**Title: Why did the late Ottoman Empire's wars catalyze the shaping of modern nursing in Turkey?**

**or**

**Wars in the late Ottoman Empire as a catalyst in the shaping of Modern Nursing in Turkey**

**Abstract**

Wars had an incredible influence on the nursing profession and gender development. InTurkey, until the Balkan wars, Nursing in the public arena was provided by men, while nursing in the intimate circle like family was served by wives and mothers. This study will examine the uniqueness of the emerging Turkish nursing military in traditional society from a new angle. It will focus on the nurse's function during wartime, and how it relates to forming modern nursing in the Turkish Republic; and examine Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa's activities to encourage and foster its development alongside the gender perception change needed among women in the Turkish labor force nursing. This study is based on Turkish Red Crescent archive sources, The History of Military Medicine museum and archive's sources at the Gülhane Faculty of Medicine, Health Sciences University, Ankara, Turkey, and on research materials about military nursing during the late Ottoman period.

Keywords: military nursing, Ottoman Empire, Red Crescent, war, Turkish nursing

**Introduction**

The emergence of modern nursing in Turkey is considered rooted in the Balkan wars of 1912-13 during the Ottoman Empire regime when female nurses were uniquely recruited to care for wounded soldiers on the frontlines.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Why did Turkish women nurses join the national efforts to care for the wounded men only in the late Ottoman Empire wars? At the end of the 16th century, Sunullah Efendi, the religious leader of the Empire, proclaimed that women have nothing to do with governmental and sovereignty issues.[[2]](#endnote-2) This approach continued to express the attitude toward women's activities in public nearly until the Turkish Republic foundation in 1922. The Ottoman society kept strict and controlled the relationships between the genders relationships in a way that men presented the public arena. At the same time, women's activities mainly lie in the private sphere.[[3]](#endnote-3) This attitude is controversial among scholars, arguing that women, mainly from lower socio-economic strata, were more visible in public as traders and shoppers than high society women, who were more hidden from the public eye. Nevertheless, Ottoman Turkish women belonged to Islamic society, with traditional characteristics of polygamous, extended families, patriarchal relations, and gender segregation.[[4]](#endnote-4) The education system between 1898-1924 had also considered a gender-conservative institution in how girls enriched their education and improved their knowledge while they learned from home economics textbooks modern approaches qualifying them for traditional tasks. In this way, women enhanced their traditional gendered role in private sphere education.[[5]](#endnote-5) Şemseddîn Samî (1850-1904), a reformist writer and activist for women's rights in the Ottoman Empire, began to publish his ideas for inequality and integrating women into society. He spread his views about women's contributions to Islamic and Western societies through his pioneering books and encyclopedia, which is considered the most remarkable Ottoman encyclopedia. In his feminist ideology publications, he claimed Muslim women's intelligence, intuition, and sharpness of mind might be considered above that of males.[[6]](#endnote-6) Together with foreign institutions like the American missionary college, acting as a change agent, influenced and raised awareness of feminism and women's empowerment.[[7]](#endnote-7) Women began to interlace in little steps in the labor force as midwives for the first time in 1845 and later as teachers (1873).[[8]](#endnote-8) The women's gender issue became a central debate about the cultural change in late Ottoman society. Few reforms in legal, bureaucratic, and education emerged and had an impact on women's status. Women's education had expanded with their entrance to Universities in 1914.[[9]](#endnote-9) The rise of women's organizations, journals, and publications focusing on women's aspects between 1908-14 hearten women to become activists as negotiators of change in their society.[[10]](#endnote-10) Despite these seeds of gender change, the debate of the traditional role of women as a reproductive function and their contribution as mothers and wives, continued to create interest in the western world even much later during the 1970s and in Turkey during the 1980s with the emerging feminist organization.[[11]](#endnote-11)

***Military Health services in the Ottoman Empire***

The emergence of Ottoman military medicine/ health evidence was dated in 1447 when the Janissary- the Ottoman infantry unit- trained some soldiers to give surgical aid to the wounded. However, military physicians entered the army earlier during the Çelebi Sultan Mehmed's time (1413-21).[[12]](#endnote-12) In those days, military physicians primarily based their work on herbal and Phlebotomy (initiated cupping), treatments for soldiers' injuries and illnesses.[[13]](#endnote-13) The military medical Ottoman knowledge, especially in surgery (e.g., body removal of arrows), was influenced by the illustrated educational books of Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn 'Abbas al-Zahrawi, a famous Spanish physician and well-known in Muslim-Arab medicine who lived until the beginning of the 11th century. By his inspiration, a surgical textbook was written by Şerefeddin Ali .b. al-Haj Ilyas Sabuncuoğlu in Ottoman-Turkish and was used by the army during Sultan Mehmed II's regime between 1451-81.[[14]](#endnote-14) Jewish physicians exiled from Europe to the Ottoman Empire between the 14th-17th centuries contributed to exposing the empire to the western medicine literature and approach.[[15]](#endnote-15) Although this professional literature, military medicine was considered less popular among the Ottoman medicine community, as was reflected in the few publications on this subject. Moreover, military medicine training itself was founded in Istanbul only in 1768.[[16]](#endnote-16) Until the 19th century, the Ottoman army did not have a permanent medicine unit. Male forces, including Physicians, surgeons, and medics-assistants, belonged to Sultan's palace medical corps and were accompanied by the combat forces only during a military campaign.[[17]](#endnote-17) The lack of organized military medicine in the Ottoman army, which suffered from a shortage of health personnel, led to failure in medical outcomes.[[18]](#endnote-18) For example, the Crimean war (1853-56) between the Ottoman to Russia revealed unavailability and insufficient medical support, lack of clinical experience, and advanced medical absence of knowledge about pre-surgery antiseptic technics and painkillers agents used in the field, like morphine. Moreover, the Ottoman medical personnel did not save and manage proper medical documentation of the wounded and ill cases. This limited the army's monitoring abilities of the nature of the injuries and the causes of the soldiers' deaths.[[19]](#endnote-19) As a result of organization, medical and sanitary failures, a quarter of the military forces died from infectious diseases like Typhoid, Cholera, and starvation due to a lack of food supply.[[20]](#endnote-20) Similar characteristics were also documented during the Ottoman-Russia war (1877-78); on the rate of each shot injury died soldier, 17 soldiers died from a disease.[[21]](#endnote-21) The shortage of qualified medical personnel for military service continued until the 19th century. The fact that medical education was not studied in Ottoman-Turkish hardly affected the finding of appropriate student candidates.[[22]](#endnote-22) To set two physicians and pharmacists in each regiment, the army recruited a high-salary contract-paid medical manpower outside the Empire from Hungary, Austria, and England.[[23]](#endnote-23) This personnel was sent to one of each 85 military hospitals established between 1785-1884 around the Ottoman Empire territory.[[24]](#endnote-24) Although these hospitals emerged, the army suffered from vast numbers of wounded and dead soldiers in the Ottoman-Russia war due to a lack of a medical network of organizations and a shortage of medical workers.[[25]](#endnote-25) The need for physicians and other healthcare providers also manifested in the Ottoman-Italian war (1911-12) in Libya. With a lack of medical equipment, the health department in the Ottoman war office decided to get help from the Ottoman Red Crescent organization that sent to the battlefield medical team, including 15 female nurses.[[26]](#endnote-26) This organization which is equivalent to the Red Cross' goals to care for wounded and disabled soldiers, was founded in 1868 but had international recognition only in 1912 and had a significant role in military medicine during Ottoman wartime.[[27]](#endnote-27) The problem of a lack of medical unit organization and inexperienced medical servicemen was observed in the Balkan wars (1912-13). The army faced basic and poor dressing equipment and many field hospitals that failed to the enemy hands. This led to harsh results when many injured and sick soldiers lay on the roads and open carts with dirty clothes, and their wounds were covered with shrapnel.[[28]](#endnote-28) The mortality rates of wounded and ill soldiers among those who succeeded in arriving at the military hospitals were 6.8 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. The need for nurses was filled by urgent training of high school students.[[29]](#endnote-29) In World War I (1914-18), the Ottoman military Health services organization was improved by placing recruited physicians and medical staff, including civilian physicians, pharmacists, and dental doctors 20-45 years old, in each regiment while additional mobile and permanent hospitals were opened. The communication between the medical staff between the frontline through the evacuation stations to the home front has improved, and the medical records for statistical use were well documented.[[30]](#endnote-30) Those positive revolutions refer to vast westerns technological and administrative developments in the engineering, military, and medical techniques that influenced the Ottoman Empire.[[31]](#endnote-31)

***Shaping of military nursing in the Ottoman Empire***

The origin of military nursing Attributable to the Crusades, monks, and priests gave nursing services alongside fighting and defending the crusades, pilgrims, and the sick in the Holy Land and Jerusalem during the 11th century.[[32]](#endnote-32) Although the Crusades pioneered work in military nursing, the most well-known and famous breakthrough in nursing during wartime belongs to the contribution of Florence Nightingale. Nightingale, a British nurse, was sent with 38 volunteer nurses to care for the British soldiers in Scutary military hospital during the Crimean war (1853-56). She significantly reduced the soldiers' mortality rates by improving sanitary conditions, reorganizing health services, and managing medical statistics records.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Nightingale emphasized the need for an organization to care for the wounded on the battlefield. This conclusion also emerged from the battle of Solferino, Italy, in 1859, when many casualties from both fighting sides met the shortage of medical care. As a result, the international organization, the Red Cross, was launched in 1864 in Swiss and later spread to 165 nations. The Red Cross aimed to give medical and nursing services to soldiers and civilians during wartime and disasters.[[34]](#endnote-34) The American Red Cross branch was also founded as a lesson derived from the unprofessional nursing services given by enthusiastic women during the American civil war (1861-65).[[35]](#endnote-35) This war was the first American medical arena in the civilian ward or military, which women entered due to the demands of nursing, feeding, and caring for injuries. Successfully, those nurses achieved the army officers' confidence and paved their way to the frontlines zone.[[36]](#endnote-36) The Ottoman Empire was open to emerging the Red Cross process and from the formation of the Geneva Convention, an international agreement for caring for wounds in a warzone, and sign on the agreement in 1867. The official Ottoman representative chosen was Dr. Abdullah Bey. Following the agreement, the Red Cross aid to the wounded Ottoman soldiers in the Serbian-Montenegro war (1876). The poor condition of the soldiers and the lack of the Ottoman army to address its medical requirements for nursing and medical care bothered the head of the Red Cross organization seeking a solution.[[37]](#endnote-37) One year later, on April 14, 1877, the Ottoman Red Crescent (Kizilay) was established and spread its branches in the Empire territory.[[38]](#endnote-38) This year, the Ottomans entered the war with the Russians. It was the first time both countries signed the Geneva agreement and went to war under international medical and humanitarian agreements. At this point, the Ottoman Red Crescent founded its first 27 permanent hospitals, with nine more mobile surgical hospitals. [[39]](#endnote-39) The American Red Cross supported the Ottoman organization by augmenting their forces with medical staff, caring for the wounded soldiers and the refugees during the Balkan wars and First World War.[[40]](#endnote-40) The Germans, in addition to the Americans, helped the Ottomans to develop military medicine and nursing. On December 30, 1898, the Germans opened a military nursing training program at the Gülhane Seririyat hospital in Istanbul.[[41]](#endnote-41) The Ottoman army relied on those graduated nurses and on a few foreign volunteer nurses who helped the Ottoman wounded during wartime.[[42]](#endnote-42) Systematic Nursing training in Turkey refers to 1912,[[43]](#endnote-43) [[44]](#endnote-44) when Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa (Akalin), a physician and a founder member of the Ottoman Red Crescent, drove and encouraged Turkish women to become nurses between 1913-14 as lessons from the nurses' shortage of the Balkan wars. Three hundred of these graduate courses served as military nurses in the First World War.[[45]](#endnote-45)

***Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa (Akalin), an agent for developing or preserving nursing?***

Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa is considered the undisputed leader and founder of nursing and midwifery in Turkey.[[46]](#endnote-46) [[47]](#endnote-47) [[48]](#endnote-48) [[49]](#endnote-49) [[50]](#endnote-50)He was qualified as a military physician in 1885 and reached his medical expertise in Paris in obstetrics and gynecology in 1889. During his time abroad, he was exposed to nursing and impressed by the French and British nurses' work caring for the patients and maintaining the hospital organization within high standards and devotion. The lack of professional personnel in Turkey with no nursing knowledge during the Ottoman wars between 1897-1911 signaled him that a change must be made.[[51]](#endnote-51) For the first step, he became the principal of a nursing and midwifery school in Kadirga, Istanbul, in 1895, teaching women to become professional midwives.[[52]](#endnote-52) In 1912, Dr. Besim Ömer was appointed to the position of Ottoman Red Crescent Society's vice president. When he traveled that year as a delegate to the 9th Red Cross conference in Washington, USA, he returned home very inspired by the advanced development of the American and European Red Cross organizations' quality of health care abilities. His central insight from that conference was about the need to foster immediate nursing schools for qualifying nursing training to fulfill caring positions in military hospitals.[[53]](#endnote-53) That should be provided on the field, in train hospitals, and the sea by the Red Crescent medical ships and vehicles.[[54]](#endnote-54) Honoring him, nursing training programs opened between 1913-14 and offered a six-month education program when the graduate nurses were sent to serve in military and civilian hospitals. Dr. Besim Ömer taught by himself nursing fundamentals of preventative medicine, midwifery, and caring for wounded and ill soldiers. He believed nursing is a combination of art and science.[[55]](#endnote-55) One of his major achievements was that he outlined the basic principles of the daily work of military nursing. As published in his book " Hastabakıcılık"(Nursing) in 1915, he describes and defines in detail the nurses' clinical and managerial authorities.[[56]](#endnote-56) According to his approach, those who had good manners and experience for years will be charged as chief nurses. The chief nurse is charged with the hospital nurses and administration issues, including the responsibility for patients' laundry and hygiene.[[57]](#endnote-57) the military nurses are charged with caring for the patient, including maintaining his bed area clean, feeding, and dressing him under the physician's permission and his supervision, giving medicine, taking the soldier to the bathroom and helping him shower, caring for the sterile of the surgical devices and even writing and sending patients' letters to their families.[[58]](#endnote-58) Dr. Besim Ömer noted the nurse/patient's proportions as a key standard in health care. He stated that each nurse encouraged ten patients. The nurse is also responsible for preparing the patient and the ward before the physician's visit,[[59]](#endnote-59) during the visit,[[60]](#endnote-60) and after the visit when she escorts the doctor to the exit door and takes off from him the treatment apron. Any of her sad or sorrowful emotions should be avoided of expressions in front of the patients to avoid decreasing their morale.[[61]](#endnote-61) Those professional guidelines defined and described for the first time the nurse's roles. From them, we may learn about a clear gender division of roles and about the professional relations between female nurses and male physicians in the Ottoman army. Dr. Besim Ömer did not hide his gender agenda about women and their exclusive fit for nursing as he expressed:

"In the past, a devoted and careful woman was thought to be enough to take good care of a patient; whether this woman was ignorant or stupid, this aspect was never taken into account. For this reason, every mother was considered the best nurse for her children".[[62]](#endnote-62)

He continues arguing that feeling compassion and mercy, patience and perseverance, mildness and fortitude were manifested in women rather than men. Since women are naturally "mothers", they are always inclined to patronage the weak and to comfort and relieve their suffering. He claimed that their motherhood, in fact, raises and glorifies women in the society of humanity, and it is that motherly feeling that makes a woman more dovelike, more compassionate, more courageous and perseverant. In his opinion, that's why the nurse is naturally female, and nursing should be held by a female.[[63]](#endnote-63) He argued that only female nurses are suitable to care for the war wounded, provide relief, and contain their pain with delicacy, meekness, and high patience and attention.[[64]](#endnote-64) His rigid gender attitudes toward female nurses are consistent with his conservative consumption of the female reproductive role in bearing many children, helping build the new Turkish nation, and fingers abortion as a serious criminal act.[[65]](#endnote-65) On the other hand, he did not hold only a stereotyped consumption towards female nurses. He succeeded in seeing further and knew that nursing is above traditional manners of caring for the patient rather, she has a spiritual ability that affects the patient's morals.[[66]](#endnote-66) He thought that by making nurses women competent in this job, the whole nation would benefit, as he claimed:

"Nursing is the most important and essential duty of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The duty of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies will not only cover the war and the difficulties created by the war, but also its activities will cover the public health issues ".[[67]](#endnote-67)

Figure 1. Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa (Akalin) with nurses, Beyoğlu hospital, Istanbul, 1913. TK 93/24, Courtesy of the Turkish Red Crescent Archive

Dr. Besim Ömer Paşa understood the importance of nurturing nursing for building a healthier society. He emphasized the importance of nurses participating in professional international conferences[[68]](#endnote-68) and the fact that it is a national pride to be a trained nurse.[[69]](#endnote-69) He was also determined to fight for nurses' legitimate for fare salary and not accept "national honor" as an alternative for that.[[70]](#endnote-70)

By expressing a dual approach, he successfully promoted integrating women as nurses into the Ottoman-Turkish labor world. Integrating women as nurses were much more complicated than other jobs in traditional society when physical and intimate contact and exposure of men's bodies to women were considered a forbidden taboo. In order to implement his plan regarding nursing care and to bridge the gap in nursing between the Ottoman Empire to Western countries, he defined military nursing roles using conservative, traditional, and gender characteristics' explanations and justifications to reduce objections from physicians and his colleagues from the Red Crescent committee and to persuade the female to volunteer for becoming a nurse.[[71]](#endnote-71)

Dr. Beshim Ömer's efforts to recruit and train qualified military nurses bore fruit in World War I when nurses proved themselves as professionals and sacrificed themselves to save the soldiers' lives.[[72]](#endnote-72) Dr. Yahub (Jacob), a physician, who served at the Red Crescent "Cağaloğlu" Hospital, Istanbul, during the Great War, described his military nurses' colleagues' devotion and contributions:

 "It is enough to see a Turkish woman at the head of a wounded person once in order to be convinced that she has acted with great humility and self-sacrifice. She unsparingly dedicates all her loving feelings, all her soul, to palliate and calm the most violent pains of the wounded, by caring like a mother and instilling patriotic feelings. With her soft and sweet voice, she raises the moral strength of the poor soldiers who are badly injured and gives them the strength to endure their pain. Even the most gravely injured ones, as a result of the delighting inspirations of the ladies who care for them, surrender themselves to our surgical operation with a high resignation. Even at the time of the surgery, they await the comforting voices of their savior angels, and they seek and find the courage to look with disdain at the scalpel (lancet) pain or the burning (painful) sensation of the (surgical) instruments in the eyes of the compassion nurses. The steadfast and brave Turkish lady, holding the hands of her soldier brothers, inspires him with confidence and, in particular, patience and endurance. After the dressing is over, the sick little soldiers [in Turkish “-cik, -cık” which means little for make a word more friendly, especially we use the word “mehmetçik”, which means literally “little Mehmed (Muhammad)”. It is used for Turkish soldier.] thank their beloved nurses with sweet and contented looks, who (nurses) make them forget the pain of their wounds with their expressive and sometimes the words which are full of sweet hopes for the country".[[73]](#endnote-73)

Nurses properly cared for the daily treatment of more than 350 injured soldiers. During an eight-hour shift around the clock, they provided a comprehensive treatment, dressed the wounds, stopped bleeding, and even performed anesthesia for operation-wounded candidates in time of rush.[[74]](#endnote-74) Above the nurses' clinical care contributions, Dr. Yahub emphasizes the nurses' national contribution as women's representatives of Ottoman society. He also takes advantage of his paper to send a message to his European colleagues who may be underestimating the level of the Red Crescent's nursing quality:

" it should not be doubted that our women, thanks to their special disposition and inclination for every auspicious work, will achieve great progress in social life in a short time, and they will soon be able to set an example for those meticulous and proud European women. Turkish women, who have an innate high personality, the feeling of loyalty, and self-sacrifice, will be able to quickly overcome their European fellows. Thanks to her modesty, good morals, and obedience, the Turkish lady will take great steps towards civilization, and then we will say to Europe with full pride that the Turkish lady is not a useful household item as you think but an essential and valuable friend in private and social life".[[75]](#endnote-75)

The integration of women-nurses proved itself in wartime arenas. At the end of the Balkan wars and the Great War, nurses were nationally highly appreciated, and they received the Red Crescent Society and Sultan honor medals for their contributions to the war efforts.[[76]](#endnote-76)

Figure 2. Nursing training at Kadırga hospital, Istanbul (no date). TK 93/26, Courtesy of the Turkish Red Crescent Archive

***Ottoman military nursing and the founding of the modern Turkish nursing***

At the end of the Balkan wars and especially World War I, nurses became a very acceptable and appreciated profession for women. More women interested in nursing courses began operating in military institutions and spread to other cities outside of Istanbul, like Bursa and Erzurum.[[77]](#endnote-77) Working together with men and women in the clinical ward during the war gave nurses as women the opportunity to prove themselves to society as valuable manpower who could initiate and make decisions by themselves.[[78]](#endnote-78) By having successful achievements in caring for the wounded on the battlefield, nurses broke out of the gender barrier and paved the way for them and other women toward high education in all job fields.[[79]](#endnote-79) Among the group of nurses who became known for their contributions are counted: Munire İsmail, Kerime Salahur, and Safiye Hüseyin Elbi.[[80]](#endnote-80) Although, the remarkable nurse was Safiye Hüseyin Elbi. Elbi, a daughter of Ahmet Paşa, an Ottoman naval officer delegate in England, and one of the first diplomas graduated nurses who volunteered to care for the wounded of the Balkan wars, served as a chief nurse on the Red Crescent hospital ship.[[81]](#endnote-81) During World War I, she cared for the wounded from the Çanakkale battles, evacuated them to Istanbul, and helped perform surgical care on the ship hospital.[[82]](#endnote-82) Elbi reached her education as a child in Europe, and with her widened educational perspective, she knew English and German languages and was dedicated to education. In 1925 she opened a nursing school, taking there a significant role as a teacher while parallel, she volunteered as an activist in various associations, including Red Crescent Society and the national league for fighting tuberculosis, and was one of the founders of the Women's People Party-organization that fight on Turkish women's rights. With her activities using her nursing and managerial skills, she was a role model encouraging women to integrate themselves into social life.[[83]](#endnote-83) Elbi was involved nationally, and internationally in congresses promoting the place of nursing and its involvement in advancing health policy.[[84]](#endnote-84) The emerging process of nursing in America and Europe began as a professional reform in nursing education and professional perception after the Crimean and American Civil wars.[[85]](#endnote-85) Nevertheless, nurses in America and Europe had an inferior status in relationships with physicians and even with their patients. They needed to defend their place and conduct their selves appropriately and justify their qualifications.[[86]](#endnote-86) Only at the beginning of the 20th century, did nursing start struggling to shape its own identity.[[87]](#endnote-87) At the same time, modern Turkish nursing leaned on the base of the Red Crescent military nursing in the late Ottoman Empire, Giving a significant developmental leap in a short time from its creation following the Balkan wars.[[88]](#endnote-88) As reflected in publications, In contrast to nursing in America and Europe, nurses in the Ottoman Red Crescent Society, had a major place of honor by their colleagues and were encouraged to add their contributions among all traditional nursing procedures they were charged.[[89]](#endnote-89) According to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1922, the first president, Mustafa Kemal Paşa (Atatürk), made the laws equal for women, and modern nursing schools were opened in the country.[[90]](#endnote-90) Over the years, the Turkish nursing profession has developed more and more. In 1954 the nursing law regulating nursing as an occupation was enacted and revised later in 2007. In 1955, the Ege University in Izmir opened the first academic nursing program. Postgraduate programs for master's and doctoral were also established between 1968-72. Today's nursing education includes specialized clinical disciplines, and all training is given as high education in Universities and colleges institutions.[[91]](#endnote-91)

**Conclusion**

Nursing in the Ottoman Empire emerged as a result of the rising of feminist public discourse and because of the demand and a shortage of appropriate caring personnel during wartime. Exposing women to outdoor social activity was not acceptable in Ottoman society. Integrating women into the nursing profession, which includes the non-modest scenario and male-female physical and intimate contact, was considered a far-reaching idea. Although foreign armies based on nursing escorting their combat forces already in the Crimean and American civil wars, the combining of female nurses slowly seeped into the Ottoman Red Crescent's stakeholders' awareness. Dr. Beshim Ömer was the first to identify the benefits of nursing to military medicine outcomes. As a physician and a senior Red Crescent member, he fought to integrate Turkish women nurses into the military arena. By defining the new role and creating the first knowledge body in nursing, he put the infrastructure for the profession. At the same time, in order to reduce the resistance of entering women to labor work in such intimate work demands in a traditional society, he justified it with stereotyped and gender explanations. From one side, military nursing is described with maternal and feminine metaphors aimed to glorifying and idealizing its function, making the public identify with its warm and familiar sentiments from home. But from the other side, nursing is mentioned as an added value profession between arts to science. Nursing as a deeply organized and essential caring bringing national pride and respect. Military nursing during the late Ottoman wars proved itself with superlative motivations and professional dedication to the sick and wounded. Although a short time passed since their first experience during the Balkan wars, Ottoman-Turkish nurses received high recognition and appreciation and even set an example and object of imitation for their well-experienced European and American colleagues. Former military nurses, especially the figure of Safiye Hüseyin Elbi, were seen as a leader and role models for other women choosing to learn and work in nursing and other disciplines after the collapse of the Ottoman Empires. The foundation of the new Turkish Republic and the law of equity for both genders brought nursing more legitimation which was reflected in the opening of many nursing programs throughout the country.

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**Notes**

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