

## THE INSTITUTION OF “VIGLA” IN THE AEGEAN ISLANDS DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Ayşe KAYAPINAR\* – M. Halef CEVİRİOĞLU\*\*

### Öz

Ege Adalarına dair Osmanlı Arşiv belgelerinde “vigla” terimine rastlamaktayız. Bazı Bulgar tarihçiler bu terimin Osmanlı öncesi döneminde ait Balkanlarda görülen bir teşkilat olduğunu söylemektedir. “Vigla”nın nereden geldiği ve ne tür işlevi olduğu konusu çok incelenmemiştir. Ege Adalarında “vigla/vigli” kelimesine rastlanmaktadır. “Vigla/vigli” teşkilatı, Osmanlı derbend teşkilatının öncüsü olarak düşünülmektedir. Anadolu ve Balkanlarda dağlık ve sarp bölgelerde, nehir ve deniz kenarlarında gözetleme, denetleme ve muhafaza görevi üstlenen Osmanlı derbentçileri yarı reaya yarı askeri konumundaydı. Osmanlı kanunnameleri ve tahrir defterlerine göre Ege Adalarında derbend teşkilatı değil, “vigla/vigli” teşkilatının sürdürüldüğü tespit edilebilmektedir. Bu çalışmada Ege Adalarında “vigla/vigli” teşkilatında yer alan yerleşim birimleri tespit edilmeye çalışılacaktır. “Vigla/vigli” fonksiyonu Osmanlı Arşiv belgelerine göre sorgulanacak ve örneklendirilecektir. Ayrıca “vigla/vigli” teşkilatı Osmanlı derbend teşkilatı ile benzerlikleri örneklendirilip kıyaslanmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelime:** *Vigla, derbend, paramiliter, tahrir, Ege Adaları*

### Abstract

The term “vigla”, which appears in the Ottoman archival documents, is argued to be an institution existing in the Balkans before the Ottoman period. One must consider “vigla/vigli” as a pioneer of the *derbendci* institution which was a partly peasant and partly military institution and oversaw the functions of observation, control and defence in Anatolia and the Balkans, serving in the mountainous and cliffy regions, streams and shores. Ottoman *kanunnames* (law codes) and *tahrir* registers (land surveys) reveal that in the Aegean Islands, the “vigla/vigli” organization prevailed as opposed to the *derbend* institution. In the present study, the aim is to detect the settlements on the Aegean within the context of the “vigla/vigli” organization. The organization will be evaluated and exemplified in accordance with the Ottoman archival material. Furthermore, the similarities of the organization with the *derbend* institution will be stated and compared.

**Keywords:** *Vigla, derbend, paramilitary, tahrir, Aegean Islands*

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\* Prof. Dr. İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü, Çiğli-İZMİR.

\*\* Araş. Gör., İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü, Çiğli- İZMİR.

## Introduction

Ottomans have made use of a number of specifically functioning groups in order to watch over the mountain passes, sea shores and river traffic. Among these, we can list the *martaloz*, *filorici*, *derbendci* and *müsellem* groups. These were fulfilling the function of keeping watch over certain territories. In return of their duty to watch over and defend their territories, they received a number of exemptions. In general, the *derbendcis* have assumed the duty to protect insecure territories. However, on the Aegean Islands, the *vigla* institution has assumed this responsibility instead of the *derbendci*.

### 1-Meaning of the term “Vigla”

Still in today’s Greece, it’s possible to detect settlements bearing the name “Vigla”. Among these, we can exemplify the Vigla village in Arta; Vigla ski centre close to Pisoderi village in Florina; a small village called Mikri Vigla close to the Naxos town center in the island of Naxos; and Kaki Vigla on the Salamis Island across Athens. We can also find out the term “vigla” in the Ottoman archival documentation. In the Ottoman *Kanunnames* [codes of regulations], the “vigla” appears as a service expected from the villagers. Bulgarian Historian Hristo Matanov claims, without showing any reference that the term existed in the Balkans before the Ottomans. He also claims that the Ottoman *derbend* institution was the continuation of “vigla”<sup>1</sup>. Indeed the code of Serbian king Stefan Dušan contains some articles concerning the road guardians which look for brigands and thieves.<sup>2</sup>

Fotic is, similarly, convinced that the institution of vigla was an auxiliary service obligation which must be traced back to the “Byzantine military-administrative system.”<sup>3</sup> And there is much evidence regarding the historical prevalence of the institution in the present era in favour of this argument: When we have a look at the settlement names over the Greek geography, compound toponyms with the “vigla” suffix catches our attention. For example, Megali Vigli is the name of a mountain in the Naxos Island<sup>4</sup> and Imerovigli is a village name on the Santorini Island.<sup>5</sup> And when we browse through hotel maps of the islands, we can detect hotels with the names “Vigla” or “Vigla Castle” in the Samos, Leros and Amurgos Islands. In Mendi (Halkidiki), the recently carried out excavations unearthed a fortification wall at a location named Vigla, which

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<sup>1</sup> Matanov 2000, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Законник Благоверного Царя Стефана,

<sup>3</sup> Fotic, (forthcoming); Fotić 2000, 170.

<sup>4</sup> BOA, TT 800, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> BOA, TT 800, p. 275.

must have been the acropolis of Mendi.<sup>6</sup> In the *Girid Tahrir Defteri* [Cretan land survey] of 1670s, there’s mention of a certain “Vigla” position in Rethymno<sup>7</sup> and the description of the “vigla” service on the Lesbos Island.<sup>8</sup> Again, during the 1670s, there are two people registered with the name Franko Viglaki and Marko Viglaki in the Margarite village of Resimo.<sup>9</sup>

The word *vigla/vigli* is derived from the Latin “*vigilia*”, meaning observation, keeping watch, watch tower or a fortified surveillance tower.<sup>10</sup> In the Roman Empire, this word designated night guards.<sup>11</sup> The *vigiles* were the firefighters and police in Ancient Rome.<sup>12</sup> From the 4<sup>th</sup> century *vigiliae* is used for guards of all kinds in the army.<sup>13</sup> The Arithmos elite troops guarding the Byzantine emperors were also known as *Vigla*.<sup>14</sup> There was even a function named *viglatores*.<sup>15</sup> Traveler Gerlach notes that the Ottoman Greeks referred to “*vigilias*” as the “holy night”.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, *vigilia/vigile* was a word known by the Ottoman Greeks. In the Latin dictionary, *vigilia* carries both the meaning of *eve* (one day before a holy day) and of observation, watch, watchman, guardian. *Vigilia*, with its connotation of watch, watchman and guardian, finds its place in the Ottoman records with the terms *vigile* or *vigla*.<sup>17</sup> A Turkish dictionary point out that *vigla* is a loanword from the Italian *vigilia*, and explains that “it is the place built on the poles of battle and merchant ships where watchmen keep watch”.<sup>18</sup> Merovigli (Ημεροβυγλιού= İmerovigliu) was one of the six villages attached to the Scaros town in the Santorini Island during the Ottoman period. The village is now lost and only its castle has remained in ruins. The village lay 2 kilometers south of Scaros. 1670 Ottoman land survey recorded “village of Castle of İskaros” and the “village of Merovigli, attached to the Castle of İskaros”, showing us that Scaros and Merovigli were two separate settlements.<sup>19</sup> Merovigli means to keep guard during the day and Nyktovigli means to keep

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<sup>6</sup> Gounaris 2015, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Balta and Oğuz 2009, 358.

<sup>8</sup> BOA, TT 264, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Balta and Oğuz 2009, 297-298.

<sup>10</sup> Longnon and Topping make mention of a certain La Vigilia position on a high hill top near today’s Navarin. See Longnon and Topping 1969, 63; Трайкова-Алпшади 2016, 174/н. 381.

<sup>11</sup> Kazhdan 1991, 2167.

<sup>12</sup> Canter 1932, 275, 287, 288; About the *vigiles* of Rome see also Reynolds 1926.

<sup>13</sup> Kazhdan 1991, 2167.

<sup>14</sup> Bury 1911, 48/f. 2, 70/f.4.

<sup>15</sup> Luttwak 2009, 386.

<sup>16</sup> Gerlach 2010, 307.

<sup>17</sup> Gaffiot 1934, 1675.

<sup>18</sup> *Türk Dil Kurumu Türkçe Sözlük*, 1998, II; 2348.

<sup>19</sup> BOA TT 800, pp. 270, 275.

guard overnight. We see these place names in the Cyclades, especially in Santorini and in Naxos.<sup>20</sup>

A record concerning the villages Herse, Mavrohorio and Ayorini of Lesbos Island gives some details about the duty of *viglaciyân*. This record is given by the Lesbos survey register from 1548. We can see there the following explanation about the service of *viglaciyân*:

*“Viglaciyân der nezd-i karye-i Herse, Mavrohorio, Ayarini*

*Vigla-i Sigri, vigla-i Lirva, vigla-i Şika, vigla-i Ankati?, vigla-i Eski Hisar, vigla-i Doroti Ayoplını*

*Didebân-ı viglaciyân-ı karye-i mezkûrîn (Herse, Mavrohorio, Ayarini) ber-mûceb-i fermân-ı hümayûn neferen 35*

*Zikr olan viglaların bazı gündüz ve bazı gece beklenegelmişdir daima mezkûr viglaları bekleyenlerin üzerlerine dâimü'l-evkât müvekkil olub vigla bekleyenler vigla yerlerin hâlî komayub tamâm hıfz u hırâset üzere olub gaflet üzere olmamak için ve dahî deryâ kenârında mahûf yerlerin harâmî levendlerin penâh olıcak yerleri ale's-sabâh yoklayub görüb gözetmek için hizmet-i mezkûreye yine mezkûr Herse, Mavrohorio ve Ayarini nâm karyeler reâyâlarından 35 nefer kimesne tayîn olunub her birin üzerlerinde didebân-ı viglaciyân deyu işaret olunmuşdur işbu 35 nefer kimesneler atlarıyla ve yaraklarıyla her vakt mahall-i mezkûrîn görüb gözetmekden hâlî olmayalar bu hizmetleri mukâbelesinde ‘öşürlerin ve rûsûmâtların ve ‘avâızların verdiklerinden sonra mücerred kürekçi yazılmakdan muaf olmak üzere pâye-i serîr-i ‘alaya ‘arz olunur. ‘Atebe-i ‘ulyâdan dahî vech-i meşrûh üzere defter-i cedîd-i hakâniye kayd edesin deyu fermân olunmağın ber mûceb-i fermân-ı ‘alî defter-i cedîd-i hakâniye kayd olundu her gün be-nevbet dörder ve beşer kişi bekleyib hıfz u hırâset üzere olalar”<sup>21</sup> [Some of the aforementioned viglas have been guarded at times at night, at times during the day. But they should never leave their spots vacant. 35 people appointed as watchmen from among the dwellers of Herse, Mavrohorio and Ayairini villages should keep watch with their arms and horses until morning; they should pay their taxes but be exempted from being enlisted as oarsmen. Each day four or five people should take shifts to keep guard]:*

<sup>20</sup> Slot 1982, I; 56.

<sup>21</sup> BOA, TT 264, p. 45.

**Table 1: List of the *Viglaciyans***

İvloni Pigadi	Duka Zevat	Vasil Mihalaçe	Leoniti Yorgi
Duka Prosopa	Duka Hırça	Mihal Papa	Paleologo Manol
Andon Pigadi	Miliça Andon	Andon İlyora	Hilko Vapor
Yani Todor	Sivasto Polit	Yani Hrisokoti	Tetarçi Basar?
Duka Laskari	Yani Pelapoça	Yani Sifora	Duka Tetarçi
Dimitri Vivalo	Mihal Yorgiçi	Canko Manol	Yorgi Canko
Papa Paleologo Yorgi	Manol Kostara	Duka Magulaçe	Andon Duka
Yorgi veled- i İgliyato	Duka Dimitraçe	Martin Papa	Manol Kostantin
	Manol Çelavit	Komneno	Yorgi Çukala
		Karol Fata	

## 2- Vigla in the Ottoman documents

Under the 1518 Gallipoli land survey, in the Limnos Island code of regulations, the name of a service fulfilled during the pre-Ottoman period is mentioned even though the name *vigla* isn't directly pronounced. The service in question here is actually the service of watch, or sentry. The code of regulation reads as such: “*Kurâ-yı cezîre-i mezkûre halkı hukûk-ı şer’iyyeyi ve rûsûm-ı ‘örfiyyeyi vech-i meşrûh üzere edâ itdiklerinden sonra cezirede etrâfda deryâ kenârında olan karavul yerlerin görüb gözedüb muhâfazât itmek kadimî hizmetleridir. Sâir ‘avârız-ı divâniyyeden ve tekâlif-i ‘örfiyeden mu’âf olmağı çün hükm-i hümâyûnları vardır.*”<sup>22</sup> [After the village people pay their religious and royal taxes, they’re supposed to keep watch over the island territory, sea shore and similar sentry spots. They should be exempt and absolved from the royal and traditional taxes as imperial decree orders]. Here, it says, the islanders were keeping themselves prepared against the unexpected attacks by keeping watch in shifts on the sentry spots [*karavul yerler*] along the sea shores. Heath Lowry, referring to a document in the Vatopedi monastery dated 1462, suggests that the inhabitants of Limnos executed this service before the Ottomans came. This document makes it clear that the islanders executed this duty on the place called *viglai*.<sup>23</sup>

How are we supposed to define *vigla* during the Ottoman period? In the 1530 code of regulation of the islands Rhodes and Chos, it is noted that “*Ve cezîrelerde deryâya karîb olan karyeler, vigile beklemek kanûndur. Vigile demek, her karyenin yaluya karîb yüksek yerde yeri olur, üzerinde ol köy*

<sup>22</sup> BOA, TT 75, p. 5; TT 434, v. 5a, TT 490, v. 7, KKA 141, v. 4a. For the analysis of this duty imposed on the village folk of Limnos as written in the code of regulation, see Demircan 2014, 93-98.

<sup>23</sup> Lowry 1986, 246-247.

*re'âyâsından iki nefer bir gün bir gece beklerler.*"<sup>24</sup> [On the islands, in the villages close to the sea shore, it's the rule to keep vigil/ watch. Vigile means that each village has a high spot close to the sea, and two people from the village folk wait there for a night and a day ] In these expressions, it becomes clear that the villages have spots in high altitudes looking over sea shores. The word "high spot" [*yüksek yerde yeri*] can both mean a high observation point and possibly an observation building like a tower. As Lowry suggests, the traces of a building of vigla/ sentry post on the Limnos sea shore still remains to be seen.<sup>25</sup> Traveler Lubenau who visited the Ottoman Empire between 1587 and 1589 mentions old ruins around the Milos Island port. He remarks that these buildings looked like a rectangular tower and built for positioning watchmen inside them.<sup>26</sup> Another traveler, Randolph, states that to the South of the Amurgos Island, there's a high mountain upon which watch towers were built in order to observe the ships approaching from the South and the North. Thanks to these towers, the islanders could take measures in time in order to protect themselves. He also suggests that certain villages were established to execute a similar observation function.<sup>27</sup> The Ottoman traveler, Evliya Çelebi, suggests that the non- Muslim inhabitants of the Andros Island were repairing the ruins of the island's castle with their own means and were keeping watch with their canons each night.<sup>28</sup>

The sentry posts in the islands such as Limnos, Lesbos and Chos are of utmost importance for the defense of these islands. In the Ottoman codes of regulations, it was already suggested that those who didn't fulfill their watchmen duty would be punished. "*Onat beklemeyüb varmayanların haklarından geline*"<sup>29</sup> [Those who don't stand in their post with highest care should be punished]. For the villages away from the sea shore, as was the case in the Rhodes and Chos Islands, they were supposed to assume the repair of the castle and serve as labour force for twelve days a year as their *bedel- i vigile* [sentry substitute service].<sup>30</sup>

The Ottoman Empire paid attention to the protection of the seashores under his rule. Because, the seashores were open to the threats of enemy and

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<sup>24</sup> Akgündüz 1992, II; 432.

<sup>25</sup> Lowry 1986, 246-247.

<sup>26</sup> Lubenau 2012, II; 617.

<sup>27</sup> Randolph 1998, 7, 22, 47.

<sup>28</sup> Evliya Çelebi 2003, VIII; 152.

<sup>29</sup> BOA TT 367, p. 202; BOA TT 640, p. 2-4; Barkan 1943, I; p.338-340; Akgündüz 1992, V; p. 432-433.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander 1985, 465.

pirate attacks from the seas.<sup>31</sup> Herse village in the Lesbos Island was waging a conflict against the pirates as it was recorded in the 1548 Ottoman code of regulation: "*Ve havâss-ı hümâyûndan Herse nâm karyenin bağları ve bağçeleri ve zirâ'at olunur yerleri deryaya karîb yerde vâki olub re'âyâ tâifesi vaktiyle hizmetlerine varmağa harâmî levendlerden hazer edüb işlerine varımazlar. Ammâ karye-i mezbûreden otuz beş nefer kimesne atlarıyla ve yaraklarıyla deryânın harâmî duracak yerlerin be nevbet görüb gözedüb ve cemî' öşürlerin ve rüsûmların ve 'avâızların verüb mücerred kürekçi yazıldıkda yazılmakdan mu'âf olmak taleb etdiklerine eylemişiz.*"<sup>32</sup> [Herse village, being situated close to seashore, is exposed to pirate attacks. But thirty five horsed and armed men from the village keep watch over the sea where pirates might attack and they pay their taxes regularly. They only demand to be exempted from being enlisted as oarsmen and their demand is granted] In the land survey, from which this code is taken, it's noted that the Herse village executes the *vigla* duty.

This being the case, it must be considered that *vigla* institution was continued during the Ottoman period and functioned as an element of bay watch. Alongside *vigla*, *yalı muhafazası* [shore watch], *karavul* [sentry], *nigehbanlık* [watch] were also used for similar duties. Certain people were ordered to keep watch day and night over the seashore and they were kept ready to notice the necessary authorities about the incoming danger.<sup>33</sup>

Establishing watch spots in order to prevent and raise awareness about the sea raids beforehand was a Mediterranean practice which can be traced back to the antiquity. From the fourteenth century onwards, it was desired to keep soldiers on land and ship at sea in order to protect the Aegean Islands against the raids of Anatolian Turkish principalities and pirates. During the Venetian rule over Crete, there was a shore protection system relying on bay watch and the expenses were met by the islanders.<sup>34</sup> A Venetian document dated 1412 informs us about a tax named *viglaticum*. This tax is also known to be a Byzantine application.<sup>35</sup> According to the system applied in Crete under Venetian rule, there were four zones of protection on the island. These were Hania, Rethymno, Candia and Setia. Within the framework of this protection system, sentries were placed on the highest spots and on capes along the shores of Rethymno. In total 101 watch spots were defined. Four captaincies were in charge of managing the protection zones that were placed from North to South, two on the each side of the Cretan island. The protection system was put into

<sup>31</sup> For detailed information, see Özdemir 2008, 187-210.

<sup>32</sup> Akgündüz 1992, V; 432-433.

<sup>33</sup> Özdemir 2008, 190.

<sup>34</sup> Özdemir 2008, 190.

<sup>35</sup> Sathas 1880-1890, 277-278; Jacoby 1971, 218.

function between April and September and all inhabitants (except for the under aged and over aged) were supposed to take shifts in the watch. There were a number of villages in the region. A Greek or a Latin leader was put in charge of the sentry spots to watch over the shores day and night. They were to inform the authorities about the approaching suspicious vessels by lighting a fire at night or raising smoke during the day. The watchmen had arrows or harquebus as their weapons. The islanders who didn't wish to do their watch duty were punished. The Ottoman state continued this application in the conquered islands and shores and preserved this bay watch system which predated itself.<sup>36</sup>

Those in charge of providing shore protection in the Ottoman Empire were military groups, auxiliary forces, paramilitary groups and the people in general. Military forces were the spahis, castle garrisons and mercenaries. Paramilitary groups were *yaya-müselleme* [foot soldiers], *yörük* [nomads], *cerahor*, *canbaz*, etc. These were military institutions active during the early periods of the Ottoman state; but they later on assumed the status of the peasant folk by obtaining certain exemptions. Even though *derbendcis* were not included among the military groups, they served to protect their lands and enjoyed exemptions. Another group which assumed the duty of watch and protection were the *martolos*.<sup>37</sup> Lastly, a recent study suggests that even certain monks could be expected to fulfil this duty: Hilandar monks from the *metochion* in the Karviye village (in Kalamaria) were recorded as *viglacı* with charge of keeping guard over the shore as it is documented by two seventeenth century Ottoman documents.<sup>38</sup>

In terms of the mechanics of the system, we can remark that towers from pre-Ottoman periods were also utilized for bay watch, along with the existing castles. During the Ottoman era, they were called *karavul* [sentry], *karavulhane* [sentry post]. However, for the islands such as the Rhodes, these were called *vigla/vigile*, and the people serving here were named *viglacı/vigileci*.

The islanders who were commanded to keep watch over the shores were required to pay *oturak resmi*.<sup>39</sup> Alexander notes that the term “oturak” meant *sitting at one's sentry post* and had the same function with *vigla*. The difference was that whereas *vigla* was used in the Rhodes and Chos, *oturak* was used in the Limnos Island.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Özdemir 2008, 190-191.

<sup>37</sup> Özdemir 2008, 192-201.

<sup>38</sup> Fotić, (forthcoming); Fotić 2000, 170.

<sup>39</sup> Akgündüz 1992, V; 406.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander 1985, 466.

### **3-Parallels with the Ottoman Derbend Institution**

The *vigla* institution, which was applied in order to provide local protection in the pre- Ottoman period, continued as the *derbend*<sup>41</sup> institution during the Ottoman era. We come across the first *derbend* villages in Greek geography in Trikala (Tırhala) in 1454/1455.<sup>42</sup> Ayo Dimitri and Diyavata villages are registered as *derbend* villages. 50 people from Ayo Dimitri and 40 from the Diyavata villages are kept exempt from poll tax and ordered to serve as *derbendcis*. In the first land survey recorded in 1460 after the conquest of Mora by the Ottomans, Rahova villagers were appointed to keep watch over the Minhalu *derbend*.<sup>43</sup> The *derbend* villages were generally positioned in the mountainous areas. There were also similar villages along the river banks. Along the Danube, Timok and Moraviçe Rivers, there were a number of *derbend* villages. Orsowa and Kasapina on the Danube are two examples of this sort.<sup>44</sup> On the western shores of the Black Sea, we observe *derbend* villages instead of the *derbendci* villages. These were in charge of not only protecting insecure places but also of the maintenance of the roads.<sup>45</sup> There were seven *derbenci* villages in the Corinth region mentioned in Ottoman documents until 1768.<sup>46</sup> One of these villages was named Vigla (Vyele).

Protection also required institutionalization on the shores of the main land. For example, non- Muslim inhabitants of the Patra city (known as Balya Badra during the Ottoman period) on the Patra Bay were appointed to keep guard over the shores and the ports. According to a register dated 1514/1515, inhabitants of Balya Badra were exempted from many obligations in return of protecting and keeping watch over the shore and the port. The exemptions they enjoyed were from poll tax, *ulak*, *cerahor*, *sekban*, extraordinary taxes and traditional levies.<sup>47</sup>

Both the *vigla* and *derbend* members served as paramilitary forces and protected their own locality. They enjoyed a number of exemptions in return of their duty. Whereas the *vigla* members were organized against threats from the sea during the Ottoman era, *derbendci* villages were appointed to guard mountains, rivers and the western shores of the Black Sea. *Viglacis* were lighting fire at night and firing canons or raising smokes during the day in order to alert people against enemies and raiders. On the other side, *derbendcis* were

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<sup>41</sup> Orhonlu, 1967, 9-33; Halaçoğlu 1994, 162-164.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, MAD 10, pp. 100, 227.

<sup>43</sup> Kayapınar 1999, 272-273.

<sup>44</sup> Kayapınar 2011, 187.

<sup>45</sup> BOA, KK 86, pp. 42, 74.

<sup>46</sup> Orhonlu 1967, 69.

<sup>47</sup> BOA, TT 607, p. 23.

taking an appropriate position to guard the mountain passes or river fords and giving alert by hitting drums. In both institutions, taking day and night shifts was inevitable. Both aimed at establishing security and obtained tax exemptions. However, *vigla* was applied during the Byzantine and Venetian rule over the Aegean islands and also probably other shore areas. In the Balkans, the *derbend* institution substituted it and spread over a larger area.

### **Conclusion**

It was a common practice of the Ottoman state to preserve the local military and economic practices of the territories it conquered. It was not only on land, but also in the Mediterranean Sea that the Ottomans followed a similar approach. On the Aegean islands under the Ottoman rule, we can hence observe that the medieval institution of shore protection was kept intact. Not only the duty of the institution was the same, but also its Latin name (*vigilia/vigilaticum*) was transferred to Turkish with little alteration (as *vigla/vigile*). Moreover, the *vigla* as an institution bore parallels with the Ottoman *derbendçi* institution which was already in use before the Aegean islands were completely conquered. Hence, we can conclude that the institution of *vigla* was not only a pragmatic reflection of the Ottoman administration in local level, but also an institution which functioned parallel to another institution, that of the *derbendci*, that had already been in practice. It can be said that *vigla* is a kind of *derbend* or vice versa.

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*The Institution of "Vigla" in the Aegean Islands during the Ottoman Period*



An example of Vigla Tower from Chios

A record about the viglaciyan in a survey register of Lesbos Island dated 1548<sup>48</sup>

وینلیک موداق قریبی هر سه داماد خودی و دیارین

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هر سه با دیوینلیک موداق قریبی هر سه داماد خودی و دیارین

نقشه ۳۵

مکرر اولاه وینلیک موداق قریبی هر سه داماد خودی و دیارین  
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نوبت موداق قریبی هر سه داماد خودی و دیارین

<sup>48</sup> BOA 264, s. 45.

Viglaciyan der nezd-i karye-i Herse, Mavrohorio, Ayarini

- Vigla-i Sigri
- Vigla-i Lirva
- Vigla-i Şika
- Vigla-i Ankati?
- Vigla-i Eski Hisar
- Vigla-i Doroti Ayoplini
  
- **Didebân-ı viglaciyan-ı karye-i mezkûrîn (Herse, Mavrohorio, Ayarini) ber-mûceb-i fermân-ı hümayûn neferen 35**
- Zikr olan viglaların bazı gündüz ve bazı gece beklenegelmiştir dâima mezkûr viglaları bekleyenlerin üzerlerine dâimü'l-evkât müvekkil olub vigla bekleyenler vigla yerlerin hâlî komayub tamâm hıfz ve hırâset üzere olub gaflet üzere olmamak için ve dahi derya kenârında mahûf yerlerin harâmî levendlerin penâh olıcak yerleri ale's-sabâh yoklayub görüb gözetmek için hizmet-i mezkûreye yine mezkûr Herse, Mavrohorio ve Ayarini nâm karyeler re'âyâlarından 35 nefer kimesne tayîn olunub her birin üzerlerinde didebân-ı viglaciyan deyu işaret olunmuşdur işbu 35 nefer kimesneler atlarıyla ve yaraklarıyla her vakt mahal-i mezkûrin görüb gözetmekden hâlî olmayalar bu hizmetleri mukâbelesinde 'öşürlerin ve rûsûmâtların ve 'avâızların verdiklerinden sonra mücerred kürekçi yazılmakdan mu'af olmak üzere pâye-i serîr-i 'alaya' arz olunub 'atebe-i 'ulyâdan dahi vech-i meşrûh üzere defter-i cedîd-i hakâniye kayd edesin deyu fermân olunmağın ber mûceb-i fermân-ı 'ali defter-i cedîd-i hakâniye kayd olundu her gün be-nevbet dörder ve beşer kişi bekleyib hıfz ve hırâset üzere olalar.