CHAPTER 1

Empire and imperium

For the rulers, what is necessary is to protect the Muslim social order and to maintain the obligations and principles of Islam among the people.
– Katib Çelebi (d. 1659), *The Balance of Truth* (London, 1957)

Take necessary care to summon all the local imams to the *shari'ah* court and admonish each of them in the strongest terms to broadcast to the people of the residential quarters that the punishments of wrongdoers will be carried out without mercy.
– Command to the *kadı* of Istanbul, 1743[1]

Imperial Istanbul

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Istanbul claimed a population of some four hundred thousand inhabitants. The capital of the Ottoman Empire since 1453, it was by turns the glory and despair of its rulers and peoples. More than once in the early modern era it seemed ungovernable. The city drew men and women from every province as well as from beyond the empire's borders. It was cosmopolitan by early modern standards but no melting pot. Migration to Istanbul was life changing for most new arrivals, but it did not change everything. Living in the city was seldom enough to erase distinctive origins and social demeanor or the attitudes that came with them. At many moments in its history, most of Istanbul's residents had been born elsewhere. Even when native to the capital, the majority were archetypal urban villagers. Urban in name, they remained intimately bound to rural associations and mores and to family members left behind in the home region. For residents of Istanbul, this most pluralistic of Continental European cities, getting on and getting along required competition and cooperation. The Ottoman state was concerned with choreographing both.

Istanbul underwent dramatic expansion between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thereafter, growth was more a matter of fits and starts. The interplay of rural flight and urban calamity saw to the more erratic pattern of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Neighborhoods differed in their experience of

[1] İstM 2/184, fol. 150a (1156/1743).

Fig. 1. "Fountain and Market at Tophane [in Istanbul]." Julia Pardoe, *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* (London, 1838).

newcomers, affluence, poverty, and disorder. Most were economically mixed, with rich and poor living side by side, although economic stratification in the eighteenth century increasingly undermined that cohesion. Many neighborhoods reflected ethnic and confessional self-ghettoization. The city as a whole, however, had an overwhelmingly male appearance and sensibility. Men, the visible sex, dominated the streets, the markets, and the public buildings.

The residential home of the sultan and the seat of government, Istanbul was a company town, both the empire personified and the core domain of male rulership. That being said, the city's precise gender ratio in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is indeterminable.[2] The state's interests until the end of the nineteenth century lay in the empire's tax base and manpower potential. Its surveys counted economic households and male adulthood but not the gender distribution of the population.[3] In the absence of true censuses in the period of the study, it is difficult to know if men's demographic share was congruent with their cultural weight.[4] Their cultural weight was heavy indeed.

[2] The ratio of men to women was about five to four in 1844, according to figures given by J. H. A. Ubicini, *Letters on Turkey: An Account of the Religious, Political, Social, and Commercial Condition of the Ottoman Empire . . .* (1856; repr., New York, 1973), 1:24.

[3] The tax registers (*tahrir*s) occasionally recorded women, usually widows, who headed households.

[4] On Istanbul's population and migration patterns in the nineteenth century, see Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, and Fertility, 1880–1940* (Cambridge, U.K., 1991), 24–5; according to the (flawed) census of 1885, the city's population was 873,565

Over the centuries, waves of new arrivals, free men and women as well as forced settlers, many of them foreign captives, poured into the city. It was the influx of voluntary arrivals, however, that ensured Istanbul's megacity demographic. Foremost among these were young men. Many were poor and unmarried and remained so. Others cobbled together a living and established Istanbul families. Muslim migrants considered themselves especially fortunate if they secured employment within the ranks of officialdom or as protégés linked to individual officeholders. The grander the officeholder, the greater were the prospects for favor seekers. Non-Muslims (T., *zimmi*s, Ar., *dhimmi*s) looked for similar connections and protectors, especially among their own coreligionists, some of whom at the highest levels enjoyed the patronage of Muslim officials.

Both Muslim and non-Muslim migrants counted themselves decidedly unfortunate if they found themselves swept up in the regime's population-culling drives. Newcomers to the city, even those of some years' habitation, were sometimes expelled en masse, victims of periodic campaigns to reduce surplus labor and ease pressures on the capital's resources.[5] Very often it was Istanbul's policing capability that required relief, as migrant flows were predominately male, and male unemployment was an all-too-familiar trigger of urban unrest.

The successful migrant was a sponsored migrant. Newcomers who had kin, compatriots, or other willing patrons already residing in the city stood the best chance of making some small corner of the capital their own. Maintaining the health of one's supporting networks entailed demonstrations of loyalty as well as the willingness to act or stand attendance when called on. As Sabean found for Continental Europe, sub-subsistence was an all-too-common living standard in the period.[6] A majority of Istanbul's inhabitants were very likely engaged in a life-or-death struggle to secure their economic footing. Family solidarity, compatriot sponsorship, and other dependencies, vertical and horizontal, were not a lifestyle choice but the foundations of urban survival. Hierarchical attachments in particular held great promise for social promotion, but patrons could not always be found.

Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39), whose reign is famous for its alteration of Istanbul's social landscape, set about his reforms by abolishing the Janissary corps and remaking the Ottoman army in a new Western-looking image. Until 1826 and the destruction of the Janissaries in June of that year, Istanbul was distinguished, and chronically troubled, by its enormous military and paramilitary population.

(192). See also Ubicini, *Letters on Turkey*, 1:24; Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, Wis., 1985).

[5] For these processes in the late eighteenth century, see Betül Başaran, "Remaking the Gate of Felicity: Policing, Migration, and Social Control in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century, 1789–1793," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2006.

[6] David Warren Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, U.K., 1998), 97.

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Thousands of active-duty soldiers and guardsmen were barracked in the capital and its suburbs. Their numbers were supplemented by several thousand irregulars, including pensioners and other formal and informal affiliates of the Janissaries, Bostancıs, and other imperial corps.[7] Contingents of soldiers functioned as police, shore patrol, and fire brigade. The Janissaries' monopolistic grip on vital municipal services compounded their political leverage as a corporate body and that of individual corpsmen as social actors. Over time, the economic lives of corps enrollees had become intermingled with the vocations and interests of shopkeeper commerce.[8] Many were themselves more tradesman than soldier. Not surprisingly, these kinds of civic and civilian linkages further enhanced the attractions of military affiliation for economically and socially hungry young men, whether or not they were new to the capital.

The three thousand or more young men studying in Istanbul's hundreds of religious colleges (*medrese*s), whether part-time, full-time, or sometimes, constituted the empire's future religious leadership. As aspiring *ulema*, these students of Islamic jurisprudence and *shari'ah* law hoped to launch their careers by gaining appointments as entry-level *medrese* professors or religious-court judges (*kadı*s).[9] Career posts were at a premium, however. The number of students and unemployed graduates of the *medrese*s by far exceeded available employment, even in the junior ranks. The majority of office seekers had to make do with the most meager postings, if they managed to stay in the profession at all. Many gave up the ghost and settled for whatever jobs they could find, selling something or assisting those who did. Until then, young diploma holders marked time in hopeful attendance on the senior men of the profession. Even greater numbers of youths waited for years just to take the diploma examination (*rüus imtihanı*).[10] Despite the shrinking of the empire's borders and the disappearance of the offices and benefices of lost or war-scarred provinces, the central system continued to swell with new graduates during the eighteenth century and through the reign of Mahmud II. In doing so, it made promises that it could not keep.

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[7] *EI2*, s.v. "Istanbul," by Halil İnalcık, esp. 242–3; for an analysis of the social connections and paradoxes of the Janissaries in history and historiography, see Cemal Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause?" in Baki Tezcan and Karl K. Barbir, eds., *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison, Wis., 2007), 113–34.

[8] Donald Quataert, "Janissaries, Artisans and the Question of Ottoman Decline, 1730–1826," in Donald Quataert, ed., *Workers, Peasants and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire, 1730–1914* (Istanbul, 1993).

[9] Madeline C. Zilfi, "The *İlmiye* Registers and the Ottoman *Medrese* System Prior to the Tanzimat," in J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont and P. Dumont, eds., *Collection Turcica III: Contributions à l'histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman* (Louvain, 1983), 309–27.

[10] On educational bottlenecks in the eighteenth century particularly, see Mehmed Raşid, *Tarih-i Raşid* (Istanbul, 1282/1865), 4:47–51; Küçük Çelebizade İsmail Asım, *Tarih-i Asım*, vol. 6 of Raşid, *Tarih-i Raşid*, 603–5; Tatarcık Abdullah, "Nizam-ı Devlet hakkında Mütalaat," *TOEM*, no. 41 (1332/1916–17), 272–3.

Ulema and would-be *ulema* rivaled the military in terms of corporate inter-
ests and political influence, if not in sheer numbers. *Ulema* hierarchs, who
oversaw personnel and promotions, were the official religious career's chief
beneficiaries. Those at the pinnacle of the profession – the grand muftis, or
*şeyhülislam*s, the chief justices of the army (*kadıasker*), and city judges – were
first-line recipients of the career's direct compensations. They also had prior-
ity claim on its stock of patronage. Through supernumerary appointments and
emoluments, they kept relatives and clients dependent, if not economically
whole. Individual students and novice *ulema* – typically young men from ado-
lescence to their midtwenties – were a source of political and personal support
for their career superiors. Collectively, they were also a potential source of
opposition.

As in the case of soldiery in the pre-Mahmudean, Janissary-dominated mil-
itary order, the status of student (*danişmend*) carried with it official standing
and a certain social dignity. Apart from scions of the great *ulema* families,
however, students were penurious almost by definition. They also lacked the
coercive means available to armed soldiers. Students, nonetheless, possessed
a certain power of numbers. Depending on the issue at hand, they could tap
into like-minded social elements, many of which represented family or com-
patriot connections and related social networks. Residential clustering in the
*medrese*s and boarding houses (*bekâr odaları*) of Istanbul's Old City neigh-
borhoods facilitated students' capacity for rousing their fellows to collective
action. At various times in the early modern era, with and against their own
ulema leadership, activists mobilized the student population to help topple an
unpopular vizierial regime. Sometimes, alongside the Janissaries and other
strategic allies, they threatened the sultan himself.

In everyday urban life, the men of the *medrese*s tended to be a conservative
force. Their vocational commitment to the study of Islamic law and the scle-
rotic *medrese* curriculum inclined them toward that disposition. Nonetheless,
study of the law did not guarantee hidebound conservatism in every regard. Nor
can it be said that *ulema* circles as a whole, or even the *ulema* elite, embraced
one and the same politics. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,
some of the most distinguished members of the various reform parties were
products of the *medrese*.[11] Still, much of the support for conservatism regard-
ing gender relations and the position of the non-Muslim minorities could
be found among *medrese* students and in the ranks of their *ulema* teachers
and mentors. *Shari'ah* law provided an ideological framework for the oppo-
sition to much social change. When the static premises of Islamic jurispru-
dence, as taught in the *medrese*s, were coupled with the students' and religious

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[11] Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulemā and Westernization in the Time of Selīm III and Maḥmūd
II," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 63–96; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman
Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (1962; repr., Syracuse, N.Y.,
2000), 216–18.

supernumeraries' chronic economic vulnerability, the likelihood of their oppo-
sition to religious egalitarianism and democratizing trends increased. It does
not surprise that the sultanic and vizierial proponents of social laws – particu-
larly laws regulating consumption practices and the social position of women
and the non-Muslim minorities – could avail themselves of the manpower as
well as the vocabulary of religious institutions.

Despite Istanbul's immense size – the most populous city in Europe and
West Asia for much of the early modern period – as well as its multiple ethnici-
ties and religions and the daily traffic of thousands of residents and sojourners,
urban mayhem was remarkably rare. Official posts and emoluments prolifer-
ated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most of these opportunities
fell to Istanbul's inhabitants. Although helping to contain some of the forces
of urban instability, they were ultimately unable to keep up with demand. They
had an even less salutary effect on the provinces, more and more of whose rev-
enues were diverted to the capital's special interests. The practice of collective
liability for the behavior of one's fellows – guildsmen, neighbors, coreligion-
ists, and the like – accelerated the detection of crimes and social misdeeds and
helped stave off disturbances.[12] The dispersion of policing responsibilities
to neighborhood notables complemented the vigilance of ordinary residents.
Through its own civilians, Istanbul achieved a level of intercommunal quiet
that was rare elsewhere in Europe.

Ottoman social norms, the general adherence of its urban populations to
differentiating rules of apparel, deference, address, and comportment, were
the product of communal conditioning and state regulation. The absence of
a clear-cut distinction between offenses against Islamic law (*shari'ah*) and
offenses against custom and usage also opened up pliable space for state
intervention in the interests of the prescribed social order.

Seeing like the Ottoman state

The empire's fading international position in the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries forced a readjustment of the rationales underlying state claims to
legitimacy. The affirming role of military imperatives, particularly in the form
of expansionist expeditions against neighboring states, lost its luster after
the seventeenth century. Expansion had become a practical impossibility in
any case. The military dynamic increasingly gave way to a more internalist
vision of dynastic legitimacy and of the central elites' role in the legitimation

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[12] Abdullah Saydam, "Kamu Hizmeti Yaptırma ve Suçu Önleme Yöntemi Olarak Osmanlılarda
Kefâlet Usûlü," in Kemal Çiçek and Abdullah Saydam, *Kıbrıs'tan Kafkasya'ya Osmanlı
Dünyasında Siyaset, Adalet ve Raiyyet* (Trabzon, 1998), 98–115; Tahsin Özcan, "Osmanlı
Mahallesi Sosyal Kontrol ve Kefalet Sistemi," *Marife* 1, no. 1 (2001): 129–51; *EI2*, s.v.
"Kafāla," by Y. Linant de Bellefonds; Ferdan Ergut, *Modern Devlet ve Polis: Osmanlı'dan
Cumhuriyet'e Toplumsal Denetimin Diyalektiği* (Istanbul, 2004), 48–54, 86–104.

project.[13] In the eighteenth century, as foreign enemies ate away at the empire's territories, the state's diminished martial stature was offset by a compensatory investment in the domestic order and the empowering authority of social control.[14]

The empire was, on many levels, conceived as domestic space. As nonforeign, nonalien terrain, its allocation in the form of governorships, service fiefs (*timar*s), and philanthropic benefices (*vakf*s) was, in theory at least, the prerogative of the ruling sultan. The capital itself was a uniquely branded sovereign property. Istanbul was more narrowly domestic – the more so as the empire continued to contract in the eighteenth century and thereafter – as it was home to the imperial family. The Ottoman dynasty was, after all, a family that ruled an empire on three continents, yet possessed no real residential house or home outside of Istanbul and its environs. The palace and lodges of Edirne and the palace-villas of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, even when not the usual flimsy kiosks, were still in Istanbul's backyard.

Istanbul was effectively the province, the personal fiefdom, of the sultan.[15] His was an overarching dynastic household governed by sultanic dictate, *shari'ah* prescription, and male priority. The capital, the throne room of the empire, increasingly came to embody the imperial system's first and last line of defense against enemies inside and out. The punctilios of personal and public comportment, the dos and don'ts of intercommunal contact, and the rules and roles of the Ottoman gender system were devised mainly within the capital. They were certainly most closely watched there. The Ottoman way was often really, and sometimes merely, Istanbul's practice. Although the language of social order had always been an important component of Ottoman legitimation, in the eighteenth century it assumed pride of place in sultanic discourse. The regime literally and figuratively retreated from conquest to defense of the realm.[16]

The imperial social formation that the rulership sought to secure, and the relationships of power that it tasked itself to reproduce, were formulated in agonistic terms. They represented more theory than fact, although they were widely held to be, or to have been in some golden past time, reality. Their significance lies in their recurring invocation and enduring appeal in these early modern centuries, when their terms were most sharply contested.

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[13] The term, though not the application of "seeing like the state," is borrowed from James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn., 1998).

[14] Madeline C. Zilfi, "A *Medrese* for the Palace: Ottoman Dynastic Legitimation in the Eighteenth Century," *JAOS* 113, no. 2 (1993): 190–1.

[15] Nora Seni's important study, "Ville ottomane et représentation du corps feminin," *Les Temps Modernes* 41 (1984): 66–95, argues that "public" space was in fact conceived of as an extension of the ruler.

[16] See the introduction and individual articles in Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski, eds., *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden, 2005); see also Zilfi, "A *Medrese* for the Palace," 184–91.

Five broad dualities or polarities both prescribed and purported to describe the lineaments of the well-ordered society. In each pair, differences were construed hierarchically. The alleged inferiorities or inabilities of one member of the pair served to justify its subordination, and in some interactions its subservience, to the other. The rationales behind the discriminations varied not only between pairs but, in historical terms, also in the context of particular crises or exigencies. In general, justifications relied on a mix of Islamic religious principles, reflecting the more expansive formulations of *shari'ah* law rather than the Qur'an by itself, as well as on custom and the legislative rulings (*kanun*s) of the sultans .

In the first and most comprehensive of these dualities, classical Islamic theorists posited for the world at large a religio-political portrait of worldly space. Lands under non-Muslim dominion, styled the "Abode of War" (*Dar el-Harb*), were held to be subordinate to the superior "Abode of Islam" (*Dar el-Islam*). The latter term denoted Muslim-ruled territories, particularly those under Sunni Muslim governance. The epitome of Sunni governance in the early modern era, as even its rivals conceded, was the Ottoman Empire. A premise of hostile or conflictual difference underlay the demarcation of a Muslim interior and non-Muslim exterior. Although Shiite Iran was periodically depicted as a non-Muslim entity, the representation came and went according to the degree of belligerence between the two states.[17] The quintessential non-Muslim powers in the period were the Christian states of Europe and Russia.

Like all prescriptions of stark difference, the worldly bifurcation between a realm of warfare and a realm of peaceful rule was more a rhetorical strategy than a grounded practice. Indeed, the concept of a third way, the Abode of Peace, or Conciliation (*Dar el-Sulh*), offered ideological reinforcement for the Ottomans' essentially pragmatic foreign policy throughout their history.[18] Like their counterparts in the Islamic past, Ottoman leaders over the centuries treated conflict with one or another non-Muslim power as entirely consonant with the divinely ordered scheme of things. However, war was not universally regarded as necessary or inevitable.[19] There were always peace parties as well

[17]   See Karen M. Kern, "The Prohibition of Sunni-Shi'i Marriages in the Ottoman Empire: A Study of Ideologies," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999, regarding the Ottoman ban on Sunni-Shiite marriage as evidence for the enduring importance of the Sunni-Shiite divide; on this point and on the ambiguities in Ottoman-Shiite relations with regard to enslavement practices, see Chapter 4 in this volume.

[18]   Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995), 79–80; Frederick M. Denny, *Islam and the Muslim Community* (San Francisco, 1987), 11; Khaled Abou El-Fadl, "The Use and Abuse of 'Holy War,'" review of *The Holy War War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, by James Turner Johnson, *Carnegie Council Resource Library*, at http://www.cceia.org/viewMedia.php/prmID/216; although for the more bifurcated view, see Rifa'at 'Ali Abou-El-Haj, "Ottoman Attitudes toward Peace Making: The Karlowitz Case," *Der Islam* 51 (1974): 131–7; Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (New York, 2000), 486–7.

[19]   Virginia H. Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700–1783* (Leiden, 1995), 195–200; see also Aksan, "Ottoman Political Writing, 1768–1808," *IJMES* 25 (1993): 53–69, regarding the changing use of classical postulates.

as war parties among Ottoman decision makers. The power of the paradigm nonetheless lay in its uncomplicated us-versus-them psychological appeal. In dark times, its deep popular resonance made it a potent instrument for mobilizing public opinion.

Inside the empire, differences in religion, gender, and estate supplied the raw materials with which social stratification was fashioned. In the logic of the second dualism, the sovereignty of Islam as the true faith and official religion of the empire achieved practical reality in Muslims' positioning as the social as well as the moral superiors of non-Muslims. In the architectural plan of the capital, the city's highest elevations were crowned by mosques endowed by the Ottoman sultans. In the social ordering of the populace, Muslim preeminence and the symbolic place of the ruler were inscribed on the material environment. A hierarchized allocation of status goods and appurtenances – not all goods by any means but those designated for the Muslim ruling classes – signified Muslim privilege, even though poor Muslims could not have afforded their cost. In most quotidian interactions, however, the duality of Muslim and non-Muslim was a matter of small differences rather than clear-cut superior-inferior ranking.

Apart from state injunctions regarding appropriate Muslim and non-Muslim attire, each of the individual religious communities, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish, laid claim to its own historically preferred garb, modes of address, foodways, and family systems, among other distinctions. Each community was also able to exercise near-complete self-regulation in its religious and civil affairs through its own religious leadership.[20] The several religious leaderships were as interested as was the central state, arguably more so, in the maintenance of communal boundaries.[21] Visual distinctions helped to reify identities where doctrinal debates were not everyday conversation. Dissimilarities of dress and comportment denoted the boundaries of the different confessions. For Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders, their daily livings and the promise of the hereafter depended on the religious conformity of their flocks. Sartorial demarcations gave color and shape to the communicants and community that religious shepherds were struggling to preserve.

In the third assignment of social value and place, the predominately Muslim *askeriye*,[22] the ruling order of civil, religious, and military officials and their dependents (*askeri*s), stood in a superior relationship to *reaya*, the

[20] For an introduction to the operation and limitations of confessional autonomy, see Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York, 1982); also Molly Greene, ed., *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, N.J., 2005); Daniel Goffman, "Ottoman *Millet*s in the Early Seventeenth Century," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 11 (1994): 135–58.

[21] Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1989), 41–3.

[22] In the centuries that are the focus of the present study, *askeri*s almost always were Muslims, but this was not always the case; see Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London, 1973), 69–114; İ. Metin Kunt, "Transformation of *Zimmi* into *Askerî*," in Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews*, 1:55–67.

Ottoman equivalent of commoners. The *reaya* comprised folk whose liveli-
hoods, through their own labor or that of their guardians, derived from non-
official, nongovernment occupations. *Reaya* numbers included the wealthy, the
penniless, and every stratum in between, although most were impoverished
or nearly so. They were mainly male and female peasants, but also pastoral-
ists and town dwellers. Some *reaya* made a handsome living as merchants,
manufacturers, seafarers, and herdsmen; Ottoman subjects did not have to be
Muslims or government employees to possess large houses and incomes and
to have slaves and servants to labor for them.

Reaya were also of all religions – although by the nineteenth century, the
term had come to be applied almost exclusively to non-Muslims, especially
Christians. Ottoman conceptions of a circle of equity in the governance of
human affairs posited reciprocity and interdependence between *askeri*s, offi-
cers of the state (literally "the military"), who in their lay or religious capacities
defended faith and realm, and *reaya*, who produced wealth through the mun-
dane labors of farm, pastureland, and city.[23] Like the European maxim, "'the
priest prays, the knight defends, the peasant works,'"[24] the Ottoman construct
underscored the interdependency and necessity of fixed social roles. As with
lord and peasant in Europe, the complementarity of social estates did not con-
stitute a relationship of equality. For the fulfillment of each estate's role in the
Ottoman model, the direction of authority and coercion led from the *askeri*s
to the *reaya*, and not vice versa.

The distinction between the official and common social orders entailed
different compensations as well as different functions. *Askeri*s were entitled
to certain tax exemptions and to social preferment. This last included, for
office-holding *askeri*s in the highest ranks, rights of command. For *askeri*s
generally, as representatives of imperial authority and favor, there was also
an expectation of, if not a right to, deference from *reaya*. For *reaya*, whose
nonofficial vocations earned them their commoner designation, liability to
taxation and circumscribed social latitude were their lot so long as they were
counted as *reaya*.[25]

As a product of the state's imagination, the *askeri-reaya* divide did not
carry the force of religious sanction. It had no scriptural foundation, nor did
it have the advantage of reflecting consistent social reality. Rather, it rep-
resented a fiscal mapping of society's taxable and nontaxed elements. Its
principal purpose was to regulate the two identities to ensure a complement of

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[23] Mardin, *Genesis*, 95–102; Gottfried Hagen, "Legitimacy and World Order," in Karateke
and Reinkowski, *Legitimizing the Order*, 65–6. Among the individuals who were not public
officials in the strict sense but received exemptions, government stipends, and *askeri* standing
were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, although any descendant might also be *askeri*
by dint of office holding in the military or *ulema*.
[24] Qtd. in Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge, U.K., 1986–), 1:384.
[25] Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlılarda Raiyyet Rüsûmu," *Belleten* 23 (1960): 575–610; Ahmet Mumcu,
Osmanlı Devletinde Siyaseten Katl (Ankara, 1963), 55.