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THE CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF THE LAND
TRAVELS OF THE OTTOMAN SUBJECTS

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THE CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF THE LAND
TRAVELS OF THE OTTOMAN SUBJECTS DURING
THE PRE-MODERN ERA

A Master's Thesis

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Ankara
June 2019



To my family

THE CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF THE LAND TRAVELS OF THE
OTTOMAN SUBJECTS DURING THE PRE-MODERN ERA

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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MASTER OF ARTS in HISTORY

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

June 2019

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.



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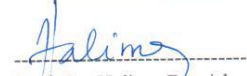
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ABSTRACT

THE CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF THE LAND TRAVELS OF THE OTTOMAN SUBJECTS DURING THE PRE-MODERN ERA

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June 2019

Traveling in the Ottoman Empire during the pre-modern times was challenging and dangerous for everyone, but much so for civilians. Furthermore, the central authority discouraged the mobility of civilians, and wanted them to stay put. These are why it is generally assumed that Ottoman tax-paying subjects, *re'âyâ*, did not leave their farms and hometowns. This thesis questions the truth of this assumption and examines how and why the Ottoman subjects traveled. As the travels of civilians were not recorded by the state in the pre-modern times, Ottoman and foreign travelers' travelogues were used as primary sources. Other sources to obtain information about voyages of Ottoman subjects were the court registers and fetva collections, which consisted of problems occurring during travels. An analysis of these materials, together with the secondary sources yielded to the result that contrary to the general assumption, Ottoman subjects sought and found ways of overcoming the risks and difficulties of changing places. Merchants, craftsmen and other civilians traveled across the Ottoman lands by their own means and benefited the road system, organization and network provided by the central administration.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Pre-Modern Era, *Re'âyâ*, Travel

ÖZET

PRE-MODERN DÖNEMDE OSMANLI RE‘ÂYÂSININ KARA YOLCULUKLARININ ŞARTLARI VE METODLARI

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Pre-modern dönemde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda seyahatler herkes için, özellikle de siviller için zor ve tehlikeliydi. Üstelik merkezi otorite de sivillerin hareketliliğini teşvik etmiyor, herkesin yaşadığı topraklarda kalmasını istiyordu. Bu sebeplerden dolayı Osmanlı *re‘âyâsının* toprağından ayrılmadığına dair yaygın bir kanı bulunmaktadır. Bu tez, bu varsayımın doğruluğunu sorgulamakta ve *re‘âyânın* nasıl ve ne sebeplerle seyahat ettiğini incelemektedir. Pre-modern dönemde sivillerin seyahatlerinin her hangi bir resmi kaydı olmaması sebebiyle, bu çalışmada birincil kaynak olarak Osmanlı ve yabancı seyyahların seyahatnamelerinden faydalanılmıştır. Kullanılan diğer kaynakları ise içinde seyahatler esnasında karşılaşılan anlaşmazlıklar ve problemlerin yer aldığı şer’iye defterleri ile fetva mecmuaları oluşturmuştur. Bu belgeler ve ikincil kaynakların ışığında, genel varsayımın tersine Osmanlı *re‘âyâsının* seyahatler sırasında karşılaşacakları riskler ve tehlikelerle baş etmenin yollarını arayıp buldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Tüccarlar, esnaflar ve diğer sivillerin Osmanlı topraklarında kendi imkanları ile ve ayrıca devletin resmi yol ağı, sistemi ve organizasyonunu kullanarak seyahat ettikleri ortaya koyulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Pre-Modern Dönem, *Re‘âyâ*, Seyahat.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objective of the Thesis

This study aims to examine the conditions and methods of the land travels of the Ottoman subjects on the Ottoman lands during the pre-modern times, based on the restrictions of the technological level and natural circumstances of the era, and present how civilians overcame these challenges. It will present the purposes of their journeys and what means and methods they used when they travelled.

With the current convenient and reliable means of travel, it is difficult to envision the challenges of traveling in the pre-modern times. The world of most Ottoman subjects was defined first by their village or town and then by their region or province at those ages. Traveling to long distances, changing locations, going to journeys for pleasure was very rare. It is a common assumption that except for state officials and pilgrims, the ordinary Ottoman subjects did not usually travel because they could not leave their farmlands; and traveling through often desolate, dangerous, geographically and climatically difficult territories was too challenging for them to travel for pleasure.

There are reasons that brings this assumption. The transportation and travels of the state officials in the Ottoman Empire were organized through *menzil* and *derbend* institutions along the main network of routes. There were also various groups of craftsmen who provided lodging, riding equipment, animals and fodder for state officials such as transporters (*nakliyeciler*), messengers (*mübaşir*) and carriers (*ulak*). However, there was

not an official transportation organization for the tax paying subjects (*re'âyâ*). The civilians were on their own while planning their journeys and arranging security, accommodation, eating, and transportation. Moreover, the Ottoman central authority did not encourage the mobility of its subjects. On the contrary, there were measures taken to make sure that the *re'âyâ* did not leave their lands and continued the production they were entitled. Traveling was risky, difficult and time consuming in the pre-modern era. The rough and rocky roads, the harshness of the landscape, uncomfortable rides, not to count the risks of being stopped by road brigands were the reality of travel for those times. Going from one place to another took a long time, so much so that people had to make arrangements for the time they went away and for the possibility of not being able to return. Despite all these, was traveling for civilians that much uncommon among the Ottoman subjects and could those who had to travel to other lands find ways to overcome the challenges?

This study will argue that, despite the lack of a state organization only for the civilians, and despite the risks and difficulties of traveling, the Ottoman *re'âyâ* sought and found ways of traveling when needed. Merchants, craftsmen or other Ottoman subjects traveled across the Ottoman lands by their own means and benefited the road system, organization and network provided by the central administration. They traveled on their own, as a group, or as part of a caravan. They could hire people to accompany them as a guide and guard. They traveled on foot or hired mules, donkeys or horses. They stayed in hans, caravanserais, zaviyes, tents, or at local people's houses as a guest. *Derbend* villages maintained their safe passages through highly dangerous locations. In general, this study will put together the methods to overcome the difficulties of civilian traveling.

The research and observations of this study will be limited with the pre-modern era, namely until the end of 18th century. It is difficult to specify general characteristics belonging to such a long period of time for any subject; however the fact that until the end of 18th century the Ottoman road system and structure did not go through dramatic changes made it possible to put this study into perspective. Before the industrial revolution and the following technological developments, the ancient routes on the road network and animal-based land travels saw only minor changes. The daily traveling time could not go beyond 25 to 60 kilometers. However the transportation systems went through major revolutions such as steam engine, railroads, canals, wheeled vehicles and rebuilding of roads in the 18th and 19th centuries. As the developments that took place in this period dramatically altered the conditions and methods of land travels, the time scope of this study is limited with the end of 18th century.

1.2. Literature Review

In the present literature over the topic of travel, there is more emphasis on military travel, and less on ordinary people, therefore it is difficult to create a clearer picture of life for civilian travelers in the Ottoman Empire is difficult. The transportation system in the Ottoman Empire was mostly constructed according to the official institutions such as military and courier system. These were vital for protecting and enlarging the Ottoman lands, while maintaining a healthy flow of tax revenues. Similarly, the studies on the subject of Ottoman transportation have been concentrated on its military and administrative aspects and emphasized the role of the state mostly. The most important institutions of the Ottoman transportation system were *derbends* and *menzilhanes*; and

there are many studies on them. Franz Taeschner's, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadoluda Yol Ağı*¹ on the other hand, provides broader details on the Ottoman road network in the historical process and helps us create a clearer image of the development of the roads since the Roman times. In his 1967 dissertation Cengiz Orhonlu² examined the *derbend* institution, together with other institutions regarding the well being and security of roads such as *köprücü* for bridges and *suyolcu* for water systems. The collection of his articles were published after his untimely death under the name *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Şehircilik ve Ulaşım* in 1984; which further studied the Ottoman cities and caravan routes.³

Yusuf Halaçoğlu's work on Ottoman *menzilhanes*⁴ is another important source where the *menzilhane* institution is examined in detail using the grain registers. The book analyzes the *menzil* stations on the main and secondary routes, the distance between them and their military significance for the Ottoman state. A more recent study on *menzilhane* institution belongs to Cemal Çetin⁵. In his PhD dissertation, he concentrates on the finance, administration and order of the *menzil* stations in Anatolia specifically.

While most of the literature on travel focuses on the issue from a military point of view, there are not many works based on a civilian perspective. Suraiya Faroqhi is one of the few that worked on the conditions, reasons and organizations of travels of civilians in the

¹ Franz Taeschner, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadoluda Yol Ağı*, Trans. Nilufer Epçeli, Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, (İstanbul: 2010)

² Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı*, (İstanbul: 1990)

³ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Şehircilik ve Ulaşım*, (İzmir: 1984)

⁴ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme (Menziller)*, Ankara 2002

⁵ Cemal Çetin, *Anadolu'da Faaliyet Gösteren Menzilhâneler (1690-1750)*, Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, (Konya: 2009)

Ottoman Empire. Her book *Travel and Artisans*⁶ in the Ottoman Empire focuses on the mobility of civilians but takes the subject from a commercial perspective and examines travels for trade purposes. Her work indicates that the Ottoman subjects had to travel to other places in order to sell their products. Her many other works include valuable details relevant for this study. In *Osmanlı'da Kentler ve Kentliler*, she examines the 15th and 16th century Anatolian cities and focuses on their population and economic activities including caravan trade. Caravans were also studied in an early study of İlber Ortaylı⁷, where he focused on camels as transport animals but explains the caravan organization and how caravan members benefited the long journey commercially as well.

Finally, the PhD dissertation of Ümit Ekin⁸ gives detailed information on the organization of transportation in the Ottoman state system and the factors that affected transportation; but the most relevant part of his work for this study is his examination of the functions of *Mekkari taifesi*, which has not been studied in detail.

1.3. Sources and Methodology

This study aims to put together non-military aspects of transportation and for this purpose examples from Ottoman court registers, fetva records, and travel journals of foreign and Ottoman envoys and travelers that illustrate the traveling conditions of the era were used.

⁶ Suraiya Faruqi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era* (London: 2016)

⁷ İlber Ortaylı, "Devenin Taşıma Maliyeti Eğrisi Üzerine Bir Deneme," (Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi, 28, 1-2 :1973), 186

⁸ Ümit Ekin, *XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, History PhD Dissertation, (Ankara: 2002)

Although it constitutes a large part of civilians' travels, the Hajj journeys were not studied extensively in this study, as they were organized by the state specifically.

Looking at the *Narh* Records⁹ it is possible to say that the business of transportation was based on certain rules in the Ottoman Empire, as the means of transportation, distance and transporter are specified in detail in these records.¹⁰ However, there are not many documents on the traveling conditions of the re'âyâ. In fact, it is only found in the *şer'iyye* registers when there is a dispute or a complaint about a certain matter. The dispute is taken to court and that is where we hear about the travelers' journeys and the problems they face. Therefore for this study, examples from Ottoman court registers were searched for the purpose of attaining information based on the problematic areas. With their extensively detailed content, Ottoman court registers, also known as *kadı sicilleri*, *şer'iyye sicilleri* are a major source of information for the social and cultural history of the empire. The kadıs kept the record of how they dealt with problematic issues in a register book, or *sicil*. These registers also included the imperial orders such as *ferman*, *buyuruldu* and *berat*. In this study, the travel agreements between merchants and *Mekkarecis*, the divorce agreements made before going on long journeys, and the orders regarding the safety of roads were the main areas of search through court registers.

The second primary source used in this study are the travelogues of foreign and Ottoman envoys and travelers. Despite providing a subjective information, travelogues are very rich sources which reflect the daily lives and conditions of their era. In this study, the information compatible with the historical data was used for the purpose of bringing

⁹ Records of officially decreed prices

¹⁰ Tahsin Özcan, *Fetvalar ışığında Osmanlı Esnafı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2003), p. 237

supportive details on the subject. The main source of travel records used in this study belongs to Evliya Çelebi. Evliya Çelebi (1611-1685?) is considered as one of the most important travelers of 17th century, as he traveled almost all territories under the Ottoman power and 47 countries across the world in a time span of fifty years. His ten volume travelogue *Seyahatname* can be considered as the richest source of Ottoman geography and road network. During his time as a courier officer or during his own journeys, he recorded the routes he had taken, including the names of all the post stations, as well as the names of the towns and villages around them. In his travel records he made very specific, detailed and meticulous depictions of the routes and roads he had taken. He not only listed the name of places he had visited, but also draw a spatial picture of his adventures over the vast lands of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹ He did not take the main routes only, but preferred to divert his route through secondary roads and paths, so as to see and know more of the Empire. He sometimes on purpose, sometimes by mistake changed his destination and did not refrain from prolonging his journey whenever he had time. When he got lost, he asked help from the locals and took detailed information on road conditions and safety from them.

The roads in the 17th century were mostly earth roads, pressed due to the passing pack animals and carriages. Around the roads were built *caravanserais*, *Hans*, *derbend* and *menzil* stations. Evliya sometimes stayed in the villagers' houses as a guest or stayed in *Hans*, but even when he did not use them he wrote extensively on *caravanserais* in an

¹¹ Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesinde Yollar: Kaldırımlar, Köprüler ve Kervansaraylar, Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, Nb. 10, August 2011, p. 43-55

appreciative manner. Especially he praised them because of the convenience and security they maintained to all travelers without having to pay money.

The routes that he would take for his official assignment were pre-determined, but when he went off route, his travels turned into adventures while trying to find his way. In his *Seyahatname*, physical structure and conditions of roads is not mentioned as detailed as the routes and settlements he passed through. The information on his means of travel, which animal he rode, or weather he used carts to carry his cargo is hidden between the lines.

Another important source for social historians is the travel records of Ibn Battuta. The 14th century Muslim Moroccan scholar and explorer Ibn Battuta travelled over a period of twenty-eight years and visited most of the Islamic world including Anatolia as well as non-Muslim lands, including Central Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and China. His travelogue conveys the social life, beliefs, traditions, natural and geographical features of the lands he travelled to. In this study the information on dervishes and zaviyes in Anatolia has been very beneficial to reflect how they were convenient and functional institutions for civilian travelers.

The travelogues belonging to foreign travelers were mostly written by envoys coming to Ottoman lands for diplomatic purposes, but there were quite a number of travelers who visited these lands for other purposes. Especially from the 15th century on, Ottoman Empire was the center of attraction for Europeans. As the empire gained more power and extended its territories, the European interest towards Ottoman lands intensified. This interest was a mixture of both admiration and also fear. Therefore the travelogues written

in 16th and 17th centuries can be considered to be more observant and objective than the ones written after the 18th century when the Empire was no longer a coveted military power.¹²

Turkish Letters of Ogier de Busbecq is a collection of letters written by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, who described the Ottoman Empire in a series of letters that he wrote when he served Ferdinand I of Austria as the ambassador for the Holy Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire from 1554 to 1562. In his journeys, he was hosted officially as an ambassador, however he also stayed at caravanserais, and wrote his observations on life in caravanserais, including information on how travelers were served, what they ate. He wrote about his admiration on how everyone is treated equally in regardless of their religion or wealth. He gives many interesting details about Ottoman life, which he learnt during his interactions with people he met on the road.

Salomon Schweigger is another traveler who kept records of his journeys. Schweigger came to İstanbul as a part of the delegation of the Austrian envoy Joachim Von Sinzendorff in 1577 and stayed until 1581. He then took off for a journey to Holy Lands by sea and went back home over Egypt. Going to Syria and Palestine by ship was common at those times. Even when traveling along the territory of a single state, individual journeys were too risky and too troublesome to venture, so travelers preferred sea and river journeys as much as possible.¹³ Still it was not possible to avoid land

¹² Özgür Yılmaz, Osmanlı Şehir Tarihleri Açısından Yabancı Seyahatnamelerin Kaynak Değeri, Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi 28 / 2, (2013), 587-614

¹³ Franz Taeschner, Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu'da Yol Ağı, Trans. Nilufer Epçeli, Volume I, Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, (İstanbul: 2010), p. 128

transportation completely. Schweigger was among those travelers who used both routes and wrote a record of his travels.

In 1530 the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I sent an envoy delegation to Suleiman I. Benedikt Kuripečič was traveling with the delegation as the translator and he kept a diary covering their journey. He wrote on the relations between the two empires and how he perceived the power of the Ottoman State. What is relevant in his records for this research is that, he included many details on the geography, landscape and culture of the sixteenth century Balkans. His depictions of distance are also relevant for this study.

The third primary source used in this study is the Fetva Collections (Fetva Mecmuaları) of the 17th and 18th century. Fetva records are the compilations of legal consent on various matters by the mufti, and include the regulations on the subject of transportation. These collections demonstrate the criteria and reasoning behind daily, practical problems and provide information on the law and implementation of rules. The legal consents were mostly given for the recurring incidents and not for individual problems. If a fetva was issued on a subject, it meant that it occurred frequently. Individuals had to pay a fee to receive a fetva for their legal problems. Examining the legal decisions on the areas of disputes provide an insight on how civilians overcame the problems of traveling and how these issues were handled in the society.

Apart from the primary sources, the organization of caravanserais, the perception and measurement of distances, the amount of time assigned for certain distances were examined to create a clearer picture of the traveling civilians.

CHAPTER II

2. TRAVELING AND ROADS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

2.1 Road Network

The Ottoman Empire inherited a system of road networks going back to Roman and Seljuk period. These roads were primarily built for official uses. They were used for the transport of military troops, carrying supplies for armies, conveying imperial orders from the capital to all around the empire, collecting and transmitting taxes, sending state officials to their assignments, and conveying gifts and state subsidies to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The private uses of these networks were just as important. The caravans which included both merchants and civilians who sought a safe way of travel used these ancient roads. Those looking for spiritual guidance or knowledge as well as wishing to visit famous religious leaders or their tombs used these roads. Although not very often, civilians set out on a journey merely for touristic reasons, to see natural or historical beauties, to visit hot baths, springs, and sometimes to visit relatives. Therefore, the ancient road network, together with the organization of roads by the state was vital for both official and civilian mobility.

Many long distance roads passing all the way through Anatolia and ending at Istanbul in the West were built by the Romans, and later by Seljuks. The Ottomans protected and further developed the public facilities such as roads, caravanserais and bridges which

they had taken over from them and added new facilities to the newly conquered lands and had them sponsored by rich incomes of the *vaqifs*. The Ottoman Empire spread over extensive lands and stood at the crossroads of trade routes, therefore it had a busy transportation network as well as an active transportation system. It was important to provide accessibility on the entire *Memalik-i Mahrûse*. In order to achieve this, a road network was established with the names of right, middle and left branches; and *menzil* and *derbend* organizations¹⁴ provided security and accessibility on these roads. Horses, mules and camels were used in the caravans that traveled along this road network.

The historical road network Via Egnatia built in the Roman and Byzantine times was the major road system used by the Ottoman Empire. However, the main network was reinforced and extended depending on military, economic and civilian requirements. Secondary roads and trails were added to them wherever needed. The Ottoman road network was the major component in the Ottoman *Ulak* system (the communications network) and *menzilhane* (relay station) system as all the imperial orders, instructions, intelligence, requests and petitions were conveyed between the centre and the provincial authorities.¹⁵ It was used by the military officers, civilians and caravans all around the Empire.

The territories of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century were ruled under two main administrative units which were the Asian part called Anatolia and the European part

¹⁴ For a detailed study on the security of roads and the institution of *derbend*, see: Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilâtı*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi: 1967)

¹⁵ Colin Heywood, "The Via Egnatia in the Ottoman Period: The Menzilhane of the Sol Kol in the Late 17th/early 18th Century." In *The Via Egnatia Under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, edited by Elizabeth Zachariadou, (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996), 130

called Rumelia. It was important for the central administration to have a well-organized road network for the sake of achieving military success. For this purpose, in both Anatolia and Rumelia, the roads were organized according to three principal routes. *Sol Kol*, the route of the left; *Orta Kol*, the route of the middle; and *Sağ Kol*, the route of the right, went through the whole empire, passed through towns and cities, and connected it with the lands outside the Ottoman territories. In the center of these three routes in Rumelia and Anatolia was İstanbul. Apart from the main routes, there were also secondary routes wherever necessary.

The Anatolian route of the right, which was also called as the Hajj route started with Üsküdar in İstanbul and went through Gebze, Eskişehir, Akşehir, Konya, Adana and reached Antakya where it separated into two. One followed a route to Aleppo, and the other to Damascus, the Hedjaz and Egypt. The route of the middle in Anatolia started with Üsküdar, following the towns of Gebze, İznik, Bolu, Merzifon, Tokat, Sivas, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Mosul, and reached Basra and Baghdad. The route of the left diverted from Merzifon and went through Ladik, Niksar, Kelkit, Aşkale, Erzurum, Hasankale, Kars and reached Tabriz.¹⁶

The Rumelian route of the right started in İstanbul and went through Kırkkilise, Prevadi, Karasu, Babadağ, Akkirman and reached Crimea. The route of the middle originated from İstanbul, Silivri and Edirne and passed through Plovdiv, Sofia, Nis, Jagodina and reached Belgrade. Finally the route of the left commenced at İstanbul, Tekirdağ, ran westwards on the ancient Roman road of Via Egnatia, passing through Malkara, Firecik,

¹⁶ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme*, (Ankara: 2002), 4

Dimetoka, Komotini, Larissa, Zeitun and reached Thebes in Greece.¹⁷ Looking at the existence of many *menzil* stations and the records of high number of horses at these stations, it is possible to say that the secondary routes connecting the main routes were also as busy as the main ones, and were equally important in terms of civilian transportation, public order and connectivity between settlements.¹⁸

Apart from ensuring accessible roads for military campaigns, building a route system was also vital for taking control of the trade routes. In fact, this was the motivation behind most conquests.¹⁹ Therefore, cities which were important in terms of trade and economic activity attracted more attention from the central government.

Maintaining the necessary amount of essential products for the cities, such as fruits, grains and meat was regarded as crucial for the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the location and accessibility of the cities, as well as their connectivity to other destinations by road, determined their importance in the empire.²⁰ Similarly, proximity to main routes contributed to the development of cities. Strategic territories received special care and maintenance from the state, to help to strengthen trade activities. The geographical position of cities was also critical for the development of their roads, and therefore their growth. Proximity to water resources, plain lands, fertile soil instead of mountainous,

¹⁷ Ibid., 5

¹⁸ Ibid., 5

¹⁹ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1978), 208

²⁰ Ümit Ekin, *XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2002), 37.

difficult lands were preferable for living and farming. Geographical advantage of a city also meant better roads, easier connectivity to main routes, and more trade activity with both short and long distances. The relations of cities which did not have a proper connectivity with others had relations within a limited area. The Ottoman sultans are known to have made extra effort to pass the main routes from the cities they wanted to develop as a commercial center. For this reason, necessary conditions were created for the traveling merchants and caravans. *Derbend* villages, hans, *caravanserais*, *imarets*, bridges, fountains, wells, mosques were built; and officers (*köprücü* for bridges and *suyolcu* for water systems) were assigned for the repair and maintenance of roads.

Bursa is a well-known example to strategically important cities. In the 15th century, Bursa became a major center for silk trade and industry, as it was located on the silk road. Its advantageous location shifted the Anatolian road network. The last station of the main road that started from Damascus no longer ended in Istanbul but Bursa.²¹ The special attention paid for the roads around the capital made it possible for Bursa to thrive. When the capital shifted to İstanbul, the same conditions were created for the new capital.

The road network used by caravans was not chosen randomly. Essentially, the caravan routes emerged as a result of long term experiences. The aim was not to reach the destination as soon as possible, but to conclude the journey without any physical or emotional losses. Therefore in long distance journeys, determining a safe route, away from sharp cliffs or rough mountain passes was the main priority of the journey.

²¹ Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi, I: 1300-1600*, trans. Halil Berktaş, (Istanbul: 2000) 273-275.

2.2. *Menzilhane* Institution

In the Ottoman Empire, between 15th to 19th century the maintenance of roads was mainly provided by *derbend* and *menzilhane* institutions. Menzil refers to a resting, halting station, a house along the way.²² *Menzilhanes* were primarily built for the courier system of state officers, but also served as a post station for armies, as well as commercial centers. In time, the courier system started to be exploited by non-official people and had to be regulated by Lütü Pasha, the grand vizier of Süleiman I. After the reforms at the 16th century *menzilhanes* became increasingly important for the state system. They linked İstanbul with the other provinces; provided rapid and secure transmission of imperial orders and intelligence; they ensured the security of the frontiers; maintained a secure atmosphere for the commercial caravans along their routes; and enabled the safe passage and accommodation of envoys and other foreign officers through sultan's lands.

Menzilhanes were built at intervals of 20 to 70 km or six to twelve hours' riding. This was approximately the distance one could travel in one day on the main road network. The intervals could go up to 150 km or 24 hours at the sparsely populated lands or frontiers.²³ At each *menzilhane*, there were a specified number of post-horses (*menzil beygiri*) and was under the control of a postmaster (*menzilcibaşı*). There were also officers in charge of maintenance, cleaning, protection, smithery, etc. The inhabitants of a *menzil* town would be exempted from paying taxes and in return they would serve the

²² Ferit Devellioğlu, *Osmanlıca-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lûgat*, (Ankara: 2001), 617.

²³ Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Fact on File, Inc.: 2009), 374

officials passing through their *menzilhanes* and would keep horses, messengers and guides ready for them.²⁴

The *menzilhane* system was primarily built for official usage of state messengers, therefore the civilians to benefit from this institution for communication was prohibited. Ottoman Empire was essentially a military state and therefore did not constitute a special messenger system for civilians. Still, as we understand from the related firmans that, civilians illegally used the state messengers for private reasons, which was seen as a factor that created the problems and misuse of the system and had to go through a reform during Suleiman I.²⁵

2.3 *Derbend* Institution

Throughout history, roads have always been primarily important for the prosperity and military success of states. Both the armies and the merchant caravans needed secure roads to get to their destination. The Ottoman administrations have always wanted to create the conditions to increase economic activities which were concentrated around the main routes and *Derbend* institutions were built primarily for the purpose of maintaining the security of the roads. *Derbend* is a Persian word derived from *der* - meaning pass - and *bent* - meaning holding.²⁶ They were built at the mountain passes; conjunction of military and commercial roads; at particularly dangerous locations; desolate and thinly populated

²⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839, (Cambridge University Press: 2006), 525

²⁵ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme, Ankara, 2002, 4

²⁶ Cengiz Orhonlu, Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı, (İstanbul: 1990), 9

areas or sometimes close to villages. They were small, fortified settlements that included a Han, a *mosque*, a madrasa, artisan shops and resembled a small town.²⁷

Derbends were first formally organized in the mid 15th century, when villagers were assigned to guard their own settlement. In time, strategically important villages started to be turned into *Derbend* villages, where some or all of the inhabitants were responsible for keeping the roads safe and in good order, and providing necessary supplies for the passing travelers. There were 2288 *derbend* families in Anatolia and 1906 families in East Balkans during the 16th century.²⁸

Derbend officers either received exemptions from paying taxes or were given timar lands in return for their services. They sometimes collected fees from travelers whom they guarded in their district, but they would have to pay compensation if any of the passing travelers were robbed.²⁹ If any *derbent* officer fled from his district, he would be forcibly brought back.³⁰ *Derbend* officers were exempt from paying taxes but they had to stay at their villages and were prohibited to leave their districts. They still had to pay their crop tax to their timar owners if they were farmers.³¹

Derbend officers served as gendarmeries and their foremost function was to protect the roads from road bandits. In fact, in order to be assigned as a *derbend*, a village had to be

²⁷ Ibid., 10-11

²⁸ Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ 1300-1600*, (İstanbul: 2003), 155

²⁹ Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 128

³⁰ Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ 1300-1600*, (İstanbul: 2003), 155

³¹ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı*, (İstanbul: 1990), 46

under the threat or danger of being attacked by bandits. This condition was sought when villages applied to become *derbend* villages, and were investigated by the central authority to make sure they really were at a perilous location.³² Another function of *derbend* officers was to provide guidance for travelers passing from their district. They were responsible from all the losses related to security issues and were enforced by imperial warrants (*berat*) to compensate.³³

2.4. Road conditions

Until the 19th century, the roads used by caravans, animals, wagons and carts were not in good condition and quality. They were merely traces naturally formed due to the passing travelers, animals and carts. The weather conditions and the needs of travelers such as safety, food, accommodation urged them to use the same routes and not venture trying alternative routes. In fact, erosion at the roads was a good indication that it was on the main routes and was used by most people.³⁴ The geographical structure between two destinations also was key to formation of the roads. Forests and mountainous paths were mostly considered dangerous as they were easy hiding places for bandits. Even if there was no safety issue along the road, traveling could still be extremely challenging due to the difficult weather conditions. Heavy rains, floods, land slides, strong winds, snow and cold weather could ruin the already rough roads even more. The extreme conditions could extend the duration of journeys immensely.

³² Ibid., 11

³³ Ibid., 40

³⁴ Ibid., 70

Whether a route was passing through mountainous areas, had rocky pathways, was far from water sources would determine its usage by travelers. Even if these routes were short by distance, an easy, plain and safe route would be preferred. When it was impossible to avoid passing through unsafe geographies, such as the mountainous Balkans, the *derbends*, *menzils*, *caravanserais* would maintain security of travelers as much as possible.³⁵ However traveling could never be completely safe, especially during the Celali revolts of the 16th and 17th centuries, the roads were full of bandits and brigands, and the activities of rebellious governors frequently made the roads impassable.³⁶

The physical conditions of the roads were challenging for everyone. The rich and the poor; the sultan or the subject, all had to pass through similar routes. However, the ruling elite and the high officers would travel more comfortably in terms of accommodation, food and ride. While ordinary travelers stayed in khans and *caravanserais*, officers could be hosted at the quarters of a bey or an important local. Having a horse or a camel for the journey was mostly a luxury for ordinary people. Most distances were measured in terms of walking durations. The security concerns were also a big issue. That is why, people preferred to travel in groups or join caravans, unlike high officers who travelled with their own delegation and bodyguards. Busbecq, complained about the difficult road and climate conditions and added that he had to travel through almost impossible roads, unsuitable for traveling, but praised the Turkish horses and men. He wrote that they never

³⁵ Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, “Bir Seyyahın Gözüyle Osmanlı Yolları”, Evliya Çelebi Atlası, (2012), 246

³⁶ Suraiya Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839, (Cambridge University Press: 2006), p. 361

hesitated to move along, despite the dark nights, with no moonlight and strong winds.³⁷ He often headed for his way at night, which is different from the habit of Turks who preferred to travel in daylight.³⁸

It is hard to say that the ancient roads or even the ones that were built or renovated in the Ottoman era progressed much until the 19th century. Some of the major cities had pavements in the centers but the major routes connecting the cities had mostly pressed earth roads or rocky pathways. The conditions became worse, sometimes impossible when it rained or snowed. Evliya Çelebi tells about the impossible, muddy roads of Egypt when it rained, and how people suffered from hunger and water shortage because they could not use the roads to get food or drinking water for days, after a heavy rain.³⁹ The earth roads would almost turn into swamps and even the animals could not walk on them. He adds that the governor had their men spread dry earth on the main roads so that people could walk. He also mentions roads blocked from heavy snow in rigorous winters. In Bitlis when the snow blocked the roads, he could not leave the city for months, so he tried to make paths through snow.⁴⁰

As most roads were easily ruined after rains, having paved roads for a town was a form of luxury. Paved roads were mostly built as charity by local philanthropes and would be found at the towns on the main routes to Makkah or at the towns between İstanbul and

³⁷ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, Kanuni Döneminde Avrupalı Bir Eliçinin Gözlemleri (1555-1560), Trans. by Derin Türkömer, (Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul:2011), 15

³⁸ Ibid., 47

³⁹ Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 2: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 150

⁴⁰ Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 5: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 18

Belgrade known as the Imperial route.⁴¹ The Imperial route received extra attention as it is a way of attaining prestige for the sultans. However caravan routes did not have to be paved; earth roads were easier to proceed for the caravan animals and it was too costly to build them everywhere. Therefore, the commercial routes were mostly left unpaved, except for the ones which were prestigious. Evliya puts a lot of emphasis on the pavements when he mentions the condition of roads in a city. He praises the pavements of Bursa, saying that they are very high quality, long lasting and shiny stones.⁴² He describes the main streets of Edirne by mentioning the wide pavements and streets full of carts.⁴³ He also notes when he sees that the roads are not paved, such as in Beypazarı⁴⁴ or in Kalecik.⁴⁵

2.5 Road Security

It is generally assumed that the Ottoman state system discouraged the movements of the tax paying subjects through obligations to get permission from their timar holders. Still, merchants, craftsmen and other subjects traveled across the Ottoman lands, and benefited the road system, security organization and network provided by the central administration.

⁴¹ Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, “Bir Seyyahın Gözüyle Osmanlı Yolları”, Evliya Çelebi Atlası, (2012), 243

⁴² Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 2: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 10, 18

⁴³ Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 3: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 257

⁴⁴ Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 2: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 237

⁴⁵ Ibid., 213

Providing security at the roads was regarded as vital for maintaining a healthy flow of tax revenues and the distribution and merchandise of goods. Merchant caravans or state officials depended on the central authority to provide the security and accommodation along the roads. The central authority assigned and instructed the local authorities for organizing the security institutions in their districts. In the Ottoman provincial administrative system during the classical age, each district had two authorities: one from the military class - the *bey*; and one from the *ulema* - the *kadı*. The first represented the executive authority, whereas the latter represented legal authority. They functioned without having a superiority over the other but by complementing each other. The *kadı* did not have the authority to execute any punishments without the approval of the *bey*, and the *bey* had to counsel the *kadı* before implementing any punishment. This kind of independent but complementary way of power division was regarded as the key to a just administration.⁴⁶

En route to a destination, there was a road network where the state built *derbends* and *menzils* in the *sanjaks* and *kazas* along the way. *Menzils* served to maintain the needs of state officials during their journey and *derbends* were established for general road security. The *derbend* officers called *derbendcis* had a space of administration where they were in charge of the security. However, the *derbend* officers were not allowed to carry guns, unless they had special permission to carry them. They could only use bladed weapons. The number of guns at every *derbend* station was kept at the state records.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), 247

⁴⁷ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilatı*, (İstanbul: 1990), 68-69

Apart from the *derbendcis*, the kadı of each *sanjak* and *kaza* was ordered to take care of the security in their own realm. The role of the kadıs extended beyond the legal sphere and included social practices too. They supervised prices and fraudulence in the marketplace, but they were also in charge of impassable roads and collapsed bridges.⁴⁸ These two administrative units functioned independently but acted in a complementary way. The *sanjak beys*, *kadıs* and *derbendcis* were held responsible for taking care of the security over their own district. This division of power was valid for every decision. The official travelers used the *menzil* institutions and at perilous times, the state appointed official guards called *Yasakçı* for the protection of delegations. *Yasakçı* officials were also allocated for the foreign envoys when they entered the Ottoman territories. They not only guarded the foreign delegations but also made sure that they did not enact in any unwanted activities.

Despite the institutional precautions for maintaining the security and accessibility of the roads, and providing safe lodging, sustenance, rested animals and guards; traveling in and outside the empire was not easy for both the state officials and *re'âyâ* in the pre-modern era. The Ottoman sources reveal that in order to overcome the difficulties, special secondary precautions had to be taken. The primary reason for these precautions was the particularly dangerous routes due to banditry. It is often mentioned in the documents as perilous locations (*mâhuf ve muhâtaralı mahaller*) due to banditry and brigandage (*kutta-i tarîk ve harâmî*). Specific orders were enjoined to local *kadıs* for the maintenance of security at these dangerous locations, asking them to provide brave and strong escorts

⁴⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, (Cambridge University Press: 2006), 213

(*bahâdır ve tuvâna yiğidler ve kulavuzlar koşub*) with horses and arms (*atlı ve müsellaḥ*) from among the trust-worthy locals (*yerlünün mu'temed-ün 'aleyh âdemlerinden*) for the state officers.⁴⁹ Especially during the transfers of tax revenues collected from urban areas to the treasury in Istanbul, special guards called *hazineci kullar* or *Efrenç Yasakçıları* were allocated as escorts. Also each *sancak* was held responsible for the general security of its lands and *sancak beğs* were enjoined to provide the necessary escorts. The presence of these orders indicate that despite the *menzil* and *derbend* institutions, the roads were still dangerous for the state officials and even more for the *re'âyâ*.

In the travelogue of Dernschwam, the roads of the Ottoman territories are described as highly dangerous due to robberies and killings. His portrayal of road conditions is very discouraging as he mentions people being robbed, abducted, sold as slaves and even killed along their journeys. In his travelogue, Dernschwam describes how unsafe and risky the roads are:

"Highway robbery and murders are common in Turkey. Bandits are former military men who are no longer being paid. Therefore they take whatever they can along the roads. They abduct travelers and sell them as slaves. This is why guardian cottages are built at the frontiers, forests, mountains and top of the hills. The guardians (*derbendci*) warn the passing travelers from up above the hills by beating a drum. They know at which locations the bandits attack. In Turkey, even

⁴⁹ Konya Şer'îye Sicili 16, 177- 4 (25 Zî'l-ka'de sene 1083 (14 Mart 1673)

(..yanına yerlünün mu'temed-i 'aleyh âdemlerinden atlı ve müsellaḥ ve tuvâna ve bahâdır yiğidler ve kulağuzlar koşup yollarda ve köprülerde ve mahûf ve muhatara olan mahallerde gereği gibi hıfz ve hırâset iderek emîn ve sâlim bir birinize irsâl .. eyleyesiz)

around city centers, if a traveler has no knowledge about the roads and is traveling alone, is under the risk of being captured by the bandits and taken away to be sold. There are many Jewish, Turkish and bad Christians dealing with this as a business.”⁵⁰

Evliya Çelebi too, mostly travelled with company and not alone. Even when not leading an official delegation, or attached to an Ottoman governor or commander, he was generally accompanied by friends, a group of slaves, often a bodyguard, sometimes a big group of bodyguards when the roads were unsafe. He joined the merchant or Haj caravans too.

Road bandits were a big challenge for foreign travelers too. In his letters Busbecq wrote that he preferred a sea journey to a land journey because traveling on sea was shorter and safer. He adds that instead of a 12 days journey from land, he and his companions made it to Belgrade in 5 days by sea. He mentions the danger of encountering Heydons - brigands and getting robbed on the roads.⁵¹ As a matter of fact he warded off many brigand attacks on his way to Buda from Vienna.⁵² The bridges were especially dangerous locations as it was very difficult to escape when two groups of brigands surrounded you from both sides on a bridge.⁵³

⁵⁰ Hans Dernschwam, İstanbul ve Anadolu’ya Seyahat Günlüğü, Yaşar Önen(trans.), (Ankara:1992), 332

⁵¹ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, Kanuni Döneminde Avrupalı Bir Eliçinin Gözlemleri (1555-1560), Trans. by Derin Türkömer,(Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul:2011), 14

⁵² Ibid., 78

⁵³ Ibid., 78

2. 6. Space and Distance

Traveling during the pre-modern times was done on foot or on an animal, therefore the length of the journey between two destinations depended on the traveler, on the kind and strength of the animals, and on the road and whether conditions. Traveling mostly started with dawn and ended with sunset. The average distance for daily traveling was approximately 30 km, which was also the average time a pack animal could ride in a day. This was why at every 30 to 40 kilometers there was either a *menzil* or a post station for officials.

Traveling was so laborious, time consuming and unpredictable that the length of journeys were mostly measured in time that they would take. According to Hans Dernschwam, both the state officials and civilians did not specify the distances in terms of length, but they could estimate it in terms of duration by horse or by walking.⁵⁴ Similarly in his travel records, Ibn Battuta used the number of days to indicate the distance of a destination, such as ‘at a distance of 2 days, half a day ahead, 10 days’ journey etc. Busbecq on the other hand described the distances both by using measurement units such as miles, and durations such as 1 day ahead⁵⁵, 4 hours by boat⁵⁶. In his travel records, Benedict Kuripečić used German miles as a unit of measurement while describing distances. He used expressions such as 50 miles away, at a distance of one mile etc.⁵⁷ He also prepared

⁵⁴ Hans Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu’ya Seyahat Günlüğü*, Trans. Yaşar Önen, (Ankara: 1992), 51

⁵⁵ Busbecq, p. 44

⁵⁶ Busbecq, p. 199

⁵⁷ The translator Özdemir Nutku notes that 1 German mile equaled to 7500 meters.

a distance chart for the governor of the town of Raabs⁵⁸ which includes the resting stations from the town of Raabs to İstanbul and the distances between each station. According to Kuripečič, it is 254 German miles, which equals to approximately 1905 kilometers.⁵⁹

In the official documents, it was common to specify the distances by using the concepts of “*mesâfe-i karîbe*”(close distance), “*mesâfe-i vustâ*”(medium distance), “*mesâfe-i ba’ide*”(far distance), “*gâyetde eb’ad mesâfe*”(most distant).⁶⁰ When no unit of measurement was used or even after mentioning a unit of measurement, the concepts of *ba’id* and *karîb* could be added as a note.⁶¹ Özer Ergenç argues that the individuals’ and state’s perception of space, distance and concepts of near and far were not the same.⁶² The common phrase we encounter in the state records, “*Diyâr-ı âher*” meaning other lands, referred to territories outside the Ottoman borders. However for the civilians, it meant literally any place other than the town a person lived in. While reaching to the most distance places was important for the state, most civilians would go only to close or medium distances.

⁵⁸ Raabs is located in today’s Austria

⁵⁹ Benedikt Kuripečič, *Yolculuk Günlüğü* (1530), Özdemir Nutku (trans.), Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, (Ankara: 1977) p. 56

⁶⁰ Özer Ergenç, “Individual’s Perception of Space in the Early Modern Ottoman World: ‘Vatan’ and ‘Diyar-ı Aher’ within the Triangular Context of ‘Memalik- i Mahruse’, ‘Diyar-ı Acem’ and ‘Frengistan,’” Speech delivered at the conference of “Ottoman Topologies: Spatial Experience in an Early Modern Empire and Beyond” in Stanford University (Stanford: 2014)

⁶¹ Cemal Çetin, *Osmanlılarda Mesafe Ölçümü ve Tarihi Süreci*, Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç Armağanı, (2013), 449

⁶² Özer Ergenç, “Individual’s Perception of Space in the Early Modern Ottoman World”, 7

Travels of civilians and officers mostly took place during daylight in the Ottoman Empire. The distance which could be covered on foot or on an animal in one day was an important factor while determining the borders of the administrative divisions (*kaza daireleri*) too. The approximate traveling time for civilians and state officers could be different depending on the urgency. An example can be seen in the study of Hlyta Taş.⁶³ She indicates that the distance between Ankara, which is a central administrative district (*Ankara merkez kazası*) and İstanbul is 92 hours of journey. A person who departs from İstanbul to reach Ankara, passed through main and secondary roads and at every 8-9 hours of journey, he would reach a *menzilhane*. There were a total of 11 *menzil* stations (skdar, Gebze, İzmit, Sapanca, Hendek, Geyve, Taraklı, Gynk, Nallıhan and Ayaş) on the way. This journey, considering that there were no extra stop-overs along the way, took approximately 11 days.

This period of traveling time is confirmed in the court registers, while giving information on the arrival and delivery dates of an official document. A firman regarding the appointment of the kadı of Ankara, Mevlana Seyyid Mehmed, dated 15 November 1620 (19 Zilhicce 1029) is recorded in the Ankara court registers on 29 November 1620 (4 Muharrem 1030).⁶⁴ However, as the delivery of imperial documents such as firmans, were transported without delay, the distance of 11 days can be regarded as a minimum time for regular, official transportation. In times of war, when there was urgency of delivering messages, this period could be 8-9 days. Other than urgencies, it is understood

⁶³ Hlyta Taş, XVII. Yzyılda Ankara, (Ankara, Trk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları: 2006), 30-31

⁶⁴ Ankara Şer'iyye Sicili 19, 159, 160; cited in Hlyta Taş, XVII. Yzyılda Ankara, 36

that regular official documents reached Ankara in 11-20 days on average. Hülya Taş mentions the travelogue of Tournefort where the amount of time between İstanbul and Ankara is reported as a journey of 12-13 days with a caravan.⁶⁵ Therefore it is possible to say that the civilians and state officers could cover the same distances at a slightly different pace and time.



⁶⁵ Ibid., 30

CHAPTER III

3. TRAVELS OF THE OTTOMAN SUBJECTS

All the precautions taken by the state and the civilians took place on the lands of the sultan. It is important to perceive the concept of *mülk* - the land ownership in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state perception in the classical age was that all lands, state or private, belonged to the Sultan, as he was the agent of God on this earth. As it said in the famous Siyasetname of Nizamülmülk, “*The land and the peasant belong to the Sultan.*”⁶⁶ This ownership was more than the ownership of property but it meant the absolute authority and the power of management and administration over all the lands on the *Memalik-i Mahruse* - the Imperial dominions of the Ottoman Sultan . The sultan was the head of execution and was responsible from the well being and safety of his subjects. It is often phrased in the documents as: “*..re’âyâ vü berâyâ eyyâm-ı adâlet-i hümâyûnumda mesrûru’l-bâl ve müreffehü’l-hâl olalar*”⁶⁷, also “*... memâlik-i mahrûsemde olan re’âyâ ki .. eyyâm-ı adalet unvânımda âsûde-hâl ve müreffehü’l bâl .. olmak lâzım..*”⁶⁸ Therefore, the matter of transportation was regarded as part of the well being and safety of Ottoman subjects. This was also the reason why banditry and

⁶⁶ Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Vol I*, (New York: 1995), 105

⁶⁷ BOA Muhimme Defteri 2, p.224, no 1619, Dated 1 Muharrem 976 (1568) Meaning: My subjects shall live in happiness and prosperity in my empire of justice

⁶⁸ Bursa Şer’iye Sicili B7, no 102, 1000 (1591) Meaning: At this era of justice, my subjects living across my dominion must be content and their well being must be provided

brigandage, which meant preventing the security of the lands of the empire was among the most severely punished crimes. Providing the safety of the roads was also seen as vital for enabling the collection of taxes from even the most rural parts of the state territories.

Among the civilian travels, merchants were the most mobile community, as traveling was a necessity. Merchant caravans were private organizations; however especially along the commercially and militarily important routes, the sultans paid extra attention to keep the roads safe and open. Hans, *caravanserais*, *menzils*, *zaviyes*, bridges, water wells and masjids were built to maintain the needs of the travelers and *derbends* were built for security.

The routes of caravans were close by but different from the *menzil* routes. *Derbends* were also in charge of the security of caravan routes. After some time this vicinity of institutions helped these districts to thrive and become a centre of attraction for commercial activities.⁶⁹ Although not aimed directly, the road organization and network was beneficial for the individual travelers too. They could also use secondary routes if they were shorter but still they would use the similar facilities in the sanjaks on that route.

Mobility of Ottoman subjects was not encouraged in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, it was seen as a matter of economic prosperity and precautions were taken in order to maintain that the subjects did not leave their towns easily. The most important component of means of production was labor in Ottoman rural economy as the empire had vast lands

⁶⁹ There are still towns in Anatolia and Rumeli under the name of Derbend, Menzil and Kervan because of their historical popularity; e.g. the villages with the name Derbent in Konya, Uşak, Afyon, Yozgat, Kütahya and Sivas.

available for agriculture.⁷⁰ Therefore, taxes collected from peasants were a major element in the total tax revenues. They cultivated pre-determined products and paid their taxes in cash or in kind. The productivity of peasants meant prosperity and power, so the State wanted to make sure the revenues were steady and the tax-payers remained of easy access. In this regard, certain precautions were taken to ensure the *reâya* did not leave their lands easily. The *timar* institution entailed the peasants to stay put on their lands for production of designated products. They had to obtain permission from their *timar* holders if they had to leave their farms legally.⁷¹ The time limit for legalizing change of places was 10 years. After 10 years, it was possible for the *timar* holders to apply to the court and demand the return of the farmers who left their land under their administration.⁷² Also the central government issued court orders, demanding those peasants who left their farms and did not return in 10 years to go back to where they came from.

Still, due to climate changes, drought, or other reasons, from time to time farmers wanted to leave their lands or deal with another occupation such as artisanship.⁷³ In this condition, the farmers would have to pay an extra tax called ‘çift bozan’ to the *timar* holder.⁷⁴ This tax was taken as a compensation for the *timar* holder, and was determined according to the loss caused by the farmer.⁷⁵ Although the main purpose of this tax was to maintain control over production and tax revenues, in terms of mobility of the Ottoman

⁷⁰ Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1914*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 31.

⁷¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), ix.

⁷² *Ibid.*, xi.

⁷³ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir?*, (İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları: 2001), 83

⁷⁴ Halil İnalcık “Timar”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, TDV Yay., V. 41, (İstanbul: 2012), 168-173.

⁷⁵ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi*, (İstanbul, Gözlem Yayınları:1980), 751

subjects, it was a discouraging implementation. Traveling to far away lands took a considerable time, not to mention its difficulties. Therefore the tax paying *re'âyâ* mostly avoided traveling unless they had serious reasons or obligations.

Another reason why the Ottoman administration did not encourage the movement of the *re'âyâ* is the domestic security concerns. The opportunity to move easily would mean less control on population of cities. The state did not want large number of its subjects to flood the big cities uncontrollably, which could result in insufficient crop production, unemployment and security problems. Balancing production and artisanship was important in terms of providing the well-being and safety of Ottoman subjects on the Ottoman lands/*memâlik-i mahruse*, as it was regarded as the duty of the Sultan.

While Ottoman peasants needed to get permission from their *timar* holders before they left their farms, non-muslim envoys or merchants coming from other states could receive a document permitting their travel on the Ottoman territories. These permission documents (*yol emri*) were necessary for the safe travel of Ottoman subjects in the 18th century⁷⁶, however its first example goes back to the 15th century. In 1463, Sultan Mehmed II ordered a permission document (called *il-can-nâme*) to be given to a non-muslim named Frank Bobaniç, letting him and his family to come and settle in Ottoman territories. Another permit was given to a Venetian ambassador, enabling him to travel in safety over the Ottoman lands.⁷⁷ Mostly among high rank officials, traveling to Ottoman lands was popular in the 18th century. The request for permits could be for touristic visits

⁷⁶ Musa Çadırcı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Çıkarılan Men' -i Mürur ve Pasaport Nizamnameleri" Documents XV/19,(1993), Ankara, 169- 181.

⁷⁷ Şinasi Tekin, "Türkiye'de XV. Yüzyıla Ait İki Pasaport İl-can Mektubu ve İl-can-nâme" Tarih ve Toplum, Vol 23 (October 1985), 9-11.

or for the purpose of medicinal studies.⁷⁸ After the 18th century, travel permits called *mürur tezkiresi* were necessary for all Ottoman subjects if they wanted to travel from one place to another. This regulation was due to the increase in population and mobility of the Ottoman society. It was necessary to control migrations to big cities and for the purpose of maintaining public order in the local administrative units, but it also aimed to protect the traveler against unwanted treatments and unlawful enforcements of taxes.⁷⁹ The travel permits will not be examined further in this study as they started to be used for civilians after the 18th century, which is out of the scope of this research.

Traveling had its risks and challenges for everyone, but the non-Muslims could sometimes need extra precautions to protect themselves along their journeys. Traveling in disguise, as a Muslim could bring certain conveniences to them. As a rule, each *taife* - group had to wear their own specific attire which enabled everyone to recognize their identity. Wearing the clothings that belonged to another *taife* than yours was not allowed. However, the non-muslim tradesmen, diplomats and clergymen were allowed to wear Muslim attires while traveling through the Ottoman territories,⁸⁰ as there were court registers that ask for permission enabling this. An example to this implementation is the Armenian silk traders traveling to Bursa. In the 17th century Bursa was the center of silk trade and many merchants visited or passed through the city. Silk at that time was either maintained locally or was brought by Armenian merchants from Iran.⁸¹ Due to the road

⁷⁸ Hamiyet Sezer, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Seyahat İzinleri (18-19. yüzyıl), Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi, c.XXI, V. 33, (Ankara: 2003), 111

⁷⁹ Mübahat Kütükoğlu, Mürur tezkiresi, TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi. V. 32, (İstanbul: 2006), 60-61.

⁸⁰ Feridun Emecen, Unutulmuş Bir Cemaat, Manisa Yahudileri, (İstanbul: 1997), 65-66

⁸¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 99.

bandits on that route, Armenian merchants traveled in disguise in order to protect themselves from bandits along the routes.

There are also examples indicating that trusted slaves were used for transporting letters or messages to other places for their masters. However, if a slave was caught on the way, he would be asked to present a record from his master proving his situation so as not to be regarded as runaway.⁸² Freed slaves (*mutak- atika*) on the other hand, commonly worked with their former masters and traveled to distant places on behalf of them, as their commercial agents.⁸³

According to the *Kannunname* of Sultan Suleiman, if an Ottoman tax-paying subject left his land on his own will, his house and his furnitures belonged to his timar holder. Also, when a subject leaves his home for a journey, a state treasury agent - *beytü'l-mâlci* looked after his property without having a right to interfere.⁸⁴ When a traveller died during a journey, his belongings were kept by the local *beytü'l-mâlci* for five years, and if a family member did not come to collect them, his belongings were transferred to state treasury.⁸⁵

The length of journeys when traveling as a part of a caravan could sometimes be unpredictable, so the merchants would have to entrust their valuables to their kins or friends. Polish traveler Simeon mentions a complication in his travelogue, saying that

⁸² In the Ottoman Empire local officers called *yavacı* collected taxes under the name *Resm-i yava* or *kaçgun*. *Yavacı*s were in charge of collecting idle or stray animals. They also had the right to question by-passers whom they suspected to be runaway slaves, looking at their outfits. Therefore freed slaves carried manumission documents named *Itkname* while traveling.

⁸³ Halil İnalcık, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* 29, no. 01 (1969): 109

⁸⁴ Halil İnalcık, *Adaletnameler*, Vol 2, (Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara: 1993), 59

⁸⁵ M. Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, C I, (İstanbul: 1993), p. 225-226

after the person he entrusted his valuables passed away, the local *beytü'l-mâlci* confiscated his belongings and he had to go there to claim them back. The *beytü'l-mâl* officer did not want to give them back and Simeon was put in jail until he could prove that the items belonged to himself.⁸⁶

3.1 Purposes of traveling

The curiosity towards what is beyond reach, the desire to explore the unknown have always been the motivation behind the travels of human beings throughout history. As Löschburg said: “The history of travel is the history of humanity.”⁸⁷ However, as with any pre-modern state, Ottoman Empire was not an easy track for travelers. The primitive road conditions, and the dangers and risks of changing places were not the only factors that discouraged the travelers. Ottoman administration wanted the tax paying subjects to stay put in their lands, and made regulations to control their mobility. Still, we see that the Ottoman *re'âyâ* found ways to take off for journeys when necessary or when they had reasons to.

3.1.1. Seasonal Movements of Nomadic Groups

There were semi-nomadic groups which dealt with providing animals for land transportation of the empire both for private and for state demands. These groups called *yürüks* changed their locations seasonally and lived at three different locations throughout the year: *kışla/kışlak* (winter pastures), *güzle/güzlek* (fall pastures) and *yazla/yazlak*

⁸⁶ Polonyalı Simeon, Polonyalı Simeon'un Seyahatnamesi, trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan, (İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat fakültesi Yayınları No. 1073. İstanbul: 1964), 84-85

⁸⁷ Winfried Löschburg, Seyahatin Kültür Tarihi, Dost, (Ankara:1997), 9.

(summer pastures). They had specific travel routes and on their routes they passed through *sanjaks* and *kazas*, however the Ottoman government assigned officers called *yürük sancağı/kazası kadısı* to accompany them through their seasonal travels.⁸⁸ These *kadıs* were direct representatives of central government⁸⁹, so they both dealt with the collection of their taxes and also administered their judicial affairs. When they passed through or stayed at a *sanjak*, *yürük sanjağı kadısı*⁹⁰ was responsible from the members of that *yürük* community. The local *kadı* or *sanjak beyi* did not interfere with their problems so as not to cause a conflict of authority. *Yürük kadısı* was responsible from regulating the travels of these communities during their seasonal migrations. If a member of this *yürük* community wanted to leave the group for some other destination, he had to get a document from the *yürük kadısı*, indicating that he is the *re'âyâ* (subject) of this specific *kadı*.

Under the *sanjaks* and *kazas*, there could be other spheres of administration which ran according to *serbestiyet* principle, which meant being free from immediate government oversight. For example, there could be small nomadic groups living next to tax-paying subjects (e.g. gypsies) in a *kaza*. These groups would be administered by a *mültezim* (tax-collector)⁹¹ or *emin* (salaried agent) and not the local *bey*. They dealt with administering

⁸⁸ Reşat Kasaba. *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees. (Studies in Modernity and National Identity)*. (Seattle, University of Washington Press: 2009), 24

⁸⁹ ...Yörük Kadısı hükm-i hümayûnla teftiş edüb..." See BOA-TD-117, s.493, 468. (Cited from Emine Erdoğan, *Ankara Yörükleri (1463, 1523/30 Ve 1571 Tahrirlerine Göre)*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi 18: 2005), p. 129

⁹⁰ The term *yürük kadısı* can be found in *mühimme* registers too. See MD, XXI, 186/51 (14 Zilka'de 970-18 Mart 1573) Cited from (Cited from Emine Erdoğan, *Ankara Yörükleri (1463, 1523/30 Ve 1571 Tahrirlerine Göre)*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi 18: 2005), 129

⁹¹ *Mültezims* were in charge of collecting taxes but they also had administrative duties. Their customary duties were actually more important than collecting taxes.

these small groups and collected taxes from them. The presence of these independent groups did not mean that they were autonomous groups. It rather meant that they were not under the sphere of local administration but were administered and taxed separately.⁹² They were also assigned separate *kadıs* for their judicial affairs.⁹³ The *kadı* of that *sanjak* would not interfere the affairs of the *kadı* assigned to that group. However, if an evidence has been accepted by a distant court, that evidence had to be considered legal (*nakl-i şahadet*)⁹⁴. In addition, some *yürük* tribes guarded dangerous locations such as mountain passes and crossroads; built and maintained roads and bridges; transported goods and protected passing caravans.⁹⁵

If a tax paying *re'âyâ* dealt with farming, he would be given enough lands (*çift*) to cultivate and maintain the sustenance of his family with the crops he produced. If the farmer left the lands he was given to cultivate for a long time, so that the lands are no longer cultivated; he would be required to pay a special tax called *çiftbozan*. However when *yürüks* cultivate a land but leave the lands to move to other places, the *çiftbozan* tax was not required from them as they were accepted as mobile subjects by law.⁹⁶

3.1.2. Trade

The Ottoman administration aimed to establish a secure environment over its domains, so that every region had balanced city-urban relations which allowed the central government

⁹² Özer Ergenç, *Osmanlı Tarihi Yazıları : Şehir, Toplum, Devlet*, (İstanbul : Tarih Vakfı 2013), p.228

⁹³ İlhan Şahin, *Osmanlı Döneminde Konar-Göçerler*, (İstanbul: 2006), p.198

⁹⁴ İlber Ortaylı, *Hukuk Ve Idare Adamı Olarak: Osmanlı Devletinde Kadı* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1994), p.59

⁹⁵ Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 151.

⁹⁶ Hüseyin Arslan, *Labor Migration Between 1564 and 1611 in the Ottoman State and its Causes*, *Journal of Economy Culture and Society* 2018; 57: 199

to collect taxes. For the Ottoman State, a sustainable economic power meant political stability, therefore the safe and continuous flow of products around the empire was seen as vital. The Sultan was responsible for the proper procurement of necessary goods at every settlement of the empire, therefore the production was organized by the state. This was not an easy task due to the extensive territory of the empire, therefore economic activities were organized with a decentralized system.

The peasants paid their taxes half in kind and half in cash. After putting aside the crop needed for the sustenance of their house, peasants would go to periodic local markets to sell their crops. Local markets were main centers for peasants to convert their products into cash and pay their taxes to their timar holders. In fact the obligation to go to the nearest market (*akreb pazar*) and the length of the journey to get to that market was regulated through *kanunnames*.⁹⁷ Therefore transporting the products to the nearest local market was important in the rural economy.

Trade was the major reason for traveling. Even if a merchant did not travel personally, he had contacts and counterparts who traveled on behalf of them. There were two types of merchants: *Tâcir-i seffâr* were the merchants who traveled overlands by merchant caravans or by sea. *Tâcir-i mütemekkin* were the merchants who resided at a certain place and ran his business through agents.⁹⁸ In many regions, extensive production and trading of certain goods became prominent as they provided large amounts of revenue to the treasury. In order to regulate the trade activities on these goods, the Ottoman state designated specific spheres of administration over them.

⁹⁷ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlıda Kentler ve Kentliler*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları (İstanbul: 2000), 70

⁹⁸ Halil Inalcik, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* 29, no. 01 (1969): 100

Manufacture and trade activity on a specific good, such as mohair textile (*sof*) in Ankara, silk in Bursa, felt in Thessalonica, thin cotton fabric (*bogasi*) in Konya, was handled as a whole. The central government determined how the whole procedure of its production and trade would be managed and assigned a *mültezim* in charge of administering all these activities on that specific good over specific administrative units, *mukataas*. A *mukataa* referred to the division of state revenue sources into portions to be distributed in return for a mutually agreed upon price.⁹⁹ The estimated revenue of a *mukataa* would be entered in the *Mukataa* registers of the finance department separately.¹⁰⁰ Each *mukataa* would be farmed out to a contractor (*mültezim*), who was recorded as a government servant in the *Mukataa* registers and thus needed a berat (imperial orders) to do their duties.¹⁰¹ Any conflict that occurred would be taken to court by the *mültezim*. Özer Ergenç explains the trade of mohair in Ankara during the Ottoman classical period as an example on how *mültezims* managed the trade activity on goods that are a high source of revenue.¹⁰² Until the second half of the 17th century, Western merchants came to Ankara directly or through their agents to buy mohair textiles and take it to their countries. There were two *mukataas* in Ankara which regulated this activity: One was the stamping *mukataa* (*damga mukataası*), and the other was pressing and painting *mukaataa* (*cendere ve boyahane mukataası*). The *mültezims* of these two *mukataas* would regulate all the trade activities and collect the tax revenues from the exported goods. Therefore the *mültezims* were in charge of the whole process of trade at a very large domain, starting

⁹⁹ Linda T. Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660*, (Leiden: 1996), p.123

¹⁰⁰ Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1916* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 55.

¹⁰¹ Linda T. Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660*, (Leiden: 1996), p.124

¹⁰² Ergenç, *Osmanlı Tarihi Yazıları*, p.295

from the point the mohair textiles were provided in Ankara, until the end station where the caravans carrying mohair textiles left the Ottoman territories, İstanbul or Thessalonica.

Assigning a *mültezim* for the management of trading of a specific good allowed the state to hold one person accountable for the whole procedure, to avoid any conflict of authority, thus made it easier to collect larger amount of tax revenues. At the same time, the distinction of a separate sphere of administration for trade goods was one of the factors that made traveling for merchants more organized and manageable. The state did not directly interfere with the travels of the *re'âyâ*, but the state organizations regarding the collection of taxes created conveniences for civilian travelers as well.

3.1.3. Pilgrimage / Hajj

Hajj was among the most common purposes for lengthy travels of civilians. After the conquest of Egypt in 1517, the Ottomans took the responsibility of organizing this holy journey. There were special hajj caravans with a pre-determined route, which were organized by the Ottoman government. These caravans stayed at the Hajj *menzils* along the way, where pilgrims could eat, shop, take a bath, pray and rest. The big caravans were like mobile towns as lots of commercial activity also took place along the way. The Hajj journey from İstanbul to Holy lands would take approximately three months. Together with all the obligations of pilgrimage, a hajj journey would take nine months in total. This long of a journey necessitated a special organization.

The Ottoman state spent vast sums for the Hajj organization every year. It a matter of prestige for the Sultans, so special road security was provided and the road maintenance

was handled with extra care for the caravans to travel safely, without interruption. A Hajj caravan was accompanied by 200 Janissaries and 100 *sipahis* who were in charge of providing the security for the caravan.¹⁰³ The Hajj caravans also delivered the gifts sent by the Sultan to the Emir of Makkah, therefore the security was a necessity for this reason too. The pilgrims were responsible for their own daily sustenance along the way. Still it is known that in the late 1500s, a tent containing food for the pilgrims were included in the hajj caravan¹⁰⁴ In general, the Hajj journey was planned so that both land and sea routes would be used, though most of the journey would take place on land.¹⁰⁵

3.1.4 Seeking health

People seeking cures for their sicknesses traveled to other places known with their healing sources. These sources could be hot baths, thermal waters, or mud baths, etc. Sometimes it could be a renowned doctor or a spiritual leader that would attract people from far away distances. These places were often a part of *zaviyes* and *imarets* which motivated travelers as they offered free accommodation and food.

In 1488, during the time of Bayezid II, a hospital was built as a part of a big complex - *külliye* in Edirne. This health center named *Dar al-Shifa'* consisted of sections with doctors, ophthalmologists, surgeons, laundry, pantry, and kitchen. Mental patients were isolated and treated with music therapy. Among the staff, there were physicians, surgeons, caretakers, a drug mixer and grinder. They were all chosen from among knowledgeable, proficient professionals. Travelers from near and far distances came to

¹⁰³ Boğaç Babür Turna, "Everyday Life in the Ottoman Empire" (MA Thesis, Bilkent University, 2000), 46

¹⁰⁴ Faroqi, Travel and Artisans, xii

¹⁰⁵ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme, (Ankara: 2002), 66

this complex to regain their health. Patients, their families, and other travelers could stay and eat in the guesthouses for three days. The kitchen prepared food for the patients, visitors and the poor throughout the year. Travelers mostly came from short distances, but for this kind of a big complex, it was possible to see people coming from long distances too.¹⁰⁶

3.1.5 *Spiritual journeys*

Among the purposes of civilian travels was the search for spiritual guidance and a desire to be a part of a religious community. Some people left their homelands to find renowned spiritual leaders. They set off for a journey either for the purpose of visiting the spiritual leader and his hospices, or they aimed to settle at their hospices and become a member of that religious group.

Especially in the early stages of the Ottoman Empire, the *Akhi* institution and wandering dervishes in Anatolia constituted an important part in the social structure of their time by attracting people to religious groups. The *Akhi* hospices called *zaviyes* served the needs of people who came to visit them and travelers who were passing by; provided safety, food, accommodation and even medical treatment to travelers.¹⁰⁷

The *Akhis* were corporations of unmarried young men mostly from the artisan groups (*taife*) of Anatolian towns and provided a structure of solidarity and mutual aid in the

¹⁰⁶ Mehmet Yaşar Ertaş, *Seyyahın Bilincine Bir Yolculuk: Bir Avrupalı Seyyah Osmanlı Tıbbından Niçin Bahseder?*, (Mahya Yayınları, Sakarya: 2015), 386

¹⁰⁷ Memiş, Abdurrahman, “Osmanlı”da Tekkeler, Sosyal Fonksiyonları ve İstanbul”da Halidi Tekkeleri”, Edt. G. Eren, Osmanlı, IV, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, (Ankara: 1999), p. 512-525.

urban environment.¹⁰⁸ They were a cohesive, well-integrated communal organization, abiding by the fundamental principles of brotherhood and were most visible when the central government was weak and inadequate.¹⁰⁹

The most well known traveler of the fourteenth century Ibn Battuta kept records of his travels which is a significant source that provides detailed information on the *Akhi* organization.¹¹⁰ When Ibn Battuta visited Alanya and Antalya, he met members of the *Akhi* association who were known to welcome travelers at their hospices (*tekke* and *zaviye*). He was very impressed by their hospitality and instead of staying at caravanserais, he preferred to stay at these hospices in more than 25 towns in Anatolia. In his travelogue, he describes the *Akhis* as:

“Nowhere in the world will you find men so eager to welcome strangers, so prompt to serve food and to satisfy the wants of others.. A Young Brother, or akhi in their language, is one who is chosen by all the members of his trade guild], or by other young unmarried men, or those who live in ascetic retreat, to be their leader. This organization is known also as the Futuwwa or Order of Youth. The leader builds a hospice and furnishes it with rugs, lamps, and other necessary appliances. The members of his community work during the day to gain their livelihood, and bring him what they have earned in the late afternoon. With this they buy fruit, food, and the other things which the hospice requires for their use.

If a traveller comes to the town that day they lodge him in their hospice; these

¹⁰⁸ Ross E. Dunn. “The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century”, University of California Press: 2005), p. 146

¹⁰⁹ G. G. Arnakis, Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire Akhis, Bektashi Dervishes, and Craftsmen. Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 12(4), (1953), p. 233.

¹¹⁰ Semavi Eyice, İlk Osmanlı Devrinin Dini - İhtimai Bir Müessesesi: Zaviyeler ve Zaviyeli Camiler, Sermet Matbaası, (İstanbul: 1963), p. 25-26

provisions serve for his entertainment as their guest, and he stays with them until he goes away.”¹¹¹

Ibn Battuta expresses his deep admiration for the hospitality of *Akhis* repeatedly throughout his records while traveling Anatolia. He tells about how they seemed glad to receive them as their guests even when they did not speak each others’ languages¹¹² and expresses his astonishment when members of two different branches of *Akhis* competed over having him lodge with themselves and they finally decided to draw lots.¹¹³

According to Ibn Battuta’s travel records, it was customary to stay at least three days for travelers at any zaviye or house as a guest. If the guest stayed less than three days, it would ruin the host’s reputation.¹¹⁴ Similarly travelers who visited thermal baths could eat and stay in *imarets* or *zaviyes* next to baths for three days for free.¹¹⁵ Ibn Battuta mentions Bursa’s famous thermal baths and people staying there for three days for healing. Therefore zaviyes also served as places for recovery from illnesses and many people traveled for health purposes.

The *Akhis* were also responsible from providing security around their zaviyes. The lands of the zaviyes were assigned to the *Akhi* groups by the state to build zaviyes at the places where the central government found difficult to reach and control. Therefore by allocating lands for zaviyes and exempting them from tax payments, the state maintained

¹¹¹ Gibb H.A.R. trans. and ed., “Ibn Battuta Travels In Asia And Africa 1325-1354.”, Volume 1, (London: 1958), 125

¹¹² Ibid., 127

¹¹³ Ibid., 129

¹¹⁴ İsmat Parmaksızoğlu, İbn Batuta Seyahatnamesinden Seçmeler, MEB Yayınları, (İstanbul: 1989), 30

¹¹⁵ ibid., 45

safety and accomodation services from *Akhis*.¹¹⁶ Tax exemptions were an attraction for many people and the immigration these lands received was how most Western Anatolian and Balkan villages were formed in the fourteenth century.¹¹⁷

When there were no caravanserais or Hans to stay and eat, and when the central authority could not, *Akhi* hostices/*zaviyes* offered these services to civilian travelers, especially at the strategically important and dangerous areas. Ibn Battuta reports that in towns where there was no official ruler, traditionally one of the *Akhis* acted as governor, having the same authority and prestige as a ruler.¹¹⁸ They were in charge of the security around their towns, so they were let to carry guns. When describing the outfit of the *Akhi* dervishes, Ibn Battuta mentions long knives at their waist, which indicates that they carried guns for security purposes.¹¹⁹ However this does not mean that they were military forces. They were considered as local security elements.¹²⁰

By the late fourteenth century the institution of *zaviyes* started to decline and with the increasing centralization of the state in the sixteenth century, most of the *zaviyes* that lost their original functions were abolished by the government. *Zaviyes* were still exempt from paying taxes but they were not serving the travelers as they used to do, or some were not located on the routes of travelers. Especially during the time of Mehmed I,

¹¹⁶ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, Hamle, 1994, p. 49-50

¹¹⁷ Halil Inalcik. "The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600.", (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), 155

¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁸ Gibb H.A.R. trans. and ed., "Ibn Battuta Travels In Asia And Africa 1325-1354.", Volume 1, (London: 1958), 131

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 126

¹²⁰ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu Karakoyunlu Devletleri*, TTK (Ankara: 1967), p.204

many *zaviyes* were closed and their lands were transferred to *timar* holders.¹²¹ However until the time of their decline, *zaviyes* practiced the rules and traditions of *Akhi* organization and in terms of traveling of civilians, their existence was significant.¹²²

3.1.6 *Search for new ways of living*

In the Ottoman Empire, all agricultural lands belonged to the Sultan. These lands which were called *mîrî* lands were allocated to sipahis to be distributed to the *re'âyâ* to be cultivated. The state depended on the agricultural production to provide the well being of its population, therefore precautions were taken to make sure the tax paying farmers stayed put in their lands. However, at times of poor harvests, or natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes, some members of *re'âyâ* left their farms in search for new ways of living or namely for the purpose of learning artisanship from a well known master.

An example to the farmers who left their lands for the purpose of finding new ways of occupation is seen in a *kanunname* written at the time of Murat III.¹²³ In the *kanunname* it is explained that an amount of *çiftbozan* tax is required from farmers, as they left their farms and stopped producing the designated crops. They left to become potters, fishermen, millers, wood cutters, stonemasons, or agricultural laborers and as they no longer pay their taxes to their *timar* holders, they are required to pay 80 Akçes if they are

¹²¹ Halil Inalcik. "The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600.", (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), 156

¹²² G. G. Arnakis, Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire Akhis, Bektashi Dervishes, and Craftsmen. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 12(4), (1953), 233

¹²³ Hüseyin Arslan, Labor Migration Between 1564 and 1611 in the Ottoman State and its Causes, *Journal of Economy Culture and Society* 2018; 57: 185-215

poor, and 120 Akçes if they are rich.¹²⁴ The information that shows that *çiftbozan* farmers choose these occupations indicate that artisanship was more favorable or profitable at those times, especially when there was drought or bad crops.

Workforce mobility was seen among Ottoman Albanians in the 16th and 17th century. They left their lands in Rumelia and came to Anatolia and İstanbul to become artisans, laborers, mercenaries, or they worked in big houses in İstanbul. This was seen among other groups living under Ottoman governance too. In Rodoscuk, for example, here were beeswax ateliers where Greek artisans worked.¹²⁵ Another example is the silver miners sent to Şirvan from Rumelia. In mühimme registers, an order is sent to the bey of Şirvan for maintaining the security of the mine workers on their way.¹²⁶

3.2 Means of Enabling Civilian Travels

3.2.1 *Mekkâri Tâifesi*

In the pre-industrial era, when men did not use motorized vehicles, transportation was mostly based on animal and human power, and the roads were far from conditions of our time. Traveling through often sparsely inhabited, dangerous, geographically and

¹²⁴ Cited in H. Aslan: “Ve çok re’âya sipaha raiyyet kaydolunub mahsule bağlan- dıktan sonra kimi ağaç yapıcı ve çanak ve çömlekçi ve balıkçı ve değirmenci ve taşçı olub ve kimi rencberlik edüb vesair vecihle kâr ve kisbe meşgul olub zira’at ve hirasat- lerin terk eyledikleriyle aşâr ve rûsûmlarından sipahi nesne almayub gadr olduğu ecilden çiftbozan diyü anın gibilerin fukarasından ber-vech-i nakid seksener akçe ve ağniyasından yüz yigirmişer akçe aluna geldiği sebebden defteri cedid-i hakanîde dahi ol-vecih üzere kayd olundu.”

¹²⁵ Hüseyin Arslan, Labor Migration Between 1564 and 1611 in the Ottoman State and its Causes, Journal of Economy Culture and Society 2018; 57: 201

¹²⁶ Cited in Hüseyin Aslan, Labor Migration Between 1564 and 1611 in the Ottoman State and its Causes: Mühimme; 42,h.382-383.20 B 989/ 20.08.1591; T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 1993, s. 6–8

climatically difficult territories were too challenging for the Ottoman subjects to travel for pleasure. Most would only leave their hometown only if it was absolutely necessary. When there were occasions and necessities, they travelled either on foot or on camels, mules, horses, donkeys, oxen and rarely carts, making 35 - 40 kilometers a day.¹²⁷

In the Ottoman Empire, members of the tax paying subjects were organized depending on their religious or occupational identities and the members of the merchant communities were called *tâife*. Owning a transport animal was very costly, but the animals could be hired from people whose occupation was to transport goods and people. This group was called *Mekkâri taifesi*. *Mekkaris* (other usages of this word are: *mekâreci*, *mekârî*, *mekkâri*, *mükârî*) were a group of craftsmen under the regulations of Ottoman craftsmen organization.¹²⁸ *Mekkârecis*¹²⁹ were among these communities who looked after pack animals and hired them out to travelers or merchants as a transport animal.¹³⁰ Camel riders (*deveci*), horse riders (*atçılar*), mule riders (*katırcı*) and cart riders (*arabacılar*) constituted the community of *Mekkârecis*. Cengiz Orhonlu notes that Evliya Çelebi reported that there were 3000 *Mekkârecis* at the time of Sultan Murad IV.¹³¹

As there was not a state-run organization specific for the transportation of the *re'âyâ*, the individuals who had to travel on their own had to take the necessary precautions by themselves. The state could not allocate guards for each traveler, therefore the *re'âyâ*

¹²⁷ Ümit Ekin, XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma, (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Dissertation, (Ankara: 2002), 39

¹²⁸ Özer Ergenç, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazıları: Şehir, Toplum, Devlet. (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları: 2013), 331

¹²⁹ The word *Mekkâri*, also used as *Mekâre* or *Mekkâre* was an Arabic word meaning transport animals. It was also used for the people whose occupation was to transport people.

¹³⁰ M. Zeki Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, C II, (İstanbul: 1993), 451

¹³¹ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Şehircilik ve Ulaşım*, (İzmir: 1984), 144

sought to find secure ways of traveling in the difficult territories. One way to do this was to hire a *Mekkâreci* as they could both transport their goods or accompany the travelers as a guide and a guard.¹³² If a caravan was gathered by the *Mekkarecis*, most of the times the owner of the goods would travel with the caravan.¹³³ The cost of transport animals would be charged on daily bases, and would be calculated depending on how many days they spent at each station along the journey.

As with every institution in Ottoman State system, *Mekkârecis* were organized in a specific order. They were represented by an elected leader (*şeyh*, *kethuda* or leader), who would act as an intermediary between the state and the members of his community.¹³⁴ *Mekkari* community worked under the supervision of kadıs, and they signed treaties with the merchants who hired them for transporting their goods. These treaties can be found among the court registers know as kadı sicilleri. When a person signed a treaty with a *Mekkareci*, another member of the *Mekkari* community would have to warrant for his colleague, and swear for his trustworthiness in front of the kadi. Also, another *Mekkareci* would have to warrant that in case the transported goods are damaged along the road, he would be the guarantor to pay the compensation to the owner of the goods.¹³⁵ These warrants and guarantees functioned as means of creating a collective liability among communities and individuals, so that they all acted in solidarity, fulfilled their

¹³² Ibid., 144

¹³³ Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiyenin İktisadî Ve İçtimâî Tarihi* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1979), 209.

¹³⁴ Ümit Ekin, *XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2002), 41

¹³⁵ Ibid., 53

responsibilities and the rights of the civilians were preserved.¹³⁶ Taking warrants for the mekkaris during the transport agreements were demanded by the central government by orders. For example, an imperial order sent to the kadi of Tokat in 28 Ramazan 1186/ M. 23 December 1772, entailed the riders of the 400 *mekkari* camels which were to be sent to the Imperial Army to be trustworthy and warranted (*mu'temed ve kefillü*).¹³⁷

The disputes between the *Mekkareci*s and merchants can be seen among the 18th century fetva registers too. Looking at the legal decisions, it is understood that most conflicts occurred when there was a problem with delivery. In case the goods that are transported by the *Mekkareci* are extorted due to a bandit attack, no compensation is asked from the *Mekkareci*.¹³⁸ However if there is a negligence that caused the loss or harm of the goods, then the *Mekkareci* pays all of the worth of goods to the merchant.¹³⁹ There are cases which show that half of the compensation is required when the goods are robbed from the *Mekkareci*.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839, (Cambridge University Press: 2006), 162

¹³⁷ Tokat Şeriyeye sicili, no:1, 209; Cited in Ümit Ekin, *XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, 54

¹³⁸ A fetva on this subject in Fetâvâ-yı Abdurrahim, V. II, p. 186, cited in Özcan, *Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı*, 265:

Q: Zeyd paid Mekkari Amr to transport an amount of goods to another land. Amr loaded his mule with the goods and on his way to destination he was attacked by road bandits. All Zeyd's goods were captured by the bandits. Does Amr have to pay the worth of the goods as compensation to Zeyd?

A: No he does not.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 266

Q: Zeyd paid Mekkari Amr for his goods to be transported to another land. If on the way, Amr spent the night at a rural place filled with bandits instead of a safe station, and the goods are robbed, does Amr have to pay compensation?

A: Yes he does.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 265

3.2.2. Caravans

Caravans were major means of land transportation, made up of camels, horses, donkeys and mules. They were led by a caravan chief (*kervan başı*), who was chosen among the caravan members and were in charge of determining the route and resting stations. The size of a caravan would change depending on the season and the commercial activity along the destination. A caravan traveling between Baghdad and Damascus, made up of 450 camels and 100 mules, was considered a small caravan, the bigger ones could include 2500 camels.¹⁴¹ The largest caravans coming once a year from Hicaz- Syria consisted of 60000 men¹⁴².

In many towns along the main road network, *Namazgâhs* (an open air place for praying) were built. They were important locations for travelers as they were mainly used for supplying the needs of the travelers while providing a place for them to pray. *Namazgâhs* were meeting points where a group of travelers came together before they set off for a journey. Caravan members, too, would meet at a *Namazgâh* before the journey. It was also a place to socialize before a long trip. They had a mimber and a mihrab, just like in the mosques, and they had no roofs or walls around them.¹⁴³

Q: Zeyd paid Amr to take his goods to another land, and Amr gave the goods to Mekkari Bekir with the permission of Zeyd. On his way to his destination, the goods were robbed from Bekir at a resting station. Does Bekir have to pay compensation?

A: He pays half the worth of goods.

¹⁴¹ Orhonlu, Şehircilik ve Ulaşım, 141

¹⁴² İlber Ortaylı, "Devenin Taşıma Maliyeti Eğrisi Üzerine Bir Deneme," (Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi, 28, 1-2:1973), 189

¹⁴³ M. İbrahimgil, H. Acun, Kosova- Prizren Fatih Sultan Mehmet Namazgâhı (Kırık cami) Kazı ve Restorasyon Çalışmaları ile Şehit Başçavuş Hüseyin Kutlu Parkı, (Ankara: 2002), 2

Caravans moved during daytime and rested at night in winters. In summer time, on the other hand, caravans took off five hours after noon and continued until two hours after sunset.¹⁴⁴ The weather conditions were a main factor in determining the departure times of caravans. The journeys were scheduled calculating the most comfortable weather along the route. For example, Tavernier notes that caravans traveling to İzmir arrived on February, June or October and left the city in the same months.¹⁴⁵ While caravans traveling to the Balkans and Anatolia were scheduled for the summer times, no one would dare to cross deserts of Baghdad and Haleppo during summer.¹⁴⁶ The distance covered in one day depended on the season, but normally a caravan would travel 6, 8, 10 or 12 hours in one day.¹⁴⁷ Other factors were the size of the caravan and the speed of the slowest participant.¹⁴⁸ The caravan animals were lined according to their speed; the horses, the mules and finally the camels. The leader of the caravan would determine the best possible halting area and when they reached the destination, the cargo of all the animals would be unloaded. Everyone would prepare a sleeping space for himself. The camels and mules would be set free for grazing, and the horses would be tied. When the night fell, the camels would be tied to each other with ropes.¹⁴⁹

Often, in order to keep down the traveling costs, drivers hired their animals for a limited distance.¹⁵⁰ This also enabled the caravan participants to stop and engage into commercial activity at the places where they hired new animals. In fact caravans did not

¹⁴⁴ M. Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, C II, (İstanbul: 1993), 244

¹⁴⁵ Tavernier, *Tavernier Seyahatnamesi*, 118

¹⁴⁶ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Şehircilik ve Ulaşım*, (İzmir: 1984), 142

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 144

¹⁴⁸ Raphaela Lewis, *Everyday Life in Ottoman Turkey*, (New York, Dorset Press: 1988), 177

¹⁴⁹ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Şehircilik ve Ulaşım*, (İzmir: 1984), 141

¹⁵⁰ İlber Ortaylı, "Devinin Taşıma Maliyeti Eğrisi Üzerine Bir Deneme," (*Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 28, 1-2 :1973), 186

end their long journeys with the same load they started.¹⁵¹ A lot of economic activity took place on the road, at every stop, which was considered a means of funding the expenses of the journey and making profit.

Traveling as a part of a caravan did not mean being safe from the dangers of the roads. Caravans were often attacked and robbed by the bandits called *kutta-i't tarik*. Especially during the Celali revolts of the 17th century, even the government troops could not stop the bandit groups which could be as large as hundreds of armed men. In 1967, a bandit called Kara Haydaroğlu was raiding the caravans coming from Iran, Damascus and Izmir and traveling to Istanbul, and was captured with great difficulty. Another Christian bandit group of 500 men raided the city of Manastır in the mid seventeenth century and nobody dared to resist them.¹⁵²

3.2.3. Caravanserais

Caravanserais were not only a part of spatial organization and means of accommodation. They were also an important element in creating economic activity which also helped to control the concentration of population around their location.

Although mostly used interchangeably, *Hans* and *Caravanserais* are not same structures. *Hans* were built in city centers for the usage of merchants and travelers. They provided food and shelter in return for money. *Caravanserais*, on the other hand were located in between towns as resting stations. They were charitable institutions built by sultans and

¹⁵¹ Ibid.,186

¹⁵² Halil Inalcik. "The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600.", (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), 155

viziers, were endowed by *waqifs*, and practical needs of the travelers were provided free of charge for three days.¹⁵³

Caravanserais could be stand-alone structures along the travel routes, built for or they could be a part of a larger facility complex, *imarets* and *menzils*. The travelers had to bring their own food or buy it from the bazaars nearby if the caravanserai is an isolated and small one. The merchants, pilgrims, travelers could find safe shelter for themselves, their animals and their baggages. The courtyard in the middle of the buildings were used for keeping animals, and the guests camped with little privacy.

The *caravanserais* which were big and a part of a larger complex, on the other hand, had staff in charge of cleaning (*ferrâş*), opening and locking doors (*bevvâb*), tender of oil lamps (*sirâcî*), cooking (*tabbâh*), bread making, maintenance (*meremmetçi*), whose salaries were paid by the *wakifs*.¹⁵⁴ There would be separate small rooms with a fireplace for guests, and for common use a bathroom, a praying room, lavatories, stables for the animals, even coffee corner for the guests would be available in these facilities.¹⁵⁵ In the evenings, endowed by a *wakif*, the guests would be served rice with meat, bread and honey.¹⁵⁶

Other than attaining the needs, the main and most important function of *caravanserais* was the security they provided, as they were mostly located at dangerous places where there was a higher risk of brigandage and robbery. Evliya Çelebi describes the

¹⁵³ P. M. Holt, A. .L, and Bernard Lewis, The Cambridge History of Islam, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 259

¹⁵⁴ Habibe Kazancıoğlu, “Osmanlı Dönemi Kervansaraylarının Sosyo-Kültürel ve Ekonomik Fonksiyonları” (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2014), 288

¹⁵⁵ Raphaela Lewis, Everyday Life in Ottoman Turkey, (New York, Dorset Press: 1988), 179

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 179

caravanserai he stayed in Burkaz (Lüleburgaz) with its doormen and guards who made sure all doors of the *caravanserai* were locked after midnight. He reports that they never let anyone in or out of the building after doors were locked and in the morning the guards made sure no one was harmed and all had their belongings complete. Only after they knew everything was all right, they unlocked the doors and saw off the guests with prayers for their safety¹⁵⁷. He also depicted the *caravanserais* as sanctuaries you can stay, eat and rest for free, find fellow travelers who you can converse, places which help you take shelter when you escape from the evils of the night and heat of the sun. They are almost miniature towns in which you can find baths, stables, masjid, even cemeteries.

Austrian traveler Solomon Schweigiger observed that *caravanserais* looked like big, wide hay barns located in open areas. There is nobody to serve for the guests like he saw in the Christian lands, but these facilities offer shelter against cold and hot weather, rain, storm and snow. Travelers have to bring their own food or they can purchase it from the bazaars around the larger towns.¹⁵⁸ They can use the kitchen to cook their food, while warming near the stove. The travelers bring their own mattress, blanket, food supplies, pots and pans with themselves.¹⁵⁹ Schweigiger complains that some of these buildings look unclean and are filled with fleas and mice.¹⁶⁰ However he praises the imarets he saw. İmarets were charity institutions that served for all, so that no one in need were turned away wanting. Guests who stayed in the imaret were served two meals a day for up to three days and their animals were fed too. Schweigiger wrote that these charity institutions are

¹⁵⁷ Evliya Çelebi, The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Book 3: Facsimile of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304, 169

¹⁵⁸ Salomon Schweigiger, "Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk 1578-1581", Kitap Yayınevi, (İstanbul: 2004) p.45

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 133

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 57

open to everyone and they offer lamb rice, bread and boza. He admired that rich and poor, Muslims, Christians or Jews could eat and stay at these imarets for three days for free, which he specifically found very useful for travelers.¹⁶¹

Another travel record is the letters of Busbecq, where many details are given on how travelers found accommodation in *caravanserais*. He describes one in the Serbian city of Nis as:

“They are long and huge buildings with an opening in the middle, for the carts, camels and mules. The buildings are mostly surrounded by 1 meter high platforms, which work as both dining tables and sleeping areas.. They can feed their animals while sitting on the platforms and lay their mattresses before sleeping. Their saddles work as pillows. They cover themselves with their kaftans and sleep in this uncomfortable situation.. There is no real privacy in caravanserais as everything can be seen publicly, except for the darkness of the night.”

The *caravanserais* Busbecq describes must be one of those built for big groups of travelers outside the city centers. The ones in the cities had separate cells to stay and people serving to the guests.

He also tells about a Turkish Han he stayed, which was more spacious and luxurious looking. He admires that they accepted all travelers regardless of their religion, and that travelers were treated with a big tray of food including bread, honey and bulgur with

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 128

meat. Busbecq observes that Turks did not eat hot meals or meat during their travels.¹⁶² They preferred to eat plain and simple food like yoghurt, cheese, dried fruit such as plum, pear, peach, quince, figs, sultanas and sour cherries. They ate fruits with bread and drank their juices. Busbecq admires that Turks did not eat much and says that they very economical, so much so that their cost for eating for 12 days equaled to the cost of food for only one day in Busbecqs country.

3.2.4. *Transport Animals*

Camels and mules were mostly used as pack animals, whereas horses and donkeys were preferred for riding. Horses were fast and comfortable to ride, but they were expensive animals. It was possible to travel twice the distance with a horse than with a caravan. In his travelogue, Busbecq describes the Turkish horses as extremely well disciplined and compliant animals. He expresses his admiration for them and gives detailed information on how they were used as transport animals. From his travelogue, we understand that the Turkish horses were obedient, strong, sturdy, and leaner than European horses. They were not fed with hay but with more nourishing dried grass and barley; and they lived as long as 50 years. He notes that horses were very expensive. A good mare, especially, could cost as much as a hundred camels and to own one was enough to make a person wealthy.¹⁶³ Some rich people preferred to hold their own camels and horses for transportation; however this was only possible for very wealthy people. In 1580s and 90s,

¹⁶² Busbecq, p. 58

¹⁶³ Ogier Ghislain De Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları: Kanuni Döneminde Avrupalı Bir Elçinin Gözlemleri* (1555-1560), trans. Derin Türkömer (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 118-120

even an ordinary horse could cost a few hundred *akçes*; and a good quality horse could go up to 20 gold pieces.¹⁶⁴

Camels were slow but sturdy, and could carry at least twice the load horses could carry, therefore they costed twice the horses.¹⁶⁵ From time to time orders were issued to determine this maximum load for camels, saying that the maximum weight to be loaded on camels should not exceed 10 kile (256 kilograms).¹⁶⁶ They ate little and had long strides.¹⁶⁷ Also, from the merchants' perspective, camels had the advantage of being able to travel even in the absence of roads.¹⁶⁸

The *fetva* records of 18th century indicate that camels were mostly used in long distance travels, especially around Makkah, Medinah, Damascus and İzmir. The disputes are on the death of the animals along the way or on the confirmation of delivery of the goods when a camel rider is hired to transport a cargo. If the hired camel dies or escapes because of the negligence of the rider, he has to pay the value of the camel to its owner.¹⁶⁹ When there is a dispute on weather the camel rider actually delivered the cargo

¹⁶⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlıda Kentler ve Kentliler*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları (İstanbul: 2000), 60

¹⁶⁵ Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *XVII. Asır Ortalarında Türkiye Üzerinden İran'a Seyahat*, trans. Ertuğrul Gültekin, (İstanbul:1980), 53

¹⁶⁶ Ümit Ekin, *XVII.-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma*, (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Tarih Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2002), 61

¹⁶⁷ Hans Dernschwam, *İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya Seyahat Günlüğü*, Yaşar Önen(trans.), (Ankara:1992), 267

¹⁶⁸ Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, (Cambridge University Press: 2006), 42

¹⁶⁹ A *fetva* on this subject in *Fetâvâ-yı Abdurrahim*, V. II, p. 186-187, cited in Özcan, *Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı*, p. 262:

Q: If Zeyd hires Amr's camel to carry fabrics to another town, and on the way, while passing a bridge, the camel trips and falls into the river together with the loads, does Zayd have to pay the value of the camel to Amr?

A: Yes, he does.

to its destination, the word of the camel rider is counted for.¹⁷⁰ These kind of transport contracts were done mostly orally at those times.

Hiring a horse for riding or a carhorse for carrying loads before long journeys was possible and there are records of fetva concerning the regulation of these. We understand that the payment for hiring the horses were done at the end of the journey according to the number of days the animals were used. Also if the travel route passes through a highly dangerous (*muhataralı*) location, the rent for the animal would be higher due to higher risk. The days that were spent at the resting stations en route would also be counted in the total duration of the journey.¹⁷¹ If the horses were harmed due to loading them excessively and more than the specified weight and time, the owner of the animal could claim a compensation.¹⁷² In case of a damage caused by a natural disaster, an accident or an attack from bandits, no compensation would be needed.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ A fetva on this subject in Fetâvâ-yı Feyziyye, p. 458, cited in Özcan, Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı, p. 263:

Q: If Zeyd hires Amr to transport coffee to a land, and Zeyd claims that Amr did not deliver the entire load, but took some portion of it for himself, can Zeyd ask for compensation, even if Amr denies this allegation and swears that he did deliver all of the load?

A: No he cannot.

¹⁷¹ A fetva on this subject in Fetâvâ-yı Abdurrahim, V. II, p. 106, cited in Özcan, Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı, p.247:

Q: Zeyd hires a horse before traveling to a distant land, He hires a horse from Amr and agrees to pay 35 Akça for each day. On the way to his destination, he stays at some menzils overnight. Can Amr charge Zeyd for the days he spent in menzils?

A: Yes he can

¹⁷² A fetva on this subject in Fetâvâ-yı Âli Efendi, V. II, 138, cited in Özcan, Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı, p. 249:

Q: If Zeyd hires a horse from Amr for 10 days, but Zeyd rides the horse 20 days more and causes the animal weaken and lose its value, can Amr want compensation for the money he lost?

A: Yes, he can.

¹⁷³ A fetva on this subject in Fetâvâ-yı Abdurrahim, V. II, 182, cited in Özcan, Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı, p. 251:

Common people preferred donkeys as they were cheaper to rent and could keep up with camels in a caravan.¹⁷⁴ Donkeys were used more frequently than other transport animals among the villagers of central Anatolian cities such as Konya and Ankara. Certain craftsmen such as tinsmiths were more mobile than others and donkeys were convenient for traveling and carrying their goods.

The rules and practices on mule and donkey hiring are similar to horse hiring. The most common problem occurring in the fetva records about donkeys are on overloading these animals. Because donkeys can endure heavy weights, their misuse is more common. In the fetva records, the mufti is asked if a man hires a donkey to carry 2 kiles of wheat but loads the animal with 4 kiles, and the donkey dies because of this, does he have to pay the value of the donkey to its owner as compensation. The answer to this question is yes.¹⁷⁵ If there is any harm given to an animal on purpose, the kadi imposes an extra penalty for this.

3.3 Measures and Arrangements for Civilian Travels

Civilians could travel alone, join a caravan of merchants, hire someone as a guide and guard or pay mekkaris to transport the items they wanted to send somewhere. If more than one person had business at a distance, they could either hire a *mekkareci* collectively or could designate one person among themselves to deal with their businesses and share the travel expenses of him. Before heading up for a trip, people could ask help from

Q: If Zeyd hires a horse from Amr for a trip; and while on the way bandits attack him and take his horse, can Amr want compensation for his horse from Zeyd?

A: No he cannot.

¹⁷⁴ Faroqhi, *Osmanlıda Kentler ve Kentliler*, 61

¹⁷⁵ Mecma'u'l- mesâil, v. 103b- 104a, cited in Özcan, *Fetvalar Işığında Osmanlı Esnafı*, 260

frequent travelers for directions to their destination. Merchants or *mekkarecis* would know the routes, road conditions etc. Shorter routes could sometimes be too rough to travel, so a longer route would be picked. While traveling, security of roads was a big concern for civilian travelers, therefore traveling for fun was very rare. Voyages to long distances was ventured only if it was absolutely necessary, and traveling alone for a civilian was only possible for short distances. For long distance journeys, joining a merchant or hajj caravan was the best option.

In his travelogue, Hans Dernschwam reports that non-military people, ordinary civilians cannot travel from one place to another easily. The merchants who need to go other places come together and travel as a group, and they hire either someone who is known at their destination or a janissary to accompany them. He adds that Ottoman lands are too distant from one another, the roads are too desolate and full of bandits, therefore traveling in groups is preferred.¹⁷⁶

Traveling to long distances for civilians was so unpredictable that, the travelers sometimes had to make arrangements for the time they spent away from their homes or would have to make arrangements because of the possibility of not being able to return. In the court registers we see examples of agreements where a traveler designates a representative in front of the kadi and witnesses, and allows him to divorce him from his wife in case he did not come back from his journey in a specified period of time. In a court register from Konya, dated 12 Rebî'ü'l- âhir 1083/7 August 1672, this period is

¹⁷⁶ Hans Dernschwam, İstanbul ve Anadolu'ya Seyahat Günlüğü, Trans.Yaşar Önen, (Ankara:1992), 97

three years¹⁷⁷ whereas in another register dated 17 Rebî'ü'l-âhir 1083 /12 August 1672, it is three hundred days.¹⁷⁸ Looking at many other examples of this kind¹⁷⁹, it is possible to say that traveling to another land (*aher diyar*) was expected to last from three months to three years in general, but mostly one year was mentioned. However the court registers do not specify the distance of these journeys and simply call them as *aher diyar*, meaning another land. Other examples present that sometimes people who took off for long journeys did not come back. After waiting for a significant period of time, their families applied to the court requiring a divorce to remarry. In one court register, a woman wants to divorce his husband, who did not come back from his journey for ten years.¹⁸⁰ These arrangements indicate that for civilians, going to distant places was seen as a dangerous, risky and unpredictable action, therefore they had to think of every possibility before they left.

Individuals would also take personal precautions when they set off for a journey. They would wear clothes that did not reveal their identities, or would hide their valuables if they had not already given them to mekkaris or other trusted intermediaries for their transportation. In fact, a way of expediting long distance transportation of money was done through a financial instrument called *süftece*. *Süftece* was a bill of exchange or letter of credit which enabled the owner of the money to be paid in cash and in the same currency upon arrival at his destination. These kind of transactions were strictly inspected

¹⁷⁷ KŞS no:16, 25-1 “...üç sene mukaddem âher diyâra gitmek murâd eyledikde müslümanlar huzûrunda üç sene temâmında gelüp zevcem merkûme Râbî’a’ya mülâki olmazsam sen benim vekîlim olup talâk-ı bâyin ile tatlik eylesin..”

¹⁷⁸ KŞS no:16, 27-5 “... üç yüz gün temâmına dek gelmezsem sen benim vekîlim olup zevcem Eşe Hatun’u talâk-ı bâyin ile tatlik eyle...”

¹⁷⁹ ŞŞS no: 2142, 140,141

¹⁸⁰ KŞS No:16, 66-4.”...târîh-i kitâbdan on sene mukaddem mahmiye-i merkûmeden kalkup âhar diyâra gitdikden sonra zevcesi merkûme ‘Âyşe’yi tatlik eylemediğine yemîn teklîf olundukda...

by the local kadıs to ensure prompt payment. *Süfteces* were commonly used in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Anatolia, Aegean Islands, Crimea, Syria, Egypt and when trading with Iran.¹⁸¹ Halil Sahillioğlu examines the use of *süfteces* in the Ottoman state system and society. He explains how they were used among Ottoman and western merchants, and presents examples from the 15th and 16th century court registers of Bursa which was one of the trade centers where *süftece* documents are frequently seen.¹⁸²



¹⁸¹ Şevket Pamuk, A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire, (Cambridge University Press: 2000), 84

¹⁸² Halil Sahillioğlu, “Bursa Kadı Sicillerinde İç ve Dış Ödemeler Aracı Olarak “Kitâbü’l-Kadı” ve “Süftece”ler”, Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri, (Ankara: 1975), 103-141

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In this study, the conditions and methods of the travels of the Ottoman subjects based on the restrictions of the technological level and natural circumstances of the pre-modern era were examined. As argued in the introduction part, the evaluations based on our sources indicate that contrary to the common assumption, traveling for Ottoman subjects was not uncommon during the pre-modern era. Despite the lack of a state organization only for the civilians and despite the challenging conditions of roads, the Ottoman subjects traveled for various purposes and found methods of overcoming the difficulties of traveling.

The Ottoman Empire in this period was essentially a military state and the existence of *menzil* and *derbend* institutions prove that the organizations for transportation was mostly for state officials. However, establishing a secure environment for commercial activity was also vital for supplying the needs in the whole empire, therefore the transportation institutions eased the conditions of traveling for the merchants too.

This study showed that an individual who had to travel to other lands for the purpose of trading goods had two options. He would either travel personally, or his contacts and counterparts traveled on behalf of him. We see that the most common distance the

merchants traveled was the nearest local market, but for longer distances, he could join a merchant or hajj caravan, or hire someone as a guide and guard. If he did not want to make the journey, he could hire a mekkari to transport the goods. If more than one person had business at a distance, they could either hire a mekkari collectively or could designate one person among themselves to deal with their businesses and share the travel expenses of him. The travel records examined in this study are consistent with the research showing that traveling alone was not very common in the pre-modern period. The reason for this is both the long durations and the security risks of the journeys.

The analysis of this study present that, individuals made use of non-governmental institutions and facilities during their journeys. They traveled on foot or hired transport animals; stayed in hans, caravanserais, *zaviyes*, tents, or at local people's houses as a guest. They also took precautions before they sett off for a journey. *Süftece* documents which were used instead of money reveal that they found ways of protecting their valuables while traveling to long distances. Another aspect of long distance journeys was their unpredictability. The primary sources used in our study indicate the need for individuals to make long term arrangements before they took off for long distance journeys. The divorce agreements which would be valid in case of not returning from journeys after a certain period of time confirm the unpredictability and risks of long journeys, as well as the efforts of individuals to take precautions against the unexpected consequences of traveling to far distances.

It was also presented in this study that traveling was very risky and challenging for all travelers in the pre-modern Ottoman era. *Derbend* institution both served state officers as well as civilians, especially during highly perilous times. Albeit unavoidable risks of

bandit attacks, caravans were preferred as means of traveling to long distances, and Hans and *caravanserais* provided safe accommodation for all travelers. Individuals also found ways to protect themselves during their journeys. They hired *Mekkareci* guides who would both guide and protect them along their route. Foreigners traveled in the Ottoman territories too. They needed travel permits and were allocated *Yasakçı* officers if they were a part of a foreign delegation. Foreign merchants are known to disguise themselves as Muslims during their journeys so as to protect themselves, but other than that, they could benefit all the means of accommodation equally with Muslims.

The abundance of the official documents used in this thesis covered the issues related to the journeys made for trade purposes or transportation agreements. The reason for this is that during the pre-modern era, the travels made for pleasure or personal needs were not recorded, except for the travelogues. The issues on travels in the official documents are only mentioned when there is a problem or a dispute. Even when the dispute is mentioned, the purpose of the journey is not specified. In the documents, the general term ‘*aher diyar*’, other land is used, which does not provide any information on the destination, even if it was made for personal reasons. Therefore, in this study, it was not possible to find primary sources that specifically reveal the purposes for traveling for reasons other than trade. However, it is still possible to derive the conclusion of the existence of leisurely travels by examining the *caravanserais*, *zaviyes* and *imarets*. These institutions which were primarily built to serve travelers, validate the mobility of the members of Ottoman society in this era.

Similarly, it was not possible to draw any conclusions on the frequency of civilian travels based on the examined sources. Nevertheless, depending on the knowledge that only after

the 18th century the official traveling permission documents were used in a systematic way suggests that the mobility of civilians was not frequent enough to necessitate official arrangements.

Despite such limitations, this study demonstrated the means and methods of overcoming the challenges of traveling among civilians in the pre-modern Ottoman society. The results derived from examining the primary sources, which are supported by the travelogues, bring us to the conclusion that the Ottoman subjects were not immobile contrary to common assumptions and traveled for various purposes, using private means and state facilities.

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