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The rise of the Köprülü family: the reconfiguration of vizierial power in the seventeenth century

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CHAPTER 3: THE BALANCE BETWEEN MEHMED IV AND FAZIL AHMED PASHA (1661-1676)

3.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter I argued that the extraordinary grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was a response to the political crises that had plagued the empire in the first part of the seventeenth century and in particular in the 1650s following Kösem Sultan's death. Indeed, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was equipped by the dynasty with extra power and authority, which was exceptional considering the conditions of his predecessors. He strove to bring order to the empire by using excessive violence. In doing so, he eliminated rival candidates for the grand vizierate. At the end of his bloody period, Köprülü Mehmed managed to pass his office on to his son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha; thereby, for the second time in the history of Ottoman governance a son succeeded his father in the grand vizierate.²⁸³ When Fazıl Ahmed was appointed as grand vizier, he was only twenty-six years old, making him the youngest grand vizier in the history of the empire. His fifteen-year-long tenure in the grand vizierate would be the longest in the seventeenth century. What factors made this succession possible? More importantly, what were the political means that helped Fazıl Ahmed preserve his power and remain in the office for such a long time?

I argue that Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's success derived from the political configuration set primarily by Mehmed IV, who has been depicted in current historiography as a "hunter" sultan deliberately detaching himself from the political arena. When Fazıl Ahmed became grand vizier in 1661, Mehmed IV was no longer a minor and he could now wish to seize power for himself to rule like a true absolute monarch, just as his uncle Murad IV had done

²⁸³ Çandarlı Ali Pasha (r.1387-1406) was appointed grand vizier after the death of his father Çandarlı Hayreddin Pasha (r.1364-1387).

it before. In such a case, the grand vizier would not have had the same latitude in dealing with the sultan as his father had enjoyed. Mehmed IV, however, decided instead to establish a harmonious relationship with the grand vizier and collaborate with Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.

In the first section of the chapter, I will focus on the early career of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha and discuss how his succession to his father's office was interpreted by contemporary Ottoman and foreign sources. The following section will examine the execution of the chief scribe Şamizade Mehmed Efendi and his son-in-law Kadizade İbrahim Pasha. I will use various historical sources in order to shed light on this complex political event. In the third and fourth sections, I will scrutinize the moving of the court to Edirne and the rise of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha as examples of the new mode of sovereignty adopted by Mehmed IV. I will also focus in these sections on the deputies of the grand vizier in the two capitals and discuss how this reconfiguration of sultanic and vizierial power created a balance in the governance which prevented clashes like the one that had erupted between Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Murad III in the late sixteenth century. Before examining the major political events in the period of Fazıl Ahmed, I would first like to treat a key historiographical problem: why has Sultan Mehmed IV been depicted in the literature as a minor figure and assigned the unflattering title of "Mehmed the Hunter"?

Scholars have generally attributed the rise of the Köprülü family in the mid-seventeenth century to the political weakness of Mehmed IV. They argue that Mehmed IV was interested only in hunting, and left all political responsibilities to the Köprülü viziers; he thus earned the nickname "hunter-sultan."²⁸⁴ As Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj also points out, Mehmed IV was so busy with taking pleasure in hunting games that it was the grand viziers—particularly Fazıl Ahmed and Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa—who "proceeded to the

²⁸⁴ A. D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* (Westport, 1982), 65–6, Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 219, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 3, 366

battlefield.”²⁸⁵ In a similar vein, in his encyclopaedia entry on Mehmed IV, Abdülkadir Özcan defines him as an ineffective sultan and underlines that his appointment of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha as grand vizier led to his own “recession.”²⁸⁶ Did Mehmed IV’s so-called weak and ineffectual governing really pave the way for the rise of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha?

In contrast to the prevailing view in the relevant scholarship, I contend that Mehmed IV’s weakness cannot explain the rise of the Köprülü family because a weak sultan could have proved a disadvantage for the grand vizier, given that his weakness could have easily made him vulnerable to the influences of inner-court favorites. As I showed in the first chapter, Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha, the strong grand vizier during the reigns of Murad IV and İbrahim I, lost his position and life as a result of the intrigues set by the favorites of İbrahim I, who is also defined in modern Ottoman historiography as a “mad” and “weak” sultan. As in the case of Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha could have encountered similar intrigues by the inner-court favorites of the sultan. However, Mehmed IV did not allow the members of his close circle, including his favorites and harem eunuchs, to interfere with the grand vizier’s authority. He followed a harmonious policy with his grand vizier that created a balance between the sultan and the grand vizier.

Throughout this chapter, I will utilize various kinds of sources, including Ottoman chronicles and the reports and books of contemporary foreign observers. For the reign of Mehmed IV, Abdi Pasha’s chronicle turned out to be the most comprehensive source because Abdi Pasha served as the sultan’s chronicler from 1663 to 1682.²⁸⁷ It should be pointed out that staying so close to the sultan limited Abdi Pasha’s critical stance yet at the same time placed him in a privileged position for closely following the political events,

²⁸⁵ Rifa’at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and The Structure of Ottoman Politics*, (Istanbul, 1984), 90.

²⁸⁶ Abdülkadir Özcan, ‘Mehmed IV’, *DİA*, vol.28, 417.

²⁸⁷ Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi’-nâme*.

many of which he either personally witnessed or heard about from those who had experienced them. In addition to Abdi Pasha's chronicle, I would have liked to use Mehmed IV's personal correspondences, but I could not consult it because of the ongoing inaccessibility of the Topkapı Palace Archive, which houses countless personal documents of the Ottoman sultans that have yet to be catalogued. Several archival documents related to the reign of Mehmed IV, specifically on Hadice Turhan, were recently studied by Erhan Afyoncu and Uğur Demir.²⁸⁸ These documents include Mehmed IV's orders to Abbas Aga, the chief black eunuch between 1668 and 1671, which broaden our understanding of Mehmed IV's personality and government style.

Mühürdar Hasan Aga's chronicle *Cevahirü't- Tevarih* (Essence of History) is another important source on the period. Hasan Aga was the private secretary and seal-keeper (*mühürdar*) of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. He began to write his chronicle in 1675 and completed it in 1681. It is devoted to narrating the grand vizier's conquests.²⁸⁹ Much of Hasan Aga's work concerns in particular the Candia campaign between 1666 and 1669. His chronicle is a eulogy of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's achievements and presented the events from the point of view of the grand vizier. Yet as a seal-keeper and private secretary of the grand vizier, Hasan Aga incorporated into his narrative some diplomatic documents, including imperial writs and correspondence between various state officials, which unequivocally distinguish this text from other works.

As I have discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, Ottoman chronicles by nature provide a highly biased and sultan-centric perspective of the political life and they thus should be supplemented by other contemporary narrative sources, especially the reports of the foreign observers. These "European" sources are also not exempt from

²⁸⁸ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*.

²⁸⁹ Abubekir Sıddık Yücel, 'Mühürdar Hasan Ağa'nın Cevâhirü't-Tevârîhi', PhD Thesis, Erciyes University, (1996), 461-62 (Hereafter Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*).

reflecting their own sorts of biases, but the crucial insights and exact details presented by these sources might be useful in filling the gaps left by indigenous Ottoman chroniclers and history writers.

As for contemporary European sources, the most important account is Paul Rycaut's *The history of the Turkish empire from the year 1623 to the year 1677 containing the reigns of the three last emperours*, narrating the political events of the Ottoman Empire from the 1640s to the 1670s.²⁹⁰ Paul Rycaut provides substantial insights into the dynamics of political life, based largely on first-hand knowledge. Rycaut was granted an appointment in 1660 as the private secretary of the British Ambassador, the Earl of Winchilsea, but simultaneously served as the Levant Company's secretary in Istanbul. In 1667, he was made consul for the Levant Company in Izmir, a position he held for eleven years.²⁹¹ His seven years as the secretary of the embassy in Istanbul (1660-1667) enabled him to amass a great deal of information about the politics and personalities of the Ottoman court. Indeed, the most valuable parts of his *History* were those written based on his own experiences and contacts with Ottoman government functionaries. Rycaut established contacts with Wojciech Bobowski, the first dragoman of Mehmed IV, and obtained from him valuable information on the Ottoman court.²⁹² Another important source for Rycaut was Marc Antonio Mamucha della Torre, the imperial grand dragoman, who also supplied him significant information. I will continue to use Levinus Warner's correspondence whose importance for Ottoman studies have I already explained in the preceding chapter. What renders the writings of Warner and Rycaut important is that they resided in Istanbul for long

²⁹⁰ Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, (London, 1670) and Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* . . . (London, 1682).

²⁹¹ Linda Darling, "Ottoman Politics through British Eyes: Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*", *Journal of World History*, 5/1, (1994), 71-97.

²⁹² Sonia Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey, Paul Rycaut at Smyrna* (Oxford, 1989), 41-2 and Anders Ingram, *Writing the Ottomans, Turkish History in Early Modern England* (New York, 2015) 119-35.

periods of time and made contacts with local people including state authorities, renegades and dragomans, who provided crucial information about Ottoman domestic politics.

Another important category of primary source material that I consulted is travelogues, which usually offer a reliable reflection of political culture in the Ottoman cities. The authors of these texts travelled across the Ottoman lands for various reasons, including carrying out an ambassadorial task, undertaking a business activity or simply pursuing adventure. The most prominent examples for the mid-seventeenth century are the reports of the Habsburg representative Walter Leslie, and the accounts of the French travelers Jean-Baptiste Tavernier and Jean Chardin.²⁹³

3.2. The Swift Rise Of Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha

Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's sudden rise to the grand vizierate after only two years of administrative experience stands as an exceptional case within the Ottoman bureaucratic praxis. Ottoman pashas usually spent almost twenty or twenty-five years building up their careers before reaching this supreme office. One exception was the case of Süleyman's longtime companion and confidant İbrahim Pasha (d.1536), who contrary to the established customs and rules, was promoted to the grand vizierate when he was only the head of the privy chamber. İbrahim Pasha was a *devsirme* and a favorite of the sultan, which made his rapid progress possible, if not less objectionable, through the personal initiative of the sultan.²⁹⁴ In the case of Fazıl Ahmed, however, after serving for a short time as an instructor

²⁹³ Alois Veltze (ed.), 'Die Hauptrelation des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel Simon Renigen von Reningen 1649-1666,' *Mitteilung des k.u.k Kriegs-Archive*, N.F.,12.Bd., (1900) 152-163, for a useful analysis of Leslie's report, Özgür Kolçak, 'Habsburg Elçisi Walter Leslie'nin Osmanlı Devlet Yapısına Dair Gözlemleri', *Tarih Dergisi*, 54, (2011), 55-89 Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Nouvelle relation de l ' intérieur du serrail du Grand Seigneur: contenant plusieurs singularitez qui jusqu'icy n'ont point esté mises en lumière* (Paris, 1675), Jean Chardin, *Journal du voyage du chevalier Chardin en Perse et aux Indes orientales: par la mer Noire et par la Colchide*, (Paris, 1686).

²⁹⁴ For a detailed study of the career of İbrahim. See, Ebru Turan, 'The Sultan's Favorite',

(*müderri*) and later as a provincial governor he was appointed to the grand vizierate thanks to the efforts of his father and predecessor, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Although modern scholars have often underlined Köprülü Mehmed's initiatives as the main force behind Fazıl Ahmed's elevation, these initiatives have yet to be substantiated. Moreover, scholars have never questioned how this transition from father to son was made possible and whether the sultan played any active role. In this section, I will first delineate the steps taken by Köprülü Mehmed by exploring hitherto unexamined archival documents. Secondly, I will discuss how the succession of Fazıl Ahmed was reflected in both Ottoman and foreign sources. Finally and more importantly, I will demonstrate that although the transfer of the grand vizierate from Köprülü Mehmed to Fazıl Ahmed was carefully prepared by both father and son in the years leading up to Köprülü Mehmed's death, it was ultimately the changing political climate in the Ottoman Empire and, crucially, the deliberations of Mehmed IV, that allowed this unprecedented transfer of power to take place.

Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was born in Köprü in 1635 while his father was still the governor of the district. Brought to Istanbul at the age of seven by his father, he studied under the leading scholars of the period, including Osman Efendi and the renowned scholar Kara Çelebizade Abdülaziz Efendi, who was the *seyhülislam* in the reign of Mehmed IV. Fazıl Ahmed quickly rose in the religious hierarchy thanks to his father's influence. At the tender age of sixteen, he was appointed as *müderri* in one of the colleges of Süleymaniye.²⁹⁵ However, the chronicles report that he decided to abandon the learned profession in 1657 because of "the rumors circulating among the *ulema* that he had achieved his position not by erudition but by favoritism".²⁹⁶ Finally, Mehmed IV called

²⁹⁵ Şeyhî Mehmed Efendi, *Vekâyi'ü'l-fudalâ in Şakaik-ı Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri*, Ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (İstanbul, 1989), I, 603.

²⁹⁶ Günhan Börekçi, 'Köprülü Family', in Agoston and Masters (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 315, Osmanzade Taip, *Osmanlı Sadrazamları, Hadikatü'l-Vüzerâ ve Zeyilleri*, Ed. Mehmet

Fazıl Ahmed from his reclusive home, at the request of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and appointed him to the governorship of Erzurum with the rank of vizier in 1659.²⁹⁷ Fazıl Ahmed thus changed his career from the religious hierarchy to the administrative track in a way that was rarely seen in the career trajectories of Ottoman statesmen.²⁹⁸ The timing of the appointment raises a question: why did Köprülü Mehmed wait for two years before getting his son to change his career path? The appointment of Fazıl Ahmed took place only a few weeks after Abaza Hasan Pasha's rebellion lost its momentum. Köprülü Mehmed felt secure in his power after suppressing the Abaza Hasan uprising, which had posed the greatest challenge to his authority; apparently he could now pave the way to the grand vizierate for his son.

In 1661, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was appointed as the governor of Damascus. Fazıl Ahmed's governorship in Damascus was an early test of his ability to rule, considering that Damascus was as one of the most populated cities in the region, an important commercial hub. Fazıl Ahmed's first objective as the governor of the city was to crush the local (*yerli*) Janissaries of Damascus and remove several governors in the region who had apparently rallied to the Abaza Hasan Pasha revolt in 1658.²⁹⁹ During his governorship, Fazıl Ahmed managed to re-establish state authority, particularly by lifting the taxes imposed on local people by his predecessors.³⁰⁰ Accordingly, Ottoman sources pointed out that Fazıl Ahmed

Arslan (Istanbul, 2013) 99, Behçet-i İbrahim, *Silsiletü'l Asaîyyeti Fi Devleti'l- Hakkanyyeti'l-Osmaniyye*, Köprülü Library, Ahmed Pasa, no.212, 76a.

²⁹⁷ The anonymous author of *Risale-i Kürd Hatip* stated that when the sultan called him, he had withdrawn to the mountain of Kadiyaylagı to study. Arslantürk and Kocaaslan, *Dördüncü Mehmed Saltanatında*, 37.

²⁹⁸ Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)*, (Minneapolis, 1988), 84-5.

²⁹⁹ Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon Under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge, 2010), 75.

³⁰⁰ Arslan Poyraz, '*Köprülüâde Fazıl Ahmet Paşa Devrinde (1069-1080) Vukuatı Tarihi Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme*', MA Thesis, Marmara University (2002), 2.

was popular in Damascus.³⁰¹ The reduction of taxes must have boosted his popularity among Damascene people, and contemporary sources bear witness to that. In her PhD thesis on Ottoman governance in seventeenth-century Damascus, Malissa Anne Taylor also points out that the Damascene sources validate his popularity.³⁰² Taylor quotes, the biographer Muhibbi saying that Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was “first among the viziers, the pride of the dynasty” who had put Damascus “under control in a number of ways, ending corruption in the management of *vakfs* and building a storehouse and securing grains from Egypt so that Damascus would be sufficiently provisioned in times of famine.”³⁰³

Fazıl Ahmed later returned to Istanbul after being appointed as his father’s deputy (*kaymakam*). Shortly thereafter, Fazıl Ahmed had to move to Edirne, because his father was very ill and unable to perform his daily tasks. He took over the responsibilities of the grand vizier and led the imperial court in the name of his father. On the last day of October 1661, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha died. Immediately, the sultan called for Fazıl Ahmed and gave the seal to him.

There is little doubt that it was Köprülü Mehmed who was the driving force behind this appointment. In particular, after the appointment of Fazıl Ahmed as governor of Erzurum in 1659, Köprülü Mehmed accelerated the purge of rival candidates to secure the grand vizierate for his son. As I explained in the previous chapter, all leading and powerful pashas were executed; Deli Hüseyin Pasha and Seydi Ahmed Pasha were dealt with on some trumped-up charges.

³⁰¹ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü’l-Tevârih*, 126.

³⁰² Malissa Anne Taylor, “Fragrant Gardens and Converging Waters: Ottoman Governance in Seventeenth-Century Damascus”, PhD Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, (2012), 46-7. These sources are Muhammad Amin ibn Fadl Allah al Muhibbi, *Khulasat al-ather, Rawai al-turath al Arabi*, (Bayrut, Maktabat Khayyat, 1996) 1:353, and Abd Al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, “Al Abyat al Nuraniyyah fi Muluk al-Dawlah”, *Zahiriyyah* MS 6742, f. 57.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 46.

Besides the purge of the potential candidates vying for the grand vizierate, were there other evident signs of Köprülü Mehmed's efforts to promote Fazıl Ahmed? Hitherto unexamined registers preserved in the Prime Minister Archive reveal that before he became grand vizier, Fazıl Ahmed already had large revenues.³⁰⁴ Köprülü Mehmed was wise to have assigned revenues to his son, since he had suffered poverty throughout his pasha career before becoming the grand vizier. For instance, the fourteen gardens and some revenues on Tenedos (Bozcaada) Island, which had been re-conquered by Köprülü Mehmed, were allocated to Fazıl Ahmed during his time as the governor of Erzurum.³⁰⁵ Many places and revenues on the island had already been given as *vakfs* to Köprülü Mehmed for his efforts to save the island from Venetian occupation.³⁰⁶ Shortly thereafter, many revenues in the Malatya region were again allocated by the sultan to Fazıl Ahmed, who was now the deputy grand vizier in Istanbul while his father was staying in Edirne.³⁰⁷ More interestingly, the revenues had formerly belonged to the people who joined the Abaza Hasan Pasha rebellion.

How did Ottoman and foreign observers explain the succession of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha? This "exceptional" transition did not escape the notice of the foreigners residing in Istanbul at that time. For instance, only eleven days after the death of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha (11 November 1661) the British diplomat Heneage Finch wrote explicitly that he found strange the ongoing succession in the grand vizierate: "It is strange that he should be vizier for five years and die in peace on his bed, and still more strange that his son should succeed him, supplanting so many ancient and experienced Bassas (Pashas)."³⁰⁸ In a similar

³⁰⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) MAD, 4273. I am grateful to Özgür Kolçak for bringing this important source to my attention and for providing me with a copy of it.

³⁰⁵ BOA, MAD 4777, 2.

³⁰⁶ BOA, TD, 2144.

³⁰⁷ BOA, MAD 4273, 19.

³⁰⁸ *Report on the Manuscripts of Allen George Fince*, 168.

fashion, the French traveler Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who visited Istanbul in 1672, stated “Succession from father to son in grand vizierate is something never seen among the Turks until today; perhaps it won’t be seen after this either” (indeed it was not seen afterwards).³⁰⁹ In the same vein, another French traveler Jean Chardin, who travelled all around the Ottoman lands, Iran and India, noted “Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was intending to launch a campaign when he passed away; but he had shown the capability to put his son Fazıl Ahmed in his post of grand vizierate before he died, although the latter hadn't even turned thirty yet. This was a most extraordinary and singular move in the history of the Ottoman empire.”³¹⁰

In contrast to the silence of the Ottoman chroniclers regarding the subject, the “bewilderment” of the foreigners is easier to understand. Europeans saw the servile status of the Ottoman elite as the main reason behind the remarkable rise of the Ottoman Empire.³¹¹ For instance, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, twice ambassador of Charles V during the time of Süleyman I, had stated that high-level Ottoman officials derived their status from being servitors of the sultan rather than being members of hereditary nobility.³¹² Perhaps, they were amazed at the transfer of the highest administrative post in the Ottoman Empire from father to son because it reminded them of their own hereditary forms of nobility, which they did not associate with Ottoman rule.

It seems that the contemporary and later Ottoman chroniclers took for granted the transfer of the grand vizierate from the father to the son, as they place no particular emphasis upon this peculiar event. Ottoman historians by and large concurred that Fazıl

³⁰⁹ Tavernier, *Nouvelle relation*, 236.

³¹⁰ Chardin, *Journal du voyage du chevalier Chardin*, 52.

³¹¹ The prime examples of these observations can be found in the writings of Busbeq and Machiavelli.

³¹² *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans by C.T Forster and F.H Blackburne Daniell, (London, 1881), 154-55.

Ahmed Pasha deserved this significant position because he was a talented statesman. Raşid Mehmed Efendi, the second official historian after Naima, stated in his chronicle that he composed around 1720:

If someone unfamiliar with state affairs had been appointed, it was clear that a state of disorder and disorganization would again prevail. Therefore, for the preservation and continuation of the order established (by Köprülü Mehmed Pasha), the sultan appointed his son.³¹³

Raşid underlined the sultan's desire for order, from the official point of view and made no special reference to the transfer of the grand vizierate from father to son. Raşid must have known that after the dominance of the Çandarlı family in the first centuries of the empire, no family had again achieved such a degree of influence as to be able to pass the grand vizierate down the generations. Why did these Ottoman sources take Fazıl Ahmed's succession for granted? One explanation is the nature of Ottoman political patronage. Ottoman chroniclers were not independent authorities. They were employed by strong patrons such as the sultan, the grand vizier and influential viziers. Indeed, the Ottoman writers did avoid going into details on important issues, especially the uncomfortable ones. They must have realized that the transfer of the grand vizierate from father to son was a turning point in the history of the empire, which would provide the Köprülü family with enormous power. The chroniclers therefore did not underline the exceptionality of the transfer from father to son. Instead they developed a common narrative that attributed the succession to Fazıl Ahmed's exceptional talent. This, however, raises further questions: How could Fazıl Ahmed prove to the contemporary Ottoman observers that he was

³¹³ Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli*, Abdülkadir Özcan, Yunus Uğur, Baki Çakır and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (eds.), I, (Istanbul, 2013), 67. For the translation of the text, see, 'Habsburg and Ottoman Statecraft During the Time of Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha (1676 - 1683)', PhD Thesis, Purdue University (2015), quotation at 170.

competent enough for this post, having completed only two years of service in bureaucracy?

In the end, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was not to be succeeded by a rivalling Ottoman statesman. Contrary to all customs and rules, Sultan Mehmed IV appointed Köprülü's son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Mehmed IV's great confidence in Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and his determination to secure the stability of the empire, which had been established by this powerful grand vizier, made the succession of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha possible. In this way, while the sultan maintained the *status quo*, the Köprülü family found an opportunity to enhance its power. This succession must be seen as the second turning point after Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's appointment in 1656 as grand vizier endowed with almost unlimited power. It should not be forgotten that the decision to appoint Fazıl Ahmed was taken by Mehmed IV alone. The sultan's extraordinary decision marked a new phase in his reign. Now, there were two main political actors on the stage. On the one hand, Mehmed IV, who was no longer a minor or dominated by his mother, asserted himself as a sultan taking the initiative. On the other hand, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was an inexperienced statesman carrying the legacy of his father who brought order to the realm. How would they govern the empire together? How would they work together without coming into conflict? Before addressing these important questions, we need to begin with the central question related to the transition from father to son. Was there any opposition at all against this succession and the increasing power of the Köprülü family?

3.3. A Late Response to the Growing Power of the Köprülü Family: The Execution of Şamizade and his Son-In-Law

In his report dated 15 December 1661 to the States-General in The Hague, Levinus Warner, the Dutch resident in Istanbul, noted that following Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's succession, the

political situation was calm. People seemed to have been concerned only about the young age of the new grand vizier.³¹⁴ Aside from the concerns about Fazıl Ahmed's age, there was no widespread dissatisfaction among both the general public and the ruling elites about the unprecedented succession of Fazıl Ahmed. This started to change, however, within a couple of years, as during his first military campaign against Austria in 1663 Fazıl Ahmed would face the first serious threat from the chief scribe of the time, Şamizade Mehmed Efendi. Şamizade Mehmed had occupied this office for a long time (1651-55, 1656-1663) and, as I have already discussed in the previous chapter, he had played an important role in the promotion of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha to the grand vizierate. Nevertheless, Şamizade now aimed to appoint his son-in-law Kadizade İbrahim Pasha, and thus he tried to eliminate Fazıl Ahmed from the highest echelons of the bureaucratic structure. Eventually, Şamizade's attempt to depose Fazıl Ahmed Pasha failed, and he was executed, along with his son-in-law, by decree of the sultan. In this section, I will revisit the events surrounding these executions through a close reading of the narratives of contemporary Ottoman and foreign observers. I will argue that these executions are a late response within the ruling elite to the transfer of the grand vizierate from Köprülü Mehmed to his son Fazıl Ahmed. Further, I will examine whether Şamizade was alone in his plot against the grand vizier or formed part of a larger network opposed to the growing power of the Köprülü family.

The news of the executions of the powerful chief scribe Şamizade and his son-in-law Kadizade İbrahim Pasha in the campaign of 1663 must have surprised many people in Edirne and Istanbul. Firstly, Şamizade was one of the leading and most experienced statesmen at that time. Secondly, he was a supporter of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and had

³¹⁴ Levini Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 72-73, the only Ottoman historian to emphasize the grand vizier's young age is Müneccimbaşı, see, Hatice Arslan Sözüdoğru, *Müneccimbasi als Historiker: Arabische Historiographie bei einem Osmanischen Universalgelehrten des 17. Jahrhunderts: Gami''ad-duwal*, (Berlin, 2009), 386.

played a decisive role in the appointment of the latter. In return for his support, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha appointed Şamizade Mehmed as the chief scribe in 1656. As an indication of his intimate relationship with the grand vizier, Şamizade agreed to be one of the attestors who were present during the registration of Köprülü Mehmed's pious endowments.³¹⁵ Why did Şamizade plan a coup against Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, the son of his once close friend? This important question has not yet been sufficiently explored in modern Ottoman historiography. The first historian who recognized the executions as a result of political conflict is Rifa'at Ali Abou El-Haj, but he limited his comments to a footnote.³¹⁶ In their study dealing with the Uyvar campaign of 1663, neither Ahmet Şimsirgil nor Fatih Çalışır refer to these executions.³¹⁷ Çalışır, like El-haj, sees the event as the result of a "readjusting of power balance" by the grand vizier, but he does not go into details.³¹⁸ Özgür Kolçak, who studies the 1663-1664 Ottoman-Austrian wars, adopts a critical attitude to sources and examines the execution in both Ottoman and German sources. Although Kolçak provides the most details on the subject, he does not attempt to scrutinize the network behind Şamizade's execution.³¹⁹ In the present study, I will try to highlight the incidents, particularly by referring Levinus Warner's report and argue that there was growing opposition against the rising power of the second Köprülü grand vizier.

There are different descriptions of the events leading to Şamizade's fall from grace. The most detailed and vivid explanation of the event can be found in the travel book of

³¹⁵ Süleymaniye Library, Köprülü İlave 3, 53b.

³¹⁶ Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*, 14.

³¹⁷ Ahmet Sımsırgil, 'Uyvar'ın Türkler Tarafından Fethi ve İdaresi', PhD thesis, Marmara University, (1997), 64.

³¹⁸ Fatih Çalışır, 'A Long March: The Ottoman Campaign in Hungary, 1663', MA Thesis, Central European University, (2009) 23-4.

³¹⁹ Özgür Kolçak 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi ve Osmanlılar: 1660 - 64 Osmanlı Avusturya Savaşları', PhD Thesis, Istanbul University, (2012), 120.

Evliya Çelebi, who served Kadizade İbrahim Pasha during the Uyvar campaign.³²⁰ Evliya Çelebi claims to have witnessed the execution in Fazıl Ahmed's tent. According to his narrative, the grand vizier summoned both Şamizade and İbrahim Pasha. He accused Şamizade of plotting to depose the grand vizier and to install İbrahim Pasha in his place. Şamizade denied that he had written a letter to the sultan, in which he had purportedly described Fazıl Ahmed as a petty hero and attributed the success of the campaign to his son-in-law İbrahim Pasha. Fazıl Ahmed was not convinced and quickly ordered the execution of the chief scribe and his son-in-law.³²¹

Evliya's account is quite important because he was the only historian to witness the executions. His eyewitness account was true. First of all, Şamizade's letter, which supposedly demanded the replacement of grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha by his son-in-law, was not only mentioned in Evliya's narrative but can also be found in other contemporary or near-contemporary foreign and Ottoman sources.³²² It should be pointed out that these writers did not have a chance to see Evliya's version because the manuscript travel book of Evliya was kept in Egypt until the mid-eighteenth century.³²³ Moreover, Evliya's work did not enter into circulation among the Ottoman literary corpus until Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall wrote an introductory article in 1814.³²⁴ Evliya described the moment of the executions of Şamizade and Kadizade İbrahim Pasha, but he did not believe in the validity of Fazıl Ahmed's accusations and pointed out that the grand vizier planned

³²⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, VI, 202.

³²¹ Ibid., 202-3.

³²² For Ottoman Sources, see, Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 172, Nazire Karaçay Türkal, 'Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, Zeyl-i Fezleke (1065-22 ca.1106/1654 - Şubat 1695) Tahlil ve Metin', PhD Thesis, Marmara University, (2012), 307-8 and Raşid Mehmed Efendi, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli*, 31 for foreign observers, Levini Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 94 Rycout, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 103-4.

³²³ Uğur Demir, "Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi'nin Topkapı Sarayı Kutuphanesi'ne Intikal Meselesi", *Osmanlı Arastırmaları/ The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 39, (2012), 205-16.

³²⁴ Nuran Tezcan, "Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi'nin Hammer-Purgstall Tarafından Bilim Dünyasına Tanıtılması Hakkında", *Evliyâ Çelebi Konuları/Yazılar*, (İstanbul, 2011), 250-74.

the executions because he begrudged Kadizade İbrahim Pasha's successful performance in the war.³²⁵ To be sure, this narrative is biased too, because Evliya was a member of İbrahim Pasha's household and staunchly defended his master in this account.³²⁶

In contrast to Evliya's account, Mühürdar Hasan Aga and Osman Aga, who wrote under the aegis of Fazıl Ahmed, accused Şamizade of plotting against the grand vizier. For instance, Mühürdar Hasan Aga remarked; "their wrong-doings had reached intolerable boundaries for our master, wherefore they were executed."³²⁷ Silahdar Mehmed Aga, the late-seventeenth-century historian, followed Hasan Aga's short description and added some important details.³²⁸ In his narrative, Silahdar gave crucial information on Mehmed IV's reaction to the letter, which was allegedly written by Şamizade. According to Silahdar, in this letter, like Evliya's version, Şamizade accused of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha of enjoying himself all the time and of being an incapable administrator; therefore he requested that his son-in-law Kadizade İbrahim Pasha replace the grand vizier. The sultan immediately sent Şamizade's letter to the grand vizier and commanded that, if the letter truly came from Şamizade, due punishment be inflicted.³²⁹ In the same line, the eighteenth-century official historian Rashid followed the writings of Mühürdar and Silahdar in a shorter fashion.³³⁰ Accordingly, the line of Mühürdar and Silahdar, who emphasized the justice of the grand vizier's actions in this matter, became a canonic position in the historiographical corpus.

The information available in the writings of Paul Rycaut and Levinus Warner confirms Ottoman narratives. Although Rycaut defined the fall of Şamizade as an example of Turkish tyranny, he pointed out that Şamizade wrote a letter and requested the grand

³²⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, VI, 202

³²⁶ See the connection between Evliya and his master, *Ibid.*, 109.

³²⁷ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 172.

³²⁸ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 307-8.

³²⁹ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 308.

³³⁰ Raşid Mehmed, *Tarih-i Raşid ve Zeyli*, 31.

vizierate for İbrahim Pasha. In Rycaut's version, the letter was not sent directly to the sultan, but to the chief black eunuch (Solak Mehmed Aga) who then read it to the sultan.³³¹ Similarly, Levinus Warner mentioned Şamizade's letter, which criticized the grand vizier because he did not have the necessary qualities. Warner remarked:

It's reported that the cause of the execution was a secret letter which-as it was discovered afterwards-had been delivered to the Queen Mother, in which he (Şamizade Efendi) was demanding that a new regent for the Supreme Power be chosen under pretext that the actual grand vizier (Fazıl Ahmed Pasha), due to his youth, acts rather with excitement than with his counsel, and that dealing with everything rather avidly than prudently, he would not be able to terminate the war that had been started.³³²

The most important question on the subject remains unresolved. Was Şamizade alone in this attempt? If we go back to the report of Levinus Warner, we find a very crucial account that the letter was sent to Hadice Turhan Sultan, not to Sultan Mehmed IV. This evidence is highly convincing on the point that it would have been a great mistake to complain about the grand vizier by directly writing to the sultan because it was well known that the sultan had declared for the support to Köprülü grand viziers many times. Moreover, Warner's report would suggest a different perspective on the case by implying both Mehmed IV's possible resentment about his mother's interference in state affairs and the indirect appeal of Şamizade.

There are some clues about the place of Hadice Turhan in this political game. Although most of them do not go beyond speculation, they can help highlight the positions of each figure. Firstly, almost one year before the Uyvar campaign (12 March 1662), the

³³¹ Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 103-4.

³³² Levinus Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 94.

English ambassador Heneage Finch reported about the growing tension between the grand vizier and Queen Mother Hadice Turhan Sultan: “There will probably be a great alteration of the chief officers of this Empire. It is supposed to arise from the Queen Mother and Kislir Aga, chief eunuch of the Grand Signor’s women, both highly discontented with the Vizier.”³³³ Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall gave a more concrete example of the tension. He stated that the grand vizier dismissed the chief treasurer Hüseyin Pasha, a client of Hadice Turhan and replaced him with his client Ahmed Aga, an action that displeased Hadice Turhan.³³⁴

More interestingly, Paul Rycaut recorded a fictitious story with regard to the trouble between Hadice Turhan and Ayşe Hanim, the mother of the grand vizier. Rycaut remarked:

That the great viziers’ mother, who entertained a familiarity with spirits, as they believed, had by her enchantments procured the office of Vizier for her husband and son successively, and prevailed still to preserve her son in the favor of his master, yet could not by force of Magic get power or dominion over the Valede (Queen Mother); no spells, it seems, had virtue enough to qualifie the spirit of that angry Juno.³³⁵

Although this was a fictitious story, it gives us some hints about court politics, especially when combined with Hammer’s and the ambassador’s reports: the tension between the queen mother and the grand vizier’s family was popularly known in Ottoman society. More importantly, it should be underlined that Şamizade himself had been a close

³³³ *Report on the Manuscripts of Allen George Fince*, 182.

³³⁴ Hammer Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, (Pest, 1830), VI, 115. Abdi Pasha records only the dismissal of the chief treasurer Hüseyin Pasha in the spring of 1662, not mentioning the reasons, see, Abdi Pasha, *Vekâyi‘-nâme*, 155.

³³⁵ Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 91.

ally of Hadice Turhan for a long time.³³⁶ Paul Rycaut pointed out that there was a cordial relationship between Hadice Turhan and Şamizade.³³⁷ Moreover, we cannot extrapolate exact conclusions about the role of Hadice Turhan in this political struggle given the present sources. However, Hadice Turhan may have felt troubled by the fact that her son granted so much power to the Köprülü viziers or by the thought that her son was too much under their influence. Like Şamizade Mehmed, Hadice Turhan might have felt uneasy about the hereditary succession of the grand vizierate and therefore desired to deprive the junior Köprülü of the homage and respect that had once been so liberally bestowed upon the father.

In conclusion, the execution of Şamizade and his son-in-law Kadizade İbrahim Pasha in the Uyvar campaign was one of the most important events in the first years of Fazıl Ahmed's grand vizierate. This was the first serious attempt to depose Fazıl Ahmed Pasha during his grand vizierate. Şamizade's attempt can be seen as a late response to the unprecedented succession of Fazıl Ahmed. It seemed that Şamizade Mehmed Efendi, former supporter of Köprülü Mehmed, opposed the increasing power of the Köprülü family. The executions of the chief scribe and his son-in-law demonstrated that not all Köprülü Mehmed's supporters automatically became Fazıl Ahmed's supporters. Lastly, the scholars writing on the execution of Şamizade neglected a basic fact: it does not matter whether the letter attributed to Şamizade was addressed to the sultan or the queen mother: the last say over the grand vizier's fate was the sultan's and he once more supported the Köprülü. It is clear that Mehmed IV staunchly stood behind Fazıl Ahmed just as he had stood by his father Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. In the following pages, I will discuss in detail the process of

³³⁶ Ekin Emine Tuşalp Atıyas, 'Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence: Ottoman Scribal Community in the Seventeenth Century', PhD Thesis, Harvard University (2013), 134

³³⁷ Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 112.

the change of the relocation of the court and the composition of the sultan's circle in parallel with its relationship with the grand vizier.

3.4. A New Sovereignty Mode of Mehmed IV

In the first two years of the grand vizierate of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, Mehmed IV assumed a more prominent role in the political decision-making process as compared to the first thirteen years of his reign. He allowed the succession of Fazıl Ahmed in 1661 and then approved the execution of Şamizade Mehmed Efendi in 1663. In the same year, the change in Mehmed IV's governing style manifested itself more visibly in some cases. Firstly, he established himself in Edirne and rarely set foot in Topkapı Palace or Istanbul thereafter. Secondly, he changed his close circle, including the chief black eunuch and favorites. He dismissed his chief black eunuch Solak Mehmed Aga and appointed his first royal favorite Leh Hasan Aga. Eventually, he appointed Abdi Pasha as court historian to mark his total control over the state mechanism as a sultan. All these changes suggest that a new phase in the reign of Mehmed IV had begun. In particular, Mehmed IV was ready to take the initiative in his realm, after his mother's domination in the first eight years followed by Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's iron rule. However, it did not mean that Mehmed IV would prefer a strong personal rule; instead, the sultan's initiatives created a new balance between himself and his mother, the grand vizier and the inner-court servants in Topkapı as well as Edirne.

Marc David Baer argues that Mehmed IV was a key actor in shaping the politics and was not "hidden in the palace like a pearl in an oyster."³³⁸ I totally agree with Baer's contention that 1663 marked a turning point in Mehmed IV's reign, because "he established himself in Edirne and appointed Abdi Pasha to be court historian," manifesting his

³³⁸ Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, 20.

independent character.³³⁹ However, I object to Baer's reading of the reign of Mehmed IV on two main grounds. Firstly, Baer merely focuses on the image of Mehmed IV, who was praised in the chronicles of the time, and therefore Metin Kunt aptly remarks "Baer is more interested in presentation than politics".³⁴⁰ For instance, Baer does not go into the repercussions of the relocation of the sultan's court to Edirne and his more active ruling style. Secondly, Baer neglects the position of the Köprülü grand viziers in the new political configuration that he describes.

In the first part of the section, I will discuss the ramifications of the settlement of Mehmed IV in Edirne in 1663 in terms of his relationship with his mother and the grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. I will argue that Mehmed IV's preference for Edirne was an important part of his style of ruling; at the same time it was a crucial element of his harmonious relationship with the Köprülü family. In the following part, I will examine the rise of Musahib Mustafa Pasha as an example of the new mode of the sovereignty of Mehmed IV. I will compare the career of Musahib Mustafa Pasha with other musahibs in the early seventeenth century in order to understand the changing role of musahibs and their relationship with the grand vizier in the reign of Mehmed IV.

In the preceding chapter, I argued that moving of the court to Edirne in 1657 was one of the most notable expressions of the collaboration between Mehmed IV and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. The grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha played a decisive role in persuading the sultan to move to Edirne. The leading officeholders including the chief treasurer, chief scribe, chief commander of the Janissaries and the seyhulislam also moved

³³⁹ Ibid.,106.

³⁴⁰ Metin Kunt, review of *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, *Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies*, 19/3, (2008) 410-12.

to Edirne with the sultan.³⁴¹ During these years, the sultan occasionally visited Istanbul. For instance, Mehmed IV came to Istanbul three times, before 1663.³⁴² During these visits, Mehmed IV spent almost one year in Istanbul.³⁴³ However, starting with 1663, the frequency and length of Mehmed IV's trips to Istanbul dramatically decreased. In the following years, Mehmed IV visited Istanbul on 14 March 1666 and after one month's sojourn in Istanbul, he returned to Edirne on 12 April 1666.³⁴⁴ After that time, he did not go to Istanbul until 1676, and instead, he roamed around Edirne engaging in hunting parties and he joined military expeditions. Meanwhile, all the dynastic rituals started to take place in Edirne: the circumcision of the princes and the wedding ceremony of the sultan's elder daughter to Musahib Mustafa Pasha in 1675 as well as the audiences with ambassadors.

We should firstly address an important question: how can we explain the sultan's reluctance to go to Istanbul? Contemporary Ottoman sources are taciturn on this question. Foreign sources, however, provide a fresh insight into understanding Mehmed IV's unwillingness.³⁴⁵ For example, Paul Rycaut records an interesting anecdote allegedly about the sultan's own words. "How, said he, to Constantinople what joy, what comfort can I have there? Hath not that place been fatal to my father? What benefit had my uncle from thence? Or any of my race? Have not all my Princes Ancestors been subject to a thousand Mutinies and Rebellions in that Palace?"³⁴⁶ We have other sources to corroborate this strong statement, but we can assert that it is not unreasonable, considering the regicide of his father in 1648, the killing of his grandmother in 1651 and finally the 1656 purge of

³⁴¹ Evliya recounts the palaces of the leading figures in Edirne when he visited Edirne in 1658. See, Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâmes*, III, 257.

³⁴² The dates of the sultan's departure from Edirne to Istanbul: 13 October 1658, 6 September 1660 and 24 March 1662.

³⁴³ His returning dates to Edirne: 10 October 1659, 28 July 1661 and 7 April 1663.

³⁴⁴ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi 'nâme*, 206.

³⁴⁵ These sources are Paul Rycaut's *The History of the Turkish Empire* and Walter Leslie's report.

³⁴⁶ Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 155.

palace officials and harem eunuchs whom the sultan most probably knew in person, all of which took place in Topkapı Palace. By the same token, in his diplomatic visit in 1665, Habsburg ambassador Walter Leslie noted, “He (Mehmed IV) loathes Constantinople, because he fears the rabble and the agitations of these mobs which he saw in his youth.”³⁴⁷ Mehmed IV’s aversion to Topkapı Palace can be observed in his visit to Istanbul.³⁴⁸ When Mehmed IV came to Istanbul in 1666 for the opening ceremony of the New Mosque, he mostly stayed in the Davud Pasha palace, on the outskirts of Istanbul, rather than in Topkapı Palace. During his three-week stay in Istanbul, his residence in Topkapı Palace did not exceed two or three nights.³⁴⁹

To what extent did Mehmed IV’s avoidance of Istanbul shape the structure of Topkapı and Edirne palaces? Was there a great change in the number of the people living and working in the two palaces after 1663? Firstly, we should start with describing the changes in the number of the staff in Topkapı Palace because we have more archival materials for it than for Edirne Palace. In the previous chapter, I showed that there were no dramatic changes in the size of the palace officers in Topkapı Palace after Mehmed IV’s moved to Edirne in 1657. If we look at 1668-1669 and 1672-1673 budgets, the number of the staff in Topkapı Palace was similar to that of 1661-1662.³⁵⁰ Even the long-term absence of Mehmed IV from Topkapı Palace did not mark any considerable change in the number of the Topkapı staff. As for Edirne Palace, I previously noted that there were 661 pages and

³⁴⁷ Adam Wolf (ed), ‘Geheimbe Relation an Ihr May was Ich in wehrender meiner Ambasciada nach der Porten von der Ottomannischen Kriegsmacht gemerckht habe’, *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, XX, (1858), 320-331 I thank Barend Noordam for the translation of the text.

³⁴⁸ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 210.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 211

³⁵⁰ For the budgets, Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar (eds.), *Osmanlı Maliyesi: Kurumlar ve Bütçeler*, (İstanbul, 2006) and Ömer Lütfi Barkan, ‘1079 - 1080 (1669 - 1670) Mali Yılına ait Bir Osmanlı Bütçesi ve Ekleri’, *İktisad Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 17/4, (1955 - 1956), 225 - 303 and the same author’s, ‘1070 - 1071 (1660 - 1661) Tarihli Osmanlı Bütçesi ve Bir Mukayese’, *İktisad Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 19/4, (1955 - 1956), 304-47 and see, Abdülkadir Özcan, *Eyyubi Efendi Kanunnamesi*, (İstanbul, 1994) 21-40

gardeners in Edirne Palace in the 1661-1662 budget. According to a budget of 1669-1670, the number of pages and gardeners was almost the same: 652.³⁵¹ Just as in Topkapı Palace, we see that there was not any significant change here.

Besides the number of the personnel in Topkapı and Edirne palaces, what can we say about the members of the harem in both palaces? Although we have no exact data on the subject, scattered information can be founded in the sources. For instance, when Prince Mustafa, the first son of Mehmed IV, was born in Edirne Palace in 1664, Ayşe Sultan, Gevherhan Sultan and Beyhan Sultan, sisters of Mehmed IV, were called to Edirne Palace from Topkapı to join in the celebration for the new prince.³⁵² This summons shows that some members of the sultan's family still resided in Topkapı Palace after 1663. In 1665, a great fire devastated Topkapı Palace, in particular the harem section. The chroniclers pointed out that there were still women and concubines there.³⁵³ They moved to the Old-Palace after the burning of the harem of Topkapı Palace.³⁵⁴ However, there is no information about the number of harem women living in Topkapı and Edirne palaces at that time.

As for the architectural aspect of the court, there were some changes in Edirne Palace.³⁵⁵ A trellised window overlooking the council chamber of the Edirne Palace was opened in 1657, similar to the one in Istanbul. In accordance with the effort to make it look like Topkapı Palace, a tower of justice was built at Edirne Palace, following the Istanbul model. In 1665 the imperial council hall and the audience hall in Edirne Palace were rebuilt

³⁵¹ Barkan, '1079-1080 (1669 - 1670) Mali Yılına', 242.

³⁵² BOA, Ibnulemin-ENB, 3/256, 3/250,3/257,3/249, 3/252, 3/251.

³⁵³ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 408 Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi 'nâme*, 211.

³⁵⁴ For the details of the great fire in Istanbul, see, Hrand Anderasyan, "Eremya Çelebi'nin Yangınlar Tarihi", *Tarih Dergisi*, 27, (1973).

³⁵⁵ Tülay Artan 'Arts and Architecture' in Suraiya N.Faroqi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume. III, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603 - 1839*, (Cambridge, 2006), 460.

and redecorated, resembling the twin pavilions in Topkapı Palace.³⁵⁶ These additions and changes undertaken in Edirne Palace in line with the architectural design of Topkapı Palace suggest that the former was actually intended to serve as an administrative center and the royal seat of the sultan.

Mehmed IV's preference for Edirne deeply affected his relationship with his mother Hadice Turhan Sultan. In the previous section, I discussed how Hadice Turhan might have been involved in Şamizade's abortive attempt to depose Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Mehmed IV supported his grand vizier and ordered the execution of Şamizade Mehmed Efendi, previously a close ally of Hadice Turhan. In the same year, Hadice Turhan lost another client; the incumbent chief black eunuch Solak Mehmed Aga was dismissed by Mehmed IV (the reasons for this dismissal will be discussed in the next section). Bereft of these close political allies, Hadice Turhan was now under close sultanic surveillance. In an undated document probably penned between 1663 and 1668 by chief black eunuch Musli Aga, we come across an anecdote stating that Mehmed IV reprimanded Musli Aga for the toleration he exhibited towards Hadice Turhan's communication with contacts outside the palace, against the express orders of the sultan.³⁵⁷ In this account, Mehmed IV reputedly addressed Musli Aga as follows: "You are the chief of my Harem, Musli Aga, and I do not allow any letter to reach my mother from anywhere. Come and report me whatever you hear; I accept no excuse related your loyalty to my mother, because you are supposed to serve only me in full effect."³⁵⁸

In 1668, when Hadice Turhan moved to Topkapı Palace, Mehmed IV sent the chief black eunuch Abbas Aga to Istanbul in order to look after Hadice Turhan. In a document

³⁵⁶ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi 'nâme*, 245.

³⁵⁷ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, 169-170 for the original document, Topkapı Palace Museum Archive (Hereafter TSMA), E.782-46.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

dated 1668, Mehmed IV wrote to Abbas Aga: “How is the situation of the city confided to the deputy Yusuf Pasha? Is it as it used to be? Or is he more cautious since the respected Mother came there. In whatever situation it is, write to my imperial stirrup duly.”³⁵⁹ These initiatives reveal that Mehmed IV was now uncomfortable with any political role that his mother might play and tried to control her through the chief black eunuchs.

In this particular period when Mehmed IV was increasing the pressure upon his mother, Hadice Turhan visited Istanbul without her son two times in 1665 and 1668, and the sultan’s siblings accompanied her when she was in the capital. The main purpose of the visit in 1665 was to observe the repairs to the Topkapı Palace after it had been damaged by the great fire in Istanbul.³⁶⁰ Hadice Turhan also examined the construction of the New Mosque (*Yeni Cami*). Two months after Hadice Turhan’s arrival, Mehmed IV visited Istanbul and participated in the opening ceremony of the New Mosque. Then, Hadice Turhan returned with her son to Edirne.

In 1668, Hadice Turhan arrived in Istanbul and stayed there until 1672. During those years, there were no face-to-face meetings between Hadice Turhan and her son Mehmed IV. Mehmed IV moved to Larissa to join the Crete expedition in 1668 but he returned to Edirne after he had received the news of the conquest of Candia by the Ottoman forces.³⁶¹ The reuniting of sultan and his mother did not take place until five years later in 1672. In the meantime, Hadice Turhan stayed in Topkapı Palace.

What can explain this separation? To answer this question, we should go back to the year 1664. Mehmed IV produced his first male heir Mustafa (later ruling as Mustafa II in 1695-1703) in 1664, after he had already been on the throne for sixteen years. There were already three surviving heirs to throne: the sultan’s half-brothers Süleyman (b.1642),

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 171 and TSMA, E.527-73.

³⁶⁰ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 408 and Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 200.

³⁶¹ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 200.

Ahmed (b.1643) and Selim (b.1644). The birth of a son profoundly changed the relationship between the sultan and his mother because Mehmed IV might have wanted to execute his brothers in order to pave the way to the throne for his son. In the face of threat of fratricide, Hadice Turhan would take responsibility for the protection of the ruler's siblings.

In the same year Mehmed IV's son was born, the first rumor about the sultan's desire to kill his brothers appeared. Rycaut remarked, "For now having a son of his own, he conceived it more secure to remove all competition that might be for the government, according to the example and custom of the Ottoman princes."³⁶² During the visit in 1665, Walter Leslie recorded a remark in a similar vein:

The sultan has two brothers, one is 3 or 4 months younger than him, the other is around 12 or 13 years old. One is spirited and brave, but the other one is plumb and unsuitable. The mother of both these young gentlemen have died, and they live under the protection of Valide (Hadice Turhan), who is the genuine mother of the sultan; the sultan himself has, since his own only son proved to be strong and vigorous, let his two brothers come from Constantinople to Adrianople (Edirne), apparently instigated by his wife the sultan, in order to execute them, which has been prevented by Valide and the Muffti.(Seyhulislam).³⁶³

However, reports of this alleged tension cannot be found in Ottoman literary sources until 1668 when the sultan and his mother took different routes.

The fact that in 1668 the Ottoman chronicles started to openly mention the rumor that Mehmed IV would have his brothers executed was connected to the long siege of Crete. In 1666, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha moved to Crete to finish the prolonged war with Venice over the island. Although the Ottoman forces made a strenuous effort to take the island, the

³⁶² Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 117.

³⁶³ 'Geheimbe Relation', 326-27.

Venetian forces adamantly resisted. This prolonged siege exhausted the treasury and caused resentment among the sultan's subjects. Mehmed IV began to grow anxious, as the people were now dissatisfied with the government. He possibly thought that the opposition intended to replace him with one of his brothers.³⁶⁴

Both Ottoman and foreign sources stated that there was a great upheaval in the capital in 1668 while the sultan camped at Larissa. The main reason behind the turmoil was the rumor that the sultan intended to kill his brothers. Evliya Çelebi remarked; "Under the pretext of the princes, there was a great confusion in Istanbul and there gathered a dazzling crowd of craftsmen and shopkeepers at the Hippodrome. They said 'we won't let the princes get suffocated and will confide them to the Queen Mother.'"³⁶⁵ An important report can be found in the National Archive in London, which was written by the British ambassador William Winchilsea in Istanbul in 1668. In a letter, Mehmed IV had sent an imperial command to his mother to the effect that his three brothers had to be put to death. This led to a sudden insurrection of the Janissaries. All the shops in Istanbul were shut, and the city gates were closed, too. However, "the Queene Mother hath refused to deliver up the Grand Signor's brothers to those who were appoynted to receive them, and is backed by the Militia."³⁶⁶

The unrest was brought under control by measures taken by İbrahim Pasha, deputy grand vizier in Istanbul, and the chief black eunuch Abbas Aga, who was in Topkapı Palace with Hadice Turhan. Mehmed IV prudently watched the unfolding events and frequently

³⁶⁴ According to Rycout, these thoughts prompted to the sultan to give an order to execute his brothers.

³⁶⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 308 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu-Dizini*, Robert Dankoff, Seyit Ali Karaman and Yücel Dağlı (eds.), (İstanbul, 2003), VIII, 193-94.

³⁶⁶ The National Archive, PRO, SP 97, XIX, fols. 75-6.

communicated with Abbas Aga.³⁶⁷ In his report, Abbas Aga informed the sultan that the pages (*İc Oğlani*) in Galatasaray and artisans (*Ehl-i suk*) played a prominent role in the rebellion but they were suppressed immediately.³⁶⁸ Although the upheaval was put down, the orders of the execution of the princes protected by Hadice Turhan and the Janissaries were not carried out.

This event allows us to make some observations on Ottoman political life and culture. Fratricide still seemed to be an open question and was still at the center of public discussion. Mehmed IV was uneasy about the presence of his brothers and dreaded forced abdication, in particular when conditions started to get worse because of the incessant war with Venice. Hadice Turhan, the Janissaries and the people in Istanbul appeared as the protectors of the lives of the princes against sultan's ire, thus creating distance in the relationship between mother and son.

Lastly, it is necessary to touch upon Hadice Turhan's architectural activity in Istanbul to show the effect of her long presence in the city. The long absence of Mehmed IV deprived, for a time, the city of the sultan's architectural patronage. However, instead of Mehmed IV, Hadice Turhan initiated many architectural projects. In 1665, she completed a large mosque complex (*küllîye*), which included a tomb, royal pavilion and market complex, in Eminönü, the center of Istanbul's busy harbor on the Golden Horn that had been started by Safiye Sultan, mother of Mehmed III in 1590s.³⁶⁹ This building remains the only imperial project in Istanbul dating from the reign of Mehmed IV.³⁷⁰ Moreover, Hadice Turhan oversaw a major reconstruction project of Topkapı Palace, which was damaged as a result of a devastating fire in 1665. The reference to Hadice Turhan in the epigraph of the

³⁶⁷ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, 177-78.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 179, TSMA nr.781-26 and E.781-37.

³⁶⁹ Senocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*.

³⁷⁰ Artan, 'Art and Architecture', 459

harem section (dated 1668) suggests that she played a prominent role in this renovation project.³⁷¹

Along with Hadice Turhan, another person who contributed to the architectural project in Istanbul was Abbas Aga, the chief black eunuch and the former steward of the queen mother. Abbas Aga patronized the Friday Mosque in Besiktaş in 1665-1666, when he was in the service of the queen mother.³⁷² The Abbas Aga Mosque's construction date also coincides with the completion of the New Mosque.³⁷³ Abbas Aga's tenure as the chief harem eunuch proved to be astonishingly productive in terms of his architectural patronage. According to Ayvansarayi, he built twelve fountains in Istanbul proper and two in Üsküdar.³⁷⁴ Abbas Aga's architectural initiatives in a way paralleled the queen mother's endeavors to maintain public visibility through patronage.

3.4.1. The Deputies of the Grand Vizier in Edirne and Istanbul: The New Configuration of the Administrative System

In the second part of the section, I will focus on the consequences of Mehmed IV's long sojourn in Edirne on the administrative structure and the sultan's relationship with the Köprülü grand viziers. The long absence of the sultan from Istanbul led to the emergence of three administrative centers: the grand vizier leading the army in the field, the deputy of the grand vizier in Istanbul and the deputy of the imperial stirrup in Edirne. It should be pointed out that the change in the administrative system was not the result of deliberate, long-range planning. Instead, the gradual changes occurred step by step. For instance, the reconfiguration of the roles of the two deputies of the grand vizier in Istanbul and Edirne

³⁷¹ Murat Kocaaslan, *IV. Mehmed Saltanatında Topkapı Sarayı Haremi, İktidar, Sınırlar ve Mimari* (İstanbul, 2014), 238.

³⁷² Hâfız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafız Hüseyin al-Ayvansarayi's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, ed. and tr. Howard Crane (Leiden, 2000), 418

³⁷³ Senocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*, 202

³⁷⁴ Ayvansarâyî, *The Garden of the Mosques*, 419

took shape after 1663 because after that year Mehmed IV continuously stayed in Edirne and the grand vizier spent his time much more on military campaigns than his father had done. This new situation made the position of the deputy in Edirne more important as he emerged as a key player between the grand vizier on campaign and the sultan in Edirne. Before examining the crucial role of the deputy in Edirne, I will scrutinize the post of the deputy in Istanbul and its place in the administrative structure.

The deputy of the grand vizier (*kaymakamlık*) who resided in the capital shared much authority of the grand vizier, issuing imperial decrees and appointing officials when the grand vizier was on military campaign. The appointment of a deputy grand vizier seems to have begun in the sixteenth century, and the practice lasted until the dissolution of the empire in 1922.³⁷⁵ In his comprehensive book setting out rules for promotions, and describing hierarchies and ranks for ceremonies, Abdi Pasha defined the duties of the deputy of the grand vizier: namely, the deputy could head the imperial council and could listen to complaints. He could control the prices in the city. He was also charged with the responsibility for the security and administrative control of the city when the grand vizier was on campaign.³⁷⁶

Since the sultan and the other leading statesmen had moved to Edirne, the imperial council gathering in Istanbul was formed by their deputies and hence, their decisions were generally related to the administration of the capital and aid to the army on campaign. The register of the imperial council for 1663 provides examples of the function of the imperial council in Istanbul.³⁷⁷ The *mühimme* registers comprise decisions taken in the imperial council. They provided daily records of the deliberations of the imperial council in the form

³⁷⁵ Kuran, E. and P. M. Holt, 'Ḳā'im-Maḳām', in Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

³⁷⁶ Tevki'i Abdurrahman Pasa, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Teşrifat ve Törenler*, (İstanbul, 2011), 26-7.

³⁷⁷ Müjge Karaca, '94 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri'nin Özetli Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi', MA Thesis, Atatürk University (2008).

of decrees addressed to the governors, judges and foreign authorities.³⁷⁸ The 1663 register is mostly made up of orders related to the shortage of food in the capital, protection of the islands close to Istanbul and transfer of money to the army.³⁷⁹ Another register compiling the resolutions of the imperial council in Istanbul at this period is the 95 *Numaralı Mühimme defteri*.³⁸⁰ This register was made up of decrees issued by the council under the leadership of deputy grand vizier Süleyman Pasha between 1664 and 1665.

As in the 1663 register, the decisions taken focused on supplying provisions to Istanbul and the Aegean Islands. The registers show that the main duty of the deputy in Istanbul was the governance of the city.

³⁷⁸ Very useful study for the Mühimme Registers, see, Uriel Heyd, *Ottoman documents on Palestine: 1552-1615: a study of the Firman according to the Mühimme Defteri*, (Oxford, 1960).

³⁷⁹ Müjge Karaca, '94 Numaralı Mühimme',

³⁸⁰ Ercan Alan, '95 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (Tahlil, Transkripsiyon ve Özet)', MA Thesis, Marmara University (2008).

Deputies in Istanbul During Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's tenure				
Name	Preceding Position	Next Position	Duration	Year
Ankebut Ahmed Pasa	Vizier	Governor of Karaman	4 Months	1657
Hasan Pasa	Governor of Anatolia	Commander of Crete	8 Months	1657
Koca Sinan Aga	The Chief Gardener of Edirne	Dismissed	4 Months	1658
Ismail Aga	Master of the Stables	The Inspector of the Army	10 Months	1658
Suleyman Pasa	Vizier	Called to Edirne	1 Year	1659
Yusuf Pasa	Vizier	Unknown	1 Year	1660
Fazıl Ahmed Pasa	Governor of Aleppo	Grand Vizier	2 Months	1661

Table 6: Deputies in Istanbul During Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's tenure

Another duty of the deputy in Istanbul was mediating between Edirne and Istanbul, particularly with regard to the foreign representatives in Istanbul. In that period, the permanent residences of the foreign representatives were still in Istanbul even after the sultan and grand vizier had moved to Edirne. The ambassadors who resided in Istanbul, like the French ambassador Marquis de Nointel, frequently came to Edirne and met with the deputy or the grand vizier.³⁸¹ Before coming to Edirne, the secretaries of the embassy first

³⁸¹ Albert Vandal (ed.), *Les Voyages du Marquis de Nointel, (1670-1680)*, (Paris, 1900), 44-5.

negotiated with the deputy in Istanbul who then informed Edirne and waited for the response from the court.³⁸²

Deputies in Istanbul During Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's tenure				
Name	Preceding Position	Next Position	Duration	Year
Uzun İbrahim Aga	The Chief Gardener	Unknown	1.5 Year	1661
Ismail Pasha	Governor of Buda	Governor of Ozi	6 Months	1663
Uzun İbrahim Pasha	Former deputy in Istanbul	Governor of Bagdad	1.5 Year	1663
Suleyman Pasha	Governor of Akkirman	Unknown	9 Months	1665
Yusuf Pasha	Vizier	Unknown	3 Years 3 Months	1666
İbrahim Pasha	The chief Commander of Janissaries	Unknown	2 Years 8 Months	1669
Mustafa Aga	The Chief Gardener	(death)	1 Year 10 Months	1672
İbrahim Pasha	Former Deputy in	Unknown	One Year	1674

³⁸² For the details, see, Antoine Galland, *Istanbul'a ait Gunluk Hatiralar*, trasn. Nahid Sirri Orik, (Ankara, 1987).

	Istanbul			
Osman Aga	The Chief Gardener of Istanbul	Unknown	One Year	1675

Table 7: Deputies in Istanbul During Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's tenure

This overview shows that the length of service of the deputies during Fazıl Ahmed's tenure was longer than during that of his father because Köprülü Mehmed Pasha frequently changed his deputies. These short-lived officeholders did not have a chance to establish their own networks as the deputy viziers had done in the late sixteenth century. As for the deputies in the period of Fazıl Ahmed, it is very difficult to determine whether all the deputies were the clients of grand vizier, but at least it could be said that they were experienced statesman because they were appointed as deputy after the position of the chief gardener or after having served as a deputy before. The only exception to this was the chief commander of the Janissaries İbrahim Pasha who was called by Mehmed IV from the siege of Candia abruptly to suppress the turmoil in Istanbul in 1668.³⁸³ Indeed, for the others, it was no coincidence that the most of them were the chief royal gardeners (*bostancibasi*) since one of the most important duties of the chief gardeners was to provide for the security of the capital, Istanbul.

Now, we can look at the function of the deputy in Edirne. Abdi Pasha did not mention the position of the deputy in Edirne in his manual. This was probably related to the fact that the position was temporary because it emerged only when the grand vizier was away from Edirne and the sultan was in Edirne instead of Istanbul. Basically, we can assert that when the grand vizier left Edirne, someone needed to deal with the sultan's work. Paul

³⁸³ This exceptional appointment was related to the turmoil in Istanbul in 1668 that I discussed in the previous section. Mehmed IV took the initiative in this appointment.

Rycaut grasped the new administrative structure, which emerged in 1663 after the grand vizier left for campaign. Rycaut remarked:

The Vizier (Fazıl Ahmed) prepared all things for action, nominating and appointing (for the Austrian campaign) such, who in his absence were to supply the offices of the state: Ismail Pasha, then Pasha of Buda, was designated for *Chimacam*, or governor of Constantinople, and Mustafa Pasha, Kaptain Pasha, Brother in Law to the Great Vizier by marriage of his sister was made *Chimacam* at Adrianople, near the person of the Grand Signor.³⁸⁴

In his definition, the deputy in Istanbul was governor of Istanbul and the deputy in Edirne was in charge of administering the empire's affairs at the sultan's side. As we understand his definition, the deputy in Edirne was close to the sultan and worked with him.

In this novel administrative system, being in the close company of the sultan as the grand vizier's deputy rendered the Edirne deputy important. Since the late sixteenth century the deputy of the grand vizier had become a key player in the factional struggles in the capital. In this period, the grand viziers were regularly assigned to lead imperial campaigns against the Habsburgs, and during their absences their deputies had the chance to establish their own networks of clients, which in turn often undermined the power base of the grand vizier. Günhan Börekçi states that most deputy viziers at this time were allied with the leaders of the dominant court faction against the grand vizier.³⁸⁵ Moreover, as Rhoads Murphey points out, the deliberate withholding of strategic supplies or financial support by a jealous deputy grand vizier in Istanbul jeopardized the success of a grand vizier on the

³⁸⁴ Paul Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 118.

³⁸⁵ Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 38.

battlefield.³⁸⁶ For instance, grand vizier Sinan Pasha's words to Mehmed III can be seen as the manifestation of the vulnerability of the grand vizier while he was on military campaign. Sinan Pasha had urged Mehmed III to join the campaign against the Habsburgs in 1596, known as the Egri campaign, remarking "If the grand vizier was sent as commander, his deputy in Istanbul would purposely withhold further soldiers and provisions from the army in order to cause the grand vizier to be unsuccessful, in the hope of damaging his reputation and ultimately replacing him."³⁸⁷ Taking into consideration Sinan Pasha's suggestion, it can be assumed that the competition between the grand vizier and his deputy in Istanbul would have come to the surface in every military campaign, arising either from the factional politics in the court or from hostility between these two state officials.

Given this historical background, the deputy in Edirne emerged as a critical position, so the holder of that position had to be someone who would not plot against the grand vizier when he was away from the capital. Who held this important position, when the grand vizier led the army, in the period of the Köprülü grand viziers?

The Deputies in Edirne During Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's Tenure			
Name	Previous Position	Duration	Year
Koca Nisanci Pasha	?	2 months	1657
Kenan Pasha	Favorite	2 months	1658
Ali Pasha	The Steward of the queen mother	3 months	1658

Table 8: The Deputies in Edirne During Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's Tenure

³⁸⁶ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700*, (London, 1999), 30.

³⁸⁷ For the translation of the text, see Hakan Karateke, "On the Tranquility and Repose of the Sultan: The Construction of Topos" in Woodhead (ed), *The Ottoman World*, 121.

Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's deputies in Edirne maintained their position for only a short time because Köprülü Mehmed Pasha spent little time at the front and Mehmed IV spent less time in Edirne in comparison to 1663. More interestingly, two of the three deputies in that period came from a position related to the court. Kenan Pasha was a favorite of the sultan and Ali Pasha was the steward of Hadice Turhan. Perhaps, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha could not find a suitable client who would be loyal to him at the time. In this case, the sultan might have decided to appoint someone close to him to this important post. Unfortunately, there is no information on the function of deputies in Edirne in this period in either archival or literary sources.

The Deputies in Edirne During Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's Tenure			
Name	Previous Position	Duration	Year
Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha	The Grand Admiral (together)	1 year	1663-1664
Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha		4 years	1665-1669
Musahip Mustafa Pasha	The Second Vizier and favorite of the sultan	8 months	1674

Table 9: The Deputies in Edirne During Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's Tenure

The table shows that Fazıl Ahmed appointed Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha, his brother-in-law, to this significant position twice. Only during the Polish campaign in 1674, did *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha briefly occupy that post. The most conspicuous factor regarding Merzifonlu Mustafa's appointment was the fact that he was a member of the Köprülü family and had grown up with Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. When the grand vizier set off for the Crete campaign in 1665, Mühürdar Hasan Aga explained the appointment of

Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha: “Since Mustafa Pasha was a protégé of late Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, the latter’s son grand vizier Ahmed Pasha always appointed him as deputy grand vizier during these campaigns on account of their long lasting acquaintance.”³⁸⁸ In a similar vein, Levinus Warner wrote about the close relationship between Fazıl Ahmed and Merzifonlu Mustafa: “the deputy grand vizier in Edirne is an intimate friend of the present grand vizier and hence obeys his words without further ado. Their friendship, which was initiated during their childhood, was even more firmly consolidated when they became related through marriage.”³⁸⁹ Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha became the second man in the administrative hierarchy and stayed in Edirne in order to act on behalf of the grand vizier.

Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha as deputy of the grand vizier took nearly all of the important decisions, such as negotiations with ambassadors, appointments of state officials or the conduct of state affairs. An appointment register (*ruus defteri*) dated 1665 makes it clear that the appointments and allocations were carried out under Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha’s responsibility while the grand vizier on campaign. The register started thus: “the appointment register of the auspicious deputy grand vizier Mustafa Pasha while we are on royal campaign.”³⁹⁰ This register generally focuses on the appointments and allocations carried out by the palace. For example, the decrees related to the wages of Hadice Turhan’s steward Abbas Aga or to the payment of a certain Yusuf Aga of the harem from the treasury department of Egypt were to be found in this register. It also signifies that Merzifonlu was in charge of dealing with the affairs of the palace.³⁹¹

While Merzifonlu conducted the state affairs, how did he communicate with the sultan? If the sultan stayed in Edirne, face-to-face meetings took place at the court. The

³⁸⁸ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü’l-Tevârîh*, 231.

³⁸⁹ Levini Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 91.

³⁹⁰ BOA, A.RSK. D.1535, 2, “Biz sefer-i hümayûnda iken Vezîr-i mükerrem Mustafa Paşa hazretleri kâimmakâmlık hizmetinde iken olan tevcihâtın defteridir.”

³⁹¹ Ibid., 3-4

sultan frequently invited Merzifonlu Mustafa into his presence and conferred with him about various matters such as complaints about provincial governors.³⁹² As a private historian of the sultan, Abdi Pasha recorded many examples of such meetings between the sultan and deputy grand vizier.³⁹³ When the sultan departed from Edirne for hunting expeditions, Merzifonlu Mustafa mostly accompanied these hunting parties. In that case, Merzifonlu Mustafa appointed one vizier as his deputy in Edirne in order not to delay the functioning of state affairs.³⁹⁴

Merzifonlu Mustafa conducted the communications with the grand vizier at the front. In the summer of 1669, during negotiations with the Venetian envoy, Merzifonlu Mustafa imprisoned the envoy, because the grand vizier sent an order to him to do so. Moreover, in meetings held in the presence of the Sultan during the siege of Candia, while the seyhulislam and other prominent statesmen insisted on withdrawing the forces from Candia, “Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha was the only statesman who supported grand vizier’s decision of continuing the siege at all costs”.³⁹⁵ He appeared to be a staunch supporter of the grand vizier in this important meeting. As a result of the grand vizier’s letters and Merzifonlu Mustafa’s strong stance, Mehmed IV decided to continue the siege.

The long absence of Mehmed IV from Istanbul and Fazıl Ahmed’s long military expeditions necessitated this arrangement regarding in the administrative practices. In this new structure, the administrative body was divided into three main centers. The first was Edirne where the sultan resided, and governed the with the deputy vizier; the second was the headquarters of the grand vizier in the field and in the third place there was Istanbul where the deputy grand vizier was responsible for governing the city. In this new order, the

³⁹² Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 257.

³⁹³ Ibid., 253, 171, 190, 193.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 172 Vizier Yusuf Pasha was left in Edirne as the deputy of Merzifonlu Mustafa,

³⁹⁵ Yasir Yılmaz, *The Road to Vienna: Habsburg and Ottoman Statecraft During the Time of Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha (1676-1683)*, PhD Thesis, Purdue University, (2015), 133

most important duties fell on the Edirne deputy's shoulders. While the grand vizier was on campaign, there had to be someone left behind who would not put his position at risk and who would even support him against the sultan's will. The fact that the sultan's close companions filled this position during Köprülü Mehmed's grand vizierate and that Merzifonlu Mustafa served in this position for a long while during Fazıl Ahmed's grand vizierate underlines the importance of this critical office. The close co-operation between Merzifonlu (as the palace representative of the Köprülü family) and the sultan constituted one of the primary pillars of the relationship between the Köprülü family and Mehmed IV. In the following section, I will evaluate another important pillar of this relationship, namely the positions of the sultan's closest favorite *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and the chief black eunuch.

3.4.3. The Circle of Sultan Mehmed IV: The Rise of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and the Silence of the Chief Harem Eunuchs

One of the most salient features of Ottoman political life in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was the rise of favorites, called the *musahibs*. As I have discussed in the first chapter, the appearance of the favorites in the late sixteenth century was a direct consequence of a political strategy developed by Murad III in order to counter the power of the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who held office under three sultans, during a period of fourteen years. Therefore, the imbalance caused by the expanding power of Sokollu had to be restrained. Murad III's successors continued to use the same strategy to curb the authority of the grand viziers. As for the reign of Mehmed IV, in the first fifteen years, we do not see any evidence of any royal favorite of the sultan. Nevertheless, in 1663, Mehmed IV designated firstly Leh Hasan Aga and later Mustafa Bey as his royal favorite. A few years later, Mustafa Bey was promoted to the second vizierate along with the

“favorite” title and maintained his position close to the sultan. As a royal favorite and second vizier, *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha followed a harmonious policy with grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. This balanced relationship between the royal favorite and grand vizier sharply contrasted with their predecessors’ precarious relationship in the first half of the seventeenth century. How exactly did the role of the favorite change and how did this affect the relationship between the sultan and grand vizier? In the first part of the section, I will seek to answer these questions. In the second part, I will touch upon the position of the harem eunuchs as other political figures in the inner court during Fazıl Ahmed Pasha’s tenure. I will scrutinize the passivity of chief black eunuchs as political actors in that period. The main purpose of this section is to show that Mehmed IV was a key player in the formation of his close circle and in reshaping the relationship between the inner-court members and Köprülü grand viziers.

The sultan’s court historian Abdi Pasha stated that while Mehmed IV resided in his court in Edirne, he appointed Leh (Polish) Hasan Aga as royal favorite (*Musahib*) in 1663.³⁹⁶ We have little information about Leh Hasan Aga. His sobriquet Leh (Polish) might suggest that he could have been a Polish renegade or captive from Poland. Abdi Pasha only noticed that before becoming *Musahib*, he was promoted from the treasury to the privy chamber, where the sultan actually lived and slept.³⁹⁷ Paul Rycaut pointed out that the sultan found Hasan Aga industrious and more “active than any of his court and declared publicly the election of this person for his friend and companion.”³⁹⁸ Although Ottoman sources did not mention Hasan Aga’s activities, Rycaut stated that he enjoyed the favor of

³⁹⁶Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 158.

³⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 158.

³⁹⁸Rycaut stated that “the Sultan took an affection to him so sudden and violent,” Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 123.

the sultan and “cloathed as rich and mounted as well, as the sultan.”³⁹⁹ Moreover, Rycaut further stated that the queen mother, chief black eunuch, other eunuchs at the court, the deputy grand viziers in Edirne and Istanbul with all the great officers were commanded to make presents of money, jewels and “other sacrifices to this rising sun.”(Leh Hasan Aga, CB)⁴⁰⁰ We have no clue about the authenticity of the sources upon which Rycaut’s comments on this issue were based, but other sources suggest a similar image. One of the sultan’s other intimates, chief eunuch Solak Mehmed Aga, felt quite uncomfortable about Hasan Aga’s rapid rise.⁴⁰¹ This case shows that the rise of Hasan Aga displeased another the influential inner-court servant, the chief eunuch.

When Mehmed IV heard that Solak Mehmed Aga was jealous of Hasan Aga’s increasing power at court, he quickly decided to banish his chief black eunuch to Egypt.⁴⁰² Why did Mehmed IV support his favorite against his chief black eunuch, who had maintained his position for almost seven years? Was this banishment of Solak Mehmed Aga an opportunity for Mehmed IV to form his own circle? We have no exact information on the subject. Solak Mehmed Aga was promoted to the chief black eunuch position on the recommendation of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Although Köprülü Mehmed Pasha played a key role in his promotion, the sources state that Solak Mehmed Aga turned into a close ally of Hadice Turhan Sultan over time.⁴⁰³ In particular, after the death of Köprülü Mehmed, Mehmed IV may have wanted to dismiss Solak Mehmed Aga, who was closer to Hadice Turhan than to the sultan himself.

³⁹⁹Ibid.,123.

⁴⁰⁰Ibid.,123-24.

⁴⁰¹Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 287.

⁴⁰²Rycaut stated that the queen mother powerfully interceded for him and gained an exchange for his life. Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 124.

⁴⁰³Rycaut, *The History of the Turkish Empire*, 125.

Soon after the banishment of Solak Mehmed Aga, Musahib Hasan Aga was also expelled from the court. Abdi Pasha does not give a detailed account of the reasons for this expulsion. He only remarks, “He had largely enjoyed royal favor, but due to certain ungrateful acts and manners, he fell from grace.”⁴⁰⁴ Then, what were these ungrateful acts? The only writer who offers some helpful information on the subject is Paul Rycaut. According to Rycaut, after dismissing Solak Mehmed Aga and the chief halberdier who opposed Leh Hasan Aga, Musahib Leh Hasan Aga acted freely and started to directly meddle in state affairs. In the face of the growing power of Leh Hasan Aga, the grand vizier complained to Mehmed IV about the favorite’s interference in state affairs. The sultan swiftly dismissed his favorite from the court and appointed him to a lower post with the title of *Kapıcıbaşı* (head of the gatekeepers).⁴⁰⁵ There is no further supplementary information to be gleaned from other contemporary sources beyond Rycaut’s narrative. However, considering Abdi Pasha and Silahdar’s explanation, on the one hand, and the exile of Solak Mehmed Aga at the same time, on the other, it seems likely that Rycaut’s remark was not far from the truth.

The rise and fall of *Musahib* Hasan Aga provides a window into the function of the royal favorites during the reign of Mehmed IV. This case demonstrates that Mehmed IV was prudent about the boundaries of the power of the royal favorite. When the royal favorite began to meddle in state affairs, he was eliminated from high politics by dismissal. Thus it can be argued that the function of Mehmed IV’s favorites greatly differed from that of his predecessors because he never allowed his favorite to curb the power of the grand vizier. There was now a clear definition of limits of the power of the sultan’s favorite. A

⁴⁰⁴ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 159.

⁴⁰⁵ Abdi Pasha and Silahdar confirm Hasan Aga’s appointment as *Kapicibasi*.

favorite could enjoy power but he could not exceed the limits by meddling in the state affairs, which were the province of the grand vizier.

Now, we will follow the career of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha, who was the longest-lasting favorite of Mehmed IV, in order to look at the function of the favorite and his relationship with the grand vizier. After the fall of Hasan Aga, Mustafa Aga obtained the same title. Who then was Mustafa Aga? We have only scant information about his early life. A Venetian report stated that he was the son of a barber from Edirne and then entered the imperial school there.⁴⁰⁶ Before becoming the favorite, like Hasan Aga, he served in the treasury and was then promoted to the privy chamber. Having been promoted to the office of *Musahib*, Mustafa Aga was honored by generous gifts and grants of the sultan. Furthermore, Abdi Pasha recorded many gift exchanges between the sultan and Mustafa Aga. More importantly, the sultan allocated many revenues to Mustafa Aga.⁴⁰⁷ The sultan used every opportunity to show his affection for his favorite.

Mustafa Aga was promoted to be second vizier in 1667. However, he retained the title of *Musahib* along with the rank of the second vizier.⁴⁰⁸ Abdi Pasha wrote about this appointment: “Our Majesty granted the title of the second vizier to *Musahib* Mustafa Aga, who has been receiving the royal favor in the Royal Chamber, to keep him as favorite again in the Royal Stirrup.”⁴⁰⁹ In this way, *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha became the second most important man after the grand vizier. What was the function of Mustafa Pasha as the second vizier? *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha accompanied the Sultan particularly during his hunting

⁴⁰⁶ Nicolo Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet, *Le Relazioni degli Stati Europei lette al Senato dagli Ambasciatori Veneziani nel Secolo Decimasettimo*, (Venice, 1866) 165 I thank Constanza Blengino for the translation of the passage and for the cultural patronage of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha, see, Wurm, Heidrun. *Der Osmanisch e Historiker Hüseyin b. Gafer Genannt Hezarfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der Zweiten Halbe des 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Freiburg, 1971) 28-34.

⁴⁰⁷ BOA Hatt-ı Hümayün 1146-39, 1146-41 and TSMK D.2352, Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 199.

⁴⁰⁸ TSMK, D.0150 and Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 243.

⁴⁰⁹ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 243.

expeditions. Mustafa Pasha was also assigned to accompany Hadice Turhan or Mehmed IV's favorite concubine Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah on their visits to Istanbul or Edirne.⁴¹⁰ *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha occupied his position for a long time. He was appointed as grand admiral in 1686 and died in this new position.

Did the rise of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha as a royal favorite in the palace resemble the promotion of favorites in the early seventeenth century? In order to gain a better understanding of the changing role of the *Musahib* of Mehmed IV, I will compare *Musahib* Mustafa to Silahdar Mustafa Pasha, the powerful favorite of Murad IV. I choose Silahdar Mustafa Pasha because his career reflected *par excellence* the sultan's favorite in the early seventeenth century. Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was endowed with power by the sultan, and he incessantly interfered in state affairs and challenged the authority of the grand vizier.

Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was raised in the *Enderun* and became the sword-bearer and favorite of Murad IV.⁴¹¹ Like *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha, Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was promoted to the second vizierate in 1635. Although he was soon appointed as the governor of Damascus, he did not go to there; instead he sent his *mütesellim* (lieutenant-governor) Osman Aga. In the following years, Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was appointed as grand admiral, but again he did not leave Istanbul for naval expeditions, as a grand admiral was supposed to.⁴¹² Although *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha did not take a provincial governorship, like Silahdar Mustafa Pasha, he stayed with the sultan. Their career lines show that they continued to serve their master in the sultan's palace as boon companions despite holding the official title of second vizier.

⁴¹⁰ For the life of Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah, Betül Ipşirli Argıt, *Rabia Gülnuş Emetullah Sultan, 1640-1715* (Istanbul, 2014).

⁴¹¹ For the life of Silahdar Mustafa Pasha, see, Nejat Göyünç, 'Eski Malatya'da Silahdar Mustafa Paşa Hanı', *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, I, (1970) and Hedda Reindl-Kiel, *Leisure, Pleasure and Duty*.

⁴¹² Reindl-Kiel, *Leisure, Pleasure and Duty*, 20.

The common point between the two *musahibs* was their marriage to the daughters of the sultan. Silahdar Mustafa Pasha married Kaya Sultan, Murad IV's daughter, in 1639.⁴¹³ Similarly *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha was married to Ayşe Sultan, the elder daughter of Mehmed IV, in 1675.⁴¹⁴ At least, there was a continuation of a pattern: since the early years of the seventeenth century, some princesses had been given in marriage to their father's boon companions.⁴¹⁵ During the sixteenth century the sultans used to marry their daughters to the foremost viziers; starting from Ahmed I's reign onwards, the sultan's favorites also started to become their sons-in-law. Mehmed IV followed the same tradition and married his elder daughter to *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha in 1675. Accordingly, Mustafa Pasha became son-in-law of the sultan as well as his favorite and second vizier. To celebrate this marriage and the circumcision of Mehmed IV's two sons, the sultan organized a wedding ceremony in Edirne that constituted the greatest public ceremony during his reign.

In contrast to these similarities, the main difference between the two *musahibs* manifested itself in the different nature of their involvement in politics. As I have showed in the first chapter, Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was very active and he tried to curb the power of the grand vizier Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha. Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha was saved from the pressure of Silahdar Mustafa Pasha only through the death of Sultan Murad IV. In contrast to Silahdar's interference, *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha followed a harmonious policy with the grand vizier. Now, we should ask how this relationship played out between Fazıl Ahmed Pasha and *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha.

Neither Ottoman nor foreign sources mention any tensions between these two prominent pashas. Before reaching the rank of the second vizier, Mustafa Pasha visited the

⁴¹³ Ibid.,27

⁴¹⁴ For the ceremony of the wedding, see, Aslı Göksel, 'The Surname of Abdi', MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University (1983) and Özdemir Nutku, *IV.Mehmed'in Edirne Şenliği*, (Ankara, 1987).

⁴¹⁵ Artan 'Royal Weddings', 350.

grand vizier, bringing the sultan's messages and gifts. Mühürdar Hasan Aga, the seal-keeper of the grand vizier, underlined that they had a cordial relationship and noted that even the grand vizier appreciated *Musahib* Mustafa's qualities.⁴¹⁶ More importantly, during the siege of Crete, Fazıl Ahmed wrote private letters to Mustafa Pasha, expecting that he could help secure the sultan's support for the continuation of the siege. This was a critical moment for the grand vizier. Fazıl Ahmed worried that Mehmed IV began to be troubled about the prolongation of the siege of Candia and was seriously considering ending the ongoing war by negotiating with the Venetian ambassador.⁴¹⁷ In this touchy situation, there was no tension or intrigue between the grand vizier and Mustafa Pasha. On the contrary, the grand vizier asked for help from Mustafa Pasha to persuade the sultan. We have more evidence about their cordial relationship in the following years. In an undated letter written sometime between 1666 and 1671, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha thanks *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha for the horse and fur that the latter presented to him.⁴¹⁸ "My illustrious and dear son," read the letter Fazıl Ahmed Pasha wrote to praise Mustafa Pasha's loyalty and obedience, "as our son, you hold a sincere love and loyalty towards us sentiments free of grudge or hypocrisy."

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When Fazıl Ahmed marched to Poland in 1674, he even appointed Mustafa Pasha as the deputy grand vizier in Edirne, because Merzifonlu Mustafa had now joined his expedition. As I discussed in the previous section, the position of the deputy of the grand vizier in Edirne was a critical post during the times the grand vizier was leading the army. Without a doubt, this appointment shows that *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha was a trustworthy

⁴¹⁶ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 287-288.

⁴¹⁷ For the details of the negotiations between Ottomans and Venetian ambassador see, Gülsoy, *Girit'in Fethi ve Osmanlı İdaresinin Kurulması* (İstanbul, 2004), 160-84.

⁴¹⁸ Hamza Konuk, 'Vani Mehmed Efendi'nin Münşe'atı, (Transkripsiyon, Tahlil ve Değerlendirme)', MA Thesis, Erciyes University (2001), 127.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 128

man in the eyes of the grand vizier. To put it more explicitly, *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha, the sultan's favorite, had turned into a close ally of the grand vizier, whereas at the same time Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha had been getting closer to the sultan. Mehmed IV played a crucial role in regulating the relationship between *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha. For instance, Mehmed IV sent letters to *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha in 1667. While the two pashas were gathered on a day to enjoy a feast, they received a *hatt-ı hümayûn* from Sultan Mehmed IV, urging them to "increase mutual understanding and solidarity."⁴²⁰ The sultan was very careful in constructing a good relationship between his favorite and the grand vizier's deputy and brother-in-law. In this way, Mehmed IV used his initiative to prevent a possible clash between two statesmen.

Lastly, I would like to mention other harem eunuchs as powerful figures in the close circle of the sultan during Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's grand vizierate. In particular since the reign of Murad III the eunuchs in the court played a prominent role in shaping the political scene. When we come to the Köprülü period, the political activism of the eunuchs dramatically decreased. In his critical examination of the history of black eunuchs, the eighteenth-century veteran halberdier Derviş Abdullah stated that since Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha succeeded in keeping the black eunuchs away from state affairs, the Ottoman Empire was able to attain prosperity.⁴²¹ What was the main reason for the decreasing power of the harem eunuchs during the vizierate of the Köprülüs? Jane Hathaway suggests "Chief Harem Eunuchs were selected from among the Köprülü's clients during these years."⁴²² However, Hathaway's remark seems untenable considering the career of chief harem eunuchs and their relationship with the sultan. Hathaway tends to

⁴²⁰ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi 'nâme*, 253.

⁴²¹ Pınar Saka(ed.), *Risâle-i Teberdâriye Fi Ahvâl-i Darüssaade, Dervis Abdullah, Darussade Agalarinin Durumu Hakkında Baltacı'nın Raporu*, (Istanbul, 2012) 145-46.

⁴²² Jane Hathaway, "Households in the Administration of the Ottoman Empire", *Türklük Bilgisi Arastirmalari/Journal of Turkish Studies*, 40, (2013), 133.

exaggerate the role of the Köprülüs and underestimate that of Mehmed IV. Moreover, Hathaway does not offer concrete evidence about the chief black eunuch's *intisab* relationship with the Köprülü grand viziers. It should be pointed out that the sultan himself made the final decision on these promotions and, the Köprülüs were barely involved in them.⁴²³ During the Köprülü years, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha only once directly intervened in the promotion of a chief eunuch, namely that of Solak Mehmed Aga in 1657.⁴²⁴ Even in this case, Solak Mehmed Aga was never truly the client of the Köprülüs. If we scrutinize the careers of the chief eunuchs during the reign of Mehmed IV, we can clearly see that all the chief eunuchs were selected from the inner court by the sultan.

The Chief Black Eunuchs During Köprülü Viziers		
Name	Previous Position	Year
Solak Mehmed Aga	Harem Treasurer	1657- 1663
Musli Aga	Bas Kapu Oglani (The Lower officer in Harem)	1663-1668
Abbas Aga	Steward of Queen Mother	1668-1671
Yusuf Aga	Harem Treasurer	1671-1687 ⁴²⁵

Table 10: The Chief Black Eunuchs Under the Köprülü Viziers

Musli Aga replaced Solak Mehmed Aga as the chief black eunuch in 1663. He came to this position from *başkapuoğlanı*, a rather low rank for this appointment.⁴²⁶ Musli Aga patronized to build a dervish convent in Edirne as a Friday mosque. “The mosque’s

⁴²³ Abdi Pasha, the private historian of the sultan, confirms that all the appointments of the chief black eunuchs were made by the sultan himself. See, Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 158, 285 and 351.

⁴²⁴ See my chapter 2 and pages 74 and 75.

⁴²⁵ Ahmed Resmî Efendi, *Hamîletü ‘l-Küberâ*, 84-7.

⁴²⁶ Dikici, ‘Obscure Roots, Solid Foundations’, 127.

inscription starts by citing the name of the patron, who is identified as a trustworthy man who was for a long time Agha of the Abode of Grandeur of the Sovereign of the Sea and the Land, the ghazi king Mehmed.”⁴²⁷ The inscription indicates that Musli Aga still received favor from Mehmed IV. After the death of Musli Aga in Edirne in 1668, Abbas Aga, the steward of the queen mother, was promoted to the chief black position. “The connection between Hadice Turhan and Abbas Aga seems to have been a crucial factor in determining the chief eunuchs’ patronage, as the enhanced position of the queen mother in this period must have had a positive impact on his own standing within the power configuration”.⁴²⁸ After the dismissal of Abbas Aga, Yusuf Aga, the harem treasurer, was appointed as the chief black eunuch in 1671. Yusuf Aga maintained his position until 1687, even after the downfall of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha, son-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. If Yusuf Aga had been connected with the Köprülü group, it would have been very difficult to maintain his position for a long time because after the execution of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha in 1683, the clients of Köprülü household were dismissed.

If the Köprülü viziers had no say in the promotion of the chief black eunuch, how can we explain black eunuch’s passivity in political life? The answer can be found in Mehmed IV’s initiatives. Like the sultan’s *Musahibs*, the chief black eunuchs refrained from interfering in the grand vizier’s sphere. Indeed, neither the chronicles nor the foreign reports mention any tension between the grand vizier and the chief eunuchs. There can be no doubt that the main architect of this order was the Sultan Mehmed IV himself. Overall, as seen in many examples in the Ottoman Empire during the early seventeenth century, the presence of a powerful favorite would jeopardize the grand vizier’s authority and hence threaten the empire’s political stability. In contrast to these earlier examples, during Fazıl

⁴²⁷ Dikici, ‘Obscure Roots, Solid Foundations’, 127 and F. Th. Dijkema (ed.), *The Ottoman Historical Monumental Inscriptions in Edirne* (Leiden, 1977), 77.

⁴²⁸ Dikici, ‘Obscure Roots, Solid Foundations’, 128 .

Ahmed Pasha's tenure, there was no clash between the sultan's favorite and the grand vizier. Furthermore, in this period, while the sultan's favorite worked closely with the grand vizier, the grand vizier's deputy turned into a close partner of the sultan. This new political configuration brought about the reduction of the rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier that had constituted one of the primary reasons behind the political crises in the first half of the seventeenth century.