

## **“Dil Almak ve Bař Kesmek” : Land Grants and Promotions for Valor and Comradely Behavior in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Warfare**

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This paper examines the rewards bestowed by Ottoman sultans and commanders-in-chief for valor (yiđitlik) and comradely behavior (yoldařlık) of Ottoman soldiers in sixteenth-century Ottoman warfare. For Ottoman troops, acquiring pre- and post-battle payments and promotions in return for effective service and bravery was a potent driving force on the battlefield. Therefore, a variety of forms were employed by Ottoman policy-makers to stimulate the motives of ğuzāt-ı islām and bolster their enthusiasm for fighting ferociously against the enemy of the faith. By employing a meticulously constructed system of awards, gratuities, promotions, remunerations, and compensations, sultans and their representative commanders-in-chief, serdārs, paid significant attention to guarantee the meaningful acknowledgment of extraordinary endeavors and valor on the battlefield. The ceremonious execution of anticipated endowments (iĥsān), predominantly manifested through monetary incentives and tīmār allocations, formed an essential facet of Ottoman military strategies. “Dil almak” (capturing tongues) and “bař kesmek” (decapitation) constituted the most usual and rapid path to acquiring considerable wealth and higher-paying ranks in the ‘askerī. For the timariots, capturing informants and decapitating the infidel soldiers in the name of the sultan would enlarge their land grants, whereas, for others, it meant ascent in ranks, bountiful payment, and even initial acquirement of land grants. This paper, focusing on ru’ūs, taĥvīl aĥkām, and mūhimme registers, unravels the amount and number of graces granted by sultans and commanders-in-chief to ğuzāt-ı islām. By analyzing the allocation of land grants, promotions, and payments given to the valiant soldiers, this study provides insight into the transformation of the promotions and graces endowed to the Ottoman troops in a changing economy.