THE ORIGIN OF THE JANISSARIES

By J. A. B. PALMER, B.A.

THE account which von Hammer gave of the origin of the Janissaries was accepted and followed by subsequent writers from the eighteen twenties to the nineteen twenties.\(^1\) Then its authority began to be shaken, particularly by an article published by F. Giese in 1924, in which he gave the extracts from the chronicle of 'Ashiqpashazâde relative to the origin of the Janissaries.\(^2\) Giese based his revised narrative only on those extracts: he himself was already editing a text of the Anonymous Chronicle (to be mentioned presently) and was presently to re-edit the text of 'Ashiqpashazâde, while a few years later Babinger was to discover and edit the text of the chronicle of Uruj. One reason why Giese's article cannot be treated as definitive is that these other texts were not then equally available. There has been further discussion and the latest writers on the subject, Professor H. A. R. Gibb and Mr. H. Bowen, pronounce the origin of the Janissaries as still uncertain.\(^3\)

This uncertainty can be removed, I believe, by a fresh investigation of the sources, taking them in their due order and considering their inter-relationship. The earliest sources are three Turkish chronicles, composed in the fifteenth century but comprising fourteenth century material. There are slight discrepancies between one of these and the other two in the passages relevant to our purpose, but these can be explained, and the three chronicles together give us a clear and self-consistent account of the matter, an account which I shall call the Chroniclers' Narrative. It has been already noticed by several writers


that the Chroniclers' Narrative contains no reference to the devshirme or tribute of Christian children, and it is now generally recognized that this was not part of the original institution. Our next set of sources consists of two Latin writers of the mid-fifteenth century, the Franciscan Fr. Bartholomaeus de Jano and the Dominican Fr. Georgius de Hungaria, who establish the date of the introduction of the devshirme. Next, in the first decade of the sixteenth century, we have to consider the account to be found in the Hasht Bihisht of Idris al-Bitlisi, which at the end of the sixteenth century was adopted by the two most famous of Ottoman historians, Sa'd ad-din and 'Ali; this account, which I shall call the Idrisian Version, is the main cause of confusion because, while it is really based on the Chroniclers' Narrative, it introduces certain re-arrangements of that material which have misled subsequent writers. The confusion was further increased in the sixteenth century and subsequently by the circulation of some quite legendary stories, which I shall call the Bektashi Legends, concerning the connection of Haji Bektash, the founder or eponym of the Bektashi Dervishes, with the origin of the Janissaries. By the end of the seventeenth century, through translations or oral transmission, scholars in Europe had in front of them the Chroniclers' Narrative, the Idrisian Version, and the Bektashi Legends; the uncritical mingling of these three sources brought confusion and uncertainty into the pages of European scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and even into those of d'Ohsson and von Hammer who, however, mainly accepted (and imposed on their successors) the Idrisian Version, instead of the Chroniclers' Narrative.

I shall now attempt to amplify and justify this summary statement of the sources and their inter-relationship, and I hope in this way to show what are the true facts (so far as we have record of them) concerning the origin of the Janissaries.

(i) The Chroniclers' Narrative: (a) The White Caps

There are three chronicles to be taken into account, namely, (a) the Chronicle of Uruj, (b) the Anonymous Chronicle passing under the title of Ta'rikh-i-al-i-'Othmân, and (c) the Chronicle
of 'Ashiqpashazade. There is a statement in 'Ashiqpashazade that he derived his narrative of the early reigns down to Bayezid I from the work of a certain Yakhshi Faqih, the son of a certain Isḥāq, who had been an imām of Orkhan. All three of our chronicles agree closely, and they seem to go back to the same source, viz. Yakhshi. He was alive in 1413, when 'Ashiqpashazade was in personal contact with him. Thus, Yakhshi must have been born not later than the beginning of the reign of Murad I (1359), and his father had been a man of standing under Orkhan. Consequently, what our chronicles take from Yakhshi, that is to say, the portions down to c. 1420 including their accounts of the origins of the Janissaries, comprises traditions recorded by Yakhshi at the beginning of the fifteenth century as to events of the previous century falling within his own lifetime or the lifetime of his father.¹

The Chronicle of Uruj has been identified, so far, in two manuscripts, one at Oxford and one at Cambridge, of which the latter is undoubtedly an abbreviation of a fuller text represented by the former.² The Anonymous Chronicle survives in numerous copies, which have been carried on by different

¹ These chronicles are now available in printed editions with introductions, and in one case a translation as follows:


References will be to these editions.

For further biographical and bibliographical information concerning these writers and their works (including Yakhshi Faqih) see F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen* (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 10, 23, 35 ff., 39 ff., 73 ff.

² The Oxford MS. ends in a.H. 872, the Cambridge MS. has been continued to a.H. 899, but over their common extent the latter is much shorter than the former and the effect of abbreviation is noticeable in many passages. There are, however, curious and fairly consistent differences of orthography and phraseology which seem to indicate derivation from a common original, not one text from the other, as they now exist. In the next note, we shall see that our Oxford MS. can hardly be the original text of Uruj.
continuators to greatly varying dates: in its original form it seems to be closely related to Uruj, but to contain much additional matter: it was re-edited and republished in a shorter recension by a Turkish writer of the mid-sixteenth century.¹

'Ashiqpashazâde is distinctly more literary and artificial than the other two chronicles, interposing chapter headings and notes, adding at the end biographical notices, and using a less primitive and plain language. It is considered that in the form in which we now possess them Uruj dates from 1460-70 and the other two from c. 1490.

As regards the passages with which we shall be concerned, the Oxford MS. of Uruj is to be preferred to the Cambridge MS., while the Anonymous Chronicle is in such very close agreement with Uruj that it would be a waste of space to set out the text of both. 'Ashiqpashazâde, however, while agreeing in general with Uruj, has differences of detail which need examination. Hence I propose to give in translation the relevant passages from Uruj (Oxford MS.) and 'Ashiqpashazâde: the latter are already available in Giese's article, but it is the narrative of Uruj, supported by the Anonymous Chronicle, which is really fundamental and which it is essential to compare with 'Ashiqpashazâde. The passages to be considered are two in number.²

¹ In his introduction to his edition of Uruj, Babinger surmises with great probability that some of the manuscripts used by Giese in preparing his edition of the Anonymous Chronicle were really texts of Uruj. The following is also worthy of note. At the end of the reign of 'Othmân, Uruj says that he ruled for nineteen years and for the remainder of his life entrusted the chieftainship to Orkhan, while the Anonymous Chronicle merely says that 'Othmân reigned for nineteen years and no more. Both, of course, are wrong, even by the dates which they themselves have earlier given. A copyist has confused ḏoṭuẓ ḏoḳuẓ (thirty-nine) with oṅdokuẓ (nineteen), which could easily happen in Arabic script. It follows that a common ancestor in which this corruption had already occurred underlies both our Oxford MS. of Uruj and the manuscript or manuscripts of the Anonymous Chronicle which Giese is following here: moreover, a later and stupid editor or copyist of our text of Uruj has added an inept and false explanation, to reconcile the discrepancy in the dates.

² This brief review of the relationship of the chronicles, as also of the dates of composition, rests upon the introductions of their respective editors, coupled with my own observations, as appears in the preceding notes.
The first passage is to be found in the reign of Orkhan, and is as follows:

Uruj (Oxford MS.)

His [sc. Orkhan's] brother 'Ali Pasha also abandoned the Beglik and handed it over to Orkhan. He himself, embracing the way of the Shaikhs became a dervish. One day 'Ali Pasha said to his brother Orkhan “Oh! brother, praise be to Allah, now again thy army has increased, the army of Islam has become strong, the army of Muhammad has attained majesty in the eyes of all and from day to day has increased. Now do thou also make in face of the world a formal act that thereby it be known in the world.” Orkhan Ghazi said “Oh! brother, whatever thou sayest, do, so be it!” 'Ali Pasha said “Oh! brother, let all thy army put on a red cap: put thou on thyself a white cap and let thy dependent slaves put on a white cap: let this be a sign in the face of the world.” Orkhan Ghazi accepted this word. He sent one sent and obtained authority in Amasia from Haji Bektash of Khorasan (Allah have mercy on him!) and had a white cap brought. He first put it on himself and afterwards his dependent slaves put on the white cap. The wearing of the white cap has remained from that time. At that time the kings and chiefs were in accord with their brothers, they respected and honoured each other, they used not to kill each other down to the time of Yildirim Khan; afterwards, in the time of Khan Yildirim, the killing of brother by brother came in. And in Anatolia in the time of Orkhan Ghazi there came in the enrolment of yaya [foot soldiers].

'Ashiqpashazade

His brother 'Ala ad-din Pasha said to Orkhan Ghazi, “My Khan, praise be to Allah that I have seen thee as king. Now also together thy army should increase from day to day. Now also put a sign on thy soldiery, which is not upon other soldiery.” Orkhan Ghazi said, “My brother, I accept whatever thou sayest.” He said, “Now the caps of the Begs round about are red, let thine be white.” He said “So be it.” In Bilejik they set up the white cap: Orkhan Ghazi put it on, all those subject to him put it on together. Orkhan sought to increase his army, as much as he could from that country. His brother said “it is a matter for the Qadis.” At that time Chendereli Karaja Khalil was Qadi of Bilejik, and he was of the family of Edebali. He was informed and said “Get foot soldiers from the district [or the people—the word is il].” Thereupon a lot of men offered bribes to the Qadi saying “Get me enrolled as a foot soldier.” And they made them also wear the white cap.

1 P. 15 of Babinger's edition of Uruj: the following passage from 'Ashiqpashazade is on p. 37 of F. Giese's edition.

2 The Oxford MS. has Beglerbeglik, the Cambridge MS. Beglik. The latter is correct, being the old expression for the office of the Ottoman chieftain. The Oxford MS. has again been ineptly amended to convert an obsolete expression into an office (of Beylerbey) which existed later.

3 He is usually so called, but Uruj calls him 'Ali: but the latter name can be used for a person whose true name is 'Ala ad-din.
Before commenting in detail on these passages it will be helpful to recall the general condition of Ottoman military forces at that time, particularly as reflected in our chronicles. The chronic warfare in Asia Minor along the frontiers of the Christian and Turkish dominions was an affair of frontier raids and counter-raids. In Lascarid times, in Phrygia, these raids were from the Turkish side carried on by people described sometimes as Uj-Turcomans, that is to say, "frontier Turcomans", between whom and the Turks of the Seljuk realm proper, some distinction is drawn. One hundred years later, when a similar frontier in Mysia and Bithynia was the scene of Ottoman raiding, the main mass of Ottoman warriors, corresponding no doubt to the Uj-Turcomans, were designated in the chronicles by the term ghazi." This is, of course, a term of general significance, meaning roughly "fighters for the faith". It is now rather generally asserted that the term has also a specialized meaning, and that precisely in early Ottoman times it denotes a body of fighters with some kind of organization, of the nature of a military order, and enjoying support from another organization somewhat resembling a guild of which the members were known as Ahis. Whether there is adequate evidence to support this theory or not is a question which is not material to the problems before us: the Chroniclers' Narrative of the origin of the Janissaries is in no way affected by the meaning which it may be legitimate to attribute to the term ghazi in the chronicles. When, as a result of the raids, adjoining districts were wrested from Christian and subjected to Ottoman control, they began almost at once to be divided up among the

1 Cf. P. Wittek, Das Fürstentum Mentesche, pp. 1-5, and Alice Gardiner, The Lascarids of Nicaea, p. 223 (as to the capture of Michael Palaeologus by Turcomans).

2 It will be found in the texts of the chronicles passim.

3 Apart from Giese's article and the work of Gibb and Bowen above-mentioned, see on the question of the ghazi and the Ahis, particularly P. Wittek, The Rise of the Ottoman Empire (London, 1938). There is also an article, prior to Wittek's later work, by Langer and Blake, "The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and its Historical Background" in American Historical Review, vol. xxxvii, pp. 468 ff.: these writers in that article undervalue the chronicles as historical sources, though admitting that they contain valuable traditions, among which, of course, their account of the origin of the Janissaries can safely be reckoned.
Ottoman warriors, presumably among the principal ghāzi heroes or leaders, in a form of ownership or tenure having feudal characteristics the units of which were known as timārs. The chronicles expressly mention the fact of division as timārs, both under ‘Othmān and under Orkhan. ¹ Thus, at the time of the incident described in the above passage, the Ottoman fighting forces consisted of a general body of warriors known as ghāzīs, who operated in some kind of unity under the Ottoman Beg, as he was then entitled, but evidently with a good deal of independence in the cases where we hear of named heroes conquering particular districts: and the subjugated territories were divided up, or were possessed by their individual conquerors, on a basis which furnishes the beginnings of a feudal levy consisting of the timār-holders (timār-erleri in the chronicles, timār-sipāhiler in later times) and their retainers.

The passage now under consideration introduces us to two further elements of military organization, namely (i) the dependent slaves of the Beg, and (ii) the yaya or footsoldiers. This passage occurs in the reign of Orkhan, near the beginning of the narrative of that reign as it stands in the chronicles, but following upon their mention of the capture of Nicomedia (Ismid), for which the chronicles give no date: Orkhan’s reign began in 1327, but from other sources the capture of Nicomedia is held to have occurred about 1338. Hence we can only judge that this incident is to be located rather before 1340.

We see that at this date the Ottoman Beg had a body of dependent slaves who engaged in warlike duties. We need not feel any doubt about this, nor does the origin of such a body require to be explained on the ground of Ottoman mentality or characteristics or any other extraordinary factor. This body was evidently a slave-bodyguard or a slave-household with military functions such as was then common among Moslem rulers: it was over four hundred years since this institution of a Mamlūk household force had been invented by an Arab Caliph and the greatest of contemporary Moslem states, Mamlūk Egypt, was founded upon it. It would be a matter of course for

¹ Uruj, pp. 12, 15; Anonymous Chronicle, pp. 7, 14; ‘Āshiqpashazāde, p. 22.
GENTILE BELLINI: A TURKISH JANISSARY
(By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum)
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a rising Moslem chieftain, such as the Ottoman Beg, to acquire such a body of personal retainers. Whether in this case the source of recruitment was capture in war or purchase from slave-merchants, particularly the Genoese, whose cargoes from the Crimea to Alexandria passed through the Straits, is not clear, but the point is immaterial for our purpose.

The incident which our passage records is the institution of a distinguishing head-dress for this force. The head-dress was a white cap, in Turkish ak börk, and there is no doubt that it is the head-dress later worn by the Janissaries, which Latin writers call mitra or pileus. It was a conical cap of white felt, stiff enough to stand up a few inches above the crown of the head, but so long that the upper part then bent back and fell down behind over the nape of the neck. Its form is beautifully recorded for us in Gentile Bellini’s drawing of a Janissary made in 1480-1, now in the British Museum (see plate).

It will have been noticed that, in two particulars concerning the adoption of this head-dress, the accounts of Uruj and 'Ashiqpashazâde differ, namely, as to whether it distinguished the Beg’s slave-troops from the rest of the Ottoman forces (Uruj), or from the forces of neighbouring Begs ('Ashiqpashazâde), and as to whether sanction for its use was obtained from a Dervish Shaikh (Uruj) or not ('Ashiqpashazâde). On both these points 'Ashiqpashazâde was followed by Giese, and other writers have repeated this view: but Giese had not the text of Uruj before him in 1924, and these seem to be strong reasons for preferring the account of Uruj in both these particulars.1

First, as to the distinction which the white cap was intended to effect, the account of Uruj is to be preferred as the difficilior lectio. If the original distinction was, as 'Ashiqpashazâde says, between the Ottoman troops and those of other Begs, it is very

1 Giese again stated his preference for 'Ashiqpashazâde on the object of the head-dress (distinction from the forces of neighbouring Begs) in a footnote on p. 22 of his translation of the Anonymous Chronicle, which (as usually) accords with Uruj, and says the distinction was between the household slaves and the other Ottoman troops: Giese conjectures that a sentence has fallen out of the Anonymous Chronicle, but he is still writing before the identification of the text of Uruj, and if he had known that that text agreed with the Anonymous Chronicle and against 'Ashiqpashazâde he would surely have revised his opinion.
difficult to imagine how in the text of Uruj this became altered at some time into a distinction between the slave-troops and the rest of the Ottoman forces: if Uruj's distinction, however, is original, it is not difficult to suppose that 'Ashiqpashazâde might have amended it into a more obvious distinction, to his mind and in his time, between Ottoman and non-Ottoman forces. Moreover, if 'Ashiqpashazâde is correct as to this distinction, what he says in his last sentence about the yaya is redundant: if all Ottoman forces wore the white cap, then there was no need to mention that the yaya wore it. The point of this reference to the head-dress of the yaya must have been to equate them with the slave-troops and stress their special connection with the Beg, and it thus implies Uruj's distinction between slave-troops and the other Ottoman forces rather than 'Ashiqpashazâde's own distinction between Ottoman and non-Ottoman forces. Therefore Uruj is here to be preferred to 'Ashiqpashazâde.

Secondly, as to Dervish sanction for the head-dress, there are, it must be submitted, good reasons for again following Uruj. It must, of course, be conceded that the personal reference to Hâji Bektâş is an anachronism, for that individual certainly died in the thirteenth century.\(^1\) If, however, it is taken as a reference to the Shaikh of a Bektashi Tekke in Amasia, there is nothing improbable about it, and it is quite in the habits of the time.

The real ground on which scholars have questioned this incident is that the Bektashi Dervishes did in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries undoubtedly make strenuous efforts to nourish a belief in a special connection between their Order and the Janissaries: consequently, this passage has been, and can be, regarded as an interpolation made in favour of this later Bektashi propaganda. There are, however, two reasons against regarding it as such an interpolation. The first is that it does not in any way correspond with the real Bektashi legends, of which, as we shall see, we know both the earlier and later forms. Secondly, it is difficult to believe that a Bektashi interpolator

would have been so ingenious as to insert his false statement in this passage: he would have inserted something in the later passage (to which we shall come) where the Janissaries and their creation are expressly mentioned and not in this passage which does not refer to the Janissaries at all.

One cannot, therefore, fairly regard this item in the narrative of Uruj as a Bektashi interpolation, and so it must be taken as belonging to the original tradition. If it is then asked why it does not appear in ‘Ashiqpashazâde, the answer is that he excised it because he was himself a disbeliever in the Bektashi claims and hostile to them. The Bektashi propaganda evidently began to make its way in the second half of the fifteenth century, and it aroused contradiction and hostility. In another passage ‘Ashiqpashazâde aligns himself with the latter opinion and characterises the Bektashi claim that the Janissaries took their head-dress from them as a lie.\(^1\) This opinion of his explains why the reference to Hâji Bektash disappears from his account of the matter. The upshot is that, disregarding the anachronism of the personal intervention of Hâji Bektash, there is no ground for rejecting the narrative of Uruj, which is in all respects reproduced in the Anonymous Chronicle, as to some original Dervish sanction for the use of the head-dress. It is to be noted also that the head-dress in question does closely resemble the earliest Bektashi head-dress known as the elift tâj: \(^2\) but it also corresponds to Ibn Baṭṭûta’s description of the head-dress worn by the Ahîs.

In this passage the term for the dependent slaves is kullari, sing. kul. They evidently reappear in later passages in the chronicles under the terms Qapu Kullari, i.e. Gate-slaves or Court-slaves, and more frequently Qapu Khalqi, i.e. Gate-people or Court-people. Under this name they appear at the battles of Ankara and Varna and in many other passages. They are always mentioned together with, but separately from, the Janissaries. Both Qapu Khalqi and Janissaries are in close attendance on the Sultan, but the chronicles designate them separately. Later, the term Qapu Kullari came to be used as a

\(^1\) ‘Ashiqpashazâde, p. 201.

general designation for all the forces or formations, of technically servile status, dependent on the Sultan, including both the various bodies of palace retainers as then existing and also the Janissaries: but originally, as found in the chronicles, the distinction between Qapu Khalqi and Janissaries is clear and well maintained.

It is evidently the expression Qapu Khalqi from which are derived the expressions πόρτα, θύρα and θύραι which appear in Byzantine historians. It cannot, therefore, be said that these expressions necessarily refer to the Janissaries, as, for instance, when Ducas mentions the πόρτα as present at the battle of Nicopolis. No doubt, the Byzantine writers may not have been aware of any distinction between Qapu Khalqi and Janissaries: but, strictly speaking, we should think of the Qapu Khalqi, the Beg’s dependent household bodyguard, and not the Janissaries, when the term πόρτα or θύρα is used in a fifteenth century Greek text.

It remains to consider the force raised under the name of yayā or footsoldiers, as mentioned at the end of the passage now under consideration. The date of this experiment is not indicated. It is a separate matter from the incident of the white cap, and we may reasonably surmise that it belongs to the period after 1340, and very possibly after 1350. It evidently represents an attempt to increase the forces in close dependence on the Beg, as distinct from the loosely organized ghāzīs and the feudal levy of the timār-holders; ʿAshiqpashazāde says as much. Whether the originator of the project was Chendereli Kara Khalil Pasha (later Khair ad-dīn Pasha), as ʿAshiqpashazāde tells us, is not certain. That personage, as we shall see, was certainly concerned with the creation of the Janissaries, and it may be by reflection from that fact that ʿAshiqpashazāde brings him in here: on the other hand, if he was concerned with the unsuccessful experiment of the yayā, that could explain why he was led to seek a fresh and successful solution of the same problem through the creation of the Janissaries.

The Chroniclers’ Narrative in these passages does not explain the basis on which the yayā were raised. The view most recently expressed is that they were originally given grants of
This view, however, is contrary to the earliest account of this aspect of the matter which we possess, namely, the *Hasht Bihisht*. As mentioned, the author of this work remoulded the Chroniclers’ Narrative in regard to the Janissaries, but as regards the organization of the *yaya* he is our earliest authority, and (as will appear below) he clearly states that the *yaya* were originally a force who received pay while on campaign and certain tax exemptions: it was only later, when they had proved a failure, that they were given auxiliary functions and received grants of land in place of their original conditions.

The explanation for the failure of the *yaya* is to be gained from the statement of ‘Āshiqpashazāde regarding bribery to obtain this status, and this accords very well with the supposition that they were originally paid troops. Pay for military service was a novelty, and there would naturally be a rush to take advantage of it. Now, the offer was made to the population of the Anatolian districts. This, however, was the same population from which came the *ghāzis*, whose services to the Beg were free, and from which the *timār*-holders drew their retainers and also their force of cultivators. Hence in offering pay for military service to this population the Beg was competing with himself and also with the *timār*-holders. That is why this experiment was a failure.

However, the *yaya*, though not successful as an expansion of the Beg’s personal troops, do not entirely disappear. They were formed at sometime in Rumili, as well as Anatolia. According to the chronicles, *yaya* from Anatolia and *‘azabs* from Rumili, mentioned together and evidently similar in character, were present at Kossovo I in 1389: it is extraordinary that neither *Qapu Khalqi* nor Janissaries are mentioned by the chronicles as present at that battle. The chronicles also mention that in the rebellion of the false Mustafa at the beginning of the reign of Murad II, the Rumili *yaya* were converted into *Muselem* while Chalcocondylas mentions the *yaya* taking part in Murad II’s attack on the Isthmus of Corinth. The fore-

1 Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., p. 54.
2 Under the name *dypádes*: the word was identified by R. P. Blake in his review in *Speculum* (1948), p. 138, of Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*. 
going is the earliest reference to *Musellem*, a cavalry force which received pay or land-grants similar to the *yaya*. It is a coherent story if we regard the *Musellem* as mounted *yaya* and as subsequent in date to the *yaya*, as the chronicles here show. Some connection or similarity between *yaya* and 'azabs is also to be suspected. Petantius mentions that the 'azabs wore red caps early in the sixteenth century.

To sum up the Chroniclers' Narrative so far, Orkhan, on the suggestion of his brother, about 1340 adopted a distinctive head-dress for his soldiers, consisting of a white cap for his own slave-bodyguard, and (probably) a red cap for the rest of his troops: sanction for the use of the white cap was obtained from Dervish quarters. Later, after 1340, and perhaps after 1350, an attempt was made to increase his personal forces by recruiting a (paid) infantry force, known as *yaya*, from Anatolia, but this experiment failed for reasons which we can easily discern.

(ii) *The Chroniclers' Narrative continued*: (b) *The creation of the Janissaries*

The second passage with which we are concerned occurs in the reign of Murad I, and is as follows:

Uruj (Oxford MS)

Again he [sc. Murad I] sent Lala Shâhin to Zagora and Philippopolis. He gave him a raid. The ghâzis conquered that part, and when Evrenos Beg had also conquered the part round Ipsala, each one of those Begs became in his own place an Uj-Beg. Finally they conquered Ipsala. It was in the year of the Hijra 763. And there was a dânishmand called Kara Rustem; he had come from Karahman. He came to Chendereli Kara Khalil who was Qâdi 'asker. He said to him, "My lord, as to this booty which there is, coming from the raid, why dost thou not seize it for the chieftainship? Thou art causing loss." The Qâdi 'asker said, "Indeed! What should we do?" Kara Rustem said, "These prisoners that the ghâzis bring, according to the commandment of God one-fifth should go to the king: why dost thou not take it?" The Qâdi 'asker said to Murad Khan Ghâzi, "Oh! king, since it is the commandment of God, why shouldst thou not take it?" Said he "Take", and so gave command. They went and put Kara Rustem over the Akjnjis. "Since it is the commandment of God, so be it," they said. Kara Rustem set himself at Gallipoli. He took 25 akches per prisoner. This innovation was through these two persons. They charged Evrenos Beg also that he should take 25 akches per prisoner coming from a raid.

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and one prisoner out of five. Thus they arranged it and carried it out. They collected the youths and divided them among the Turkish folk in Anatolia: they set them to ploughing and to menial tasks, and they learnt Turkish. After three or four years had passed, they brought them back and made them at the Court into Yenicheri, and made them wear the white cap. This was the original foundation of the Yenicheri: since that time they gave them the name Yenicheri.

'T Ashiqpashazade

The Khān stayed in state in Adrianopole. He gave a raid to his Lala to the parts round Zagora and to Philippopolis. Evrenos Ghāzī also went, he conquered Ipsala. These became Uj-Begs each in his own place. One day a dānishmand they called Kara Rustem came from the Karaman country: he came to Chendereli Kara Khalil, who was Qādi 'asker: he said, "Sir, why dost thou cause loss of this property?" The Qādi said, "What is this property?" Rustem said "These prisoners which these ghāzis take, by the command of God one in five of them belongs to the Khān: why dost thou not take?" The Qādi 'asker submitted it to the Khān. They called Kara Rustem and said, "My lord, whatever is the command of God, do." He set himself in Gallipoli: he took 25 akches per prisoner, and this innovation was the work of two dānishmands, one Chendereli Kara Khalil, and the other Kara Rustem. And also they charged Ghāzī Evrenos, they said, "Take one in five of the prisoners coming from the raid, and from him who has not five prisoners take his 25 akches per prisoner": and over this arrangement Evrenos also set a Qādi. And many youths were collected, they brought them to the Khān. Khalil said, "Let us give these to the Turks, let them learn Turkish, let us make them into a force of troops," thus said he, and thus it was. Day by day, there were more: in the end they became Moslems, they made use of them for some years, afterwards they brought them to the Court, they put on them a cap, they gave them the name of Yenicheri, they exist at the present time.

This incident is narrated directly after the story of the capture of Adrianople, which the chronicles date in 761/1360, while the present story follows on fresh raids dated 763/1362. Whether these dates are correct cannot here be discussed. The ghāzīs are still the main personnel of the Turkish forces, but their operations seem to be more organized: this is to be gathered from the fact that they operate under leaders belonging to the entourage of the Beg, who is said to "give the raid" to the chosen commander. The word used for raid is aķin, and the ghāzīs participating in the raid are called Aķinjis, the name of terror by which the irregular troops of the Ottoman rulers became known to the inhabitants of the Balkans,

1 P. 50.
Hungary, Transylvania and Slavonia. We can thus see that the later Akinjis, who now first appear, are the old gházis. The term gházis when used in the later parts of the chronicles certainly has merely its general sense: the raiding forces, when the frontier is in the Balkans or on the Danube and the regular Ottoman forces have been fully organized, are the Akinjis. At the present stage the Akinji commanders are given some special status in the frontier districts under the title of Uj-begs, frontier-chiefs, reminiscent of the Uj-Turcomans. This title persists quite late in the chronicles: they are found along the Danube in the reign of Murad II, always in connection with the Akinjis.

The origin of the Janissary organization is to be found in a suggestion by a certain Kara Rustem to apply the ordinary Moslem law of ghanimat (booty) to human captives. This law provided that one-fifth of all booty should belong to Allah, i.e. to the public fisc. If this is applied to living creatures it can only operate in kind where a captor is bringing in a group of at least five captives, when one can be taken by the fisc and four be left to the captor. To deal with fractional groups below five or between two multiples of five, a value per head must be set on the creatures in question and then for each individual in the fractional group the captor pays one-fifth of that value. That is what was done here. The value fixed for a captive was 125 akches (or aspers), and for a "fractional" captive the captor paid 25 akches. Thus the captor of five prisoners yielded up one, the captor of nine prisoners yielded one prisoner and 100 (4 × 25) akches, and so on.

The collection of this levy was entrusted to Kara Rustem at Gallipoli when the prisoners would be brought down for transport to Anatolia, and also to Evrenos Beg because he was the Uj-Beg through whose control the returning raiders would pass with their booty.

Chendereli Kara Khalil suggested that the prisoners who were thus collected (the verb used here is devshirmek) should be utilized for the formation of a New Force (Yeničeri) of

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1 For a remarkable description of the Akinjis c. 1450, their training and methods, see Fr. Georgius de Hungaria, O.P., Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum, cap. v.
2 See, for instance, Uruj, p. 60.
slave troops. By this method the ruler’s personal force could be increased without incurring the defects disclosed in the yaya experiment. The Turkish word cheri means an army, a military force, or troops. It is used in the chronicles interchangeably with the Persian word lashkar: sometimes both words are used in the same sentence with the same meaning, and both are applied to Ottoman forces, to enemy forces, and to allied forces.¹ Later in the chronicles both words also acquire a specialized meaning as the technical terms for the feudal levies of Anatolia and Rumili respectively, commanded by the Beglerbegs. Yenicheri means simply New Force.

The cash levy or commutation for fractional prisoners was originally a levy made by the fisc from the captor. It later turned into a due which was exacted by a Moslem landholder, whose position would be that of a quasi-captor, from his Christian tenants, regarded here as quasi-captives. This transformation had come about at least as early as the reign of Murad II, for this due is mentioned in law-books dating from the reign of Mehmed II.² It is found again in various localities in the codes of Sulaiman I in the mid-sixteenth century: it remained in existence and was noted by d’Ohsson and by von Hammer as a poll-tax.³ In this altered form, the levy was known as penjik, a Persian word for one-fifth, corrupted into ispenje: it always retained the original fractional figure of 25 akches per head. How this transformation came about, we cannot at present say, but it is clear that the penjik tax is a later development from the fractional cash commutation under the old law of ghanimat.

To sum up the Chroniclers’ Narrative so far as concerns this episode, after the capture of Adrianople and further raids in the Balkans there was a great influx of prisoners and a

¹ Examples may be found in Uruj, pp. 13, 22, 33, 34, 73, etc.
² See Mitteil. z. osm. Gesch., i, 28 (text), 44 (trans.). The code in question regulates the rights of men-at-arms, i.e. the lowest grade of the feudal fighting force who would have been the practical captors on campaign.
³ von Hammer, Des osm. Reiches Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung, pp. 213, 246, 281 and 291: Mouradja d’Ohsson, Tableau général de l’Empire Othoman, iii, 37-8. von Hammer again mentions that it was payable to the immediate lord, i.e. the quasi-captor.
certain Kara Rustem suggested that the public fisc ought, under the law of *ghanimat*, to make a levy of one prisoner in five. This was done. Chendereli Kara Khalil suggested that the prisoners so collected should be used to create a New Force of slave-retainers for the Beg, known therefore as *Yenicheri*: these were given the same white cap as the pre-existing *Qapu Khalqi*. The application of the law of *ghanimat* involved a cash commutation at 25 *akches* per head for fractional groups of captives. Later on this became transformed into a tax known as *penjik* or *ispenje*, levied from Christian tenants by their Moslem lords.

(iii) *The Devşhirme*

The Chroniclers' Narrative shows that neither the *Qapu Khalqi* nor the Janissaries were originally recruited by means of the forced levy of Christian children later known as the *devşhirme*, the verbal noun of the same verb which the Chroniclers' Narrative uses for the "collection" of the captives taken by the fisc. For the origin of the *devşhirme* we have to utilize the information contained in two Latin writers.

The first of these is a Franciscan friar, Fr. Bartholomaeus de Jano. In his *Epistole de Crudelitate Turcarum*, dated from Constantinople in December 1438, he gives a long and harrowing description of the devastation caused by the Ottomans (including a reference to the very raid into Siebenbürger in August 1438 in which Fr. Georgius de Hungaria was captured), the sufferings of Christian captives, and the iniquities of Christian slave-dealers. He then gives a warning that Murad II is preparing an attack on Constantinople for the following year and has recruited 3000 rowers and collected materials of war. He next proceeds as follows:

> Adde, si quid ponderis est, quod de omnibus villis, civitatibus et castellis suo subjectis imperio, quae forte centum millia sunt decimam puerorum partem de Christianis, quod prius numquam fecerat, nuper accepit a decem usque ad viginti aetatis annos, quos suos speciales sclavos et armigeros, et quod pejus est, Saracenos effect. ¹

¹ Migne, PG. 158, cols. 1055-67: the quotation is from col. 1066. The credit for first noting this statement seems to belong to J. H. Mordtmann in an article in Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. *Devşhirme*: but he quoted inaccurately and without the necessary context, and failed to give the reference. Fr. Bartholomaeus de Jano is so named from his birthplace, Giano near Spoleto (Yanensis
Considering that Fr. Bartholomaeus had only just returned from the Council of Ferrara and that he stresses in his letter the events of that very year 1438, the adverb *nuper* must be emphasised and probably means that the thing happened in 1438 and even perhaps in the later months of the year. The phrase *decimam partem* should be taken rather as tithe in a general sense: the exact proportion need not be pressed. The levy was not, in the writer’s eyes, of much military importance (*si quid ponderis est*), and was probably for the *Qapu Khalqi* (speciales sclavos et armigeros) rather than for the Janissaries.

Fr. Bartholomaeus does not indicate that the levy was to be regularly repeated: moreover, there is extant another letter from him dated in February 1442 (1443), in which he repeats his descriptions of the sufferings of Christian captives but omits any mention of this levy.¹ Evidence, however, that it was repeated and had become an established institution between 1438 and 1458 is contained in the *Tractatus de moribus, condicionibus et nequicia Turcorum* of Fr. Georgius de Hungaria, a Dominican friar. His most interesting description of the Janissaries, as they existed before the end of his captivity in 1458, has not been printed in modern times.² Therefore, I transcribe it in

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¹ The second letter is extant in an old French version, contained in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale now numbered Français 1278, which was printed in *Anciennes Chroniques d'Engleterre par Jehan de Waurin*, edited by Mlle. Dupont for the Société de l'Histoire de France, Tome II, 6ème Partie, Paris, 1859: the subscription in the manuscript is Berthelemy de Jennes, which the editress made into Barthelemy de Genes (under which name Zinkeisen later quoted it), a confusion of *Janua* with *Jano*.

² Fr. Georgius de Hungaria, born in Siebenbürgen in 1422, was captured by the Turks at Szászsebes, where he was a student, in a raid in 1438 mentioned curiously enough by Bartholomaeus de Jano: he remained in captivity till 1458, then returned and became a Dominican, arrived in Rome probably between 1475 and 1480 and at about that time wrote his book, which is the most valuable and interesting account extant of Ottoman life and institutions before 1500 and was reprinted in eleven Latin editions between 1480 and 1530, and thereafter in
entirely from the first edition of his work, expanding abbreviations, but otherwise retaining his orthography:

_Praeterea Turcus magnus ab omni prede et rapina decimas suas habet et cum senserit copiam esse captivorum, precepit ut omnes juvenes a xx. annis et infra per partem decime que ad eum spectat sibi offerantur. Sed et per omnem terram sui dominii adhuc multi sunt de grecis antiquis et aliis nationibus qui castella et oppida plurima inhabitant et ab omnibus statutis et oneribus aliorum dominorum liberi et exempti ipsius regis serviciis intendant et ad eius curiam pertinent. Horum filios a xx. annis et infra etatis missis nuncius de quinquennio ad quinquennium sibi adducere precipit et jubet ut, distributi per curias magnatorum suorum, in moribus et viribus et in armis erudiantur et exerceantur. Qui dum circa xx. vel amplius etatis pervenerint reductos ad curiam suam in stipendium suum cos recipit et sibi familiaris faicit. Tales eorum lingua gingitscheri vocantur et habentur aliquando in curia regis xxx. vel xl. milia et portant quaedam insignia in vestimentis et maxime in capite portant pileos vel mitras albas, quibus nemo audeat uti nisi sit de curia regis._

Apart from its reference to the tribute of children, this passage confirms the Chroniclers' Narrative as to the recruitment from prisoners of war and as to the white caps, points of considerable interest in view of its early date. The statement that the children were levied from Christians who were free of dues to other lords and rendered services to the Sultan himself is also of interest, because it is possibly the explanation of how this institution, totally unjustified by the Sacred Law of Islam, came into being. Other lords were already levying the penjik from their tenants, and perhaps the Sultan likewise levied it from his and now claimed it in kind, in its original form: it could then be justified on the ground of custom or analogy, though not by several imperfect German versions: he died in 1502, and was buried near Fra Angelico in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. For fuller information I may be allowed to refer to an article which I published in the _Bulletin of the John Rylands Library_, vol. xxxiv, no. 1 (September, 1951), pp. 44ff.

1 It is the more necessary for me to record that this important reference was noted (but not quoted) by A. H. Lybyer, _Government of the Ottoman Empire in the time of Suleiman the Magnificent_ (1913), in an Appendix, pp. 309-10, because in my article referred to above I omitted his name from my list of forty writers who make use of or mention the _Tractatus_. Lybyer, however, was much at sea over the bibliography of the _Tractatus_. He also (glancing no doubt at the Prologus) thought the author was only a theological student and further (misled doubtless by the tendentious preface of Martin Luther to the Augsburg 1530 edition) supposed him to have held "some of the ideas that preceded the Reformation", whatever that may mean: in fact, the author was a Dominican friar and a priest, and we now know that he died in Rome in 1502 in such odour of sanctity that he was venerated by crowds after his death. His pages abundantly show his fervid devotion to the Catholic Church, her full doctrine and authority.
any express permission of the Sacred Law. However, the tribute did not apparently in later times remain confined to the Sultan's own tenants.

To complete the early references to the *devshirme*, it seems to be mentioned in a treaty or capitulation concluded between Mehmed II and the Genoese at Galata in 1453.\(^1\) It seems also to be referred to by Chalcocondylas.\(^2\) Moreover, Phrantzes states that Murad II first gave to the Janissaries the organization which they had in Phrantzes' time and that previously they had different regulations and uniform, a statement which might refer to the new mode of recruitment.\(^3\) Paulus Jovius, c. 1540, says that Murad II first established the Janissaries, a statement which may be based on the passage in Phrantzes.\(^4\)

The original period of the levy's recurrence and the proportion of children taken is uncertain. There is considerable evidence for a period of five years and a proportion of one-fifth, which would tend to confirm some connection with the *ghanimat* law and the *penjik* tax. Fr. Georgius de Hungaria makes it quinquennial.\(^5\) Spandugino (information first collected c. 1505) says it was every five years and the proportion of the eligible children actually taken was one-fifth.\(^6\) Petantius (information before 1516) says the levy was triennial or, as some say, quinquennial.\(^7\) Menavino says the levy was as if by a tithe and from a father who had three children one might be taken.\(^8\) Geuffroy

4. Paolo Giovio vescovo di Nocera, *Commentario de le cose de' Turchi* (Venice, 1538?) : see under the reign of Murad II.
5. See the quotation above.
7. Felix Petantius' only printed work is his treatise *Quibus itineribus Turci sunt aggredieni*, but he collected much valuable information when he was in Constantinople as an envoy of Ladislaus II of Hungary before 1516; he was a personal friend of Joannes Cuspinianus, who (according to J. G. Vossius *De Historicis Latinis* (1627), p. 548, (1651), p. 607), possessed an unprinted manuscript of Petantius, and who embodies much information from Petantius in his *De Origine Turcorum* (see p. 475, n. 5 below), where the item now in question is in the section entitled *Militum Genera*.
says it was quadrennial: Paulus Jovius only mentions recruitment from prisoners of war: these last three sources are all about 1540.

(iv) The Idrisian Version

Having thus examined and commented on the earliest sources which record the creation of the Janissaries (the chronicles) and of the devşirme (the two Latin authors), we now have to consider when and how the Idrisian Version of the story came into being.

The Idrisian Version appears first in the Hasht Bihisht of Idris al-Bitlisi, which was composed between 1500 and 1510. The work was written in florid Persian, to the order of the Sultan Bayezid II, who desired a history covering the exploits of the House of Othman to be produced on the model of accepted Arabic and Persian historians.

At the period when Idris wrote and for at least sixty years thereafter, we find that the chronicles, and the Chroniclers' Narrative as to the Janissaries, are dominant in Ottoman historiography. Thus, Mehmed Neshri virtually reproduced 'Ashiq-pashazade, in his Jahannumâ, which was written before 1520.

Then, about 1550, the Anonymous Chronicle itself was re-edited and republished in a shorter recension by a certain Muhîyî'd-dîn b. 'Ali al-Jamâlî. At about the same time Küchük Nishânji Mehmed Pasha gives an abbreviated version of the Chroniclers' Narrative in the corresponding passages of his

1 F. Antoine Geuffroy, Briefe descriptio de la Court du Grant Turc etc. (Paris, 1543), f.d.v.
2 Paolo Giovio, op. cit.
3 F. Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen, p. 45. There is no printed edition of the Hasht Bihisht. For the purposes of this article, I have used British Museum Add. MSS. 7646-7, where the relevant passages are to be found on fols.73v-75v (Book II, Dastan 7) and fols.106r-108v (Book III, Dastan 4).
4 Babinger, op. cit. p. 39. I have examined the relevant passages in the Vienna National Bibliothek MS. Nr. 986 by means of photographs kindly supplied to me by that library: I learn, however, that a text is in course of being printed at Ankara under the care of M. Faik Reşat Unat.
5 Babinger, op. cit. p. 73: Giese's introduction to his edition of the Anonymous Chronicle (see p. 467, n. 8).
work usually called the Ta'rikh-i-Nishānji (much valued by the Turks down to modern times).\(^1\)

There is, in fact, no sign that, at the time when Idris wrote, there existed any earlier source on which he could have drawn for his account of the origin of the Janissaries, except the chronicles which we have examined.\(^2\) We must suppose, in those circumstances, that Idris used those sources and that the Idrisian Version is based on the Chroniclers’ Narrative. In that case the differences between the two accounts ought to be explicable on literary grounds. I shall endeavour to show that this is the case.

It is unnecessary, for this purpose, to set out the Idrisian Version. Whether in the original Persian or in the scarcely less ornate Turkish of Sa’d ad-dīn, the relevant passages are far too long to translate in full. A fairly lengthy summary will suffice. The Idrisian Version, like the Chroniclers’ Narrative, consists of two episodes, one under Orkhan and one under Murad I.

\(^1\) Babinger, op. cit. p. 103. I have referred to the edition of this work printed at Constantinople 1279/1862, pp. 112, 119.

\(^2\) I would point out that there is also an early line of Ottoman historians who entirely omit these episodes. The head of this line appears to be Karamani Mehmed Pasha, who died in 1481: for him see Babinger, op. cit., p. 24, and extracts in Türk Tarih Encumeni Mecmuasi (1924), pp. 85 ff., 142 ff. Since his work must date from the time when Uruj, as we have him, took final shape, its importance is obvious. When critically examined, it will probably be found to contain valuable personal information on the reign of Mehmed II. For earlier times, the author’s written sources can only have been our chronicles or earlier forms or recensions of them; as to such earlier forms of the chronicles, some valuable information may be gleaned from his work, when subjected to scholarly examination. Karamani Mehmed Pasha is said to be the source used by Rühi Chelebi al-Edrenewi, who wrote between 1500 and 1520, contemporary with Idris and Neshri: Rühi’s work again has not been printed, but I find in Bodleian MS. Marsh 313 that he omits the episode in the reign of Murad I (that manuscript unfortunately has a lacuna covering the reign of Orkhan). Rühi in turn was used by Rustem Pasha, who wrote c. 1560 in the last years of Sulaiman Qanuni: for him see Babinger, op. cit. pp. 80-2, and extracts by Dr. Ludwig Förrer, Türk Bibli., Bd. xxi (Leipzig, 1923). Rustem’s contemporary Lutfi Pasha seems to belong to the same group. These writers seem to limit themselves deliberately to an account of wars and campaigns, foreign or civil, and to exclude other matters, such as the episodes in which we are interested. Their works thus do not invalidate the view expressed in the text that for our purpose the Chroniclers’ Narrative is the only early source.
Episode 1: Reign of Orkhan. After the capture of Nicomedia Orkhan makes Brusa his capital. His brother 'Alā ad-dīn, who had made Brusa his corner of retirement, offered congratulations on the victory at Nicomedia, and pointed out that the house of Othman had acquired majesty and independence, that its military power increased from day to day, and that appropriate customs and laws should be introduced. First, the Ottoman ruler should coin in his own name. Secondly, soldiers should have a particular dress, distinguishing them from enemy forces. Thirdly, the army should be increased by a force of infantry. Orkhan approved these suggestions. In the year A.H. 729 he began to coin in his own name in place of the Seljuk coinage. The Greeks and Franks wore scarlet woollen garments and red, yellow and black caps, and he beautified his army with white caps. This custom continued till the time of Yıldırım Bayezid, who chose various garments for his army, at which time, on the suggestion of Timurtash Beg, the white cap was appointed for the ruler's personal troops and a red cap for the retainers of great men. Mehmed II made white caps with gold embroidery the special dress of the Janissaries, and red caps for the servants of great men. The uskuf, worn by the chiefs of the Janissaries of the Buluk, was the invention of Sulaiman Pasha, the conqueror of Bulair, and was worn out of respect for Maulānā Jalāl ad-dīn Rūmī. The custom began under Murad I of decorating it with gold embroidery for ceremonial occasions. As to increasing the army, they consulted the Qaṭī of Bilejik, Maulānā Khalīl. They chose active youths from among the children of the Turks. Maulānā Khalīl was put in charge, and collected brave youths; these were given an akçe a day on campaign, which ceased upon their return, when they worked at cultivation in their own homes, and were exempted from taxes. This piyada [i.e. yaya] increased in numbers and committed abuses, whereupon the ruler consulted his counsellors and it was decided to select suitable children of the infidels and bring them the honour of conversion to Islam. Overseers were appointed to collect within a few years some thousand infidel children who should receive the light of Islam and render service and obedience. They were given pay of an akçe or more according to ability and the name of Yenicheri. Others, seeing their rewards and advancement, became eager to hand over their children, and several thousand unbelievers were converted to Islam. In the past 200 years in this way more than 200,000 persons have decided to embrace Islam and under Ottoman rulers there has been an incomparable extension of the faith. After the innovation of the Yenicheri, the piyada received lands instead of pay with exemption from taxes. In this mode also, a mounted force was formed from children of the Turks and given special lands and called Musellem.

Episode 2: Reign of Murad I. Lala Şahîn conquered the district of Zagora and a great quantity of booty of all kinds was obtained. Maulānā Kara Rustem, a learned jurist from Karaman, observing that the legal rule regarding the one-fifth of all booty was not in force, drew the attention of the Qaṭī asker Maulānā Kara Khalīl to the relevant verse, declaring that a fifth of all booty belonged to Allah. Maulānā Kara Khalīl referred the matter to the Sultan, who gave orders to proceed according to the tradition and entrusted the collection of the fifth to Maulānā Kara Rustem. They placed a value on all kinds of booty and valued each prisoner at 125 Othmani (akçe) and established the custom of taking 25 Othmani (akçe) as the fifth part of a prisoner.
The Idrisian Version bears, as we were led to expect, evident signs of dependence on the Chroniclers' Narrative. The division into two episodes, and their dating, is the same in both: so are the personalities who take part. Even in high-flown Persian the speech of 'Alā ad-dīn preserves verbal echoes of his speech in the Chroniclers' Narrative. Dependence on 'Ashiqpashazāde in particular can be inferred from the part played by Kara Khalil, the reason given for the colour of the caps, and the absence of any reference to Dervish sanction.

The vital difference between the Idrisian Version and the Chroniclers' Narrative is that the former transfers the account of the origin of the Janissaries from its place in the narrative of the reign of Murad I to a passage in the section comprising the reign of Orkhan, where it becomes combined with (or more accurately, appended to) the account of the origin of the white cap: as a corollary, the Idrisian Version treats the episode in the reign of Murad I merely as the institution of a booty tax in money. This difference, however, can be accounted for on literary grounds, if attention is turned to Idris' method of composition as exemplified in these passages.

It will be seen that after he has given the narrative of the adoption of the white caps (according to 'Ashikpashazāde), Idris proceeds to deal with a number of later changes in regard to headgear and costume. It is evident that, writing for the highest circles of the Court in his own time, he felt it incumbent on him to connect the first introduction of a distinguishing uniform with later changes and even with the customs of his own day. No doubt, Court or administrative traditions provided him with his material here: in the only point to which the chronicles also refer in this connection, the origin of the gold-braided uskuf, he agrees with them in dating it under Murad I.¹ These later developments do not belong chronologically to this part of the narrative at all: it is by a literary device that Idris incorporates these matters here, as more or less completing the story of Ottoman military or formal dress down to his own time. That is his literary method.

Now, his placing in this passage the episode of the origin of ¹ Uruj, p. 24. The story bears a highly legendary air in the chronicles.
the Janissaries is an example of the same method. Still following the chronology of the Chroniclers' Narrative, he deals with the yaya. Again, he seeks to complete this with related developments down to his own time. He therefore brings in the origin of the Janissaries: he finds in his sources no account of the devshirme which was a feature of the Janissary organization in his own day, and so he supplies an account of this, which serves the double purpose of filling a gap and of giving a flattering (but inaccurate) account of current arrangements. Finally, he brings in the origin of the Musellem which again comes from a still later passage in the chronicles. Once again, it is a question of the literary device of welding into a single passage and a consecutive narrative material and episodes of different dates.

The fact is that the difference in chronological arrangement between the Idrisian Version and the Chroniclers' Narrative is only apparent, not real. Idris is studiously vague as to chronology. For literary reasons, he moves the episode of the origin of the Janissaries into his narrative of Orkhan's reign but he does not date the episode in that reign. Later writers, as we shall see, have taken him in that sense, but in so doing they have conjured a difference over facts out of a literary device.

It followed, of course, that in the second episode under Murad I, Idris could not deal with the origin of the Janissaries at all, for he had already done so. All that was left to him to use was the financial aspect of the ghanimat tax. Still following his same method, he hastens to connect that with the institutions known to himself and his contemporaries in the Ottoman service, and therefore converts the episode of Kara Rustem into the institution of a money tax recognizable as the penjik tax which was being collected in his own time.

The Idrisian Version, therefore, does not represent an account of the origin of the Janissaries different from, much less superior to, the account contained in the Chroniclers' Narrative. It is merely the Chroniclers' Narrative rearranged by another hand. Its importance is due to the fact that, after the lapse of another sixty years and more, it was adopted by the two most famous and influential of Ottoman historians, Sa'd ad-din and 'Ali. The former virtually translates it into Turkish, the latter
adopts it in an abbreviated form. They are hardly to be blamed for thus giving currency and predominance to the Idrisian Version. Like Idris, they were Court historians. Idris' work was already of respectable age in their time, sixty years nearer the sources than they were, full (as we have seen) of useful material not to be found in the Chronicles, and composed with evident labour and studiousness. They preferred it to the rough chronicles, already in their time circulating in texts and recensions which differed much among themselves: a more critical approach could not be expected of them. However, as a consequence, they set upon the Idrisian Version the seal of their own dazzling reputations.

Before leaving the Idrisian Version one concluding remark is necessary. Where Idris' work does not pervert or contradict its own written sources (the chronicles), it is a first-rate source in its own right, and its statements may and do form our earliest evidence on important matters. The most notable of these for our purpose is the question of the original constitution of the yaya. According to Idris, these were first of all paid troops, and only later did they receive grants of land, when their experiment had proved unsatisfactory. There is no good reason for rejecting this, the earliest, record on this point and reversing the process of their development.

(v) The Bektashi Legends

These are only legends and little time need be spent on them. We can gather their earliest form and something of their growth from the Bektashi compendium known as the Vilâyatnāmah of Ḥāji Bektash. This work has been claimed to belong, as a whole, to the early fifteenth century, and thus to be earlier than the existing texts of the chronicles. That claim, however, may

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1 I have referred to the printed editions of Sa'd ad-din, Constantinople, A.H, 1279, 2 vols., vol. i, 37-41, and 74-5, and 'Āli, Constantinople, 5 vols., vol. v, pp. 42-3 and 69.

2 See Dr. Erich Gross, "Die Vilayetname des Hâggi Bektaşch", Türk. Bibl., xxv (Leipzig, 1927): the passages referred to are on pp. 133 and 153-5. Gross's views as to date have been controverted and reference should now be made to J. K. Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, p. 48.
be excessive, particularly as regards the passages of interest to us. However, the Vilâyatnâma is, generally speaking, of the fifteenth century, and even those passages cannot be much, if at all, later than our texts of the chronicles. We certainly find here the kind of legend which the Bektashis were circulating at the time when they were seeking to establish their connection with the Janissaries and which roused the ire of 'Ashiqpashazâde.

The longest and earliest form of these legends in the Vilâyatnâma is made to relate to 'Othmân I, not Orkhan. According to it 'Othmân I committed a breach of a truce with the Christians, and was summoned for judgement on this offence before the Seljuk Sultan at Konia. He was then sent for judgement to Hâji Bektash. The latter used to make his disciples wear white caps, locally manufactured. One of these caps had been one day brought to him which was of exceptional height and which no one could wear: he therefore bent it in the middle and put it away in a cupboard saying that its destined wearer would one day appear. When 'Othmân was brought before him, Hâji Bektash gave him this special cap with a blessing, a lighted candle, and a sword. Later Hâji Bektash took refuge in the lands conquered by 'Othmân and his children and invited the Seljuk Sultan to confer a high office on 'Othmân: the Seljuk Sultan, on learning that 'Othmân possessed the high cap and the sword and had received the blessing of Bektash, conferred on him the Sanjak of Sultan Önü (the original Ottoman holding).

Two briefer supplements also contained in our text of the Vilâyatnâma furnish a different story. According to these, on an occasion when 'Othmân I was hard pressed, Hâji Bektash sent him miraculous reinforcements: these troops complained of being insufficiently or improperly clad for their duty, and thereupon Hâji Bektash cut pieces of felt from the hem of his robe and laid these on their heads.

A marginal gloss then adds that they were called Yenicheri from the word yen meaning a sleeve, a false etymology substituting this word for yeni, new. This gloss seems to record the transition to the form of the legend which appears in European writers from the seventeenth century onwards and according to which the Janissaries' head-dress originated through the sleeve
of Hāji Bektash falling over a Janissary's head and down his back when Bektash was giving him a blessing. This incident reaches a final form in which it is said to have occurred on the field of Kosovo I immediately after the killing of Murad I by a wounded Serbian, an event foreseen or foretold by Hāji Bektash, who is thereupon also put to death for failing to prevent what he had foreseen.

We can see clearly enough here a development of a pure legend originally attached to 'Othmān I. Evidently, this legend is not represented by the story of the white cap as given in the Chroniclers' Narrative and, as pointed out already, this is one reason for not classing that incident in its entirety as a Bektashi interpolation.

(vi) The use of the Turkish sources by European writers

Even the latest Byzantine writers, Chalcocondylas, Ducas and Phrantzes, do not use written Turkish sources. They are largely concerned with contemporary events and are themselves, for us, sources for Ottoman history. They are of the same date as the composition, in their surviving form, of the Turkish chronicles. For events before their own time the Byzantine writers rely upon earlier Greek writers or on hearsay, not on written Turkish sources.

When we come to the earliest Latin or European writers there is no reason to dissent from von Hammer's judgement that their sources for early Turkish history were hearsay. They were themselves again sometimes eyewitnesses and they had some access to Byzantine writers, and the later among them used the works of the earlier. They did not use written Turkish sources. This is true of Nicolaus Sagundinus (c. 1450), Spandugino (c. 1505), Felix Petantius (before 1516), Joannes Adelphus (1513), Joannes Cuspinianus (d. 1529), Paulus

\[\text{1 For the work of Sagundinus, see J. Ramus, Elegiarum de rebus gestis Archiducum Austriae (Louvain, 1553).} \]
\[\text{2 See above p. 467 and n. 6.} \]
\[\text{3 For Petantius see above p. 467, and n. 7.} \]
\[\text{4 Joannes Adelphus, Die Türkisch Chronica usw. (Strassburg, 1513).} \]
\[\text{5 Joannes Cuspinianus, De Origine Turcorum, first printed after his death as part of his De Caesaribus et Imperatoribus opus insignis (Strassburg, 1540) and then separately at Antwerp, 1541.} \]
Jovius (c. 1540), or Sansovino (c. 1560). Between 1450 and 1550 the only Latin writer who offers us something quite remarkable in regard to Ottoman origins is Fr. Georgius de Hungaria; his knowledge of the campaign of the Mamluk Sultan Baibars in eastern Asia Minor and of the names of the post-Seljuk princedoms is without parallel.

It was not until the last forty years of the sixteenth century that Turkish written sources became available to European scholars in translation. The first to become so were the ancient chronicles, to be precise the Anonymous Chronicle. This is in line with the status of these sources in the sixteenth century as indicated above; it is indeed a confirmation of the respect in which they were then held that the first European enquirers and translators should have had these placed in their hands. The earliest of these translators were Caudir von Spiegel (1567) and the contemporary translator of the manuscript known as the Bek Chronicle. Then comes the more famous Leunclavius (1588): the latter used, in different works, both the longer and the shorter (1550) recension of the Anonymous Chronicle. In the seventeenth century the Anonymous Chronicle continued to be utilized by European writers. This is the case with Knolles in 1603 and the republication of his work by Rycaut in 1687, while Spiegel’s work reappears through Podestà in 1671 and Geropoldi in 1686.

1 See above p. 467 and n. 4.
2 Francesco Sansovino, Dell’ Historia Universale dell’ Origine et Impero de Turchi (Venice, 1560).
3 Tractatus de moribus, condicionibus et nequicia Turcorum, cap. i.
4 For these early translations see the remarks by Giese and by Babinger in their respective introductions to their editions of the Anonymous Chronicle and Uruj. Spiegel’s translation appears in Markus Brosian, Chronica oder Acta von der türkischen Tyrannen (Neisse, 1567). The Bek Chronicle was a manuscript belonging to Jerome Bek of Leopoldsdorf.
5 Leunclavius, Annales sultanorum othmanidorum (Frankfurt, 1588), Historiae Musulmanae (Frankfurt, 1591).
7 Sir Paul Rycaut, The Turkish History . . . with a continuation . . . whereunto is added the Present State of the Ottoman Empire (London, 1687-1700).
8 J. B. Podestà, Origo et Gesta Ottomanici Stirpis (Vienna, 1671). He also translated Sadeddin.
9 Antonio Geropoldi, Annali de’ Sultani Osmanidi etc. (Venice, 1686).
Meanwhile, the Idrisian Version had become available also to European scholars through translations of Sa’d ad-dīn. The most famous of these was Bratutti’s Italian translation, which appeared in 1649.1 Seaman, in 1652, translated Sa’d ad-dīn’s account of Orkhan’s reign into English and this, of course, included the whole of the first episode of the Idrisian Version.2

It is also evident that by about this time European travellers or officials in the Levant began to come across the Bektashi Legends in their then current forms. In his own additions to Knolles’ work, Rycaut gives the Kossovo version of the sleeve incident, oblivious of the fact that in reproducing Knolles’ own work he had already given the Chroniclers’ Narrative of the origin of the white cap and of the Janissaries.3

Thus by the end of the seventeenth century European students were in possession of three apparently distinct narratives, without the critical apparatus or ability to understand their interrelationship—the Chroniclers’ Narrative, the Idrisian Version, and the Bektashi Legends. The result is confusion throughout the works of eighteenth century writers, who juxtapose these sources or reconcile them as each judges best. Demetrius Cantemir (translated into English in 1734) gives a summary of the Idrisian version under the reign of Orkhan, attributes under the reign of Murad I the origin of the Janissaries to the imposition of a tax on booty, mentioning Kara Khalīl but not Kara Rustem, and adds to this the sleeve incident, but not at Kossovo.4 Aaron Hill, in 1709, gives the Kossovo version of the sleeve incident.5 Marsigli, in 1732, attributes the

1 Vincenzo Bratutti, *Chronica dell’ origine e progressione della casa ottomana composta da Saidino Turco* (Vienna, 1649).
3 In Rycaut’s work Knolles’s original narrative taken from the chronicles is in vol. i, pp. 128, 132: the sleeve incident is in vol. ii on p. 72 of the additional section by Rycaut entitled *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, while on p. 90 of the same section Rycaut again refers to Kara Rustem and the institution of the Janissaries under Murad I, i.e. to the Chroniclers’ Narrative.
4 Demetrius Cantemir, Prince of Moldavia, *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire*, translated by N. Tindale, 1734: originally written in Latin, but apparently first printed in this English translation, posthumously, the author having died in 1723.
5 Aaron Hill, *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 1709.
origin of the Janissaries to Murad I and gives the sleeve incident, but not at Kossovo.¹

Late in the eighteenth century confusion still persists in the very famous work of Mouradja d'Ohsson, though in the main he adopts the Idrisian Version and is chiefly responsible, together with von Hammer, for its subsequent predominance and (we may add) the misunderstanding of it.² d'Ohsson, of course, splits the story up and deals with it in different parts of his work, which is descriptive, not consecutively historical. In one place he gives the history of the white cap and later head-dresses from the Idrisian Version. Elsewhere he states that Orkhan, in 1330, instituted the Janissaries to replace the yaya and recruited them from Christian prisoners, thus fastening on later students the apparent chronology of the Idrisian Version, which has been criticized above: he adds to this the sleeve incident but not at Kossovo. Elsewhere he refers to the Sultan's right to one-fifth of the booty, a right established according to him in 1362 under Murad I.

Von Hammer's account is practically a complete translation of the Idrisian Version from the pages of Sa'd ad-dīn. He cites the latter in his footnotes as his principal authority, but he was well aware of what his less learned predecessors and successors did not know, namely, that Sa'd ad-dīn himself was only reproducing Idris: he made, for this reason, great efforts to obtain one of the rare manuscripts of the Hasht Bihisht, ultimately with success.³

To his presentation of the Idrisian Version, von Hammer added the sleeve incident, but not at Kossovo: he placed it in the reign of Orkhan. There is a mystery here, because in his footnotes he gives as his sources for this incident Neshri and 'Āli. The incident, of course, is not in Neshri's real text at all, and Neshri, in any case, follows 'Ashiqpashazāde who, if he had ever heard the sleeve incident in the form which we know, would

¹ Comte de Marsigli, L'État Militaire de l'Empire Ottoman (1732), ch. xv, p. 67.
³ See above p. 448, n. 1.
have been exceedingly enraged. As for 'Alt, he again uses the Idrisian Version, which contains nothing of the kind. It seems that von Hammer in his footnotes here has confused his sources: as he places the incident under Orkhan, one may suspect that he is really following d'Ohsson, but he might have had an interpolated or corrupt text of Neshri or 'Ashiqpashazade.

The vital point of von Hammer's treatment is that he agrees with d'Ohsson in adopting a superficial chronology from the Idrisian Version, and therefore he locates in the reign of Orkhan both the origin of the white caps and the creation of the Janissaries (including the devshirme) and treats the episode under Murad I as the imposition merely of a (money) tax on booty.¹

Von Hammer's account naturally reappears in the works of writers who were mere abbreviators of his own great history, such as Creasy, de la Joncquière or Lord Eversley.² Inability to use Turkish sources, however, compels also such writers as Zinkeisen and Iorga to rely on von Hammer in this matter, although in other respects their works are original and independent.³ The very imperfect monograph of Ahmad Jevad, generally speaking, corresponds, as d'Ohsson's version does, with the Idrisian Version.⁴ Theodore Menzel, again, seems to draw mainly

¹ In dealing with the origin of the Janissaries d'Ohsson particularly was handicapped (as was also von Hammer) because he approached the question from the state of Ottoman military formations in his own time. There had been a long development, resulting in a huge and complex organization, in which many old distinctions had fallen into oblivion or had been overlaid by later classifications. Thus, Qapu Kullari had become a term which included both the various Palace corps (the original Qapu Khalqi) and the Janissaries, and the devshirme had (in its time) served to recruit both formations, so that the true and original distinction between them observed in the Chroniclers' Narrative was either unnoticed or disbelieved. Again, the 'Ulufejis or troops paid from the Treasury (as opposed to the feudal levies) included the yaga under the same classification with the Qapu Kullari, thus again blurring an original distinction. It is extremely difficult to disentangle early Ottoman military history if one starts to work backwards from the later state of affairs, and this has been a secondary cause of confusion in regard to the origin of the Janissaries.

² Sir W. Creasy, History of the Ottoman Turks (1854); Vicomte A. de la Joncquière, Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman (1881); Lord Eversley, The Turkish Empire (1917).


⁴ Ahmed Djevad, État Militaire Ottoman (1882).
on d'Ohsson and thus also has the Idrisian Version. In 1916 H. A. Gibbons made an attempt to re-write early Ottoman history, again without knowing Turkish: his speculations as to the early history of military organization are valueless. F. W. Hasluck observed the confusion among European writers over the origin of the Janissaries but, once more for lack of ability to examine Turkish sources, he had no key to the puzzle.

F. Giese, in his article of 1924 mentioned above, was mainly concerned to correct Gibbons' mistaken reconstruction and also to develop the theory of a connection between the beginnings of Ottoman expansion and the Ahīs. Moreover, he relied only on Ḍüşhikpəşəzəde. He formed the theory that the white cap belonged to the Ahīs (he gives the red cap to the Kızılbaş naturally enough), claims that Othman's followers were Ahīs and so used the white cap before Orkhan, that Orkhan added the yağa to Othman's Ahīs, and then Murad I added the Janissaries to the "war-worn" yağa. Whatever the merits of the theory as to Ottoman-Ahī connections, this account as a historical sequence is evidently an artificial reconstruction of the data to be found in Ḍüşhikpəşəzəde. Similar accounts are offered by those who have extended Giese's Ahī-theory by further explanations of the special character of the ghāzīs in early Ottoman times.

Professor Gibb and Mr. Bowen in the latest study of the subject do, in substance, adhere to the Chroniclers' Narrative. They distinguish Qapu Kulları existing under Orkhan, then the yaya under the same ruler, and finally the creation of the Janissaries from prisoners of war under Murad I; they then attribute the institution of the devşirme to Murad II. Their account is much coloured by current views regarding the Ahīs and the ghāzīs, but they also have to contend with the same difficulties as d'Ohsson, because the main purpose of their work is to describe Ottoman institutions as they existed in the sixteenth

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2 H. A. Gibbons, The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire (1916).
3 F. W. Hasluck, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, ii. 483 ff.
4 p. 448, n. 2.
5 Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, pp. 48, 53, 54, 58, 59 and 64.
6 See above p. 478, n. 2.
century and later, so that they start from the later elaborations and read these back into the primitive institutions. Thus, starting from the later ‘Ulûfeji classification, they confound the Qapu Kullari and the Janissaries from the beginning, so that they miss the vital distinction in origin between them. Then, again arguing from the later conditions, they regard the Musellem as earlier than, or contemporary with, the yaya in origin, a view not supported by either the Chroniclers’ Narrative or the Idrisian Version, and consider that the yaya had grants of land originally, not pay, which is contrary to the Idrisian Version, the earliest account of the matter. The connection of the Bektashis with the white caps they regard as wholly apocryphal.

One may say, therefore, with all respect to such distinguished scholars, that the problem for them has continued to be bedevilled by the lack of orderly and critical analysis of the sources. By such an analysis we have endeavoured to restore in its simplicity and self-consistency a story first innocently distorted by the literary devices of Idris, less innocently embroidered by the Bektashis, then lost to sight in the tangle of later Ottoman administrative rules and traditions, and later recovered by even the greatest of European Turcologists only in a muddled and unrecognizable state.