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SOME TURKISH ARCHIVAL SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE MENZILHANE NETWORK IN RUMELI DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (NOTES AND DOCUMENTS ON THE OTTOMAN ULAK, I)

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ABSTRACT

The history of the Ottoman **ulak** (state courier) and **menzilhane** (posting-station) system has not been studied hitherto on the basis of archival sources.

The purpose of these notes is to provide a short description of the surviving records of the **Mevkufat kalemi (menzil)** — the Bureau of Contributions in Kind (Posting-stations), i.e., the sub-bureau within the Ottoman financial administration which, in the eighteenth century, administered the menzilhane network in the **vilayets (beğlerbeğlik)** of Rumeli and Anadolu.

These records are mostly of the eighteenth century, and are preserved in Istanbul, for the most part in the **Başbakanlık Arşivi** (Archives of the Prime Minister's Office). A smaller number of registers and documents, some from as early as the fifteenth century, are also kept in the **Topkapı Saray Müzesi Arşivi** (Topkapı Palace Archive).

The **ulaklık**, or the official courier service of the Ottoman Empire, together with the network of **menzilhanes** (posting-stations) which was established on the most heavily-travelled routes of the Empire, remains a little-studied Ottoman institution of the classical period. J. H. Mordtmann,^{1a} the pioneer German Ottomanist, devoted to the **ulak** a masterly aside in one of his last articles,² in which he pointed out the antiquity of the institution and gathered together a score of contemporary western and Ottoman notices of it. He also published (from a mid-sixteenth century collection of **inşa**) the model text³ of an **ulak hükmü**, or imperial command for the requisition

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of posthorses, the fundamental document deriving from the day-to-day operation of the *ulaklık*.

In the fifty years which have passed since Mordtmann made his observations, few historians have given the *ulak* and *menzilhane* system more than passing attention, and the abundant Turkish archival materials from which its history might be written have remained largely unexplored.⁴ The purpose of these notes is to provide a provisional and summary account of some of the main classes of documents in the Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (*Başbakanlık Arşivi*)⁵ at Istanbul which derive from the administration of the *ulak* and *menzilhane* system during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. For this period the records of the *menzilhane* administration and of the traffic which the *menzilhanes* supported survive in large numbers; for earlier periods, unfortunately, they are fewer in number. Although the attention of these notes is directed towards Rumeli, the archival materials exist in equal, or greater, amounts for Anadolu.

The *menzilhane* network in Rumeli in the 18th century

The Ottoman *menzilhane* network in the eighteenth, as in earlier, centuries was based on the six major roads (*kol*) which radiated from Istanbul to the frontiers of the Empire — to Erzurum and the Caucasus; to Diyarbakır and Iraq; to Aleppo and Carlo or Mecca; to Özü and the Crimea or the line of the Dnestr; to Belgrade; and to Salonica and the Morea or Albania.⁶ Along these main routes, the maintenance and upkeep of which was an ever-present concern of the state,⁷ were established *menzilhanes* at intervals of between six and twelve hours' riding, i.e., at distances of between 20 and 70 kilometers, depending on the terrain. In frontier districts, or in thinly-populated steppe or semi-desert areas, the distances between *menzilhanes* were often greater: up to 24 hours or c. 150 kilometers. Along these routes, linking the Court and central administration of the Empire with the provinces, the frontier garrisons, and the borders of the Empire, was concentrated the courier and military traffic of the state — and, in time of war, the line of march of its armies.⁸ It is perhaps not too much to state that it was the *menzilhane* network, in its communication and provisioning functions, that held together the Empire, even — or particularly — in the eighteenth century: an indication of its importance that was unappreciated by most contemporary European observers and taken for granted by Ottoman historians.⁹

In Rumeli, in the eighteenth century, the *menzilhane* network was concentrated on the three main routes which radiated from Istanbul (or, in practice, from Edirne) — the three *kols* of the right, the centre and the left. From each of these main routes there also diverged 'branch lines' serving provincial centres or areas lying away from the three *kols*.¹⁰

The *sağ kol*, the "right-hand road [from the Court]", 'Crimea Road' as we may call it, in the eighteenth century commenced for administrative purposes at Kırk Kilisa.¹¹ and followed a northerly course parallel to and inland from the western coast of the Black Sea, striking across the broken country of the eastern Balkan chain via Aydos¹² and Prevadi¹³ to pass through the eastern fringes of the Deli Orman and enter the

Dobruja at the important menzilhane of Hacı Oğlu Bazarı.¹⁴ From there the Crimea Road bisected the Dobruja, with menzilhanes at Kara Su¹⁵ and Baba Dağı,¹⁶ before crossing the Danube between Tulcı¹⁷ and İsmail¹⁸ and veering north-eastwards in long stages to the fortress of Özü.¹⁹ In the early eighteenth century, in face of the Russian advance towards the Black Sea a string of menzilhanes was established beyond Özü, linking that fortress with the Crimea and with Azak,²⁰ and also joining the Crimea Road to the line of the Dnestre, thus also serving the strategically important fortresses of Bender²¹ and Hotin.²²

The most important 'branch line' from the *sağ kol* ran from Hacı Oğlu Bazarı to Siliştre, thence along the southern bank of the Danube to Ruscuk, Niğbolu and Vidin.

The *orta kol*, the 'centre road', historically better known than the routes of the right and the left, but in the eighteenth century, after the loss of Hungary, of lesser importance than either of them, originated at Edirne, following a route too familiar to need description utilising the valleys of the Meriç (Maritsa) and Morava to gain Filibe,²³ Sofia, Nish and Belgrade.²⁴

The *sol kol*, the 'route of the left-hand' commenced, in the eighteenth century, at Tekir Dağı (Tekfur Dağı),²⁵ running westwards on the course of the Roman Via Egnatia,²⁶ through Kavalla to the vicinity of Salonica, from whence a branch continued into Epirus and Albania, to reach the coast at Preveze or Direç,²⁷ while the main route turned south through Thessaly to Yenişehir-i Fener²⁸ and Eğriboz,²⁹ and, after the reconquest of the Morea, to Gördüs.³⁰

The administration of the menzilhane system : archival records

Financial responsibility for the menzilhane system in the *beğlerbeğlik*s of Rumeli and Anadolu was exercised by a sub-bureau (*halifelik*) attached to the *Mevkufat kalemî*, the Bureau of Contributions in Kind, one of the most important of the Bureaus into which the Ottoman central financial administration was divided.³¹ The date of the establishment of the *Mevkufat kalemî* (menzil) remains unclear; certainly its records are disappointingly scanty for any period before the beginning of the eighteenth century; from then on, and particularly after the reorganisation of the system in 1124-5/1712-13,³⁷ archival material, both bound volumes (*defter*) and single documents (*evrak*) is extremely plentiful and will permit a close investigation of the system as it operated in the seventy-five years which precede the accession of Selim III in 1204/1789.³³

As one consequence of the long and still-continuing process of organising and classifying the archives of the Ottoman state which survive in the *Başbakanlık Arşivi*, the *Mevkufat kalemî-menzil* are to be found in several of the main classifications (*tasnif*) employed there.

A number of miscellaneous *defter*s relating to the menzilhane system are to be found in the vast series of the *Maliyeden Müdevvere Defterleri*, the bound registers which were incorporated *en bloc* from the Finance Ministry, although the number of *defter*s³⁴ is smaller than might be expected. They are mainly of the four main types described below.

The largest group of defters from the Mevkufat kalemi-menzil are to be found in two of the most important of the classifications: these named after their founders, the archivists Muallim Cevdet (CVT) and Kamil Kepeci (KPT).³⁵ This group of defters, of which a few are of the late seventeenth century, but most are from the eighteenth and first third of the nineteenth centuries, number in all some hundreds, and are the most important source for the detailed operating and financial history of the menzilhane network in the eighteenth century. They are of four main types.

(a) **Menzil defterleri.**

The so-called menzil defterleri ('poststation registers') (KPT 2991-3059 (bound); CVT-Nafia, *passim* (unbound); several hundreds) are the records of the courier traffic which passed through individual menzilhanes. The defters were drawn up immediately after the end of each accounting period³⁶ by the *kadi* of the *kaza* in which the menzilhane was situated, and forwarded by him to the Mevkufat kalemi-menzil for auditing by the clerks of that sub-bureau. These defters contain a mass of valuable statistical, geographical and financial information on the daily operation of the menzilhanes, on the traffic which used them, and on the financial dispositions made for their support by the local community (village; group of villages; *kaza*) which was charged with their upkeep and by the central financial authorities themselves.

The format of individual defters, and the form and extent of the information contained in them, varies widely within broad limits; a characteristic which increases the interest in studying them and provides a conspectus of the wide variations in Ottoman provincial record-keeping, in its conscientiousness and literacy — or in the lack of these admirable qualities.³⁷

Three sizes of page appear among the menzil defterleri of the eighteenth century. The standard and by far the commonest format (all these measurements are approximate) is 16 x 46 cm. Occasionally a larger format of 22 x 58 cm. is employed or, from the smaller menzilhanes, a lesser one of 11.5 x 33.5 cm. The defters from the smaller menzilhanes were very commonly written on one side of a single sheet of paper, which was then folded to make a single folio. These defters are occasionally written on very large sheets of paper, e.g. the menzil defteri from Belgrade, RH 1122-3 (1710-11) (CVT-N 1305/20), which measures 36 x 62 cm.

In these menzil defterleri the text begins (usually) on f.lv. with an often lengthy title, which records the circumstances leading to the drawing up of the defter; its contents; the period covered; the names of the one or more *menzilciler* (post-station keepers); the establishment of the menzilhane in the number of posthorses (*bargir*; *menzil bargiri*) stationed there, and occasionally other information as well.^{37a} The language is usually simple and straightforward, but occasional passages of hyperinflated pseudo-Arabism — or the occasional semiliteracy³⁸ — are to be found.

To pass from the title of the defter to its contents.

In general, each occasion on which an *ulak hükmü* (or *buyuruldu* or *yariğ*) was

presented by a rider at the menzilhane for the requisitioning of one or more posthorses calls forth an entry in the menzil defteri. This entry provides some or all of the following information: the name and (or) office of the bearer of the requisition; the cause of his journey; the name or office of the higher functionary at whose command he is undertaking the journey; whether or not he is making a one-way or a return trip; the original point of departure and ultimate destination or the name of the preceding and following menzilhane; the number of riders included in the requisition (which of course equals the number of posthorses supplied), the number of postboys (*sürücü*) sent forward to ride with the party and bring back its horses from the next menzilhane. No menzil defteri which I have so far studied manages to provide all this information; some limit themselves to registering the number of posthorses supplied to unspecified individuals for unspecified journeys. The date on which individual requisitions were made is almost never given,³⁹ although some of the larger menzilhane, most notably that at Üsküdar (the first Anatolian menzilhane) divided their registers by the month.

The individual menzil defteri entries, therefore, are given in compressed form. A defter, such as the one for the menzilhane at Aydos for the period 1199/1784-5 (CVT-N 3059), which is notably well-written, manages to include on one page an average of 115 entries, arranged in 23 lines of five. A typical line (f. 2r, l. 14) may be given here :

Bina Emini çokadarı ve Sadri Âli tatarı bargir re's 6	Sadri A zam tatarı Ârif Ağaya bargir re's 3	Abdi Paşa hazretlerinin Kurt Osman Ağaya bargir re's 4
asker üzerine ta'yin baş-çavuş ağaya bargir re's 3	Hotin Defterdarı Çokadarı İbrahim Ağaya re's bargir 3	

- to the messenger of the Superintendent of Works and the courier of the Grand Vizier posthorses . . 6
- to the courier of the Grand Vizier. Ârif Ağa . . . posthorses . . 3
- to Kurt Osman Ağa, the servant of his Excellency Abdi Paşa.
. posthorses . . 4
- to the Chief Poursuivant, detailed on military business, posthorses 31
- to İbrahim Ağa, messenger of the defterdar of Hotin posthorses . . . 3

A more informative type of entry is provided by the kadi of İsmail Geçidi, the site of the menzilhane at the crossing of the Danube between İsmail and Tulci, in the menzil defteri which was drawn up for the accounting period RH 1180-1 (23 April 1767-8) (KPT 3051/2) :

Zahire emriyle vurud eden Hazreti Sadrı Âli çokadarı Mustafa Ağa		To Mustafa Ağa, messenger of H.E. the Grand Vizier, who arrived with a provision order
bargir re's 2	Killi tarafına âzim	Posthorses 2
		Gone forward in the direction of Kili

On all the main routes of the Empire, and particularly on those sections of them which approached strategic frontiers, the traffic was preeminently of a military and diplomatic nature. To take another example, the *menzil defteri* from Koşunluk, a *menzilhane* near Bender and the frontier with Russia, which is dated 1134-5 (1722) (CVT-N 1305/14), shows a constant stream of traffic of this kind: Russian [envoys or couriers?: 'Moskovlu'] travelling from Russia to the Porte; the **bölük başı** of the Rumelian **sağ kol**; the **kol çavuşu**, coming from the Porte and then, three entries later, returning from Bender; a **çavuş** transporting the pay for the corps of waggoners at Hotin; a **bölük başı** of the **han** of the Crimea, on the way to Wallachia; an **ağa** of the **paşa** of Hotin returning from business at Kili, and thus continuously throughout the year.

The traffic carried by a particular *menzilhane* apart, a considerable amount of other information on its organisation and finances, and on the locally-raised revenues — **bedel-i nüzul** ('provision exemption': a money tax levied nominally in lieu of contributions in kind as proviant for the Ottoman army when on campaign)⁴⁰ and the **avarız** ('emergency', i.e. regular) taxes — the collection of which was the responsibility also of the *Mevkufat kalemi*, may also be obtained from the *menzil defterleri*. For this purpose the financial audit of the *defter* made, after its receipt by the Finance Office, by the clerks of the *Mevkufat kalemi-men-zil*, is most useful, it was always written on the last pages of the *defter*.

Information may also be obtained from the *menzil defterleri* on the identity of the **menzilci** or post-station keeper at a particular *menzilhane*. Often these call for little comment, being a succession of otherwise unidentified Mehmeds, Mustafas and Ibrahims. Occasionally, in certain parts of Rumeli, most particularly in eastern Thrace, **zimmi menzilcis** are found: in 1110/1699 a certain Sefer **zimmi** is **menzilci** at Edirne, the largest *menzilhane* in Rumeli; and in the same year there were **zimmi menzilcis** at Mıgalkara (Andronik, an Armenian) and at Keşan.⁴¹ At Tekir Dağı in 1132/1720 there were employed joint **menzilcis** named Bogos and (?) Serapio.⁴² The office of **menzilci** is also sometimes found exercised jointly by up to three named individuals, for example at Yenice Kara Su⁴³ in 1128/1716, where the responsibility was shared by Hasan Efendi, Uzun Mustafa Beşe and Ahmed Çelebi.⁴⁴ Frequently responsibility was exercised jointly by the inhabitants of the *kaza* in which the *menzilhane* was situated, e.g. (to mention one amongst many) at Isakçı (Isacceca).⁴⁵

Menzilhanes which lay in strategic frontier districts came under military control. The returns from the *menzilhane* at Belgrade for the year RH 1122-3 (1710-11) were drawn up by Osman, *kadı* of Belgrade for Abdi Paşa, the commandant (**muhafız**), who, most unusually in the case of a *menzil defteri*, affixed his seal and signature at the

head of the document.⁴⁶ The information contained in this *defter*, it may be added, is of the sparsest.⁴⁷ On the last stages of the extended eighteenth-century *sağ kol* to Azak, the twin *menzilhanes* at Yeni Kal'e and at Taman, on opposite shores of the Straits of Kertch, were the responsibility of the *nazır* of Kefe,⁴⁸ while the *menzilhane* of Habibli, the next stage towards Azak, was under the charge of the *ağa* of the *beşlüyân* (frontier cavalry)⁴⁹ from the fortress of Açu,⁵⁰ the island in the Sea of Azov on which it was situated. Finally, the last *menzilhane* on the *sağ kol*, Azak itself, was administered by the *beşlüyân agası* of that fortress, inside which, indeed, it had been established.⁵¹

From these numerous provincial *menzil defterleri*, and from the audits which were applied to them, what may be called the third dimension of the system — the statistics of seasonal and annual use — may also be extracted. Towards this end a few preliminary remarks may be made. In Rumeli, in the financial year 1124/5 (1712-13), the year of the reorganisation of the whole system, returns were expected from sixty-six *menzilhanes*.⁵² The most heavily used *kol* was that of the right, the road to the Crimea. At its twenty-two *menzilhanes* were stationed 185 posthorses. At the eighteen *menzilhanes* of the *orta kol* were stationed 204 horses; at the twenty-six *menzilhanes* of the *sol kol*, only one hundred and fifty, making 549 as the total establishment of posthorses in the *vilayet* of Rumeli.⁵³

From the number of posthorses stationed at a particular *menzilhane* may be derived some indication of its relative importance, and of the volume of traffic which passed through it. In the reign of Ahmed III Edirne, the seat of the court, possessed the largest *menzilhane* in Rumeli, with an allocation (in 1713) of forty posthorses. From Edirne, in the twelve months ending in April 1713, were despatched 6896 posthorses, of which 1732 were ridden by *sürücüs*.⁵⁴ Thus, with an allocation of forty horses, Edirne was despatching approximately one hundred and forty per week on the first stage of couriers' and others' journeys to all parts of Rumeli: to the *menzilhanes* of Fakih⁵⁵ or Karmabad,⁵⁶ or to Yanboli,⁵⁷ 14 hours distant, the first stages on journeys to the north; to Zagra-yi Atik, 18 hours distant, on the secondary route to Vidin; to Habibca, nine hours toward Sofia and Belgrade, and *tocisr-i* Ergene, (nine hours) or Dimetoka (seven hours), en route for Gallipoli or the *sol kol*.

On particular routes the traffic was lighter: during the same period (April 1712-13) and leaving aside the totals for the *sürücüs*, 1293 riders were despatched from Fakih; 2000-plus from Aydos; 2978 from Prevadi, and 2795 from Hacı Oğlu Bazarı. By making use of evidence from the *menzil defterleri*, these global annual totals may be broken down still further. Prevadi may again be taken as an example. Prevadi was a *menzilhane* of some significance on the Rumelian *sağ kol*. The third *menzilhane* from Edirne, after Paşa and Karmabad or Aydos, it was also the junction for roads, regularly used by courier traffic, to Silistre on the Danube, to Yenipazar⁵⁸ (for Rusçuk and Vidin) and to Varna on the Black Sea. The *menzil defteri* from Prevadi for six months in 1129-30 (October to April 1717-8)⁵⁹ provides a breakdown by route of posthorses sent out during that period. The road to the Crimea was by far the most heavily travelled, and the journeys made to the next *menzilhane* to the north, Hacı Oğlu Bazarı, (433 plus 217 *sürücüs*) nicely balance those to Aydos to the south (450 plus 209), representing in total the approximate through traffic between the Porte and the Danube during that

period. In contrast, journeys diverging from the main road were much fewer: to Silistre only twenty-five, of which eight were sürücüs (although Silistre was served by other roads as well); to Varna, 63; and to Yenipazar, twenty-eight. The overwhelming significance of the three great *kollar*, to support which evidence from many other *menzil defterleri* could also be adduced, is surely manifest in these empirical statistics.

(b) *Ahkâm defterleri - menzil.*

A series of useful statistics concerning courier traffic and the use made of the *menzilhane* network may also be extracted from a further series of *defterleri* which derive from the *Mevkufat kalemi-menzil*. These are the so-called *ahkâm defterleri - menzil*, i.e. registers of *ulak hükmüs* given out during a particular period (which is almost invariably the *Ruzi Hızr*-based solar year).⁶⁰ Although in the middle and later years of the sixteenth century *ulak hükmüs* were entered, usually in an abbreviated form, at the end of volumes of the *Mühimme Defteri*,⁶¹ by the beginning of the eighteenth century, if not earlier, these, with other subordinate matters, were hived off into a series of separate *defterleri*, in this case the *ahkâm defterleri - menzil*. Entries were divided according to the *kollar* used; first for the *beğlerbeğlik* of Anadolu, secondly for Rumeli. More than in the case of the *Mühimme* entries, the issues of *ulak hükmüs* were made in these *defterleri* in a set form from which, again, much useful statistical information of the use of the *menzil* network may be gained.

JOURNEYS MADE ON THE AUTHORITY OF AN *ULAK HÜKMÜ* FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES ON THE RUMELIAN SAĞ KOL (THE 'CRIMEA ROAD') AND ITS BRANCHES, 1706 - 1709.

<u>Destination</u>	A	B	C	D	<u>Destination</u>	A	B	C	D
Sağ kol	—	4	6	10	İsmail Geçidi	8	10	4	22
Pınar Hisar	—	2	—	2	Isakçı	2	6	8	16
Kırk Kilisa	—	—	2	2	Kili	4	—	2	6
Ahyolu	2	2	—	4	Akkerman	—	2	2	4
Prevadi	2	—	—	2	Bender	15	17	31	63
Balcık	—	—	2	2	Russian frontier	14	6	7	27
Kostanca	—	—	1	1	Boğdan	6	18	4	28
Yanbelı	2	—	—	2	Özü	44	20	47	111
Şumni	—	2	—	2	Or Kalesi	2	—	4	6
Silistre	2	16	6	24	Kırım	17	17	30	64
Rusçuk	6	4	10	10	Keleş	2	2	—	4
Niğbolu	12	15	12	39	Yeni Kale	21	8	22	51
Ziştovi	—	—	1	1	Açu	13	—	—	13
Vidin	13	9	2	24	Azak	5	—	—	5
Hırsova	—	—	1	1	unclear	3	18	2	23
Hflak	17	10	14	41	not to sağ kol				
İbrail	3	—	—	3	destinations	—	(10)	(22)	(32)
İsmail	2	—	4	6	E	131	117	140	388
Tırnovi	5	8	8	21	F	266	288	343	897
Yergöğü	—	2	—	2					

A *Ruz-ı Hızr* 1119-20 (26 April 1706 - 25 April 1707)

B *Ruz-ı Hızr* 1120-21 (2 April 1707 - 25 April 1708)

C *Ruz-ı Hızr* 1121-22 (26 April 1708 - 25 April 1709)

D Three years' total, 26.4.1706 - 25.4.1709

E Numbers of occasions on which ulak hükmüs were issued for the Rumelian sağ kol

F Total number of riders/posthorses issued

(Source : BA KPT 2820, *Defter-i kuyud-i ahkâm-ı menzil* for 1118/1705 - 6 to 1122/1708 - 9)

Note : The figures for individual destinations reflect the numbers of one-way journeys made by single riders or groups travelling under the authority of the same ulak hükmü. Defter entries for return journeys out from the Porte and returning to it (*varub gellince*) or vice versa were counted as two; one-way journeys either from (or most commonly to) the Porte were counted as one.

These figures exclude journeys made on the authority of *buğuruldus* issued either by the Grand Vizier or by the pashas of frontier fortress or of *yarlığs* issued by the *han* of the Crimea or his deputies.

(c) *Nizam defterleri*

The *nizam defterleri* form a numerically small but important class of defter devoted to the *menzilhane* system. These defters were prepared on the basis of the audits made of individual *menzilhanes'* returns for a particular financial year, which were then combined to provide a statistical and financial breakdown of the *menzilhane* network of the Empire, or at least for the *vilayets* of Anatolia and Rumeli, kol by kol, and *menzilhane* by *menzilhane*. I hope to produce an edition of the text of one of these *nizam defterleri*, that for the financial year 1124-5 (1712-13),⁶² in the near future.

The predecessor of this defter has recently come to light (CVT-N 1320). This is the *nizam defteri* for 1111/1700, which is less full than its successor, and noticeably more ill-written.

(d) *Zahire mübayaası defterleri*

The *menzilhane* had other functions besides the provision of remounts to couriers and other travellers. In wartime its function was to serve as a halting-place for the army when it was en route to or from the theatre of war. To this end the *menzilhanes* had to be supplied with food and fodder for the men and riding and draught animals which constituted the Ottoman army on the march: the *menzilhanes* themselves acted as collection centres for supplies levied on the reaya of the surrounding districts. Since, of course, the army marched more slowly than a courier could gallop or even the retinue of a pasha progress, intermediate nightly halting-places (*menzil*) were established between the regular *menzilhanes* and were placed under the administration of the *menzilhane* nearest to them. At the time of the Ottoman reconquest of the Morea in 1715, 'provisioning' *menzils* were set up along the whole length of the Rumelian sol kol, at intervals of a day's march. Between the adjacent *menzilhanes* of Dimetoka and Ferecik, for example, *menzils* were established at Saltık and at Vakfı Rendil, each supplied with corn, flour, wood and other necessaries; the one from Malgara; the other from Ferecik.⁶³

A number of defters for this army provisioning purpose survive in the Kamil Kepeci tasnifi, e.g. KPT 2715, for the line of march on the orta kol from Davud Paşa (Istanbul) to Belgrade in 1098/1687, or KPT 2759, for the army's march from Edirne to İstefe (Thebes), for the Morea campaign of 1106/1695.

(e) **Single documents (evrak)**

Apart from the various series of defters which have been discussed above, many thousands of single documents (**varak**, pl. **evrak**) in the Başbakanlık Arşivi and in the Topkapı archives also contain much valuable information on the ulak menzilhane system in the eighteenth and, to some degree, in earlier centuries. Only the main types may be briefly mentioned here; a more detailed discussion of their contents and usefulness must await another occasion.

A large group of documents scattered, in particular, through the Cevdet (Nafi'a) classification, consist of draughts and copies of **hükms** (orders) addressed to kadıs in places situated on sections or all of one or the other kollar, and dealing with the upkeep and tenancy of the menzilhanes and the conduct of traffic on the road. Many of them, deal with the abuses connected with the giving of posthorses to unauthorised persons, or with the illegal requisitioning by ulaks of horses to which they were not entitled (e.g., in Cumada II 1183/October 1769) on the road from Kirk Kilisa to the front, during the war with Russia.⁶⁴

In contrast to these documents issued from the centre are numerous **i'lans** issued by the local kadıs at the request of various petitioners for the grant of menzilhane expenses from the Treasury, and **arzuhalı** (petitions) submitted by local officials or residents against abuses connected with the system or to secure the opening of a menzilhane in the locality. From these **i'lans** and **arzuhalı**, perhaps more than from any other source except their counterparts in the **sicillât** of the local kadıs themselves (which lie outside the purview of these notes) the local history of particular menzilhanes and their effect on the communities in which they were situated, can be obtained.⁶⁵

Conclusions. The purpose of these notes is confined to pointing out some of the more important Turkish archival sources for the history of the menzilhane network in Rumeli during the eighteenth century. It will be obvious to those familiar with the field that many other sources might have been indicated: to take only the most obvious, I have purposely ignored the Mühimme defterleri as a sources, partly because this series of defters is already so well known to Ottoman historians, and partly because I wished to concentrate on the archival sources which derive from the actual administration of the menzilhane system itself. In conclusion, perhaps two observations of a general nature may be made. The first, which is unconsciously made by many of the documents which have been read while these notes were in preparation, is the supreme importance and indispensability, in the local administration of the ulak/menzilhane network, of the kadı; the second brings me back to the remarks made fifty years ago on the ulak by Mordtmann, to which I referred in the first paragraph of these notes. In speaking of attempts which apparently were made in the mid-seventeenth century to suppress entirely the ulak system because of the many abuses and extortions which it occasioned, Mordtmann remarks⁶⁶ that 'the ulaks appear however still in later notices, from the first half of the eighteenth century. Then, however, they disappear from our sight and are swallowed up in oblivion (**Dann verschwinden sie aus unserem Geschichtskreis und geraten in Vergessenheit**)', a statement which he illustrates by the imperial historiographer Cevdet's necessary gloss of the phrase **Beç ulağı** by the term **Viyana postası**, when dealing with the events of the year

1196/1782.⁶⁷ But Cevdet was writing in 1854, by which time, under the stress of the Tanzimat and the abandonment of so many old forms, the ulak and the menzilhane had indeed passed into the void of nothingness. As the *kurir* or *posta*, and as the *postahane*, however, they survived the Tanzimat until the successive introduction of the telegraph, the railway and the motor put an end such things for ever.

NOTES

- 1 The research on which this paper is based was carried out in the Başbakanlık Arşivi, the archives of the Topkapı Saray Müzesi, and the library of the Deutsche Archäologische Institut in Istanbul. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director and Staff of each of these institutions for their assistance, and in particular to acknowledge the many kindnesses shown me by Bay Turgut Işıksal of the Başbakanlık Arşivi, on the occasion of my sojourns in Istanbul. I must also offer thanks to Dr. Metin Kunt for his generous invitation to me as an outsider, to contribute, to the *Boğaziçi University Journal*, and to my old friend Dr. Heath Lowry, Director of the American Research Institute in Turkey, for many acts of kindness, not least in the provision of those two desiderata of the itinerant scholar, lodgings and a place in which to work.
- 1a Cf. Franz Babinger, *J. H. Mordtmann zum Gedächtnis*, Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1933, 16 pp. (necrology and bibliography).
- 2 'Die jüdischen Kira im Serai der Sultane', *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* xxxii/2, 1929, 1-38. Cf., on the ulak, pp. 23-5.
- 3 Op. cit., p. 24. For the oldest *ulak hükmü* so far published see Fr. von Kraelitz [— Greifenhorst], *Osmanische Urkunden in türkische Sprache aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Wien, 1921 (=Sb. d. Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien, Ph.-Hist. Kl., 197/3), pp. 106-7 (an ulak hükmü of I. Muharram 903/30 Aug. - 8 Sept. 1497). In the archives of the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi is preserved an ulak hükmü of 887/1482 (TKS E. 5568), which exhibits several interesting points of difference from the document published by Kraelitz. I hope to publish this firman, together with some other fifteenth-century documents preserved in the Topkapı archives which deal with the ulak and related subjects, in a future article.
- 4 Or works specifically devoted to the menzilhane system there exists only the little brochure of Rıza Bozkurt, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda kollar, ulak ve işe menzilleri* (= Gnkur, Bşk. Harp Tarihi Dairesi Resmî Yayınları Seri No.: 2), Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1966, which reproduces, in a simplified tabular form, information extracted from several of the defters preserved in the Başbakanlık Arşivi and referred to *infra*, *passim*.
- 5 On the Başbakanlık Arşivi cf. Midhat Sertoğlu, *Muhteva bakımından Başvekâlet Arşivi*, Ankara, 1955; B. Lewis, 'Başvekâlet Arşivi', *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, i (1960), 1089-91.
- 6 The historical geography of Anatolia and Rumeli in the later Ottoman period has been extensively studied, but not to any considerable degree on the basis of Turkish archival documents. The early work of F. Taeschner, *Das Anatolische Wegenetz nach Osmanischen Quellen*, Leipzig, 1924, and the later studies of particular campaign routes in Anatolia in the 16th and 17th centuries by Turkish historians like the early work of C. J. Jirecek and the now-flourishing 'Evliya Çelebi-industry' for Rumeli, rely almost exclusively on historico-literary sources.
- 7 Cf., on this subject, the contributions of the late Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Derbend Teşkilâtı*, Istanbul, 1967; 'Köprücülük', *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresi 1970, Bildiriler*, Ankara, 1973, ii, 701-8; 'Mesleki bir teşekkül olarak Kaldırımçılık ve Osmanlı şehir yolları hakkında bazı düşünceler', *Güney - Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, i, 1972, 93-138.

⁸ I hope to deal more at length with the military aspects of the menzilhane system in a future contribution.

⁹ There are numerous incidental references to and descriptions of the ulak and menzilhane system in the vast literature of European descriptive writing on the Ottoman Empire, from Chalcocondyles in the mid-fifteenth century (cf. Mordtmann, *op. cit.*, 23) to the acute observations of Dr. Edward Browne in the seventeenth and the witty descriptions of Capt. Adolphus Slade, who observed the ulak during the last decade of its unreformed existence. These works, despite their interest and value, lie outside the purview of this note.

Ottoman writers, like many of their European contemporaries, seem principally to have been concerned with recounting or reforming the abuses perpetrated by the ulaks in requisitioning horses from the peasantry and from other travellers. Cf. the remarks of the Grand Vizier of Süleyman I, Lutfi Pasha, concerning the abuse of the system in the mid-sixteenth century (R. Tschudi, ed., *Das Asaf-nâme des Lutfi Pascha*, Berlin 1910, 11. The ulak/menzilhane system as it existed at this time is further illuminated (but mainly for Palestine) by the observations of the late Uriel Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1613*, Oxford, 1960, 28, 101, 124-7. The abuses which were current in the sixteenth century the forcible requisitioning of posthorses for the courier service; the supply of posthorses to unauthorised individuals, and the excesses and depredations committed on the local populace by high officials and their retainers when travelling from menzilhane to menzilhane seem to have been equally current in the eighteenth century, to judge by the large number of drafts and copies of *hükms* which prescribe measures to prevent abuses, and which are addressed to the kadis stationed along the various kollar. Cf. further on this subject the useful contribution of Bistra Cvetkova, 'Obsciazenie podatkowe rai w Bulgarii w czasie niewoli tureckiej, zwiazane z utrzymaniem zajazdow (menzili) ('Taxes on the peasantry in Bulgaria during the period of Turkish rule designed to support the post-stations'), *Przeglad Orientalistyczny* ii/26, 1958, 193-8. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. L. J. D. Collins, of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, for drawing this article to my attention and providing me with a translation of it.

¹⁰ I deal with this subject more fully in an article, 'The menzilhanes of the *eyâlet* of Rumeli according to the *Defter-i Mufredât-i Iskele ve Kolhâ-yi Menâzil-i 'Atik* of 1003/1594-5', which will appear in the next issue of *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*.

¹¹ Kırk Kilisa, since 1924 known as Kırklar-eli (cf. *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v.), 65 km. (12 hours) north-east of Edirne and 200 km. (38 hours and five stages - Büyük Çekmece, Silivri, Çorlu, Burgas, Kırk Kilisa - from Istanbul. The menzilhane of Kırk-Kilisa, as Mr. Machiel Kiel, of Castricum, Holland kindly informs me, still exists. Formerly known as the Ali Beg menzil hani, it possesses an [unpublished] inscription of 982/1574-5, and is now the 'İnci Sineması' (Letter to the author, of 20.3.1977). In 1112/1701 the menzilhane possessed an allocation of four posthorses, the upkeep of which was provided from fifty *avariz-hane* and *bedel-i nüzul* impositions (KPT 3006/1).

¹² Aydos, now Aitos in s.e. Bulgaria, the third menzilhane on the *sağ kol*. Amongst the *menzil defterleri* (see *infra*) preserved in the Başbakanlık Arşivi is one (CVT-Nafi'a 1306/7) written by Ahmed, the *naib* of Aydos, recording the requisitioning of posthorses by servants of the Russian ambassador on the authority of *buyuruldus* issued by the commandant (*muhafız*) of Bender, during the six months from Ruzı Kasım to Ruzı Hızır 1143 (26 Oct. 1730 to 23 April 1731) - a total of 219 horses for the journey south to the next menzilhane of Fakih, according to the *naib's* *defter*; but of only 194 less 65 *sürücüis* (postboys; see *infra*), according to the records of the menzilhane at Bender which were used by the *Mevkufat kalemi-men zil* in the audit of the *defter*.

¹³ *Prevadi*, now *Provadiya* in eastern Bulgaria, the fourth menzilhane on the *sağ kol*, fourteen hours beyond Aydos. In 1108/1696-7 it possessed an allocation of 12 posthorses (CVT Nafi'a 1320); according to the audit of the returns for 1124-5/1712-13 (KPT 3006) 1299 horses were issued against courier orders.

- 14 Hacı Oğlu Bazari, also known as Dobriç; now Tolbuhin, in n.e. Bulgaria. The surviving records of this important menzilhane appear to be particularly numerous.
- 51 Kara Su, also known as Tekfur Gölü; later, in the nineteenth century, Mecidiye (now Megidia, in Romania).
- 16 Baba Dağı, now Babadağ.
- 17 Tulci (Tulcea), on the south bank of the Danube, below the divergence of the arms of the delta. The menzilhane was supported by the avarız and bedel-i nüzul revenues from Tulci (KPT 3006). In 1713 it possessed seven posthorses (*ibid.*).
- 18 Ismail; now Izmail, and a Russian frontier station. The menzilhane here was at, and under the control of, the kadi of Ismail Geçidi, according to numerous references in the Cevdet (Nafi'a) documents.
- 19 Özü, the Ottoman fortress at the mouth of the Dnepr; after its loss to Russia at the end of the eighteenth century renamed Ochakov. For the difficulties encountered late in the eighteenth century in administering this menzilhane cf. the *fi'an* of the kadi of Özü, written in Safer 1192/March 1778 (CVT - N 970).
- 20 Azak, i.e. Azov, at the furthest limit of the sea of Azov. The menzilhane here was reestablished in Muharram 1125/Feb. 1713 (KPT 3006).
- 21 Bender, now Bendery, in Bessarabia. The menzilhane here was established in 1119/1708, on the initiative of el-Hac Yusuf Pasa, vali of Bender (CVT - N 1637).
- 22 Hotin, now Khotin in the Ukrainian S.S.R., and in the 18th. century the most important Ottoman fortress on the middle Dnestr. Hotin lay sixty-six hours' ride beyond Ismail, itself 97 hours from Kirk Kilisa and 142 from Istanbul (KPT 2555).
- 23 Filibe (Phippopolis, now Plovdiv, in Bulgaria), the third menzilhane from Edirne on the orta kol (after Habibca and Uzuncaabad Hasskoy), and 31 hours from Edirne.
- 24 Belgrade was for much of the eighteenth century the administrative terminus of the orta kol. Twelve hours to the north-west lay the border with the Hapsburg territories, while the courier route which followed the south bank of the Sava towards Bosnia does not seem to have come under the administration of the central authorities at Istanbul.
- 25 (Both forms are found in 18th-century documents)
- 26 The continuity of menzilhane sites from the Roman and Byzantine to the Ottoman periods of rule in the Balkans deserves some attention from future scholarship.
- 27 Dirac: Durazzo; now Durrës, in Albania.
- 28 Yenisehir-i Fenar: now Larissa.
- 29 Eğriboz: Khalkis.
- 30 Gordus: i.e., Corinth.
- 31 J. von Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reiches Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung*, Wien, 1815, ii, 152-3; H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Oxford, 1950-57, i/1, 130, ff.; Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, Ankara, 1948, 357, 360.
- 32 That such a reorganisation took place at this time is evident from references to *nizam-ı cedid* in documents dated 1125/1713-4 (cf. CVT (N) 761, 779, 1401 - this last referring to the 'ordinances

newly given to the posting-stations', in this case, those of the Anatolian *sağ kol* —, and from the Nizam Defteri of the same year, which is discussed below.

- 33 The 'unreformed' Ottoman courier and *menzilhane* system, if one may make an empirical observation from the surviving *mevkufat kalemi - menzil* records, continued its existence to 1255/1839, when the terminology, at least, was reformed under the *Tanzimat*; the use of such terms as *menzilhane*, *ulak*, etc., and the concept of the three *kollar*, were at this time abandoned. The transformation and 'degeneration of forms' of the archival documents, however, appears to begin in the last decade of the eighteenth century (cf. L. Fekete, *Die Siyakat-Schrift in der türkischen Finanzverwaltung* (— *Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica*, vii), Budapest 1955, ii, plates ciii, civ).
- 34 The catalogue of the *Mahyeden Müdevver* defters, for the mid-seventeenth century and subsequently, consists of a series of boxes containing hand-written *fiches* on which the description of the defter is entered. The following late 17th and 18th century defters appear to derive from the *Mevkufat kalemi - menzil* :

<u>MMD no.</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>ff.</u>	<u>subject</u>
1960	1188	184	<i>menzil ücretleri defteri</i>
1963	1047	42	Accounts of the Anatolian <i>sağ kol</i>
3278	1134	204	<i>Menzil defteri : sefer-i hümayûn</i>
3995	1189	404	Anatolia : <i>sağ kol</i>
3999	1142—8	140	<i>menzil defteri</i>
4106	1182	356	<i>menzils</i> : Anatolia and Arabistan
7286	n.d.	8	<i>menzils</i> : Edirne and Gelibolu
7321	1194	304	<i>menzil defteri</i>
10322	1141—53	438	<i>menzil defteri : ahkâm</i>
10334	1142—50	430	<i>menzil ahkâm defteri : Rum III, sağ kol</i>
15642	1176	17	<i>menzil defteri</i>
16159	1176—82	83	<i>menzil defteri</i>
18352	1137	16	<i>menzil müfredât defteri</i>
18357	1139	8	<i>menzil ahkâm defteri : sefer-i hümayûn</i>
19156	1179	10	<i>menzils</i> : Rumeli and Anatolia
19222	1178	25	<i>menzils</i> : Rumeli and Anatolia
19533	1197	42	<i>menzil defteri</i> for Gebze
19697	1137	20	<i>menzil defteri</i>
20203	n.d.	6	— — —
20645	n.d.	2	<i>menzil defteri</i> from Bagdad

35 Cf. Sertoğlu, *op. cit.*, 70, ff.

36 The accounting period used in the financial administration of the *menzilhane* system ran from Ruzı Hızır (St. George's Day; the end of winter), i.e. 23 April, for one solar year. A six-month period, running from Ruzı Hızır to Ruzı Kasım (St. Demetrius' Day, 26 October) or vice versa was also employed at times.

37 The entries made in a *menzil defteri* may reflect on occasion the contemporary pronunciation of, for example, toponyms. The following examples are taken from the records of the *menzilhane* at Karinabad (Karnobat, in s.e. Bulgaria) for 1128/1716 (CVT(N) 909) :

Conventional literary form	Karınabad defter	(?) local pronunciation
بابا طائی	بابا داغ	Baba Dag
هوتین	هوطون	Hutun
یرکوی	یرکویو	Yergöyü
اوزی	اوزو	Özü
قویم	قیریم	Kırım
شملی	شملو	Şumlu
روسبیقا	اورسبیق	Uruscık
افلاق	اوقلق ، اولاح	Uflak, Uvlah

- 37a An informative title is provided, for example, for the *menzil defteri* which was drawn up for the year Ruzı Hızr 1180 - 1 (23 April 1767 - 8) by el-Seyyid Abd al-Rahman, *naib* of Hacı Oğlu Bazarı. Here was situated one of the most important *menzil-hanes* on the road to the Crimea. This *defter*, according to the title, lists the posthorses provided against *yarlıgs* of the han of the Crimea and the Crimean governor (*ser'asker*) in Bucak, against *buyuruldus* of the Ottoman commander of Özü, and orders of the proviant inspectors (*zahire mubaşirleri*), by the *menzilci* Sâm Çelebi, for journeys southward to the next *menzilhane* of Prevadi. It is interesting to note that documents emanating from the hanate of the Crimea thus had validity in Ottoman territory.
- 38 Of which the commonest is the mis-spelling of such Arabic compounds as Zi'l-hicce or Zi'l-ka'da (CVT - N 909: ذالقعدة or such words as ta yin (loc. cit.: طاین
- 39 One *defter* which does include the date of requisitions of posthorses is that for İstefe (Thebes), Ruzı Hızr 1142 - 3 (1729 - 30), drawn up for the *menzilci* Nesimi ibn Mehmed by Mustafa, *kadı* of İstefe.
- 40 The *menzilhane* at Kırk Kilisa, for example, was supported by the revenues from fifty *avarız-hane* and fifty *bedel-i nüzul hanes* (in 1125/1713: KPT 3006); that at Divane Ali, one stage north of Hacı Oğlu Bazarı, received 300 *esedi guruş per annum* (source unspecified) from the *kaza* of Silistre, and 275 *guruş* each from the *kazas* of Mangalia and Balcık (in 1125/1713: KPT 3006). For an occasion of which the stipulated subvention from Mangalia was not paid (Şaban 1131/June 1719) see the *arzuhal* of the *menzilci*, Halil (CVT - N 1341).
- 41 CVT - N 1320
- 42 The reading of this latter name is unclear.
- 43 Now Yenisaia, between Kavalla and Komotini (Gumulcina) in western Thrace.
- 44 CVT - N 1305/11
- 45 KPT 3006
- 46 CVT - N 1305/20.
- 47 The individual entries in this *defter* are of the "posthorses; 2" type. There is considerable

discrepancy between the statistics provided by the defter — 999 horses sent out during the year — and those of the auditors: 141 "chargeable" riders to Palanka-i Hasan Paşa, the first stage south of Belgrade towards Nish and İstanbul, and only twenty-one such to the frontier (Hudud-ı İslâm). No accounting is made of couriers on the route from Belgrade to Bosnia.

48 KPT 3006. These menzihaner were re-established in response to an İlan of Yusuf Paşa on 29 Muharram 1125/25 Feb. 1713.

49 The *beslüyân* ("those receiving five [akçe per diem]") were garrison troops stationed (for the most part) in frontier fortresses and under the command of the *mustahfiz* (commandant) (cf. I.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti teşkilâtından Kapukulu Ocakları*, Ankara, 1943, 3; Fekete, *Die Silyakat - Schrift*, 96, 215).

50 KPT 3006.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid. For the succeeding three-month period the total numbers of couriers despatched to various destinations from Edirne are as follows:

First stage destination	Karınabad Paşa and	Yanbolıt (sağ kol) (Özü/Bender)(Silistre)	Zagra-i Cedid and Atık (sağ kol) (Vidin)	Habibca (orta kol)	Dimetoka (sol kol) (Selanik)	Cisr-i Ergene (sol kol) (Gelibolu)	Kırk Kilisa (local)
Posthorses issued	883	122	132	181	270	134	5
less sürücüis	256	40	46	82	112	41	2
Net totals	627	82	86	99	168	93	3

Source: CVT - N 1305/15

55 Fakih, also known in these sources as Fakih Derbendi; now Fakiya, in s.e. Bulgaria.

56 Cf. n. 37, *supra*.

57 Yanbolıt; now Jambol, it lay on the courier route from Edirne to İslimye, Tirnovi or Silistre.

58 Now Novi Pazar.

59 KPT 3007/2

60 Cf. *supra*, n. 36.

61 Cf. Heyd, *op. cit.*, p. 22, n. 2.

62 KPT 3006 (Rum İli); KPT 3007/1 (Anadolu). The defter is entitled *Defter-i menazil-i bargiran-ı ulak der vilayet-i Rum İli* (or *Anadolu*) or (on f. 1r of KPT 3006, *Rum İli ve Anadolu Bargir Menazillerinin Nizamı Defteridir*).

63 Bozkurt, *op. cit.*, 31.

64 CVT - N 412 (Zilhicca 1154/February 1742); CVT - N 482.

65 Cf. Cvetkova, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

66 *Op. cit.*, 25.

67 Cevdet, *Tarih*, İstanbul, 1309, i, 263, quoted by Mordtmann, *loc. cit.*

ÖZET

Osmanlı ulak ve menzilhane düzeninin tarihi gelişmesi şimdiye kadar arşiv belgelerine dayanarak incelenmiş değildir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 18. yüzyılda Rumeli ve Anadolu vilayetlerinde menzilhane düzeninin idaresini yüklenmiş olan ve Osmanlı mali idaresinin bölümlerinden olan **Mevkufat Kalemî (menzil)** bürosunun elimizde bulunan kayıtlarını kısaca tanıtmaktır.

Tanıtilan kayıtlar genellikle 18. yüzyıldan olup çoğu İstanbul'da Başbakanlık Arşivi'nde bulunmaktadır. Bazıları 15. yüzyıla kadar uzanan daha az sayıda bazı defter ve belgeler ise Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi'nde saklanmaktadır.