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**POLICING THE COUNTRYSIDE: GENDARMES
OF THE LATE 19TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN
EMPIRE (1876–1908)**

This article lays the groundwork for a more systematic history of the Ottoman gendarmerie (*jandarma*), with special emphasis on the men in the corps and their working conditions. Through this paramilitary police institution, 19th-century Ottoman bureaucrats aimed to extend their authority into the provinces, which at that time could be described as only marginally under Ottoman sovereignty according to contemporary definitions of the term. From the late 18th century on, extending state sovereignty to recognized territorial boundaries emerged as a vital need for most European states as well as the Ottoman Empire. Along with other modern military and civil institutions and modern administrative practices, introducing various types of paramilitary provincial police forces enabled governments in Europe to enhance and extend their authority over territories where it had been limited. The gendarmerie thus emerged in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire as integral to modern state formation and its technologies of government. While acknowledging the Pan-European context of the gendarmerie's emergence and its theoretical ramifications, the present article is concerned more with the Ottoman context within which this police corps was established, evolved, and took on a uniquely Ottoman form.