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**PROVINCIAL MILITARY STRUCTURES IN MID-18TH-CENTURY
RUSÇUK: BETWEEN THE DEFENSE OF THE “EVER-VICTORIOUS
FRONTIER” AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFLUENCE**

(Summary)

The role of the Janissary corps in the history of the post-classical Ottoman Empire is one of the most debated themes in historiography. Undoubtedly, this role transcended its purely military functions and had much wider social, economic, and political repercussions, not only for the capital of the Empire but also for the provinces. This was particularly true in the context of the decentralization of the corps and their infiltration into local societies and economies in the eighteenth century. This paper aims to examine the local implications of these multi-layered processes in the town of Rusçuk (Ruse, on the Lower Danube), based on information from a rare, detailed mid-18th-century avarız defter.

The source provides valuable information on the local society, with a key focus on the military strata in the town of Rusçuk, dominated almost entirely by the Janissaries. The information from the defter offers valuable details about their inner hierarchy, payment structures, and clustering along professional lines in the urban quarters. This exhaustive but generally statistical information will be correlated with data from the kadi court records of the local sharia judges of Rusçuk from approximately the same period (circa mid-18th century).

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Through a micro-historical approach, the study attempts to provide a more adequate context for understanding the demographic parameters, the degree of infiltration of the military into local society and economy, and their role in the everyday life of the province.

Keywords: Rusçuk, 18th-century, *avariz defter*, *sicil*, *yeniçeri*, *dizdar*.