

# The Janissary Army during the Reign of Sultan Mahmud II of Ottoman Turkey, 1808-1826

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**Abstract:** The Janissary Army was originally a key part of the Ottoman Turkish military and helped conquer parts of Asia and Europe. Over time, however, its members began to work in politics, business, and other areas, losing their military character. Because of this drop in numbers, Sultan Mahmud II disbanded the corps on June 15, 1826. This study seeks to investigate: This research aims to examine the origins, transformation, decline, and dissolution of the Janissary Force, as well as the consequences of its disbandment, through historical research encompassing topic selection, heuristic resource collection, source criticism, chronological interpretation, and historiography. The findings indicate that the Janissary Army, formed through the devshirme system, evolved from a military corps into a powerful socio-political force whose resistance to reform led to Sultan Mahmud II's decisive dissolution of the corps, marking the beginning of Ottoman modernization. Mahmud II created the Mansur Army, which was trained in the European way. This was a big step toward military reform and centralization.

**Abstrak:** Tentara Janissari pada awalnya merupakan bagian penting dari militer Turki Utsmani dan berperan dalam menaklukkan berbagai wilayah di Asia dan Eropa. Namun, seiring waktu, anggotanya mulai terlibat dalam politik, bisnis, dan bidang lain sehingga kehilangan karakter militernya. Karena penurunan peran tersebut, Sultan Mahmud II membubarkan pasukan ini pada 15 Juni 1826. Penelitian ini bertujuan menelaah asal-usul, transformasi, kemunduran, dan pembubaran Janissari, serta konsekuensi dari pembubarannya melalui metode penelitian sejarah yang mencakup pemilihan topik, pengumpulan sumber heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi kronologis, dan historiografi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Tentara Janissari, yang dibentuk melalui sistem devshirme, berkembang dari korps militer menjadi kekuatan sosial-politik yang besar, tetapi penolakannya terhadap reformasi mendorong Sultan Mahmud II untuk secara tegas membubarkannya, yang kemudian menandai awal modernisasi Utsmani. Mahmud II mendirikan Tentara Mansur yang dilatih dengan cara Eropa, sebuah langkah penting menuju reformasi militer dan sentralisasi kekuasaan.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ottoman Turkey Empire was formed around the 14th century in Anatolia, a region once part of the Byzantine Empire. Originating from a nomadic group of Turkey moving into the region, this group is known for their horseback riding and war expertise. One of the successful nomadic groups of Turkey was the Seljuks, who moved west and eventually settled in Byzantine territory after defeating them in 1071.

After the defeat of the Seljuks by the Mongols in the mid-14th century, the Turkish group under Osman's leadership took over the abandoned territory. Osman and his followers established power near Constantinople, using Byzantine weakness to expand their territory (Ayva, 2012). In the mid-14th century, they began to enter Europe, conquering Thrace, Macedonia, and others, until finally conquering



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Constantinople in 1453, marking the end of the Roman Empire in the East (Niewöhner, 2024).

The Ottoman Turkey Empire flourished thanks to its adaptability to the new environment and Islamic law's strict but flexible application. Although it consisted of various tribes and religions, Islam became the foundation of this Empire (Demirdağ, 2023). The conquest of non-Muslim territories forced them to learn tolerance to maintain the continuity of the Empire.

The Janissary corps, established in the late 14th century, was a crucial element of Ottoman military power (Goston, 2011). Recruited through the *devşirme* system, Christian boys underwent intensive training to become Muslim warriors. This process involved coerced labour, weapons training, and the formation of a distinct masculine identity rooted in military prowess and brotherhood (Yılmaz, 2023). The Janissaries played a vital role in expanding Ottoman territories and were considered Europe's dominant military force from 1300 to the mid-1700s (Uyar & Erickson, 2009). However, by the 17th century, the corps began to face challenges, including a decline in discipline and obedience (Karaca, 2022). Despite these issues, the Ottoman military remained a significant force until 1918, undergoing various reforms to preserve its effectiveness. The legacy of the Janissaries continues to influence the modern Turkish Army (Uyar & Erickson, 2009).

The Ottoman Turkey Empire was one of the Islamic Empires that later significantly contributed to history. In its heyday, the territory of the Ottoman Turkey Empire stretched from Western Asia to parts of Europe. The history of the Ottoman Empire of Turkey can be divided into several parts. The first part is the early era of the establishment of the Ottoman Turkey Empire, which ranges from 1200-1400 AD; the second part is the glory era of the Ottoman Turkey Empire which ranges from 1400-1500 AD, and the third part is the era of the decline of the Ottoman Turkey Empire which ranges from 1500-1700 AD (Awaad & Nursoy-Demir, 2023; Demirdağ, 2023; Skene, 1851). The establishment of the Ottoman Turkey Empire began with the invasion of Asia Minor in 1240 AD by Ertogul with more than four thousand cavalry. A conflict occurred between Ertogul's army and the Mongol army, and Ertogul achieved victory. The defeat of the Mongols, who were also enemies of the Seljuk Empire, gave the Seljuk Sultan at that time a gift in the form of one of the regions in the Byzantine Empire (Ayva, 2012).

The Seljuk Kingdom gave the northwestern

region of Anatolia to the nomadic peoples brought by Ertogul. They settled in the territory granted by the Seljuk Empire and became vassals in the service of the Seljuk Empire (Dargin, 2023). This lasted until the Mongols invaded again and occupied Persian territory, and continued to move to Russia. By 1300 AD, the Seljuk Kingdom of the Mongols invaded the central region of Anatolia and destroyed the Seljuk Kingdom (Evered & Evered, 2020).

Some accounts loosely trace the roots of the Janissary system back to the late 13th century, when the early Ottoman beylik under Osman I in 1299–1323 (Todorov, 1969a) began employing captured Christian youths and incorporating them into military service. These early practices were more ad hoc and not yet institutionalised as a standing corps (Karaca, 2022). Most mainstream historians agree that the Janissary corps was formally organised under Orhan I in 1324–1362, likely around the 1330s–1360s. The *devşirme* system (systematic recruitment of Christian boys) was developed later, especially under Murad I in 1362–1389, which gave the corps its distinctive character (Pamuk, 2004).

After the defeat suffered by the Seljuk Empire, the Turks, led by Osman, the son of Ertogul, invaded the Seljuk territories controlled by the Mongols. In his conquest, Osman was accompanied by the *ghazi* (Glickman, 2000; Williams, 2011), who already recognised and understood the areas to be conquered. The emergence of Turkey, which has a strong military force, then made it known as a warfighter.

The conquests pioneered by Osman and subsequent sultans followed me to expand the territory. From 1300 to 1500 AD, Ottoman Turkey conquered the surrounding region that encompassed Asia Minor, eastern Africa, and several European regions such as Bulgaria, Serbia, and Macedonia (Karligkioti et al., 2022). In the middle to late 15th century, Ottoman Turkey, under the leadership of Sultan Mehmed II, succeeded in conquering Constantinople, which was under Byzantine rule. The success of Sultan Mehmed II in conquering Constantinople is a manifestation of the hope of Muslims who have tried to conquer Constantinople since the time of the Umayyad caliph (Gómez-Morón et al., 2021).

The territorial expansion carried out by Ottoman Turkey was directly proportional to the expansion of the military aspect. The Janissary Army was formed to compensate for the territorial expansion measures taken by Ottoman Turkey. Initially, the existence of the Janissary was not as

the central unit in the military force but as a bodyguard for the royal family (Stiles, 1989). However, in its development, Ottoman Turkey needed a military force capable of being on the front lines of the war (Schibille et al., 2022).

The military training given to the Janissary Force can be said to be very harsh. Non-Muslim sons taken from the territories conquered by Ottoman Turkey were obliged to convert to Islam. If the children disobey and do not obey the rules, they will be punished (Dargin, 2023); Such as being beaten with rattan, forbidden to eat and drink, and swimming in ice-filled rivers to get used to hard training. The Janissary army grew into a feared military force. Apart from its number and capabilities, the Janissary has complete weapons. Unlike traditional swords and spears, Janissaries began using rifles in the early 15th century. Under the reign of Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih (Mehmed II), the number of troops using rifles as firearms increased and became one of the reasons for the success of Ottoman Turkey in conquering Constantinople (Aydın et al., 2022).

Entering the 17th century, the invasion of Ottoman Turkey was no longer as intense as in the early days of the Kingdom. Statehood problems, such as regional and military management problems, often occur within the country. The Janissary's once-strict and rigid recruitment system began to loosen due to the country's need to increase the number of soldiers during the conflict with Austria. During the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), the Sultan formed a new military force and ordered the abolition of other military organisations (Vadas & Baráth, 2024). The Janissary, as a military institution that had survived since the formation of the Empire, did not accept the decision made by Sultan Selim III. In May 1807 and July 1808, as a result of the reforms initiated by Sultan Selim III, two Sultans (Sultan Selim III and Sultan Mustafa IV) were killed (Boyacıoğlu, 2015).

After Sultan Mustafa IV died, Sultan Mahmud II ascended the throne as his successor. Sultan Mahmud II is known as the leader who launched reforms to the overall system of government in Turkey. The Reform Movement carried out by Sultan Mahmud II included the changes he made to the Janissari Army. The Janissary Army has not only been a military institution but has penetrated the political and economic aspects of the country (Eren, 2011).

The influence of the Janissary Army in state politics can influence public opinion and move the people because they are considered pillars of state

order (Garfinkle, 2016). This was the basis for Sultan Mahmud II's decision to disband the Janissary Army in 1826 because of the initiation of the military force to carry out a rebellion. Janissari's political position, with the people's sympathy and support, allowed him to carry out a rebellion, so Mahmud II saw Janissary as a threat (Ortug et al., 2023).

Despite the wealth of literature on the Ottoman Empire and its military might, there is still a noticeable lack of in-depth research on the Janissary Army under Sultan Mahmud II, especially in 1808–1826. The Janissaries are frequently cited concerning Ottoman military victories, although usually either in passing or in light of their prior contributions to the empire's growth. The internal dynamics, political power, and eventual collapse of the Janissary Corps during the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II have received little attention. This essay aims to close this gap by offering a thorough examination of the Janissary Army during this pivotal time, looking at the reasons behind its dissolution and their significance in the political context.

Based on the background that has been described, the main purpose of writing this paper is to discuss the dynamics that occurred in the Janissary Army during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II. This is because there is still a lack of research on the Janissary Force. Research related to Ottoman Turkey mostly mentions the Janissaries as a large army that played a role in the conquest of Turkey and is described only at a glance. The period that the research focuses on is 1808-1826. In that year, Turkey was under the leadership of Sultan Mahmud II. The reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) began from 1808 to 1839, but the author chose the period 1808-1826 because the Janissari was dissolved in 1826. This research will explore the historical side of the glory days of the Janissary Army, which was in power for more than 10 years, with various perspectives from the main goal of a military force: to become a weapon of control. This article provides a scientific contribution to world history, reflecting how the Ottoman Empire built a military system.

## **METHOD**

The type of research uses historical research methods with literature study methods and literature studies from sources and documents related to the study of the Janissary Force. The first stage in historical research is the selection of topics. The selection of topics is the basis that will later

become the framework and direction of the research. The title that has been chosen as the research topic will then take the historical researcher to the next step. The selection of topics is like laying the first stone in the construction of historical writing until later. It will become complete writing. The author's emotional closeness is related to his interest in Turkey's culture and history. The history of Turkey is thick with Islamic nuances and proves that Islam once achieved its glory during the Ottoman Empire.

Intellectual proximity relates to the author's mastery of the material to be researched. Mastery of the material to be researched can provide a big picture of theories, methods, and other points, which will then be systematically compiled as historical research. Intellectual closeness can be seen from the author's background as a History Education student. As a history education student, the author studied courses related to research topics, including the history of West Asia, the history of politics and international relations, and the fundamentals of political science.

Two types of sources can be used in historical research: primary and secondary. Primary sources are sources that are directly related to the research topic. Primary sources can be in the form of people who are witnesses to history or relics in the form of archives made when historical events occurred.

The primary sources used are books and research journals that discuss a lot about the political and military history of Ottoman Turkey. The first point to be discussed in the study is the history of the formation of the Janissary Army. The author uses several books in the first discussion, including *The Janissaries* (Chohan, 2023). The book contains information about the formation and dissolution of the Janissari. The formation of the Janissaries is also discussed in the chapter *On the Ottoman Janissaries (fourteenth-nineteenth centuries)* by Gilles Veinstein from the book *Fighting for A Living: A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500-2000*. In addition, the author also used *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* by (Murphey, 2006) which discusses the Turkish military from 1500 to 1700 AD. Primary sources can be found in the archives, which are still stored, and interviews can be conducted if there are living historical witnesses. Therefore, the topic chosen in historical research also influences the heuristic process. The period of the research topic is related to the availability of sources. Historical sources directly related to Ottoman Turkey in the author's periodisation are royal archives. In addition to royal

archives, there are letters and travel records from people who witnessed firsthand life in the Ottoman Kingdom of Turkey in the 17th century.

Verification of data sources is carried out by paying attention to two things, namely, external and internal verification. Internal verification is carried out by paying attention to the data source's physical (external) condition. If using old document sources, the researcher looks at the writing style and material that are components of the document. In this study, the documents used as primary data sources have a clear identity to ensure the credibility of historical writing and the evidence attached to it. After that, the research was conducted to present historical data about the Janissary Force using a comprehensive historiography method. The historical studies discussed include the political and military fields involved in the Janissary troops' existence.

### **FORMATION OF THE JANISSARY FORCE**

In the early days of the Ottoman Turkey Empire, territorial expansion became a priority, and military power became the key to the conquest of Asia Minor. To strengthen the army, Ottoman Turkey implemented a *devshirme* system, which gathered children from conquered territories, especially Christian communities (Ergene & Kaygun, 2011; Özcan, 2015). These children were trained to become Janissary soldiers or servants of the Sultan, considered professional recruits. This system is also a tool for Islamization and the fulfilment of labour needs. Despite protests from the local community, *Devshirme* continued as it was considered essential to the continuity of Ottoman Turkey's military and power (Bekaroğlu & Barnes, 2021). The Ottoman Turkey Empire expanded into Asia and Europe by strengthening its military, mainly by forming the Janissary Army. The *devshirme* system was used to recruit Christian children who were then trained to become Janissaries, which increased in number from 12,000 to 40,000 during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman (Türkyılmaz, 2016). The Janissary army, which was initially forbidden to marry, was changed by Sultan Selim I so that it was divided into two types: those who were married and those who were not married.

The Janissary was not only a permanent infantry unit but also became a symbol of the Sultan's power, serving as a guard at the palace and on display in state ceremonies. This army differed from other military units, such as *sipahis* and *kapikulu*, as the Janissaries were the Sultan's slaves who were chosen and trained with great discipline.

They are also equipped with firearms, making them decisive in various battles (Chaney, 2015; Şevket, 2013).

The structure of the Janissary Army is highly organised, with 101 regiments, each having a specific role, from guards to artillery. Leadership in the Janissary involved various levels of officers selected from within the army. In its heyday, the Janissary had a strict code of ethics to maintain discipline and loyalty to the Sultan. These troops served in warfare and as a powerful political and social tool in the Ottoman Turkey Empire (Coşgel et al., 2012).

### **THE ROLE OF THE JANISSARY FORCE IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL ASPECTS**

The Janissary army is considered to have suffered a setback after the reign of Sulaiman. During that time, the population of Ottoman Turkey increased. The increase in population is not only due to the arrival of immigrants but also because of the explosion of birth rates, while the death rate decreases due to peacetime (Shaw, 1976). An expansion of employment did not accompany the explosion in the birth rate. Farmers also lack land to carry out agricultural activities due to population density. The prohibition on marriage was abolished for Janissaries so that the troops, which were initially only focused on military activities, became integrated into the community's life through marriage. Married Janissaries also contributed to the increase in population density. In addition, the Janissary Army, which began to have a family, was divided between duties as a military force and meeting the family's economic needs (Yilmaz, 2011).

Around the 16th or 17th century, there were groups affiliated with the Janissaries. The group is affiliated with the Janissary for the honour, protection, and possibility of becoming a salaried permanent member (Kafadar, 2007). The group is trying to survive in poor economic conditions, as most of its members are poor young people and newcomers to Istanbul. Therefore, the group used the name Janissari as a protection, and the Janissaries got help from the group for free because, in the end, they were not paid. In the border garrison, many people paid to enlist in the Janissary to enjoy the privileges of the Janissary Force. Some of the privileges that come from being a member of the Janissary Army are being free from the city where they live, being able to work in trade, having the right to open shops, setting up stables, and

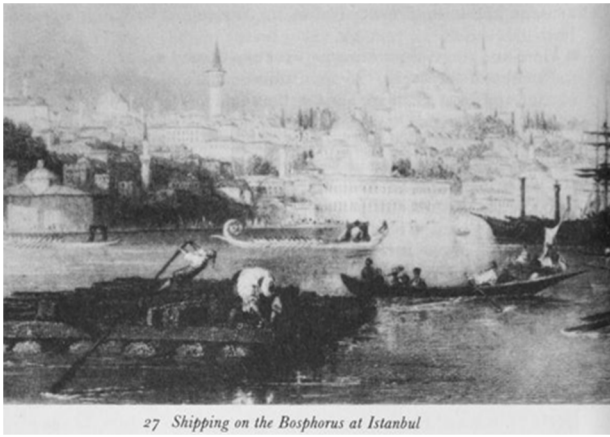
other trading activities (Porter, 1854). The social status of the Janissary Corps in the community is determined by the position and salary earned. The lower the position of a Janissarie, the lower the salary received. The salary of the Janissary Corps is only enough to meet basic needs mediocrely.

The involvement of the Janissary Army in the economic field in Ottoman Turkey began around the 16th century. Some of the factors behind the involvement of the Janissary Force in economic activities are the delay in reducing salaries and the amount of salary that is only enough to meet daily needs. As a new wave of immigrants arrives, the growing population in Istanbul also affects the market's ability to provide necessities.

The delay in the salaries of the Janissary Army and the overall economic problems in Ottoman Turkey occurred around the 16th Century (Sugar, 2012). Inflation was caused by the long war with Austria and the prolonged conflict with Persia. Ottoman Turkey at that time was a military country whose main income came from war spoils, not from trade and production. Therefore, when mercenaries began to rule in the military, and the loot in the newly conquered lands was not much, the sipahi took over the land of regional power to secure economic conditions. The economic problems of Ottoman Turkey also come from the timar involved in debt and receivables activities. The timar relied on debt to survive because there was often a discrepancy between military operations and harvest time (Tekgul, 2016).

The prolonged war between Ottoman Turkey and Austria made Ottoman Turkey move to increase the number of Janissary Troops so that there was no need to hire mercenaries. The Janissary Army, which was initially only taken from *Devshirme*, began to open recruitment for Muslims. The increased number of Janissary Troops changed the payroll system so that the Janissary Corps could earn money outside military duty (Imber, 2009). The increase in the number of Janissary Troops has made the Janissary Army a corrupt organisation at various levels. The colonels were involved in corrupt practices that filled personal pockets. The names of the fallen Janissary Troops were not reported, so the salaries that the fallen Janissari Troops should have received were then taken by irresponsible individuals (Wheatcroft, 1995).

Some of the Janissaries were engaged in ordinary trading activities, but others formed plots to forcibly collect tribute from wealthy merchants, such as building contractors and sea merchants (Kafadar, 2007). The operations of the Janissary



**Figure 1.** Freight delivery in the Bosphorus Strait, Istanbul. Source: (Lewis, 1971).

Army that formed the conspiracy were all carried out in the trade activities related to the eateries, such as bakers, butchers, and coffee shops scattered throughout the city. Janissaries used their position as a military force to threaten and disrupt the supply of traders' commodities. Items brought by ship are not allowed to be picked up before the merchant pays tribute to the Janissary Force. The activity of withdrawing tribute from the traders carried out by the Janissary Force is a detrimental and unsettling act. In 1584, a group of merchants sent a decree to stop the activities of the Janissaries to the detriment of the baker's business owners. Janissaries take advantage of their social status as military institutions to commit fraud. The Janissary forces dominate economic and commercial activities in the Belgrade and Aleppo regions (Coşgel et al., 2012).

Until the 18th century, the involvement of the Janissary Army in trade activities began to interfere with the function of the Janissary Army as a state military body. Trading activities are carried out during assignments in military operations. Some do not even participate in military operations so they can still take care of their business (Sunar, 2006).

The military power of the Janissary Army became a factor in political change during the founding of Ottoman Turkey. The era of Ottoman Turkey's decline after its heyday in 1450-1550 was given the term because of the consecutive defeats of Ottoman Turkey to the Habsburgs in Austria and the Romanovs in Russia (Ágoston, 2011). In the early 17th century, after the heyday of Ottoman Turkey under the rule of Solomon, the Ulama, the military group of the Janissari Army, and influential nobles began to challenge the legitimacy of the Sultan's rule (Sariyannis, 2015). The Janissary army could use its power against the Sultan or other state



**Figure 2.** Illustration of Aga, General of the Janissary Force. Source: Rycout (1972).

officials. Some of the rebellions carried out by the Janissary Army are as follows: The abdication of the Throne of Ibrahim I in 1648; The Rebellion of the Aga of the Janissary Army in 1651; Rebellion against Ipsir Mustafa Pasha for planning to disband the Janissary Army in 1655; The Vakvakiye Incident in 1656; The abdication of Mehmed IV in 1687; The Edirne Incident in 1703; and the Patrona Halil Incident in 1730 (Kafadar, 2007).

The rebellion carried out by the Janissary Army was, on average, due to delayed salaries, unpaid donations, and a decline in the currency's value. These factors were not proportional to the burden of the Janissary Army's military life, so the Janissary Army began to feel restless and cause riots. In addition, the Janissari Army also faced the threat of disbandment planned by the Sultan.

The rebellion during the inflationary period occurred not because of military problems but because of economic and political aspects. The rebellion carried out by the Janissari Army is a social movement because the Janissari Army is a representation of the merchant and artisan class (Baldwin, 2015; Kafadar, 2007). Although the

Janissary Army is a group formed to be fully loyal and serve the Sultan, the Janissary Army considers that the loyalty given to the Sultan still has a commensurate mutual responsibility. When the Sultan ignores the duties that must be fulfilled by the Janissary Force, in this case, it is about the right in the form of salary. Then, the Janissary Force has the right to give to the Sultan.

## DISCUSSION

The arrangement and improvement of the Footrest Domain and its military framework, especially the Janissary powers, show a wealthy ground for discussing the complexities of state-building, military advancement, and social elements within the pre-modern world. The foundation of the Hassock Realm within the 14th century marked the start of an effective Islamic state that developed out of the leftovers of the Byzantine Realm, capitalising on the shortcomings of its neighbours (Wei et al., 2024). The rise of the Ottomans under Osman I and their possible success in Constantinople in 1453 emphasises the key significance of military development, versatility, and the utilisation of devout and social components to solidify control (Kakaliagos & Ninis, 2018).

The creation of the Janissary Corps represents the Hassock Empire's imaginative approach to military organisation (Caya, 2015). The *devshirme* framework, which persuasively enrolled Christian boys from prevailing domains and converted them to Islam, was not, as it were, a strategy of guaranteeing a steadfast and viable military drive but also an implication of social building. The Janissaries became a first-class military unit, recognised by their teaching, dependability, and utilisation of advanced weaponry like guns. Over time, in any case, their integration into civilian life, especially after the lifting of the marriage boycott, was driven to shifts in their part from simply military to socio-political on-screen characters, reflecting broader changes in Hassock society and economy.

The Janissary Corps' inclusion in financial and political matters highlights the complex relationship between military education and state control within the Hassock Domain. As the Domain confronted financial challenges, counting swelling and a developing populace, the Janissaries progressively locked in in exchange and other financial exercises, sometimes driving to debasement and the disintegration of their military viability. This financial association, with deferred compensations and declining living benchmarks,

fueled a few Janissary uprisings, which impacted political changes inside the Domain. The Janissary revolts, driven by both financial grievances and political desire, emphasise the complex connection between military powers and the soundness of the state, as well as the potential for such strengths to challenge or indeed oust established specialists when their interface is debilitated (Boyacıoğlu, 2015).

The dissolution of the Janissary Corps in 1826, known as the "Auspicious Incident," marked a pivotal moment in Ottoman modernisation efforts (Arslan, 2011). Sultan Mahmud II's violent suppression of the Janissaries, who had long resisted change, paved the way for the creation of a new, modern army called the Victorious (Levy, 1971). This event was part of a broader reform agenda aimed at centralising state power and dismantling the *ancien régime*, including changes to the *timar* system, tax farms, and provincial autonomy (Quataert, 1997). The military, particularly its officer corps, played a crucial role in modernisation efforts, becoming a centre for liberal ideas and Western-style education. However, the process of military reform in the 18th century was complex, involving more than just a conflict between reformists and conservatives (Levy, 1982). These reforms had far-reaching consequences for Ottoman society and laid the groundwork for further modernisation in the 19th century (Quataert, 1997).

Sultan Mahmud II's abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826 marked a pivotal moment in Ottoman military modernisation. The establishment of the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, a new army organised along European lines, aimed to address the empire's military weaknesses (Kadercan, 2013). This reform involved recruiting soldiers from various empire regions and employing foreign experts to train the new forces (Coşgel et al., 2012). However, the transition faced challenges, including assimilating old army elements, reorganising military education, and managing budget constraints (Todorov, 1969b). Despite these efforts, the new army struggled against Mehmed Ali's forces in Anatolia, partly due to persistent rivalries and factionalism (Aksan, 2021). Nonetheless, the reform initiated a broader modernisation process, with officer training becoming a crucial modernising force in the empire (Karaca, 2022).

The Ottoman Empire's modernisation efforts in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were driven by the need to address military, economic, and

administrative challenges (Çolak, 2024). A pivotal moment in this process was Sultan Mahmud II's abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826, which had long resisted change, paving the way for a modern army. This reform was part of a broader strategy to adapt institutions to changing circumstances, allowing the empire to outlast its contemporaries in Asia and Western Europe (Pamuk, 2004). The Tanzimat period (1839-1876) saw extensive reforms in governance, fiscal policies, and civil rights, although these faced resistance from entrenched structures. While the central bureaucracy demonstrated flexibility in adapting institutions, its focus on preserving traditional order ultimately stifled private capital accumulation and the creation of a broad power base, contributing to the empire's eventual disintegration (Şevket, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The Janissary Army was a military force that had an important role in the conquest carried out by Ottoman Turkey. Ottoman Turkey stood under the leadership of Osman I, who took over the remnants of the Seljuk Empire after Genghis Khan's Mongol Army destroyed it. Members of the Janissary Army were collected from taxes withdrawn from the conquered areas. The system used to collect taxes in the form of a boy is called *Devshirme*. Most *devshirme* children were trained hard to become foot soldiers, while some received an education in the capital to serve the Sultan directly.

The Janissary Army had a significant role when it became the ultimate offensive in Ottoman Turkey's military plan. The number of Janissary Troops continued to increase in tandem with the expansion of the territory carried out by Ottoman Turkey until its territory stretched to the border with Europe. In its development, Janissari began to explore other aspects of state life, such as politics, society, and economics. This made the Janissari lose its identity as a state military institution. The military function of the Janissary Forces declined and often failed in assigned military operations. Several sultans, such as Sultan Osman II and Sultan Selim III, attempted to disband the Janissari Army but failed because the Janissari responded violently with a rebellion.

Learning from the failures of previous sultans, Sultan Mahmud II formed a careful plan to dissolve the Janissaries. Sultan Mahmud II took an implicit approach to the elements of state power to be on his side. In June 1826, Sultan Mahmud II was ready to face the rebellion of the Janissari Army and succeeded in disbanding the Janissari Army. Sultan

Mahmud II ordered his subordinates to ensure that no Janissaries were left and officially announced the disbandment of the Janissary Army throughout the country on June 17, 1826.

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