. The right

of asking for mercy could be used either by a group of people or individuals, regardless of their sex and religion.[42]

According to Murphey, utilization of the military practice of *eman*, as a means of ending conflict and the avoidance of unnecessary bloodshed was by no means unusual during the conquest of the Balkans. This was a striking feature of the pattern of Ottoman military engagement which proved to be successful in reducing casualties. Most of the time, Ottomans achieved this voluntary surrender by the application of overwhelming force. This was a common military practice at that time and did not mean voluntary surrender of the weaker side committed sort of treachery. *Eman,* typically a conditional but otherwise voluntary surrender, was often sought by the Ottomans in order to end the senseless continuation of siege. It was offered to the enemy side not only for ending of conflict but also for avoiding the inception of clash.[43]

In this sense, the protection of civilians was the main concern for the Ottoman administration. From the first conquests in Anatolia, Ottoman administration needed the support of natives to remain in the places they had taken control. Continuing political and social turmoil in the territories helped much to and eased the way of Ottoman conquests. The rumors among the native populations about the Ottoman justice and tolerance coincided with the instability and chaos in the cities and towns to that extent which a contemporary noted that not the Turks but the people themselves were harming their own cities and towns.[44]

Ottoman Warfare

Ottoman military campaigns both in Anatolia and the Balkans were bearing sort of an ideology that unlike the Mongol invasions, the Ottomans sought to settle in the lands they conquered permanently. This ideological background was another factor in reducing civilian casualties, since looting and abusing the civilians, as the common characteristics of the 14th century warfare, were avoided by the Ottomans. According to Murphey, although the 15th-17th century warfare was always characterized as a bitter fighting to the last drop of the blood of soldiers, the defense of the honor and glory of their countries was by no means the main concerns of the soldiers. There were other elements such as compromise, conciliation and humanity to influence the devotion of the soldiers from both sides.[45]

Murphey says: "Concern for social justice and the protection of people was also an underlying concern governing the Ottomans' organization of food supply for the army... By extracting resources in the way it did, the government was not just protecting its own interest and legitimate private gain from the massive trans-societal undertaking of producing, supplying and delivering goods for consumption in war."[46] Any undisciplined actions such as committing of abuses against civilian

populations were punished within the limits of law by the commander of the army.[47]

Murphey quote Paul Rycaut who accompanied an Ottoman army in 1665 in order to support his assertion: "In Turkish camp no brauls, quarrels or clamors are heard; no abuses are committed on the people in the march of their army; all is bought and paid with money, as by travelers that are guests at an inn."[48]

According to Murphey, not raiding and looting but discipline, proper allocation and use of army resources were the main determinant factors behind the Ottoman success in military sphere.[49] This has to be interpreted as the positive factor in reducing the civilian casualties. A disciplined and well-fed and well-organized army was always preferable to the army of irregulars in the 14th and 15th centuries in terms of the protection of civilians. Murphey sums up motivational and psychological aspects of Ottoman warfare as follows: "Ottoman traditions of leadership and command; troop motivation and loyalty; the role of army ceremony in promoting group cohesion; and the forms of reward used for the ante-bellum encouragement and post-bellum acknowledgement of military service."[50]

While Murphey rejects the prevailing view of Ottoman *gaza* (holy war) tradition as the unchanging driving force behind all Ottoman wars and finds it entirely ahistorical, he draws attention to the material motivations that urged people to participate in wars. In his view, material incentives and personal enrichment were not absent in encouraging the soldiers. Basic human greed and worldly concerns rather than patriotic and spiritual values and pure and selfless devotion were the most active factors animating the soldiers' behavior in battle.[51] "In both collective and personal level, material interests were the main concerns in waging of war. For the state, controlling land, resources and trade routes was much more a matter than the forced conversion of the conquered people or the collective triumph of the nation of Islam. For the soldiers, religious conviction was not more than a source of inner strength to ensure their survival to the end of battle. After the battle their main concern was to get whatever the rewards and bonuses they were entitled to."[52] On the war booty Murphey says: "Therefore, undisguised desire for booty constituted another important factor of material motivations. Both during the course of campaigns and during peacetime, raiding parties were organized against civilian targets and mostly poorly defended territories in order to acquire easily movable and marketable properties. These attacks could be destructive for the civilians when some volunteers or opportunists participated in with the expectation of rich material reward."[53]

Deportation and emigration as an instrument of security and reorganization of the conquered lands were systematically used by the Ottomans. Mass deportation was applied when they faced with a resisting and rebellious population of a town or village. Most of the time, these

deportations were directed to the Anatolian lands. On the other hand, settlement of Turkish people in conquered lands was another common practice of the Ottomans. In both deportation of the Christians and the settlement of the Turks, the main Ottoman concern was security. Most of the settlements of nomadic Turkish population in the Balkans resulted because of their troublesome position in Anatolia.[54] Ottoman administration did not hesitate to relocate both Christians and Turks whenever it was necessary. Regarding the civilian casualties during the relocation of the masses, we may argue that Ottomans were not immune from charges. Although cotemporary sources did not provide us detailed accounts, if we take the traveling conditions of the 14th and 15th centuries into account, mass deportation and settlement bear some fatalities with them.

Conclusion

It is really difficult for today's historians to imagine the Balkan peoples' perception of Ottomans during the first stages of the Balkan conquests. Though rare, contemporary accounts did not show us the same picture as the one drown later on by the Orientalist literature. We do not know exactly whether the Ottomans were seen by the Balkan populations as the occupiers or as the people who brings salvation to the region. Contemporary accounts, which we find some remarks about the Ottomans and their conquest of the region, were the products of the contemporary political circles defending their own positions rather than reflecting the common outcry of the masses. The voice of ordinary native populations was missing in the contemporary literature to reach a conclusion that the Ottomans were the evil and damnation of God over the Balkan peoples. Therefore, while the literature constructed later on not only in the Balkans but also in the other parts of Europe is misleading and heavily biased against Ottomans and their conquest of the Balkans, contemporary accounts does not show us a true picture of the aspects of civilian life in the Balkans during the Ottoman conquest.

On the other hand, it is also difficult to find the Ottoman contemporary sources. Although we have records of fiscal registers (*defters*) as early as from the late 14th and early 15th centuries, together with some old anonymous popular chronicles the oldest known chronicle was dated in 1476.[55] As was shown very well in the works of Halil İnalcık, these fiscal registers are important to complete the picture in terms of socio-economic aspects of the conquest of the Balkans.[56] However, Ottoman chronicles are not adequate enough to get some inside information respecting the civilians and their conditions in the wars or during the conquest. It is not surprising to find out that these chronicles were also written from the Ottoman point of view and reflected only their

positions and concerns. Thus, one can easily find the common themes and the styles of writing, similar stories and anecdotes.

Notes

[1] M. Fethullah Gülen, *Prophet Muhammad as Commander,* (London: Truestar Ltd., 1996), 18.
[2] *Qur'an*, 24:1-7
[3] Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 20.
[4] Bukhari, *Manaqib,* 9. See also, Andrew Miller, *Miller's Church History from First to Twentieth Century,* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1963), 285.
[5] *Qur'an*, 48:1.
[6] *Qur'an*, 4:75.
[7] Gülen, 31-38.
[8] Gülen, 31-38.
[9] Gülen, 31-38.
[10] *Qur'an*, 8:41
[11] Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 13: 351-354.
[12] Ibid., pp. 351-354
[13] *Qur'an*, 76:8-9
[14] Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 12: 466-470.
[15] Lewis, 7,8,9. Also see, Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and abolition in the Ottoman Middle East,* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).
[16] Even in the 20th century does the records and statistics show that several millions women exposed rape during the wars in different parts of the world. The number of German woman raped by the Russian soldiers is 1.9 million in the Second World War. Three million women were raped by the German soldiers in the East Europe. For this information see, *Austria Today* 8(1993): 12*)* Again Japans in Korea and the Americans in the Philippines involved in such crimes. See, J. Vickers*, Women and War*, (London, 1993), 21-23*.* More recently, in the war of Bosnia, Serb soldiers raped more than forty thousand women as their official ethnic cleansing policy. See, Roy Gutman*, Witness to Genocide: The 1993 Pulitzer Prize-Winning Dispatches on the "Ethnic Cleansing" in Bosnia*, (New York: Lisa Drew Books, 1993), 120-132.
[17] Lewis, 59-62.
[18] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600,* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 5-8.
[19] İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 9-16.
[20] İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 5-6.
[21] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy,* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1978), 104.
[22] İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 7.
[23] "To understand the superiority of the Ottoman to the local Balkan administrations one has to compare Ottoman law with the code of Serbian monarch, Stephan Dusan. Simply, Dusan's code forced the peasants to work for their lord two days a week, Ottoman regulations required the people to work only three days a year on the *Sipahi*'s land. See, İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 13.

[24] İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 13.
[25] İnalcık, "Conquest, Organization and Economy", 108.
[26] *Qur'an*, 2:256. See also *Qur'an* 10:99 and 18:29.
[27] G. Georgiades Arnakis, "The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Modern History,* vol. 24, no 3, (1952), 238.
[28] T. Papadopoulos, *Studies and Documents Relating to the History of the Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination,* (Hampshire G.B.: Variorum, 1992), 1-26. C.A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1852,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1-8. See also Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453,* (Cambridge, 1965).
[29] See H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilisation on Muslim Culture in the Near East,* vol. 1, (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 215-216. Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs,* (New York, 1951), 716. There are several explanations of this issue in the literature: that Mehmet the Conqueror granted the privileges because of his policy over Europe which served to split Christianity into two camps or his financial considerations which served to collect more tax from the non-Muslims or that Constantinople was not captured by force but surrendered by capitulation. For the elaboration of the above arguments see the works of T. Papadopoulos, G. Georgiades Arnakis, Steven Runciman, C.A. Frazee. According to İnalcık : "from the beginning Ottomans followed a policy of tolerance and protection of the Orthodox Church. This policy proved to be beneficial to both the Church and the new rulers." See, Halil İnalcık, "The Turks and the Balkans," *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,* vol. 1, (1993), 20.
[30] İnalcık, "The Turks and the Balkans," 19.
[31] See, Speros Vryonis Jr., "Religious Change and Continuity in the Balkans and Anatolia from the Fourteenth through the Sixteenth Century" in Speros Vryonis Jr. ed. *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages,* (Wiesbaden, 1975).
[32] İnalcık, "The Ottoman Empire," 116.
[33] Vryonis, 135.
[34] The assertion is that the *devşirme* system was another means of conversion appears to be weak. This is also wrong for the Greeks because Greeks were not taken as *devşirme* (recruiting boys for Janissary corps) until the late 17th century. As it was the case for the Jewish subjects. It targeted only the rural population and almost all Slavs and Albanians. See, P. Wittek, "Devshirme and Shari'a," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* no 17, (1955), 271-278 and V. L. Menage, "Devshirme", *EI,* vol. 2.
[35] N. Levtzion, "Towards a Comparative Study of Islamization" in *Conversion to Islam,* N. Levtzion, ed. (London, 1979), 1-9.
[36] Vryonis, 138.
[37] Stavro Skendi, "Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans", *Slavic Review*, vol. 26, (1967), 229.
[38] Ali Köse, "İslamın İlk Devirlerinde Yayılış Şekilleri," *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi,* (1999), 45-75.
[39] Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 11:75-81
[40] Mehmet Neşri Efendi, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma,* vol. 2, 765-767.
[41] Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700,* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 128.
[42] Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 12: 385-390.
[43] Murphey, 129.
[44] Melek Delilbaşı, "Osmanlı-Bizans İlişkileri," *Türkler,* vol 9:122-132.

[45] Murphey, 129.
[46] Murphey, 98.
[47] Murphey, 135.
[48] Murphey, 98.
[49] Murphey, 102-103.
[50] Murphey, 134.
[51] Murphey, 146.
[52] Murphey, 151.
[53] Murphey, 153.
[54] İnalcık, "Conquest, Organization and Economy," 123.
[55] See, I. H. Ertaylan, ed., *Tevarihi Ali Osman,*(İstanbul, 1946). *Aşıkpaşaoğlu Tarihi,* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1970).
[56] See, Halil İnalcık, *Arvanid S*ancağı *Defteri,*(Ankara, 1954). Halil İnalcık, *Fatih Devri Üzerine Tetkikler ve Vesikalar,* (Ankara, 1954).

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