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

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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 Eğri 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 Gılmani', 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 Tabanıyassı 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 İsmail 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 İnalcık, ‘Khosrew Pasha’, Bearman et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹⁴⁷ Metin Kunt has argued that like Köprülü Mehmed, Tabanıyassı 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 Tayyarzade-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-Riüesa*, 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 the 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 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 Thyss 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 Gılmani', 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*, (İstanbul, 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 seyhulislam.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 İsa-zade. *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 Osmanischen 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 Siyavus 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 Seyhulislam, 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 Jacob 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 *Turkmen 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 *Turkmen 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 Tayyarzade 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 Tayyarzade 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

²⁵⁸ Levinus Warner, *Diaries*, 19b.

²⁵⁹ Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 303.

²⁶⁰ İlgürel, ‘*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 Gülmanî*’, 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 İsazade, *İsa-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 seyhüislam 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.