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THE OTTOMAN MENZILHANE AS THE COMMUNICATION NETWORK IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Zalina Adobasheva
PhD, Institute of Social Sciences
Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University,
Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek
E-mail: zalina.adobasheva@mail.ru

ОСМАНСКИЕ МЕНЗИЛХАНЕ КАК КОММУНИКАЦИОННАЯ СЕТЬ В ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ

Адобашева Залина Мехтиевна
PhD, институт социальных наук
Кыргызско-Турецкий университет «Манас»
Республика Кыргызстан, Бишкек
E-mail: zalina.adobasheva@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

Communication has been an important and necessary part of our live since ancient time. Life would have been so hard without communication. No sphere of human activity is possible without communication. Communication, which began between people, was developed with the emergence of states; communication was provided both within the state itself and with other states. So, in this article, we examined how the communication process takes place during the Ottoman Empire, namely, we have considered the Ottoman menzilhane, which at that time served as the communication network. We have considered the postal system known as ulak-menzil (messenger post), thanks to which official communications in the Ottoman state were mainly carried out. We also examined the system of triple main roads on which the menzilkhane were based. We studied topics such as missions of menzilhane operation of menzilhane officers in menzilhanes.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Коммуникационная сеть была важной и необходимой частью нашей жизни с древних времен. Жизнь была бы такой тяжелой без коммуникации. Никакая сфера человеческой деятельности невозможна без коммуникации. Связь, которая началась между людьми, получила развитие с появлением государств; связь обеспечивалась как внутри самого государства, так и с другими государствами. Итак, в этой статье мы рассмотрели, как происходил коммуникационный процесс во времена Османской империи, а именно, мы рассмотрели османские мензилхане, которые в то время служили коммуникационной сетью. Мы рассмотрели почтовую систему, известную как улак-мензил (сов. курьерская почта), благодаря которой в основном осуществлялись официальные коммуникации в османском государстве. Мы также рассмотрели систему тройных главных дорог, на которых базировались мензилхане. Мы изучали такие темы, как миссии мензилхане, деятельность рабочих в мензилхейне.

Keywords: Ottoman menzilhane, communication, Ottoman Empire, ulak-menzil.
Ключевые слова: Османский мензилхане, коммуникация, Османская империя, улак-мензил

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The Ottoman Menzilhane As The Communication Network In The Ottoman Empire

From time immemorial, great states have attached great importance to communications in accordance with their positions; the goal is to keep the communication system between the capital and the province in a constant active and functional mode. So what does the term communication imply? Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. [1] The Ottoman state, with its political, economic and social structure, was a rich civilization that was based on the geographical and cultural heritage left by previous civilizations; an extensive transport and communication system centered in Istanbul influenced the formation of this civilization. Communication in the Ottoman State has been provided through *ulaks* since the first establishment of the state. [2] Ulaks used to deliver the state's news about important and urgent affairs between the center and the states. They had to be honest and resistant to road conditions.

With the expansion of the borders of the state, the need to establish a regular communication network between the center and the states emerged and towards the end of the XVI century the *menzilhane* (Arabian: **منزلخانه)** began to develop. [3, p.913] In Arabian menzil means "land of landing, mansion" and in Persian ḫāne means "home, place". [4]. As a word, the *menzilhane* which means mansion, between two mansions and a mansion road, have undertaken the function of postal stations. [5] Menzilhanes which served as postal stations performed the communication service through ulaks. Ulak was a courier of the state postal service, who carried out communication between the center and the outskirts of the Ottoman Empire. His duty included the timely delivery of sultan's decrees, various kinds of reports and official papers, as well as significant sums of money. [6] A sufficient amount of workhorse is fed in the range houses and presented to the service of ulaks. Ulaks stayed in the menzilhanes located on the roads they passed, resting and replacing their workhorses with new ones, and thus ensuring communication. [3, p. 913] Geographical conditions, population density of the region, etc. played a decisive role in the establishment of menzilhanes.

Menzilhanes are usually set up with distances of 6 to 12 hours (about 40-70 km). In areas with low population density, the distance between menzilhanes could reach up to 24 hours. [7]

Menzilhanes were established on the triple main road system, including right arm (*sağ kol),* left arm (*sol kol),* middle arm *orta kol,* both in Anatolia and Rumeli within the borders of the Ottoman State. [3, p. 913]

Anatolian Right Arm (Pilgrimage Route) (Turkish: Anadolu Sağ Kol (Hac Yolu)): Üsküdar-Gebze-Eskişehir-Akşehir-Konya-Adana-Antakya is a pilgrimage road that follows the route of Aleppo and Damascus. There were 27 menzilhanes on this route. The distance between Üsküdar Menzilhane and Aleppo Menzilhane was 247 hours. The most important of the secondary roads separated from the Anatolian right arm are Izmir, Bodrum, and Antalya-Anamur roads.

Anatolian Middle Arm (Baghdad-Basra Road) (Turkish: Anadolu Orta Kol (Bağdat-Basra Yolu)): it is the Baghdad-Basra road following the Üsküdar-Gebze-İznik-Bolu-Tosya-Merzifon-Tokat-Sivas-Hasan Çelebi- Malatya- Harput-Diyarbekir- Nusaybin- Mosul-Kirkuk route. There were 44 menzilhanes on this road. The Baghdad Menzilhane was located 445 hours from Istanbul.

Anatolian left arm (Turkish: Anadolu Sol Kol): the left arm, located between Istanbul and Erzurum, followed the path of the Middle Arm to Merzifon, from here through Ladik-Niksar-Karahisar-ı Sharki-Kelkit-Ashkale-Erzurum, one arm from Hasankale to Kars and the other arm reached Tabriz.

In Rumeli, the Ottomans again moved in three directions, using the existing roads. These roads, which were also used by the Romans and Byzantines, were divided into three: the Right Arm (Crimea-Black Sea trade route), the Middle Arm (Via Militaris) and the left Arm (Via Egnatia). Rumeli, which has been involved in the policy of expansion since the establishment of the Ottoman State, has been a region that has maintained the importance of the Ottomans in every period. The route followed by the main roads in Rumeli is as follows:

Rumeli Right Arm (Crimean Road) (Turkish: Rumeli Sağ Kol (Kırım Yolu)): the right arm, which has commercial importance, was reaching Ozi and Crimea from Istanbul via Vize-Kırkkilise (Kırklareli)-Prevadi-Karasu-Babadağı-İsakçı-Akkirman.

The Rumeli Middle Arm (Istanbul-Belgrade road) (Turkish: Rumeli Orta Kol (İstanbul-Belgrad Yolu)): it reached Belgrade via İstanbul-Silivri-Edirne-Filibe-Sofya-Niş-Yagodina.

Rumeli Left Arm (Via Egnatia) (Turkish: Rumeli Sol Kol (Via Egnatia)): it stretched from Istanbul-Tekirdağ-Malkara-Firecik-Dimetoka-Gümülcine-Pravişte - Lankaza-Yenisehir (Larissa) -Izdin Road to Istefe (Tebai) and from there to Gördüs via the Eğriboz range. Gördüs range was also 194 hours away from Istanbul.

As can be seen, the Ottoman Empire had a network of roads connecting every corner of the country to the capital. It provided the opportunity to communication with every region of the country through the menzilhanes which were established on the road network. As a matter of fact, until the establishment of the postal organization, menzilhane was the communication service of the state. [3, p. 913-914]

Missions of Menzilhane

Menzilhanes were established to ensure regular and timely communication. It was of great importance that the Sultan's orders were delivered to the officials in the province on time, and that regular and systematic communication between the center of the state and the provinces was ensured. It was possible for the works not to be interrupted by delivering the decisions taken to the relevant places in a timely manner.

The menzilhanes, which initially performed the state's communications service, also increased their business over time. By expanding the borders and organizing expeditions to remote places, the menzilhanes located on the road that the army will pass have also taken on the task of ensuring the work of the soldier. During the campaign, the road that the army would pass and the menzilhane that it would stay on were determined in advance, these menzilhanes were reinforced to meet the needs of the soldier. In addition, partially menzilhanes were used in the transportation of commercial goods. In addition, they also provided accommodation services to ambassadors who came and went to the Ottoman Empire. [3, p. 914]

Operation Of Menzilhane

Menzilhanes served under the Menzil Caliphate. The duty of the Menzil Caliphate, which was subordinate to the Mevkufat Office [8] (Turkish: *Mevkufat Kalemi*) of the Revenue Office (*Defterdarlık*) [9], was to manage the affairs and accounts of menzilhane. All these were under the responsibility of the person appointed as the Caliph of Menzil. accounts and works related to the ranges were recorded in the range books and stored in the *Hazîne-i Âmire*. [10]

The *kadı* [11] (judge), dignitaries and the people of the region were responsible for the operation of the menzilhane. In order for the menzilhanes to work regularly menzılhane workers (Turkish: *menzilci*) had to be assigned, groom, janitor, cook and servants had to be provided to perform the internal services of the menzilhanes, as well as the driver and sufficient number of range horses (*menzil beygiri*) had to be fed. [12]

Officers İn Menzilhanes

The role of the *sancak* [13] administrators and notables was great in the appointment of the rangers (*menzilci, in Turkish it reads like menzilji*) who were responsible for the operation of the menzilhanes. Mütessellim [14], kadı, mufti [15], ayan [16] and a wealthy person who were deemed suitable by the notables were appointed as a menzilci for one year with a cash fee. [17] However, at the end of a year, the same person was usually appointed as a menzilci. Thus, it has been that for many years, the ranger has remained in the hands of the same family.[18]

In the selection of the menzilci, the opinion of the people was also taken and the name and appointment of the person appointed as the menzilci was notified to the capital. Since the menzilci had to ensure the regular service of the menzilhane, the characteristics of cooperation and dexterity were sought in the person to be appointed as a menzilci.

The duties of the menzilci included providing range horses to the messengers traveling with the range provision, meeting the range costs, maintaining the internal order of the menzilhane and managing the menzilhane.[19]

Menzilci was exempted from avarız-ı divaniye [20] and tekalif-i örfiye [21] in return for these services. Non-Muslims could also be appointed to the mission of rangers and were exempted from giving a janissary boy in return for their services.[22]

Conclusion

So as described above, until the establishment of the postal organization, the official communication service within the borders of the Ottoman State was provided through the menzilhane. In addition to communication, the menzilhane performed important functions during the expeditions and served as grain warehouses where the needs of soldiers were met. Menzilhane has also significantly affected the social and economic life of the people of the region where it is located. It has been observed that there was an economic mobility around menzilhane during its productive periods. In addition, they have contributed to the development and growth of the region in which they were founded over time.

As a result, efficient results were obtained from the menhanes that served from the establishment of the Ottoman Empire until the period when the postal organization was established, when they operated in accordance with the rules and on a regular basis. Menzilhanes provided political and social services by meeting the communication needs of the state, as well as military services by providing accommodation to the army during the expedition. Starting from 1834, a postal organization began to be established in addition to the menzilhanes, and the menzilhanes turned into postal stations.

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8. A department in the Ottoman finance organization that is engaged in income collected under the name of mevkūfat and performs tasks such as recovering money that is not spent, conducting state purchases, managing military appointments and transport affairs. http://www.lugatim.com/s/mevkufat. (20.082021).
9. The department that oversees the financial affairs of the provinces. *http://www.lugatim.com/s/defterdarlik*. (22.082021).
10. Hazine (Treasury) for short. (In Ottoman خزين) It is the place where the state treasury of the Ottoman Empire and related documents were kept. http://www.lugatim.com/s/Hazine-iAmire. (22.082021).
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13. Old Turk. sānç-mak "saplamak" means "stab or stick". A flag representing the honor and pride of a state, a military unit, with various shapes and embroidered inscriptions on it, made to be planted on the ground. http://www.lugatim.com/s/sancak. (23.082021).
14. Mütessellim is the proxy that any governor or sancak-bey left or sent to represent him when he is not in the province or sancak due to his duty. See: Osmanlı Tarihi, III. Cilt-I.Kısım, 10. baskı, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları-2011, Ord. Prof. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı
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18. Özkaya, s. 348.
19. Halaçoğlu, s. 149; Özkaya, s. 348.
20. *Avâriz-ı divaniye* ("war chest") Ottoman tax, which provided for the extraordinary expenditures of war without special confiscations or heavy levies. *https://www.britannica.com/topic/avariz-i-divaniye*. (23.082021).
21. Tekalif-i orfiye was a blanket terms for several different ad hoc charges which were, initially, extraordinary taxes raised in war-time. They were variously paid in cash or in kind, and rates could vary (to an extent), depending on the community's ability to pay. See: Demirci, Suleyman (2003). "Avariz and nüzul levies in the Ottoman Empire: An assessment of tax burden on the tax-paying subjects. A case study of the Province of Karaman, 1628–1700".
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