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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 Marquis 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 Köprülü 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*, (Einsiedeln, 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, (İstanbul, 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.