

Rise of Indigenous Ottoman Viziers in the Sixteenth Century*

XVI. Yüzyılda Yerli Osmanlı Vezirlerinin Yükseliş

Zahit Atçıl**

Abstract

This study explores the transformation of the Ottoman vizierate in the sixteenth century, highlighting the emergence of “indigenous viziers” who rose from humble origins through the devşirme levy and palace education. Unlike earlier viziers—ulema scholars of madrasa training or Balkan and Byzantine aristocrats who maintained ties to their homelands—these new figures were entirely products of the Ottoman system. Educated in the palace school (*Enderûn*) and promoted through provincial and central offices, indigenous viziers embodied a unique model of state service rooted solely in loyalty to the sultan. Their careers illustrate both the centralizing ambitions of Suleyman the Magnificent and the broader Ottoman process of state-building, which

* This article is based partly on research supported by the TÜBA GEBİP program and partly by the Boğaziçi University YÖK-ADEP project (No. 25B09YOKADP1). I would like to express my thanks to my colleagues Ayşe Polat and Ertuğrul Ökten for kindly reading drafts of this article and offering valuable comments on the arguments. I am also grateful to two anonymous referees for helping me avoid mistakes; any remaining errors are, of course, my own responsibility.

** Assoc. Prof. Dr., Boğaziçi University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History-Doç. Dr., Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, İstanbul/TÜRKİYE, <https://ror.org/03z9tma90> zatcil@bogazici.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1505-7769>

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC). / Bu makale Creative Commons Atıf-GayriTicari 4.0 Uluslararası Lisans (CC BY-NC) ile lisanslanmıştır.

replaced cosmopolitan or aristocratic bureaucrats with a cadre of palace-trained administrators whose authority could not be transferred to other dynastic contexts. By situating this development within comparative European frameworks, the article argues that the rise of indigenous viziers represents a distinctive form of meritocratic integration in the early modern world.

Keywords: Vizier, Devshirme, Enderûn, Indigenous, Ottoman.

Öz

Bu çalışma, XVI. yüzyılda Osmanlı veziriazamlığındaki dönüşümü inceleyerek, devşirme sistemi ve saray eğitimi yoluyla mütevazı kökenlerden yükselen “yerli vezirlerin” ortaya çıkışını ele almaktadır. Medrese eğitimi almış ulema kökenli ya da Balkan ve Bizans aristokrasisine mensup ve memleketleriyle bağlarını sürdüren önceki vezirlerin aksine, bu yeni vezirler bütünüyle Osmanlı sisteminin ürünleriydi. Enderûn’da yetiştirilen ve taşra ile merkezde çeşitli görevlerde tecrübe kazanan yerli vezirler, yalnızca padişaha bağlılık temelinde şekillenen özgün bir hizmeti modelini temsil ettiler. Onların kariyerleri, hem Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın merkezleştirme hedeflerini hem de Osmanlı devlet inşa sürecini yansıtmaktadır. Aynı zamanda bu süreç, kozmopolit veya aristokrat bürokratların yerini, otoritesi başka hanedan bağlarına aktarılamayan saray kökenli idarecilerin aldığı bir dönemi işaret etmektedir. Bu gelişmeyi Avrupa’daki çağdaş örneklerle karşılaştırarak makale, yerli vezirlerin yükselişinin erken modern dünyada özgün ve liyakate dayalı bir bürokratik sistemi sunduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Vezir, Devşirme, Enderûn, Yerli, Osmanlı.

Introduction

Luigi Bassano, a Venetian merchant living in Ottoman lands in the mid-sixteenth century, observed that the sultan (i.e. Süleyman the Magnificent, r. 1520-1566) greatly esteemed the Slavic peoples and appointed them to high positions in the government¹. Almost fifty years after Bassano, Ottoman historian Mustafa Âli of Gallipoli wrote in the introduction to his world history compendium, *Künhü’l-Ahbâr*, that the viziers and governors of his time were of Christian origins, while Muslims by birth were largely excluded from governing positions².

1 Luigi Bassano, *Costumi et i modi particolari della vita de’ Turchi*, ed. Franz Babinger, Monaco di Casa Editrice Max Hueber, Baviera 1963, p. 110.

2 Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-Ahbâr: 1. Rükün*, ed. Suat Donuk, Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, İstanbul 2020, p. 100.

Looking at the list of grand viziers up to the sixteenth century, one may notice that they were not always of Christian origins. Early viziers were originally scholars (*ulema*) who had been educated in madrasas and served as judges and military judges (*kadiasker*) before their appointment to the vizierate. After the conquest of Istanbul, Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481) preferred to appoint viziers from among the children of Balkan and Byzantine noble families. During the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, however, one may observe that the viziers came from humble backgrounds, mostly born into Christian subject families in the Balkans, collected as *devşirme*³ boys in childhood or as captives of raiding activities on the frontier zones. They received education and training in military and administrative arts as well as instruction in Islamic culture and sciences, and gained experience in various positions both in the provinces and at the center. Eventually, they rose to the office of grand vizier and exercised full powers within the Ottoman Empire.

It is worth asking why and how the Ottoman sultans shared their power with these Christian-born peasant bureaucrats. In addition, what kind of education and training enabled these viziers to assume the grand vizierate to exercise the sultans' powers? Moreover, if the *devşirme* system and the practice of collecting boys from raids dated back to at least the late fourteenth century, why were these recruits largely confined to military service until the sixteenth century before being appointed to administrative positions? What does it mean that the Ottomans first appointed scholars (*ulema*), then Balkan/Byzantine aristocrats, and then *devşirme* or captive-origin peasant boys to the grand vizierate?

The literature on Ottoman viziers tends to identify the conquest of Istanbul as a turning point, after which Ottoman sultans stopped appointing scholars to vizierial positions, preferring viziers of *kul* (literally slave) origin. The literature generally holds that Mehmed II appointed *devşirme*-origin *kul* individuals to the grand vizierate, departing from the earlier practice of appointing *ulema* (scholar)⁴.

- 3 The term *devşirme* literally means "collecting," and historically it referred to Ottoman child-levy on non-Muslim populations mostly in the Balkans. It constituted one of the means of Ottoman recruitment for military and administrative officers. Below, I will discuss in detail how it began and evolved over time.
- 4 Halil İnalcık, "Wazîr-Ottoman Empire," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1974; Cenk Reyhan, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde siyasi iktidar ve seyfiyye sınıfı: vezir-i a'zamlık örneği", *OTAM Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, No. 31, 2012, p. 31; Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453-1474)*, Brill, Leiden 2001, pp. 66-70; Cemal Kafadar, "The Ottomans and

The prevalent explanation is that, in the early Ottoman period—similar to pre-Ottoman Muslim political contexts—scholars were the most available pool for administrative recruitment. When Mehmed II began to implement absolutist policies, he reduced scholars to teaching and judicial positions and, in their place, began appointing *kuls*.

I argue, however, that the true kul viziers (of *devşirme* or captive origin) came to power only during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566), whom I term “indigenous viziers.” The viziers appointed after 1453 were not genuine *kuls* but were primarily drawn from Balkan and Byzantine aristocratic families⁵. The transition from ulema to Balkan/Byzantine aristocrats and finally to indigenous viziers can be understood as part of the process of Ottoman state formation in the sixteenth century. As I will show below, in the early days of the Ottoman principality, rulers relied on cooperation with scholars (*ulema*) in administration. However, the cosmopolitan outlook of scholars during this period occasionally challenged Ottoman authority. Following the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II initiated a reform project to relegate the scholars (*ulema*) to roles as professors and judges. To achieve this, he cooperated with the children of Balkan and Byzantine nobility, who possessed inherited experience in governance. This process helped establish an Ottoman scholarly tradition and indigenize the *ulema*. But these aristocratic viziers posed new challenges for the Ottoman sultanate. Finally, the solution came during the reign of Süleyman, who granted governing positions to *devşirme* and captive-origin boys, educating them in the newly established palace school (*Enderûn*), and appointed them to vizierial posts after they had gained experience in both provincial and central bureaucratic roles. The viziers of Süleyman were educated solely in Ottoman institutions and served exclusively in Ottoman bureaucratic positions—they were indigenous viziers.

Europe,” in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Thomas Brady et al., Brill, Leiden 1994, pp. 603-7. For a list of viziers see: Ahmed Osmanzâde Taib, *Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ*, Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, İstanbul 1271; Ahmed Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ”, *Osmanlı sadrazamları: Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ ve Zeylleri*, ed. Mehmet Arslan, Kitabevi, İstanbul 2013; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr: Dördüncü Rûkn, Osmanlı Tarihi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2009; İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, Vol. 5, Türkiye Yayınevi, İstanbul 1947 Hedda Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd: eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bâyezîds II. (1481-1512)*, K. Schwarz, Berlin 1982.

5 Only Heath Lowry notes this aspect but he did not extend the argument to other periods. See Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2003, chap. 7.

The rise of indigenous viziers in the Ottoman Empire occurred in the context of European state-building processes during the sixteenth century. The transition from decentralized feudal structures to more integrated sovereign states was a common phenomenon⁶. i) The expansion of royal bureaucratic offices⁷, ii) standing armies⁸, and iii) relatively more centralized taxation systems⁹ were shared by all early modern states. This development also cultivated indigenization by abandoning the cosmopolitan, shifting identities of bureaucrats, soldiers, and other servants¹⁰.

- 6 Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1985; Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Verso, London 1979; Eugene F Rice and Anthony Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, W. W. Norton, New York 1994, pp. 110-45; Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997.
- 7 James B. Collins, "State Building in Early-Modern Europe: The Case of France", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31/No. 3, 1997, pp. 603-33; G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1953; James B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009; Paula Sutter, "Habsburg State-Building in the Early Modern Era: The Incomplete Sixteenth Century," *Austrian History Yearbook*, No. 25, January 1994, pp. 139-57.
- 8 Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988. Basing his argument on Michael Roberts' concept of "military revolution" (a lecture at Queen's University of Belfast. See *The Military Revolution, 1560-1660: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the Queen's University of Belfast*, Boyd, Belfast 1956), reprinted in *Essays in Swedish History*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1967, pp. 195-225.) Parker recast it as a phenomenon unique to Western Europe, characterized by new military techniques and widespread use of gunpowder, which he argued ultimately led to the emergence of modern nation-states. For a critique of Parker's argument—one that nevertheless upholds the importance of centrally disciplined armies—see Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550-1800*, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands 1991. Regarding the application of the military revolution to Ottoman studies, see Halil İnalçık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, No. 6, 1980, pp. 283-337; Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005; Özgür Kolçak, *Ok, Tüfek ve At: 16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askerî Devrimi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2023.
- 9 John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1989; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1660*, Warfare and History, Routledge, London 2002; Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla and Patrick K. O'Brien (eds.), *The Rise of Fiscal States: A Global History, 1500-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012.
- 10 As an example of the waning of cosmopolitan identities see Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire", *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 8/No. 1-2, 2004, pp. 109-34.

What makes the Ottoman case unique compared to other periods and contemporaneous European examples is that the Ottomans provided a mechanism for social mobility, elevating peasant children through *devşirme* collection or by capturing boys during raids and educating them in distinctively Ottoman institutions. In other European cases, bureaucrats might have come from the local population, but they mostly belonged to the nobility or were connected to noble classes. For example, as Paula Sutter Fichtner states, the Austrian Habsburgs preferred in the administration “notables indigenous to the Austrian lands”¹¹. In other words, even if European monarchs appointed men from local lands, they almost always chose them among the nobility. This was quite similar to the situation to that of the scholar viziers (until 1453) and Balkan/Byzantine aristocratic viziers (1453-1523), who came from a noble pool of bureaucrats who likely had connections with pre-Ottoman socio-political structures and even neighboring countries. However, as I will show below, the careers of indigenous viziers were formed solely within the Ottoman context. Their education and experience were non-transferable to other political contexts, as they lacked scholarly and noble status and did not come from bloodlines valued in the European context. Therefore, the rise of indigenous viziers was a unique period in Ottoman history as well as in early modern European history.

Considering the questions posed and points highlighted above, this article pursues two main objectives: i) to introduce a new periodization for the Ottoman viziers from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries; ii) to offer a new conception of the vizierate that transcends nation-state categories, which define “core citizens” as loyal constituents while treating other groups as foreigners excluded from service. Here, I introduce the term “indigenous” for the *devşirme* viziers who rose to power during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. I define the term “indigenous,” stripped of nation-state perspectives and geographic connotations, to characterize the viziers’ careers in relation to Ottoman sovereignty¹². Since sovereignty legally

11 Paula S. Fichtner, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1490-1848: Attributes of Empire*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2003, p. 18.

12 The term “indigenous” (or “native”) is mostly used by anthropologists as outside observers who observe the culture of a group of people belonging to a particular geographic region. Being a concept developed in the post-colonial context, people with having historical continuity in pre-colonial period are considered by the UN as “indigenous.” In this anthropological sense, it has a context of the modern state, modern citizenship, civil rights etc., because in modern nation-states, citizens are considered to hold sovereignty. See for example, Douglas Sanders, “Indigenous Peoples: Issues of Definition”, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, No. 8, 1999, pp. 4-13; Moslih

resided in the sultan, nativity and indigeneity should be understood in terms of loyalty and service to him. Accordingly, I focus on the viziers' career formation and service to the sultanate rather than their ethnic and geographic background. Within this framework, I argue that only the *devşirme* viziers of the sixteenth century deserve to be called indigenous viziers.

These observations might seem counterintuitive from a modern perspective. For example, nationalist tendencies in modern Ottoman historiography often label people of *devşirme* background 'foreigners' because of their non-Turkish origin. However, such nation-state-shaped appraisals are inadequate for understanding individual identities in the pre-modern Ottoman world. As the Ottoman Empire ruled over multiple ethnicities in Europe, Asia and Africa, the core identity of the Ottoman Empire cannot be reduced to 'Turkishness,' nor any single ethnic or territorial marker. Although some elements of modern nation-states existed, the main organizing principle of the state in the early modern period was dynastic rather than national¹³. Allegiance to a royal power, rather than to a nation/ethnicity or territory, constituted the primary criterion for recruitment and the exercise of power. In other words, individuals who were employed in early modern bureaucracies were judged not for loyalty to their native land but for their loyalty to the patron dynasty that legally held sovereignty¹⁴.

By the second half of the sixteenth century, a growing awareness emerged distinguishing *devşirme* from *ecnebi* (lit. "foreigner") among those filling army and bureaucratic positions¹⁵. As non-*devşirme* groups –*ecnebi*, a term which in the

Kanaaneh, "The 'Anthropologicality' Of Indigenous Anthropology", *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 22/No. 1, 1997, pp. 1-21; Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 40/No. 4, 2005, pp. 597-614. But in this article, I argue that the term "indigenous" should be detached from the nation state conditions, because in pre-modern Ottoman context, the sovereignty belonged, at least legally speaking, to the sultan. Therefore, I use indigenous in respect to royal sovereignty and the loyalty to the possessor of legal sovereignty.

13 Richard Bonney explains why he has chosen the title of his book as *The European Dynastic State* by saying "While not all early modern European states were truly dynastic ... the sense of dynasty was of enormous importance everywhere [even in] republican regimes such as Venice..." See "Preface" in Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States: 1494-1660*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990).

14 Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Constructing Ottoman Identity in the Reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol. 1/No. 1-2, 2014, pp. 111-128.

15 For a discussion of the distinction between *devşirme* and *ecnebi*, see Metin Kunt, "Turks in the Ottoman court", *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, edited by Joroen Duindam, Tülay

early modern period did not mean “geographical foreigner” as today— were thought to have infiltrated into the janissary corps and other bureaucratic units, the presumed purity of Ottoman institutions was considered “tainted.” These observations clearly show that modern nationalist assumptions on early modern Ottoman identities misrepresent the situation, as it was the *devşirme*-origin people, not the others, who were most directly associated with the Ottoman enterprise. Therefore, it is essential to look at the history of the vizierate and vizierial identities with a perspective free from modern nation-state categories and nationalist ideals.

In this paper, I seek to explore why and how the indigenous viziers emerged and contextualize them within the bureaucratic developments of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent. To clarify my argument, I begin by briefly discussing the *ulema* viziers and Balkan/Byzantine aristocratic viziers, then introduce the phenomenon of indigenous viziers and analyze how the Süleymanic age facilitated their rise. I will also examine the career formation of indigenous viziers to distinguish them from the scholar and aristocratic viziers. Lastly, I will examine their emergence within the context of the Süleymanic age, a period in which dynastic prestige reached its peak and bureaucratic institutions assumed a more central role.

Ulema Viziers in the Early Ottoman Period (1300-1453)

The viziers in the early phase of the Ottoman state were selected from Muslim scholars (*ulema*). They received their education in Anatolian madrasas and usually followed a career path that included service as judge (*kadı*) and military judge (*kadıasker*) and then as vizier. Ottoman sources mention Alaeddin Pasha as the first Ottoman vizier during the reign of Orhan Bey (r. 1326-1362). After him, Nizameddin Ahmed Pasha, Hacı Pasha, and Sinaneddin Yusuf Pasha, who all came from scholarly backgrounds¹⁶, served as viziers during the reign of Orhan¹⁷.

Artan, and Metin Kunt, Brill, Leiden 2011, pp. 289-312.

- 16 For the early Ottoman scholars and their political connections see in Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 17-45. Also see in Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 2, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1974, pp. 279-286; İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamic Republic of Letters*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2016; Aydın Taneri, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş Döneminde Vezir-i A'zamlık, 1299-1453*, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, Ankara 1974.
- 17 Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ”, pp. 59-60; Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 18a; Taneri, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş Döneminde Vezir-i A'zamlık, 1299-1453*, pp. 33-34; İnalçık, “Wazir-Ottoman Empire”; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Osmanlı Tarihine Ait Yeni Bir Vesikamın Ehemmiyeti ve İzahı ve Bu Münasebetle Osmanlılarda İlk Vezirlere Dair Mütelea”, *Belleten*, Vol.

Among the scholar-viziers, the most influential lineage was the Çandarlı family, whose members held the vizierate for nearly a century and shaped Ottoman governance through successive generations. The Çandarlı family dominated the vizierate for several generations, starting under the reign of Murad I (r. 1362-1389) and continuing through the time of Mehmed II (1451-1481). Çandarlı Kara Halil Hayreddin Pasha (d. 1386), Çandarlı Ali Pasha (d. 1406), Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha (d. 1429), and Çandarlı Halil Pasha (d. 1453) were educated in Islamic sciences at madrasas before serving as judges and eventually viziers¹⁸.

The best-known member of the Çandarlı family is Halil Pasha (d. 1453), who became grand vizier during the reign of Murad II and the early reign of Mehmed II. He was the last grand vizier with a scholarly background serving at a time when men of military origin began to gain greater space in the bureaucracy. He was the leader of a group that resisted Mehmed II's policies favoring janissaries and military men. In the Ottoman court, second vizier Şehabeddin Pasha, third vizier Saruca Pasha, and fourth vizier Zaganos Pasha, who belonged to the military branch of the bureaucracy, supported Mehmed II's long-held plan to besiege Constantinople. Halil Pasha consistently advocated peace toward Byzantium to prevent a renewed European crusade like those that had endangered the Ottoman army at Varna (1444) and Kosovo (1448)¹⁹. The peace party led by Halil Pasha lost influence after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453. Halil Pasha was then executed, a development that marked the beginning of changes in the nature of the vizierate. Halil Pasha's execution not only eliminated the leading voice of the peace faction but also symbolized the decline of ulema dominance in the vizierate, paving the way for the rise of Balkan and Byzantine aristocratic figures favored by Mehmed II.

3/No. 9, 1939, pp. 99-106.

18 Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*, pp. 1-86; Taneri, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş Döneminde Vezir-i A'zamlık, 1299-1453*, pp. 35-36.

19 Osanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 62; Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 146b; Halil İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1954, pp. 109-114.

Table 1: Ottoman Grand Viziers before 1453

Name	Dates of Service	Ethnicity	Career Formation	Previous Positions
Alâüddin Pasha	1323?-1331	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	unknown
Nizameddin Ahmed Pasha	1331-1348(?)	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	unknown
Hacı Pasha	1348(?) -1360(?)	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	unknown
Sinaneddin Yusuf Pasha	1360(?) -?	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	unknown
Çandarlı Halil Hayreddin Pasha	1368 (or 1373)-1387	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Judge
Çandarlı Ali Pasha	1387-1406	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Judge
Halil Pasha	After 1406-?	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Judge
Bayezid Pasha	(?) -1421	Türk or Albanian (?)	Palace Service	Military commander
Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha	1421-1429	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Judge
Çandarlı Halil Pasha	1438-1453	Türk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Judge, military judge

Sources: Ahmed Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ,” in *Osmanlı sadrazamları: Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ ve Zeylleri*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (Kitabevi, 2013); Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr: Dördüncü Rûkn, Osmanlı Tarihi* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2009); İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947), Vol. 5; Aydın Taneri, *Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kuruluş döneminde vezîr-i a'zamlık, 1299-1453* (Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1974); İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1974); Halil İnalçık, “Wazîr-Ottoman Empire,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)* (Brill).

The relations between the scholar-viziers and the Ottoman dynasty in the early period reflected a balance of cooperation and mutual dependence between the dynasty and the scholars. Most pre-conquest viziers were educated in institutions that predated the Ottoman principality and brought with them expertise in fiscal record-keeping and administration rooted in the Near Eastern political practice. The scholar-viziers enjoyed considerable autonomy in their relationship with the

sultan. They represented a long tradition of administration in the Near East at a time when the sultans and members of the Ottoman dynasty were seeking to consolidate power and establish legitimacy, for example, through the propaganda of their engagement in *gaza* and the construction of a respectable genealogy for legitimate rulership²⁰.

Even when Mehmed II sought to curb the autonomy of the scholarly class and make them more dependent on the Ottoman enterprise, they resisted submitting to his absolutism. When Mehmed II imprisoned Sinan Pasha b. Hızır Bey (d. 1486), an important member of the religious-scholarly and bureaucratic elite, the other scholars collectively protested, saying that unless the sultan released him, they would burn all their books and leave the Ottoman lands forever. The sultan therefore released Sinan Pasha to prevent their departure for the Mamluk lands in Egypt and Syria or the Turcoman and Timurid lands in the East. Even if this might sound naïve, the rhetoric in the sources suggests that their cosmopolitan background made such mobility seem plausible²¹.

It is also worth noting that the function and career path of a vizier in the early days of the Ottoman principality were not yet distinct from a judicial career; these paths diverged only in the sixteenth century. The backgrounds and career paths of judges and viziers were largely the same. With the exception of Bayezid Pasha (d. 1421) –whose background remains obscure²², all early viziers belonged to the scholarly class and followed a common pattern: judgeship, then military judgeship, and finally the vizierate. The functions of these offices were either minimally differentiated or constituted stages of increasing responsibility and power. The fact that the same group of people (i.e., the scholars/*ulema*) dominated the offices from judgeship to vizierate fostered a strong corporate consciousness and a measure of autonomy within the administration.

The autonomy and power of the scholars were also related to their cosmopolitan outlook, through which they did not identify themselves with any principalities. This was partly because they represented the continuity of political and social culture that predated these principalities and partly because their educational

20 Colin Imber, “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth”, *Turcica*, Vol. 19, 1987, pp. 7-27.

21 Abdurrahman Atçıl, “The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship (1300-1600)”, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2010, pp. 94-95.

22 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. II, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2011, pp. 553-554.

careers usually transcended the boundaries of a principality²³. The important educational centers were Bursa, Konya, Cairo, Damascus, Tabriz, and Samarkand. The cosmopolitan culture of the scholars made it unproblematic to hold patronage from one principality (e.g., the Mamluks) while also receiving patronage from a rival (e.g., the Ottomans). In other words, Musa Çelebi hesitated little to appoint Bedreddin as his military judge even though Bedreddin had been a close associate of Sultan Barquq and possibly had received an offer from Timur, because scholars –the principal human resource for office, including the vizierate– had long been professional bureaucrats whose careers transcended dynastic boundaries since the Abbasid era²⁴. This independence of the scholar-viziers, while valuable for early state formation, gradually became a liability for a sultanate seeking centralized authority, leading to the search for a more controllable administrative elite — a search that culminated in the rise of the ‘indigenous’ viziers of the sixteenth century.

Byzantine-Serbian Nobility in the Ottoman Vizierate (1453-1523)

When Mehmed II ascended the throne for the second time in 1451, he was determined to limit the influence of scholars in his administration. He believed that his father, Murad II, had been forced to acquiesce to the advice and agenda of the viziers, particularly Çandarlı Halil Pasha, whose insistence on peace had shaped foreign policy. Although some viziers of *kul*-origin²⁵ served in his father’s court, they did little to diminish the power of Halil Pasha, whose family had long dominated the Ottoman administration. Murad’s abdication in favor of his 12-year-old son in

23 For the cosmopolitan outlook of the ulema see Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 17-45; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*. As an example, Şemseddin Fenari left the Ottoman lands when he had a conflict with Sultan Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402). He moved to Karamanid lands in Anatolia and assumed the teaching position and the office of military judge. Bayezid regretted his anger and invited him back. On his return from the pilgrimage in Arabia in 1419, the Mamluk sultan invited him to Egypt where he taught students and participated in academic debates. See in Richard C. Repp, *The Miñfi of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, Ithaca Press, London 1986, pp. 83-88.

24 For Bedreddin’s scholarly career see Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-ahbâr*, vr. 54a-b; Halil bin İsmâil, *Simavna Kadısoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Manâkıbı*, ed. Abdülbâki Gölpinarlı and İsmet Sungurbey, Etü Yayınevi, İstanbul 1967. For a discussion of cosmopolitan scholarly networks see in Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*, pp. 122-40.

25 The term *kul*, “slave,” represents a group of people who were recruited from non-Muslim subjects through the *devşirme* levy whose sole allegiance was to the sultan. I will discuss below the formation of real *kul* viziers.

1444 further strengthened Halil Pasha's position²⁶. Mehmed, however, recognized Halil Pasha's indispensability because of the respect and loyalty he commanded among the Janissaries²⁷. Thus, he initially contented himself with dismissing Ishak Pasha from the office of second vizier and appointing him governor-general of Anatolia²⁸. To marginalize scholars and secure broader support for his ambitious plans, he appointed viziers from the sons of former Byzantine and Balkan aristocratic families as a deliberate strategy. By March 1452, he had as his viziers: Halil Pasha (grand vizier), Saruca Pasha (second vizier), Şahabeddin Pasha (third vizier), and Zaganos Pasha (fourth vizier)²⁹. By appointing men of aristocratic origin rather than ulema, Mehmed II sought viziers who owed their loyalty exclusively to him, rather than to a broader scholarly estate with its own networks of authority.

Halil Pasha, who strongly favored consolidating central power and opposed the siege of Constantinople, fell from power after the conquest. Mehmed II, as the conqueror of the Byzantine capital, had acquired significant prestige and personal charisma; he dismissed Halil Pasha from the grand vizierate, imprisoned him, and finally executed him. This execution symbolized the end of the ulema's long-standing dominance in the vizierate and cleared the way for Mehmed II's preferred cadre of administrators. He appointed Zaganos Pasha grand vizier in 1453, though he dismissed him soon after. Thereafter, Mehmed II appointed Mahmud Pasha, who served twice and continued to be in a powerful position until his death in 1474. Mehmed II preferred to raise non-scholar bureaucrats (like

26 Murad II likely sought a respite from stressful politics and from rivalries among his viziers: he also aimed to underscore his indispensability as an arbiter among competing interests. Feridun M. Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet, 1453: İstanbul'un Fethi ve Kıyamet Senaryoları*, Timaş, İstanbul 2012, pp. 79-98.

27 A janissary revolt in 1446 resulted in Mehmed's abdication and Murad's return to the throne again. The janissaries attempted to take revenge on vizier Şahabeddin Pasha, whom they believed to have caused many of their fellows to die during the campaign of Transylvania (1442). Şahabeddin Pasha barely escaped with his life. Halil Pasha invited Murad to Edirne, stating that the janissaries accept only him as the legitimate sultan. It was also Halil Pasha from whom the janissaries asked a pardon from Murad, whom they had angered them due to their revolt. Halil Pasha appears to have been the most crucial figure the janissaries trusted and respected. See in Halil İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, pp. 92-96; Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet, 1453*, pp. 117-40.

28 Halil İnalçık, "Mehmed II", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 28, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2003, pp. 395-407; İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, pp. 110-11; Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet, 1453*, pp. 14-41.

29 İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, p. 85 and 112.

Rum Mehmed Pasha, İshak Pasha and Gedik Ahmed Pasha) but he continued to cooperate with scholars (like Sinan Pasha and Karamani Mehmed Pasha)³⁰.

In the literature, Mehmed II's execution of Halil Pasha and his policy of selecting viziers among converts have been interpreted as the beginning of a new era in the vizierate –often called the “rule of *kuls*”³¹. The term *kul* refers to military and administrative personnel recruited as war captives or through the *devşirme* levy applied on Christian subjects and trained to serve the sultan. Although the slave-soldier system had existed since the Abbasid era, the *devşirme* levy –which systematically recruited Christian peasant boys– was a distinctive Ottoman innovation. The janissary army, the most important part of the Ottoman standing army, was theoretically based primarily on the *devşirme* system. Based on certain physical and mental criteria, young boys were selected and brought to the capital, where they were examined and distributed into various sections of the military and administrative units. The most promising were reserved for the inner service (*Enderûn*) of the palace, where they received an elite education and training, as well as personal service to the sultan. After graduating, they were assigned various administrative and military positions in the provinces and at the center, and some eventually rose to high offices, including the vizierate. The institutionalization of the *devşirme* system thus served not only as a means of military recruitment but also as a powerful tool of centralization, ensuring that the empire's highest officials were formed entirely within Ottoman structures.

If we return to the viziers of Mehmed II after Halil Pasha, most grand viziers of this period were not of *kul*-origin; their careers do not reflect the “typical” trajectory of a Christian peasant's son rising through the *devşirme* system and palace schooling to reach the vizierate. They were instead the children of Byzantine, Serbian, and Albanian noble families, some of whom were brought under the care of the sultan at an early age, while others converted to Islam voluntarily and entered Ottoman service.

The Ottoman practice of recruiting noble children may have originated from the Byzantine tradition of taking hostages from the children of neighboring

30 See the list of grand viziers after 1453 until 1517 in Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, pp. 12-22. A similar list is available in Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs*, p. 63.

31 Halil İnalçık, “Ghulām-Ottoman Empire”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, Second Edition, Brill, Leiden 1965; Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, Praeger Publishers, New York 1973, p. 77; Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs*, pp. 59-67.

principalities. In this system, Byzantine emperors ensured the loyalty of the surrounding rulers by hosting their children in the imperial capital, thereby using them as diplomatic tools³². Byzantine historian Doukas records several instances in which Ottoman rulers were required to send their sons to the Byzantine court as guarantees of peaceful relations. In turn, Ottoman rulers requested that the Byzantine emperors and other Balkan princes send their own sons to either perform compulsory military service or to stay as hostages at the Ottoman court³³.

However, over time, the Ottoman relations with Balkan and Byzantine noble children diverged from the original Byzantine hostage tradition, even if they initially resembled it in rationale. For example, Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha, one of the sons of Duke Stjepan in Southern Bosnia, was taken as a hostage at an early age following the conquest of Bosnia (1463). With the reign of Mehmed II, the Byzantine Empire ceased to exist, and nearly all Balkan countries fell under Ottoman control. Consequently, the placement of noble children at the Ottoman court should no longer be interpreted within the context of mutual diplomatic relations between independent states. These polities were either fully subordinated to Ottoman sovereignty or had disappeared altogether. In the same vein, after the death of Duke Stjepan and the civil war among his children, Mehmed II annexed southern Bosnia completely and allowed Hersekzade Ahmed to continue his career in Ottoman administration. In short, although the Ottoman recruitment of Byzantine and Balkan noble children may have had its roots in the Byzantine hostage tradition used to secure diplomatic peace, their later appointments to high offices such as the grand vizierate should be understood as part of the Ottoman imperial administrative system rather than as instruments of diplomacy. This shift signaled the transformation of noble hostages into Ottoman insiders, whose identities and careers were increasingly defined by service to the sultan rather than their dynastic origins.

32 Cecily J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2014; Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2009.

33 For the detention of Bayezid I's son Mustafa and Süleyman Çelebi's son Orhan as hostages at the Byzantine court see Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, transl. Harry J. Magoulias, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1975, p. 104 and 159. In return, for Prince Manuel's (the emperor Manuel II) compulsory military service to Bayezid see Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, pp. 81-85. For the Walachian prince Dracul's retention as hostage at the Ottoman court see Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, pp. 1-78.

Table 2: Ottoman Grand Viziers between 1453 and 1523

Name	Dates of Service	Ethnicity	Career Formation	Previous Positions
Zağanos Pasha	1453-1456	Albanian/ Greek	Devşirme	District governor, Admiral
Mahmud Pasha	1456-1466 and 1472-1474	Serb	Aristocratic background	Governor-General
Rum Mehmed Pasha	1466-1469	Greek	Aristocratic background	Second Vizier
Ishak Pasha	1468-1471 and 1481-1483	Turk	Aristocratic background	Third Vizier
Gedik Ahmed Pasha	1474-1477	Serbian	Aristocratic background	Governor-General
Sinan Pasha	1477-1477	Turk	Madrasa education, scholarly career	Madrasa Professor (Müderriş)
Karamani Mehmed Pasha	1478-1481	Turk	Aristocratic background, Madrasa education	Chancellor, Governor- General,
Davud Pasha	1482-1497	Albanian	Devşirme	District Governor, Governor-General
Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha	1497-1498, 1503- 1506, 1511, 1512- 1514 and 1515- 1516	Bosnian	Aristocratic Background, Palace Service	Army commander
Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha	1498-1499	Turk	Madrasa Education, Scholarly career	Judge, Military Judge
Mesih Pasha	1482-1485 and 1499-1501	Greek	Aristocratic Background	Admiral
Ali Pasha (Hadim)	1501-1503, 1506- 1511	Bosnian	Aristocratic Background	Governor-General
Koca Mustafa Pasha	1511-1512	Greek	Devşirme	Governor-General
Ahmed Pasha (Dukaginzade)	1514-1515	Albanian	Aristocratic Background	Governor-General
Sinan Pasha (Hadim)	1516-1517	Bosnian	Aristocratic Background	Governor-General

Yunus Pasha	1517	Albanian	Devşirme	Agha of Janissaries, Governor-General
Piri Mehmed Pasha	1518-1523	Türk	Madrassa, bureaucracy	Judge, Finance Director

Sources: Ahmed Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ”, *Osmanlı sadrazamları: Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ ve Zeylleri*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (Kitabevi, 2013); Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr: Dördüncü Rikn, Osmanlı Tarihi* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2009); İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947), vol. 5; Hedda Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd: eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bâyezîds II. (1481-1512)* (K. Schwarz, 1982); Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (State University of New York Press, 2003).

The careers of individual grand viziers help to illustrate this broader context. Zaganos Pasha, whose origins remain obscure, succeeded Halil Pasha as grand vizier in 1453. Alongside the second vizier Şahabeddin Pasha, he served as tutor and counselor to Mehmed II and played a pivotal role in advocating for the siege of Constantinople, in opposition to Halil Pasha's more cautious stance. Zaganos Pasha was also connected to the ruling dynasty through marriage: he was the son-in-law of Murad II and later became father-in-law of Mehmed II. His tenure as grand vizier was brief: the sultan eventually dismissed him and arranged for the divorce of his daughter. Following a short period of exile, he returned to public service, holding important positions in provincial administration and ultimately serving as admiral of the Ottoman navy³⁴.

The most prominent vizier of Mehmed II was Mahmud Pasha, son of Michael Angelos, who belonged to a distinguished Balkan-Byzantine noble family from Novo Brdo. On his father's side, he was the grandson of Caesar Manuel Angelos Philantropenos, the former ruler of Thessaly, while on his mother's side, he was the grandson of Byzantine nobleman Marco Yagari. His maternal cousin was George Amirutzes, the renowned Pontic Greek Renaissance philosopher. Mahmud Pasha's brother, Michael Angelović, held an influential position in the court of the Serbian despot Lazar and played a significant role in mediating peaceful relations between the Ottoman government and the Serbian ruler³⁵. He was captured

34 A Savvides, “Zaghanos Pasha”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8070; Alexis G. C. Savvides, “Notes on Zaghanos Pasha's Career”, *Journal of Oriental and African Studies*, No. X, 1999, pp. 14-47.

35 Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ”, pp. 63-64; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 147a-b. For a scholarly discussion and criticism of the sources on the origins of Mahmud Pasha, see

by a certain Mehmed Agha while traveling with his mother from Novo Brdo to Smederovo (along with two other boys, Mevlana Abdulkерim and Mevlana Ayas, who would undergo madrasa education)³⁶. Mahmud received an education in the Ottoman palace at Edirne during the reign of Murad II and rose to prominence under Mehmed II. He was appointed grand vizier in 1456, following the failed Ottoman siege of Belgrade. In addition to his role as grand vizier, he served as *beylerbeyi* (governor-general) of Rumelia and participated in numerous military campaigns. He was dismissed in 1468, reinstated in 1472, but dismissed again two years later. In 1474, he was executed, marking the end of his tumultuous political career³⁷. Mahmud Pasha's trajectory exemplifies how an aristocratic background could initially facilitate entry into the Ottoman elite, but ultimate advancement and survival depended on proximity to the sultan and integration into Ottoman political culture.

Ishak Pasha served as grand vizier for both Mehmed II and his son Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) in 1468-1471 and 1481-1483. He was the son of a certain Ibrahim Agha from İnegöl, near Bursa. He played a crucial role in the smooth transition from the reign of Mehmed II to that of Bayezid, especially in mediating between outraged janissaries, who killed the grand vizier Karamani Mehmed Pasha, and the new sultan, who was displeased with their lack of discipline³⁸. Ishak Pasha's son-in-law, Gedik Ahmed Pasha, also held the position of grand vizier. Ahmed Pasha, from a minor Serbian noble family, received education at the Ottoman palace during the reign of Murad II, and after serving as governor-general of Anatolia, rose to the vizierate. Following Mahmud Pasha's second term, he served as grand vizier for three years (1474-1477), before becoming admiral of the Ottoman navy. During his grand vizierate and admiralty, he conquered

in Stavrides, *The Sultan of Viziers*, pp. 73-100. See and compare also in Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Mahmud Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1993; C. H. Imber, "Maḥmūd Paṣha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4798; Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Sadrazam Adni Mahmud Paşa'ya Ait Bir Tedkik Münasebetiyle", *Belleten*, No. 24, 1960, pp. 509-11.

36 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 63-64; Stavrides, *The Sultan of Viziers*, pp. 107-10.

37 Stavrides, *The Sultan of Viziers*, pp. 119-84; Imber, "Maḥmūd Paṣha"; Tekindağ, "Mahmud Paşa".

38 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 64; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 204b; *DİA*, "İshak Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 22, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2000; Vehbi Tamer, "Fatih Devri Ricalinden İshak Paşa'nın Vakfiyeleri ve Vakıfları", *Vakıflar Dergisi*, No. IV, 1958, pp. 107-24; Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd*, pp. 223-39.

Crimea in 1475 and Otranto in 1480³⁹. Another brief grand vizierate was that of Rum Mehmed Pasha (1471-1472). His origins remain uncertain, though he was probably Greek and taken among the local elite children of the city during or after the conquest. Ottoman sources portray him negatively, particularly for introducing rent on houses in Istanbul that had previously been granted as freehold property. According to Aşıkpaşazade, this policy was suggested by his father's Byzantine associates, indicating his close ties to the city's pre-Ottoman elite and possibly to noble ranks⁴⁰. This episode illustrates how ties to Byzantine elites could both enable access to high office and generate suspicion about divided loyalties. Taken together, these viziers reveal how, in the decades following 1453, the Ottoman dynasty continued to rely on members of Balkan and Byzantine nobility to consolidate legitimacy over newly conquered territories.

Mehmed II's pattern of grand vizierial appointments continued during the reigns of his two successors, Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) and Selim I (r. 1512-1520). Byzantine and Balkan aristocratic families, with few exceptions, retained control over government. The most striking individual was Mesih Pasha, who was the nephew of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine IX Palaeologus. Considering Constantine died without any male heir, Mesih Pasha would have been the next emperor if the Byzantine Empire had survived. He was taken (with his two brothers) into the Ottoman palace for education at the age of ten, after the conquest of Istanbul. He converted to Islam and rose to the position of grand vizier during the reign of Bayezid II (1483-1485 and 1499-1501). He was influential in Bayezid's foreign policy concerning the question of Cem⁴¹.

39 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 65; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 147b. M. Halil Yinanc notes that Gedik Ahmed Pasha is mentioned in some western sources as a member of Byzantine Palaeologan family. Yet, the fact that his father was a fief holder in Serbia is now attested by the archival sources. See in Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, "Ahmed Paşa, Gedik", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 1, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1993, pp. 193-199; Osmanzâde Taib, *Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ*, 13-14; Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd*, pp. 100-128; Hedda Reindl, "Gedik Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 13, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1996, pp. 543-544; Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, p. 116.

40 Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Mehmed Paşa, Rum", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. VII, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1993; A. H. de Groot, "Mehmed Paşa, Rûm", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5137. Especially see Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Constructing Ottoman Identity in the Reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, 2014, pp. 115-117.

41 Theodoros Spandouginos, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, trans. Donald M. Nicol, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, p. 46; Giovan Maria Angiolello, *Historia Turchesca (1300-1514)*, ed. Donado da Lezze and Ion Uşru ed. Inst. de arte grafice "Carol Göbl" s-r I.S. Rasidescu,

Like Mesih Pasha, Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha, and Dukaginzade Ahmed Pasha were two important grand viziers during the reigns of Bayezid II and Selim, belonging to Bosnian and Albanian nobility, respectively. Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha (whose original name was Stjepan) was the youngest son of Stjepan Vukčić-Kosača, the Duke of St. Sava in southern Bosnia, known popularly as Herzog (el Cersecho). When Mehmed II annexed Bosnia in 1463, the Duke of St. Sava accepted Ottoman suzerainty. His youngest son, Ahmed, was born around the mid-1450s in Castel Nuovo, where he spent his childhood, and then received an education in Dubrovnik, where he was known as Prince Stjepan. When his older brother, Herceg Vlatko, seized his share of their father's inheritance in 1472, Prince Stjepan (Ahmed), who had initially been taken as a hostage, chose to remain in the capital, converted to Islam, but kept his links with his homeland. Hersekzade Ahmed was then raised in the palace and married Hundi Hatun, the daughter of Bayezid, in 1484. He held the position of grand vizier five times during the reigns of Bayezid II and Selim (I: 1497-98, II: 1501-1504, III: 1511, IV: 1512-1514, V: 1515-1516)⁴².

Dukaginzade Ahmed Pasha was from Albanian nobility. His ancestor, Duke-Jean (Duka-Gin), founded the duchy of Shkodër (İşkodra or Scutari). After the Ottoman conquest of Albania, some members of the duchy went to Italy, and some entered service in Istanbul. Dukaginzade Ahmed and his brother Mehmed joined the Ottoman service (either during the reign of Mehmed II or Bayezid II). Dukaginzade Ahmed Pasha became the governor of Anatolia in 1511 and was appointed by Selim I as grand vizier in 1514. He was married first to Ayşe Sultan (a granddaughter of Bayezid II) and later to Fatma Sultan (a daughter of Selim I)⁴³.

1909, p. 106; Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 68; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 147b-48; Halil İnalçık, "Mesih Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)* (Brill), https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5170; Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd*, pp. 279-91.

42 Spandouginos, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, pp. 44-45; Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 66-67; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, p. 205; Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd*, pp. 129-46; H. Šabanović, "Hersek-Zâde", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2850; Şerafettin Turan, "Hersekzâde Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 17, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1998; Heath W. Lowry, *Hersekzâde Ahmed Paşa: An Ottoman Statesman's Career & Pious Endowments*, Bahçeşehir University Press, İstanbul 2011; Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, p. 126. Safvet-beg Bašagić, *Žnameniti hrvati, bosnjaci i hercegovi u turskoj carevini*, Stamparija Grafika S. Kovacic, 1931, p. 6.

43 Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, p. 127; Abdülkadir Özcan, "Dukaginzâde Ahmed Pasa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1994, pp. 550-551.

Two eunuch grand viziers from Bosnia were also descendants of Bosnian nobility. The first, Hadim Ali Pasha, who served as grand vizier in 1501-1502 and 1506-1511, was from a fief-holding family of Ostoya from the village of Drozgometva⁴⁴. The second, Hadim Sinan Pasha, who held the grand vizierate twice in 1515 and 1516-1517, was a descendant of Tvrtko Borovinić (d. 1463), a relative of great Bosnian despot Radosav Pavlović (d. 1441)⁴⁵. Their appointments illustrate how the Ottoman dynasty could incorporate even eunuchs of noble background into the highest administrative offices, thereby ensuring both their absolute loyalty to the sultan and a symbolic continuity with the aristocratic elites of the Balkans.

Four grand viziers with scholarly backgrounds between the execution of Çandarlı Halil Pasha in 1453 and the beginning of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) deserve particular attention. Firstly, Sinan Pasha, son of Hızır Bey, was among the outstanding scholars during the reign of Mehmed II. He was appointed to the grand vizierate in 1477 and held the position for about a year⁴⁶. Secondly, Karamani Mehmed Pasha, the last vizier of Mehmed II, was also a scholar in his early career. He was a descendant of Mevlana Celaleddin Rûmî from Konya and studied with the famous scholar Musannifek Ali b. Mahmud (d. 1470). He served as chancellor (*nişancı*) in Mehmed II's court. During his grand vizierate, the lawbook of Mehmed II, known as *Kanûnnâme-i âl-i Osman*, was probably composed. He also authored a chronicle on the Ottoman dynastic venture in Arabic⁴⁷. Thirdly, Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha was the youngest son of Çandarlı Halil Pasha. Despite the fact that after the execution of his father, the property of the Çandarlı family was confiscated and all the relatives faced some kind of demotion,

44 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 69; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 205a-b; M. Tayyib Okiç, "Hadım (Atik) Ali Paşa Kimdir?", *Necatî Lugal Armağanı*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1968; Mehmet İpşirli, "Atik Ali Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1991.

45 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 70; T. H., "Sinan Paşa, Yusuf Hadım", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. X, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; Şerafettin Turan, "Hadım Sinan Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 15, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1997; Başağaç, *Znameniti*, p. 68.

46 Hasibe Mazıoğlu, "Sinan Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 10, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1993, pp. 666-670; Christine Woodhead, "Sinan Pasha, Khoja", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill, Leiden 1997, Vol. 9.

47 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 65-66; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 204b; Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Mehmed Pasha, Karamânî", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; A. H. de Groot, "Mehmed Pasha, Karamânî", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5130; V. L. Ménage, "The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography", *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1962, p. 174.

Ibrahim Pasha served as judge in Edirne and became military judge and vizier. He was appointed as grand vizier by Bayezid in 1498⁴⁸. Fourthly, Piri Mehmed Pasha, like Karamani Mehmed Pasha, was a descendant of Mevlana Celaleddin Rûmî. He became chief treasurer (*başdefterdar*) during the reign of Bayezid II, and also became vizier in 1514 and grand vizier in 1517. He held the office until Süleyman appointed Ibrahim Pasha as his grand vizier in 1523⁴⁹.

Except for the three Ottoman grand viziers (Davud Pasha [1483-1497], Koca Mustafa Pasha [1511-1512], and Yunus Pasha [1517])⁵⁰, the grand viziers who served during the reigns of Mehmed II, Bayezid II, and Selim I were all either from Balkan-Byzantine aristocratic families or from *ulema* families. Mehmed II aimed to break the dependency on the scholars who had a cosmopolitan educational and career background and preferred to appoint the sons of former Christian noble administrators to vizierial positions after their conversion to Islam. Though most of these viziers joined the Ottoman service at an early age and received education at the Ottoman palace, the selection of viziers among them is noteworthy.

The fact that the viziers were mostly of noble backgrounds shows that the Ottoman dynastic legitimacy, still insecure at the time, did not yet reach a level of superiority and respectability. Their noble pedigrees not only reassured newly subdued populations but also projected an image of continuity and respectability to rival powers in Europe and the Islamic world. The rule by former Christian Balkan nobility suggests that the Ottoman legitimacy needed a kind of cooperation with the nobility of the newly conquered lands. The example of Mahmud Pasha Angelović as the Ottoman grand vizier and his brother Michael Angelović as governor of Serbia, as well as the connection between Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha and his relatives in Bosnia, shows the mediation of the nobility in establishing

48 Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ”, pp. 67-68; Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*, pp. 100-104.

49 Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ”, pp. 70-71; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-ahbâr*, vr. 356b; Franz Babinger, “Pîrî Mehmed Paşa”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6125.

50 For brief information of these grand viziers see in Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ”, p. 66, pp. 69-70; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-ahbâr*, fol. 204b-5, fol. 206a and fol. 207b; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Dâwüd Paşa”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1759; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Davud Paşa”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; Şerafettin Turan, “Davud Paşa, Koca”, in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1994; Feridun M. Emecen, “Koca Mustafa Paşa”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 26, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Ankara 2002, pp. 131-133; Danişmend, *Kronoloji*, Vol. V, pp. 13-15; Reindl, *Männer um Bâyezîd*, pp. 162-76 and pp. 302-18.

Ottoman rule⁵¹. In addition, some viziers, such as Hersekzade and Dukaginzade, seemed to have close contact with European noble merchants such as Andrea Gritti, future doge of Venice, and friendship with European diplomats⁵². The existence of viziers from Balkan nobility also implies continuity in administration, be it Byzantine, Balkan or Ottoman. This continuity highlights the Ottoman strategy of embedding itself within pre-existing administrative and social traditions rather than attempting to replace them entirely, thereby strengthening the dynasty's long-term claims to legitimacy.

The Rise of Indigenous Ottoman Viziers (1523-1580)

Süleyman's first indigenous grand vizier was İbrahim Paşa from Parga, a Venetian colony on the Adriatic coast. İskender Paşa probably captured him during his raids in Friuli⁵³. Later, his widowed daughter presented İbrahim as a gift to Süleyman. Süleyman and İbrahim grew up together and became associates. When Süleyman ascended the throne in 1520, he appointed İbrahim as the chief of the privy chamber in the palace. Proximity and intimacy between Süleyman and İbrahim continued to increase, and in 1523, Süleyman raised İbrahim directly from his privy chamber to the grand vizierate, disregarding the expectations of his father's grandees. Furnished with a wide sphere of power, İbrahim acted as the sultan's alter ego and intermediary between the sultan and the rest of the elites and subjects, from whom the sultan distanced himself. As İbrahim duplicated the sultan in authority as well as in grandeur, his tenure became the paragon of a powerful vizierate. Contemporary chroniclers alternately praised his unmatched authority and criticized his ostentation, portraying him as both indispensable and dangerously overreaching⁵⁴.

51 Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs; Reindl, Männer um Bāyezīd*, pp. 129-46; Lowry, *Hersekzāde Ahmed Paşa*.

52 İ. Metin Kunt and Zeynep Yelçe, "Divân-ı Hümayûn: Le Conseil Impérial Ottoman et ses Conseillers (1450-1550)", *Conseils et Conseillers Dans l'Europe de La Renaissance: V. 1450-v. 1550*, ed. Cédric Michon, Renaissance, Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, Tours 2012, pp. 328-29.

53 See İskender Paşa's raiding activity in the Adriatic coast in Angiolello, *Historia Turchesca (1300-1514)*, pp. 232-37; Maria Pia Pedani-Fabris, "Turkish Raids in Friuli at the End of the Fifteenth Century", *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica. Akten Des 13. CIEPO - Symposium Vom 21. Bis 25. October 1998*. Institut für Orientalistik, Wien 1999.

54 Osmanzāde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 71-72; Mustafâ Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 356b-57. For scholarly discussion of the life and career of İbrahim Paşa, see in Ebru Turan, "The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Paşa and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516-1526)", Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2007; Hester D. Jenkins, *İbrahim Paşa, Grandvizir of Suleiman the Magnificent* (New York 1911); M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "İbrahim Paşa," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "İbrâhîm Paşa",

After Ibrahim's mysterious fall in 1536, Ayas Pasha rose to the grand vizierate. An Albanian by origin, Ayas Pasha was born in Avlonya and taken as a *devşirme* boy to the Ottoman palace during the reign of Bayezid II. He participated in Selim's campaign against the Safavids in 1514, as agha of the Janissaries, and later served as governor of Anatolia by the time Süleyman ascended the throne. After a reshuffling of viziers in 1523 and the appointment of Ibrahim Pasha as grand vizier, Ayas Pasha joined the club of viziers. Having worked with Ibrahim Pasha closely for years, Ayas Pasha became grand vizier in 1536 and remained in his position until his death from the plague in 1539⁵⁵. His tenure, though brief, was critical in stabilizing the vizierate after Ibrahim's sudden downfall, reassuring both the Janissaries and the provincial governors of continuity in governance.

He was replaced by Lutfi Pasha, best known as the author of an Ottoman History (*Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*) and a treatise of advice book to the viziers (*Âsafnâme*)⁵⁶. Born probably in 1488, he was taken as a *devşirme* boy from Avlonya and brought to Istanbul. He graduated from the *Enderûn* as chief palace taster (*çeşniğirbaşı*), became chief gate-keeper (*kapıcıbaşı*), and standard bearer (*miralem*). He served as governor in several districts, such as Aydın, Ionia, and as governor general of Anatolia and Rumeli. He became the second vizier in 1538. When Ayas Pasha died in 1539, he was appointed to the grand vizierate, where he served for two years until his sudden dismissal in 1541. He was married to Şah Sultan, the sister of Süleyman, but when he retired to Dimetoka after his dismissal, he divorced his wife⁵⁷.

Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English), Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3457; Feridun M. Emecen, "İbrahim Paşa, Makbul", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 21, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2000; Danişmend, *Kronoloji*, Vol. V, p. 16.

- 55 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 72-73; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 357b; Danişmend, *Kronoloji*, Vol. V, pp. 16-17; Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Ayas Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul, 1991; M. Cavid Baysun, "Ayas Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 2, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993; V. J. Parry, "Ayās Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0895.
- 56 Lütü Paşa, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, Matba'-i Âmire, İstanbul 1341; Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, "Lütü Paşa Âsafnâmesi", *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan*, Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul 1991; Luṭfi Paşa, *Das Asafname*, ed. Rudolf Tschudi Mayer & Müller, Berlin 1910. He also has a treatise on the Ottoman caliphate. See Lütü Pasha, *Khlās al-umma fī ma'rifā al-a'imma*, MS: Ayasofya 2877. For a brief discussion of this treatise see Hamilton A.R. Gibb, "Lutfi Pasha on the Ottoman Caliphate", *Oriens*, No. XV, 1962, pp. 287-95.
- 57 Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 73; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 357b-58; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Lütü Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993; C. H. Imber, "Luṭfi Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4704; Mehmet İpşirli, "Lütü Paşa", *TDV İslam*

After Lutfi Pasha, Hadim Süleyman Pasha filled the position of grand vizier. He was among the white eunuchs of the palace and probably of Hungarian origin. He was chief of the privy chamber during the reign of Selim I and was later appointed as governor of Syria (1523) and Egypt (1525). His expedition to the Indian Ocean in 1537-1538 to help Bahadur Shah of Gujarat against the Portuguese is of particular importance. Though he failed in the siege of Diu in 1538, he was welcomed in Istanbul thanks to his success in bringing the treasury of Gujarat to Istanbul and also for consolidating Ottoman power in Yemen. The campaign also marked one of the earliest Ottoman attempts to project naval power into the Indian Ocean, signaling the empire's ambitions to challenge Portuguese dominance and to secure the Red Sea trade routes. He rose to the grand vizierate in 1541 after Lutfi Pasha and served three years until he was dismissed and replaced by Rüstem Pasha in December 1544⁵⁸.

Rüstem Pasha was either of Croat, Bosnian, or Serbian descent from a village near Sarajevo and brought to Istanbul at an early age. He held the position of keeper of the sultan's arms (*silahdâr*) before graduating from the *Enderûn*. He then served as head of the imperial stable (*mîrahûr*) and governor-general of Diyarbekir and Anatolia. He married Mihrimah Sultan, the only daughter of Süleyman and his beloved wife Hürrem Sultan. He joined the viziers in 1539 and became grand vizier in 1544. He was dismissed in 1553 when the sultan executed Şehzade Mustafa, because he was blamed for intriguing against Mustafa with his mother-in-law, Hürrem Sultan. He was, however, quick to restore his position in 1555 and held it until his death in 1561⁵⁹.

Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 27, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003.

- 58 Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 358a; Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 73-74; Herbert Melzig, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devrinde Amiral Hadım Süleyman Paşa'nın Hint Seferi*, Selami Sertoğlu Kitabevi, İstanbul 1943; Şerafettin Turan, "Süleyman Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 11, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993; Cengiz Orhonlu, "Khâdim Süleymân Paşa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4120; Erhan Afyoncu, "Süleyman Paşa, Hadım", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 38, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010.
- 59 See Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 74-75; Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 358a-60; Franz Babinger, "Rüstem Pasha", in *EI, First Edition*, III, Brill, Leiden 1913-1938; Christine Woodhead, "Rüstem Paşa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6349; Şinasi Altundağ and Şerafettin Turan, "Rüstem Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. IX, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993; Erhan Afyoncu, "Rüstem Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 35, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2008; Ahmet Arslantürk, *Bir Bürokrat ve Yatırımcı Olarak Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Veziriazamı Rüstem Paşa*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Marmara University, 2011; Zahit Atçıl, *State and Government in the Mid-Sixteenth*

Ahmed Pasha, who served for two years during the interim period of Rüstem Pasha's grand vizierates (1553-1555), was of Albanian origin. He graduated from the *Enderûn* as chief gate-keeper (*kapıcıbaşı*) and served as standard-bearer (*miralem*) and the *agha* of the janissaries. He was famous for his successful expeditions and conquests in Hungary, Transylvania, and Georgia. Though he obtained the word of the sultan against his dismissal at the time of his appointment to the grand vizierate, he was beheaded in 1555, because the sultan's two close women, his wife Hurrem and his daughter Mihrimah, wanted to have Rüstem restored to the grand vizierate⁶⁰.

Another grand vizier of Süleyman, Semiz Ali Pasha, was from Herzegovina. He was brought to Istanbul as a *devşirme* boy during the 1520s and educated in the *Enderûn*. He was appointed as the *agha* of the janissaries (953/1546), as governor general of Rumeli (1546), and governor general of Egypt due to his holding a vizieral rank (956/1549). He became the second vizier in 1553 and the grand vizier in 1561. He successfully renewed the peace agreement with the Habsburgs, by which Ferdinand yielded all his claims in Transylvania and Hungary and continued to pay an annual tribute of 30,000 ducats⁶¹.

He was replaced by Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who served as grand vizier during the reigns of three sultans (Süleyman, Selim II, and Murad III). Mehmed Pasha was from a Bosnian village near Vişegrad. He graduated from the *Enderûn* as chief taster (*çeşniğirbaşı*) and then served as chief gatekeeper (*kapıcıbaşı*). After the death of Grand Admiral Hayreddin Pasha (Barbarossa), he was brought to the head of Ottoman navy. He became governor of Rumeli in 1549 and third vizier during the Nahçıvan campaign (1553-1555). Thanks to his helping Şehzade Selim during his competition with Şehzade Bayezid (1558-1560), he became a close associate of the future sultan Selim and married his daughter İsmihan Sultan. He remained

Century Ottoman Empire: The Grand Vizierates of Rustem Pasha (1544-1561), Ph.D. Dissertation: The University of Chicago, 2015, Chapter 1.

60 Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 360a-b; Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", p. 75; M. Cavid Baysun, "Ahmed Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 1, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1993; M. Cavid Baysun, "Ahmad Paşa, Kara", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0415; Feridun M. Emecen, "Kara Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 24, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2001.

61 Mustafa Âli, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 360b-61; Osmanzâde Taib, "Hadîkatü'l-Vüzerâ", pp. 75-76; Başıgâç, *Znameniti*, p. 11; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Ali Paşa, Semiz", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 1, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; R. Mantran, "Ali Paşa Semiz", *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0537; Erhan Afyoncu, "Semiz Ali Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 36, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2009.

in the position of the grand vizierate until his death in 1579⁶². His long tenure symbolized the peak of indigenous vizierial power in the sixteenth century.

Table 3: Ottoman Grand Viziers between 1523-1579

Name	Dates of Service	Ethnicity	Career Formation	Previous Positions
İbrahim Pasha	1523-1536	Greek	Captive of raiding	Chief aga of Privy Chamber
Ayas Pasha	1536-1539	Albanian	Devşirme	Agha of Janissaries, Governor-General
Lutfi Pasha	1539-1541	Albanian	Devşirme	Governor-General
Süleyman Pasha (Hadim)	1541-1544	Hungarian	Devşirme	Governor-General
Rüstem Pasha	1544-1553 and 1555-1561	Croat	Devşirme	Master of Stable, Governor-General
Ahmed Pasha	1553-1555	Albanian	Devşirme	Agha of Janissaries, Governor-General
Ali Pasha	1561-1565	Croat	Devşirme	Agha of Janissaries, Governor-General
Mehmed Pasha (Sokolovic)	1565-1579	Serb	Devşirme, clergy	Governor-General, Admiral

Sources: Ahmed Osmanzâde Taib, “Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ”, *Osmanlı sadrazamları: Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ ve Zeylleri*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (Kitabevi, 2013); Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-ahbâr: Dördüncü Rikn, Osmanlı Tarihi* (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2009); İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947), Vol. 5.

As demonstrated in these examples, the grand viziers of Süleyman’s reign were indigenously grown bureaucrats. They were born as children of Christian subjects, taken as *devşirme* boys, and trained in the Ottoman palace. Their career was structured and enhanced through their education and service in the Ottoman institutions. Their rise to the top was not tied to any noble background like the

62 Mustafa Âli, *Künhü’l-ahbâr*, vr. 371a-b; Osmanzâde Taib, *Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ*, pp. 32-34; Başıgâci, *Znameniti*, pp. 48-49; G. Veinstein, “Sokollu Mehmed Paşa”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7090; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Mehmed Paşa, Sokollu, Taviil”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993; Erhan Afyoncu, “Sokollu Mehmed Paşa”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 37, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2009.

previous generations, nor to family profession, as with members of the *ulema*. This marked a sharp departure from the dominance of Balkan noble households under Mehmed II and from the scholar-viziers who had shaped late fifteenth-century politics. They could ascend the steps of the bureaucracy only through merit demonstrated by their aptitude and service within the system. Therefore, they viewed the bureaucracy as their own enterprise because without this enterprise, their position would never be respected in any alternative structure. In this way, the rise of Süleyman's viziers symbolized not only personal merit but also the increasing centralization of imperial authority around the sultan.

The Indigenous Viziers' Career Formation

The viziers who rose to prominence during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) were systematically drawn from the system of *devşirme* (literally 'collection'). Unlike the viziers from earlier Islamicate polities, these viziers had no family experience in administration nor noble lineage. Taken from Christian peasant families at an early age, they were brought to the Ottoman capital and trained in a range of arts and sciences in the inner service (*Enderûn*) of the Ottoman palace. Upon graduation, they became eligible for posts both in the provinces and at the imperial center. What set them apart from earlier generations was that their career depended solely on palace education and the sultan's favor, granted as a reward for loyal service.

A comparison of viziers before and during Süleyman's reign clarifies this distinction. Earlier viziers were less directly tied to the fortunes of a single dynasty, since they came from families traditionally forming the pool of administrators for any ruling house. Even if a dynasty collapsed, viziers and other bureaucratic classes – scribes and judges – could transfer their service to the victorious dynasty. This cosmopolitan outlook was regarded as normal. Although Mehmed II began to marginalize the *ulema* from the vizierate, he elevated instead the former ruling families of the conquered regions. In contrast, the indigenously grown viziers owed their education and career entirely to Ottoman institutions. If they had not been conscripted as *devşirme* boys and brought to the capital, they would have remained peasants in Christian villages. Having neither noble titles nor professional training, they had no alternative career path other than being servants of the sultan. Unlike their predecessors, they could not transfer to rival dynasties, since their authority was recognized only within the Ottoman system. In this context, Lütfi Pasha states that the sultan's servants, lacking noble backgrounds, could only serve the

Ottoman dynasty⁶³. Therefore, they were indigenously grown viziers whose career options were structured within the Ottoman bureaucracy.

How, then, were they conscripted and educated? How did the *devşirme* system function? The origin of the system goes back to the fourteenth century. According to Ottoman sources, upon the suggestion of Molla Kara Rüstem of Karaman and Çandarlı Halil Hayreddin Pasha, the practice of giving one-fifth of the captives taken by the *gazîs* to the sultan began during the reign of Murad I (r. 1362-1389). Halil Pasha sent these captives to Muslim families in Anatolia, where they learned Turkish and were introduced to Islam before entering the sultan's service. These newly converted captives became the nucleus of the janissary army⁶⁴. Although the use of slave-soldiers in standing armies had long existed in many forms, the *devşirme* system represented an Ottoman innovation. It was applied in rural Christian areas, where the Ottoman officials selected the sons of peasants. Boys were brought to the capital, first placed with Muslim families, and later conscripted into the janissary army.

The *devşirme* was complex and even contradictory in several respects. First, it could be described as a mechanism of enslavement of Christian subjects. Since non-Muslim subjects, *zimmîs*, were given liberty to live and observe their own religion freely according to Islamic law, the *devşirme* levy posed a problem because of its forced conversion and involuntary entrance into royal service⁶⁵. Second, the *devşirme* was also a mechanism through which the boys could receive education and experience, allowing them to attain administrative and military offices as high as the grand vizierate. They could even build their own households and maintain their own servants⁶⁶. While the *devşirme* functioned as a recruitment system for the sultan's

63 Lütfi Pasha, *Khlās al-umma fî ma'rifā al-a'imma*, MS: Ayasofya 2877, fol. 23a-b.

64 Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın tarihi: Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osmân*, ed. Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç, Gökkuşbu, İstanbul 2007, Bab. 45; Neşrî, *Cihânnümâ*, ed. Necdet Öztürk and Franz Taeschner, Çamlıca, İstanbul 2008, pp. 90-92; Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, Ötüken, İstanbul 2011, p. 38; Nihat Azamat, *Anonim tevârîh-i âl-i Osman: F. Giese neşri*, Marmara Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul 1992, pp. 24-25.

65 Paul Wittek, "Devşirme and Shari'a", *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 17/No. 2, 1955, pp. 271-78; Gümeç Karamuk, "Devşirmelerin Hukuki Durumları", *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1999, pp. 19-32; Richard C. Repp, "A Further Note on the Devşirme", *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 31/No. 1, 1968, pp. 137-139.

66 The phenomenon of the rise of pasha households was one of the significant aspects of the political culture from the sixteenth century onward. See in Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, "The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683-1703: A Preliminary Report", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*,

army and administration, it also provided a kind of social mobility by offering career opportunities for Christian peasants to rise into the highest levels of administration.

It is important to note that the system of *devşirme* evolved over time. Initially, it served only for the recruitment of soldiers for the janissary army, but it later expanded into a source for military and administrative officers. In other words, the *devşirme* gradually supplied human resources for both the army and the administration. According to the ideal system, once the boys were collected, they were brought to the capital, where they were examined and classified according to their physical and mental capacities. The most promising ones were reserved for the service of the royal household, while the rest were sent to Turkish farmers and then drafted into the janissary army. Those who were selected for the royal service were educated at the Ottoman palace. After graduation, they became eligible for office appointment in the outer service or in the provinces.

Although the inner service (*Enderûn*), where those capable boys were educated, seems to have existed as early as the reign of Murad II (r. 1421-1451)⁶⁷, it remains unclear when the *devşirme* began supplying boys for this place training. A section called *Enderûn* existed in Edirne Palace at that time, but its known educational structure began functioning after the construction of Topkapı Palace in Istanbul⁶⁸. Under its initial structure and experiment, the *Enderûn* was the place where the children of predominantly Byzantine and Serbian nobility were educated and raised to administrative positions by the end of the fifteenth century. Considering the background and career of the supposedly *Enderûn* graduates from the reign of Murad II until that of Selim I, the use of the *devşirme* for the *Enderûn* must have started after the construction of the Topkapı Palace.

Vol. 94/No. 4, 1974, pp. 438-47. The existence of the servants for those who entered to the sultan's service as 'slave' is treated in İ. Metin Kunt, "Kulların Kulları", *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi*, Vol. 3, 1975, pp. 27-42. For recent studies on vizierial households see İ. Metin Kunt, "Royal and Other Households", *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (Routledge, 2012); Cumhur Bekar, "The Rise of the Köprülü Household: The Transformation of Patronage in the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century", *Turkish Historical Review*, Vol. 11/No. 2-3, 2021, pp. 229-56; Emre Pamuk, "Vüzerâ Kapuları ve Timar Sistemi (1532-1611)", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, No. LXV, 2025, pp. 49-94.

67 Mehmet İpşirli, "Enderun", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 11, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1995, pp. 185-187.

68 Rifat Osman, *Edirne Sarayı*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1957, pp. 16-20; Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Architectural History Foundation, New York 1991, pp. 111-122.

As I described in the previous section, almost all viziers of non-*ulema* origin who were educated in the *Enderûn* were actually children of former Byzantine/Serbian nobility, and some of them (like Hersekzade and Dukaginzade) joined the royal service voluntarily. By contrast, when the *devşirme* was applied to the *Enderûn*, it referred specifically to the practice of selecting the most promising among the collected Christian peasant boys for royal service. These former Christian peasant boys who completed the education in the *Enderûn* and rose to important administrative positions constituted the indigenous viziers. This shift marked a crucial break with earlier patterns, replacing a reliance on Balkan and Byzantine nobility with a new cadre of palace-trained administrators whose authority derived exclusively from service to the Ottoman dynasty.

The Süleymanic Vision

Historian Mustafa Âlî opens the chapter on Süleyman's reign in his world history, *Künhü'l-Ahbâr*, by stating that Süleyman initiated a new tradition by selecting his viziers and grand viziers from those who were educated in his palace school and also by bestowing them with the status of royal son-in-law. He also attributes to Süleyman a new tendency not to allow others to rise to higher governing positions⁶⁹. Although prior to Süleyman's reign, we can observe that grand viziers had military, judicial, and scholarly backgrounds and sometimes even noble status, after that, only people with *devşirme* backgrounds could attain the vizierial positions.

The landmark of the change in career paths was an edict issued in 1531, where Süleyman addressed the complaints of the officers who resented the entrance of some non-askeri (*ecnebi* = *foreigner*) into the provincial administrative positions and declared that the administrative positions were indeed open for all subjects⁷⁰. This was very significant for two reasons. First, Süleyman ascended the throne at a time when the administrative elites had entrenched their group interests in such a way that they represented the long tradition of the political culture of governing in the Near East, on which the Ottoman dynasty had depended for knowledge and

69 Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, fol. 272b.

70 İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650* Columbia University Press, New York 1983, pp. 35-38; Tayyip Gökbilgin, "Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'ın Timar ve Zeâmet Tevcihi İle İlgili Fermanları", *Tarih Dergisi*, Vol. XVII/No. 22, 1967, doc. 1. For the reflection on the conflict between hereditary position holders and those who enter to the bureaucracy new, see in Cornell H. Fleischer, "Between the Lines: Realities of Scribal Life in the Sixteenth Century", *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor VL. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, The Isis Press, İstanbul 1994, pp. 58-59.

expertise. It was also a time when a highly rigid social structure was envisioned by the elites in order to close the path by which the children of the subjects (*re'aya*) could join the club of the military/administrative class (*askeri*). The administration was expected, according to this elite vision, to remain in the hands of those who belonged to the *askeri* class by birth, as they either belonged to the Byzantine/Serbian aristocracy or the *ulema* class who had preexisted the Ottoman enterprise.

When Süleyman ascended the throne, the viziers were inclined to continue their positions and prided themselves on surviving the cruelty of his father, Selim⁷¹. They took it for granted that the sultan had to follow the procedure in administration, and the viziers were supposed to follow their path to the grand vizierate by order. Süleyman initially cooperated and acquiesced to their ambitions until he consolidated his power by the conquests of Belgrade and Rhodes, as well as by suppressing the uprising of Canberdi Gazali. He appointed his favorite Ibrahim Agha to the grand vizierate in 1523. Ibrahim had no previous experience in government, as he was the chief of the privy chamber. The rise of Ibrahim was resented by some viziers (e.g., second vizier Ahmed Pasha) who still placed their own ambitions and interests before the young sultan's prestige, and in their perspective, the sultan should have respected their acquired positions and should not have brought an *ecnebi* to the grand vizierate because he was not worth the position that they felt they deserved. The edict of 1531, therefore, marked the break of the oligarchic tendency of the elites, with Süleyman declaring that everyone in the Ottoman realm was his slave (*kul*), no one could be called an *ecnebi*, and everyone had the right to hold an administrative position at the center or in the provinces⁷².

The second aspect of the Edict is that it marked a new Ottoman self-confidence and a firm belief in the efficacy of Ottoman institutions. It was implied that having an education in the institutions founded by the Ottoman dynasty and offering a loyal service to the sultan was now more important than any family background or

71 During the reign of Selim (1512-1520), three of his five viziers were executed, one died in battle and only one survived to the next reign. It is also reported that Dukaginzi Ahmed Pasha was executed with Selim's own hands. See Metin Kunt and Zeynep Nevin Yelçe, "Divân-ı Hümayûn: le Conseil impérial ottoman et ses conseillers (1450-1580)", Cédric Michon (ed.), *Conseils et Conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance v. 1450-1550*, Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, Tours 2012, pp. 321-323.

72 "İmdi, benim memalik-i mahrûsemde vâki olan eğer sipahilerdir ve eğer re'âyâdır, cümlesi kullanımdır; kendü memleketim ve vilâyetim halkı nice ecnebi olur." See in Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, p. 35.

any non-Ottoman affiliation. The arts of government could now only be learned through service in the Ottoman institutions; they were no longer transferred from any outside source, like in the previous centuries. In order to be eligible for a high position, one could only receive education in Ottoman educational institutions, particularly in the Ottoman palace. In fact, Mustafa Âlî states that by Süleyman's reign: "The vizierate has become an acquired art; whoever is full of comprehension could learn it by experiencing. By this approximation, the splendid person who graduates from the venerable school with a status of agha becomes grand vizier ultimately"⁷³.

The system of *devşirme* was best suited for this new system because the *devşirme* boys came to the palace as particularly malleable and trainable in line with the Ottoman ideals of loyal service and effectiveness. They were considered to have started careers from the beginning and, through education, they could be equipped with the most sophisticated culture and knowledge concerning the state and government. Therefore, the palace education in the inner service (*Enderûn*) was very crucial for the rise of an indigenous bureaucratic class. *Enderûn* education was of several stages marked by the rooms. First, they were put under strict discipline in Greater Chamber (*büyük oda*) and Smaller Chamber (*küçük oda*) under the supervision of white eunuchs. They were taught the Islamic faith and culture, the languages of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, as well as trained in wrestling, archery, shooting, and horseback riding. As they progressed, they moved into more prestigious rooms in the *Enderûn*: the *kiler* (cellar), *hazine* (treasury), and *hasoda* (privy chamber). If they failed to receive a promotion at any stage, they were taken out to join one of the six cavalry regiments of the standing army in the outer service (*birûn*).

The privy chamber was the most prestigious section, because it was where the sultan slept, meaning the pages in the privy chamber were the closest individuals to the sultan during the day and night. Once coming to the privy chamber, the pages became eligible for appointment to bureaucratic positions in the outer service (*birûn*) or in the provinces. The palace education aimed to instill in the pages absolute loyalty and strict discipline. They were to remain within the third courtyard of the palace with no contact with the outside world until their graduation. They were

73 Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr*, vr. 272b. For a discussion of the career formation of viziers see Metin Kunt and Zeynep Nevin Yelçe, "Divân-ı Hümayûn: le Conseil impérial ottoman et ses conseillers (1450-1580)", pp. 318-319.

to dedicate themselves to the service of the sultan and show their devotion to the Ottoman enterprise. The longer they remained in the *Enderûn*, the more likely they could gain higher positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy⁷⁴.

In Rüstem's case, he became one of the favorites of the sultan thanks to his absolute devotion and unwavering loyalty. According to one story, one day while the sultan was standing next to a window of a pavilion, he accidentally dropped something (probably a handkerchief). As all the pages rushed to the stairs to bring the thing back, Rüstem jumped gallantly out of the window and caught it before the others⁷⁵. Even if we may have doubts about the accuracy of this account, it shows at least the expectation from a page that he should display absolute devotion to the sultan so much as to risk his life without hesitation, with this devotion increasing his likelihood for promotion.

The picture here may seem overly ideal. Although the strict discipline of the pages and their inability to leave the third courtyard have been repeated in sources and the literature, Mustafa Ali in the late sixteenth century criticized pages who left by pretending to be sick and went to the first courtyard, where the palace hospital was

74 For sixteenth and seventeenth century descriptions of the education in the *Enderûn* see in Franz Babinger, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promontorio -de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475*, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München 1957, pp. 37-46; Gio Antonio Menavino, "Della Vita et Legge Tvrchesca", *Dell'istoria vniuersale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi*, ed. Francesco Sansovino, Venice 1560, fol. 39v-44r; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Nouvelle Relation de l'interieur Du Serrail Du Grand Seigneur*, Chez Loivier de Varennes 1675, pp. 101-107; Albertus Bobovius, *Topkapi: relation du sérail du Grand Seigneur*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos, Actes Sud, Arles 1999. See also some modern literature on the *Enderûn* in İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1984, pp. 301-56; İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 76-88; İnalçık, "Ghulâm-Ottoman Empire"; Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, Palgrave, Basingstoke 2002, pp. 148-53; Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, p. 7 and pp. 31-38; İpsirli, "Enderun"; Ülker Akkutay, *Enderûn Mektebi*, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, Ankara 1984, pp. 70-89 and pp. 94-122; Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Architectural History Foundation, New York 1991, pp. 114-22; Barnette Miller, *The Palace School of Muhammad the Conqueror*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1941, pp. 126-51; İsmail H. Baykal, *Enderun Mektebi Tarihi*, Halk Basımevi, İstanbul 1953, pp. 123-34.

75 "Dicesi che il primo grado di grazia ch'egli acquistò presso il Gran-Signore fù, che essendo cascato a sua maestà non so che dalle mani stando ad una finestra, e correndo gli altri paggi per le scale e per le porte a pigliarlo, esso Rustan si gettò giù da una finestra per esser più presto a portar quel ch'era uscito di mano di sua maestà." Bernardo Navagero, "Relazione dell'Impero Ottomano del Clarissimo Bernardo Navagero, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli Fatta in Pregadi nel Mese di Febbrajo del 1553", in *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ed. Eugenio Albreri, Tipografia e Calcografia all'Insegna di Clio, Firenze 1840, p. 98.

located⁷⁶. In fact, the acceptance of only *devşirme* boys into the palace education is far from accurate, because archival sources show many examples where non-*devşirme* origin boys were admitted to the *Enderûn*. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, this ideal system transformed as many Muslim born boys found ways to enter the *Enderûn*. In fact, while late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century descriptions (Angiolello, Iacopo de Promentorio and Menavino) display an ideal system in which only Christian boys were accepted and educated there⁷⁷, late sixteenth and seventeenth-century descriptions (Mustafa Ali, Bobovi) emphasize the deviation from the ideal system⁷⁸. The *Enderûn* system in its pure form and structure probably worked for about fifty years in the first half of the sixteenth century, in which the grand viziers of Süleyman were its products. They acquired a career after being born as peasants and reached high bureaucratic positions through their education in the *Enderûn*, where they were acquainted with court etiquette and imperial political culture. Although there always were both *devşirme* boys and non-*devşirme* pages from the beginning, the selection of particularly *devşirme* boys and their elevation to high positions was primarily a sixteenth-century phenomenon, because in previous periods, only children of noble families or children of *ulema* were raised and favored in the vizierate.

Conclusion

Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq (Habsburg ambassador in Istanbul in the 1550s), in his *Turkish Letters*, ascribed the Ottoman success in warfare and administration, compared to their European counterparts, to the Ottoman meritocratic system. He wrote

No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. [...] In making his appointments the Sultan pays no regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity; he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man whose promotion is in question. It is by merit that men rise in the

76 Mustafa Âli, *Mevâ'irdü'n-nefâis fi-ğavâ'rdi'l-mecâlis*, ed. Mehmet Şeker, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1997, p. 26 (275).

77 Angiolello, *Historia Turchesca (1300-1514)*; Babinger, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promontorio -de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475*; Menavino, "Della Vita et Legge Tvrchesca".

78 In addition to Mustafa Âli's observation cited in footnote 76, see Bobovius, *Topkapi*.

service, a system which ensures that posts should only be assigned to the competent. [...] Those who receive the highest offices from the Sultan are for the most part the sons of shepherds or herdsmen, and so far from being ashamed of their parentage, [...] for they do not believe that high qualities are either natural or hereditary, nor do they think that they can be handed down from father to son, but that they are partly the gift of God, and partly the result of good training, great industry, and unwearied zeal...⁷⁹.

This observation was somewhat related to his own case, as he did not inherit noble titles from his father because he was born as an illegitimate son. Despite his talent, skills, and humanist education, he could not obtain the highest position he hoped for. If he had been in the Ottoman Empire, he implied, he could have reached even the grand vizierate with the education he received. In other words, he acknowledged that the Ottoman system in the mid-sixteenth century was based more on education and talent than on noble descent and cosmopolitan networks.

In fact, Busbecq came to the Ottoman lands when indigenously grown viziers were ruling the empire. The Ottoman dynastic legitimacy had reached a level that freed them from questioning, and the royal house assumed considerable power and authority. Meanwhile, they invested in their own educational institutions, which produced governing elites from those of ignoble backgrounds. We can identify the process as one of state-building, initiated by Mehmed II from the mid-fifteenth century, though the solid results came only in the sixteenth century. This was particularly the achievement of Süleyman the Magnificent, who established the Ottoman bureaucratic state⁸⁰.

If we summarize the process of the rise of indigenous viziers in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, we can identify three periods until the last quarter of the sixteenth century: 1. *ulema* viziers; 2. Byzantine/Balkan aristocrat viziers;

79 Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, Vol. 1, transl. Charles Thornton Foster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, C. Kegan Paul & CO, London 1881, p. 154.

80 For Süleyman's achievements and ambitious policies see Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân", *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein, Documentation française, Paris 1992; Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kânûn for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture", *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein, Rencontres de l'École du Louvre, Documentation française, Paris 1992.

and 3. indigenous viziers. The first category consisted of viziers with scholarly backgrounds who first served in judicial positions and then became viziers. Their cosmopolitan outlook, due to their wide scholarly networks, allowed them to have relations beyond the Ottoman enterprise, as they mostly received education and had some career outside the Ottoman lands. Belonging to relatively dignified families, *ulema* viziers hardly saw themselves as inferior to the precarious Ottoman prestige. By the middle of the fifteenth century, Mehmed II, who took credit for being the conqueror of Istanbul, initiated legislation to reorder the scholarly career and the position of the *ulema* class under his hierarchical system. As he tried to deprive the *ulema* of access to vizierial positions –with few exceptions– he accommodated the children of some Byzantine and Balkan aristocrat families as his viziers. This tendency continued during the reigns of Bayezid and Selim I. Some respected individuals belonging to Byzantine and Balkan noble dynasties (such as Mahmud Pasha Angelovic, Mesih Pasha of Palaeologus, Hersekzade Ahmed Pasha, etc.) then acted as viziers and grand viziers.

By the time of Süleyman's ascension to the throne, we observe the emergence of indigenous viziers of ignoble origins, who were collected as *devşirme* boys or captives from raids at an early age and received education in the Ottoman palace. The careers of these viziers were completely formed within the Ottoman system, and their promotions to higher positions depended solely on their skills as well as service and loyalty to the Ottoman sultans. Unlike the viziers of the previous periods, they could not offer service to other dynasties, nor could they find alternative career paths outside the Ottoman framework. In other words, they were indigenously grown and indigenously created viziers. Ultimately, the rise of these indigenous viziers signaled a decisive moment in Ottoman state-building: a system where dynastic legitimacy, palace education, and bureaucratic loyalty outweighed nobles, embedding meritocracy at the core of imperial governance.

Ethical Statement/Etik Beyan

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were complied with during the preparation of this study and all the works referred are mentioned in the bibliography./Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

BBIBLIOGRAPHY

Abou-El-Haj, Rifaat Ali, "The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683-1703: A Preliminary Report", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 94/No. 4, 1974, pp. 438-447.

Afyoncu, Erhan, "Rüstem Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 35, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2008, pp. 288-290.

Afyoncu, Erhan, "Semiz Ali Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 36, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2009, pp. 494-495.

Afyoncu, Erhan, "Sokollu Mehmed Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 37, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2009, pp. 354-357.

Afyoncu, Erhan, "Süleyman Paşa, Hadım", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 38, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2010, pp. 96-98.

Ágoston, Gábor, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Akkutay, Ülker, *Enderûn Mektebi*, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara 1984.

Altundağ, Şinasi, and Turan, Şerafettin, "Rüstem Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. IX, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, s. 800-802.

Anderson, Perry, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Verso 1979.

Angiolello, Giovan Maria, *Historia Turchesca (1300-1514)*, Edited by Donado da Lezze and Ion Ūrsu ed. Inst. de arte grafice "Carol Göbl" s-r I.S. Rasidescu, 1909.

Arslantürk, Ahmet, *Bir Bürokrat ve Yatırımcı Olarak Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'ın Veziriazamı Rüstem Paşa*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Marmara University, İstanbul 2011.

Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi: Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân*. Edited by Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç, Gökkuşbu, İstanbul 2007.

Atçıl, Abdurrahman, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Atçıl, Abdurrahman, *The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship (1300-1600)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2010.

Azamat, Nihat, *Anonim Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman: F. Giese neşri*, Marmara Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul 1992.

- Babinger, Franz, "Pīrī Mehmed Paşa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6125.
- Babinger, Franz, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Genuesen Iacopo de Promontorio -de Campis über den Osmanenstaat um 1475*, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1957.
- Babinger, Franz, "Rüstem Pasha", *EI, First Edition*, Vol. III, Brill, 1913-1938.
- Bašagić, Safvet-beg, *Žnameniti hrvati, bosnjaci i hercegovci u turskoj carevini*, Stamparija Grafika (S. Kovacic), 1931.
- Baykal, İsmail H., *Enderun Mektebi Tarihi*, İstanbul Fetih Derneği, Halk Basımevi, 1953.
- Baysun, M. Cavid, "Ahmad Paşa, K̄ara", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*. Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0415.
- Baysun, M. Cavid, "Ahmed Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 1, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, p. 193.
- Baysun, M. Cavid, "Ayas Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 2, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 43-47.
- Bekar, Cumhur, "The Rise of the Köprülü Household: The Transformation of Patronage in the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century", *Turkish Historical Review*, Vol. 11/No. 2-3, 2021, pp. 229-256.
- Binbaş, İlker Evrim, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Black, Jeremy, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550-1800*, Studies in European History, Humanities Press, 1991.
- Bobovius, Albertus, *Topkapi: relation du sérail du Grand Seigneur*, Edited by Stefanos Yerasimos, Actes Sud, 1999.
- Brewer, John, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1989.
- Busbecq, Ogier Ghislain de, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, Vol. 1, Translated by Charles Thornton Foster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, C. Kegan Paul & CO, London 1881.
- Collins, James B., "State Building in Early-Modern Europe: The Case of France", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31/No. 3, 1997, pp. 603-633.

Collins, James B., *The State in Early Modern France*, 2nd ed., New Approaches to European History 42, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Danişmend, İsmail Hami, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, (4 vols.), Türkiye Yayınevi, İstanbul 1947.

DİA, "İshak Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 22, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2000, pp. 537-538.

Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, Translated by Harry J. Magoulias, Wayne State University Press, 1975.

Elton, G. R., *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, University Press, 1953.

Emecen, Feridun M., *Fetih ve Kıyamet, 1453: İstanbul'un Fethi ve Kıyamet Senaryoları*, Timaş, İstanbul 2012.

Emecen, Feridun M., "İbrahim Paşa, Makbul", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 21, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2000, pp. 333-335.

Emecen, Feridun M., "Kara Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 24, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2001, pp. 357-358.

Emecen, Feridun M., "Koca Mustafa Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 26, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 2002, pp. 131-133.

Ertman, Thomas. *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Fichtner, Paula S., *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1490-1848: Attributes of Empire*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2003.

Fleischer, Cornell H., "Between the Lines: Realities of Scribal Life in the Sixteenth Century", *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, edited by Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, The Isis Press, Istanbul 1994.

Fleischer, Cornell H., "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân", In *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, edited by Gilles Veinstein. Documentation française, Paris 1992.

Gibb, Hamilton A. R., "Lutfi Pasha on the Ottoman Caliphate", *Oriens*, Vol. XV, 1962, pp. 287-95.

Glete, Jan., *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1660*, Warfare and History, Routledge 2002.

- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "Ali Paşa, Semiz", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 1, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 341-342.
- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "Dāwūd Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1759.
- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "İbrahim Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5/2, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 908-915.
- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "İbrāhīm Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3457.
- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "Lütfi Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 96-101.
- Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "Mehmed Paşa, Sokollu, Tavil", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 595-605.
- Gökbilgin, Tayyip, "Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'ın Tımar ve Zeâmet Tevcihi İle İlgili Fermanları", *Tarih Dergisi*, Vol. XVII/No. 22, 1967, pp. 35-48.
- Groot, A. H. de, "Meḥmed Pasha, Ḳaramānī", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5130.
- Groot, A. H. de, "Meḥmed Pasha, Rūm", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5137.
- H. T., "Sinan Paşa, Yusuf Hadim", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. X, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 661-666.
- Halil bin İsmâil, *Simavna Kadıuoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Manâkıbı*, Edited by Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı and İsmet Sungurbey, Etü Yayınevi, 1967.
- Hilsdale, Cecily J., *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Hodgson, Marshall G. S., *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 Vols., University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Imber, C. H. "Lütfi Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4704.
- Imber, C. H. "Maḥmūd Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*. Brill. Leiden. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4798.
- Imber, Colin, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth", *Turcica*, Vol. 19, 1987, pp. 7-27.

- Imber, Colin, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, Palgrave 2002.
- İnalçık, Halil, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1954.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Ghulām-Ottoman Empire”, *EI, Second Edition*, Brill, Leiden.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Mehmed II”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol 28, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Ankara 2003, pp. 395-407.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Mesîh Pasha”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5170.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700”, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, No. 6, 1980, pp. 283-337.
- İnalçık, Halil, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, Praeger Publishers, 1973.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Wazîr-Ottoman Empire”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Vol. XI, Brill, Leiden.
- İpşirli, Mehmet “Atık Ali Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1991, pp. 64-65.
- İpşirli, Mehmet, “Enderun”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 11, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1995, pp. 185-187.
- İpşirli, Mehmet, “Lütfi Paşa”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 27, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Ankara 2003, pp. 234-236.
- Isom-Verhaaren, Christine, “Constructing Ottoman Identity in the Reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II”, *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol. 1/No. 1-2, 2014, pp. 111-28.
- Isom-Verhaaren, Christine, “Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire”, *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 8/No. 1-2, 2004, pp. 109-34.
- Jenkins, Hester D., *Ibrahim Pasha, Grandvizir of Suleiman the Magnificent*, Columbia University Press, New York 1911.
- Kafadar, Cemal, “The Ottomans and Europe”, *Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, edited by Thomas Brady, Oberman, and James D. Tracy. Brill, Leiden 1994.
- Karamuk, Gümeç, “Devşirmelerin Hukukî Durumları”, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1999, pp. 19-32.

Kolçak, Özgür, *Ok, Tüfek ve At: 16. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Askerî Devrimi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2023.

Kunt, İ. Metin, “Kulların Kulları”, *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi*, Vol. 3, 1975, pp. 27-42.

Kunt, İ. Metin, “Royal and Other Households”, *The Ottoman World*, edited by Christine Woodhead, Routledge, London 2012.

Kunt, İ. Metin, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, Columbia University Press, New York 1983.

Kunt, İ. Metin-Zeynep Yelçe, “Divân-ı Hümayûn: Le Conseil Impérial Ottoman et Ses Conseillers (1450-1550)”, *Conseils et Conseillers Dans l'Europe de La Renaissance: V. 1450-v. 1550*, edited by Cédric Michon, Renaissance, Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, Tours 2012.

Kütükoğlu, Bekir, “Ayas Paşa”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1991, pp. 202-203.

Kütükoğlu, Mübahat S., “Lütfi Paşa Âsafnâmesi”, *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan*, Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, İstanbul 1991.

Lowry, Heath W., *Hersekzâde Ahmed Paşa: An Ottoman Statesman's Career & Pious Endowments*, Bahçeşehir University Press, İstanbul 2011.

Lowry, Heath W., *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2003.

Lütfi Paşa, *Das Asafname*, Edited by Rudolf Tschudi, Mayer & Müller, Berlin 1910.

Lütfi Paşa, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, Matba'î Âmire, İstanbul 1341.

Luttwak, Edward, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2009.

Mantran, R., “Alî Paşa Semiz”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0537.

Mazıoğlu, Hasibe, “Sinan Paşa”, *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 10, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, İstanbul 1940-1987, pp. 666-670.

Melzig, Herbert, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devrinde Amiral Hadım Süleyman Paşa'nın Hint Seferi*, Selami Sertoğlu Kitabevi, İstanbul 1943.

Ménage, V. L., “The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography”, *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1962.

Menavino, Gio Antonio, “Della Vita et Legge Tvrchesca”, *Dell’historia vniuersale dell’origine et imperio de Turchi*, edited by Francesco Sansovino. Venice 1560.

Miller, Barnette, *The Palace School of Muhammad the Conqueror*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1941.

Mustafa Âli, *Kûnhü’l-ahbâr: Dördüncü Rûkn, Osmanlı Tarihi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2009.

Mustafa Âli, *Mevâ’idü’n-nefâis fi-ķavâ’idi’l-mecâlis*, Edited by Mehmet Şeker, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1997.

Navagero, Bernardo, “Relazione dell’Impero Ottomano del Clarissimo Bernardo Navagero, Stato Bailo a Costantinopoli Fatta in Pregadi nel Mese di Febbrajo del 1553”, In *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, edited by Eugenio Albèri, Tipografia e Calcografia all’Insegna di Clio, Firenze 1840.

Necipoglu, Gürlu, “A Kânûn for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture”, *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, edited by Gilles Veinstein, Rencontres de l’Ecole du Louvre, Documentation française, Paris 1992.

Necipoglu, Gürlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Architectural History Foundation, New York 1991.

Neşri, *Cihânnümâ*, Edited by Necdet Öztürk and Franz Taeschner, Çamlıca, İstanbul 2008.

Okiç, M. Tayyib, “Hadım (‘Atik) Ali Paşa Kimdir?”, *Necati Lugal Armağam*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1968.

Orhonlu, Cengiz, “Khhâđim Süleymân Pasha”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4120.

Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, Ötüken, İstanbul 2011.

Osmanzâde Taib, Ahmed, *Hadikatü’l-Vüzerâ*, Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, İstanbul 1271.

Osmanzâde Taib, Ahmed, “Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ”, *Osmanlı Sadrazamları: Hadîkatü’l-Vüzerâ ve Zeylleri*, edited by Mehmet Arslan, Kitabevi, İstanbul 2013.

Özcan, Abdülkadir, “Dukakinzâde Ahmed Paşa”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1994, pp. 550-551.

- Pamuk, Emre, "Vüzerâ Kapuları ve Timar Sistemi (1532-1611)", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, No. LXV, 2025, pp. 49-94.
- Parker, Geoffrey, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Parry, V. J., "Ayās Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0895.
- Paula, Sutter, "Habsburg State-Building in the Early Modern Era: The Incomplete Sixteenth Century", *Austrian History Yearbook* 25, January 1994, pp. 139-157.
- Pedani-Fabris, Maria Pia, "Turkish Raids in Friuli at the End of the Fifteenth Century", *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica. Akten Des 13. CIEPO-Symposium Vom 21. Bis 25. October 1998*, Institut für Orientalistik, Wien 1999.
- Reindl, Hedda, "Gedik Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 13, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul. 1996. pp. 543-544.
- Reindl, Hedda, *Männer um Bāyezīd: eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bāyezīds II. (1481-1512)*, K. Schwarz, Berlin 1982.
- Repp, Richard C., "A Further Note on the Devshirme", *BSOAS*, Vol. 31/No. 1, 1968, pp. 137-39.
- Repp, Richard C., *The Müfti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy*, Ithaca Press, 1986.
- Reyhan, Cenk, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyasal İktidar ve Seyfiye Sınıfı: Vezir-i a'zâmlık Örneği", *OTAM Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, No. 31, 2012, pp. 209-224.
- Rice, Eugene F and Anthony Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, 2nd ed., W. W. Norton, 1994.
- Šabanović, H., "Hersek-Zāde", In *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2850.
- Savvides, A., "Zaghanos Pasha", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8070.
- Savvides, Alexis G. C., "Notes on Zaghanos Pasha's Career", *Journal of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. X, 1999, pp. 144-147.
- Spandouginos, Theodōros, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, Translated by Donald M. Nicol, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997.

Stavrides, Theoharis, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453-1474)*, Brill, Leiden 2001.

Taeschner, Fr., "Akhi", In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, I, Brill, Leiden.

Taeschner, Fr., and Claude Cahen, "Futuwwa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, II, Brill, Leiden.

Tamer, Vehbi, "Fatih Devri Ricalinden İshak Paşa'nın Vakfiyeleri ve Vakıfları", *Vakıflar Dergisi*, No. IV 1958, pp. 107-124.

Taneri, Aydın, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş Döneminde Vezîr-i a'zamlık, 1299-1453*, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, Ankara 1974.

Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste, *Nouvelle Relation de l'interieur Du Serrail Du Grand Seigneur*, Chez Loivier de Varennes, 1675.

Tekindağ, Şehabeddin, "Mahmud Paşa", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 183-188.

Tekindağ, Şehabeddin, "Mehmed Paşa, Rum", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993, pp. 594-595.

Tekindağ, Şehabeddin, "Mehmed Paşa, Karamânî", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 7, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993, pp. 588-591.

Tekindağ, Şehabeddin, "Sadriazam Adni Mahmud Paşa'ya Ait Bir Tedkik Münasebetiyle", *Belleten*, Vol. 25/No. 95, 1960, pp. 509-527.

Tilly, Charles, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1985.

Turan, Ebru, *The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Pasha and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516-1526)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2007.

Turan, Şerafettin, "Davud Paşa, Koca", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1994, pp. 37-38.

Turan, Şerafettin, "Hadim Sinan Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 15, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1997, pp. 7-8.

Turan, Şerafettin, "Hersekzâde Ahmed Paşa", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 17, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İstanbul 1998, pp. 235-237.

Turan, Şerafettin, "Süleyman Paşa", *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 11, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 194-197.

- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1974.
- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, “Davud Paşa”, *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 496-499.
- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1984.
- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. II, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2011.
- Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, “Osmanlı Tarihine Ait Yeni Bir Vesikanın Ehemmiyeti ve İzahı ve Bu Münasebetle Osmanlılarda İlk Vezirlere Dair Mütelea”, *Belleten*, Vol. 3/No. 9, 1939, pp. 99-106.
- Veinstein, G., “Soğollu Meḥmed Paşa”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7090.
- Witteck, Paul, “Devshirme and Shari’a”, *BSOAS*, Vol. 17/No. 2, 1955, pp. 271-78.
- Woodhead, Christine, “Rüstem Paşa”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, Brill, Leiden, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6349.
- Woodhead, Christine, “Sinan Pasha, Khoja”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill, Leiden.
- Yinanç, Mükrimin Halil, “Ahmed Paşa, Gedik”, *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1993, pp. 192-199.
- Yun-Casalilla, Bartolomé, and O’Brien, Patrick K. (eds.), *The Rise of Fiscal States: A Global History, 1500-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012.

