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

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**The Rise of the Köprülü Family: The Reconfiguration
of Vizierial Power in the Seventeenth Century**

PROEFSCHRIFT

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de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M.
Stolker, volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
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door

Cumhur Bekar

geboren te
Karaisalı in 1982

Promotores: Prof. dr. J.F.J. Duindam (Universiteit Leiden)
Prof. dr. M. Kunt (University of Cambridge, UK)

Promotiecommissie: Prof. dr. J.J.L. Gommans (Universiteit Leiden)
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Dr. R.L.A. van Leeuwen (Universiteit Amsterdam)
Prof. dr. C. Kafadar (Harvard University, USA)
Prof.dr. T. Artan (Sabancı University, Turkey)

To my mother and father,

Zeynep and Mehmet

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Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

Dit proefschrift schetst het aan de macht komen van de Köprülü dynastie van grootvizieren, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha en Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, door hun verhouding met de dynastie en de connecties van hun huishoudens te onderzoeken. Deze studie van het politieke leven van de Köprülü grootvizieren heeft als doel om inzicht te geven in twee vraagstukken. Ten eerste beoogt zij licht te werpen op de verschuivingen in de verhouding tussen de sultan en de grootvizier van de late zestiende tot en met de late zeventiende eeuw. Ten tweede geeft zij een gedetailleerde analyse van de structuur van de huishoudens van de grootvizieren, die vanaf de late zestiende eeuw op de politieke Bühne verschenen. De combinatie van deze twee vraagstukken zal resulteren in een grondige analyse van de transformatie die het Osmaanse politieke systeem onderging in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw.

Het proefschrift is verdeeld in vier hoofdstukken. De eerste drie hoofdstukken zijn chronologisch georganiseerd. Het eerste hoofdstuk geeft een overzicht van de verhouding tussen de grootvizier en de sultan met diens kring van intimi, van de troonsbestijging van Murad III tot en met die van Mehmed IV in 1648. Het hoofdstuk zal laten zien hoe de rivaliteit tussen de grootvizier en de kring persoonlijke gunstelingen aan het hof van de van de sultan politiek tumult veroorzaakte in de vroege zeventiende eeuw. Het hoofdstuk toont in detail hoe het beleid van Murad III een grote en langdurige invloed kreeg op het Osmaanse politieke bestel. In tegenstelling tot zijn grootvader Süleyman I en zijn vader Selim I, die enorme macht delegerden aan hun grootviziers, zette de nieuwe sultan Murad III een aantal maatregelen in gang die tot doel hadden het gezag van de sultan ten opzichte van de grootvizier te herstellen. Murad III veranderde twee belangrijke elementen in de positie van de grootvizier, die uiteindelijk leidden tot een ondermijning van diens positie. De eerste was een verandering in het patroon van bevordering tot grootvizier. Nadat het patroon dat was ingesteld door Süleyman I was doorbroken, werden grootvizieren met toenemende regelmaat aangesteld en ontslagen. De tweede was een verandering in de vormen van communicatie tussen de sultan en de vizier. Dagelijkse ontmoetingen in persoon werden vervangen door minder regelmatige geschreven mededelingen. Een nieuw patroon van machtsuitoefening door de favorieten van de

sultan en harem eunuchen werd bestendig door Murad IV en Ibrahim. Als gevolg van deze maatregelen nam de invloed van de groep gunstelingen binnen de persoonlijke omgeving van de sultan toe, terwijl de macht van de grootvizier geleidelijk verminderde. Terwijl de grootviziers gedurende de zestiende eeuw lang hun positie behielden en groot gezag hadden, bekleedden zij nu een wankelende positie waarin ambtsdragers elkaar bovendien snel afwisselden. De grootvizieren waren mede hierdoor niet in staat om effectief om te gaan met de toenemende onzekerheden die het rijk te wachten stonden gedurende de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw. Het fenomeen van het afnemende gezag van de grootvizier kwam ten einde met het bewind van Köprülü Mehmed Pasha als grootvizier vanaf 1656.

Het tweede hoofdstuk zal gewijd worden aan de grootvizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Dit hoofdstuk beschouwt de wijze waarop Köprülü Mehmed Pasha aan de macht kwam en in staat was de macht te behouden op een twistrijk politiek toneel. Het argumenteert dat de belangrijkste factor in het aan de macht komen van Köprülü Mehmed de vorstelijke steun van Hadice Turhan Sultan en Mehmed IV was. Hadice Turhan, die de macht in het Osmaanse paleis in handen had op dat moment, regelde de aanstelling van Köprülü Mehmed als grootvizier met volledige bevoegdheden. Gedurende zijn vijfjarige ambtsperiode genoot Köprülü Mehmed de volledige steun van Hadice Turhan en Mehmed IV voor zijn maatregelen en keuzes. Zij stonden hem een grote reikwijdte in zijn gezagsuitoefening toe. Bovendien ondermijnden zij de positie van grootvizier niet op momenten dat hij serieuze tegenslagen te verwerken had. Deze doorslaggevende steun van Hadice Turhan en Mehmed IV bleek zonneklaar gedurende de verwickelingen rond de rebellie van Abaza Hasan Pasha, die aanving in september 1658. De gouverneur van Aleppo, Abaza Hasan Pasha, kwam in opstand tegen de groeiende macht van Köprülü Mehmed. Abaza Hasan Pasha's verzet duurde tot februari 1659, toen hij met zijn metgezellen geëxecuteerd werd in Aleppo. Tijdens deze onlusten bleef Mehmed IV vierkant achter zijn grootvizier staan, waardoor de opstand zijn stuwkracht verloor en uiteindelijk luidde.

Het derde hoofdstuk richt zich op de grootvizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha en diens verhouding met Mehmed IV. Het hoofdstuk argumenteert dat Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's succes afhing van de politieke configuratie die voornamelijk opgezet was door Mehmed

IV. In de huidige politieke historiografie wordt Mehmed IV veelal negatief neergezet als de “jager” sultan, die zich verre hield van de politieke verantwoordelijkheden. In tegenstelling tot dit heersende beeld stel ik dat Mehmed IV’s zwakte de opkomst van de Köprülü familie niet kan verklaren. Een zwakke sultan was immers vaak juist een nadeel geweest voor de zittende grootvizier, omdat zwakte de sultan extra vatbaar maakte voor de invloed van de favorieten in zijn besloten kring aan het hof. In het eerste deel van het hoofdstuk richt ik mij op de vroege carrière van Fazıl Ahmed Pasha en laat ik zien hoe zijn opvolging in het ambt van zijn vader werd geïnterpreteerd door tijdgenoten, binnen en buiten het rijk. Het daarna volgende deel zal de executie van de hoofdsecretaris Şamizade Mehmed Efendi en zijn schoonzoon Kadizade İbrahim Pasha beschouwen. In het derde en vierde deel zal ik de verhuizing van het hof naar Edirne en de opkomst van *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha als voorbeelden van de nieuwe vorm van soevereiniteit, ingesteld door Mehmed IV, navorsen. Ik zal mij ook richten in deze delen op de plaatsvervangers van de grootvizier in de twee hoofdsteden en bespreken hoe deze herconfiguratie van de macht van de sultan en de grootvizier. Door deze nieuwe balans in de locatie en werkwijze van het bestuur bleven botsingen, zoals die zich hadden voorgedaan tussen Mehmed Pasha en Murad III in de late zestiende eeuw, uit.

In het vierde en laatste hoofdstuk is het mijn doel om te laten zien hoe de Köprülü grootvizieren hun patronagesystemen en hun netwerken opbouwden. Door de rollen van de *kethüda*, *agas* en secretarissen in het huishouden te onderzoeken en de cliënten van het Köprülü huishouden in de militaire en bestuurlijke systemen zichtbaar te maken, werpt dit hoofdstuk licht op de fundamentele politieke betekenis van het Köprülü huishouden. Dankzij hun opeenvolgende ambtstermijnen wisten de Köprülü grootviziers een groot netwerk te creëren, dat zich uitstreckte van de provinciën tot de centrale bureaucratie. De Köprülü wisten hun cliënten te plaatsen op sleutelposities in het centrale bestuur, die in het nabije verleden in handen waren geweest van het ambtsdragers gerekruteerd uit het huishouden van de sultan. Nog belangrijker is dat dit hoofdstuk laat zien dat de protégés van de Köprülü zich direct van het huishouden van de vizier naar belangrijke centrale posities bewogen, zonder ooit de cursus honorum te hebben gevolgd met posten in het paleis of op het lagere niveau van provinciaal bestuur. Op het provinciale niveau

begunstigde het Köprülü huishouden bovendien vele timarioten, die zij bijvoorbeeld aan de *vakfs* van de familie konden binden.

Curriculum Vitae

Cumhur Bekar was born on 30 October 1982 in Adana, Turkey. He earned his BA from the department of history at Ankara University in 2006. He continued his academic pursuits at Boğaziçi University, where he completed his thesis *A New Perception of Rome, Byzantium and Constantinople Hezarfen Huseyin's Universal History* and received his M.A degree in 2011. He worked as research assistant in the same university during the years 2008-2010. Later, he worked as researcher in a film production company.

He started his PhD at Leiden University in 2013, where he worked as a researcher to the project 'Eurasian Empires', funded by NOW (Dutch National Research Organization), which was cooperation with the University of Amsterdam and Nijmegen University. While part of this program he was supervised by Prof. Jeroen Duindam and Prof. Metin Kunt, resulting in the present dissertation. He was a visiting fellow at Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University in 2015. While at Harvard, he was supervised by Prof. Cemal Kafadar.

Stellingen (Propositions)

1. The rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier that started in the reign of Murad III was the main cause of the political crises in the first half of the seventeenth century.
2. The Sultan Mehmed IV cannot be depicted as a “weak sultan”, leaving all political responsibilities to the Köprülü viziers. In contrast to this prevailing view, Mehmed IV was a key actor in shaping the politics.
3. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha established the most efficient political network stretching from the provinces to the central bureaucracy of the seventeenth century by the end of their twenty-year tenure. Owing to the long years during which they stood at the helm of the state, the Köprülü grand viziers were not only able to place their clients in important posts, but also to make a very important network of their own from among their relatives and their clients that helped themselves gain primacy over all other competing vizier households.
4. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha successfully restored the authority of the grand vizierate that can be seen as the most conspicuous result of the era of the Köprülü grand viziers.
5. The diaries and correspondence of foreign ambassadors and counselors are very useful in filling the gaps left by indigenous Ottoman chroniclers and history writers in the seventeenth century.
6. The political history of the Ottoman Empire is a neglected field in Ottoman historiography. It failed to produce biographical studies of even some of the most influential sultans and viziers.

7. While the sultan's household as an institution of recruitment declined in the seventeenth century, vizier/pasha households began to provide an alternative to the regular channels of palace and political appointments. The members of the vizier households moved directly from service in the vizier's household to important positions that differed from those of the sixteenth century.
8. Along with Istanbul, Edirne turned into the most significant administrative and political center of the Ottoman Empire in the second part of the seventeenth century, which brought about the underlying changes in the administrative structures.
9. The most practical way of dealing with stress during writing a doctoral dissertation is to watch blockbuster movies and TV series one after the other. Particularly, the series focusing on historical events, along with comforting the researchers, help them acquire a vantage point over the historical material at hand.
10. The digitization of the archival and literary sources in the last decade has eliminated barriers that prevent researchers from easily accessing to knowledge. Today, history researchers have unprecedented facilities that former generations did not. However, it remains obscure or unanswered to what extents the quality of historical researches have experienced an increase in quality.

INTRODUCTION

When Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, at the age of almost seventy, was appointed as grand vizier on 15 September 1656, few would have thought that he was to become one of the most powerful and independent grand viziers in Ottoman history. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was the sixth grand vizier to take office within a single year.¹ The preceding five grand viziers came and went, some within a matter of weeks. They either faced dismissal or chose to resign from the position. Moreover, the inception of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's grand vizierate coincided with one of the most critical and tumultuous times of the seventeenth century. Since 1645, the war with Venice over Crete had exhausted Ottoman manpower and the treasury, engendering great turmoil in the capital.² A few months before Köprülü Mehmed was appointed, the Ottoman navy suffered its worst defeat of the war. Following their victory, the Venetians blockaded the straits, which meant cutting off food supplies to Istanbul from Egypt. Under these dire conditions, it was a commonly held view that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha would not last long in office.³ The French ambassador of the time, M.de la Haye Vantelay also shared this opinion, and he therefore neither paid a visit to Köprülü Mehmed Pasha nor presented the customary royal gifts.⁴

In contrast to general expectations, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha remained in the office until his death in 1661. During his five-year tenure, he successfully grappled with the uncertainties of the empire and effectively suppressed the political unrest that beset the

¹ These were grand viziers: Süleyman Pasha, (19 August 1655 - 28 February 1656), Hüseyin Pasha (28 February-5 March), Mustafa Pasha, (5 March), Siyavuş Pasha (5 March - 26 April) Boynuyaralı Mehmed Pasha, (26 April - 15 September 1656).

² For the vivid description of the unrest in Istanbul, see, Ahmet Arslantürk and Murat Kocaaslan (eds.), *Dördüncü Mehmed Saltanatında İstanbul, Risale-i Kürd Hatib* (İstanbul, 2014), 34.

³ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, Ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 4 Vols, (Ankara, 2008), IV, 1720.

⁴ Charles Schefer (ed.), *Memoire Historique sur l'ambassade de France a Constantinople. Par le Marquie de Bonnac Publie avec un précis de ses negociations a la porte ottomane* (Paris, 1894), 19.

empire in the first part of the seventeenth century. More importantly, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha succeeded in establishing a dynasty of grand viziers. He was followed in office by his son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Following Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, who remained in the post from 1661 until his death in 1676, another member of the family, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's son-in-law Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha (r. 1676-1683) was appointed as grand vizier. Although Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha was executed because of his failure in the siege of Vienna in 1683, the influence of the Köprülü family did not diminish. On the contrary, during the rebellion of 1687, they played an important role in the deposition of Mehmed IV. From 1689 to 1703, the Köprülüs also held the grand vizierate in the person of Köprülü Mehmed's other son, Fazıl Mustafa (r. 1689-1691), and then his nephew, Amcazade Hüseyin (r. 1694-1702). Because of this Köprülü influence, the period between Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's appointment to the grand vizierate in 1656 and the deposition of Mustafa II in 1703 has been named as the "Köprülü period."⁵

This dissertation examines the reconfiguration of vizierial power under Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. This study of the political life of the Köprülü grand viziers is intended to provide insight into two main lines of inquiry. Firstly, it offers an important opportunity to analyze the relationship between the sultan and the vizier, two powerful figures of the political system, from the late sixteenth century up until the late seventeenth century. Secondly, it opens up the possibility of providing a detailed analysis of the structure of the vizierial households that appeared on the political scene from the sixteenth century onwards. The combination of these two lines of inquiry will result in a thorough analysis of the transformation that the Ottoman political system underwent in the

⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzuncarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 4 vols. (Ankara, 1947 - 59), Halil İnalcık, *Devlet-i Aliyye III, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu üzerine araştırmalar, Köprülüler Devri* (İstanbul, 2016), Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago, 1972) and Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols. Vol.1: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1976).

second half of the seventeenth century. What can the rise of the Köprülü viziers with their households tell us about the changing relationship between the sultan, the grand vizier, and the power balances at the court?

One of the most pivotal changes in the Ottoman polity during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was the diminished power and authority of the grand vizierate. Süleyman I and his successor Selim II had delegated nearly autonomous power to their grand viziers. As the deputy of the sultan, the grand vizier became the empire's *de facto* ruler, presiding over the imperial council. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, the last grand vizier of Süleyman I and the only one of Selim II, emerged as the most important statesman, and he virtually ruled the whole empire. He reached the zenith of his power between 1566 and 1574. However, the new sultan Murad III resented his grand vizier's power and influence, and therefore set a new policy conferring enormous power on inner-court members, such as harem eunuchs, who controlled access to the sultan and counterbalanced the power of the grand vizier. After Sokollu Mehmed's death in 1579, the authority of the grand viziers became increasingly challenged by inner-court dignitaries including the royal favorites and harem eunuchs.

This new political configuration established by Murad III has been documented and studied by an increasing number of modern Ottoman historians in the last three decades. Rather than seeing Murad III's initiatives as a sign of decline, they emphasize the rise of the court as a new center of political power. Cornell Fleischer shows the emergence of new political actors around Murad III through the lens of one of the most critical contemporary observers, namely Mustafa Ali.⁶ Gülru Necipoğlu studies the architectural aspect of Murad

⁶ Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Ali (1541 - 1600)* (Princeton, 1986).

III's seclusion policy.⁷ Christine Woodhead examines the perception of Murad III's policies in the eyes of contemporary Ottoman observers and his historical patronage in response to growing criticism.⁸ While Günhan Börekçi and Baki Tezcan demonstrate how Murad III and his immediate successors employed their favorites and black eunuchs to curb the power of the grand vizier,⁹ Emine Fetvacı painstakingly shows the ways in which the new political arrangements were reflected in illustrated history books.¹⁰ Thanks to these well-researched studies, Murad III is now seen as the chief architect of the new political configuration, which buttressed the inner-court vis-à-vis outer-court office-holders.

Although recent scholarship has opened up new lines of inquiry for understanding the political arrangements carried out by Murad III and his immediate successors Mehmed III, Ahmed I and Osman II, some important questions regarding the post-1622 period remain unanswered.¹¹ In contrast to the rich literature on the developments of the political structure of the empire between the accession of Murad III and the regicide of Osman II in 1622, there is little analysis in the secondary literature of how these developments unfolded in the post-1622 period.¹² Did Murad IV and Ibrahim I adopt the style of the rulership of

⁷ Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, 1991).

⁸ Christine Woodhead, 'Murad III and the Historians: Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Late 16th-Century Historiography', in Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinskowski (eds.), *Legitimizing the Order, The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden and Boston, 2005), and the same author's, 'Poet, Patron and Padişah: The Ottoman Sultan Murad III (1574 - 95)', in Giles E.M. Gasper and John McKinnell (eds.), *Ambition and Anxiety: Courts and Courtly Discourse, c.700 - 1600* (Toronto, 2014).

⁹ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire, Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, 2010) and Günhan Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites at the court of Sultan Ahmed I and his Immediate Predecessors', PhD thesis, Ohio State University (2010).

¹⁰ Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Indiana, 2013).

¹¹ While Günhan Börekçi studies the reign of Ahmed I in his PhD dissertation, Baki Tezcan and Gabriel Piterberg deal with the events that culminated in regicide of Osman II in 1622, see, Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy, History and Historiography at Play* (Los Angeles, 2003).

¹² There is no detailed study of Murad IV's personal rule or the erratic sultanate of Ibrahim I in the Ottoman historiography.

Murad III? How does the personal rule of Murad IV fit in this framework? How did the favorites of Ibrahim I circumscribe the power of the grand vizier?

I argue that the rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier that started in the reign of Murad III continued into the first part of the seventeenth century. Even Sultan Murad IV, who assumed an outgoing rulership style in contrast to Murad III's secluded one, vested his favorite Silahdar Mustafa Pasha with great authority and took advantage of the rivalry between the royal favorite and the grand vizier. The success of the inner-court circles reached its apogee as they acted as power brokers in the reign of Ibrahim I. The power of Ibrahim I's favorites was ended only in an uprising, bringing about the deposition and execution of Ibrahim I. The turmoil continued incessantly throughout the first eight years of Mehmed IV's reign, under Hadice Turhan's regency. The interference of the sultan's favorite and harem eunuchs in the affairs of state created political crises as manifested in the rebellions that mostly culminated in the execution of many palace officials as well as the regicide of two sultans, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹³ This chaotic period, threatening the security of the throne, pushed Hadice Turhan to restore the authority of the office of grand vizier. After a series of abortive attempts, Hadice Turhan finally found a strong figure in the person of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha in 1656.

If the first part of the seventeenth century witnessed the waning of the grand viziers' power, then how can we explain the growing power of the Köprülü grand viziers under Mehmed IV in the second part of the seventeenth century?

¹³ There were eight great rebellions in the capital, 1589, 1600, 1603, 1622, 1648, 1651, 1655 and 1656, for a general review of the rebellions in the seventeenth century, see, Cemal Kafadar, 'Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause', in Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan (eds.), *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World, A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison, 2007), 113-35.

The rule of the Köprülü grand viziers is generally regarded as an era of “recovery” and “restoration.”¹⁴ In the general evaluation of the seventeenth century, the Köprülü period appeared to be an “exception” or a short “revitalization.” After a long phase of political instability in the empire, the Köprülü grand viziers revived the empire and embarked on a new wave of conquest. It is true that within a period of twenty years, Köprülü Mehmed and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha managed to suppress the political unrest and to extend the empire’s territory by annexing the “formidable” island of Crete, a part of Poland, and significant castles on the border with Habsburgs. The Köprülü viziers have long been commemorated solely for these military accomplishments. From the nineteenth-century Ottoman grand narratives to modern historiography, a wide range of studies have viewed Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as a cruel and relentless “savior,” who brought order to the realm, while Fazıl Ahmed Pasha has been portrayed as a victorious commander who reinitiated the Ottoman age of conquest despite being slightly more lenient and pious than his father.¹⁵ However, these studies overlook the reconfiguration of the vizierial and sultanic power in that period.

I argue that the most decisive factor in the establishment and consolidation of the Köprülü power was the high level of support provided by Hadice Turhan Sultan and Mehmed IV. Indeed, the rise of the Köprülü family cannot be understood without looking at

¹⁴ Hans Kissling, ‘Die Köprülü Restauration’, in *Internationales Kulturhistorisches symposion Mogersdorf I: Österreich und die Türken*, (Einsensstadt, 1972) 75-83.

¹⁵ For the nineteenth-century narratives, see, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, (İstanbul, 1891), 10 vols, I, 50-1, Tayyazade-Ata, *Osmanlı Saray Tarihi, Tarih-i Enderun*, ed. Mehmet Arslan, (Istanbul, 2010), 5 vols, II, 83-7, Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü’l Vuku’at, Kurumlarıyla Osmanlı Tarihi I-IV*, Ed.Yılmaz Kurt, (Ankara, 2008) and popular histories for the Köprülü period in the twentieth century, Ahmet Refik [Altınay], *Köprülüler* (İstanbul, 2011), Mizancı Murad Efendi, *Tarih-i Ebü'l-Faruk: tarih-i osmanide siyaset ve mediniyet itibarile hikmet-i asliye taharrisine teşebbüs* (İstanbul, 1912 - 1914), VII, 253, Vâhid Çabuk, *Köprülüler* (Ankara, 1988) and Ömer Köprülü, *Osmanlı Devletinde Köprülüler* (İstanbul, 1943) in the same line but a new study, Christoph K. Neumann, ‘Political and Diplomatic Developments’, in Suraiya N.Faroqi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume. III, The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603 - 1839* (Cambridge, 2006), 50, For an exceptional study, see, Metin Kunt. ‘The Köprülü Years, 1656-1661’ PhD thesis, Princeton University (1971).

the actions of Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV. Hadice Turhan Sultan delegated power to Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and thwarted any attempts to undermine the power of the grand vizier. While Hadice Turhan gradually withdrew from the political scene, Mehmed IV, who had reached his majority, became a more active sultan. Like his mother Hadice Turhan, Mehmed IV staunchly supported Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and continued his support for Fazıl Ahmed Pasha while retaining his sovereign power.

This dissertation places Mehmed IV and his actions at its center in order to explain the rise of the Köprülü household, in ways that differ from the existing literature. Mainstream Ottoman historiography presents Mehmed IV as a minor figure during the Köprülü period. He has been depicted as a hunter-sultan, who did not care about ruling his empire and indulged himself in hunting instead. In this interpretation, Mehmed IV's indifference to politics paved the way for the growing power of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Even though revisionist historiography abstains from the pejorative identification of Mehmed IV as the hunter-sultan, one cannot say that it offers new perspectives on Mehmed IV's political activities or his relationship with the Köprülü viziers. For instance, Baki Tezcan sees Mehmed IV as a "junior partner of Köprülü autocracy" but does not explain what constituted "autocracy" of Köprülü viziers or specify further the role of Mehmed IV in this partnership.¹⁶ Marc David Baer produced a portrayal of the sultan that differs from other studies. He describes Mehmed IV as a strong sultan, dominating all the political initiatives.¹⁷ However, he hardly addresses how this new portrayal of the sultan alters our understanding of seventeenth-century Ottoman politics, especially the relationship between the sultan and the grand vizier. Both authors overlook the inner circle of the sultan and the political role played by the palace establishment during the Köprülü period.

¹⁶ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 216.

¹⁷ Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam, Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 2008).

The relationship established between the Köprülü viziers and Mehmed IV was the opposite of the one that prevailed in the first half of the seventeenth century. The sultan and his close circle, including royal favorite *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and the chief harem eunuchs, followed a conciliatory and balanced policy with respect to the grand viziers rather than the more conflicting one of earlier decades. This study will detail how a new balance of power took shape between sultan and grand vizier, based on the relocation of the court to Edirne and the service of key officeholders, notably the deputies of the grand vizier in the two capitals and the rise of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha as a new type of royal favorite of Mehmed IV.

The second object of the analysis is the Köprülü household. In Ottoman studies, the term “household” is commonly associated with a network of people linked to each other either through blood ties or patron-client relations.¹⁸ Along with the sultan, viziers, provincial governors and even *ulema* founded their own households, modeled to varying degrees on that of the sultan. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the graduates of the imperial household dominated the cadres of the military and administrative system. A key shift that occurred in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century was that the monopoly of the sultan’s household on the recruitment of manpower into state services was broken and households of viziers emerged as an alternative source of power.¹⁹ The viziers began to place their household members in military and administrative positions in order to promote their own interests. Although it is known that the vizierial households played a prominent role during the seventeenth century, the function of these households in the

¹⁸ Metin Kunt, ‘Royal and Other Households’, in Christine Woodhead (ed.) *The Ottoman World* (London, 2012) 103, Jane Hathaway, ‘The Military household in Ottoman Egypt,’ *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27, (1995), 24 and Gabriel Piterberg, ‘Mamluk and Ottoman Political Households, An Alternative Model of “Kinship” and “Family”’, in Christopher H. Johnson (ed.) *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond* (New York, 2011), 43-53.

¹⁹ Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550 - 1650* (New York, 1983).

Ottoman polity has not yet been elaborated. There is still no detailed study of the households of powerful grand viziers, such as Rüstem Pasha, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Sinan Pasha, Kuyucu Murad Pasha and Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha. It would also be justified to say that there is no single study on the Köprülü household, which is considered to be the vizierial household *par excellence*.

This dissertation provides the first concentrated attempt to study the Köprülü household. I will analyze the Köprülü household's strategy of recruitment and the employment of its clients in the military and administrative systems. I argue that the succession of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha played a crucial role in the establishment of the powerful patronage network as he promoted to significant positions his clients as well as former clients of his father.

The sources consulted for this study can be grouped into three main categories: Ottoman literary sources, foreign ambassadors' and travelers' reports, and archival materials. I will start with the Ottoman literary sources. Luckily, there are numerous Ottoman chronicles dealing with the Köprülü period. Along with two eighteenth-century official chronicles, namely the histories of Naima and Raşid, there are many contemporary histories that shed light on the subject. Nonetheless, these Ottoman literary sources narrate the events from a one-sided perspective and without delving into details. The primary reason for that is the chroniclers' concern with satisfying their patrons, which prevented them from including information that did not please these patrons. These biases pose difficulties for the study of political history and make subjects such as political factionalism, inner-factional rivalry or personal attitudes toward rivaling factions difficult to uncover. Ottoman chroniclers provided little information on individuals. They occasionally spelled out the names of viziers and other high officials, but do not give a full picture of

their lives and connections. The female members of the imperial family and other influential members of the inner court were totally neglected.

This lacuna, however, can be filled in by using the diaries and correspondence of foreign ambassadors and counselors who resided in Istanbul during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Figures such as Levinus Warner, the resident of the Dutch Republic to the Ottoman Empire (1655-1665) and Paul Rycaut, secretary to the English ambassador in the 1660s, who resided for many years in Istanbul during this period, and to whom much space will be granted in the following chapters, established strong connections with palace officials such as dragomans or physicians and managed to obtain valuable information missing from the chronicles. Again, in this period, foreigners who received an orientalist education, such as Warner and Antoine Galland, secretary to the French ambassador (1670-1679), showed a high degree of interest in Ottoman cultural life and were able to create links to the local Ottoman sources of information. To be sure, European observers also had their specific agendas and networks that affected the way they wrote about Ottoman politics, even if they were not part of Ottoman officialdom.

Finally, the study will use two principal repositories of Ottoman archival material. The first of these is the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive, which holds the documents produced by the Ottoman bureaucracy. The second, and the more important one, is the Topkapı Palace archive, which contains the correspondence related to the palace and the sultan. Its inadequate catalogue and restricted access to researchers in recent years are the reasons why this archive has not been sufficiently consulted. Once the document collections of the archive become fully available to researchers, even more subjects such as the rulership style of Mehmed IV, Hadice Turhan's position, and the correspondence between members of the dynasty and with the Köprülü viziers (if any) will be illuminated.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. Each chapter will deal with sub-questions that will serve to answer my main question. The first three chapters are organized chronologically. The first chapter provides an overview of the position of the grand vizierate and its relationship to the sultan and his close circle, from the accession of Murad III until that of Mehmed IV in 1648. The chapter will show how the rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier created political tumult during the early seventeenth century. The second chapter will be dedicated to the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. It concentrates on the process through which Köprülü Mehmed Pasha gained power. The relationship between Köprülü Mehmed and Hadice Turhan and later Mehmed IV will be a key theme in this chapter. In the third chapter, I will focus on the grand vizierate of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. I will also scrutinize the new mode of sovereignty adopted by Mehmed IV and its impact on the relationship with Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. The emergence of a multipolar administrative system, the rise of *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha and the relationship between Hadice Turhan and Mehmed will be examined in detail in this chapter. In the fourth and final chapter, my purpose is to show how the Köprülü grand viziers established their patronage system and wove their networks. I will examine the function of the family members and servants who closely worked with grand vizier as well as clients of the Köprülü household in the administrative and military systems. Lastly, I will touch upon the patronage networks of the Köprülü household in the provinces.

CHAPTER 1: THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE INNER-COURT SERVANTS-AND THE GRAND VIZIER IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH AND EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will examine the rivalry between the inner-court servants and grand vizier starting from the accession of Murad III in 1574 until the enthronement of Mehmed IV in 1648. The reign of Murad III was a turning point because Murad III altered the policy of his predecessors Süleyman I and Selim II, who had allowed their grand viziers enormous authority in the management of state affairs. Murad III resented the incumbent grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's power and tried to empower servants of the inner court in order to "establish his personal control over the running of the state."²⁰ Murad III's initiatives created a clash between the grand viziers and the inner-court servants. More importantly, Murad III's rulership was adopted by his successors, leaving a lasting effect on Ottoman political life in the seventeenth century. This chapter will clarify the changing roles of political actors such as the grand vizier, the chief black eunuch and the sultan's favorite during the first part of the seventeenth century. In doing so, it will provide a better understanding of the new configuration of the power relationship between Mehmed IV and the Köprülü grand viziers, which constitutes the major theme of chapters II and III.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part, I will document the rise of the chief black eunuchs and royal favorites as new political actors. Firstly, I will examine the careers of the royal favorites as well as their relationship with the sultan and the grand

²⁰ Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 149.

viziers. Secondly, I will dwell upon the ascendancy of the chief black eunuchs vis-à-vis white eunuchs in the harem. In the second part, I will discuss the monumental changes in the grand vizierate after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. I will explain the changes in the hierarchical pattern of the vizierate and in the communications between the sultan and grand vizier.

Like many other contemporary palaces, the Topkapı Palace consisted of an inner (*enderun*) and an outer (*birun*) court.²¹ “The inner court included separate male and female hierarchies in the palace school and the harem.”²² The youths in the palace school were educated under strict control of the white eunuchs. The most capable of the pages advanced in their education and served the sultan in the four “chambers” of the inner court. These chambers were the cellar (*kiler*), the treasury (*hazine*), the campaign (*seferli*) and the privy chamber (*has oda*). The most honorable officers of the privy chamber in descending order were the chief of the privy chamber (*has oda başı*), sword-bearer (*silahdar*), the keeper of the garments (*çuhadar*), the stirrup-holder (*rikabdar*) and the keeper of the linen (*tülbend gulamı*). The pages who graduated from the inner court were appointed to higher positions like that of the commander of the Janissaries, the provincial governor or even the vizier.

The harem housed sultan’s relatives and women. Alongside the sultan’s women, there was a large group of female servants in the harem. Like the male pages, these servants were subjected to a strict training at the hands of more experienced senior women (*kahya kadın*). The queen mother (*Valide Sultan*) had absolute authority within the harem and her most important aide was the chief black eunuch, a position that will be studied in detail below. In addition to these officials in the inner court, the sultan’s tutor, spiritual guide and the royal favorite (*musahib*) formed the close circle of the sultan.

²¹ For a comparative review of the inner-outer division in the early modern polities, see, Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties, A Global History of Power* (Cambridge, 2016), 168-88.

²² *Ibid.*, 191.

There were a group of outer service holders who regulating the contact between the palace and the outside world. These officers were the gatekeepers, people of the stables, standard bearers, tent pitchers, keepers of the royal appurtenances for travel and keepers of the sultan's hunting birds. In the outer court, there were also the services for the government of the realm. The members of the imperial council including the grand vizier, the dome viziers, the chief treasurer, a keeper of the seal, two military judges, the grand admiral, the commander of the Janissaries and the governor of Rumelia gathered in the second courtyard. In addition, there were janissaries and the six regiments cavalry in the outer court. From the late sixteenth century, these two main groups of armed forces fought each other. The underlying clash point was the cavalry's extra privileges that resented the Janissaries. Each group could ally with the rival ruling viziers or the high-ranking members of the *ulema* in order to crush each other. However, these two rival groups sometimes formed a united front against the increasing power of the inner court servants. As I will show in the following pages, leading eunuchs and sultan's favorites were murdered by the coalition of the Janissaries and cavalry regiments during the first part of the seventeenth century.

The power of the chief black eunuch and the royal favorite became pronounced during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the Ottoman imperial palace underwent several profound changes. The first great change was the moving of the sultan's family from the so-called Old Palace, which had previously been the residence for royal women and children, to the Topkapı Palace.²³ This move included the sultan's mother, wife, unmarried daughters and concubines as well as a large group of white and black eunuchs, causing a considerable expansion of the imperial harem. Murad III initiated architectural

²³ Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem, Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993).

adjustments to the harem, including new quarters for the queen mother and black eunuchs and new apartments for his numerous concubines.²⁴ This expanded harem differed from the more impersonal atmosphere of Mehmed II's harem, which had excluded the sultan's wives, children and mother.²⁵

This new arrangement was closely connected to the move towards a more secluded imperial image that developed under Murad III. Murad III was not the first sultan to withdraw from the public gaze. Mehmed II had introduced the policy of the seclusion as part of the enhancement of the sultan's status after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453.²⁶ This more hidden rulership contrasted with the early practices of the Ottoman sultans. This retreat became even more pronounced with the reign of Selim II, who was the first Ottoman sultan not to head a military campaign. However, seclusion reached a zenith in the reign of Murad III. Murad III did not leave the capital once during the twenty-one years of his reign. He even stooped attending Friday prayers, which had previously given people an opportunity to see and present petitions to their sultan.²⁷ According to Domenico Hierosolimitano, court physician to Murad III, for a long period between 1589 and 1591, the sultan did not even leave the palace.²⁸ As a result of the sultan's seclusion, the political clout of the imperial council was transferred to those people with whom the sultan had daily contact.

The demographic and architectural expansion of the imperial harem as well as the sultan's increasing seclusion enlarged the importance of the chief black eunuch and the

²⁴ Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial*, 164 and the sultan's private doctor Domenico Hierosolimitano points out that Murad III had forty wives, see, Domenico Hierosolimitano, *Domenico's Istanbul*, Ed. Geoffrey Lewis, trans. M.J.L. Austin, (Warminster, 2001), 28-32.

²⁵ Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial*, 164.

²⁶ For a general analysis of the seclusion of the Ottoman sultans in comparative perspective, see, Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces,' *Ars Orientalis*, 23, (1993), 303-42.

²⁷ Woodhead, 'Poet, Patron', 233.

²⁸ Hierosolimitano, *Domenico's Istanbul*, 28-32.

sultan's favorite since they mediated between the royal family and the outer world. As the sultan's seclusion increased, so did the political power of those in the sultan's close circle.

After the reign of Murad III, two important changes further increased the power of the inner-court servants.²⁹ The first change was the abandonment of the tradition of sending princes out to govern provinces in order to learn statecraft. This practice ceased after the reign of Mehmed III, but the change was not the result of a deliberate policy shift. When Mehmed III died at the age thirty-seven in 1603, his sons had not yet reached the age to be sent out of the palace. Afterwards, all the male members of the dynasty were raised and educated in the harem section, making them more susceptible to the influence of women and of the eunuchs who were now in charge of their education.

The second change that increased the importance of the inner court was the renunciation of the practice of royal fratricide. It had been a custom since the reign of Mehmed II that when a new sultan ascended to the throne, he ordered his brothers to be executed in an attempt to avoid competition for the throne. When Ahmed I acceded to the throne at the age of thirteen in 1603, his brother Mustafa was not executed because the reigning sultan was still childless and, hence, Mustafa was the only living male member of the dynasty. Mustafa was allowed to live in case Ahmed died unexpectedly without an heir.³⁰ After Ahmed I passed away, it was not his son but his brother Mustafa who replaced the dead ruler. After that, the principle of succession from father to son was abandoned and fratricide gave way to seniority. All princes alive at the time of the enthronement of the new sultan became potential candidates for the throne. As a result, the power struggles within the Ottoman polity shifted from provincial princely households to Topkapı Palace. Under

²⁹ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 97-104.

³⁰ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 60-3.

these new circumstances, the inner-court servants emerged as important political actors because they established close relationships with young princes from early childhood.

1.2. The Rise of the Royal Favorites at the Ottoman Court

One of the most significant features of Ottoman politics in the seventeenth century was the tension between the royal favorite and the grand vizier. Friction emerged between Şemsi Ahmed Pasha, the favorite of Murad III, and the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in the 1570s. Such tensions continued even after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, since Murad III continued to empower his favorites at the expense of his grand viziers. In this section, I will survey the emergence of royal favorites and their relationship with grand viziers.

The Ottoman Turkish counterpart of the royal favorite is a *musahib*. The *musahib* is an Arabic word by origin and signifies “a person capable of pleasant conversation.”³¹ In Ottoman political terminology, the *musahib* comes to mean both a boon companion and a consultant who engages in conversations with the sultan about important issues and state affairs. The sultan may appoint anyone he wishes as his *musahib*. The *musahibs* were selected from “among a wide range of office-holders and courtiers, including viziers and *agas* as well as dwarfs, mutes and eunuchs.”³² The *musahibs* were later promoted to important positions. For instance, Murad IV’s *musahib* Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was appointed as the governor of Damascus while Mehmed IV’s *musahib* Mustafa Pasha was vested with the office of the second vizierate. It should also be pointed out that once appointed, they could still bear the title *musahib* and could send their proxies to their designated posts while they would preserve their presence at the sultan’s side. As the close

³¹ Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, ‘Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? Dwarfs and Mutes at the Ottoman Court in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, MA thesis, Sabancı University (2006), 32.

³² *Ibid.*, 32

confidants of the sultan, the *musahibs* were allocated considerable gifts and revenue sources. Their real power, however, lay in their ability to influence the sultan's decisions in important matters and in controlling all petitions (*telhises*) and information addressed to the sultan.

There was only one reference to the political role of favorites in the historical and political corpus before the late sixteenth century. In his treatise on the vizierate, Lütfi Pasha, the exiled grand vizier of Süleyman I, warned,

The sultans should not mingle too much with the favorites. The rulers would of course have favorites; however, the favorites should only enjoy his gifts and vests of honor. They must not be allowed to interfere with public affairs. This is a crucial issue.³³

Mustafa Ali emphasizes that the *musahib* should be witty and knowledgeable and act as an advisor to the sultan.³⁴ The *musahib*, according to Mustafa Ali, “should not seek a regular government office and should be chosen from the ulema, poets, or dervishes.”³⁵ A treatise titled *Hirzü'l- müluk* (Castle of Kings), presumably penned by a member of the anti-Sokollu Mehmed Pasha group during Murad III's reign, emphasized that the sultan was supposed to have a powerful *musahib*.³⁶ However, toward the end of the second part of the seventeenth century, the image of the royal favorite became more negative. The favorites' interference in the business of state turned into one of the main themes of the advice literature. The anonymous writer of *Kitab-ı Müstetab* written between 1618 and 1622,

³³ Lütfi Paşa, *Lütfi Paşa Asafnamesi (Yeni Bir Metin Tesisi Denemesi)*, ed. Mübahat Kütükoğlu, (İstanbul, 1991), 7.

³⁴ Mustafa Ali, *Mustafa Ali's Counsel for Sultans of 1581: Edition, Translation, Notes*, ed. Andreas Tietze, (Vienna, 1979 - 1982), 2 vols, I, 41-7.

³⁵ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 159.

³⁶ Anonymous, 'Hirzü'l- müluk,' in *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Dair Kaynaklar*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara, 1988), 143-207.

points out that *musahibs* should be kept away from state affairs.³⁷ Koçi Bey, who penned a treatise for Murad IV around 1630, states that until the beginning of Murad III's reign, boon companions and favorites had been experienced, skillful and wise people; after that they began to interfere in state affairs, particularly in the promotions of grand viziers. He states,

They began to propose many unacceptable things to those who became grand vizier. When the latter did not permit, they would join in one tongue and one mind, and use every opportunity to slander them in the sultan's presence. By provoking the sultan's wrath, they used to cause their assassination or exile, or the confiscation of their property, and defamation.³⁸

How did these tensions summarized by Koçi Bey start?

1.2.1. Favorites of Murad III, Mehmed III and Ahmed I

The first *musahib* of Murad III was Şemsi Ahmed Pasha. He was a former governor-general of Rumelia and a scion of the princely İsfendiyaroğlu family.³⁹ He graduated from the inner court and then took several positions in the outer services in the reign of Süleyman I, such as chief falconer and commander of the imperial cavalry troops. In 1551, he was appointed as governor of Damascus in 1551. In 1569, during the reign of Selim II, he retired from his governorship. Afterwards, he was appointed as *musahib* of Selim II.⁴⁰ Toward the end of the reign of Selim II, he returned to his hometown of Bolu.

With Murad III's accession, Şemsi Ahmed Pasha's second career as *musahib* began. The close circle of Murad III, particularly Üveys Pasha, the chief treasurer and close

³⁷ Anonymous, 'Kitab-ı Müstetab', in *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Dair Kaynaklar*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara, 1988) 18-9.

³⁸ Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, 'Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions?', quotation at 102.

³⁹ For the life of Şemsi Ahmed Pasha, see, Şemsi Ahmed Paşa, *Şeh-name-i Sultan Murad*, Günay Kut and Nimet Bayraktar (eds.), (Cambridge, 2003).

⁴⁰ Şefik Peksevgen, 'Secrecy, Information Control and Power Building in the Ottoman Empire, 1566 - 1603', PhD Thesis, McGill University (2004), 187.

confidant of Murad III, recommended that Şemsi Ahmed Pasha be appointed *musahib* because he was known as an enemy of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.⁴¹ Apparently, Şemsi Ahmed's animosity toward Sokollu played an important role in his appointment.⁴²

Şemsi Ahmed Pasha's second term as *musahib* differed greatly from his first one. While the contemporary sources remain silent over the political activities of Şemsi Ahmed Pasha as the royal favorite of Selim II, he still proved to be one of the most authoritative political figures of Murad III's reign.⁴³ In particular, Şemsi Ahmed Pasha's proximity to Murad III and the time he was allowed to spend with the now very secluded sultan were key points in this respect. Stephen Gerlach, the Lutheran chaplain who accompanied the Habsburg ambassador David Ungnad in Istanbul from 1573 to 1578, wrote about Şemsi Ahmed Pasha's close relationship with Murad III:

This Pasha's mansion is in Üsküdar (on the Bosphorus), right across the sultan's palace. Whenever he wants, he can go to the court from there...; He is a very close friend of the sultan. However, neither is he appointed to any apparent office, nor does he carries out any official responsibility. Nonetheless, he has an easier life than that of other Ottoman grandees, because he almost never leaves the company of the sultan, and he can talk to him in an intimate manner, as no other pasha would dare to do. Whatever he says (to him), it is accepted. That is why all the pashas and grandees show him much respect and are afraid of him. Whenever Şemsi Pasha visits (Sokollu) Mehmed Pasha on the sultan's business, everybody runs to greet him and pays homage to him as if the sultan himself had come.⁴⁴

⁴¹ İbrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi*, (İstanbul, 1281 - 1283), II, 6.

⁴² Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 165.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 167-69.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, quotation at 166.

Şemsi Ahmed Pasha, in his bid to undermine Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, constantly complained to Murad III about the pasha's misdeeds and encouraged the sultan to assume more political responsibility.⁴⁵ The struggle between Sokollu Mehmed and Şemsi Ahmed Pasha came to an end in 1579 with the assassination of Sokollu. The following year, Şemsi Ahmed Pasha passed away, too.

After the death of Şemsi Ahmed Pasha, Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha became the *musahib* of Murad III. He was raised in Murad's court and started to receive his favor at an early age. When Murad III acceded to the throne, Mehmed was appointed as the chief hawker, one of the highest-ranking officials of inner-court service. During royal hunts, he was the sultan's closest companion.⁴⁶ In this position, Mehmed increased his personal bond with his master. After five years in this position, Mehmed was promoted to be the chief falconer and then to *mirahur*, the head of the imperial stables. More importantly, he was promoted to be the chief commander of the janissaries. In 1584, he was appointed as the general-governor of Rumelia. From 1584 until his murder in 1589, Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha exerted great influence over court affairs. Moreover, he controlled the petitions (*telhises*) submitted by the grand vizier and the viziers to the sultan and dominated the distribution of offices. Pecevi points out that whenever the grand vizier submitted a *telhis* to the sultan, Mehmed Pasha cast aspersions on it, thus influencing the sultan's reply.⁴⁷

The enormous power of Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha displeased other political actors including the Janissaries and cavalry regiments. As Jeroen Duindam aptly points out, "the dominance of a single person or faction raised doubts about the ruler's powers and inevitably triggered conflict at court, with the outsiders using every opportunity to

⁴⁵ Peksevgen, 'Secrecy, Information Control', 197.

⁴⁶ Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 172-78.

⁴⁷ Pecevi, *Tarih-i Pecevi*, II, 38.

overthrow the favourite or the faction in power.”⁴⁸ All of the viziers asked the sultan to dismiss Doğancı Mehmed Pasha, but the sultan refused. In April 1589, when the palace cavalry protested about having been paid with debased coinage, the rival viziers saw an opportunity to overthrow Doğancı Mehmed Pasha. They incited the cavalry against Doğancı Mehmed, and the cavalry indeed eventually assassinated him. This bloody end suggests the potentially very negative consequences of giving near-absolute power to one favorite.

Still after the death of Murad III in 1595, the new sultan Mehmed III maintained his father’s policy of giving favorites absolute power. In this era, it was Gazanfer Aga who emerged as the new royal favorite. Gazanfer Aga was a Venetian convert who had entered the court of Selim several decades earlier.⁴⁹ Later, he was castrated so that he could join Selim’s inner household.⁵⁰ In 1574, a few years after the accession of Selim II to the imperial throne, Gazanfer became head of the privy chamber in 1574. In 1584, Gazanfer Aga was also promoted to position of the chief white eunuch, holding both posts simultaneously. Gazanfer Aga held these two offices for more than thirty years, under the reigns of Selim II, Murad III and Mehmed III. By controlling these two significant positions, Gazanfer Aga exercised enormous power and control over palace politics. However, as in the case of Doğancı Mehmed Pasha, Gazanfer Aga’s immense power created great resentment among other political actors, such as cavalry regiments, *ulema* and Janissaries. In 1603, the imperial cavalry soldiers revolted against the hegemony of the

⁴⁸ Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties*, 73

⁴⁹ Maria Pia Pedani, ‘Safiye’s Household and Venetian Diplomacy’, *Turcica*, 32, (2000), 9-32 and Levent Kaya Ocakaçan, ‘The Changing dynamics of the Ottoman patronage networks (late 16th and early 17th centuries)’, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 34, (2017), 12.

⁵⁰ Ezgi Dikici, ‘The making of Ottoman court eunuchs: origins, recruitment paths, family ties, and “domestic production”’, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 30 (2013), 110–14.

alliance between Safiye Sultan, the mother of Mehmed III and Gazanfer Aga.⁵¹ The soldiers demanded the banishment of Gazanfer Aga, citing his overwhelming control over the sultan and imperial affairs. Mehmed III reluctantly surrendered his *musahib* to the rebellious soldiers in order to prevent his own dethronement. Gazanfer Aga was executed in front of Mehmed III in January 1603. Once again, the sultan yielded his *musahib* to the soldiers and their alliances.

As pointed out above, Ahmed I was the first Ottoman sultan to be raised in the harem and not sent out to govern a province. This meant that he lacked a princely household that could fill crucial administrative posts.⁵² Therefore, he appointed people in his close circle to influential positions, one of whom was Derviş Pasha, the chief gardener. The seclusion of the sultans inside the palace had brought about an increase in the importance of the chief gardeners, who could establish close contact with the young sultans.⁵³ In an act that had no precedent, Ahmed appointed Derviş Pasha first as the grand admiral and then as grand vizier. Derviş Pasha's meteoric rise to offices in the uppermost echelons of Ottoman administration distinguished him from Şemsi Ahmed Pasha and Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha. Doğançlı Mehmed Pasha, for example, had been a long-time favorite of Murad III but did not receive the rank of vizier until he had served as three years as governor of Rumelia.

During his tenure as grand vizier, Derviş Pasha alienated other members of the ruling elite. He held a strict control over each and every sort of *telhis*, addressed to the

⁵¹ Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 48-54.

⁵² An insightful analysis of the incorporation of a prince's household into imperial household, see, Metin Kunt, 'A Prince Goes Forth (Perchance to Return),' in Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan (eds.), *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World, A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz*, (Madison, 2007) 63-71.

⁵³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 104 and see, Murat Yıldız, *Bostancı Ocağı (Bahçıvanlıktan Saray Muhafızlığına)* (İstanbul, 2011).

sultan, causing great tension between the members of the upper administration.⁵⁴ In face of the increasing divide between the pasha and other members of the court, Ahmed I had his favorite grand vizier executed. Contemporary accounts suggest that this action won the young sultan immense prestige. From then on, he took great care to appoint more experienced figures as grand vizier.⁵⁵

1.2.2. The Favorites of Murad IV and Ibrahim I

From a political point of view, Murad IV's reign can be divided into two periods. The first period (1623-1632), which started from his accession in 1623 until 1632, was dominated by the queen mother Kösem Sultan and her initiatives. The second period, spanning from 1632 to 1640, was marked by the consolidation of the personal rule of Murad IV through his strong and brutal governance.

Unlike his predecessors, Murad IV developed a more outgoing rulership style. Especially after 1632, he took to strolling through Istanbul in disguise or in the company of his Janissaries in order to search out and punish criminals. The contemporary historian Mehmed Halife observed that the people of Istanbul were afraid of going out at night in Istanbul because Murad IV patrolled the city and ordered the execution of those caught committing wrongs.⁵⁶

Despite this more outgoing style, Murad IV did not abstain from investing his favorite with great power. Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was the most influential royal favorite of the time.⁵⁷ Silahdar Mustafa had attracted the attention of Murad IV as a royal page (*gılman-ı hassa*) at the court. The sultan later accepted him into the privy chamber. Silahdar

⁵⁴ Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 209-32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁵⁶ Ertuğrul Oral, 'Mehmed Halife, Tarih-i Gılmani', PhD thesis, Marmara University (2000), 52

⁵⁷ Hedda Reindl-Kiel, *Leisure, Pleasure and Duty. The Daily Life of Silahdar Mustafa, Eminence Grise in the final years of Murad IV (1635 - 1640)* (Berlin, 2016).

Mustafa became *silahdar* (sword-bearer) in 1634 and after one year was promoted to the second vizierate. Thereafter Silahdar Mustafa Pasha's political authority became apparent, and he made great use of his proximity to the sultan to interfere frequently in imperial affairs. This, however, spurred a rivalry between himself and grand vizier Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha.

When Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha sought to circumvent Silahdar Mustafa Pasha by reporting directly to the sultan about state affairs, the Silahdar is said to have complained to the sultan:

Silahdar Mustafa said "Kara Mustafa Pasha does not respect me and keeps his correspondence with you secret. What's my fault?" The Sultan, addressing Silahdar Pasha, demanded an answer from the grand vizier: "Why do you neglect Silahdar Pasha and not write to him about the affairs?" to which Kara Mustafa Pasha responded: "My all-powerful Sultan, please tell me if your servant Silahdar Pasha has any share in your reign, or not? If this be the case, your will be done and I'll have to refer everything to him, too. But if not, I recognize only you as the Sultan and hence inform only you about the state affairs! Moreover, it is most appropriate that the correspondence between the Sultan and me remain a secret, which is not supposed to be exposed to either Silahdar Pasha or anyone else. Otherwise, I can neither govern, nor act as a Grand Vizier."⁵⁸

This conversation, recorded by the historian Naima, suggests that even under the outgoing and powerful Murad IV the inner-outer balance was still precarious. The sultan continued to use inner-court power to offset outer-court dignitaries. The rivalry between

⁵⁸ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 984.

Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha and Silahdar Mustafa Pasha was ended only with death of the Sultan Murad IV in 1640.

Sultan Ibrahim ascended to the Ottoman throne in 1640 upon the death of his brother Murad IV. Ibrahim has been regarded as a mentally unstable ruler, earning the epithet *Deli* (mad) in modern Ottoman historiography.⁵⁹ It is true that Ibrahim suffered from mental illness. He spent all his early life in close confinement, in constant fear of execution by his brother Murad IV, who had had four of his elder brothers executed. Ibrahim was unable to believe that Murad was dead and assumed that the announcement of his death was a trick. It was obvious that these eerie and stressful years had profoundly affected Ibrahim's mental health. It also affected his ability to rule: Koçi Bey presented two treaties, one to the Sultan Murad IV in 1632 and one to Ibrahim in 1640. The first one included rather sophisticated details, while, the second by comparison was written almost as if addressing to a child.⁶⁰ This may be regarded as a sign of both the sultan's mental weakness and his lack of a proper education.

Under Ibrahim, the grand vizier Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha was kept in his office. The vizier could now go about eliminating his rivals, since they were no longer under the protection of Murad IV. Silahdar Mustafa Pasha, once the most powerful figure in the palace, was first banished and then executed. In the first years of Ibrahim I, Kemankeş Pasha performed quite effectively as grand vizier and conducted his business independently. However, he later encountered a more serious threat posed by the close confidants of the sultan. The historian Mehmed Halife reveals tensions that arose between the sultan and his grand vizier upon the sultan's expression of his desire to have *musahibs*.

⁵⁹ Feridun Emecen, "Ibrahim" *Diyanet İşleri İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Hereafter *DİA*), XXI, 274-81.

⁶⁰ I would like to thank Metin Kunt who suggested the comparison. See, Koci Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. Yılmaz Kurt, (Ankara, 1998) and Çağatay Uluçay, 'Koçi Bey'in Sultan İbrahim'e Takdim Ettiği Risale ve Arzları', in Tertip Heyeti (ed.), *Zeki Velid Togan'a Armağan*, (Ankara, 1950), 177-199.

Sultan Ibrahim asked: “My brother Sultan Murad is said to have had a fine and distinguished *Silahdar*. Why shouldn’t I also have one?” When, the sultan designated Yusuf Pasha of Bosnia, the conqueror of Crete, as his *Silahdar*, Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha reacted:

The presence of the people of this sort in the close company of the Sultan is surely damaging and detrimental for the affairs of the Sultanate. Even though it is true that Sultan Murad had *musahib*, everybody disliked him since he meddled with all the affairs of the state; and the viziers, the other statesmen and especially the Grand Vizier were all subjugated and paid respect to him. Now, under my authority, it is neither permissible nor appropriate for any such person to be in the company of the Sultan.⁶¹

To be sure, as an experienced vizier, Kemankeş Pasha was aware of the imminent danger such an appointment posed. He faced two prominent royal favorite rivals in the period. The first was *Cinci* (Sorcerer) Hüseyin Hoca. He came to Istanbul from Anatolia and entered one of the *medreses* (religious schools) of Süleymaniye.⁶² His sorceries became so famous in the city that he drew the attention of the palace. He was called in and gained the confidence of Kösem Sultan and Sultan Ibrahim himself. *Cinci* Hoca seems to have cured Ibrahim’s sexual impotence, since in the remaining years the sultan would have several children, including four future sultans. He was also appointed tutor to the sultan. In that position, he exerted an enormous influence over Sultan Ibrahim.⁶³

The second favorite of Sultan Ibrahim and another serious threat to Kemankeş Pasha was *Silahdar* Yusuf Pasha.⁶⁴ He was a Dalmatian renegade and a convert to Islam. While

⁶¹ Oral, ‘Tarih-i Gılmani’, 34.

⁶² Cengiz Orhonlu, ‘Husayn Efendi, known as Djindji Khodja’, in P. Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online Reference Works (Leiden, 1954 - 2005).

⁶³ Oral, ‘Tarih-i Gılmani’, 36.

⁶⁴ Zeynep Aycibin, ‘Katip Çelebi, Fezleke: Tahlil ve Metin’, PhD Thesis, Mimar Sinan University (2007), 567.

rikabdar (stirrup-holder) in the palace, he was promoted to the second vizierate and became *musahib* of the sultan. Silahdar Yusuf Pasha allied with Cinci Hoca to secure Kemankeş Pasha's fall. Firstly, they removed the protégés of the grand vizier from their positions. When the grand vizier responded by attempting to incite the Janissaries to revolt outside the palace gates in 1644, the sultan had him seized and executed. The death of Kemankeş Pasha marked a turning point in the history of the early seventeenth-century grand vizierate. From Kemankeş Pasha's death to Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's rise to power in 1656 no grand vizier's tenure lasted more than two years.

The execution of Kemankeş Pasha suggests how a weak sultan and his close circle could be dangerous to a powerful grand vizier. Under the influence of this circle, Ibrahim first restricted the grand vizier's authority and then had him executed.

Favorites and concubines exerted enormous influence on the appointments and dismissal of all the grand viziers following the death of Kemankeş Pasha. Moreover, they controlled and assigned huge estates and lucrative revenues to themselves and their clients.

It comes as no surprise that the rule of Ibrahim and the enormous influence of favorites and concubines on politics aroused opposition. The Janissaries, cavalry regiments and *ulema* assembled in the Hippodrome in 1648. They held the sultan himself responsible for the ills of the empire. The Seyhülislam issued a *fetva*, authorizing the sultan's deposition. Ibrahim was seized and put into close confinement in the palace. Ten days after the accession of Mehmed IV, fearing that attempts might be made to restore Ibrahim, another *fetwa* authorized the strangling of the deposed sultan on the grounds that there

could not be two sultans at once.⁶⁵ This time, the sultan's reliance on his favorites had resulted in his own deposition.

1.3. The Creation of the Office of the Chief Black Eunuch in the Harem

One of the most important developments in the reign of Murad III was the creation of the office of the chief black eunuch in 1574. Eunuchs had been employed as guardians of the harem and palace administrators since the reign of the second sultan, Orhan (1326-1362).⁶⁶ However, most of these were white eunuchs who had been selected from the *devsirme* recruits and slaves. Black eunuchs, instead, had worked under supervision of white eunuchs. When Murad III inaugurated the post in 1574, he conferred part of the power of the white eunuchs on the black eunuchs. The most important transfer was that of the supervision of the imperial pious foundations for the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina. At the same time, harem eunuchs began to be selected mostly from among Africans. They took on the administration of the harem and served as the tutors of young princes, while white eunuchs remained responsible for the training of palace pages in the inner court. From the reign of Murad III onwards, black eunuchs gradually gained prominence over white eunuchs in the palace. How did this balance affect power at the court? How did harem eunuchs exert influence on the political stage?

Before examining the office of the chief black eunuch, it would be useful to pinpoint the role of white eunuchs in the harem. The chief white eunuch was officially titled "Commander of the Gate of Felicity" (*Babüssaade Ağası*).⁶⁷ They were supervisors and tutors of the pages in the inner court. In the *kanunname* (code of law), which was

⁶⁵ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 1168 and Ebubekir Yücel, 'İki Halifenin Bir Arada Bulunmaması Anlayışı ve Osmanlı Hükümdarı Sultan İbrahim'in Siyaseten Katli', *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 12/1, (1999), 40-57.

⁶⁶ Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha, Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (Oxford, 2006) 11-17.

⁶⁷ Metin Kunt, 'Royal and Other Households', in Woodhead (ed), *The Ottoman World*, 111.

supposedly written in the reign of Mehmed II, white eunuchs were defined as the mediators between the sultan and other officials of the palace.⁶⁸ The chief white eunuch thus enjoyed the privilege of access to the sultan. During the reign of Süleyman I, the superintendence of the imperial pious foundation for Mecca and Medina was conferred upon the chief white eunuch, which increased the authority of his position considerably. As has been mentioned before, the last influential chief white eunuch was Gazanfer Aga. With the death of Gazanfer Aga in an uprising 1602, white eunuchs lost their influence to the black eunuchs.

Like other *devsirme* recruits in the inner court, white eunuchs were sent out as provincial governors, including to great provinces such as Egypt. Between 1517 and 1598, for example, six of the twenty-nine governors of Egypt were white eunuchs.⁶⁹ Some of them even rose to the grand vizierate.⁷⁰ The prominent example of such a eunuch-turned-grand-vizier was Hadım Süleyman Pasha (r.1541-1544). Hadım Süleyman Pasha entered the palace during the reign of Selim I. After serving as chief treasurer of the inner court, he went out as governor of Damascus in 1535, and transferred to the governorship of Egypt in the following year. In 1541, Süleyman Pasha was called to Istanbul and made the second vizier. After the dismissal of grand vizier Lütfi Pasha, he became the grand vizier, a post he held until his dismissal in 1544. Black eunuchs, in contrast, stayed in the palace and did not leave for such posts, probably preferring to remain in the palace rather than getting an appointment in the imperial administration.

The year 1574 was a turning point for black eunuchs. After 1574, black eunuchs took over the control of the harem, taking charge of the other eunuchs and servants in the

⁶⁸ Abdülkadir Özcan (ed.), *Kanunname-i Al-i Osman, (Tahlil ve Karşılaştırmalı Metin)*, (İstanbul, 2007), 7.

⁶⁹ Mustafa Ali, *Mustafa Ali's Description of Cairo of 1599*, ed. Andreas Tietze, (Vienna, 1975), 69-80, Mustafa Ali states "it had been customary at the time of their great forebears to give the governorship of Egypt to persons of eunuch class whatever it became vacant." 73.

⁷⁰ The eunuchs-turned grand viziers in the late sixteenth century were: Ali Pasha, Sinan Pasha, Süleyman Pasha, Mesih Pasha and Hasan Pasha.

harem. Accordingly, black eunuchs had ready access to the female members of the Ottoman dynasty such as the mother and wife of the sultan; they controlled “the traffic into and out of the harem quarters.”⁷¹ This close connection empowered black eunuchs as representatives of and mediators for these influential figures in the harem.

Why did Murad III create the office of the chief black eunuch in 1574? The Ottoman sources are silent on the reasons for this new arrangement. It may be speculated that the enlargement of the palace in terms of both population and space necessitated the division of the authority of the white eunuch, in order to decrease his workload.⁷² Baki Tezcan, for his part, suggests that the office was created as a result of the inability of even a strong white eunuch to rival the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Nevertheless, he does not offer any detailed explanation of why the black eunuchs came to command a more influential position than the white ones, a question that remains unanswered.⁷³

The first chief black eunuch was Habeş Mehmed Aga, who was of Abyssinian or Ethiopian origin. As the first chief black eunuch and supervisor of the pious endowments of Mecca and Medina, Mehmed Aga attained great power and wealth. He exerted great influence because of his close alliance with Murad III, with Murad’s mother Nurbanu Sultan and Safiye Sultan, Murad III’s consort. Perhaps the most striking example of Mehmed Aga’s influence is his extensive patronage of illustrated manuscripts. Emine Fetvacı shows that Mehmed Aga fashioned himself in the books as an indispensable agent for the sultan, “a role previously fulfilled by the grand vizier.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Fetvacı, *Picturing History*, 149.

⁷² Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, ‘Obscure Roots, Solid Foundations: A Comparative Study on the Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Court Eunuchs’, MA Thesis, Koç University (2009), 22.

⁷³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 102.

⁷⁴ Emine Fetvacı, ‘Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617’, PhD Thesis, Harvard University (2005). 208.

After the death of Habeş Mehmed Aga, chief black eunuchs became increasingly involved in state affairs.⁷⁵ Mustafa Aga, the chief black eunuch of Ahmed I and Osman II, emerged as one of the most powerful political actors in that period.⁷⁶ Holding his office for nearly fifteen years, Mustafa Aga played a key role in two pivotal events: the accession of Mustafa I and the enthronement of Osman II. Following Ahmed I's death, Mustafa Aga took it upon himself to convince the senior officials of the empire that Prince Mustafa had no mental ailments and was fit to rule. Thus, the system of Ottoman dynastic succession system was modified so that Ahmed's brother Mustafa could take the throne instead of Ahmed's son. Peçevi remarked "the change in the law of succession was engineered by the chief black eunuch Mustafa Aga, to whose management all affairs of state had been committed during the reign of Ahmed I."⁷⁷ However, it was again Mustafa Aga, who notified deputy grand vizier Sofu Mehmed Pasha and the seyhulislam Esad Efendi about the worsening mental condition of Sultan Mustafa, before using his influence to incarcerate Mustafa and enthrone Osman II instead. Although Mustafa Aga was instrumental in the accession of Osman II, he was exiled to Egypt in that sultan's later period. What rendered Mustafa Aga so special was that he was brought back to the capital from his exile to serve as chief black eunuch for a second time in 1624. He remained in the office until his death a few months later in 1624.

Mustafa Aga's exile opened up an opportunity for Süleyman Aga, who had formerly been his apprentice.⁷⁸ Süleyman Aga would go on to prove himself as one of the most

⁷⁵ Yıldız Karakoç, 'Palace politics and the rise of the chief black eunuch in the Ottoman empire', MA thesis, Boğaziçi University (2005).

⁷⁶ Tülün Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları ve Resimli Kitaplar: II. Osman Devrinde Değişen Güç Simgeleri*, (İstanbul, 2012), 59- 73.

⁷⁷ George Junne, *The Black Eunuchs of the Ottoman Empire, Networks of Power in the Court of the Sultan*, (London, New York, 2016), quotation at 166.

⁷⁸ Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Hamiletü'l Kübera*, ed. Ahmet Nezihi Turan (İstanbul, 2000), 49.

important supporters of Osman II. This tight relationship was to lead to his murder along with that of the sultan in the 1622 rebellion.

During the reign of Murad IV, however, we come across no influential chief black eunuch. Idris Aga, who was invested with the office in 1624, served for sixteen years until 1640. Despite his long tenure, he seems never to have become an important political figure, a fact supported by the taciturnity of the chronicles. The reason for this might be that Murad IV chose to empower his *musahib* Silahdar Mustafa Pasha.⁷⁹ Similarly, *musahibs* became more influential during Ibrahim I's reign, when again the black eunuchs do not appear as significant political actors.

One of the most important roles of the chief black eunuch in early seventeenth century was their patronage in the administrative system. We know that the chief black eunuchs sponsored the careers of viziers and grand viziers. For instance, Nasuh Pasha, who served as grand vizier from 1611 to 1614, had been a client of Habes Mehmed Aga, as a halberdier at the court.⁸⁰ Thanks to Mehmed Aga and his patron Safiye Sultan's influence, Nasuh Aga was promoted to the governorship of Aleppo and later became the grand vizier. Another striking example of the patronage of the chief black eunuch can be seen in the career of İstanköylü Ali Pasha, who was a protégé of Mustafa Aga. Ali Pasha rose to the power thanks to Mustafa Aga's support. However, the partnership was ended after Ali Pasha became the grand vizier, and Ali Pasha played an instrumental role in having Mustafa Aga deposed.⁸¹ Peçevi explains that the grand vizier desired absolute power and convinced the sultan to send Mustafa Aga into exile. Mustafa had also acted as a patron for other

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁰ Jane Hathaway, 'Habesi Mehmed Agha: The First Chief Harem Eunuch (Darussaade Agasi) of the Ottoman Empire', in Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi, and Michael Bonner, (eds.), *The Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allen Cook*, (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2011) 184 and Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 160.

⁸¹ Resmi Efendi, *Hamiletü'l Kübera*, 48 and Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi*, II, 371.

viziers appointed to important positions during the first half of the seventeenth century, including Tabaniyassi Mehmed Pasha, one of the influential grand viziers of Murad IV.⁸²

By the end of the middle seventeenth century, the chief black eunuch had consolidated his power and gained precedence over the white eunuch in the harem. Wojciech Bobowski, a Polish renegade, who worked in the Topkapi Palace for ten years, wrote in 1657:

This officer (chief black eunuch) is more important than the Kapi agasi (chief white eunuch) because, in addition to his greater income, he has easier access to the prince and has more occasion to approach him at any hour, even when he was retired or was with his mistress...⁸³

The power of the black eunuch reached its apex in the period following Kösem Sultan's murder in 1651. The office was one of the most important in the empire from 1651 until the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. The next chapter will focus on the developments surrounding the office during that period.

1.4. The Demise of the Power of the Grand Vizierate

While the chief black eunuch and royal favorite increased their power, the authority of the grand vizier waned dramatically following the assassination of grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579. In the ensuing years, Murad III and his successors “did not want another Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, in office for 15 years and the effective ruler of the realm.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, Murad III changed two important features of the grand vizierate that ultimately culminated in the demise of the authority of the grand vizier. The first was a

⁸² Metin Kunt, ‘Derviş Mehmed Paşa, ‘Vezir and Entrepreneur: A Study in Ottoman Political-Economic Theory and Practice’, *Turcica*, 19/1, 1977, 199.

⁸³ C.G Fisher-A.Fisher ‘Topkapi Sarayi in the Mid-Seventeenth Century: Bobovi’s Description’, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 10 (1985 - 1987), 26-7.

⁸⁴ Metin Kunt, ‘Sultan, Dynasty and State in the Ottoman Empire: Political Institutions in the Sixteenth Century’, *The Medieval History Journal*, 6/2, (2003), 226.

change in the pattern of vizierial promotion. With the breaking up of the pattern established by Süleyman I, grand viziers were appointed and dismissed with increasing frequency. The second was a change in practices of communication between the sultan and the grand vizier. Here, daily face-to-face meetings gave way to less frequent written communication. Before scrutinizing these two changes in detail, I will offer a brief survey of the grand vizierate from Mehmed II until the accession of Murad III in 1574.

The grand vizier was the highest-ranking administrative officer in the Ottoman Empire, head of the government and the deputy of the sultan. The code of law (*kanunname*) of Mehmed II described the grand vizier in the following manner:

Know that the grand vizier is, above all, the head of viziers and commanders. He is greater than all men: he (the grand vizier) is in all matters the sultan's absolute deputy. The *Defterdar* (the chief treasurer) is deputy from my treasurer, and he (the grand vizier) is the supervisor. In all meetings and in all ceremonies the grand vizier takes his place before all others.⁸⁵

This paragraph legally established the precedence of the grand vizier over all other Ottoman officials. Also, the delegation of sultanic power was sanctioned legally by the description of the grand vizier as the sultan's absolute deputy (*vekil-i mutlak*). The grand vizier was responsible for appointing officials, overseeing the treasury and the supervising the regulation of the prices in the market.

Despite this definition of grand vizierial authority in the code of law, the power and influence of the grand viziers varied in accordance with each sultan's style of rule. For instance, Mehmed II had an authoritarian rulership style and actively participated in

⁸⁵ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, the Classical Age 1300-1600* (New York, 1994), quotation at 94.

decision-making.⁸⁶ Bayezid II, unlike his father, assumed a more passive attitude and did not intervene in his grand viziers' affairs. His successor Selim I, by contrast, played a more assertive part in the decision-making process and took the lead in imperial council meetings. He also deliberately kept the office of the grand vizierate vacant through delays in appointment. For example, he waited for three months to appoint Herzekzade Ahmed Pasha in 1515 after having personally executed the grand vizier Dukaginzade Ahmed Pasha.⁸⁷

The most important change regarding the grand vizierate took place in the reign of Süleyman I. Having started with the appointment of Ibrahim Pasha as the grand vizier, Süleyman I delegated nearly autonomous power to his grand viziers.⁸⁸ Ibrahim Pasha's elevation from gatekeeper to the grand vizierate without holding any intermediary position was an unprecedented move that was never to be repeated.⁸⁹ Kaya Şahin rightly points out "this was Süleyman's ultimate assertion of his own authority at the expense of any notions of merit or hierarchy that may have existed in 1523."⁹⁰ Ibrahim Pasha's decisions were consistently put into action, and even the sultan did not interfere with the grand vizier's spheres of authority.⁹¹ After Ibrahim Pasha's sudden execution in 1536, after thirteen years as grand vizier, his successors Ayas Pasha, Lütü Pasha and Hadim Süleyman Pasha remained in their positions for only two or three years. It was only Rüstem Pasha, the son-

⁸⁶ Zahit Atıl, 'State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire: The Grand Vizirates of Rüstem Pasha (1544 - 1561)', PhD Thesis, University of Chicago (2015), 233.

⁸⁷ Feridun Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Istanbul, 2010), 353-56.

⁸⁸ Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan, Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London, 2005), 38.

⁸⁹ Ebru Turan, 'The Sultan's Favorite: Ibrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman' PhD Thesis, University of Chicago (2007).

⁹⁰ Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman, Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge, 2013) 46.

⁹¹ Atıl, 'State and Government', 236.

in-law of Süleyman I and the next grand vizier, who enjoyed the same favor from the sultan that Ibrahim Pasha had.

Towards the end of Süleyman's reign, the grand vizier had become the main political authority of the state rather than merely a representative of the sultan.⁹² Hüseyin Yılmaz convincingly argues that there was a change from a sultan-centric tradition set down by Mehmed II to a vizier-centric tradition in the Ottoman political literature of the sixteenth century.⁹³ In this new constellation, the sultan maintained his place as the main source of legitimacy but was less visible in the day-to-day workings of the empire. Such day-to-day workings were managed more and more by the grand vizier.

Without a doubt, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who came to power towards the end of Süleyman's reign, turned out to be the emblematic figure of this new political configuration. Sokollu Mehmed followed same career path as Rüstem Pasha.⁹⁴ He was a *devsirme* recruit and was raised in the Topkapı Palace. After serving in the sultan's privy chamber as a sword-bearer, he held the offices of head taster and chief gatekeeper in the outer service. He was sent out for provincial service as governor-general and was then appointed as grand admiral. After serving as the governor-general of Rumelia, he joined the imperial council, where he rose through the ranks of viziers until he reached the top. He became grand vizier in 1565 and served until his assassination in 1579. Sokollu Mehmed was also a royal groom, married to the Sultan Selim II's daughter İsmihan. Particularly in the reign of his father-in-law, Sokollu Mehmed wielded enormous power.

⁹² Metin Kunt and Nevin Yelçe, 'Divan-ı Hümayun: le Conseil imperial Ottoman et ses Conseillers (1450 - 1580)', in Cedric Michon (ed.), *Conseils Conseillers, dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, v. 1450-v.1550, (Rennes, 2012), 309.

⁹³ Hüseyin Yılmaz, 'The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Suleyman the Lawgiver (1520 - 1566)', PhD Thesis, Harvard University, (2005).

⁹⁴ Gilles Veinstein, 'Sokollu Mehmed Pasha', in Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* and Uros Dakic, 'The Sokollu Family Clan and The Politics of Vizierial Households in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century', MA Thesis, Central European University (2012).

Everything changed with the accession of the new sultan Murad III in 1574. As noted, Murad III resented the immense power Sokollu Mehmed had accumulated during his long service. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had monopolized the most important nominations, and his clients were entrenched in the highest offices. Murad III increasingly tried to regain the control of nominations.⁹⁵ In the first years of his sultanate, he was directly involved in making appointments and frequently dismissed Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's protégés. For example, the chancellor of the imperial council Feridun Ahmed Bey, a client of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, was dismissed and exiled from Istanbul.⁹⁶ He also ordered the execution of Sokollu's paternal cousin Mustafa Pasha, governor of Buda.⁹⁷ And when Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was assassinated in 1579, it was suspected that the sultan had had a hand in it.⁹⁸

After the death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Murad III continued his control over nominations. When the grand vizier Mesih Pasha requested the appointment of Hasan Aga as chief scribe, Murad III denied his request and wrote to the grand vizier: "You are obliged to employ the people we assign."⁹⁹ These words expressed the close control of the sultan over nominations, formerly managed by the grand vizier. In response, Mesih Pasha indicated his wish to retire.¹⁰⁰ In his *telhises*, Sinan Pasha, who served as grand vizier in the reign of Murad III for the sixth time, continuously complained about the intervention of the

⁹⁵ As Jeroen Duindam suggests, "the control of nominations was a key instrument of any ruler", see, Duindam, *Dynasties*, 218.

⁹⁶ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 72-3, Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', 167-69.

⁹⁷ Mustafa Pasha was accused of wrongdoing in his governorship, Yasemin Altaylı, 'Macarca Mektuplarıyla Budin Beylerbeyi Sokullu Mustafa Paşa (1566-1578), *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 49/2, (2009), 157-71.

⁹⁸ Salomon Schweigger, a Protestant preacher at that time, remarks "it was widely rumored in the capital at the time that Sokollu's murder was actually the work of the sultan", see, Börekçi, 'Factions and Favorites', quotation at 170.

⁹⁹ Mustafa Ali, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali ve Künhü'l Ahbar'ında II.Selim, III.Murad ve III.Mehmed Devirleri*, Ed. Faris Çerçi 3 vols. (Kayseri, 2000), III, 493.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 492-94.

sultan and his companions over appointments.¹⁰¹ As noted above, these were often made by royal favorites without advice from the grand viziers. This challenge to the power of the grand viziers continued throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. At the same time, two other novelties placed restrictions on the grand viziers. Let us now study those in more detail.

1.4.1. The changes in the hierarchical pattern of vizierial promotion

From the execution of Ibrahim Pasha in 1536 to the accession of Murad III in 1574, a regular pattern of vizierial promotion was followed. There were eight grand viziers in that period, and their career patterns were almost identical.¹⁰² After being trained in the palace, they moved on to serve in the outer palace in positions such as gatekeeper (*kapicibasi*), standard-bearer (*emir-i alem*) and the head of the imperial stables.¹⁰³ Later, they were promoted to provincial postings such as the governorship of Egypt or Rumelia. Finally, they were elevated to the imperial council, which included six viziers. They all served on the imperial council before being promoted to the grand vizierate, a position they held for two or three years, until their retirement, dismissal or natural death or execution.¹⁰⁴

During the reign of Süleyman I, following the death or dismissal of a grand vizier, the second vizier became grand vizier; the third was promoted to second, and so on. With the exception of Ibrahim Pasha, all the grand viziers advanced from the second vizierate. Thus, vizierial promotion was almost systematic. The key aspect of this system was that the sultan's intervention was minimal.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Sinan Paşa, *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri*, Ed. Halil Sahillioğlu (İstanbul, 2004) 2, 6, 8-16

¹⁰² Kunt and Yelçe, 'Divan-ı Hümayun', 313.

¹⁰³ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 72.

¹⁰⁴ Kunt and Yelçe, 'Divan-ı Hümayun', 313

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 313.

Murad III discontinued this almost automatic promotion ladder. After Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Murad III changed his grand viziers much more rapidly, and grand viziers were dismissed only to be brought back after a time. In this new political order, any vizier could be elevated to the grand vizierate. At the same time, Murad III encouraged rivalry between viziers by holding out the possibility of reinvesting them with the grand vizierate. The reason for rotating the office among a pool of possible candidates was to prevent them from holding long tenures during which the grand vizier could appoint people who belonged to his faction to all key positions. The sultan now resumed his role in the appointment of the grand vizier.

In the sixteen years of Murad III's reign (1574-1595) following Sokollu's death, the grand vizierate changed hands ten times among six viziers. During the eight-year reign of his successor, Mehmed III, the office changed hands eleven times among eight viziers. In this period, several grand viziers were appointed more than once, including Koca Sinan Pasha, Siyavuş Pasha and Damad İbrahim Pasha, each of whom held the office three times.

The Grand Viziers After Sokollu Mehmed Pasha			
1	Semiz Ahmed Pasha	13.10.1579-28.4.1580	6.5 months
2	Lala Mustafa Pasha	28.4.1580-7.8.1580	3 monts
3	Koca Sinan Pasha (1)	25.8.1580-6.12.1582	2.5 years
4	Siyavuş Pasha (1)	24.12.1582-25.7.1584	1.5 years
5	Osman Pasha	28.7.1584-29.10.1585	1.5 years
6	Hadım Mesih Pasha	1.11.1585-14.4.1586	4.5 months
7	Siyavuş Pasha (2)	15.4.1586-2.4.1589	3 years
8	Koca Sinan Pasha (2)	2.4.1589-1.8.1591	2.5 years
9	Ferhad Pasha (1)	1.8.1591-4.4.1592	8 months

10	Siyavuş Pasha (3)	4.4.1592-28.1.1593	10 months
11	Koca Sinan Pasha (3)	28.1.1593-16.2.1595	2 years
The Grand Viziers of Mehmed III			
1	Ferhad Pasha (2)	16.2.1595-7.7.1595	5 months
2	Koca Sinan Pasha (4)	7.7.1595-28.11.1595	4.5 months
3	Lala Mehmed Pasha	19.11.1595-28.11.1595	9 days
4	Koca Sinan Pasha (5)	1.12.1595-3.4.1596	4 months
5	Damad Ibrahim Pasha	4.4.1596-27.10.1596	7 months
6	Yusuf Sinan Pasha	27.10.1596-5.12-1596	1.5 months
7	Damad Ibrahim Pasha (2)	5.12.1596-3.11.1597	11 months
8	Hadım Hasan Pasha	3.10.1597-9.4.1598	5.5 months
9	Cerrah Mehmed Pasha	9.4.1598-6.1.1599	9 months
10	Damad Ibrahim Pasha (3)	6.1.1599-10.7.1601	2.5 years
11	Hasan Pasha	22.7.1601-4.10.1603	2 years

Table 1: The Grand Viziers of Murad III and Mehmed III

Table 1 clearly shows that no grand vizier maintained his position for more than two years. As Christine Woodhead points out, “Murad III succeeded in forestalling any further dominance of the office by one individual.”¹⁰⁶ During Murad III’s reign, the average length in office was 1.74 years. Mehmed III’s grand viziers held even shorter terms; the average time in office was 0.6 year during his eight-year reign. The shortening of grand vizier’s terms constituted one of the most significant aspects of the grand vizierate in the early seventeenth century. The table below illustrates the situation:

	1323-1579	1579-1656
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¹⁰⁶ Woodhead, ‘*Poet, Patron*’, 235.

The Length of Tenure	Alâüddin-Sokollu	Sokollu-Köprülü
Less than 1 year	1	19
Around 1 year	3	19
Around 2 years	4	4
Around 3 years	4	3
Around 4 years	2	-
Between 5 and 10 years	8	3
10 years and over	13	-

Table 2: Length of Tenure of the Grand Viziers

We can observe the same pattern in the first half of the seventeenth century. With the exception of men like Kuyucu Murad Pasha, Tabanıyassı Mehmed Pasha and Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha, the grand viziers of the period all had short terms in office.

No	Grand Viziers of Ahmed I	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Malkoç Ali Pasha	16.10.1603-26.7.1604	Ten months
2	Lala Mehmed Pasha	5.8.1604-21.6.1606	Two years
3	Derviş Mehmed Pasha	21.6.1606-5.8.1611.	6 months
4	Kuyucu Murad Pasha	11.12.1606-5.8.1611	5 years
5	Nasuh Pasha	22.8.1611-17.10.1614	3 years
6	Kara Mehmed Pasha	17.10.1614-17.11.1616	2 years
No	Grand Viziers of Mustafa I	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Halil Pasha	17.11.1616-26.2.1618	3 months
No	Grand Viziers of Osman II	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Halil Pasha (1)	26.2.1618-18.1.1619	2 years

2	Kara Mehmed Pasha (2)	18.1.1619-23.12.1619	1 year
3	İstanköylü Ali Pasha	23.12.1619-9.3.1621	1 year
4	Ohrili Hüseyin Pasha	9.3.1621-17.9.1621	6.5 months
5	Dilaver Pasha	17.9.1621-13.6.1622	8 months
No	Grand Viziers of Mustafa I (2)	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Kara Davud Pasha	20.5.1622-13.6.1622	24 days
2	Mere Hüseyin Pasha (1)	13.6.1622-8.7.1622	25 days
3	Lefkeli Mustafa Pasha	8.7.1622-21.9.1622	2.5 months
4	Hadım Mehmed Pasha	21.9.1622-5.2.1623	4.5 months
5	Mere Hüseyin Pasha	5.2.1623-30.8.1623	7 months
No	Grand Viziers of Murad IV	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Kemankeş Ali Pasha	30.8.1623-3.4.1624	7 months
2	Çerkes Mehmed Pasha	3.4.1624-28.1.1625	10 months
3	Hafız Ahmed Pasha (1)	8.2.1625-1.12.1626	2 years
4	Halil Pasha (2)	1.12.1626-6.4.1628	1.5 years
5	Hüsrev Pasha	6.4.1628-25.10.1631	3 years
6	Hafız Ahmed Pasha (2)	25.10.1631-10.2.1632	3.5 months
7	Recep Pasha	10.2.1632-18.5.1632	3 months
8	Tabaniyassı Mehmed Pasha	18.5.1632-2.2.1637	5 years
9	Bayram Pasha	2.2.1637-26.8.1638	1,5 months
10	Tayyar Mehmed Pasha	27.8.1638-23.12.1638	4 months
11	Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha	23.12.1638-8.2.1640	1 year
No	Grand Viziers of Ibrahim I	Dates	Length of Tenure
1	Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha	8.2.1640-31.1.1644	4 years
2	Sultanzade Mehmed Pasha	31.1.1644-17.12.1645	2 years
3	Salih Pasha	17.12.1645-16.9.1647	2 years

4	Kara Musa Pasha	16.9.1647-21.9.1647	5 days
5	Hezarpare Ahmed Pasha	21.9.1647-7.8.1648	10 months

Table 3: The Grand Viziers in the early 17th Century

1.4.2. The emergence of the *telhis* as the main mode of communication

One of the essential changes introduced by Murad III was a shift from face-to-face contact between the grand vizier and the sultan to written contact.¹⁰⁷ This was carried out through a piece of paper issued by the grand vizier and presented to the sultan, called *telhis*. In this new form of communication, the grand vizier submitted each question to the sultan in writing, and the sultan issued a hand-written answer on top of the original query. This meant that the sultan withdrew from direct contact with the grand vizier. How did this novelty affect this key relationship?

During the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the meetings between the sultan and the grand vizier became more procedural and standardized.¹⁰⁸ When Rüstem Pasha occupied the grand vizierate, he conveyed the state affairs discussed in the imperial council to the sultan verbally. According to Antonio Erizzo, the Venetian bailo of the time, “the reporting to the sultan was not more than a customary insignificant procedure, because the whole operation of government was functionally run by Rüstem Pasha whose report of an affair to the sultan did not change the outcome.”¹⁰⁹ Under this system, Süleyman delegated responsibility for state affairs to the grand vizier and the imperial council. The grand vizier formed the key connection between the imperial council and the sultan with the members of the council

¹⁰⁷ Pal Fodor, ‘Sultan, imperial council, grand vizier: changes in the Ottoman ruling elite and the formation of the grand vizieral *Telhis*’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 47 (1994), 67–85.

¹⁰⁸ Atçıl, ‘State and Government’, 239.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

rarely exchanging words with the sultan. The grand vizier thus enjoyed not only a certain level of independence in conducting state affairs, but also easy access to the sultan.

Starting with the accession of Murad III, the connection between the sultan and the grand vizier increasingly assumed a written form. Although it is hard to pinpoint the exact beginning of the process, the *telhis* collections of Sinan Pasha suggests that the mechanism started at least after Sokollu Mehmed's death.¹¹⁰ In the *telhises*, Sinan Pasha summarizes all of the state affairs for the sultan and asks for his approval.¹¹¹ As Pal Fodor has shown, most of these *telhises* consisted of appointments though many others concerned the assignment of prebends (*dirliks*).¹¹² Financial issues, bureaucratic administration and diplomatic relations constituted the remaining subjects of the *telhises*.¹¹³ This suggests that the grand vizier lost much of his independence and was obliged to request the sultan's confirmation for every important appointment and decision.

At the same time, the period saw an increase in the number of royal rescripts (*hatt-i hümayun*).¹¹⁴ Before the reign of Murad III, the number of royal rescripts was negligible.¹¹⁵ Murad III began to write a rescript for every piece of government business. Contemporary observer Mustafa Ali condemns "the innovative proliferation of royal rescripts" in the reign of Murad III. Mustafa Ali pointed out that while formerly appointments necessitated no more than the approval of the grand vizier, "sultan Murad required that he see and sign most documents of appointment."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Pal Fodor, 'The Grand Vizieral Telhis, A Study in the Ottoman Central Administration 1566 - 1656' *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 15, (1997), 138

¹¹¹ Sinan Paşa, *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın*,

¹¹² Pal Fodor, 'The Grand Vizieral Telhis', 154.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 156-58.

¹¹⁴ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 95.

¹¹⁵ Pal Fodor, 'The Grand Vizieral Telhis', 139 and Josef Matuz, *Das Kanzleiwesen Sultan Süleymans des Practigen* (Wiesbaden, 1974) 68-9.

¹¹⁶ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 295.

Black eunuchs and *musahibs* benefited most from this new mode of communication. As Günhan Börekçi points out, “they not only had the privilege of submitting their own petitions to the sultan, but could also control which vizierial *telhises* the sultan saw.”¹¹⁷ This constituted one of the main sources of tension between the inner-court servants and the grand viziers.

The use of *telhises* continued after Sinan Pasha.¹¹⁸ The collection of *telhises* of Yemişçi Hasan Pasha, who served as a grand vizier to Ahmed I, reveals that the sultan and the pasha frequently employed *telhises* as well. In one of these, Ahmed I refused the grand vizier’s request to meet personally, with the handwritten note: “You should inform me on paper,”¹¹⁹ suggesting that face-to-face meetings between sultan and grand vizier had become rare.¹²⁰ During the minority of Sultan Murad IV, his mother Kösem Sultan carried out conversations with the grand viziers via *telhises*.¹²¹ Murad IV also made use of a high number of royal rescripts after he established his own authority in 1632. As Rhoads Murphey has shown, more than three hundred of such royal rescripts were put together in a manuscript, now kept in Istanbul University.¹²²

Overall, short terms, reappointments, written communication and the intervention of royal favorites and harem eunuchs profoundly weakened the grand vizierate during the first part of the seventeenth century. The grand viziers lost their independence. The anonymous writer of *Kitab-ı Müstetab* described the demise of the power of the grand vizier: “Whereas before the whole world was afraid of the grand vizier, now those who occupy this post have

¹¹⁷ Börekçi, ‘Factions and Favorites’, 154.

¹¹⁸ *Osmanlı Tarihine Aid Belgeler: Telhisler (1596 - 1607)*, Ed. Cengiz Orhonlu, (İstanbul, 1970).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹²⁰ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (London, 2009), 162.

¹²¹ Halil İnalcık, *Devlet-i Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar II. Tagayyür ve Fesad (1603 - 1656), Bozuluş ve Kargaşa Dönemi* (İstanbul, 2014), 371-429.

¹²² *Sultan Dördüncü Murad’ın Hatt-ı Hümayunları, Suver-ı Hutut-ı Hümayun*, Ed. Önder Bayır, (İstanbul, 2014) and Rhoads Murphey, ‘An Ottoman View from the top and rumblings from below: The Sultan’s writs (hatt-i Humayun) of Murad IV (R.1623 - 1640)’, *Turcica*, 28, (1996), 319-38.

come to fear even people who are not worth fearing.”¹²³ The phenomenon of the decreasing vizierial authority would come to a halt with appointment of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as grand vizier in 1656. He would manage to restore the authority of the office of the grand vizierate. But how did Köprülü Mehmed Pasha achieve success? The next chapter will look for an answer to this question.

¹²³ Anonymous, ‘Kitab-ı Müstetab’, 19

CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF KÖPRÜLÜ MEHMED PASHA: RESTORATION OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE GRAND VIZIER (1651-1661)

2.1. Introduction

In the year 1067 (1656) the courier of the Crimean sultan Mehmed Giray Khan, whose name was Colağ Dedeş Ağa, arrived from the felicitous Threshold on his way back to the Crimea, bearing letters for our lord the pasha.

“Amazing”, cried the Pasha when he read the letters. “My Evliya, have you heard?” he went on in his astonishment. “Boynu Egri Mehmed Pasha has been dismissed from the grand vizierate, and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha has been appointed in his place.”

“Well, my sultan,” piped up the seal keeper, Osman Ağa, “just see what an evil day the Ottoman state has reached, when we get as grand vizier a miserable wretch like Köprülü, who could not even give straw to a pair of oxen!”¹²⁴

The famous traveler Evliya Çelebi recorded this dialogue in his voluminous travels-cum-memoirs when he accompanied in the Crimea his master Melek Ahmed Pasha, who was at the time the governor of Özi. The passage is important because it provides precious insights into how the appointment of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was received by contemporary Ottoman observers. The reaction of Osman Ağa indicates that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha did not have a positive public image. He was known as an inept statesman, who did not deserve the grand vizierate.

¹²⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman, Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588 - 1662) As Portrayed in Evliya Celebi's Book of Travels*, ed. Robert Dankoff, (Albany, 1991), 204

Indeed, those who were surprised at this appointment were not only Melek Ahmed Pasha and his seal-keeper Osman Aga. The contemporary historian Mehmed Halife pointed out that the elevation of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha to the grand vizierate engendered confusion in Ottoman political circles.¹²⁵ The bewilderment of the people when they heard about this appointment, it is not hard to explain: when he became grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was almost seventy years old, and he did not have a salient political career before holding the grand vizierate.

In contrast to his early career, however, Köprülü Mehmed's grand vizierate was so remarkable that he would later be remembered as one of the most powerful and independent grand viziers in Ottoman history. This chapter seeks to investigate the ways in which Köprülü Mehmed Pasha rose to power and managed to preserve it in a highly contested political scene.

The grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha is unparalleled in many respects. Firstly, Köprülü Mehmed's grand vizierate was one of the longest tenures of the grand vizierate in the first part of the seventeenth century. Köprülü Mehmed successfully kept his position until 1661 when he died peacefully in his bed. A five-year tenure indeed was very exceptional compared to that of his predecessors, some of whom did not last for even one month in the position. Secondly, Köprülü Mehmed independently wielded his power and reestablished the prestige of the grand vizierate. Indeed, when we remember that the authority of the grand vizier had been circumscribed since the late sixteenth century by the sultan, Janissaries, royal favorites, and the *ulema*, Köprülü Mehmed's independent and authoritarian rule seems all the more exceptional. How did Köprülü Mehmed become such a powerful grand vizier?

¹²⁵ Oral, 'Tarih-i Gilmani', 52

I will argue that the most important factor in the empowerment of Köprülü Mehmed was the royal support of Hadice Turhan Sultan and Mehmed IV. Hadice Turhan, who held power in the Ottoman palace at that time, orchestrated the appointment of Köprülü Mehmed as grand vizier with full powers. In his five years of tenure, Köprülü Mehmed enjoyed the full support of Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV in his measures and actions. They allowed him great scope of authority. In addition, they did not undermine the position of the grand vizier when he encountered serious setbacks.

This decisive support from Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV can be seen during the rebellion of Abaza Hasan Pasha, which began in September 1658. The governor of Aleppo Abaza Hasan Pasha revolted against the growing power of Köprülü Mehmed, a rebellion that lasted until February 1659 when Abaza Hasan Pasha and his lieutenants were executed in Aleppo. In this large-scale rebellion, Mehmed IV chose to stand by his grand vizier; thereby the revolt lost its momentum and eventually subsided.

In the first section of the chapter, I will focus on the career of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha before becoming the grand vizier. In the second section, I will take a look at Hadice Turhan's regency years that paved the way for the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. In this section, I will review the events surrounding Hadice Turhan's struggle with other powerful groups including the harem eunuchs. The third section will examine the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, and further discuss the nature of the relationship between Mehmed IV and Köprülü Mehmed. In the next section, I will zoom in on Abaza Hasan Pasha's rebellion, the greatest challenge to Köprülü Mehmed's authority during his grand vizierate, to better understand how Köprülü Mehmed managed to consolidate his power.

A major historiographical question in dealing with the period of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha is how such an insignificant figure rose to the highest position in the empire.¹²⁶ The phenomenon of the ascendancy of Köprülü Mehmed should be understood within the context of the quickly evolving and complex political environment, which prevailed within the Ottoman capital in the years from 1651 until 1656. After the bloody murder of Kösem Sultan in 1651, Hadice Turhan became the *de facto* head of the dynasty. This period was overwhelmingly shaped by her initiatives and actions. The instability of this period encouraged Hadice Turhan to restore the prestige of the grand vizier. However, she failed to realize her intention because of the factional strife among the political contenders until the appointment of Köprülü Mehmed as grand vizier. The appointment of Köprülü Mehmed as grand vizier must be seen as the result of a long-term and deliberate policy carried out by Hadice Turhan since 1651 rather than a sudden and unexpected policy alternation.

Throughout this chapter, I will use a wide variety of primary sources in both Ottoman Turkish and foreign languages. The most important and detailed study on Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's grand vizierate is undoubtedly Naima's four-volume chronicle, which contains many details not available in other Ottoman chronicles, while also incorporating information provided by his predecessors.¹²⁷ Like that of his contemporary Naima, Silahdar's history includes a comprehensive treatment of Köprülü Mehmed's tenure.¹²⁸ His biographical note on Köprülü Mehmed is the earliest and the most detailed one. He supplies information missing from other biographical sources. In addition to the chronicles of Naima and Silahdar, I will also have recourse to Mehmed Halife's chronicle. Mehmed Halife was

¹²⁶ Metin Kunt, 'Naima, Köprülü, and the Grand Vezirate', *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi-Hümaniter Bilimler*, 1, (1973), 57-63 and Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 255-258.

¹²⁷ For the analysis of Naima, see, Lewis V. Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, Ed. Norman Itzkowitz, (New York, 1972).

¹²⁸ 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). (Hereafter Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*)

in the palace inner service (1637-1664) and his chronicle covers the years 1623-1664.¹²⁹ In this chapter, I will also benefit from Evliya Çelebi's travel book. Evliya witnessed many significant events and met the highest personages while he was in the households of Melek Ahmed Pasha, Seydi Ahmed Pasha and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.

Among European sources, the most significant one that requires particular attention is the reports of Levinus Warner, the resident of the Dutch Republic to the Ottoman Empire, between 1655 and 1665. Before coming to Istanbul, he had studied theology and oriental languages at Leiden University. He left Leiden in 1644 and travelled to Istanbul where he was informally connected to the Dutch Embassy. He then became the diplomatic representative of the Dutch Republic in the Ottoman Empire in 1655.¹³⁰ During his diplomatic career in Istanbul, Warner corresponded with The Hague. A large number of official reports have survived from his ten-year residency, some of which were published in 1883 by the Leiden University librarian Willem Nicolas Du Rieu.¹³¹ These reports, written in Latin, contain the observations of Warner in his capacity as a diplomat and scholar, and offer detailed insights into Ottoman political life. Although these reports present rich material on Ottoman history, they have not yet been explored in Ottoman historiography. During his residency in Istanbul, Warner contacted several prominent figures at the Ottoman court, who equipped him with valuable information about the political dynamics of the court at the time. One of them was Salih Efendi, the chief physician of Mehmed

¹²⁹ For a comprehensive analysis of the work, see, Bekir Kütükoğlu, 'Tarih-i Gılmani'nin İlk Redaksiyonuna Dair', *Tarih Dergisi*, 27, (1973), 21-40.

¹³⁰ Arnoud Vrolijk, Jan Schmidt and Karin Scheper, *De Oosterse Verzameling van Levinus Warner, Nedelands diplomat in zeventiende-eeuws Istanbul, The Oriental Collection of Levinus Warner, Dutch diplomat in seventeenth-century Istanbul* (Lecturis, 2012), 42-48

¹³¹ Levini Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis Epistolae Inediate*, Ed. G.N du Rieu, (Leiden, 1883).

IV.¹³² In Warner's own correspondence, he mentions him as "prominent Turk of the Court, my good friend."¹³³

Along with his diplomatic correspondence, I will also use Warner's diaries, which are in manuscript form and kept in the Leiden University Library. The first modern scholar to introduce the diaries is Jan Schmidt, who catalogued Warner's collection in Leiden University Library.¹³⁴ The diaries occupy six notebooks and cover information on the contemporary political events and on scholarly subjects from 1657 to 1664.¹³⁵

I will also utilize the Swedish Ambassador Claes Ralamb's diary, which contains important observations on Köprülü Mehmed and other major Ottoman figures of the time.¹³⁶ Ralamb was sent to Istanbul in 1657 in order to secure Ottoman permission for a Swedish-Transylvanian alliance. He stayed there until February 1658. Ralamb's travel diary was originally published in Swedish in 1679, and its English translation appeared in 1732.¹³⁷ The travel diary includes personal descriptions as well as information about Ottoman politics and diplomatic affairs. Ralamb used information on Ottoman politics

¹³² Vrolijk, Schmidt and Scheper, *De Oosterse Verzameling*, 100

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 106 for Warner's letter, see, Leiden University Library, Or.1163 27b.

¹³⁴ Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts, In the Library of Leiden University and Other Collection in the Netherlands, Volume One, Comprising the Acquisitions of Turkish Manuscripts in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2000).

¹³⁵ Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, Leiden University Library, Or.1159e, Leanne Jansen, a PhD student in the Institute for Classics at Leiden University has kindly provided the transliteration and translation of one of these six notebooks, which contained important information on the Abaza Hasan Pasha rebellion of 1659. Thanks to her efforts, I have been able to use valuable information from Warner's diaries that has not previously been used in the historiography.

¹³⁶ Cemal Kafadar, 'The city that Ralamb visited, the political and cultural climate of Istanbul in 1650's', in Karin Adahl (ed.), *The Sultan's Procession, The Swedish embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657 - 1658 and the Ralamb Paintings*, (Istanbul, 2006), 59-73 and also see, Göran Larsson, 'Clas Ralamb' in David Thomas and John Chesworth (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History, Volume 8. Northern and Eastern Europe* (Leiden, 2016) 649-53.

¹³⁷ Nicholas Rolamb, *A relation of a Journey to Constantinople*, translated from the Swedish and printed in Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill, eds., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels: Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts, Others Now First Published in English: In Six Volumes with a General Preface Giving an Account of the Progress of Navigation from Its First Beginning* (London: 1732) vol.V, at 669-716.

provided by Wojciech Bobowski, a Polish renegade.¹³⁸ Besides writing and publishing a travel diary, Ralamb also commissioned and bought a number of paintings, which give a detailed first-hand portrayal of courtly life in the Ottoman Empire and the city of Istanbul.¹³⁹

2.2. The Early Career of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha

According to one of his endowment deeds, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was born in Rudnik, a village in Albania in ca. 1578.¹⁴⁰ He entered the sultan's service as a *devsirme*. He first worked in the Imperial Kitchen around 1623. Later, he was promoted into the inner service of the palace, the corps of pages, thanks to the support of Hüsrev Aga, who was then in the highest grade of the corps of pages.¹⁴¹ He served in the various sections of the inner court, including the cellar (*kiler*), the treasury (*hazine*) and the privy chamber (*hasoda*).¹⁴² Traditional biographical notices point out that Köprülü Mehmed was later moved out of the palace, due to his "quarrelsomeness and disobedience."¹⁴³ However, this information should be taken with a grain of salt as it is found only in the chronicle of Silahdar. Instead, Metin Kunt offers a cogent explanation for the dismissal of Köprülü Mehmed from the court. Kunt points out that Köprülü Mehmed might have left the palace when his patron Hüsrev Pasha

¹³⁸ Karin Adahl, 'Claes Brorson Ralamb's embassy to the Sublime Porte in 1657 - 1658', in Karin Adahl (ed.), *The Sultan's Procession, The Swedish embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657 - 1658 and the Ralamb Paintings* (Istanbul, 2006), 16.

¹³⁹ Karin Adahl, 'The Twenty paintings depicting the Sultan's procession', in Karin Adahl (ed.), *The Sultan's Procession, The Swedish embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657 - 1658 and the Ralamb Paintings* (Istanbul, 2006), 74-113.

¹⁴⁰ Köprülü Library, Endowments, 1/2444, V. 22a-22b and also see, Yusuf Sağır, Vakfiyesine göre Köprülü Mehmed Paşa Vakıfları (İzmir Milli Kütüphane'de 634/1-2 nota Kayıtlı Nüsha), MA Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, (2005).

¹⁴¹ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 37, Mehmet Arslan (ed.), *Osmanlı Sadrazamları, Hadikatü'l-Vüzera ve Zeyilleri* (İstanbul, 2013), 118, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III, 33.

¹⁴² Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was listed as one of the chiefs of the privy chamber, see, Enderunlu Abdullatif, *Ayine-i Derun (Osmanlı'ya Devlet Adami Yetistiren Mektep: Enderun-u Hümayün)*, ed. Ahmed Koç, (Istanbul, 2013), 65.

¹⁴³ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 256, Tayyib Gökbilgin and Richard C.Repp, 'Koprulu', Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Mücteba İlgürel, 'Köprülü Mehmed Paşa', XXVI, 260-63.

was promoted to commander of the Janissaries because once “a member of the palace inner service was promoted to an important government position outside the palace, many pages were also discharged to form his personal retinue.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, it is highly probable that Hüsrev Pasha selected Köprülü Mehmed to accompany him. The fact that Köprülü Mehmed was a treasurer in Hüsrev Pasha’s retinue in 1628 supports Kunt’s point.¹⁴⁵ However, be it for his dismissal from the palace due to his disobedience, or because Hüsrev Pasha selected him for his retinue, Köprülü Mehmed’s move out of the palace was a turning point in his career. Firstly, he was to follow his fortune in the lower echelons of a vizier’s household, and thus would not have a chance to enjoy a large retinue because of his limited financial sources. Secondly, and more severely, his career now became dependent solely on his master, and should the master fall from grace, he would have to search for a new patron.

Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s career in Hüsrev Pasha’s retinue came to an end with the execution of his master Hüsrev Pasha, who was held responsible for the failure to recapture Baghdad after the Safavid occupation in 1631.¹⁴⁶ After the downfall of his master Hüsrev Pasha, Köprülü Mehmed was able to stay in Istanbul during the period of the grand vizierate of Tabanyassı Mehmed Pasha (r.1632-1637).¹⁴⁷ During his time in Istanbul, Köprülü Mehmed held a variety of posts, including those of the inspector of the guilds,

¹⁴⁴ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 38.

¹⁴⁵ Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı used the document preserved in Topkapı Palace Library to show that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha worked as treasurer of Hüsrev Pasha, see, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, 415 the reference number of the archive is TSMA 610. In addition, Evliya Çelebi states that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha joined Hüsrev Pasha when Hüsrev was promoted to Janissary commander and Köprülü was employed as treasurer, Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 304 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu- Dizini*, Robert Dankoff, Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı (ed.s), (İstanbul, 2006), I, 135. (Hereafter Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*).

¹⁴⁶ The Ottoman forces had been trying to recapture Baghdad from the Safavid occupation since 1622. For the career of Hüsrev Pasha, see, Halil İnalçık, ‘Khosrew Pasha’, Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁴⁷ Metin Kunt has argued that like Köprülü Mehmed, Tabanyassı was of Albanian origin and that that fact constituted a possible connection between the two statesmen, see. Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 36.

inspector of the arsenal, commander of the cavalrymen and commander of the armorers. Köprülü Mehmed was later appointed as the governor of Köprü in the Ottoman province of Amasya in 1634, which earned him the epithet “Köprülü,” (coming from Köprü). He married Ayşe Hanım, daughter of the *voyvoda* (the officer in charge of collection revenues) of the region.¹⁴⁸ In 1638, Köprülü took part in the siege of Baghdad as the district governor of Çorum, located in north central Anatolia.

Köprülü Mehmed secured the favor of his Albanian compatriot Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha, the newly appointed grand vizier. It is worth highlighting this connection, because when Evliya Çelebi visited the villages of Albania, he observed that the villages of Kemankeş Mustafa and Köprülü Mehmed were very close to each other.¹⁴⁹ Kemankeş Mustafa was also known as the protector of his fellow Albanians. He patronized many Albanians and provided them the means to advance in their careers. For instance, under the aegis of Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha, Köprülü Mehmed started working as the commander of the imperial gatekeepers and later as the master of the imperial stables, which were significant positions in the palace.¹⁵⁰

During these years, it is highly likely that Köprülü Mehmed met Kasım Aga, another Albanian protégé of Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha.¹⁵¹ Kasım Aga would play a

¹⁴⁸ Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s sons Fazıl Ahmed and Fazıl Mustafa were born in this town in 1635 and 1637.

¹⁴⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, VIII, 305.

¹⁵⁰ Enderunlu Abdullatif, *Ayine-i Derun*, 51 and Tayyazade-Ata, *Osmanlı Saray Tarihi*, II, 84

¹⁵¹ Kasım Aga became the chief architect in 1635 and maintained his position until the demise of Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha in 1644.¹⁵¹ Later, he was arrested and banished to Gelibolu. However, he quickly regained his former position with the assistance of Cinci Hoca, a close companion of Ibrahim I. In 1651, Kasım Aga attempted to become steward (*kethüda*) in the household of Queen Mother Kösem Sultan but to no avail. However, he finally attained his coveted position at the time of Hadice Turhan. See, Semavi Eyice, ‘Mimar Kasım Hakkında’, *Belleten* 43, (1979), 767–808.

significant role in the future career of Köprülü Mehmed. Another important person in the retinue of Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha was Şamizade Mehmed Efendi.¹⁵²

It is not surprising that Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha gathered around him Albanians, given that ethnic solidarity played a considerable role in Ottoman politics as convincingly demonstrated by Metin Kunt.¹⁵³ Starting in the late sixteenth century, solidarity based on a common ethnic and regional origin was a common feature of Ottoman politics, and some of the contemporary Ottoman observers referred in their own writings to this point. Mustafa Ali, for instance, notes: “ If he (the grand vizier) is Albanian, his own groups become fortunate, for he is likely to promote his relatives and siblings appointing to reputable positions those from his own city and hometown.”¹⁵⁴ For the career of Köprülü Mehmed, this “Albanian connection” might have played an important role in his promotion and getting recognition by the palace.

Köprülü Mehmed’s advancement in the palace hierarchy stalled after the execution of Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha in 1644. Until 1651, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was appointed to several provinces as governor.¹⁵⁵ It was during these years that he was ordered to put rebel governors in Anatolia under imperial control.¹⁵⁶ In those years when he had no position in the administration, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha chose to stay in Köprü.¹⁵⁷ Köprülü Mehmed got

¹⁵² Şamizade was a bureaucrat and became the secretary of Hezarpare Ahmed Pasha, (the grand vizier 1647 - 1648). Şamizade’s patron Hezarpare was a protégé of Kemankeş Mustafa Pasha, and they worked together under the protection of the latter. Hezarpare Ahmed Pasha promoted Şamizade to the position of chief scribe in 1647. He remained in his post until 1655. After a short banishment period in 1655, Şamizade returned to Istanbul in 1656 and would support Köprülü Mehmed’s grand vizierate. See, Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Sefinetü’r-Rüesa*, Millet Library, Ali Emiri 720, 27a.

¹⁵³ Metin Kunt, “Ethnic- Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment”, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 5, (1974) 233-39.

¹⁵⁴ Gülru Necipoğlu, ‘Connectivity, Mobility, and Mediterranean “Portable Archeology”’: Pashas from the Dalmatian Hinterland as Cultural Mediators’ in Alina Payne (ed.), *Dalmatia and Mediterranean, Portable Archeology and the Poetics of the Influence* (Leiden and Boston, MA, 2014), quotation at 317.

¹⁵⁵ These provinces: Konya, Egri and Anatolia.

¹⁵⁶ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 42-3.

¹⁵⁷ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 256, Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1568.

an opportunity to receive an important position, when his fellow Albanian Kasim Aga was promoted to serve as steward of Queen Mother Hadice Turhan Sultan, the new powerful political figure at the court. Now let's look at the rise of Hadice Turhan Sultan and her regency in detail.

2.3. The Regency of Hadice Turhan Sultan: The path to the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha (1651-1656)

This section aims at re-evaluating Hadice Turhan's undertakings during her regency period. Hadice Turhan's activities will be considered in light of contemporary chronicles and her own *telhises* published by Erhan Afyoncu and Uğur Demir.¹⁵⁸ These *telhises* are mostly comprised of Hadice Turhan's memoranda to the grand viziers and were studied in a limited fashion by Leslie Peirce and Lucien Thys-Senocak.¹⁵⁹ After a reconsideration of this material, I suggest that Hadice Turhan's efforts to re-build the grand vizierate had started long before Köprülü Mehmed Pasha assumed office. Through a parallel line, I will try to focus on Köprülü Mehmed's mostly failing enterprises and on his allies who strove to elevate him to the grand vizierate.

Mounting the throne at the age of seven, Mehmed IV was supervised and guided by his grandmother Kösem Sultan. It was expected that Mehmed IV's mother Hadice Turhan would assume the role of regent for her son, but due to her youth and lack of experience, Mehmed IV's grandmother, Kösem Sultan, who had been at the center of palace politics for many years, took charge.¹⁶⁰ The first three years of Mehmed IV's reign

¹⁵⁸ Erhan Afyoncu and Uğur Demir, *Turhan Sultan* (Istanbul, 2015).

¹⁵⁹ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, and Lucien Thys-Senocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Burlington, 2007)

¹⁶⁰ Kara Çelebi-zade Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrar Zeyli*, (*Tahlil ve Metin*), ed. Nevzat Kaya, (Ankara, 2003), 67-137, Karacelebizade remarks "It being an ancient custom that upon the accession of a new sultan the mother of the previous sultan remove to the Old Palace and thus give up her honored office.", Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, quotation at 251.

witnessed power struggles between the two queen mothers. Kösem Sultan allied with the Janissary commanders, who heavily dominated political life. In response to Kösem Sultan's dominance, the junior queen mother Hadice Turhan was supported by chief black eunuch Süleyman Aga. Furthermore, the new grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha joined Hadice Turhan's faction. This struggle eventually resulted in the murder of Kösem Sultan and her allies.¹⁶¹

There were now three new powerful figures on the political scene. The first was Hadice Turhan, who was now ready to take initiative as the unrivalled queen mother. The second was the chief black eunuch Süleyman Aga who had been the main ally of Hadice Turhan in her struggle with Kösem Sultan. The third and final figure was the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha, who had made a great contribution to the demise of the alliance of Kösem sultan and the Janissary commanders.

In this new political configuration, a power struggle surfaced between the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha and the chief black eunuch Süleyman Aga. Siyavuş Pasha complained that his authority was curbed by the constant intervention of Süleyman Aga.¹⁶² On his part, Süleyman Aga was putting pressure on Hadice Turhan to effect Siyavuş Pasha's removal from office and to replace him with a politically weak figure Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, at age ninety the oldest of all viziers at the time. When the issue of Siyavuş Pasha's removal came to the fore, Hadice Turhan consulted her recently appointed steward Kasım Aga. Hadice Turhan felt the need to exchange opinions with a figure from her inner circle. Kasım Aga suggested that Köprülü Mehmed would be a suitable candidate for the grand vizierate.¹⁶³ However, Hadice Turhan thought that Köprülü Mehmed did not possess the necessary reputation and hence the authority required for such an important position.¹⁶⁴ Instead of

¹⁶¹ For the details, Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 1326-28 and Oral, 'Tarih-i Gilmani', 26-8.

¹⁶² Ibid., III, 1365-66.

¹⁶³ Ibid., III, 1372.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., III, 1372.

Köprülü Mehmed, Hadice Turhan appointed on Süleyman Aga's recommendation Gürcü Mehmed Pasha as grand vizier in 1651.¹⁶⁵

In his first months as grand vizier, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha failed to perform as effectively as expected of him. Hadice Turhan shared her concerns about the grand vizier's performance with her steward Kasim Aga. Kasim Aga again recommended that Köprülü Mehmed should at least be given permission to sit at the imperial council to gain experience. In the meantime, as grand vizier Gürcü Mehmed Pasha realized that Köprülü Mehmed was to pose a threat to his post, he immediately wrote a *telhis* to Hadice Turhan, asking for Köprülü's dismissal from his office:

My felicitous sovereign, it has been affirmed that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha has been breeding rebellious and defeatist intentions in league with the head architect (Kasim Aga); and a *telhis* has been sent to the Royal Threshold to demand the *Sancak* [county] of Köstendil in the Rumeli Province with the title of *beglerbegi* [governor-general] for Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.¹⁶⁶

Having acquiesced to the grand vizier's request, Hadice Turhan approved Köprülü Mehmed's appointment to Köstendil. Thus, Köprülü Mehmed's early endeavor to become the grand vizier did not come to fruition.¹⁶⁷ Afterwards, Kasim Aga was banished from the court, whereby Köprülü Mehmed lost his most important supporter in the capital.

The most significant question about Hadice Turhan's decision remains unanswered: why did Hadice Turhan grant Gürcü Mehmed Pasha's request? Although Hadice Turhan was discontented with grand vizier's early performance, she might have thought that it was

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., III. 1368.

¹⁶⁶ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, 57, TSMA, E.2457-7.

¹⁶⁷ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III.1373 and Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme, Osmanlı Târihi (1648 – 1682), Tahlil ve Metin Tenkidi*, Ed. Fahri Ç. Derin (İstanbul, 2008) 43, Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrar Zeyli*, 109.

as yet too early for a replacement in the office and her faith in the grand vizier was not yet broken. Thus, she did not condone any effort that would disturb the grand vizier's comfort and undermine his authority. In the following days, Hadice Turhan continued to support the grand vizier. She granted the grand vizier's requests on appointments of his relatives and clients. For instance, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha's son Hasan Pasha was appointed as the governor of Maras.¹⁶⁸

Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, despite Hadice Turhan's firm support, had been unable to master state affairs. In particular, Hadice Turhan was infuriated about the delays in the building up of the new fleet. This circumstance altered the tone of the *telhises* written to the grand vizier. In a *telhis*, she had openly targeted the grand vizier: "If you fail to serve deservedly, the wealth you enjoy due to the sultan's grace will be a sin for you; we had put our trust in you for every issue since you were a long-time servant."¹⁶⁹

As Leslie Peirce points out, "as Hadice Turhan matured politically, her circle of advisers widened to include people outside the palace"¹⁷⁰ The Anatolian Judge Mesud Efendi turned out to be a prominent political figure as Hadice Turhan's protégé. Mesud Efendi had formerly attracted by standing by Hadice Turhan's side. In 1651, the Janissaries had called in *ulema* for support after Kösem Sultan's assassination. When the members of the upper echelon such as the seyhulislam, chief judges and the judge of Istanbul responded positively to the call and stood by rebels, Hadice Turhan found herself in a thorny situation.¹⁷¹ Among the few members of the *ulema* taking her side was Mesud Efendi. This incident sealed his alliance with Hadice Turhan.

¹⁶⁸ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, 58, TSMA, E-7002-42.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 87, TSMA E. 7001-37.

¹⁷⁰ Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 254.

¹⁷¹ Fikret Yılmaz, "Siyaset, İsyan ve İstanbul (1453-1808), in Coşkun Yılmaz (ed.), *Antik Çağ'dan XXI.Yüzyıla Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, (Istanbul, 2016), 156.

Mesud Efendi's opposition to the grand vizier, especially during the imperial council gatherings, put him in a difficult position. In a session observed by Hadice Turhan behind a screened window, she had intervened during the grand vizier's speech and admonished him to take heed of Mesud Efendi's words and rebuked him.¹⁷²

Hadice Turhan's support for Mesud Efendi and his admission into her close circle of counselors are very important factors in understanding Hadice Turhan's policies. Hadice Turhan was seemingly uneasy with Süleyman Aga's heavy influence on grand vizier Gürcü Mehmed Pasha. Although Süleyman Aga had been an erstwhile ally of Hadice Turhan, Hadice Turhan did not want to align herself with a single powerful figure in the ruling elite.

Hadice Turhan therefore called back to Istanbul the exiled viziers who could serve as alternatives to the grand vizier.¹⁷³ Among the exiles recalled were Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha, the former governor of Egypt. Thus, candidates for the grand vizierate would be at hand in Istanbul and could easily replace Gürcü Mehmed Pasha.

Removal of Gürcü Mehmed Pasha and the appointment of a new grand vizier took place following a crowded consultation (*meşveret*) session.¹⁷⁴ The participants were the sultan, the vizier, the Janissary commanders, the *sipahi* leaders, the Seyhulislam and Mesud Efendi. Hadice Turhan observed the session behind a screened window and at times intervened by putting words into her son's mouth.¹⁷⁵ At a certain point, the young sultan even turned his head towards the window and asked his mother's opinion: "Whom should we make the grand vizier?" Hadice Turhan replied in return that this consultation session was being held for that specific purpose and the answer had to be found at once.¹⁷⁶ Those

¹⁷² Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 254.

¹⁷³ Afyoncu and Demir, *Turhan Sultan*, 93, TSMA, E.751-48, It was Metin Kunt who drew attention to this important text, see, Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 44.

¹⁷⁴ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 1399 - 1405.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 1401.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1402.

present unanimously chose Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha and informed the queen mother about their decision. Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha was then called to the palace for an interview with the sultan before assuming his new post.¹⁷⁷ Tarhuncu Ahmed demanded a wide range of authority, including a free hand in collecting state revenues from all possible sources and a promise to be allowed to have his own way, as his conditions for accepting the office. Hadice Turhan agreed to these conditions.

Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha's appointment to the grand vizierate is important in at least two respects: the first is the fact that his appointment was decided at a consultation session. It seems that it was on Hadice Turhan's own initiative that such a session was held and a conclusion was arrived at. Hadice Turhan's action might have been prompted by her desire to empower the grand vizier with the support of a solid consensus instead of letting a singular will determine the decision, as had been the case with Gürcü Mehmed's appointment on the insistence of the chief black eunuch Süleyman Aga. The second issue is Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha's precaution of putting forth certain conditions. We can interpret it as his pre-emptive move against the actions of the black eunuchs, who might have blocked his authority. Hadice Turhan's acceptance of these conditions proves her willingness to restore the authority of the grand vizierate.

The most important indicator of the support Hadice Turhan offered to the new grand vizier was the removal of the chief black eunuch Süleyman Aga at the grand vizier's request.¹⁷⁸ Although Tarhuncu Ahmed received high-level support from Hadice Turhan, he could not produce satisfactory outcomes for the ongoing problems. Particularly, Tarhuncu Ahmed's strict measures in state finances caused much unrest in every political circle. In the meantime, rumors flourished that Tarhuncu Ahmed refused to carry out certain

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1404 and Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 58-9.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 1411 and Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ravzatü'l-Ebrar Zeyli*, 116-17.

appointment requests issued by Hadice Turhan.¹⁷⁹ Even though the primary sources do not explicitly note the reasons, Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha was dismissed on 21 March 1653 and executed immediately thereafter.¹⁸⁰ Thus, the enterprise of the grand vizier who had been invested with great authority came to bear no fruit.

The grand vizierate of Derviş Mehmed Pasha, successor of Tarhuncu Ahmed, created a period of relative peace and prosperity, but after his death conditions once again began to decline. The subsequent grand viziers proved to be complete failures. While İpşir Mustafa Pasha's removal from office preceded his execution. Murad Pasha resigned three months after coming to power. His successor Süleyman Pasha could not make a drastic improvement in state affairs, either. It is not possible to ascertain Hadice Turhan's role in these appointments from sources in this period since we do not possess any *telhis*.

In the meantime, Köprülü Mehmed's old friend Kasim Aga was pardoned and came to Istanbul where he started lobbying again for Köprülü Mehmed. Kasim Aga asked grand vizier Süleyman Pasha to bring Köprülü to the capital to benefit from his skills, but the grand vizier responded, according to Naima: "O, you're suggesting to me a quarrelsome and bankrupt man who was dismissed from each and every post he's been assigned to."¹⁸¹ Once again, Kasim Aga's initiatives remained fruitless.

In March 1656, a major revolt broke out in Istanbul.¹⁸² The main cause of this rebellion was the debased currency. The trouble arose when the standing army realized that their pay was worth much less on the market than its nominal value. The troops marched to the palace and demanded that those who had deceived Sultan Mehmed by implementing the

¹⁷⁹ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, III, 1461-62.

¹⁸⁰ Erol Özvar, 'Tarhuncu Ahmed Paşa', *DİA*, XV, 20-2.

¹⁸¹ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1646 - 47.

¹⁸² For a vivid narrative on this event, see, Eremya Çelebi Kömürçiyân (H.Andresyan and Fahri Derin (eds.), 'Çınar Vakası', *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3, (1957), 57-65.

debasement be killed. Their real targets were certain black and white eunuchs and women in the palace. Hasan Aga, the spokesman of the rebels, addressed the sultan:

O Sultan, such sort of debased coinage circulates in the Islamic city, and if you claim that the treasury is empty, then how can the Arabs (referring to black eunuchs C.B) live in such pomp and panache? Is it fitting for the common good [*din u devlet*] to hold them dear and venerable over the despised and humiliated *kuls*? The grand vizier is with them, the mufti is with them; why are they holding the entire ruling mechanism of the sultanate in their hands? Surely, their bodies would better be annihilated and their names erased from the pages of history.¹⁸³

The mutineers presented a list of execution demands including the mother of the sultan and the chief black eunuch. Sultan Mehmed asked that his mother be spared and they accepted the sultan's request. Nevertheless, the dead bodies of the chief black eunuch and the chief white eunuch were shown to the mob over the wall of the palace. But even this gory display failed to satisfy the mutineers, and the next day they again marched on the palace. More palace officials were sacrificed and their corpses were hanged from a plane tree. As a result of the troops' demands, the former grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha was appointed as the new grand vizier and Mesud Efendi became the seyhülislam.¹⁸⁴

The harem clique, which had been occupying considerable space in political life, was now eliminated, due to the execution of a high number of palace officials. As Metin Kunt rightly points out, there was no group now ready to fill the political vacuum left by the rebellion.¹⁸⁵ This was actually an advantage for Hadice Turhan. She could now go and search for her own assertive grand vizier. Siyavuş Pasha, who was appointed in the wake of

¹⁸³ Mehmed Halife, *Tarih-i Gilmani*, 45

¹⁸⁴ İszade. *İsa-zade Tarihi (Metin ve Tahlil)*, Ed. Ziya Yılmaz, (İstanbul, 1996), 17-9 and Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, I, 132.

¹⁸⁵ Kunt, "Naima, Köprülü", 62.

the rebellion, could not retain to power for long and passed away on duty at the end of his second month. He was succeeded by the governor of Damascus, Boynu Yarali Mehmed Pasha.

When Boynu Yarali Mehmed Pasha returned to Istanbul in early June 1656, the capital was in turmoil: A naval defeat in June, followed by the Venetian occupation of Tenedos and Lemnos across the straight in the Dardanelles, blocked Ottomans ships and brought about severe shortages and price hikes in Istanbul. The public unrest jeopardized the sultan's personal security and inspired all sorts of rumors about a plot to depose the sultan.¹⁸⁶ The new grand vizier Boynu Yaralı Mehmed Pasha was not able to deal effectively with the growing problems. His miscalculated plan to whitewash the Istanbul walls to reinvigorate their look only sowed fear among the inhabitants of the city.¹⁸⁷

The failure of the grand vizier to tackle the mounting problems presented a new opportunity for Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Upon returning to Istanbul, Köprülü Mehmed obtained a promise from the grand vizier for an appointment to a new position. In the meantime, Köprülü Mehmed contacted some of his old friends who had connections with the palace. One of them was Kasim Aga, who again tried to persuade Hadice Turhan to deliver the grand vizierate to Köprülü Mehmed. The chief scribe Şamizade Mehmed Efendi also worked for the promotion of Köprülü Mehmed. Moreover, the palace tutor Mehmed Efendi and treasurer of the harem Solak Mehmed Aga were in support of Köprülü Mehmed Efendi.¹⁸⁸ Unfortunately, there is no contemporary source showing Köprülü Mehmed's prior connections with Mehmed Efendi and Solak Mehmed Aga. But it seems credible to assume that as a result of this group's negotiations with Hadice Turhan and the worsening

¹⁸⁶ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 115.

¹⁸⁷ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1694.

¹⁸⁸ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1697 - 98 and Abdi Pasha does not mention the names, see, Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 98.

conditions in the capital, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was appointed on 14 September 1656 as the new grand vizier.¹⁸⁹ According to Naima, before accepting the grand vizierate, Köprülü Mehmed stipulated four conditions, which he wished to explain to the queen mother in person. His request was granted and that evening a palace official secretly took him to meet with the queen mother. The four conditions were as follows:

- 1) All his requests be granted by the sultan, and nothing contrary to such requests be sustained
- 2) No pressure be allowed on the grand vizier from any source in the granting of any office, so that the most deserving men might be employed
- 3) No vizier or other official be allowed to emerge to a position that might rival him or impinge upon the grand vizier's power and independence of action
- 4) No ill-willing backbiters be allowed to slander the grand vizier.¹⁹⁰

Finally, Hadice Turhan accepted all his conditions and took a solemn oath to honor them.

Naima's account of the conditions demanded by Köprülü Mehmed is a well-known story in Ottoman history, one which was repeated by Ottoman historians and European Ottomanists.¹⁹¹ This account later gained a secure place in modern historiography. Metin Kunt, however, questioned the authenticity of this long accepted "fact",¹⁹² because he pointed out that this story about the extraordinary contract between Hadice Turhan and the grand vizier does not feature in the works of other contemporary historians such as Karacelebizade, Vecihi, Mehmed Halife and Abdi Pasha. In particular, Abdi Pasha and

¹⁸⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, (the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive). (Hereafter BOA), A.RSK 1529, 317.

¹⁹⁰ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, quotations at 56-7.

¹⁹¹ Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, (Pest, 1830) and Nicola Jorga, *Geschichte des Osmannischen Reiches* (Gotha, 1911), IV,74-6

¹⁹² Kunt, 'Naima, Köprülü', 57.

Mehmed Halife should have known about this meeting, had it occurred, because they were in the *enderun* at the time Köprülü was appointed. Moreover, in contemporary foreign accounts, we have not yet discovered any such information regarding this extraordinary appointment.¹⁹³

However, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s pre-appointment requests from Hadice Turhan were not unprecedented. As discussed above, Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha had also put forth specific conditions four year earlier. Naima’s exaggerated account, as Metin Kunt suggests, was an “innocent attempt to dramatize the appointment of his patron, the event which marked the beginning of the Köprülü dynasty of grand viziers.”¹⁹⁴ Kunt’s remark seems plausible, considering Naima’s patron was Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha, a nephew of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.

More importantly, the question arises why Hadice Turhan agreed to appoint Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as the grand vizier with such a large scope of authority. Hadice Turhan had been in search of a competent grand vizier all through her regency and accepted the requests put forth by the grand viziers to the extent allowed by the political circumstances. Nonetheless, Hadice Turhan failed in her intentions. The failures of the grand viziers allowed other political actors to increasingly intervene in daily politics, and Hadice Turhan became desperate. However, the fall of the harem clique in 1656 had provided her and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha with a conducive political atmosphere.

Name	Previous Position	Time Span	After
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¹⁹³ In particular, well-informed Levinus Warner did not mention this event.

¹⁹⁴ Kunt, ‘Naima, Köprülü’, 59.

Gürcü Mehmed Pasha	The governor of Aleppo	27.09.1651- 20.06.1652	Dismissed
Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha	The governor of Egypt	20.06.1652- 21.03.1653	Execution
Derviş Mehmed Pasha	The grand admiral	21.03.1653- 28.10.1654	Dismissed (due to health problems)
İpşir Mustafa Pasha	The governor of Aleppo	28.10.1654- 11.05.1655	Execution
Kara Murad Pasha	The grand admiral	11.05.1655- 19.08.1655	Resignation
Süleyman Pasha	The vizier of Dome	19.08.1655- 28.02.1656	Resignation
Gazi Hüseyin Pasha	The commander-in-chief in Create	28.02.1656- 05.03.1656	did not realize his grand vizierate
Surnazen Mustafa Pasha	The deputy of grand vizier	05.03.1656 (Only five hours)	Dismissed
Siyavuş Pasha	The governor of Silistre	05.03.1656- 26.04.1656	Natural Death
Boynu-Yarali Mehmed Pasha	The governor of Damascus	26.04.1656- 15.09.1656	Dismissed
Köprülü Mehmed Pasha		15.09.1656- 30.10.1661	Natural death

Table 4: The Grand Viziers in the regency of Hadice Turhan Sultan

2.4. The Grand Vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha: The Consolidation of the Authority of the Grand Vizierate

When Köprülü Mehmed Pasha became the grand vizier in September 1656, there were serious doubts about his capacity to grapple with the uncertainties the empire faced. Köprülü Mehmed was not a particularly wealthy man and was known to have suffered financial distresses.¹⁹⁵ How would such a poor and bankrupt grand vizier manage the needs of the deficient treasury? The case of Derviş Mehmed Pasha showed that wealth contributed to the grand vizier's ability to deal with financial issues. Secondly, Köprülü Mehmed was not a figure particularly known by the public. For a long time, he had not held any significant offices in Istanbul and had recorded no memorable successes. It was quite uncertain how he would manage to establish his authority over against his rivals in the political arena or what sort of policies he would follow. In addition, Köprülü Mehmed acquired the post during one of the most challenging times of the empire's history: the Venetian blockade was continuously putting pressure on the capital and the inhabitants were overcome by the anxiety that the city could be invaded any second. Of course, the most problematic uncertainty was the relationship of Köprülü Mehmed with the dynasty. Would Hadice Turhan stand behind Köprülü Mehmed or contribute to his downfall? This section seeks to answer this question given all the issues raised above: How did Köprülü Mehmed wield and consolidate his power?

¹⁹⁵ From his appointment as the governor of Köstendil in 1651 until becoming the grand vizier in 1656, Köprülü Mehmed had financial troubles except when he held an important position. The historian Silahdar notes that Köprülü Mehmed had difficulty in managing his finances and he was once imprisoned for his debts. See, Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 256, Metin Kunt, in this regard, remarks "that many people were astounded at the appointment of the penniless and bankrupt Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as grand vizier in 1656", Kunt, 'Derviş Mehmed Paşa', 202.

I argue that the most important element of Köprülü Mehmed's meteoric rise is the grand vizier's close collaboration with Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV. Before examining their relationship, it will be necessary to pinpoint the political role of Hadice Turhan. Did Hadice Turhan's role dwindle overnight after 1656? It needs to be pointed out that for Köprülü Mehmed's period in office, we do not have the same documentary evidence that we had in the previous section to highlight Hadice Turhan's role. Nonetheless, as I will portray in detail in the following pages, Hadice Turhan was transformed from an active participant to a supporter who provided help for the consolidation of the grand vizier's authority. As for Mehmed IV, he started to play a more active role and to attend the meetings in person. It will be suggested that he built up a close political relationship with Köprülü Mehmed. Nevertheless, in light of available sources, it is difficult to say if Mehmed IV took decisions on his own or with his mother. Therefore, I will refer to Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV together.

In the first days of his tenure, Köprülü Mehmed wanted to execute some prominent pashas, who were still protected by Hadice Turhan. Firstly, Köprülü asked Hadice Turhan to grant an execution order for Karagöz Mehmed Pasha, a former finance minister. Although Köprülü's request was based on Karagöz Mehmed's past record of corruption and crime, Naima openly stated that this request was a real test for Köprülü Mehmed Pasha to judge the extent of the dynasty's support.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, Karagöz Mehmed Pasha was executed on 6 November 1656 despite Hadice Turhan's protection. Another illustrating case was the execution of Abaza Ahmed Pasha, who was a protégé of Hadice Turhan. Abaza Ahmed Pasha was the commander of the garrison on Bozcaada (Tenedos), an important island in the Aegean Sea. He was accused of having surrendered the island to the Venetians without

¹⁹⁶ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1713.

mounting any resistance. Köprülü Mehmed summoned him to the capital and had him executed on 11 November 1656.¹⁹⁷ The most interesting point in this case was the place of the execution. Abaza Ahmed Pasha was executed inside the palace (*hasbağçe*) in front of the sultan.¹⁹⁸ This was a clear indication that Mehmed IV and Hadice Turhan had consented to the demands of Köprülü Mehmed.

Besides these executions, Köprülü Mehmed started dismissing several important individuals, eliminating rivals and increasing his sphere of influence. For instance, Halil Aga, the officer in charge of the highest grade of the palace pages, was dismissed on the charge that he tried to establish his influence independent of the grand vizier.¹⁹⁹ Halil Aga's dismissal was significant in the sense that it shows how Mehmed IV/Hadice Turhan did not tolerate the palace officer's meddling with the authority of the grand vizier.

Another question for Köprülü Mehmed was the increasing popularity of the grand admiral Seydi Ahmed Pasha. Seydi Ahmed was recently appointed as grand admiral because of his achievement in crushing the Venetian landing force at the Dardanelles.²⁰⁰ Additionally, Seydi Ahmed had a close relationship with the harem eunuchs and the *musahibs*.²⁰¹ They were active in promoting Seydi Ahmed's name as a much more able candidate for the grand vizierate.²⁰² There is no solid information about why they supported Seydi Ahmed Pasha against Köprülü Mehmed. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı speculates that Seydi Ahmed must have become acquainted with the palace officers when

¹⁹⁷ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1714 Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 75, Ziya Akkaya, 'Hasan Vecihi, "Tarih-i Vecihi", *Vecihî, Devri ve Eseri*', PhD Thesis, Ankara University, (1956), 145, (hereafter, Vecihi, 'Tarih-i Vecihi').

¹⁹⁸ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 75, Abdi Paşa, *Vekayi'name*, 99

¹⁹⁹ Abdi Paşa, *Vekayi'name*, 99 and Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1718, Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 63.

²⁰⁰ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1714 for the career of Seydi Ahmed Pasha according to Evliya Çelebi, see, Mehmet Ali Ünal, 'Evliya Çelebi'ye Göre Bir Osmanlı Veziri: Seydi Ahmed Paşa' *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10, (2011), 1-24.

²⁰¹ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1720, Abdi Paşa, *Vekayi'name*, 100 and Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 76.

²⁰² Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 63.

he was halberdier at the palace.²⁰³ Nevertheless, Uzunçarşılı's claim is weak, because Seydi Ahmed served as a governor in the provinces for a long time. Alternatively, the palace officials who were discontented with the increasing power of Köprülü Mehmed wanted to use the popularity of Seydi Ahmed to eliminate Köprülü Mehmed. Köprülü Mehmed immediately went to the palace and requested to appoint Seydi Ahmed as governor of Bosnia.²⁰⁴ Once again, Köprülü Mehmed's request for a dismissal of a notable officer was approved by Mehmed IV/ Hadice Turhan.

The dismissal of Seydi Ahmed as grand admiral created resentment among the central cavalry troops (*the sipahis*), who gathered and protested in the center of the city in December 1656. This was a highly serious military revolt directed against the growing power of Köprülü Mehmed. In response to the insurgents' protest, the leading high bureaucrats including prominent members of the *ulema*, the viziers and the representatives of the military class, convened at the house of the grand vizier to discuss the action plan. In this assembly of consultation (*meşveret*), the imperial writ sent by the sultan was read. Mehmed IV requested that all the participants help the grand vizier in suppressing the cavalymen's rebellion. Those present promised to support the grand vizier.²⁰⁵ The location of the assembly and reading of the imperial writ before the gathering could be seen as signs of the dynasty's open support for Köprülü.

Another clash between Köprülü Mehmed and his opponents in the palace took place in January 1657 after the removal from office of Siyavuş Mustafa Pasha, governor of Damascus. Siyavuş Mustafa Pasha was a former *silahdar* of Mehmed IV. As a *silahdar*, he was a very close attendant of the sultan. While a *silahdar*, he had been a supporter of Boynu

²⁰³ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, III, 36.

²⁰⁴ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1714.

²⁰⁵ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1722, *Silahdar*, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 78, Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 102 and Hasan Vecîhî, *Târîh-i Vecîhî*, 146.

Yaralı Mehmed Pasha. He had tried to prevent Köprülü Mehmed's appointment. Thus Hadice Turhan had removed him from the capital to Damascus as governor of the city.²⁰⁶ Köprülü Mehmed hindered Siyavuş Mustafa Pasha's governorship in Damascus and dismissed him in January 1657. Siyavuş Pasha tried to defy the order of dismissal, relying on the influence of his friends in the palace. Siyavuş Pasha prepared to keep the new governor out of Damascus by force. To avert a clash Köprülü was forced to compromise: both Siyavuş Pasha and his successor were appointed to other provinces, and Damascus was given to another pasha.²⁰⁷ After this brief settlement, Köprülü Mehmed requested Siyavuş Pasha's execution due to his disobedience against the imperial order. After hearing this request, many palace officials including the *Silahdars*,²⁰⁸ interceded with the sultan on Siyavuş's behalf.²⁰⁹ When Köprülü Mehmed heard about these initiatives, he immediately went to the palace. According to Naima, Köprülü Mehmed said that it was impossible to carry out his own duties when there were several others involved in the administration. For Köprülü the affairs of state could not be properly conducted when his work was contested by others: it was far better for him to resign from the grand vizierate than get executed one day on charges of defective administration.²¹⁰

Naima suggests that Köprülü Mehmed gained the full support of Sultan Mehmed IV, who allegedly said that it now fell on Köprülü Mehmed to punish those who meddled with his business. Indeed, those who had supported Siyavuş Pasha were expelled from the palace. Through the removal of Siyavuş Mustafa Pasha, one of his major rivals, from the

²⁰⁶ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1725-27.

²⁰⁷ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 81.

²⁰⁸ In this context, *Silahdars* are groups that were one of the six cavalry regiments of the Porte. It differs from Silahdar, who was a sword-bearer of the sultan. I thank Metin Kunt for clarifying the meaning of the silahdar.

²⁰⁹ Siyavuş himself had risen to high office from among the sword-bearers. Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1726 - 27.

²¹⁰ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1727.

scene and by expelling his opponents in the palace, Köprülü Mehmed was able to consolidate his power. Köprülü Mehmed received unquestioning support from the sultan, and this was the key to his success in eliminating his rivals and opponents.

A striking example of the harmonious relationship between Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Hadice Turhan/Mehmed IV is the change in the office of the chief harem eunuch. Solak Mehmed Aga, the treasurer of the harem and a supporter of Köprülü Mehmed's rise to the grand vizierate, was now appointed as chief harem eunuch. Following Köprülü Mehmed's elevation to the grand vizierate, Solak Mehmed Aga mediated between Mehmed IV and Köprülü Mehmed. He frequently visited the grand vizier on behalf of the sultan in the grand vizier's headquarters, while Köprülü Mehmed engaged in war with the Venetian forces. After the recovery of Tenedos, Mehmed IV sent Solak Mehmed Aga to Köprülü Mehmed with robes of honor, various gifts, and a letter congratulating him on his success.²¹¹ Köprülü established close rapport with Solak Mehmed Aga through his visits and promised him the office of the chief harem eunuch. Köprülü Mehmed asked the sultan to appoint Solak Mehmed Aga as chief black eunuch.²¹² Mehmed IV granted the grand vizier's request. Solak Mehmed Aga preserved his position during the vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed. This is a key appointment because the chief black eunuchs were very close to the sultan and the grand viziers had previously had no say in their appointments. On the contrary, the chief black eunuchs heavily dominated the political scene and the grand viziers and other grandees were often appointed on their recommendation during the first part of the seventeenth century. Solak Mehmed's appointment as chief harem eunuch on the recommendation of Köprülü Mehmed can be seen as another sign of Mehmed IV's support

²¹¹ Ibid., IV, 1712.

²¹² Köprülü Mehmed wrote to the sultan: "*I'm not sure* about the Chief Black Eunuch Dilaver Mehmed Aga, (who came to position in March after the great rebellion in Istanbul and it seemed that there was no formal relationship with Köprülü Mehmed Pasha) it is requested that Solak Mehmed Aga become the new Chief Black Eunuch", Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1774.

for his grand vizier. Moreover, it should be pointed out that this appointment marked the decline of the chief harem eunuchs on the political scene because Solak Mehmed Aga did not interfere in grand vizier's authority as a political actor. The passivity of Solak Mehmed cannot be explained only by the protection provided to him by Köprülü. Köprülü Mehmed was gradually asserting his authority over the realm and was ready, with the support of the dynasty to crush all potential threats venturing to meddle with his position.

Lastly, I argue that the most significant consequence of the close collaboration between Mehmed IV and the grand vizier was the relocation of the court to Edirne. On 18 October 1657, Mehmed IV and his mother Hadice Turhan with a large retinue including the grand vizier, the Seyhülislam, the chief judges (*Kazaskerler*), the group of distinguished palace officials (*zümre-i Muteferrika*) and pursuivants (*Çavuşlar*) went from Istanbul to Edirne.²¹³ The departure marked the beginning of a long sojourn of the dynasty in Edirne. Even though Istanbul remained the capital, Edirne gradually became the principal seat for the Ottoman dynasty until 1703. The Ottomans had conquered Edirne in 1361 and moved their capital there from Bursa (1361-1453). It was also an important center of the expanding empire, due to its proximity to the Balkan frontier.²¹⁴ Even after the conquest of Constantinople, the sultans occasionally resided in Edirne Palace and engaged in hunting expeditions.²¹⁵ However, they had not stayed there for longer than two years until the reign of Mehmed IV.

Why did Mehmed IV and Hadice Turhan decide to move to Edirne? The court historian Abdi Pasha notes that following the re-conquest of Tenodos, Köprülü Mehmed asked Mehmed IV to go to Edirne where they would meet in preparation for the campaign

²¹³ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1766 and see, Karin Adahl, 'The Twenty paintings', 74-113.

²¹⁴ For the importance of Edirne in early Ottoman history, see, Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995).

²¹⁵ For the some examples of the sultan's residence in Edirne in the first part of the seventeenth century, see Arif Bilgin, *Osmanlı Saray Mutfağı* (Istanbul, 2004) 97-101.

against the Venetians.²¹⁶ Naima also adds that another motive for the move was restoring the order in Transylvania.²¹⁷ Both chroniclers saw the sultan's move to Edirne as Köprülü Mehmed's deliberate attempt to secure the western frontier. However, apart from Abdi Pasha and Naima, the Ottoman chroniclers offer no detailed information about why the sultan departed for Edirne.

The move of the court to Edirne caught the Swedish ambassador Ralamb's attention, too. Ralamb carefully watched the procession of the sultan and recorded very vividly in his diary what he observed.²¹⁸ As for the reasons of the departure, Ralamb says:

During my stay at Constantinople sultan Mehmed entered into his 17th year, at which time a Turkish emperor becomes of age, and the mother's guardianship terminates. He is then by law obliged to repair to Adrianople, the ancient seat of the empire and to undertake some expedition, to entitle him to a third feather to be put into his turban by the vizier.²¹⁹

However, Ralamb might have been misinformed on the subject because there was no tradition that the Ottoman sultan became of age at seventeen, nor that he had to travel to Edirne then, nor that he would earn a third feather on his turban by undertaking an expedition. Conrad Jakob Hilterbrant, a secretary in the retinue of Gotthard Welling, another Swedish representative at the time, assumed that the sultan departed the city to avoid the plague, but there is no information to prove Hilterbrant's observation.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 113.

²¹⁷ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1766.

²¹⁸ Ralamb, *A relation of a journey to Constantinople*, 710-12.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 711.

²²⁰ Conrad Jakob Hilterbrant, *Dreifache Schwedische Gesandtschaftsreise (1656 - 1658)*, ed. Franz Babinger, (Leiden, 1937), 136.

In modern historiography, Metin Kunt offers an explanation for the departure of the sultan to Edirne. Kunt points out that Köprülü encouraged the sultan to leave Istanbul for Edirne to head the anticipated campaign. Kunt remarked that the resettlement of the court in Edirne was a step in the revival of the traditions of the empire since the former capital as a “historic gateway to Europe must have come to symbolize the empire-building tradition and glorious past of the Süleyman I” at that time.²²¹ However, it should also be pointed out that Mehmed IV did not take part in the campaign personally during the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Other modern historians do not give the reasons for the departure of the sultan to Edirne; instead they attribute the sultan’s preference to stay in Edirne for a long period to his devotion to hunting since Edirne was a more suitable place for hunting expeditions than Istanbul. It is true that Mehmed IV preferred Edirne for hunting expeditions in later years, but this does not explain his initial departure in October 1657.²²²

An alternative explanation suggested by Tülay Artan is consistent with my argument that since the very first day of his grand vizierate Köprülü aimed to hold the sultan in check. Artan strikingly observes “the new grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha may have wished to render the sultan inaccessible to any and all rival factions prior to cracking down on the latter.”²²³ As I explained in the first chapter, from the late sixteenth century on, accessibility to the secluded sultan had become increasingly valuable. The sultan’s favorites and harem eunuchs enjoyed the privilege of access to the sultan on a regular basis. Accordingly, they had the opportunity to exert considerable influence on the sultan’s decisions.

²²¹ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 85.

²²² Caroline Finkel, *The History of the Ottoman Empire, Osman’s Dream*, (New York, 2005) 307 and Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries, The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*, (Londra, 1979), 333.

²²³ Tülay Artan, ‘Royal Weddings and the Grand Vizierate: Institutional and Symbolic change in the early 18th century’, In Duindam et al. (eds.) *Royal Courts*, 350.

As the power of the servants of the inner court increased, the political authority of the grand vizier, who now had limited access to the sultan, diminished. Against this backdrop, the initiative undertaken by Köprülü can be regarded as an important measure to prevent the rise of inner-court rivals. Furthermore, as I explained above, in the first months of his tenure, Köprülü Mehmed faced serious opposition from various circles in the court. The sword-bearers and imperial council members intrigued to depose the grand vizier. This might have stimulated Köprülü Mehmed to take serious precautions.

The archival material shows that the repairs at Edirne Palace started three months after Köprülü Mehmed came to power.²²⁴ This evidence encourages us to speculate that Köprülü Mehmed was actively involved in the move of the court to Edirne. The repairs lasted almost one year. The register includes details of expenditures for the repairs at the court. The rooms for the sultan and the queen mother were extensively renovated. Many parts of the palace such as the kitchens, stables and new rooms for pages were largely repaired and renovated.²²⁵ The most remarkable innovation in the palace was the opening of a trellised window overlooking the council chamber of the Edirne Palace, similar to the one in Istanbul. This last innovation suggests that the sultan planned to reside in Edirne for a long time.

Whether Topkapı Palace staffs were entirely transferred or only a limited staff was relocated to Edirne is unclear. It is quite difficult to fully address this question because of the paucity of the archival sources as to the numbers of the staff in Topkapı and Edirne Palaces. Nevertheless, the budgets including data with regard to the expenditures of the

²²⁴ BOA, D.BŞM, D. 199, and see, Ahmet Arslantürk and Murat Kocaslan, 'Padişah için Hazırlık: 1067 - 1068 (1656 - 1658) Yıllarında Edirne Sarayı'nda Onarımlar ve Yeni Mekanlar', *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 55, (2012 - 2013), 2-26.

²²⁵ D.BŞM, D.199, 25.

staff in Topkapı Palace will to some extent help us to hazard an opinion about this.²²⁶ While reading the sources, we are confronted with two fundamental problems. First, these budgets were not prepared on regular basis. For instance, if we look at the budget of the year 1654, there is no example of its subsequent year budget. Thus we cannot systematically follow changes in the size of the staff. Secondly, the budgets differ in the information they contain. A few of them include every detail of palace expenditures, while others are summary budgets, including only the costs of the imperial staff, and do not mention the numbers of the staff. Now, we can look at the number of the staff in Topkapı Palace in 1654 and 1662, according to the budgets of those years.²²⁷

	1654	1661- 1662
Imperial Stables	3,291	3,398
Cooks-Pantry Staff	1,312	1,370
Artists	735	735
Tailors	221	217
Keepers of the Royal Appurtenances for Travel	1,059	1,193
Palace Honor Roll	760	631
Palace Ushers	976	693
Secretaries of the Imperial Council	42	36
Imperial Messengers	61	90
Keepers of the Sultan's Hunting Birds	589	32

Table 5: Number of staff in Topkapı Palace in 1654 and 1662

²²⁶ The book edited by Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar is the most comprehensive study on the Ottoman budgets and includes many unpublished budgets. see, Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar (eds), *Osmanlı Maliyesi: Kurumlar ve Bütçeler*, (İstanbul, 2006).

²²⁷ All the examples of the budgets are taken from Genç and Özvar's book, for the original reference number of the 1662 budget, see BOA MAD 22249, for the 1654's budget see, BOA MAD 22249 and for the additional information, see, Abdülkadir Özcan, *Eyyubi Efendi Kanunnamesi*, (İstanbul, 1994) 21-40.

When the budgets of 1654 and 1662 are compared, we can conclude that there were no dramatic changes in the size of the palace offices in Topkapı Palace. The most striking change can be detected in the sharp decline in the numbers of keepers of the sultan's hunting birds in Topkapı Palace between 1654 and 1662. This sharp decline makes sense considering the sultan's devotion to hunting because the keeper of the sultan's hunting birds had moved to Edirne. There are no separate titles for Edirne Palace and its expenditures. There is only one section regarding the number of the pages and gardeners (*Bostancı*) who were charged with the protection of the palace. According to the numbers in the budget, there were 356 gardeners in Edirne Palace in 1654, but the number of the gardeners increased to 661 in 1662.²²⁸ This could be explained by the presence of the sultan at the court in those years. Unfortunately, we do not have any statistical information about the numbers of the staff at Edirne Palace.

There is also important information on the numbers of soldiers in Istanbul in 1654 and 1662. In parallel with the palace staff, there is stability in the number of the military men, including the Janissaries and palace cavalry. For instance, there were 32,500 Janissaries according to the 1654 budget. As for 1662, the number of the Janissaries was still the same.²²⁹ This information suggests that the move of the dynasty to Edirne did not change the military presence in Istanbul. In this way, the military force, a key political

²²⁸ If we look at the numbers of the gardeners in Edirne Palace in the sixteenth century, we find numbers similar to those of 1654. For instance, 447 gardeners in 1583 and 334 gardeners in 1596. See, Murat Yıldız, '15. -19.Yüzyıllarda Edirne'de Asayışı Sağlayan Bir Kurum: Edirne Bostancı Ocağı', *History Studies*, 3/3, (2011), 383-94.

²²⁹ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, '1070-1071 (1660-1661) Tarihli Osmanlı Bütçesi ve Bir Mukayese', *İktisad Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 1/4, (1955 - 1956), 304-47.

player in Istanbul, was far away from the court and much less able to stage any effective opposition to the court.²³⁰

After reviewing the nature of collaboration between Hadice Turhan/Mehmed IV and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, we now turn to another important question: why did the dynasty support Köprülü Mehmed? The plausible answer is that Köprülü Mehmed succeeded in reestablishing internal peace and defeating the external menace. Firstly, Köprülü Mehmed broke the blockade on the Dardanelles through the re-conquest of Tenedos and Lemnos from Venetian forces, freeing the capital from the Venetian threat. Secondly, he quickly and forcefully eliminated the endemic rivalry between the Janissaries and the palace cavalry (*Sipahi*). For instance, rebellious *sipahis* in the capital were bloodily suppressed with the assistance of the Janissaries. Following the breaking of the power of the *sipahis*, Köprülü Mehmed directed his attention to the Janissaries. He got the opportunity to punish them when the Janissaries poorly performed in the battles to save Tenedos and Lemnos. Köprülü Mehmed ordered the execution of many Janissaries.²³¹ This time, Köprülü Mehmed played the *sipahis* off against the Janissaries.²³² As Rolamb observed, “executions (of janissaries) Köprülü Mehmed chiefly committed to the sipahis, with a view of rooting up all confidence between them.”²³³ Accordingly, Köprülü Mehmed reduced the power of the two armed forces in the empire, which could potentially threaten his growing authority.²³⁴ Thirdly,

²³⁰ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman*, 216.

²³¹ Levinus Warner reported on 7 August 1657: “Many Janissaries were executed on the orders of the grand vizier due to their reluctance in the war against Venice forces and many of those who escaped were imprisoned.” Warner, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 23.

²³² Wojciech Bobowski states “his father (Köprülü Mehmed) caused considerable division between the *sipahis* and the Janissaries so that they were always opposing one another”, see, C.G Fisher and A.Fisher, ‘Topkapı Sarayı’, 52.

²³³ Rolamb, *A relation of a journey to Constantinople*, 792.

²³⁴ Later nineteenth-century Ottoman historian and statesman Mustafa Nuri Pasha attributed the political silencing of the Janissaries to the draconian measures of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. See, Mustafa Nuri Pasha, *Netayicü'l- Vuku'at, Kurumlarıyla Osmanlı Tarihi*, I-IV, ed.Yılmaz Kurt, (Ankara, 2008), 173.

Köprülü Mehmed successfully eliminated the dangerous *Kadizadeli* movement, a puritanical sectarian group involved in factional politics since the reign of Murad IV.²³⁵ A few days before Köprülü Mehmed assumed power, the *Kadizadeli* followers called for a massacre of the Sufis. Köprülü Mehmed swiftly banished the ringleaders of the *Kadizadeli* movement to Cyprus and quieted down the situation in Istanbul. Thanks to Köprülü Mehmed's draconian and violent policies, the dynasty was no longer in jeopardy.²³⁶ Mehmed IV and Hadice Turhan were undoubtedly impressed by Köprülü Mehmed's administration of affairs. Mehmed IV had enormous respect for him, to the extent that, as one contemporary observer notes, he would call him "father."²³⁷

2.5. The Greatest Challenge to the Authority of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha: Abaza Hasan Pasha Rebellion and its Repercussions

Since his appointment as grand vizier in September 1656, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha had effectively managed to cope with the unrest in the empire and firmly consolidated his power as grand vizier. Köprülü Mehmed's strong grand vizierate posed a threat to the authority of the provincial governors of Anatolia, who had been independently wielding power in their domains since the late sixteenth century. They began to think that the wrath of Köprülü Mehmed would turn on them if they did not pre-empt it by taking necessary measures. Almost thirty powerful governors from various provinces in central and

²³⁵ For the Kadizadeli movement, see, Madeline Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45/4 (1986), 251–69.

²³⁶ "Köprülü Mehmed brought the empire to such a level that although the previous decades had been full of rebellions and factional strife, now public tumults ceased to a great extent and whatever remained was no longer conspicuous." Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 34-5.

²³⁷ The British Ambassador Earl of Winchilsea wrote "The Grand Signior is not more than twenty two years old, and wholly governed by the Vizier, whom he calls father" in 1657, see, *Report on the Manuscripts of Allen George Fince, Esq of Burley-On-The-Hill*. Rutland, Ed. S.C. Lomas, (London, 1913), 97

southeastern Anatolia gathered in Konya, in central Anatolia, in mid-summer 1658. The Anatolian pashas, led by Abaza Hasan Pasha, the governor of Aleppo, demanded that the sultan depose his grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed. The rebellion ended with the execution of Abaza Hasan Pasha and other pashas, who had been in state service for a long time. After repressing the greatest challenge to his authority, Köprülü Mehmed started to act much more independently and became even more powerful. How did Köprülü Mehmed survive the greatest challenge to his authority?

The rebellion should be evaluated within the context of the great transformation of the provincial governors from the late sixteenth century onwards. The major change in the provincial administration was in the shift from the district to the province as the main unit.²³⁸ In this way, the provincial governors in the seventeenth century ruled their provinces with much greater authority than in earlier times and enjoyed considerably increased revenues. They now controlled vast economic resources and had huge retinues as well as a small army. Moreover, the weakness of the central government had increased their autonomy in their territories. They acted freely and sometimes did not even obey the central government's orders.²³⁹ As in the case of İpşir Mustafa Pasha, the Anatolian pashas were even appointed as grand vizier by the central government in the hope that they would be effective in suppressing the independent actions of other pashas in the provinces because the central government had been powerless to destroy them. Anatolian pashas now were concerned about the increasing power of the central government headed by Köprülü

²³⁸ Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, 77-95 and the same author's latest overview of the provincial administration, see, Metin Kunt, "Devolution from the Centre to the Periphery: An Overview of Ottoman Provincial Administration", in Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus (eds.), *The Dynastic Centre and The Provinces, Agents & Interactions* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 30-49.

²³⁹ For a general overview of the Anatolian pashas in the early seventeenth century, Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca and London, 1994) and Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia. Amasya 1576- 1643* (Leiden and Boston, 2016).

Mehmed Pasha because they feared that they would lose their autonomous privileges. The most exemplary expression of the Anatolian provincial governors' concerns can be found in the chronicle of the eighteenth-century historian Nihadi, who recounted the governor's complaints:

Köprülü Mehmed executed so many people without reason that no experienced pasha is now alive. He finds faults with each of them and gets them killed. *His desire is to be superior to all* (italics mine). When his attention will be turned on you, even you will be executed. Hence act fast and be precautionary, or you will regret it in the end.²⁴⁰

Abaza Hasan Pasha led the revolt of the Anatolian pashas against Köprülü Mehmed. This was not the first rebellion for Abaza Hasan. He had instigated another rebellion against the central government in 1652. Abaza Hasan was by origin a member of the *sipahi*, the first of the six divisions of the imperial cavalry.²⁴¹ He served Sinanzade Mehmed Pasha, governor of Hamid as his mütesellim (deputy-governor). In 1648, Abaza Hasan became the *Türkmen voyvodasi*, a lucrative and desirable post in the seventeenth century.²⁴² His revolt against the central government was provoked by his dismissal by the powerful Janissary commander Bektas Aga, a key political figure in the capital at the time. Abaza Hasan gathered a large army, demanding his return to office. The uprising culminated in the agreement that Abaza Hasan would recover his office of *Türkmen Voyvodasi*. Abaza Hasan thus achieved his initial goal and also developed a reputation as highly competent and

²⁴⁰ Hande Nalan Özkasap, 'Tarih-i Nihadi (152b - 233a) Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme', MA Thesis, Marmara University (2012), 37.

²⁴¹ Mücteba İlgürel, 'Abaza Hasan Paşa İsyanı', Associate Professorship Thesis, Istanbul University (1976), 51-5, I thank Sinan Kaya and Turgay Koçak for their assistance in making a copy of the thesis.

²⁴² *Türkmen Voyvodası* is a new post in the seventeenth-century Ottoman financial administrative system. His duties included collecting taxes and carrying out administrative affairs of tribes. See, Onur Usta, 'Türkmen Voyvodası, Tribesmen and the Ottoman State (1590-1690)', MA Thesis, Bilkent University (2011), 7.

successful leader.²⁴³ Later, Abaza Hasan cultivated a strong relationship with İpşir Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Aleppo. İpşir Mustafa Pasha and Abaza Hasan independently ruled in Anatolia. After the demise of İpşir Mustafa Pasha in 1654, Abaza Hasan was appointed as governor of Karaman. After Köprülü Mehmed became the grand vizier, Abaza Hasan was transferred to Aleppo in February 1657. Due to both his *sipahi* origin and the fact that he had served almost independently of the Porte in Anatolia for a long while, he felt uneasy about the increasing authority of the central government, on the one hand, and about Köprülü Mehmed's violent policies towards the *sipahis*, on the other.

The tension between Köprülü Mehmed and the Anatolian governors erupted in open rebellion when Köprülü Mehmed called upon them to join the Transylvanian campaign that aimed to punish the rebellious movement of Gyorgy II Rakaczy.²⁴⁴ Abaza Hasan Pasha and other Anatolian pashas did not respond to the call-up immediately because they feared that the grand vizier would execute them. Abaza Hasan started to correspond with other Anatolian governors with a view to mounting a unified opposition to Köprülü Mehmed. As a result of Abaza Hasan's initiatives, almost thirty Anatolian pashas in or out of the office, including Tayyazade Ahmed Pasha, the governor of Damascus and Can Mirza Pasha, the governor of the Kütahya, gathered with 30.000 men in Konya in central Anatolia.²⁴⁵ Along with the large retinue of pasha households, many Janissaries and *sipahis* who were suffering under the draconian rule of the grand vizier, fled to Anatolia and joined forces with the rebellious pashas.²⁴⁶ They were still, to all appearances, on their way to join the

²⁴³ İlgürel, 'Abaza Hasan', 61-72.

²⁴⁴ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1784 and Hasan Vecîhî, "*Târîh-i Vecîhî*", 167 For the northern policy of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, see Kunt, *The Köprülü years*, 87 - 94, Özgür Kolçak, 'Şahinlerin Pençesinde bir Erdel Hükümdarı II.Rakoczi ve Köprülü Mehmed Paşa', Unpublished paper, I thank Özgür Kolçak for sharing his unpublished article; and Gabor Karman, *A Seventeenth-Century Odyssey in East Central Europe, The life of Jakab Harsanyi Nagy* (Leiden and Boston, 2016), 92-6.

²⁴⁵ Hasan Vecîhî, "*Târîh-i Vecîhî*", 169.

²⁴⁶ İlgürel, Abaza Hasan, 89.

campaign in Edirne, but, despite numerous orders from the sultan and the grand vizier asking them to proceed at once, they remained in Konya. Those gathered in Konya finally announced, “We will continue to assemble here until Köprülü Mehmed is dismissed”.²⁴⁷ They further proposed that Tayyazade Ahmed Pasha should replace Köprülü Mehmed only then would they serve in whatever campaign the sultan undertook.²⁴⁸

It is time to turn our attention to Edirne in order to look at the reaction of the sultan to ongoing events. When the rebels’ claims reached Edirne, Köprülü Mehmed had already set out for the campaign without most of the Anatolian troops. The first reaction of the sultan to the rebels was restrained and he did not insist that they join the Transylvanian campaign. Instead, he ordered them to move to Baghdad and guard the borders with Iran.²⁴⁹ Abaza Hasan and other commanders, however, ignored the order. No longer satisfied with the idea of the removal of Köprülü from office, they now called for his execution.²⁵⁰ In order to show their determination, they moved towards Bursa. It seems that they wanted to ensure popular respect and support for their cause, since their troops were not allowed to extort provisions and money from the peasantry as would be expected in an uprising.²⁵¹

While the rebellious group marched towards Bursa, members of the court were deliberating over whether the sultan was intent on supporting Köprülü Mehmed or not in the face of the growing unrest in the empire. Although Ottoman sources do not mention the issue, the Dutch resident Levinus Warner recorded some interesting details about the unfolding developments.²⁵² Warner obtained information from an unnamed source related to the court on Abaza Hasan’s insurrection and wrote in his diary, “the king said that I

²⁴⁷ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi ‘-nâme*, 122, the translation is taken from Finkel’s *Osman’s Dream*, 302 and Hasan Vecîhî, “*Târih-i Vecîhî*”, 172.

²⁴⁸ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1786.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 1788.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, 1787.

²⁵¹ Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 302 and Kunt, *The Köprülü years*, 103

²⁵² Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, Leiden University Library, Or.1159e

would rather lose my kingdom than my vizier.” However, not everyone agreed with the sultan and reminded him of the Arabic proverb “*La vefa’il müluk*” (There’s no lasting gratitude when it’s a matter of sovereignty).²⁵³ The passage shows that court views on how to respond to Abaza’s were far from monolithic. Indeed, some deny that the sultan staunchly backed to his grand vizier. In the following days, the historian Silahdar noted, “the sultan had shown such firmness and resilience in protecting the grand vizier that no one could dare to speak negatively about Köprülü.”²⁵⁴ In a similar vein, Warner again recorded crucial information about the firm support of the sultan for Köprülü Mehmed and disagreement within the court vis-à-vis the behavior of the sultan:

The king, having held a “*meşveret*” (consultation),²⁵⁵ made this public announcement: You who are present --at this point he grabbed the robe of the vizier: While this man (grand vizier) lives safe and sound, we also live safe and sound; if he suffers, we suffer together with him (it is said that the king was certainly persuaded in this by the vizier). Everybody says that never among them has there been a king who has “made *teslim*,(surrender)” i.e. conceded everything to such an extent to the vizier, but this king. Recently he himself stated that he realized the benefits that have accrued to him from the vizier.²⁵⁶

Mehmed IV’s refusal of the rebels’ demands changed Abaza Hasan’s political stance. Abaza Hasan then avowedly declared his independence: “From now on, consider us as implacable a foe as the Shah of Iran; they [the Sultan] shall have Rumelia and we Anatolia.”²⁵⁷ Warner indicates as well that Abaza acted unflinchingly to seize power in the

²⁵³ Ibid., 12a

²⁵⁴ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 158.

²⁵⁵ In the original text *meşveret* written in Arabic script

²⁵⁶ Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 18a.

²⁵⁷ Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, quotation at 303.

localities.²⁵⁸ Such a radical declaration was all the more dangerous since it was addressed to a young and inexperienced sultan while his grand vizier and most of the loyal troops of the empire were stationed far away.²⁵⁹ After this declaration of independent rule, the rebellion took a dramatic turn.²⁶⁰ Abaza and his followers began to plunder the vicinity of Bursa. The rebellious army expanded and became much more vigorous.

The government took action to counter the rebels and mobilized public opinion and support. It first proclaimed a general call to take up arms against the rebels (*nefir-i amm*). Moreover, the Seyhulislam Bolevi Mustafa Efendi issued a *fatwa*: “ Since they (the rebels) committed an act of oppression against the sultan, their blood can be shed lawfully: Those who cause Muslim armies to abandon their fight with infidels by perpetrating sedition are worse than infidels,”²⁶¹ The copies of the *fatwa* were dispatched to all cities in Anatolia along with orders for the mobilization of all men to join the government against the rebels. Warner pointed out that Abaza Hasan was rather angry because a “*nefir-i amm* had been proclaimed against him, and that a *fatwa* had been issued, which declare him to be an infidel, and excluded from the Muslim Community.”²⁶² We learn from this passage that the *nefir-i amm* and *fatwa* profoundly demoralized the insurgents since to be declared infidel by the highest religious authority would delegitimize the rebellion.

The rebel army finally entered Bursa when the governor of Bursa, Kenan Pasha, surrendered the city to them. With the capture of Bursa, the rebel army closed all the routes to Istanbul. People fled to Istanbul and murmured their displeasure about the grand vizier.²⁶³ The increasing annoyance in Istanbul and the growing power of the rebel army

²⁵⁸Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 19b.

²⁵⁹Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 303.

²⁶⁰İlgürel, ‘*Abaza Hasan*’, 94.

²⁶¹ Kunt, *The Köprülü years*, quotation at 107.

²⁶² Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 21a and it includes a copy of the *fatwa*.

²⁶³ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1791 and Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 22a

made Mehmed IV anxious. Mehmed IV wrote to Köprülü Mehmed to explain the seriousness of the situation and ask him to return from Transylvania immediately.²⁶⁴ Köprülü Mehmed swiftly arrived at Edirne on 12 October and the imperial council held an emergency meeting in the sultan's presence to which the officers and the elders of the Janissaries and *sipahis* were invited.²⁶⁵ Murtaza Pasha, governor of Baghdad, was charged with commanding the army.²⁶⁶ He was ordered to assemble the armies of the eastern governors to defeat Abaza Hasan.

In the meantime, Abaza Hasan was experiencing difficulties in maintaining his army due to resistance in the cities and his failures in Anatolia.²⁶⁷ Even though the rebel army defeated Murtaza Pasha's army in Ilgin, in the Konya plain, it did not take the initiative because of ongoing problems in finding adequate supplies for the army and the increase in desertions among its ranks. They moved to Antep, but they faced the hostility of the people of the region who were loyal to the government. Therefore, they then moved to Aleppo where Hasan Pasha was the former governor of the city. The government troops, regrouped under Murtaza Pasha, followed them closely but stayed in Aleppo without attacking the rebels. Murtaza Pasha promised the rebels in writing that if they surrendered he would use all his influence with the central government to reinstate them to their positions and restore their honor. In March 1659, Abaza Hasan and his lieutenant surrendered against a promise of clemency.²⁶⁸ On 15 March 1659 Abaza Hasan and thirty other leaders of the revolt were

²⁶⁴ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1791

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 1792.

²⁶⁶ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi '-nâme*, 124.

²⁶⁷ İlgürel, '*Abaza Hasan*', 110.

²⁶⁸ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1819.

executed.²⁶⁹ In this way, the rebellion, which was considered a serious challenge to Köprülü and eventually to the sultan, came to an inglorious end.

Once Köprülü Mehmed managed to quell Abaza Pasha's revolt, he acquired a great opportunity to eliminate all potential provincial resistance movements. Köprülü Mehmed sent his trusted lieutenant, Ismail Pasha, to round up rebels, to end unjustified tax exemptions and to confiscate all illegally held firearms.²⁷⁰

While Ismail Pasha undertook a survey to restore order in Anatolia, the sultan and the grand vizier moved to the Dardanelles through Bursa to perform an inspection of the castles. As a witness to the trip, Evliya Çelebi, who was now temporarily a member of Köprülü Mehmed's household, vividly described the ongoing punishment imposed on the *celalis* –those who were accused of joining Abaza Hasan Pasha's insurrection. Evliya pointed out that throughout the trip, tens of thousands of people who had been arrested in various parts of Anatolia and accused of being *celali* rebels were beheaded.²⁷¹ The dimension of the violence against the *celalis* was frightening. Evliya remarked “every day and at every stage, the severed heads and tongues of (Abaza) Hasan Pasha's followers arrived at the camp and were cooked as ‘head’ ‘n’ trotters soup.”²⁷² The harsh policy of the grand vizier and the inspection of Ismail Pasha in Anatolia contributed to the consolidation of the authority of the central government, which had been significantly bolstered since Köprülü came to power.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., IV, 1820, Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi '-nâme*, 132, Oral, ‘*Tarih-i Gülmani*’, 67 and Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 211 for the list of the names of the executed rebels, see, BOA, MAD 4688, 37-46.

²⁷⁰ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1837 and İ sazade, *İ sa-zade Tarihi*, 81 for the list of confiscated properties of the rebel pashas and others, see BOA, MAD 7326, 8.9.20 and 51.

²⁷¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 307 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu-Dizini*, Seyit Ali Karaman, İbrahim Sezgin and Yücel Dağlı (eds.), (İstanbul, 2001). V, 142.

²⁷² *Evliya Çelebi's Journey From Bursa to the Dardanelles and Edirne, From the Fifth Book of the Seyahatname*, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Annotations by Hakan Karateke (Leiden, 2013) 99.

On the personal level, after the rebellion was put down, Köprülü Mehmed targeted prestigious viziers to eliminate any possible rival for his position. Köprülü Mehmed's first target was Deli Hüseyin Pasha, the commander-in-chief in Crete. Deli Hüseyin Pasha was appointed as commander of the fortress of Canea in 1645. He then became the commander-in-chief in 1646. He captured the important town of Rhethymnos in 1647, which made him one of the most prestigious and popular pashas in the empire. During his thirteen years in Crete he distinguished himself by his personal courage. In February 1656, Hüseyin Pasha had been appointed grand vizier and the seal of office was dispatched to him, but the appointment was cancelled as a result of the Janissary revolt a week later.

The tension between Köprülü Mehmed and Hüseyin Pasha existed before the outbreak of the Abaza Hasan Pasha rebellion. Levinus Warner reported about this tension on 17 April 1658 "It is feared that the unrest will be unfolded soon due to increasing enmity between Köprülü Mehmed and Hüseyin Pasha."²⁷³ Subsequently, Hüseyin Pasha was recalled from his command in Crete.²⁷⁴ Köprülü Mehmed, hoping to rid himself of a popular rival, alleged that Hüseyin Pasha had misappropriated military funds for the Cretan campaign.²⁷⁵ Hüseyin Pasha was initially saved from death by the intervention of Mehmed IV and Hadice Turhan on the grounds that it was an inadmissible fate for one who had given such distinguished service for so long. The Seyhulislam, Bolevi Mustafa Efendi refused to issue a juridical opinion recommending his execution.²⁷⁶ Warner explained the reasons why Köprülü Mehmed needed to get a *fatwa* issued to kill Deli Hüseyin Pasha:

For his response was that many others had already been killed, and were killed without fatwa, so why did they seek it now in this case? And the grand vizier

²⁷³ Warneri, *De Rebus Turcicis*, 47-8.

²⁷⁴ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 130.

²⁷⁵ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1825-26.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, IV, 1828.

pointed out that for the King himself it was much more sensible for the life of Hüseyin Pasha to be spared, since he heard that he had served the uncle of the King (Sultan Murad) and he had been appreciated by his father (Ibrahim) and now had offered himself up to the present King, from whom he had proof that his body bore dignified wounds.²⁷⁷

It was only through a religious licence for execution that Köprülü Mehmed could overcome the sultan's admiration for Hüseyin Pasha. The seyhülislam Bolevi Mustafa Efendi was afterwards dismissed because he did not support the elimination of Hüseyin Pasha. Although Köprülü Mehmed did not take a juridical opinion about Hüseyin Pasha, he did not give up his initiatives to eliminate his prestigious rival. Deli Hüseyin Pasha was made governor of Rumelia in December 1658, but within weeks, as a result of the intrigues of his enemies, he was recalled to Istanbul to face a charge of extortion; he was imprisoned in the Seven Towers (*Yedikule*) and executed.²⁷⁸

Why did Köprülü Mehmed wait to receive consent from the sultan to execute Deli Hüseyin Pasha? Put differently, why did the sultan change his opinion after one and a half years? Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient evidence to give an exact answer to these questions. Chroniclers writing in the aftermath of the execution underlined that the accusations lodged against Hüseyin Pasha by the grand vizier were fabricated.²⁷⁹ Moreover they pointed out that the execution of Hüseyin Pasha caused grief among people who rather

²⁷⁷ Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 34b.

²⁷⁸ For review of the execution of Deli Hüseyin Pasha within the context of Ottoman law, see, Rhoads Murphey, "Hybridity in Ottoman legal tradition as a source of flexibility in governing the empire: an overview with particular reference to the application of the ruler's executive judicial or orfi powers" in *Imperial Lineages and Legacies in the Eastern Mediterranean, Recording the Imprint of Roman Byzantine and Ottoman Rule*, Rhoads Murphey (ed.) (New York, 2016), 35-49.

²⁷⁹ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 165-66 and Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1824-25.

chose to regard Hüseyin Pasha as a martyr.²⁸⁰ Though there was strong public sentiment that the charges brought against Hüseyin Pasha were false, the sultan ultimately approved Köprülü Mehmed's request for execution. This approval can be seen as a sign of the increasing power of Köprülü Mehmed and of the sultan's unlimited support for his actions, in particular after the suppressing of Abaza Hasan Pasha's revolt.

The last victim of Köprülü Mehmed's ferocious purge was his long-time enemy Seydi Ahmed Pasha. He was transferred to Bosnia as the governor from the position of grand admiral in 1656. Engaged in skirmishes on the Austrian border, he succeeded in suppressing the revolt ignited by the rebellious Ottoman vassal of Transylvania, Gyorgy II Rakaczy, which became the biggest threat to Ottoman sovereignty on its northern frontier. Evliya Çelebi identified Seydi Ahmed Pasha as a capable governor and an efficient military commander.²⁸¹ This time, unlike in the case of Deli Hüseyin Pasha, Köprülü Mehmed easily eliminated his former enemy and did not face any opposition from the seyhulislam or the sultan himself.²⁸² The elimination of Seydi Ahmed Pasha was the last step in the purge of the powerful and prestigious pashas. Accordingly, no true rivals remained for Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.

Consequently, Abaza Hasan Pasha's revolt was a turning point in the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed. The rebellion was the greatest and the most serious challenge to his authority. Köprülü Mehmed emerged from this challenge with his power further bolstered. Pursuing this advantage, on the one hand, he made a great effort to reestablish the authority of the central government in the provinces, but, on the other hand, he used the opportunity to eliminate his strong rivals with some trumped-up charges. From now on, there was no

²⁸⁰ Özkasap, 'Tarih-i Nihadi', 45-6.

²⁸¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, V, 219.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 319-21.

obstacle in his way to handing his post over to his son. The next chapter will focus on this unprecedented transfer of the office and on the story of his son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.

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’, *DIA*, 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',

(*müderriş*) 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 *müderriş* 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 Asafiyyeti 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 Kadiyaylagi 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.

³⁰¹Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-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 Busbecq 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 Sirmsirgil, 'Uyvar'in Turkler Tarafından Fethi ve Idaresi', 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-Tevârih*, 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 Araştırmaları/ 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 Konumaları/Yazılar*, (Istanbul, 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 Levini 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 Rycout 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 Köprülüs. 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 Atiyas, 'Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence: Ottoman Scribal Community in the Seventeenth Century', PhD Thesis, Harvard University (2013), 134

³³⁷ Paul Rycout, *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 Kreigsmacht 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 (*küllüye*), 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, TSMİA 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 *Numarali 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’-t-Tevârîh*, 231.

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

³⁹⁰ BOA, A.RSK. D.1535, 2, “Biz sefer-i hümâyûnda iken Vezîr-i mükerrerem 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.

³⁹⁷Ibid.,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.

⁴⁰³ Rycaut, *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

⁴⁰⁶Nicolo Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet, *Le Relazioni degli Stati Europei lette al Senatodagli Ambasciatori Venezianin el Secole 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 eHistoriker Hüseyinb. Gafer Genannt Hezarfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der Zweiten Halfe des 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Freiburg, 1971) 28-34.

⁴⁰⁷BOA 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-Tevârih*, 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 Köprülü's? 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'nin 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 Fazil

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.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KÖPRÜLÜ POWER: A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE KÖPRÜLÜ HOUSEHOLD

4.1. Introduction

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, vizier/pasha households gained considerable prominence in the Ottoman polity. They came to control vast economic resources and commanded huge retinues, each the size of a small army. This was the result of a profound transformation of the provincial administration, namely, from the district (*sancak*) to the province (*eyalet*) as the main unit of provincial bureaucracy.⁴²⁹ The central government willingly encouraged this development because the traditional central forces were not able to cope with growing disturbances in Anatolia or with the increasing threat of Habsburg forces on the western frontier of the empire. Consequently, the state tried to supplement the viziers' income. As Metin Kunt aptly remarks, "more and more members of the households of pashas were given government positions and fiefs while still in the service of their masters."⁴³⁰ Accordingly, "there was a transition from the more or less single-centered patrimonial administrative structure of the sixteenth century to a set-up dominated by numerous households in the seventeenth century."⁴³¹ Among these households, the Köprülü household emerged as the most important vizier household in that period as the Köprülü family steadily dominated political life. In this chapter, my main purpose will be to show

⁴²⁹ For a classical treatment of the developments of the Ottoman provincial system, see, Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, 77-95.

⁴³⁰ Kunt, 'Derviş Mehmed Paşa', 213.

⁴³¹ Christoph K. Neumann, 'Political and Diplomatic Developments', in Suraiya N.Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol.III: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, (Cambridge, 2006), 50.

how Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha established one of the most powerful vizier households in the seventeenth century.

The Köprülü household, indeed, is widely seen as the epitome of the vizier/pasha household in Ottoman historiography.⁴³² In a 1974 article, Rifaat Ali Abou El-Haj underlined the year 1656, when Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was appointed grand vizier, because it coincided with the rising political importance of grandee households.⁴³³ El-Haj also argued that with the ascendancy of the Köprülü household, vacancies in the administrative system were increasingly filled not by men “who were raised and identified as bureaucrats, but by men who were raised in or attached to vizier and pasha households.”⁴³⁴ Following El-Haj’s steps, Jane Hathaway points out that the Köprülü household displaced all competing vizier households where critical administrative appointments were concerned.⁴³⁵ By the same token, for Karen Barkey “the Köprülü family provided an alternative route of recruitment into politics, different from the palace and the military that had been until then controlled solely by the sultan’s household.”⁴³⁶ Although these leading scholars concur on the point that the Köprülü household played a central role in the Ottoman political establishment and had a monopoly on appointments, they do not offer any explanation as to how the Köprülü family managed to build such a powerful household. In this chapter, I will attempt to address this difficult question in detail.

The most challenging difficulty in studying vizier households is the paucity of literary and archival sources providing information on the size and function of vizier

⁴³² Rifaat Ali Abou El-Haj, ‘The Ottoman Vezir and Pasha Households 1683 - 1703: A Preliminary Report’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 94/4, (1974), 438-47, Jane Hathaway, ‘Households in the Administration of the Ottoman Empire’, *Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları, Journal of Turkish Studies*, 40, (2013) 127-49.

⁴³³ El-Haj, ‘The Ottoman Vezir’, 438.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 439.

⁴³⁵ Hathaway, ‘Households in the Administration’, 131.

⁴³⁶ Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference, The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, 2008), 208.

households in early modern Ottoman history. There are few archival materials relating to the households of the viziers of the sixteenth century. The first is a register book for annual incomes and expenditures of grand vizier Semiz Ali Pasha (r.1561-1565) for the years 1560-1561.⁴³⁷ The register also includes the records of all the gifts given and received, the audiences with foreign ambassadors and the credit relations. However, this register provides us with no details about the household members and their payments. There is a summary account of the expenditures of the household.⁴³⁸ The second piece of archival material is the annual accounting book of Ayas Pasha, governor of Erzurum for the year 1556-1557.⁴³⁹ Like the account of Semiz Ali Pasha, Ayaz Pasha's account is also a summary register. All we learn in this register is that 266,717 *akces* were spent on the servants of the inner and outer palaces.⁴⁴⁰ The only specific information to be found is *Kapi Kethüdasi* (steward of the provincial governor in Istanbul) Kabil Bey's annual payment of 22,200 *akces* for his services in carrying out the pasha's affairs in Istanbul.⁴⁴¹

As for the seventeenth century, there is a more detailed and published register: the governor of Diyarbekir Ömer Pasha's account book for the incomes and expenditures for the year 1670-1671.⁴⁴² We learn from the register that there were 125 guards and 220 lower

⁴³⁷ BOA, KK 717 for the transcription of the register, see, Osman Elanali, 'H.986'e ait Varidat ve Masarifat Muhasebesi Icmal Defteri, Senior Thesis, Istanbul University, (1974), I thank Selim Karahasanoğlu for providing a copy of the thesis.

⁴³⁸ BOA, KK 717, 3, the expenditures is in total amount to 1.402,743 *akces*, but there are no specific details.

⁴³⁹ BOA, KK 1865, This register is published by Dündar Aydın, see, Dündar Aydın, 'Osmanlı Devrinde XVI.yüzyılda Erzurum Beylerbeyi Ayas Paşa'nın Bir yıllık Bütçesi', *OTAM (Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi), Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 8 (1997), 393- 477.

⁴⁴⁰ Dündar Aydın, 'Osmanlı Devrinde', 409.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 409 and for the function of the kapi kethudasi see, Michael Nizri, 'Rethinking Center-Periphery Communication in the Ottoman Empire, The Kapi Kethudasi', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 59, (2016), 473-98.

⁴⁴² BOA, MAD 6786, This register is studied by Metin Kunt, see, Metin Kunt, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin Yıllık Gelir-Gideri Diyarbekir, 1670-71* (Istanbul, 1981).

level *birun* employees and that pages received 3.2 *kurus* per month per person.⁴⁴³ Even from this relatively more detailed register, it is not possible to draw an all-inclusive picture of the household servants. Thus, it is difficult to find in these sources substantial and satisfactory evidence to determine the size of the vizier household.

The most detailed information about a vizier household is, however, to be found in memoirs of Antoine Galland, who was the assistant of Marquis De Nointel, the French ambassador in Istanbul in the years 1670-1679.⁴⁴⁴ The size and functioning of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha's household are minutely described in Galland's memoirs. Galland's description can be summarized as follows: while members of the inner household (pages) received a low salary, high officials of the permanent household such as the steward, gatekeepers, letter-bearer and the head of the stables received no pay. Others in the outer permanent household and the mercenary troops were paid 3-12 *kurus* per month.⁴⁴⁵

As the archival sources and Galland's description show, the vizier households were divided into two main branches: an inner and outer court, which imitated the sultan's household on a smaller size. As for the Köprülü household, I have been unable to trace information on numbers, wages or function of the inner and outer members of the household because we do not have sources giving detailed figures.⁴⁴⁶ What we could discover about them was related to the steward, *agas*, scribes and the permanent companions of the grand vizier. Therefore, instead of the traditional inner-outer division, I propose to evaluate the Köprülü household in three separate layers.

⁴⁴³ Kunt, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin*, 23.

⁴⁴⁴ Antoine Galland, *İstanbul'a ait günlük hatıralar (1672 - 1673)*, tr. Nahid Sırrı Özik (Ankara, 1998).

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 132-42.

⁴⁴⁶ Galland and Ottoman sources indicate that Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's retinue included around a thousand pages (*iç oğlanları*) in the 1672 military campaign against the Polish. For insightful analysis of the departure procession of 1672, see Tülay Artan, 'Osmanlı Ordusunun Sefere Çıkış Alayı (1672): Osmanlı Kadimciliği mi, Püriten Gösterisi mi?', in Ayşen Anadol (ed.), *Uzak Komşu Yakın Anılar, Türkiye Polonya İlişkilerinin 600 Yılı* (İstanbul, 2014), 60-77.

In the first layer of the household, I will examine the function of the family members, *kethüdas*, *agas* and scribes. The main criterion for putting these officers and relatives into the first layer is their proximity to the person of the grand vizier. These officers accompanied the grand vizier on his military campaigns and performed critical roles in the household. For this reason, I will explain the function of each officer and member of the family.

In the second layer, I will place the clients of the Köprülü family in the administrative system. The patron-client (*intisab*) tie is the linchpin of the section. *Intisab* was established between the head of the household and his household members by means of recruitment, training and appointment. “Aided by their patron’s *intisab*, they (the clients) became officeholders and, the more successful, also heads of their own households.”⁴⁴⁷ Therefore, it was the gateway for many dependents to progress in their administrative careers. I will show how the Köprülü grand viziers established *intisab* with their clients. In particular, I will focus on sons-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, since they played crucial roles in preserving the power of the Köprülü household.

In the third layer, I will scrutinize a neglected aspect of *intisab*: the relationship between the vizier households and provincial timariots, and will address a fundamental question in this section: how were the provincial timariots connected to the Köprülü household?

The figure below will help visualize the course I will follow in this chapter:

⁴⁴⁷ Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy*, 159.

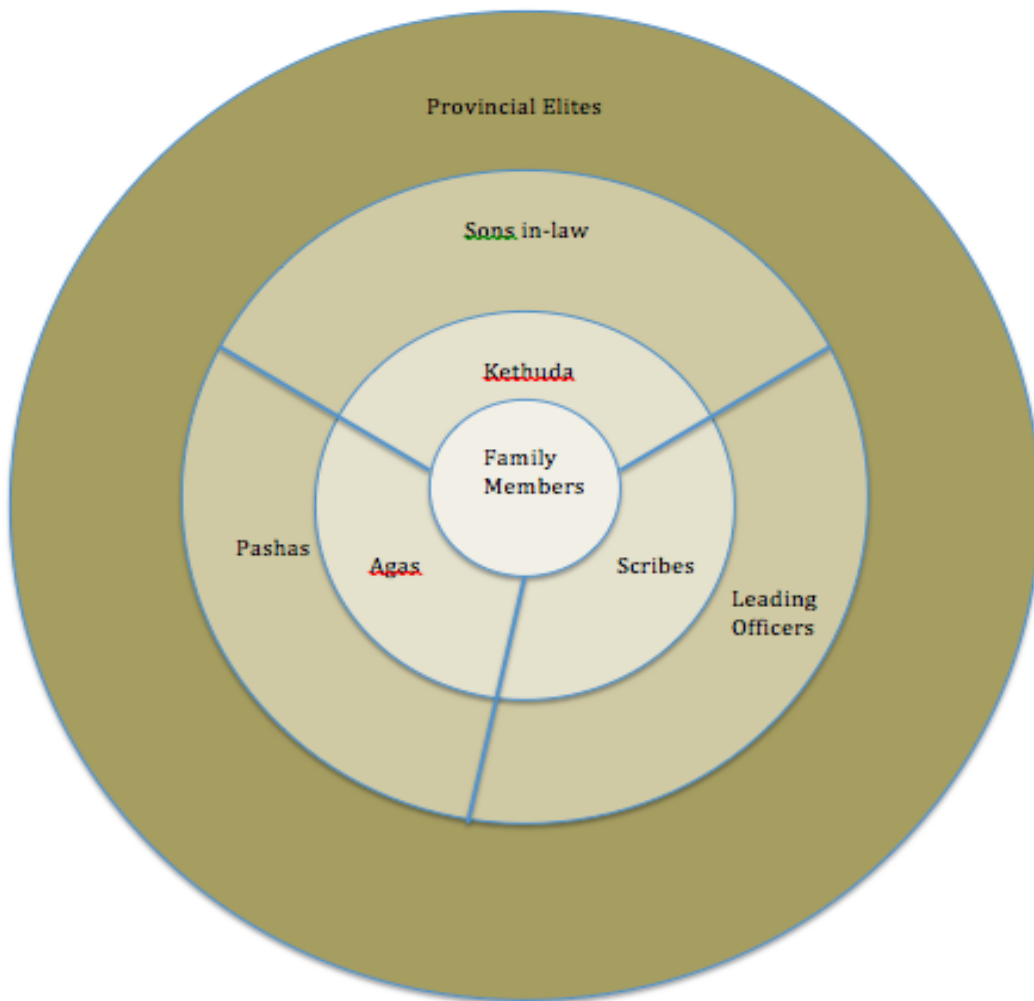


Figure 1: The Layers of the Köprülü Household

Upon his succession following Köprülü Mehmed Pasha in the position of grand vizier, his son Fazıl Ahmed attained enormous power. In each section, I will trace the footprints of this unprecedented succession. The main questions of the chapter include: what sort of positions did Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's clients occupy during his son's grand vizierate? Did the sons-in-law persist in their loyalty to the family? Can we find traces of this continuity among the lower-level servants, such as the steward and scribes?

The sources on the subject are quite limited and taciturn when it comes to details. Given these shortcomings of the available sources from the period, I will combine all the available evidence drawn from distinct types of sources in order to shed light on the functioning of the Köprülü household. Particularly, I will employ the chronicles written by the scribes of the Köprülü household. These are Mühürdar Hasan Aga's *Cevahirü't-Tevarih*, Osman Dede's chronicle *the history of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha* and Mustafa Zühdi's *Ravzatül'l Gaza*.⁴⁴⁸ These works were being written by the household servants of the Köprülü household and they provide precious insights into the other household members such as the family, steward and other officials.

4.2. The First Layer of the Köprülü Household

4.2.1. Family Members

I have already indicated in the introduction that vizierial households functioned similarly to the Ottoman palace but on a smaller scale. Like the sultan, the head of the household delegated his authority to a group of officials who formed a semi-permanent administrative body. The grand vizier and his family stood at the heart of the household. In this section, I will examine Köprülü family members as a part of the household. As Jane Hathaway points out, family members including wives, children and siblings were key players in preserving the household's wealth and fame.⁴⁴⁹ But the following questions need to be asked: did they perform a special task in the household organization? Did they assume an official position in the state or continue to stay with the family?

⁴⁴⁸ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, I examined this important source in detail in the previous chapter, Arslan Poyraz, 'Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed' and Mustafa Zühdi, *Ravzatül'l Gaza*, Istanbul University Library, TY 2488.

⁴⁴⁹ Jane Hathaway, 'Households in the Administration', 29.

Firstly, I would like to show the family tree of the Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. This figure was prepared in accordance with the information in the *vakf* registers of the family members.⁴⁵⁰ The family tree includes Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s sons, daughters and grandsons. Even though the Köprülü family tree could be extended to the twentieth century, here I confine the figure to the first part of the eighteenth century.

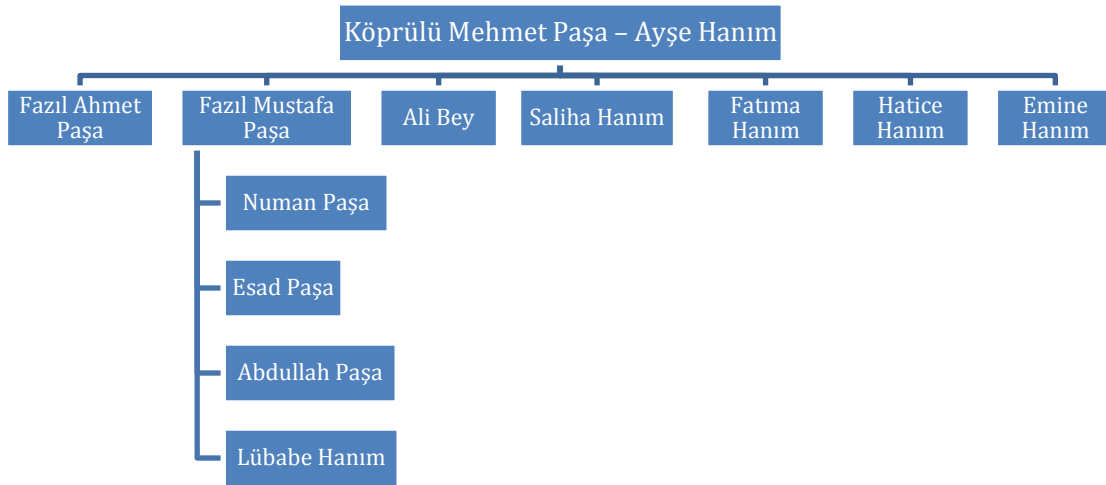


Figure 2: Köprülü Family Tree

Firstly, I will touch upon the life of Ayşe Hanım, the wife of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. The information concerning Ayşe Hanım is very scanty. She was born in Havza as a daughter of an affluent *voivoda* of the region.⁴⁵¹ When Köprülü Mehmed Pasha came to Köprü as a sub-governor of the region, he married Ayşe Hanım in the 1630s. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s marriage to Ayşe Hanım must have been very late in his life because when Köprülü Mehmed died in 1661 he was in his seventies. They had three sons and four daughters. After Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s death in 1661, Ayşe Hanım mostly spent her

⁴⁵⁰ for the *vakfs* of the Köprülü family, see, Köprülü Kütüphanesi (Köprülü Library) 2/2445 and 3/2446, 4/2447, and also see, Yusuf Sağır, ‘Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerine ve Vakfiyelerine Göre Köprülü Ailesi Vakıfları, PhD Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, (2012), 242-52.

⁴⁵¹ İbnülemin, Dahiliye, 19/1789 “Köprülüzade Mustafa Paşa hazretlerinin mükerremelerinin Havza kazasına tabi Kayacık nam karye çiftliği”.

time with son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. In 1665, she came to Belgrade to congratulate her son on his victory over the Habsburg forces and visited the grave of her younger son Ali Bey who had just died on the way back from the Raba River due to illness.⁴⁵² During the siege of Candia, Ayşe Hanım stayed with Fazıl Ahmed along with other members of the family, including the grand vizier's brother Fazıl Mustafa, his sisters, uncle and cousin.⁴⁵³ She gave moral support to her son for two and a half years. We have limited information on her activities in Crete. There is a single example of Ayşe Hanım's influence on Fazıl Ahmed's decision-making. In March 1667, Fazıl Ahmed ordered the execution of Abdülkadir Pasha, Manca Mehmed Pasha and Egribozlu Ali Pasha because of their responsibility for losing the naval battle against the Venetian fleet. Ayşe Hanım asked that he pardon Abdülkadir Pasha, who was the captain of the ship, which had brought Ayşe Hanım from Istanbul to the island. Fazıl Ahmed granted her request and pardoned Abdülkadir Pasha.⁴⁵⁴

The important point is that Ayşe Hanım was always standing by the side of her son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha along with the other members of the family. In all the military campaigns that Fazıl Ahmed led, his mother, brothers, uncle and cousin accompanied him, indicating that the Köprülü family stuck together as a whole all the time. However, it is almost impossible to pinpoint the role of Ayşe Sultan and daughters in the household structure, as there are few references to her in the chronicles.

The most renowned member of the family after Ayşe Hanım was Mustafa Bey, the only brother left to Fazıl Ahmed after their brother Ali Bey's untimely death in 1665. Fazıl Mustafa was the second son of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. He was two years younger than his elder brother Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. He was born in the town of Köprü in 1637, when his

⁴⁵² OeStA (Österreichische Staatsarchiv), HHStA (Haus- Hof-, und Staatsarchiv), Türkei I/138, Konv. 1, vr. 31a-33b I thank Özgür Kolçak for providing this important text. Also, see Mustafa Zühdi, *Ravzatü'l-Gazâ*, 71a.

⁴⁵³ Mühürdar Hasan, '*Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*', 461-62,

⁴⁵⁴ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*. 440, İ sazade, *İsa-zade Tarihi*, 95.

father was the sub-governor of the district.⁴⁵⁵ He spent part of his childhood in Köprü and in various other cities such as Trabzon, Karaman, Damascus and Iznik where his father held various posts. Fazıl Mustafa began madrasa education in the early years of his childhood with his brother Fazıl Ahmed. He entered the ranks of the sultan's guards as a *Müteferrika* in 1659.⁴⁵⁶ *Müteferrika* was a special corps in the palace outside service (*birun*). Only a very small number of sons and brothers of the highest officials joined this service.⁴⁵⁷ Even though Fazıl Mustafa managed to become a *Müteferrika*, he spent most of his time with his elder brother, on campaigns. Although Mustafa Zuhdi and Mühürdar Aga stated that Fazıl Mustafa accompanied his brother in the diplomatic negotiations and meetings, there is no evidence indicating his active participation.⁴⁵⁸ During the time he lived by the side of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha as a *Müteferrika*, Fazıl Mustafa enjoyed revenues of *zeamet*.⁴⁵⁹

It should be emphasized that Fazıl Mustafa did not receive any administrative post during his brother's tenure as grand vizier. He was appointed as the seventh dome vizier in the imperial council only in 1680 while his brother-in-law Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha was grand vizier.⁴⁶⁰ How can we explain the long absence of Fazıl Mustafa from the administrative structure? There is a plausible explanation for this absence. Fazıl Mustafa focused on his intellectual activities, refraining from politics. Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha took considerable interest in the education of Fazıl Mustafa. Both his father and his elder brother saw to it that Fazıl Mustafa was educated by the most prominent

⁴⁵⁵ For the life of Fazıl Mustafa Pasha, see, Zeynep Aycibin, 'XVII. Yüzyıl Sadrazamlarından Köprülü-zâde Mustafa Paşa Döneminde Osmanlı Devleti'nin Siyasî ve Sosyal Durumu', MA thesis, Mimar Sinan University, (2001) and Fehmi Yılmaz, 'The Life of Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa Pasha and his grand vizierate', MA Thesis, Bilkent University, (1996).

⁴⁵⁶ Azize Gelir Çelebi, "93 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (1069 - 1071/ 1658 - 1660) (Tahlil-Transkripsiyon ve Özet), M.A Thesis, Marmara University (2008), 155-56.

⁴⁵⁷ For the *müteferrika* corps, see, Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, 33.

⁴⁵⁸ Mühürdar Hasan, '*Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*', 133 and Özgür Kolçak 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri', 130, Mustafa Zühdi, *Ravzatü'l-Gazâ*, 70a.

⁴⁵⁹ MAD 3774, 12 and 22.

⁴⁶⁰ Zeynep Aycibin, '*XVII. Yüzyıl Sadrazamlarından*', 17.

scholars of the empire, including Hanlizade Mehmed Efendi.⁴⁶¹ Contemporary Ottoman observers portrayed Fazıl Mustafa as an eminent scholar on Islamic sciences and lexicology and an avid reader.⁴⁶² Fazıl Mustafa was indeed renowned as a protector of prominent intellectuals and luminaries.⁴⁶³

As for the four daughters of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, there is very little information. Even the chronicles written under the patronage of the Köprülü grand viziers hardly mention them. The few words we can say about them would concern their husbands and the marriage strategies of the Köprülü family. The head of a vizierate household might marry off his daughter to an outstanding member of household, whether a slave or a free man, in order to ensure the future bridegroom's loyalty. Alternatively, "he might marry off his daughter or son to the children of the heads of other important households in order to strengthen the ties between the two households and thus expand their political and economic power."⁴⁶⁴ Köprülü Mehmed Pasha utilized both marriage strategies to strengthen his family's position in the Ottoman elite. Two daughters of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha married clients of the Köprülü household, Merzifonlu Mustafa and Abaza Siyavuş Pashas. Saliha Hanım was married to Merzifonlu Mustafa, who made his way into the household at a very early age and served as sword-bearer of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. We do not know the name of the wife of Abaza Siyavuş Pasha. Abaza Siyavuş Pasha, on the other hand, entered the household as a slave and functioned as a steward for many years. The remaining two grooms were inner-palace graduates: Kaplan Mustafa and Kibleli Mustafa Pashas, who were both governors-general. However, we have no information about the dates of their marriages and names of their wives. Relying on the sources it can be deduced that their

⁴⁶¹ Uşşakızade İbrahim Efendi, *Zeyl-i Şekaik*, Ed. Hans Joachim Kissling, (Wiesbaden, 1965) 532

⁴⁶² Abdülkadir Özcan (ed.), *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099 - 1116/ 1688 - 1704)* (Ankara, 2000), 28 and Mustafa Zühdi, *Ravzatü'l-Gazâ*, 70a-71a.

⁴⁶³ Heidrun Wurm, *Der Osmanische Historiker Hüseyin*, 36-64.

⁴⁶⁴ Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household*, (London, 2014), 62.

marriages took place before 1663.⁴⁶⁵ I will explore in detail the sons-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as influential members of the household in the next section.

About daughters-in-law of the family, we know that Fazıl Mustafa was married with four children, but the name of his wife is unknown to us. We have unfortunately been unable to find out whether Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was ever married. It is important to note here that the Köprülü family did not seek any marriage links with the dynasty.⁴⁶⁶ Since the reign of Süleyman I, Ottoman princesses were married to promising or already powerful state officials. Sons-in-law (*damads*) of the dynasty thus gained proximity to the ruling house and attained power. Was this, then, a conscious policy followed by either the imperial dynasty or by the Köprülü family? Unfortunately, it is again impossible to answer this question in light of the extant sources.

His mother and siblings were not only the family members living by Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's side. Like the other members of the family, Fazıl Ahmed's uncle Hasan Aga and his son Hüseyin Bey, who would be another Köprülü grand vizier in from 1697 to 1702, accompanied Fazıl Ahmed. *Amca* (Uncle) Hasan Aga's life has not been satisfactorily illuminated. Given the fact that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was recruited for the palace through the *devsirme* system and that the *devsirme* often placed his close relatives in palace or official positions, it can be assumed that Köprülü Mehmed's brother Hasan Aga might have been recruited for the palace or another official post.⁴⁶⁷ The most tangible document available to us indicates that his son Hüseyin Bey was born in 1644 in Köprü where

⁴⁶⁵ See, Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih and Mustafa Zühdi, Ravzatü'l-Gazâ*.

⁴⁶⁶ For the marriage politics of the Ottoman dynasty, Juliette Dumas, 'Les Perles de nacre du Saltanat, Les Princesses Ottomanes (mi-XVe-mi-XVIIIe siècle)', Ph.D Thesis, Ecole Des Hautes en sciences Sociales (2013).

⁴⁶⁷ Murat Yıldız, *Balkanlar'daki Osmanlı Vakıf Mirasından Amca Hasan Vakfı*, (İstanbul, 2012) 20 and Selim İlim Özkan, 'Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Hayatı ve Faaliyetleri (1644 - 1702)', PhD Thesis, Süleyman Demirel University (2006),1

Köprülü Mehmed was governing at the time.⁴⁶⁸ Amca Hasan Aga appeared again during his nephew's grand vizierate, this time as the uncle. He participated in Fazıl Ahmed's military campaigns and stayed with him all the time.

The future grand vizier Hüseyin Bey also accompanied his father and his cousin Fazıl Ahmed Pasha during the latter's military campaigns.⁴⁶⁹ Later, Hüseyin Bey also followed the army on the 1683 campaign to Vienna as a part of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha's retinue.⁴⁷⁰ This fact also suggests that Köprülü family members served in the Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha household, too. Hüseyin Pasha was appointed as grand admiral in 1694 and became the grand vizier in 1697. He kept this position until 1702.⁴⁷¹

4.2.2. Always Loyal, Always Client: *Kethüdas* of the Köprülü Household

By the fifteenth century, the concept of *kethüda* (the steward or chief household officer) was used in the Ottoman administration system to designate the staff member who looked after the affairs of a government official or influential person.⁴⁷² Put differently, *kethüda* was an authorized deputy official. There were many *kethüdas* working in different branches of Ottoman social and political organization such as the Janissary corps, treasury, the dockyards, the imperial pantry and the grand vizierate. The most important of those officials bearing this title was the *kethüda* of the grand vizier. As a senior member of the grand vizier household, the *kethüda* took prime responsibility for administering the household.⁴⁷³ He commanded *Agas* (*officers*) and mercenary units.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, he actively

⁴⁶⁸ Halime Doğru, *Lehistan'da Bir Osmanlı Sultanı*, (İstanbul, 2006), 24.

⁴⁶⁹ Mustafa Zühdi, *Ravzatü'l-Gazâ*, 71a and 71b.

⁴⁷⁰ Selim İlim Özkan, 'Amcazade Hüseyin', 4.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁷² Cengiz Orhonlu and Gabriel Baer, 'Kethüda.', in Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

⁴⁷³ For the historical development of the *kethüda* position in the Ottoman administrative system, see, Muzaffer Doğan, 'Sadaret Kethüdalığı, (1730 - 1836)', PhD Thesis, Marmara University (1995).

⁴⁷⁴ Muzaffer Doğan, 'Sadaret Kethüdalığı', 26.

participated in the diplomatic negotiations in the name of his master. Due to these factors, *kethüdas* occupied a more privileged position in comparison to the other servants of the household. For instance, only *kethüdas* were granted *timar* revenues, which could reach up to 35,000-40,000 *akces*.⁴⁷⁵ The most distinctive point here is that while other members of the household, such as *telhisci* (messenger) and *kapıcıbaşı* (head of gatekeepers) received shares of the official revenues assigned to the grand vizier, *kethüdas*' income was independently allocated by the state. Another example underlining the importance of the *kethüda* was his prominent place in the list of distribution of the sultan's of royal largesse. One of these registers dated 1661 shows that the *kethüda* of the grand vizier received a considerable largesse second only to that of the grand vizier.⁴⁷⁶

Kethüdas of the grand viziers were generally selected from the staff of the grand vizier's household. However, there were some exceptional cases. For instance, by an imperial edict (*hatt-ı hümayin*), Haydar Bey, *kethüda* of the grand vizier Siyavuş Pasha, was dismissed in 1592 and the governor of Egriboz Mustafa Bey, replaced him.⁴⁷⁷ Almost one hundred years later, in 1711, the sultan dismissed Hasan Aga, *kethüda* of the grand vizier Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha, due to ongoing complaints about him.⁴⁷⁸ These cases exemplify the rare incidents of involvement of the sultan in the selection of grand viziers' *kethüdas*.

The position of *kethüda* began to gain prominence in the seventeenth century as it turned into a stepping-stone for the highest positions in the administrative echelon.⁴⁷⁹

Viziers were trying to appoint their *kethüdas* to significant posts that sometimes culminated

⁴⁷⁵ Anonymous, 'Hırzû'l- müluk', 185

⁴⁷⁶ BOA, D.BSM, D.221, 4-5, This *kethüda* would have been Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, the steward of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.

⁴⁷⁷ Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, I-II, Ed. Mehmet İpşirli, (Ankara, 1999), I, 280-1.

⁴⁷⁸ Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Pasa, *Zübde-i Vekayiat*, Ed. Abdülkadir Özcan, (Ankara, 1995) 725

⁴⁷⁹ However, we can find a few examples from the sixteenth century, see, Mustafa Ali, *Mustafa Ali's Counsel*, II,12.

in the grand vizierate. In the first part of the seventeenth century, three kethüdas became grand vizier.⁴⁸⁰ These pashas had started their careers in the households of grandees and continued as provincial governors without holding any intermediate state office. For instance, Derviş Mehmed Pasha was a kethüda of Tabaniyassi Mehmed Pasha, grand vizier from 1632 to 1637. It was in 1636, while his patron Tabaniyassi was still in office, that Derviş Mehmed received his first imperial appointment, as governor of Damascus.⁴⁸¹ In the second part of the seventeenth century, the number of kethüda-turned-grand-viziers dramatically increased. Between 1683 and 1703, there were five grand viziers who rose to power from the kethüda position.⁴⁸²

What was the background of each Köprülü household kethüda? What sort of responsibilities did they assume as a kethüda? More importantly, which offices did they occupy after being a Köprülü kethüda and did they continue their relationship with their master?

The first kethüda of the Köprülü household I have detected is Gürcü Mehmed Pasha. Ottoman sources are silent regarding the career and activities of Gürcü Mehmed Pasha as a steward of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. However, Paul Rycaut recorded his connection with Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. He claimed that he was “a Person, who by his own Estate and Friends had raised the House of Kuperlee, having in the time of his Poverty and Meanness lent him that Sum of Money, which gave him the first Rise to his Richness and Authority.” To reward his help and support, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha appointed him as

⁴⁸⁰ They were Tabaniyassi Mehmed Pasha, Derviş Mehmed Pasha and Boynuegri Mehmed Pasha.

⁴⁸¹ Metin Kunt, ‘Derviş Mehmed Paşa’, 200.

⁴⁸² *Osmanlı Sadrazamları, Hadikatü'l-Vüzerâ*, 118-27.

his kethüda.⁴⁸³ Aside from Rycout's succinct note, there is no information on Gürcü Mehmed's functions during his tenure.⁴⁸⁴

When Köprülü Mehmed Pasha died in October 1661, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha maintained his position as steward of the new grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. This appointment followed the recommendation of Mehmed IV.⁴⁸⁵ Afterwards, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha was promoted to be governor of Diyarbakir.⁴⁸⁶ After the governorship of Diyarbakir, he became the governor of Aleppo, one of the most important posts in the Ottoman administrative-military system. He joined the Austrian expedition with a large household including almost two thousand soldiers in 1663.⁴⁸⁷ Mühürdar Hasan Aga stated that the grand vizier highly respected him and sought to receive his advice on the every subject.⁴⁸⁸ Indeed, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha played a critical role in the military organization in the 1663-1664 wars.⁴⁸⁹ In 1665, he was transferred to the governorate of Buda, the most important outpost of the Ottoman Empire on the western border. He died in this position. Gürcü Mehmed Pasha's career is a good example of the transition from Köprülü Mehmed's household to that of his son. He began his career in Köprülü Mehmed's household and transferred to Fazıl Ahmed's household. Although Gürcü Mehmed Pasha retained his position as steward for only a short time, the relationship between Gürcü Mehmed Pasha and his new master Fazıl Ahmed Pasha continued to grow. He was appointed to significant provincial positions and contributed with his large households to the grand vizier's efforts against the Habsburg army.

⁴⁸³ Paul Rycout, *The History of the Turkish*, 116.

⁴⁸⁴ Evliya Celebi described Gürcü Mehmed as a procrustean, see, Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, VII,59.

⁴⁸⁵ Mühürdar Hasan, '*Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*', "Lala, baban kethüdası olan Gürcü Kethüdayı kendüye kethüda eyle." 154.

⁴⁸⁶ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 254.

⁴⁸⁷ Özgür Kolçak, 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi', 113-14.

⁴⁸⁸ Mühürdar Hasan, '*Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*', 132.

⁴⁸⁹ Özgür Kolçak "XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi", 114.

While Gürcü Mehmed Pasha maintained his position as *kethüda* of the grand vizier, Salih Bey, Fazıl Ahmed's own *kethüda* during his governorship in Damascus, was appointed as *Çavuşbaşı* (head of the palace ushers) and later as the chief commander of the Janissaries during Fazıl Ahmed's grand vizierate.⁴⁹⁰ This is a very exceptional appointment because Fazıl Ahmed directly appointed his *kethüda* to one of the most critical and prestigious positions in the empire. This appointment is one of the best examples of the growing authority of the grand viziers under the Köprülüs because the former grand viziers did not appoint their clients to such critical positions. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the commanders of the Janissaries were appointed from the graduates of the imperial palace by the sultan. Like Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, Salih Bey performed crucial duties as a commander of the Janissaries and closely worked with the grand vizier.

The second steward of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha after Gürcü Mehmed Pasha was İbrahim Aga.⁴⁹¹ He was born in Bosnia and came to Istanbul to become the superintendent of the imperial docks.⁴⁹² Silahdar notes that İbrahim Aga's achievement in the completion of sixty shipyards in three months attracted the attention of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.⁴⁹³ Only this passage suggests that İbrahim Aga was a client of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. After the appointment of Gürcü Mehmed Pasha as governor of Diyarbakir, İbrahim Bey entered the service of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha as steward in 1662. After five years' tenure as steward, İbrahim Bey was appointed as governor of the Aleppo, and he stood side by side with the grand vizier in the siege of Candia in October 1668.⁴⁹⁴ In 1670, he was sent to Egypt as

⁴⁹⁰ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*, 155-56.

⁴⁹¹ For the life of İbrahim Pasha, see, Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 681-83.

⁴⁹² Evliya Celebi, *Seyahatname*, VI, 310, Evliya brought the letter of İbrahim's mother and news from Bosnia to İbrahim Bey.

⁴⁹³ Mehmed Süreyya *Sicill-i Osmani*, Ed. Nuri Akbayar, 6 vols, (İstanbul, 1996), III, 783 and for a similar view, see Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 82.

⁴⁹⁴ Mustafa bin Mustafa, *Tarih-i Sefer ve Feth-i Kandiye (Fazıl Ahmed Paşa'nın Girit Seferi ve Kandiye'nin Fethi)*, ed. Meltem Aydın, (İstanbul, 2016), 112.

governor-general.⁴⁹⁵ Ibrahim Pasha was transferred to the governorship of Damascus in 1673. In 1674 he was again appointed as governor of Aleppo and became the chief commander in the Polish expedition in 1675. He died in 1676, the same year as his master Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.⁴⁹⁶

We can more easily follow the activities of Ibrahim Pasha as steward in the chronicles than that of Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, as particularly Mühürdar Hasan Aga recorded some details with regard to the close circle of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.⁴⁹⁷ One of the most curious aspects of Kethüda Ibrahim's activities was his involvement in diplomatic negotiations. Habsburg resident Simon Reningen referring to the diplomatic bargaining carried out in Edirne in 1662, names the grand vizier's steward Ibrahim in his account along with the more customary members of the Ottoman diplomatic mission, such as the grand vizier, the chief scribe and the commander of the Janissaries.⁴⁹⁸ By the same token, the Habsburg ambassador Walter Leslie, who came to Istanbul in 1665, described Ibrahim Aga as the most prominent among the viziers.⁴⁹⁹ However, an important detail, which Leslie omitted, was that Ibrahim Aga had not acquired the vizierial title at the time yet. Most probably, the important role played by Ibrahim Aga as kethüda must have misled Leslie into thinking that Ibrahim had to be a vizier.

Even after his promotion to the Aleppo governorship, Ibrahim Pasha maintained his proximity to the grand vizier and continued to carry out vizierial orders. As he did in the Austrian campaign, he actively continued diplomatic negotiations with the Venetian

⁴⁹⁵ İsa-zade, *İsa-zade Tarihi*, 106.

⁴⁹⁶ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 682 and Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, III, 783.

⁴⁹⁷ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 140-141.

⁴⁹⁸ Alfons Huber, "Österreichs diplomatische Beziehungen zur Pforte, 1658 – 1664", *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte*, 85, (1898), 560.

⁴⁹⁹ Alois Veltze (edt), "Die Hauptrelation des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel Simon Reningen von Reningen 1649-1666," *Mitteilung des k.u.k. Kriegs-Archiv*, N.F., 12. Bd., (1900), 154.

delegation.⁵⁰⁰ During the process leading to the signing of the peace treaty, Ibrahim Pasha seemed to head the Ottoman diplomatic mission and was the most active negotiator.⁵⁰¹

After the signing of the peace treaty with Venice in 1669, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha was still in Crete. At that time, Hungarian Prince Mihaly Apafi, the Ottoman-appointed ruler of Transylvania, secretly dispatched his emissary Daviz Rozsnyai to ask the grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha for military assistance.⁵⁰² Rozsnyai came to the island in January 1670. He had six face-to-face conversations with Ibrahim Pasha between 8 January and 6 February 1670. In these conversations, Ibrahim Pasha conducted negotiations in the name of grand vizier and continuously informed the grand vizier on the subject.

Along with the diplomatic undertakings, Ibrahim Pasha also tried to fulfill other challenging missions that Fazıl Ahmed assigned to him. In 1670, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha sent Ibrahim Pasha to Egypt with 2,000 imperial troops. The main purpose of this appointment was to reassert central authority in this important province.⁵⁰³ Ibrahim Pasha arrested two leading local figures, Yusuf Bey Sahr al-Nakip and Kenan Bey, who were local supervisors of the *Evkaf-u Humayun*, the largest and the most profitable *vakf* in the empire. They were accused of embezzling revenues. Ibrahim Pasha then appointed the commander and the senior officer of Janissaries as supervisors of the *Evkaf-u Humayun*. In this way, Ibrahim Pasha successfully carried out a challenging task that increased the power of the central government over local figures and controlled supervisory posts.

⁵⁰⁰ Nuri Adıyeke, 'Hikayet-i Azimet-i Sefer-i Kandiye', MA Thesis, Ege University (1989), 52. I thank Nuri Adıyeke for sharing his inaccessible thesis with me. Arslan Poyraz, 'Köprülüzâde Fazıl Ahmed', 120.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 54.

⁵⁰² For the details of this diplomatic mission, see, Georg B. Michels, "Myth or Reality? Ottoman Support for Hungarian Rebels in Light of a Secret Transylvanian Mission to the Porte (1669-1670)", *Hungarian Cultural Studies, e-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association*, 8, (2015), 34-45.

⁵⁰³ Jane Hathway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt, The Rise of the Qazdaglis* (Cambridge, 1997), 148-50 and James E. Baldwin, 'The Deposition of Defterdar Ahmed Pasha and The Rule of Law in Seventeenth-Century Egypt', *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 46, (2015), 131-63.

It proved impossible to track the kethüdas of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha after Ibrahim Aga from 1668 until 1672. Sources such as Mühürdar Hasan's *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh* just state that Osman Aga, son of Timurtaş Pasha replaced Ibrahim Aga.⁵⁰⁴ However, there is no additional information in the chronicles either about the identity of Osman Aga or about his activities. We can only say that Osman Aga might have died during the war because at the end of the war, the sources referred to Mahmud Aga as Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's kethüda.⁵⁰⁵ All we know about Mahmud Aga is that he bought thirty stores in Candia after the conquest and established a pious foundation in the city.⁵⁰⁶ There is no further information regarding his activities. In 1672, *Cavusbasi* Süleyman Aga was appointed as kethüda of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.⁵⁰⁷ Süleyman Aga as a *cavusbasi* had worked under Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha, the third vizier in the imperial council and deputy grand vizier in Edirne at that time.⁵⁰⁸ Only six days after Fazıl Ahmed's death, the late grand vizier's kethüda, Süleyman Aga, was appointed as the head of the imperial stables. He achieved this important post, which enabled him to keep close and continuous contact with the sultan, thanks to his affiliation with the Köprülü family and to the patronage of the new grand vizier, Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha. However, Ottoman chroniclers did not record any details about Süleyman Aga as a kethüda during his tenure.

What does this information tell us about the kethüdas of the Köprülü Household? Firstly, those who were elevated to the position of kethüda were either connected to the grand vizier from the beginning or gained his favor on the road. Secondly, in addition to managing the affairs of the grand vizier's household as a kethüda, they also partook in, and

⁵⁰⁴ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 416.

⁵⁰⁵ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 546 and Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 416.

⁵⁰⁶ Ersin Gülsoy, *Girit'in Fethi*, 241-43.

⁵⁰⁷ Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 407 and for his career, see, Ömer Faruk Akün, 'Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa ve Mirahur Sarı Süleyman Aga Mücadelesi ile İlgili Bir Konuşma Zabtı', *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 19 (1980), 7-64.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 12

even sometimes personally conducted, diplomatic negotiations on behalf of the grand vizier. The third and the most important point is that while the *kethüdas* were promoted to important positions, they kept in contact with their former masters. As we can observe in the careers of Ibrahim and Gürcü Mehmed Pashas, they assumed crucial roles in the fulfillment of important duties and military campaigns.

4.2.3. *Agas*

Under the command of the *kethüda*, we find group called the *agas* (officials). *Aga* was a title given to some Ottoman officers or officials in the military and administrative systems, but here I refer to *aga* as a man working in a vizier's household.⁵⁰⁹ Along with the mercenaries, *agas* constituted the largest group in the household. Mühürdar Hasan stated that there were almost eighty *agas* working in Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's household in the wars of 1663-1664.⁵¹⁰ They carried out two main duties. Firstly, they took responsibility for the registering, controlling and leading of the mercenary units.⁵¹¹ Secondly, they were in charge of establishing communication between different vizier households, especially in serving as the go-between for the *kethüda*'s diplomatic undertakings.

Since the late sixteenth century, Ottoman vizier households increasingly employed mercenary units to deal with mounting disturbances in Anatolia.⁵¹² Accordingly, the vizier households hired as many mercenary units as their financial resources allowed. As Özgür Kolçak convincingly shows, in the military campaign against Austria in 1663, the mercenary units under the command of the viziers constituted the major part of the Ottoman

⁵⁰⁹ For the definition, see, Gustave Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs and Efendis, A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul, 1997), 8.

⁵¹⁰ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*, 221.

⁵¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the mercenaries in the Ottoman history, see, Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler*, (Ankara, 2012).

⁵¹² For the classical review see, Halil Inalcik 'Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 6, (1980), 283-337.

firepower.⁵¹³ From their selection for recruitment to registration and provisioning responsibility for the mercenaries was confided to the *agas*. With the number of Fazıl Ahmed's mercenaries at around 4,000, it is easy to understand the importance of the *agas* in the organization of the military campaign.

The ethnic and geographical background of these *agas* reveals the recruitment strategies followed by the Köprülü household. These *agas* mostly came from the Albanian region, the homeland of the Köprülü family.⁵¹⁴ They were sent to this region where they gathered local people as mercenaries.⁵¹⁵ The *agas* of Albanian origin probably used their personal links to the region to find necessary manpower for the grand vizier's household.⁵¹⁶ Indeed, Albanian troops formed a considerable part of the grand vizier's private army.⁵¹⁷ More importantly, both Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha chose Albanians as their personal guards.⁵¹⁸ Fazıl Ahmed Pasha maintained a permanent force of 100 to 400 men recruited among the able-bodied young population of those lands. The recruitment of these personal guards and the household mercenaries from the Albanian lands once more suggests, as Metin Kunt has earlier shown, the important role of ethnicity in the Köprülü household.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ Özgür Kolçak, 'The Composition, Tactics and Strategy of the Ottoman Field Army at Zrinyi-Újvár and St. Gotthard (1663–1664)', in Ferenc Toth, Zagorhidi Czigany Balazs (eds.) *La bataille de Saint Gotthard et la paix de Vasvár: Expansion Ottomane-Coopération Européenne* (Budapest, 2017), 73-92.

⁵¹⁴ Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 380 and Alois Veltze (ed), 'Die Hauptrelation des kaiserlichen', 154.

⁵¹⁵ *1660-1665 tarihli Ordu Mühimmesi*, Sachsische Landesbibliothek- Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, (Thereafter SLUB) Eb. 387, 119a and 127a I thank Özgür Kolçak for providing a copy of this important register.

⁵¹⁶ Özgür Kolçak 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi', 137.

⁵¹⁷ Kolçak 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi', 138 and Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 379.

⁵¹⁸ Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 380.

⁵¹⁹ Kunt, 'Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity'

The *agas* also played a significant role in the communication between the grand vizier's household and the palace and other viziers. Particularly, they were assistants of the kethüda in his diplomatic negotiations. For example, Haseki Mehmed Aga carried the letter including the news of the conquest of Uyvar Castle to the sultan.⁵²⁰ The same Mehmed Aga was sent to Transylvanian Prince Apafi Mihaly by kethüda Ibrahim Aga. Moreover, while Mihaly was returning to his home, Mehmed Aga accompanied the prince.⁵²¹ Habib Aga was given a mission to go to Crimea to invite Tatar forces to the campaign against the Habsburgs in 1663.⁵²² In the siege of Candia, Karakulak Ahmed Aga carried grand vizier's *telhis*⁵²³ to Mehmed IV, who resided in Edirne.⁵²⁴

These examples clearly show the role played by the *agas* while the grand vizier was on campaign. Apart from these military campaigns, the *agas* regularly carried written orders of the grand vizier to other viziers. Some archival sources provide us with some examples of the *agas*'s messenger duty. The register of annual income and expenditures of Diyarbekir Governor Omer Pasha shows that at least four *agas* of the grand vizier's household visited Diyarbekir for various purposes between 1670 and 1671. The governor of Diyarbekir Omer pasha spent a total of 2.209 kurus by way of stipends and gratuities and various purchases on these *agas*. The first of these officials was a Mustafa Aga, who brought the pasha a *muhafaza* emir, a special appointment as "guardian" or military commander of the region in addition to regular duties as governor. In the case of the second official of the grand vizier's household, Osman Aga, it is noted that he came for the "accounts," that is probably to check Omer Pasha's accounting. There is no indication of

⁵²⁰ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke* and Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, VI, 209 but Evliya Çelebi did not write the name of Aga.

⁵²¹ Kolçak, 'XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi', 135; Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 205-06.

⁵²² Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 280.

⁵²³ Fazıl Ahmed Pasha Tarihi 73a, Nuri Adıyeke, *Hikayet-i Azimet-i*, 49-51 and 54. Arslan Poyraz, 'Köprülüzâde Fazıl Ahmed', 120.

⁵²⁴ Silahdar, *Zeyl-i Fezleke*, 511.

the purpose of the visits of Ahmed Aga and Topal Ahmed Aga. Similarly, we can gather some information in the register of the treasury of Kaplan Mustafa Pasha, son-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. The register from his treasury covers the time from May 1658 until 1662.⁵²⁵ In this register, grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *aga* and *cavusbasi* received broadcloth and satin for a garment.⁵²⁶ However, the register does not give any explanation as to why Fazıl Ahmed's *aga* and *cavusbasi* visited the pasha. These last documents manifest that the serving the grand vizierial household as an *aga* was highly profitable. Each time they were visited or carried messages to a pasha, they were rewarded. If we possessed more registers, we would be able to glean more about the gift-exchange and communication between the grand vizier and the other viziers of the time.

4.2.4. Scribes

Scribes constituted one of the most important parts of the vizier's household. They worked as the main communicators of state business. As Ekin Tuşalp points out, scribes "translated from the perhaps not so educated words of pashas into the strictly regulated language of Ottoman diplomatics."⁵²⁷ They served in different positions in the household such as seal-keeper (*mühürdar*), registrar (*tezkireci*), copy-checker (*mukabeleci*) and secretary (*katip*) of the grand vizier.

It is very difficult to determine the exact number and the names of the scribes working in the Köprülü household because of the paucity of the primary sources. Nevertheless, in the list of attesters (*şuhud-ı hal*) who were present during the registration

⁵²⁵ BOA, D. BŞM 211 and for analysis of the register, see, Hedda Reindl-Kiel, 'Luxury, Power Strategies, and the Question of Corruption Gifting in the Ottoman Elite (16th-18th Centuries)', in Yavuz Köse, (ed.), *Şehrayin, Die Welt der Osmanen, die Osmanen in der Welt Wahrnehmungen, Begegnungen und Abgrenzungen, Festschrift Hans Georg Majer* (Wiesbaden, 2012), 107-19.

⁵²⁶ BOA, D. BŞM 211, 6 "Ahmed Paşa tarafından gelen ağasına kırmızı cübbe çuka arşın aded 5, Ahmed Paşa çavuşbaşına meneviş saye çuka arşın aded 5".

⁵²⁷ Atiyas, 'Political Literacy', 192.

of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's endowments in the summer of 1661, certain names are included.⁵²⁸ This list includes only the names of the scribes and does not allow us to analyze their functions. The biographical dictionaries of the poets, however, are useful sources to follow scribe-poets' careers in the households.⁵²⁹ Many of the contemporary scribes active in the household services were also poets registered in the biographical dictionaries. It was actually due to their poetic efforts (such as writing laudatory *kasides*) dedicated to the prominent officeholders of the time that they could find a niche in their household service. In Cornell Fleischer's finely documented biographical study on Mustafa Ali, one of the most important bureaucrats and intellectuals of the late sixteenth century, we can follow Ali's efforts to dedicate poems and *kasides* to many preeminent statesmen of the time in return for an office in their household service.⁵³⁰ The scribes in these households could reasonably expect to be elevated to the post of chief scribe or become other chancellery officials in the imperial chancery if their patron were to be appointed as grand vizier.⁵³¹

As the most powerful vizierial household at the time, the Köprülü household became the main patronage target for "various types of young men, newcomers to the capital city, *medrese* graduates and youngsters fresh out of the inner palace school."⁵³² In particular, as Ekin Tuşalp points out, the *Mevlevi* order turned out to be one of the main

⁵²⁸ KK V, 3.2446, 53a - 54a they are: Mezaki Süleyman Efendi, *Tezkireci-i Sani*, (the second secretary), Sıdkızade Ahmed Efendi, *Mektubi* (the scribe), Ramazan Ağa, *Mühürdar*, (the seal-keeper of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha) Habib Ağa, (the treasurer of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha).

⁵²⁹ Pervin Çapan (ed.), *Tezkire-i Safayi (Nuhbetü'l-Asar min Feva'idi'l Eş'ar) İnceleme - Metin - İndeks*, (Ankara, 2005), Adnan İnce (ed.), *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuara Salim Efendi, Mirzazade Salim Mehmed Emîn Efendi, 1156/1743*, (Ankara, 2005), İlhan Genç (ed.), *Esrar Dede, Tezkire-i şu'arâ-yı Mevleviyye: inceleme, metin*, (Ankara, 2000).

⁵³⁰ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 41-69.

⁵³¹ For the *kasides* written for Köprülü grand viziers, see, Özlem Ercan, "Baba-Oğul Sadrazamların Şairlere Farklı Yaklaşımları ve Fazıl Ahmed Paşa'ya yazılan Manzumeler", *Turkish Studies-International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 7/2, (2012), 461-80.

⁵³² Atiyas, 'Political Literacy', 204.

channels, which secured the flow of staff into Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's household.⁵³³ Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's connection with the *Mevlevi* order played an important role in this relationship. For instance, two prominent *Mevlevi* poets, Fasih Ahmed Efendi and Fenni Mehmed Efendi served in the Köprülü household.⁵³⁴ Fasih Ahmed Dede, who worked as a scribe of the Imperial Council, was transferred to the household of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha and became his treasury scribe and one of his foremost courtiers. In early 1670's, he relinquished this post to adopt a secluded life in the Galata *Mevlevihane*.⁵³⁵ Another significant *Mevlevi* poet, Fenni Mehmed Efendi, too, became Fazıl Ahmed's scribe by offering him a *kaside*.⁵³⁶

Some scribes had maintained their position since the time of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's Erzurum governorship. For instance, Mühürdar Hasan Aga, the seal-keeper of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, joined Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's household in Erzurum where he had served as a servant of the treasury in the Erzurum governorship.⁵³⁷ Similarly, Erzurumlu Osman Dede had been serving in the household as a scribe since Fazıl Ahmed's Erzurum governorship.⁵³⁸

The Köprülü monopoly on the vizierial office also secured a sense of continuity for the scribes. Mezaki Süleyman Efendi became the second secretary of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. After Köprülü Mehmed's death, Mezaki Süleyman continued to serve Fazıl Ahmed in the same position.⁵³⁹ Later he was promoted to the position of master of the imperial council (*divan hacesi*) and the copy-checker of the cavalry regiment (*Mukabeleci Suvari*)

⁵³³ Ibid., 204.

⁵³⁴ Mustafa Çıpan, 'Fasih Ahmed Dede, Hayatı, Edebi Kişiliği, Eserleri ve Divanı'nın Tenkidli Metni', PhD Thesis, Selçuk University (1991).

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 12

⁵³⁶ "Köprülü-zâdeye bir kasîde verip ber-vech-i te'bîd menâsıb-ı hâcegân-ı dîvân-ı bülend-erkândan cizye mukâbelesi kitâbeti ihsân olundu", Esrar Dede, *Tezkire-i şu'arâ-yı Mevleviyye*, 416-17.

⁵³⁷ Mühürdar Hasan, 'Cevâhirü't-Tevârih', 5.

⁵³⁸ Arslan Poyraz, 'Köprülüzâde Fazıl Ahmed Paşa'. 1.

⁵³⁹ Ahmet Mermer, *Mezaki Hayatı, Edebi Kişiliği ve Divan'ının Tenkitli Metni*, (Ankara, 2001)see, for the document sealed by Suleyman Mezaki Efendi BOA, Ibnulemin, Hariciye, 1/98.

with the support of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Mezaki's career is a fine example of how scribes made the transition from the era of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha to that of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.

Another striking example is the career of a poet-scribe named Ahmed who had entered Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's household. When Fazıl Ahmed Pasha died, Ahmed moved to a madrasa in Bursa to teach. He was soon to be recruited by Fazıl Ahmed's brother Fazıl Mustafa Pasha, who appointed him as the director of finances of the Anatolian provinces.⁵⁴⁰ When Fazıl Mustafa Pasha became grand vizier, he appointed Mustafa Efendi, the scribe of the treasury of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's household as his *kethüda*.⁵⁴¹ Yet another example was a certain Nigari, who had served as scribe in the household of Ibrahim Pasha, the steward of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. After his patron Ibrahim Pasha passed away in 1676, he served under Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha and Fazıl Mustafa Pasha. That he continued to serve Fazıl Mustafa after Merzifonlu Mustafa particularly indicates the fact that having served in Köprülü service must have been an essential reference for serving in the Merzifonlu household, too.

4.3. The Second Layer of the Köprülü Household: Clients in the Administrative System

The establishment of patron-client (*intisab*) ties was one of the main strategies of building an Ottoman household. A vizier "might patronize individuals, whom he could place strategically in offices for the advancement of household interests, or enter into a relationship of clientage with a more powerful official and link his fortunes to the same."⁵⁴²

Intisab was established on the basis of a variety of other sorts of relationships. Blood

⁵⁴⁰ *Tezkiretü's-Şuara Salim Efendi*, 199.

⁵⁴¹ *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi*, 28.

⁵⁴² Charles L. Wilkins, 'Masters, Servants and Slaves: Household Formation among the Urban Notables of Early Ottoman Aleppo', in Christine Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World*, (London, 2012), 292.

kinship constituted the most immediate basis for patronage, but friendship, marriage ties, ethnic and geographical origins and household service played a crucial part in the establishment of *intisab* networks.⁵⁴³ In this section, I will explore the clients of the Köprülü household in the administrative system. Who were they? How did they make a connection with the Köprülü grand viziers? Which positions did they occupy and how long did they stay in their positions?

4.3.1. Sons-in-law as main force of the Köprülü household

Sons-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha played a crucial role in preserving the power of the household during Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's grand vizierate. It should be pointed out that sons-in-law were really members of the family, almost as much as real sons. As noted, there were four sons-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha: Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha (d.1683), Kaplan Mustafa Pasha (d.1681), Kibleli Mustafa Pasha (d.1664) and Abaza Siyavuş Pasha (d. 1687). While Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha and Abaza Siyavuş Pashas were raised in Köprülü Mehmed's own household and rose to the grand vizierate, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha assumed the grand admiralty several times after graduation from the *Enderun*. Another *Enderun* graduate, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha, met an early career termination as he passed away in the 1664 military campaign.

Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha was the most prominent and experienced member of the household.⁵⁴⁴ He was born in Merzifon in Central Anatolia around 1635 as son of a cavalry officer (sipahi), who was said to have served under Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Merzifonlu Mustafa started his career as *iç oğlanı* (palace page) in the household of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Merzifonlu Mustafa and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's elder son, Fazıl Ahmed, were the

⁵⁴³ Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 19-20.

⁵⁴⁴ Colin J. Heywood, 'Karā Mustafā Pasha, Merzifonlu, Maktül', Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition* and Yasir Yilmaz, 'The Road to Vienna'.

same age; they grew up and received their education together. Merzifonlu Mustafa married Köprülü Mehmed's daughter Saliha Hanim. After having held a number of positions within the household's inner service such as the sword-bearer (*silahdar*), Merzifonlu Mustafa became Köprülü Mehmed's letter-bearer (*telhisci*) when the latter became grand vizier in 1656. After Merzifonlu Mustafa brought the news of the conquest of Yanova to the court in 1658, the sultan employed him as the head of the imperial stables (*mirahur*). This post brought him into close contact with the sultan, who was an avid hunter. Two years later, he became the governor of Silistre, which was followed by the governorship of Diyarbekir.

The rapid rise of Mustafa Pasha started with Fazıl Ahmed's succession to the grand vizierate. Fazıl Ahmed Pasha appointed Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha as the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet, a post he retained until 1666. While keeping his grand admiral position, he also became the deputy grand vizier in Edirne during Fazıl Ahmed's Uyvar campaign of 1663. This made him both the second and third highest-ranking official of the empire at the same time. His second term as deputy fell during the Cretan campaign (1666-1669). He joined the Polish campaign in 1672 with the grand vizier. He became the grand vizier in 1676 after the death of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha occupied the grand vizierate for seven years, and in 1683 he was executed as a result of the unsuccessful attempt to take Vienna.

As I examined in detail in the previous chapter, Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha performed a very important role as deputy in Edirne. He represented the interests of the Köprülü household when the grand vizier was on campaigns. It should be pointed out that as deputy Merzifonlu Mustafa built a close relationship with Mehmed IV, which brought him the opportunity to enlarge his influence. For instance, in 1665, Merzifonlu Mustafa presented one horse, six daggers and five moneybags to the sultan; in return, the sultan

appointed Merzifonlu Mustafa's steward as a *Müteferrika* with a fief grant as payment.⁵⁴⁵ While he served as deputy in Edirne, Merzifonlu Mustafa captured and brought the bandit named Sivri Bolukbasi before the sultan, who in turn awarded him a precious cloth to him.⁵⁴⁶ More importantly, Merzifonlu Mustafa managed to get his own clients, namely Bektas Aga and four other men, appointed as imperial cavalry officers with salaries of forty and ten *akces* per diem respectively.⁵⁴⁷ In this way, Merzifonlu successfully integrated his clients into the cavalry regiments. Moreover, the archival sources state that Merzifonlu's *agas* and his letter-bearer were awarded "hi'lat" (robe of honor) by the sultan at different times.⁵⁴⁸

These examples reveal that being in proximity to the sultan and enjoying his grace was essential for a vizier who wanted to enlarge his household. It seems that Merzifonlu Mustafa obtained a fair share of this grace by spending long years near the sultan as the deputy grand vizier. Indeed, Merzifonlu Mustafa's household was one of the greatest households in that period, numbering around several hundred members even when he was a still deputy of the grand vizier. For instance, according to Antoine Galland, who described the household of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha in detail, there were 125 pages in the inner part of the household. There also were fifty *kapicibasi* in the outer service of pasha.⁵⁴⁹ Consequently, Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha, as Merlijn Olon aptly points out, was "a scion of an administrative dynasty, a court favorite, and the head of one of the period's largest households" which made him one of the most notable figures at the time.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁵ Abdi Paşa, *Vekâyi'-nâme*, 195.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵⁴⁸ BOA, Ibnulemin, Maliye, 51/4876,16/1474 and 16/1475.

⁵⁴⁹ Galland, *İstanbul'a ait günlük hatıralar*, 132-42.

⁵⁵⁰ Merlijn Olon, 'A Most Agreeable and Pleasant Creature? Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasa in the Correspondence of Justinus Colyer (1668-1682)', *Oriente Moderno*, 83/3, (2003), 653.

The second important son-in-law in the family was Kaplan Mustafa Pasha. Although Kaplan Mustafa Pasha assumed critical positions during Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's grand vizierate, in comparison to Merzifonlu, he has received less scholarly attention. However, Kaplan Mustafa took an active role in the military campaigns led by Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, and he was often appointed as the chief commander in the raids against the Habsburg forces.

Little can be said with certainty about Kaplan Mustafa Pasha's early career. He seems to have started his career in the *enderun* and was a sword-bearer before taking up a post as governor.⁵⁵¹ Mehmed Süreyya stated that he was appointed as governor of Baghdad and then of Van, but I could not find any reference in the contemporary chroniclers and archival sources to corroborate Süreyya's information.⁵⁵² In contrast to Süreyya's claim, in an archival record from May 1658, we find him mentioned as the governor of Musul in 1658.⁵⁵³ One year later, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha was appointed as the governor of Trablusşam (Tripoli, Lebanon).⁵⁵⁴

It is unclear when Kaplan Mustafa was married to daughter of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Kaplan Mustafa joined military campaigns as the governor of Karaman. In 1665, he was transferred to the governorship of Damascus.⁵⁵⁵ When the preparations for the Crete campaign began, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha was appointed as the grand admiral in 1666. This was Fazıl Ahmed's conscious choice, for grand admiral Merzifonlu had been appointed the deputy grand vizier in Edirne. The imperial fleet was of the utmost importance during the Cretan war, and this critical office was transferred to Kaplan Mustafa Pasha. Until 1672, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha held this office before joining the Kamaniecz campaign as the

⁵⁵¹ Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, III, 867 and Enderunlu Abdullatif, *Ayine-i Derun*, 65.

⁵⁵² Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, IV, 1189.

⁵⁵³ BOA, Ibnulemin, Maliye 11/997 (29-12-1069).

⁵⁵⁴ BOA, Ibnulemin, Maliye 16/1434 20/1866, 24/2278.

⁵⁵⁵ BOA, D.BSM 209 ,44.

governor of Aleppo. As a frontline fighter, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha assumed important roles in the 1674 campaign. He became the governor of Diyarbekir in 1675, and, after a brief period of removal from the office during Merzifonlu Mustafa's grand vizierate, he once more held the grand admiralty from 1678 until his death in 1680.

Kaplan Mustafa Pasha was the "fighting figure" of the Köprülü family. He was given an important part in planning all military campaigns of the period. For instance, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha commanded roughly 1,000 men during the Ottoman-Habsburg military engagements in 1663-1664.⁵⁵⁶ He always stood at the head of critical tasks. For instance, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha ordered him to join the expedition to Nograd, an important castle of the Habsburg forces.⁵⁵⁷ Again in the siege of Candia, he assumed important responsibilities as the grand admiral as he sought to provide supplies and ammunition from the mainland to the island for the army.⁵⁵⁸ Similarly, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha fulfilled many critical military duties during the 1672 and 1674 Polish campaigns.⁵⁵⁹

As a result, Kaplan Mustafa Pasha must be regarded as a chief-assistant of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha on military issues. He carried the main share of the burden in the military campaigns and led an army in the name of the chief-commander Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. His appointments as the chief admiral and the chief-commander are not haphazard or ad hoc; on the contrary, they are carefully designed and planned.

Another son-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was Kibleli Mustafa Pasha. There is no information about his early career. We only know that Kibleli Mustafa Pasha was

⁵⁵⁶ Özgür Kolçak, "The Composition, Tactics", 82.

⁵⁵⁷ SLUB Eb.387,121a, Tâib Ömer, *Fethiyye-i Uyvâr ve Novigrâd*. Istanbul University Library, İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal, 2602, 14a.

⁵⁵⁸ 'Fazıl Ahmed Pasha' 56.

⁵⁵⁹ For the details, see, Mehmet İnbaşı, *Ukrayna'da Osmanlılar, Kamaniçe Seferi ve Organizasyonu (1672)* (İstanbul, 2004), 135-70.

appointed as governor of Sivas, Anatolia in 1658.⁵⁶⁰ One year later, he was transferred to the governorship of Kastamonu, in Anatolia.⁵⁶¹ So, he was not a prominent figure of politics in the capital until Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's rise to power. In the military campaign of 1663, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha joined the army as the governor of Damascus. Like Kaplan Mustafa Pasha, he was among the leading decision-makers in the military campaign of 1663.⁵⁶² As Özgür Kolçak points out, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha was generously supported by the Ottoman treasury: he received at least 1,320,000 *akçes* in loan at different times-the single largest amount of money allocated to an Ottoman notable during the Ottoman-Habsburg war of 1663-1664.⁵⁶³ Indeed, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha commanded a force of 2,500 men at the time of the siege; 500 of these men were taken from the garrison of Damascus and were not a part of his personal household troops. In other words, Kibleli Mustafa's household troops were most likely comprised of 2,000 recruits, which constituted one of the largest household troops in the field.⁵⁶⁴ As indicated above, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha's career came to a premature as he died in 1664. If he had lived, however, without a doubt, he would have proved an important figure of the Ottoman military organization as a representative of the Köprülü family along with Kaplan Mustafa Pasha.

The last son-in-law of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was Abaza Siyavuş Pasha. Of Abhazian origins, Siyavuş Pasha started his career as a slave of Köprülü Mehmed.⁵⁶⁵ Having been set free, he was married to a daughter of his master. He became the commander of the gatekeepers of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. He participated in Fazıl Ahmed's

⁵⁶⁰ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, IV, 1808,

⁵⁶¹ BOA, Ibnulemin, Maliye, 24/2261.

⁵⁶² Özgür Kolçak, 114 and Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 344.

⁵⁶³ Özgür Kolçak, 'The Composition, Tactics', 83 and see, BOA, KK, 1957, 29, 37, 39, 42.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 84

⁵⁶⁵ A.H. de Groot, "Siyawush Pasha", Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

campaigns in Uyvar, Crete and Kamaniets. Siyavuş Pasha was charged with sending the news of the taking of Candia to Hadice Turhan Sultan in Istanbul.⁵⁶⁶

Siyavuş Pasha's rise to prominence started with Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha. Even though he was removed from office in the wake of purge of the clients of the Köprülü household after the execution of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha, he was appointed the *aga* of the cavalry regiments in 1684 before becoming the governor of Diyarbekir. He became the grand vizier in 1687, but he was killed in the great rebellion in the same year, which culminated in the dethronement of Mehmed IV.

In the absence of sons in the household, the sons-in-law of the Köprülü family enjoyed a prominent role in maintaining the power of the family. Each of them performed a special task. For instance, Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha as the foremost and seasoned member of the family occupied a critical position, which enabled him to work closely with the sultan. Through closely working with the sultan and grand vizier, Merzifonlu formed his own vigorous household. As a man of the sultan and the grand vizier, Merzifonlu easily succeeded Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Kaplan Mustafa Pasha enjoyed military positions, played a leading role in the military campaigns and represented the warrior aspect of the household. Despite his short term of service, Kibleli Mustafa Pasha also assumed important responsibilities in the military organization. Abaza Siyavuş Pasha accompanied the grand vizier and enjoyed key positions in the household.

4.3.2. Other influential Pashas related to the Köprülü Household

The clients of the Köprülü household were not exclusively the sons-in-law, who were linked to the family through marriage. Especially inside the administrative system, there were clients who were appointed to important positions where they served for long years.

⁵⁶⁶ Mustafa bin Mustafa, *Tarih-i Sefer*, 141 BOA, İbnülemin-Askeriye, nr. 6/481, in this document Siyavuş was charged with buying tenants and other things for Vani Efendi, tutor of Mehmed IV.

Even though it is not very well known how their affiliation to the Köprülü household was formed, these clients assumed significant positions for the household.

The chief treasurer (*Defterdar*) Ahmed Pasha turned out to be an influential client of the Köprülü Household. Not without reason called by the Venetian Morosini “a creature of Ahmed Köprülü.” he was appointed the chief treasurer in 1661.⁵⁶⁷ Indeed, Ahmed was a former head armorer, and his swift advancement was clearly based on his master’s generosity. In 1665, he was honored with the rank of vizier. Ahmed Pasha preserved his position for thirteen years before he was appointed as the governor of Egypt with the aim of carrying out Fazıl Ahmed Pasha’s centralization policies in Egypt in 1675.⁵⁶⁸ During the grand vizierate of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha, Ahmed Pasha became governor of Diyarbekir, Bosnia, Kamaniets and Timisvar. Ahmed Pasha died in 1683 during the siege of Vienna.⁵⁶⁹

Like all family members and other clients, Ahmed Pasha accompanied Fazıl Ahmed Pasha on his military campaigns. He carried out important duties arranging the provisions and fiscal matters of the army as *Defterdar*.⁵⁷⁰ More importantly, he contributed to the army with his own substantial household troops during the Cretan and Polish campaigns. The fact that he occupied for thirteen years the office of the *defterdarlık*, a challenging and important post that underwent frequent changes during the first half of the seventeenth century, suggests what an important client he was to the grand vizier. The grand vizier’s trust in Defterdar Ahmed Pasha is also exemplified by his immediate consultation with the

⁵⁶⁷ *Le Relazioni degli stati Europei lette al senato dagli amasciatori Veneziani nel secolo decimosettimo*, Nicolo Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet (eds.), Series 5, Turcica, (Venice 1871), 212.

⁵⁶⁸ Baldwin, ‘The Deposition of Defterdar’,

⁵⁶⁹ Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *The Ottoman Survey Register of Podolia (ca.1681), Defter-i Mufassal-i Eyalet-i Kamaniçe*, (Cambridge, 2004), 2 vols, I, 15.

⁵⁷⁰ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*, 384. Arslan Poyraz, ‘Köprülüzâde Fazıl Ahmed’, 107.

Defterdar when an important foreign policy issue was to be decided after the grand vizier returned to Edirne from the 1670 campaign.⁵⁷¹

The chief scribe was another important position in the central bureaucracy. As I discussed above, this position was filled by Şamizade Mehmed Efendi, who had been a close supporter of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Şamizade Mehmed was executed because of his abortive attempt to depose Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. Acemzade Hüseyin Pasha replaced him. It is not explicit in the sources whether there was any patron-client relationship between Acemzade Hüseyin Efendi and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. However, like Defterdar Ahmed Pasha, Acemzade maintained his position for fourteen years and joined all the military expeditions in the retinue of the grand vizier.⁵⁷² So, he became a close client of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.

Another influential governor affiliated with the Köprülü household was Abaza Hüseyin Pasha. The only information about Abaza Hüseyin Pasha's relationship with Köprülü Mehmed Pasha comes from *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*. Mühürdar Hasan Aga recalled that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha advised his son on his deathbed: "Never deprive Hüseyin Pasha of your favor; he has served us very well and hence I confide him to you."⁵⁷³ Fazıl Ahmed promoted Abaza Hüseyin Pasha to the governorship of Buda, a significant post in the borderland with Austria. Like other clients of the Köprülü household, Abaza Hüseyin Pasha was to become one of the leading figures in the military campaigns and one of the most trusted men of the grand vizier in the field.⁵⁷⁴ After the capture of Uyvar Castle, he was appointed as commander of the castle.⁵⁷⁵ He commanded the Rumelian forces in the siege

⁵⁷¹ M.Halef Cevrioğlu, 'A Swedish Envoy To Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha: Aslan Aga's Relazione (1669/71)', *International Balkan Annual Conference 7*, Prishtine, 9-11 November 2017. I thank Halef for providing me with his unpublished paper.

⁵⁷² Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Sefinetü'r-Rüesa*, Millet Library, Ali Emiri MS 720, 29a.

⁵⁷³ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*, 142-43.

⁵⁷⁴ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârih*, 236-237 and Paul Rycout stated that Hüseyin Pasha had 3,000 household troops. See, Paul Rycout, *The History of the Present State*, 341.

⁵⁷⁵ SLUB EB.837, 111b and 112b.

of Candia and joined with his large household in the Kamaniets campaign.⁵⁷⁶ When we consider that more than ten years of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's fifteen-year-long grand vizierate were spent on campaigns, his desire to establish a close circle around himself inside the military establishment becomes more understandable.

4.4. The Third Layer of the Köprülü Household: The Relationship between Köprülü Household and Provincial Timariots

The question whether and how viziers forged patron-client relationships with timar holders in the provinces and officers who had *timar* revenues remains unexplored in Ottoman historiography.⁵⁷⁷ This is a key subject for better understanding the functioning of the vizier households because many timar holders were attached to the vizier households during the seventeenth century. If a *timar* holder was registered as a client of a certain vizier in order to receive an exemption from going to war, he was defined as “*defterlü*” in the Ottoman bureaucratic terminology. The system worked in the following manner: when the mobilization of the war began, the officers inspected the timar holders to see whether they had joined the army because timar holders had to join the military campaign.⁵⁷⁸ If the timariot could not offer a plausible explanation for his lack of participation, his fief was revoked by the authorities. However, if the timariot could prove that he served in the household of a vizier or a different bureaucrat in the upper echelons of the government, he would be registered as the “*defterlü*” (that is to say, a pasha's roll) of the high-level officials he claimed to be attached to. In that case, the timariot cavalryman did not lose his

⁵⁷⁶ Mühürdar Hasan, *Cevâhirü't-Tevârîh*, 234.

⁵⁷⁷ An earlier attempt was made by Mustafa Cezar, see, Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler*, 195-201 and for a groundbreaking approaching to the subject see, Özgür Kolçak “XVII. Yüzyıl Askeri Gelişimi, 111-16.

⁵⁷⁸ BOA, İbnülemin Askeri, 751,752,753 892,893,894 and 896.

fief.⁵⁷⁹ In this section, I attempt to examine this complex relationship between viziers and timar holders through archival sources. Focusing on this issue will not only enlighten us about the patronage relationship between the provincial timariot cavalries and the vizier households, but also elucidate the fuzzy link between the households and state-related officials.

The fact that the timar holders, in addition to their primary duties, collected around the vizierial households caught the attention of the authors of the *nasihatname* (advice-literature).⁵⁸⁰ Common criticism of the *nasihatname* authors was that the timar holders, who were originally supposed to participate in military campaigns, managed to escape this obligation by serving under vizierial households. In more general terms, the criticism targeted the employment of state-salary- or fief-enjoying officials by the vizierial households. As I pointed out above, among household members only *kethüdas* received the *zeamet*⁵⁸¹ revenue.⁵⁸² Other servants had to be paid by the viziers themselves. According to ‘Ayn Ali, a prominent *nasihatname* author, one of the principal reasons why the timar system became corrupted over time was that the timariots “who enjoyed the fiefs donated by the sultan” did not follow the army with their men to war, but rather chose to get registered as a *defterlü* in a vizierial household.⁵⁸³

Notwithstanding the complaints of the *nasihatname* writers, the employment of *timar* holders in the vizier households expanded. A 1657 archival register provides

⁵⁷⁹ There was an alternative way to avoid joining military campaigns. Metin Kunt stated “it is known that the state started around 1650 to collect a ‘timar-substitute’ charge (*bedel-i Timar*) from those timar holders who did not take part or who not asked to take part in imperial campaigns.” See, Kunt, *Bir Osmanlı Valisinin*, 23.

⁵⁸⁰ Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi* and Anonymous, ‘Kitab-ı Müstetab’.

⁵⁸¹ In the Ottoman system, it is customary to classify revenues according to their yield: a timar produced revenues up to 20,000 akces, a *zeamet* from 20,000 to 100,000 akces. See, Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants*, 12.

⁵⁸² Anonymous, ‘Kitab-ı Müstetab’, 39.

⁵⁸³ Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osman der Hülâsa-i Mezâmin-i Defter-i Dîvân ve Risâle-i Vazîfe-horân ve Merâtib-i Bendegân-ı Âl-i Osmân*, Ed. Tayyib Gökbilgin, (İstanbul, 1979) 75.

substantial information on the subject. The register shows that twelve imperial council pursuivants (*Cavus*) who had timar revenues were employed in the retinues of the chief-commander Deli Hüseyin Pasha. These imperial pursuivants served as treasury officials, sword-bearers, seal-bearers and gatekeepers of the vizier Deli Hüseyin Pasha. In this way, they maintained their *timar*-revenues while serving in the vizier household.⁵⁸⁴

In addition to this example, there are numerous documents penned by the central government to the local authorities for the preservation of the fiefs of the *defterlüs*. For instance, in a decree addressing the judge of Malatya in Anatolia in 1681, a certain Süleyman, who enjoyed a fief of 19,173 *akces* per annum in the county of Malatya, was exempted from participating to the campaign since he had been the *defterlü* of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha.⁵⁸⁵ In another document dated 1677, the *zeamet* fief of a certain person in the Merc village of the Damascus County, was given the same privilege as he was serving Musahib Mustafa Pasha.⁵⁸⁶ These sorts of commands and orders abound in the Ottoman archive.⁵⁸⁷

In addition to these individual applications, a register in the form of a defter covering the period between 1659 and 1662 records the *defterlüs* accompanying commanders joining the Transylvanian campaign and constitutes the most detailed extant account of the subject.⁵⁸⁸ According to this register, when the order to launch the campaign was issued in 1659, the governors of Rumelia, Bosnia, Buda, Karaman, Sivas, Aleppo and

⁵⁸⁴ BOA, A.NŞT, Dos, nr. 18/126 These pursuivants took their revenues through timar system and see, Murat Uluskan, ‘Divan-ı Hümayun Çavuşları’, PhD Thesis, Marmara University (2004).

⁵⁸⁵ BOA, Ibnulemin, Askeri, 30/2651.

⁵⁸⁶ BOA, Ibnulemin, Askeri 17/1651.

⁵⁸⁷ BOA, Ibnulemin, Askeri 7/574, Ibnulemin, Timar ve Zeamet, 2/140 and 2/168 and Ibnulemin, Maliye 11/1004.

⁵⁸⁸ BOA, KK 434, “Erdel seferinde defterlülür için ordu-yı hümayûndan virilen ahkâm kuyûdudur el-vâkı‘ an-6 şehri Şabâni’l-mu‘azzam sene 1070 (17 Nisan 1660)” 38.

Adana were invited to join the army with their troops.⁵⁸⁹ In this register, seventy-six *zaims* and 292 timariots were exempted from the timar inspection due to their service to the pashas. The register records the timariots as the *defterlü* to individual pashas from specified regions and the reasons for their exemptions.

We can see *defterlüs* of both Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha in this register. According to a registry dated 24 June 1661, twenty timariots and nine *zaims* were registered as *defterlüs* of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. These *defterlüs* were exempted on the condition that they served in the *vakfs* of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha in Yanova and Varad.⁵⁹⁰ These timariots who received their fiefs from the state in exchange for some service, were actually serving a vizier's own pious foundation (*vakf*) without losing their fiefs. After the death of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, we have the names of the *defterlüs* who now served *vakfs* of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. This registry starts as "The *defterlüs* of the pious foundation of the late grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha" dated 11 March 1663, including eleven *zaims* and twelve timariots, who were charged with dealing with the *vakfs*.⁵⁹¹ These records clearly justify the complaints of the nasihatname authors in showing us that state officials worked for the viziers.

After Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, we come across the names of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *defterlüs*. The number of the *defterlüs* is sixty-four and this figure is the highest any pasha had on his roll.⁵⁹² There are no detailed explanations for any of the entries, save for the

⁵⁸⁹ BOA, KK 434.

⁵⁹⁰ "Sa'adetlü ve mürüvvetlü sadr-ı a'zam hazretlerinin Yanova ve Arad'da olan hayratı binasının hizmetiyle istihdam olunmaları için alıkonulan zü'ama ve erbab-ı tımarlardır. Fi 26 L. sene 71", 44.

⁵⁹¹ "Zıkr olunan yirmi üç nefer zü'ama ve erbab-ı tımar bin yetmiş iki senesinde merhum Mehmed Paşa hazretlerinin evkafına ta'yin olunduklarına hidmet-i asakir-i İslamın zad ve zahireleri tedarikinde ve sa'ir hidemat-ı padişahide meçud olub Erdel Seferine varmadılar deyu dirliklerine zarar gelmemek üzere başka başka hükümleri yazılmışdır. Fi gurre-i Ş. Sene 73", 52.

⁵⁹² For instance, "Niğbolu, Tımar-ı Ebubekir, Karye-i Memlamniçe Tabi-i Rahova Defteri, 1400 Sa'adetlü vezir-i azam hazretlerinin defterlülerinden olmağın suret-i emri mucebince kayd olunmuştur. Fi 19.Z sene 72" 50.

notes that they were Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *defterlüs*. When we closely look at these *defterlüs*, it can be detected that they came from different regions of the empire. Some come from Nigde Aksaray, Menteşe and Kastamonu in Anatolia, while other timariots had their fiefs in the Balkan cities of Nigbolu (Nicopolis) and Vidin. Hence, we can see that Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *defterlüs* were spread over a considerable expanse of territory. We also have information regarding the number of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *defterlüs* who were registered during the Cretan campaign: These were fifty-four *timars* and *zeamets* whose holders were granted immunity.⁵⁹³

Now we should focus on certain problems with the register. The most important question is whether these *defterlüs* were clients or members of the vizierial household, or just people enjoying exemption due to the military service they provided. In fact, both categories existed, although the number of the people who received exemption in exchange only for military service is quite meager. For instance, a certain Kenan who held a fief of 20,000 *akces* in Timisvar was assigned to the repair of the Castle of Ineu, a commission for which he was recorded as a *defterlü* and received immunity for his fief.⁵⁹⁴ Similarly, the holder of a *zeamet* of 21,000 *akces* in Szeged, Hasan was commissioned to procure the wheat destined for the imperial army and an order was issued to protect his fief against any intervention.⁵⁹⁵

Apart from random figures recorded for these sorts of assignments, the *defterlüs* in the register tended to be either relatives or clients of the viziers. In any case, the wide geographic range of the origins of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's *defterlüs* already shows, as Özgür

⁵⁹³ ONB, Mixt. 1305, vr. 30b-31a, I wholeheartedly thank Özgür Kolçak for sharing this important source. "Zikr olunan elli bir nefer zuema ve erbab-ı timar Hanya muhafazasına ta'yin olunan vezir-i müşarün-ileyh hazretlerinin defterlü ademlerinden olup hizmetede olmağla me'mur oldukları bayrakları altında mevcut bulunmadılar deyü zeamet ve tımarlarına zarar gelmemek üzere"

⁵⁹⁴ KK 434, 42.

⁵⁹⁵ KK 434, 40.

Kolçak accurately observed, that “volunteerism of former patronage relationship proved more effective than the appointments undertaken by the central government” with regard to the *defterlüs*.⁵⁹⁶ A document addressing Fazıl Ahmed Pasha in person reveals the functioning of the mechanism. A certain Mehmed, who was a descendant of the conqueror of Esztergom Mehmed Pasha, had penned a letter to Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, expressing his wish to become the pasha’s *defterlü*. The Ottoman government consented to the request and sent an order to the governor of Buda, declaring that petitioner Mehmed’s *zeamet* was to receive exemption as long as he was in the service of the grand vizier. In this way, Mehmed was exempted from participating in military campaigns, as he was a *defterlü* of the grand vizier.⁵⁹⁷

Family members of the vizierial households themselves were among the *defterlüs*, too, and they occupied a considerable place in the lists. The register under study indicates that many of the pashas registered their sons as *defterlüs* and protected their fiefs even though the sons accompanied them in their retinues. Mehmed, son of Kenan Pasha the custodian of Erzurum, for example, was registered as *defterlü* for a *zeamet* of 22,464 akces in Smederevo while he was serving his father in Erzurum.⁵⁹⁸ Even though we detect no mention of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha’s relatives in this register, another record suggests that his brother Fazıl Mustafa was entered twice as *defterlü* in the rolls. As a Müteferrika, Fazıl

⁵⁹⁶ Kolcak, 113.

⁵⁹⁷ IE, Ensab 260 (9 August 1667), see, also Kolcak, 113, For response of the central government see: ‘Mezbur devletlü ve merhametlü Sadrazam hazretlerinin defterlü adamlarından olup memur olduğu sefer ve muhafazalarda mevcut bulunmadı deyü zeametine hazer gelmemek için emr-i şerif mucebinceFi 15 Şevval sene 1076’ for the requirement of Mehmed see, “Saadetlü merhametlü sultanım hazretleri sağolsun, Arzuhal-i bende-i budur ki Serem sancağında Busavye(Yusavye?) nahiyesinde berat-ı mutasarıf(?) eylediğimiz otuz üç bin sekiz yüz elli akçe zeamet karyeleründen Şumanofçe(?) nam karye ve gayrı yerde zeametimiz olmağla saadetlü ve merhametlü hazretlerinden mercudur ki bu kullarına edüp bu sene-i mübareke defterlü kullarınızdan eylemesi babında Budun beylerbeyisine hitaben emr-i şerif sadaka ihsan buyrulmak rica olunur. Baki ferman sultanımıdır. Bende-i Mehmed ibn-i fatih-i Estergon Mehmed Paşa”

⁵⁹⁸ KK 434, 41.

Mustafa Pasha was supposed to receive his revenue from fiefs; however, since he always accompanied his brother as part of the latter's household, his *zeamet* was protected by getting orders issued to that effect.⁵⁹⁹

As a result, viziers managed to keep attached to their household increasing numbers of officials enjoying the state's timar or *zeamet* revenues. As we saw with regard to Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's *defterlüs*, the Köprülü grand viziers managed to mobilize timariots for their own *vakfs*. They constantly incorporated more and more timar and *zeamet* holders into their households, spreading their networks over a larger geography. This subject, whose surface we have merely scratched, the surface, needs further attention and should be supplemented with more documents.

4.5. Conclusion

As Metin Kunt implies, one of the most important changes in the seventeenth century is the increasing importance of patronage relations and household affiliations in the Ottoman polity.⁶⁰⁰ As the most powerful and sustained vizier household in the seventeenth century, the Köprülü household provided an alternative to the regular channels of palace and political appointments. We can see the efficiency of the Köprülü household in three principal points that helped it gain primacy over all other competing vizier households.

The first is the ability of the Köprülü household to insert its members into the administrative system. The *kethüdas* of the Köprülü household, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha, for instance, were appointed to important provincial governorships. In addition, Salih Aga, the former steward of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, was promoted to the chief commander of the Janissaries after serving briefly as a *cavusbasi*. These appointments differed from those of the sixteenth century. They moved directly from service in the

⁵⁹⁹ BOA, Ibnulemin, Dahiliye, 111.

⁶⁰⁰ Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, 95.

vizier's household to important positions, having held posts neither in the palace nor in lower-level provincial service. Accordingly, the Köprülü household became a fast track to high offices.

The second is the establishment of minor-level households under Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's leadership. These households were all somehow tied to the Köprülü family through marriage alliances or patron-client links. The most exemplary evidence that these different households came together to form a powerful network is the important position that the Köprülü clients occupied in the Ottoman military organization during Fazıl Ahmed's campaigns. The organization of the 1663 campaign alone offers much information about the large network held together by the Köprülü household. Fazıl Ahmed Pasha brought to this campaign two of his brothers-in-law who commanded their large household troops: Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's former steward and the new governor of Aleppo, Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, *Defterdar* Ahmed Pasha, Salih Aga, the chief commander of the Janissaries and Acemzade Hüseyin Efendi, who would later replace Şamizade Mehmed Efendi. Furthermore the governor of Buda, Abaza Hüseyin Pasha, who had been a close friend of the family, was also present. Apart from bringing their large household troops to the war, these figures also proved to be Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's closest assistants in war planning and diplomatic negotiations thanks to the positions they held. Besides, Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha, who assumed the office of the grand admiralty and deputy grand vizier in Edirne, must also be included in the picture. As a result, one can say that never before in Ottoman history had so many relatives and clients taken part in a single military organization.

The third is the extension of the patronage networks of the Köprülü household in the provinces through establishing *intisab* ties with provincial timariots. The Köprülü household patronized many timariots who came from different regions of the empire. The

Köprülü grand viziers employed provincial timariots in their own service, for instance in the *vakfs* of the family. The Köprülü household was not alone in using timariots in such a way during the seventeenth century, but it managed to attach highest number of timariots to itself.

Lastly, owing to the long years during which they stood at the helm of the state, the Köprülü household managed to create a large and strong patronage network. The “continuity” from father to son enabled Fazıl Ahmed Pasha not only to place his clients in important posts, but also to make a very important network of his own from among his brothers-in-laws and the clients who had been loyal to his father despite their relative bureaucratic invisibility at this time. The Köprülü household was more influential and longer lasting than the powerful households of the sixteenth century, such as those of Sokollu Mehmed and Rüstem Pashas. The influence of the members of Sokollu Mehmed and Rüstem Pasha’s households did not continue after the death of their masters. However, even after the members of the Köprülü household were expelled from administrative positions following the failure of the siege of Vienna in 1683, they reassumed important positions in a few years and played key roles in dethroning Mehmed IV in 1687. Furthermore, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha’s other son, Fazıl Mustafa Pasha, his nephew *Amcazade* Hüseyin Pasha and grandson Köprülü Numan Pasha also managed to intermittently hold the post of grand vizier until the 1710s. This return to power and their success in preserving political influence were the most consequential lines of distinction between the Köprülü household and other vizierial households of the time.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation analyzes the dynamics of the Ottoman political system between 1656 and 1676. The analysis is carried out through a study of the influential vizierial family that came to power in 1656, the Köprülü. It focuses on the processes by which they gained and employed political power and unravels their relationship with the Ottoman dynasty. This study shows that Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and Fazıl Ahmed Pasha successfully restored the authority of the grand vizierate with support from the dynasty. They established the most efficient political network of the seventeenth century by the end of their twenty-year tenure.

The death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha is generally acknowledged as a watershed that marked the end of the empire's "classical age". Unlike his grandfather Süleyman I and his father Selim I, who delegated enormous power to their grand viziers, the new sultan Murad III initiated a series of policies that aimed to reassert sultanic authority vis-à-vis the grand vizier. In this way, as Gülru Necipoğlu aptly observes, "the clear-cut pyramidal social hierarchy of the classical age, with the sultan and grand vizier occupying its summit, evolved into a fluid structure with competing factions dominated by royal women and palace eunuchs."⁶⁰¹ The recent literature provides substantial insights into these new political arrangements, such as the creation of the position of chief black eunuch and the rise of the power of the royal favorites and women at the expense of the grand vizier. But historians have not adequately explored the question of how these changes affected the political structure during the early seventeenth century. The personal rule of Murad IV and the rise of royal favoritism in the reign of Ibrahim I are little studied, and there is no scholarly work on the question of how the relationship between the sultan and grand vizier unfolded in that period. By the same token, modern scholarship has devoted very little

⁶⁰¹ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 46.

attention to the rise of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and the succession of his son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha in the second part of the seventeenth century. Only the reestablishment of order and the expansion of the empire under the Köprülü viziers have attracted the attention of the scholars. They neglect important developments such as the moving of the court to Edirne, the emergence of a threefold administrative center, the new balance between the sultan and grand vizier, and the reduction of the inner-court servants-grand vizier rivalry in that period. Moreover, the literature has overlooked the connection between the emergence of the Köprülü household and the general political developments of the first part of the seventeenth century.⁶⁰²

I argue that the Köprülü household's long-lasting power was directly related to the political developments that took place between the enthronement of Murad III in 1574 and 1656. The first chapter showed in detail that the policies followed by Murad III deeply impacted the Ottoman political establishment. A new pattern of rule through royal favorites and harem eunuchs was perpetuated by Murad IV and Ibrahim. As a result of these novel policies, the influence of the inner-court members increased while the power of the grand vizier gradually decreased. In contrast to its role in the sixteenth century, the grand vizierate became an unstable position where the officeholders were frequently changed. The grand viziers were not able to deal effectively with the mounting uncertainties the empire faced during the first half of the seventeenth century. Accordingly, beginning in the early seventeenth century, Ottoman writers of advice literature started to place more emphasis on the need to minimize the influence of the inner-court circles, including the royal favorites and harem eunuchs, and to reestablish the authority of the grand vizierate. In addition to an intellectual climate favoring a return to a powerful grand vizier, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha's

⁶⁰² See the footnote 15th in the introduction.

appointment as grand vizier must be placed in the context of the severe crisis that plagued the Ottoman Empire in the 1650s. In 1651, the new power-holder Hadice Turhan Sultan, as her ten-year-old son's regent, was willing to grant power to a strong and capable man. After the unsuccessful one-year grand vizierate of Gürcü Mehmed Pasha, Hadice Turhan Sultan appointed Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha as grand vizier and promised that she would not allow anybody to interfere with the actions of the grand vizier. As an indication of her support for the grand vizier, Hadice Turhan dismissed the chief black eunuch, Süleyman Aga, the most powerful figure at the court, upon Tarhuncu Ahmed's request. Tarhuncu Ahmed, however, failed to deal with the ongoing problems and was executed within one year. Tarhuncu Ahmed's successors could not manage to reverse the setbacks suffered by the empire, either. In the meantime, the long war with Venice and the growing disturbances in the provinces and factional struggles in the capital jeopardized the security of the throne. In March 1656, a coalition of the Janissaries and imperial cavalry regiments revolted against the dominance of the harem eunuchs, who had wielded enormous power since 1651. The uprising culminated in the execution of the leading palace officials, including the chief black eunuch. Faced with political chaos, Hadice Turhan Sultan engineered the appointment of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as grand vizier with full powers over policy. In this manner, a new political configuration, which highlighted the independence of the grand vizier's authority and invested him with more influence, emerged in 1656.

The most important actor that paved the way for the establishment and application of this new configuration was the dynasty itself, contrary to what the present literature suggests. By providing the necessary ground for the grand vizier to act, Hadice Turhan Sultan and Mehmed IV aimed at creating stability in the empire. The main impetus behind this new political constellation was that the political crises, which stemmed from the rivalry

between the inner-court servants and grand vizier, threatened Mehmed IV's security on the throne. Moreover, the appointment of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha with extraordinary powers was not unique. As Metin Kunt rightly observes, the grand vizierate of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha "was not more than the culmination of a certain trend of his times."⁶⁰³ The main difference between Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and his predecessors was the former's achievement in establishing order. Within the first two years of his grand vizierate, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha suppressed the rebellious soldiers of the cavalry regiments in the capital, thanks to the power delegated to him by the dynasty. Later, Köprülü Mehmed succeeded in taking back the Limnos and Tenodos islands, ending the Venetian blockade of the Strait of the Dardanelles. As Köprülü Mehmed Pasha gained control over political factionalism and removed the Venetian threat, Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV worked hand in hand to strengthen the power of the grand vizier.

The most significant indicator of the cooperation between the dynasty and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha was the moving of the dynasty to Edirne. This transfer, which was prompted by Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, kept the dynasty away from any rival factions, such as the Janissaries and cavalry regiments, which had caused tumult in Istanbul for years. At around this time, while Hadice Turhan's political involvement decreased, Mehmed IV began to assume the duties of the sultanate. Hadice Turhan now tried to reinvigorate the dynastic prestige that had been tarnished by political crises such as depositions and regicides of the sultans that had plagued the previous half-century.⁶⁰⁴ She initiated the construction of the Dardanelles fortresses and a great mosque in Istanbul. Hadice Turhan and Mehmed IV started the royal processions between Edirne and Istanbul and to Bursa, where they visited ancestral tombs. While the grand vizier was trying to end internal and

⁶⁰³ Kunt, *The Köprülü Years*, 136.

⁶⁰⁴ Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 257.

external threats to the empire's authority, the dynasty conveyed "broader messages about the enduring power and endurance of the House of Osman."⁶⁰⁵

In the meantime, Mehmed IV developed a close relationship with his grand vizier. Köprülü Mehmed's administration of state affairs made a strong impression on the sultan. The first considerable challenge for Mehmed IV was the rebellion of the Anatolian pashas under the leadership of Abaza Hasan Pasha, who demanded the execution of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Mehmed IV consistently rejected the demands of the rebels and stood by Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, giving support that played a crucial role in the suppression of the rebellion. By the end of his five years in office, Köprülü Mehmed Pasha had managed to establish the internal stability of the empire and to eliminate any possible opposition that could threaten the throne of Mehmed IV.

After the death of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, Mehmed IV, contrary to all customs and rules, appointed Köprülü Mehmed's son Fazıl Ahmed Pasha to the grand vizierate. This extraordinary appointment can be explained by Mehmed IV's willingness to maintain the *status quo*, which had been established by Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.

With Fazıl Ahmed Pasha's grand vizierate a new phase began in the relationship between the grand vizier and sultan. Mehmed IV redesigned his inner circle by dismissing the incumbent chief black eunuch Solak Mehmed Aga and appointed his own man Musli Aga instead. He increasingly limited Hadice Turhan's connection to the outer world through the control of the chief black eunuch. Moreover, he appointed *Musahib* Mustafa Aga as his favorite and later promoted him to the second vizierate. Unlike his predecessors, however, Mehmed IV did not allow the members of his close circle, including his favorite and harem eunuchs, to interfere with the grand vizier's authority. During Fazıl Ahmed

⁶⁰⁵ Artan, 'Royal Weddings', 353.

Pasha's grand vizierate, the sultan's inner circle worked in great harmony with the grand vizier, which was actually encouraged by the sultan himself.

One of the most notable examples of the close collaboration was the emergence of a multipolar administrative system. In this system, the deputy grand vizier in Edirne forged a close relationship with the sultan and protected the interests of the grand vizier at the court, while the latter was on campaign. Another deputy in Istanbul was charged with responsibility for the security and administrative control of the city. Mehmed IV indeed worked in harmony with Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha, who was the confidant of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha in Edirne and did not permit any intrigues against the grand vizier. More importantly, he demanded that Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha and his own favorite *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha collaborate. In this manner, Merzifonlu was able to find his place within the close circle of the sultan, while the sultan's favorite could also become a confidant of the grand vizier. The fact that *Musahib* Mustafa Pasha assumed the post of the deputy in Edirne during the 1674 Polish campaign is emblematic of this rapprochement. This close collaboration created a power balance and prevented clashes such as those between Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Murad III.

In this new political configuration set up by Mehmed IV's appointments, the grand viziers exercised undisputed power and created a period of relative political stability. Fazıl Ahmed Pasha conducted successful campaigns, stretching the empire's borders to their largest extent, which increased both the imperial and Köprülü families' legitimacy. In this period of stability, the dynasty was no longer in jeopardy and had the opportunity to strengthen its public image. Mehmed IV encouraged the preparations of symbols of legitimacy such as "a book of imperial festivities, a dynastic genealogy and new codes of

law.”⁶⁰⁶ The dynasty’s renewed interest in such activities and its efforts to increase its legitimacy were made possible by close collaboration between Mehmed IV and the Köprülü grand viziers.

The most conspicuous result of the era of the Köprülü grand viziers was the restoration of the grand vizierial authority. A symbolic example in this respect is the related passages in the *kanunname* (code of law) of Abdi Pasha, the chancellor and the private historian of the sultan, which was written soon after the death of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha in 1676.⁶⁰⁷ The definition of the grand vizierate in this *kanunname* is quite detailed in comparison to the one in the *kanunname* of Mehmed II, produced some two centuries earlier. The lengthy explanation of the functions and responsibilities of the grand vizierate in the *kanunname* of Abdi Pasha is a clear indication of the increased authority enjoyed by the grand vizier during the Köprülü period.⁶⁰⁸

This dissertation also examined the function of the Köprülü household, the most powerful vizierial household in the seventeenth century. By exploring the roles of the *kethüda*, *agas* and scribes in the household and by examining the clients of the Köprülü household in the military and administrative systems, this study sheds light on the efficiency of the Köprülü household. Thanks to their long-lasting incumbency, the Köprülü grand viziers managed to establish a large network stretching from the provinces to the central bureaucracy. Most of the key positions held by Köprülü clients had formerly been controlled by the imperial household. This was a sign of the decline of the sultan’s household as an institution of recruitment vis-à-vis the vizier household. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, clients and family members of vizier’s household rose to prominence over the palace graduates as far as official appointments were concerned.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 351.

⁶⁰⁷ Tevki’i Abdurrahman Pasa, *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Teşrifat*, 3-18.

⁶⁰⁸ Metin Kunt, ‘Sadr-i A’zam’, in Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

Between 1683 and 1703, only three of the fourteen grand viziers were of imperial palace origin, while seven of the remaining eleven were members of the Köprülü household. The Köprülü household can hence be regarded as the most important agent in this transformation.

Overall, the vulnerability of the dynasty convinced first Hadice Turhan and then Mehmed IV about the need to unreservedly support the Köprülü grand viziers. The “working arrangement” emerging gradually then consolidated into a “system”, accepted and supported by both the Köprülü grand viziers and Mehmed IV. The “system” was broken up as result of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha’s failure in Vienna in 1683. The execution of Merzifonlu Mustafa Pasha and dismissal of the Köprülü clients, however, decreased the power of Mehmed IV, who was forced to abdicate the throne only four years later. The tension between the sultan and grand viziers continued to make a mark in political life after the deposition of Mehmed IV. Sultan Mustafa II, who was enthroned in 1695, attempted to regain the sultanic authority and dominate the grand vizier with the close collaboration of the seyhulislam Feyzullah Efendi. Their attempts resulted in another deposition of the sultan, Mustafa II, and execution of the seyhulislam in 1703. The rise of the provincial elites and civilian bureaucracy add new components to the power struggle, and their relationship with the sultanate and grand vizierate contribute a further complexity to the political structure of Ottoman history in the eighteenth century, which needs to be explored in other studies.

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