THE OTTOMAN VEZIR AND PAŞA HOUSEHOLDS 1683-1703: A PRELIMINARY REPORT*

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By the second half of the seventeenth century nearly half of all appointments for high office in the central government in Istanbul and the governorships of the provinces were filled by men who had been either raised, trained or attached to the kapılar households of vezirs and paşas. This comparatively new element of the Ottoman elite had come gradually to replace the sultan’s household and the military, the two traditional sources for the Ottoman ruling class. This essay is divided into two parts: a statistical substantiation showing the number of men who held high office in 1683-1703 by way of the kapılar compared with those who were drawn from the sultan’s household and the military. The kapı par excellence was the one created by Köprülü Mehmed Paşa. The second part explores the growth and continued political dominance by Mehmed’s kapı and its allies during the last two decades of the seventeenth century.

This essay will focus on a heretofore ignored element of the Ottoman elite, a privileged group directly derived neither from the military nor from the palace, the two sources traditionally assigned as the reservoirs from which the ruling class was drawn. In the second half of the seventeenth century the vezir and paşa households graduated and came to govern the identity of a growing number of men who eventually became vezirs and paşas in their own right, generating thereby their own satellite households. Prior to this century, vezirs and paşas were known to have had large staffs on their households, some of whom were assigned to lucrative administrative positions. Late in the sixteenth century complaints were lodged against the preferential treatment which some household graduates were receiving in those assignments. At that time, however, the phenomenon was still sporadic.1

Since the study of the vezir and paşa households is still in its preliminary stages, the following presentation will be confined to the period 1683-1703 and focus on two limited purposes: a tentative statistical substantiation showing the growing number of men who came to hold high office by way of the households and a description of the growing dominance by the satellites of the house of Köprülü Mehmed Paşa.

The traditional view of the structure and institutional set up of the central organs of the Ottoman state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to differ only slightly from the picture drawn of them in the previous century. At the head of the state stood the absolute ruler who appointed the grand vezir as his chief executive. This officer as well as all those who held high office in the government was drawn from the palace-schools, institutions which trained the palace “slaves” for the various palace and central governmental functions which the state required. The continuity in the absolute nature of a sultan’s power is attested to by the fact that the laws of each ruler were outstanding and ad hoc. With the accession of a new sultan all enactments by the previous one stood null and void until otherwise renewed.

Recent studies have tended to revise this static view. Invariably, the sultans never abandoned old usages or institutions, not even office-labels as the structure of government evolved over the centuries. Among the main changes which have

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1 I wish to express my gratitude to Andreas Tietze and Albert Hourani for their comments and encouragement. A semester leave granted by the California State University and Colleges in 1968 helped in freeing me from teaching duties and in the launching of this project.

1 My gratitude to Andreas Tietze for bringing to my attention Mustafa 'Ali's observations. He is currently engaged in the translation of works of this late sixteenth century Ottoman figure. The same observations are made by Halil Inalcık in “Ghulam,” Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd Edition).
been noted were those effected in the institution of the grand vezirate itself. Up to 1654 the grand vezir’s office was regarded as the first of several found in the sultan’s personal household. Since political affairs were inseparable from the sultan’s private affairs, the offices of the grand vezir were housed on the palace grounds.2

In the middle of the seventeenth century the offices of the grand vezir were removed from the palace grounds and housed in a former paşa’s palace just outside the Top Kapi Palace in Istanbul. This event may not have been any more than a symbolic act which signaled the final recognition of the changed status of the office. What had in fact taken place was the formal separation of the personal affairs of the Ottoman dynasty from those of the general public. This pattern of personal rule and its eventual division into the private and public administration is not unique to the Ottomans, for in the West several medieval states evolved from personal patrimonies where kings carried in their baggage all the business of government wherever they went, into bureaucratic states. As the business of government grew more complex there developed specialization of functions and duties of offices and officials.

Both the attendant and the consequent changes or additions which occurred in the structure and institutions of the Ottoman state due to division and eventual separation of public from the private affairs of the sultans have barely been touched by modern research. Most of those who treat the period 1650-1700’s regard it primarily as a transitional one which bridged the gap between the sultanate of the women (1600-1650’s) and that of decline and disintegration (1700-1800’s). Drawing mainly on Gibb and Bowen’s study, Albert Hourani portrayed the half century under discussion as a “time of troubles” to which the universal sultanate of the sixteenth century had succumbed. The struggle for power between the various palace groups, ulama and slave conspirators paralyzed the state. From the turmoil of the seventeenth century, the house of Osman emerged permanently weakened. “In so far as a single hand now controlled the government, it was not the Sultan, but that of the Grand Vezir who had behind him the elite of the palace schools, that solid and loyal group which held the Empire together.”3

4 Norman Itzkowitz sees the period as one which witnessed the rise of an “efendi class” from the bureaucracy. This new class came to hold the highest posts of government along with those who were graduated from the palace schools.

The Hourani interpretation, while rightly acknowledging the shift in the executive power from the sultans to the grand vezirs, leaves the latter completely dependent on the palace schools for staffing the central government. Itzkowitz, on the other hand, leaves his reader with the impression that the bureaucracy became one of the major keys for advancement in the period 1684-1774. Both these generalizations are acceptable as descriptions for the widest possible extension of the period they cover. However, a study of the backgrounds of those who came to hold high office from 1683-1703, at the very least, does not quite bear out either generalization.

In the second half of the seventeenth century a different pattern of training and a different gate of opportunity for entry and advancement is discernible. The palace schools’ monopoly, if ever there was one in the sixteenth century, of the highest posts of government had broken down by the latter part of the seventeenth century. Vacancies which were not staffed by palace graduates were increasingly filled not by men who were raised and identified as bureaucrats, but by men who were raised in or attached to vezir and paşa kapıları/households.5 Contemporaries called the


5 By the 1650’s, at least, the rank of vezir was awarded as an honor by the sultans to esteemed individuals in return for substantial monetary contributions called “ak-çe-i ça’iže . . . tug-i humayun.” Thus both Sohrabli

2 For details see I. H. Uzunçarşılı, Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı (Ankara, 1948), 249-50.

3 H. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West

4 Norman Itzkowitz, “Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities,” Studia Islamica, XVI (1962), 86-87. (Hereafter cited as Itkowitz, “Eighteenth Century.”) Itzkowitz’s work is misinterpreted by Kurat-Bromley and therefore the role of the efendi-turned paşa is somewhat exaggerated. “It was this able and loyal group of efendis or ‘Men of the Pen,’ some of them trained in the palace-schools instead of in the college-mosques, that now held the empire together.” New Cambridge Modern History, VI (1970), 616. Halil Inalcık points out that the efendi or ‘men of the pen’ dominated the grand vezirate in the eighteenth century. “Reisulkuttab,” İslam Ansiklopedisi (Istanbul, 1940—).

households: kapilari/kapi = singular. The term kapı was used to signify bāb; both terms, the first Turkish and the other Arabic, literally mean “gate” or “door” and by extension are the parts which are made to signify the whole, the household. In this manner the expression Sublime Porte which was a translation of Bāb-i 'Aali, referred to the grand vezir’s household and eventually became the designation for the government of the Ottoman state in its public departments. In this study, the expression vezir and paşa kapilari is meant to be inclusive of the grand vezir’s. The latter was considered as one of the several simultaneously co-existing vezir and paşa households.

The suggestions which are made in this paper are based on a partially completed survey of the official biographies of men who held the highest posts in the central and provincial administration. The biographical data were gleaned from contemporary and near contemporary sources. Under

Ahmed and Morali Hasan were expected to pay 25 keses each into the sultan’s private treasury as their contribution in return for elevation to the rank of vezir. Cited in Sıhihdar Mehmed Aga, Sıhihdar Tarihi. 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1928), Vol. II, 139, (hereafter cited as Sıhihdar, Tarihi); and also in Defterdar Mehmed Paşa, Zubdat ul vakay,’ İstanbul, Suleymaniye Kütüphanesi Esad Efendi ktb. (manuscript) no. 2382, f. 137a (hereafter cited as Defterdar, Zubdat). Rami Mehmed paid the sum of 22,500 gurüş for the same honor. Maliye defteri 10148, 8.

6 The standard chronicles for this period are Sıhihdar, Tarihi (which is being continued in modern translation by İsmet Parmaksızoğlu under the title Nusretname in fasilkules, Istanbul, 1962-0. Citl I and II, fasikul I, were used in this study along with and checked against the manuscript with the same title in Istanbul, Beyazıt Umumi Kütüphanesi no. 2369), Defterdar, Zubdat; and Raşid, Tarihi-i Rasid, 6 vols. Istanbul, 1282. These three chronicles, some archival sources (Muhimmé defterleri 105-114, and some Maliye defterleri), the specialized biographical dictionary by Ahmed Resmi, Saffinat ulyruesa, Vienna, Österrichische Nationalbibliothek, H. O. 118, and the biographical studies of Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, Vols. III, part 2 (Ankara, 1954), and IV, part 2, (Istanbul, 1959) and those in Dânişmand, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. III. (Istanbul, 1961 edition), were surveyed for biographical information on all officials who acquired a title, or managed to get promoted, or demoted or advanced within the ranks or changed status. Each item of information was placed on 3 by 5 inch cards. Each card carried also the date (or approximate date when no specific date was given by month and day), on

the headings Central Administration and Eyaletler (provinces), were tabulated the backgrounds of those who held office in either category in terms of the following symbols: B. Z. (beyzadeleter); C. (civilian); M. (military); P. (palace); V. H. (vezir and/or paşa households). Except where otherwise noted, in this period all posts in the palace household services and most of the posts in the military service were almost invariably manned by individuals who were brought up in the palace and military services respectively. Thus, in these services, except where otherwise noted, appointments of outsiders to the palace and most of the military posts were the exception to the rule.

The above-mentioned symbols are defined as follows:

P. (palace) refers to those, whether slaves or free-born Muslims, who started their service in the sultan’s palace.

Although in the past (especially starting from the middle of the fifteenth century) the imperial household was staffed almost exclusively by slaves, in the second half of the seventeenth century a good number of those who entered that service were free-born Muslims, some of whose parents were comparatively well-known. Such was the background of Elmas Mehmed Aga (grand vezir: 1695-97). His father, Sadik Reis was a commander in the navy (gemi reisi). Mehmed was born in Kastamonu, entered the palace at an early age, serving as çokadar-i hassa, then as sıhihdar, mir-i alem, rikab kaymakamı and eventually mişaneti.7

M. (military) refers to those who were brought up in the ocaks of the standing armed forces and navy and who were assigned to posts outside what may be considered strictly military functions.

which the biographical fragment or event occurred, as well as the source and page on which the information was based. The cards were then indexed in alphabetical order under the biographee’s name and in chronological order. Simultaneously, while the biographical data was being collected, a list was kept of changes in office which had occurred both yearly and by tenure under the name of each incumbent grand vezir and the duration of the service of the appointee was noted down. This latter set of cards was also indexed in alphabetical order and by the name of each office. It was thus possible to retrieve the biographical data by three means: in terms of the biographee’s name, or in terms of the office he held, or in terms of the year of his appointment under each specific grand vezir.

7 Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, III, 2. 443.
Thus, sons of members of the ocaks would fall into this category if they were to follow their fathers' career. For purposes of simplification, those who were brought up in the provincial military establishments are listed here as members of the military establishment proper. It should be emphasized again that those who were trained and brought up in the palace household used to be the main beneficiaries of both the highest military and administrative posts starting from the middle of the fifteenth century. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century, whereas before, most if not all commanders and men of the centrally stationed armed forces came from amongst the palace graduates, now more and more men are noted who had inherited their positions from their fathers. These developments did not preclude the continuation well into the seventeenth century of the practice of graduating men from the palace right into the ocaks of the standing army.

B. Z. (bezyadeler) literally sons of beys, those who were more or less well-known, and had become close to an equivalent to nobility. Here, B. Z. is used with reference to all who carry the title bey whether by virtue of the sons' having acquired it because their fathers had achieved the title, paşa; or those who had inherited the title bey having been so designated by the state in recognition of their rulership over a specific group (Kurds, Albanians or Turkomans). In the seventeenth century sources the title was commonly applied to those men who held sancaks, hukumets or muhafazāt through inheritance. In this study the abbreviation is applied to the immediate families of vezirs and paşas, their brothers, sons-in-law, or what the sources refer to as their akribā. It should be noted, finally, that not all sons of paşas were designated as bey in the sources, for example the title efendi or aga was perhaps even more commonly used with reference to them, but here, again for the purposes of simplification, these men are regarded as B. Z. as though they had carried the title bey. Of course, the sons of very important agas, such as Köprülü Mehmed Paşa's nephew Amcazade Huseyin, rated the title bey. Hasan, his father, was known as Aga. V. H. (Vezir and Paşa household) refers to the halk or staffs of the households of the paşa and vezirs. The halk included the personnel and troops of the kapi, be they Muslims in origin or slave. The kapi usually consisted of men who were raised and trained in the household as well as those who were trained elsewhere but eventually were attached to the house through clientship/intitāş. The last group were acquired following the dissolution of a V. H. and the breakup of the halk (literally creatures) of the kapi or from amongst those who received their initial apprenticeships in the central administration's bureaucracy. While halk was the generic term used to refer to all the household staffs, the sources refer to them also as 'atbā' (followers/hangers-on), agalar (officers), adamlar (men) and kullar (slaves). As with the sultan's palace, the vezir and paşa kapi acquired slaves which it trained into whatever skills were needed or necessary for service. Some of these slaves managed to ascend not only to the headship of the staffs of the household (kyahyaship/from the Persian: ketkhoda) but also went on after manumission to create their own households. In the second half of the seventeenth century one such 'abd-i ma'lūk (manumitted slave) of a V. H. became a grand vezir in his own right.

Like the palace the households had an inner and an outer service, each sector staffed by officials and officers proportionate to the position and wealth of its founder. A large number of these household members came to attain the rank of

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9 In mid-year, 1675, Mehmed IV graduated 1,000 ghilman-i-enderun-i hassah into the boluks, Silihdar, Tarih, vol. I, 648; and in March 1678 he graduated 1,500 Istanbul bostancis into the Janissary corps. Ibid., 673; and 16 ghilman-i-enderun again in September 1680 Ibid., 733. Mustafa II graduated 200 men of the saray-i 'atik service, 1,000 of the Istanbul saray/palace and 500 Edirne bostancis to serve as tufengecis. Silihdar, Nusret-name, Cilt I, fasikul I, 135/manuscript reference 231a.
11 Silihdar, Tarîh, I, 526.
12 For example Kara/Bayburtli Ibrahim Aga who served Celâl Hasan Paşa, then Ferari Kara Mustafa and finally Kara Mustafa, whom he succeeded as grand vezir in 1683. The same Kara Ibrahim admitted into the service of his household Dal Taban Mustafa, first as a messenger and later as iç mehter başı before he moved out to serve into the military establishment. Uzunçarşı, Osmanî Tarîhî, III, ii, 423-25; and IV, ii, 259-83.
13 Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, I, i, 152-53.
14 During 1687-88, Abaza Siyavuş, a slave of Köprülü Mehmed, who served as grand vezir.
15 For details see citation in Footnote 13 above.
vezir and title of paşa and were able to establish
their own kapılar.

C. (civil) refers to those who started their careers
in the central bureaucracy irrespective of back-
ground (whether or not they were sons of military
men or those who came from the ilmiye/religious
bureaucracy), but were not attached to any specific
vezir or paşa household.

The tables included in this study represent
probes into the backgrounds (as far as these can
be determined) of officials who attained office
under the two headings: Central Administration
and Eyaletler (governors of provinces) during the
grand vezirates of Kara İbrahim (1683-85), Sari
Suleyman (1685-87), Abaza Siyavuş (1687-88),
Nişancı Ismail (1688), Bekri Mustafa (1688-89),
Fazıl Mustafa (1689-91), Arabacı Ali (1691-92),
Hacı Ali (1692-93), Bozoklu Mustafa (1693-94),
Surmel Ali (1694-95), Elmas Mehmed (1695-97),
Amcazade Huseyn (1697-1702), Dal Taban Musta-
fa (1702-03) and Rami Mehmed (1703).

**Central Administration: 1683-1703**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>B.Z.</th>
<th>V.H. P.</th>
<th>M.</th>
<th>C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul Kaymakam</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nişancı</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silihdar Aga</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapudan Paşa</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                  | 13   | 91      | 69 | 56 |

**Governors of Eyaletler/Provinces: 1683-1703**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>B.Z.</th>
<th>V.H. P.</th>
<th>M.</th>
<th>C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Adana</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bagdat</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halep: 1 6 7 7 1
Diyarbekir: 5 8 8 3 0
Rakka: 1 3 7 1 0
Rumeli: 6 3 4 4 0
Silistre: 3 3 3 2 0
Sivas: 4 4 13 0 0
Sham: 4 2 13 4 0
Shehrazor: 3 5 5 2 0
Trabulsh Sham: 1 1 6 0 2
Trabzon: 2 1 4 3 1
Timişvar: 4 5 2 2 1
Kars: 2 1 1 0 1
Kibris: 1 4 4 1 2
Karaman: 2 6 7 2 0
Kamanicha: 0 3 2 1 1
Kandya: 3 2 6 3 1
Kanica: 0 2 0 1 0
Keffe: 1 0 2 2 0
Marash: 4 2 5 3 1
Mısır: 0 3 4 1 1
Mora: 0 2 6 5 0
Mosul: 1 3 5 1 0
Varad: 0 0 2 1 0
Yanova: 2 8 15 2 0

The sub-totals for the twenty years for each
category are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Administration</th>
<th>Eyaletler (provinces)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.Z.</td>
<td>V.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.H.</td>
<td>M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures indicate that the military had been
down-graded as a source for staffing posts in the
central government and in the provinces taking
a little over 20% of posts in the central and about
16% of the governorates. The palace household,

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36 As if in justification of this change, Mustafa Naima, quoting Ibn Khaldun, tried to explain early in 1700 that
during a period of stability of a government (presumably
the Ottoman state had reached that stage in the late
seventeenth century) the "men of the sword" tend to
give way to others in attaining the highest posts of govern-
ment. Mustafa Naima, *Naima Tarihi*, (Istanbul, 1283),
vol. I, 24-40, of the author's own introduction to the
chronicle where he discusses the various stages (life-
cycles) through which each government or state passes
through from oblivion to zenith to demise.
on the other hand, continued to provide a substantial number of men to staff both levels of government. However, in at least the latter two decades of the seventeenth century it provided about a fourth and a little over a third of the posts on these two levels of government respectively, whereas in the previous century it was purported to have had a near monopoly in filling these positions. In the second half of the seventeenth century assignments to the highest posts of government were shared by the palace graduates and the families and staffs of the vezir and paşa kapilar. However, in the period 1683-1703, men from the vezir and paşa household’s staffs and members of their families surpassed the palace graduates in the number of recruits who obtained important central and provincial posts. While the palace graduates obtained 26.30% and 38.50% of all positions filled on these two levels, the B. Z. and V. H. combination totaled 39.50% and 41.90% respectively.

The smallest percentages, 12.50% and 3.70%, were registered by men who came from the bureaucracy (C). The total number of men neither of the military nor of the palace who managed to attain high office on the central and provincial levels came to over half of the former and five points short of half for the latter out of the total number of assignments made during the last two decades of the seventeenth century. A significant shift in dependence for recruitment and staffing for these highest posts of government took place away from the traditional ones of the palace and the military services.

The growing preponderance of the vezir and paşa households and their graduates indicate the decline in the personal rule of the sultans, a trend which had its beginnings in the end of Süleyman Kanuni’s reign. The parallel to this decline was the down-grading of the palace as the sole training ground for public administrative experience. Here it should be noted that the failure of the palace to provide the staffs for the highest posts of government coincided with the decline in the recruitment and training of slaves by the palace schools. The enhanced position of the households was recognized existentially and only de facto by the sultans. The denial of de jure and therefore institutional recognition of the growing preeminent position of the vezir and paşa kapilar kept the men and the institution in a precarious position and predisposed the internal political history of the state to potentially violent struggles for ascendency during political crises. At the base of these struggles was the constitutional question of whether in fact the sultans both ruled and reigned. Although the right of reigning was rarely questioned, the growing preeminence of the households and their capacity for self-perpetuation threatened, at least in the second half of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman monarchs’ right to rule. In the period under discussion, the question was formally raised at the time of a major political crisis. Internal strife and disaffection had paralyzed the state. The Venetians threatened to blockade the Dardanelles and invade Istanbul. To extricate itself from both internal and external threat, the Ottoman court turned to Köprüli Mehmed. As his conditions for accepting the office of grand vezir, he requested of the court: non-interference with his recommendations and nominations to all levels of government service; denial of permission for criticism to be voiced of his decisions and policies; and denial of meddling in state affairs by former ministers and statesmen. When the court finally accepted his conditions in 1656, Mehmed took the seal of office. This grand vezir, a Muslim-born graduate of the palace, was able to found the vezir-paşa kapi par excellence. Thirty-eight of the forty-seven years following his ascendance were dominated by grand vezirs either of his direct descent (his sons: Ahmed, 1661-76 and Mustafa, 1689-91), or a nephew (Amcazade Huseyn, 1697-1702), a son-in-law (Kara Mustafa, 1676-83), or members of their various households (Kara Mustafa’s kyayha Kara Ibrahim; a slave of Köprüli Mehmed and his son-in-law Abaza Siya-

17 Already between 1664-1683 about one-third of all assignments to the highest posts of the central government were filled by a combination of B. Z. and V. H. staffers and no less than twenty percent of the same combination were assigned eyeletler. These figures should be taken merely as suggestive of the current trend since they are based on uncompleted research for these two decades.

18 Halil Inalcik discusses the decline of slave system in “Ghalam,” cited in Footnote 1 above.

19 In a highly suggestive article, Serif Mardin attributes the continued political strife in the Ottoman state to the dynasty’s reluctance to accord institutional recognition to the elites. “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire,” Comparative Culture and Society, (1969), XI, 258-81.
Having been denied the throne twice by the Köprülü family, Mustafa II upon his accession was determined to exercise the right of ruling. Four days following his elevation to the sultanate, he issued an Imperial rescript to the incumbent grand vezir Surneli Ali Paşa declaring his full intent "to go on the ghaza and cihād in person." From February 1695 until July 1697, Mustafa did in fact reign and rule. Within those two years he was able to mold the various elements of the ruling class, including the vezir and paşa households, into an instrument which was subordinate to himself. His eventual and ultimate success or failure depended upon his performance and those of his subordinates on the battlefield.

Under his leadership, the Ottoman state recovered in two years several forts along the frontier between Timişvar and Transylvania. The daring exploits of these first years were brought to a sudden halt by the annihilating defeat of Ottoman forces at Zenta in 1697. In his time of need, Mustafa II turned to Huseyin Paşa to extricate himself from the chaos, confusions and embarrassments of defeat. Had the new minister expected to have a free rein in the conduct of state affairs, he was bound for disappointment. The inability of the sultan to allow him a free hand was eventually to cost Mustafa II his throne. To retard the possible ambitions of the grand vezir, the sultan had given Şeyhüislâm Feyzullah Efendi, his chief political advisor since 1695, the freedom to interfere in the conduct of state business. In his own turn, Feyzullah had already developed his own ambition, designing to secure for himself and his direct progeny perpetuation in the highest


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20 For biographies of these grand vezirs see Uzuğarılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, III, ii, 414-448.
23 Ibid., 483, 560-70.
24 Whereas both princes Mustafa and Ahmed were considered too freely and liberally raised (therefore dangerous for any ambitious minister), Sultan Ahmed II was "not only pious but skilled in the production of the calender." Ibid., 570.
25 I am currently preparing a detailed study of the rebellion of 1703.
posts of the religious bureaucracy and a monopoly of the political advisorship to the sultan.\textsuperscript{28} Prior to Zenta, his ambitions were curbed by the sultan who had conducted state business in person. But with Mustafa II's withdrawal from the personal conduct of state affairs, Feyzullah was left with an unobstructed field to nourish his growing power.

The inevitable conflict between the ambitious mufti and the fairly independent and strong-willed grand vezir does not come out to the surface. In fact contemporary sources do not even hint at the potential for conflict. Towards the end of the vezirate of Huseyin, however, the buyuk mirahor Kiblizade Ali Bey was suddenly dismissed from his office and was sent to exile and eventual execution in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{29} Ali Bey was caught when he secretly contacted Prince Ahmed (subsequently Sultan Ahmed III) in the harem.\textsuperscript{30} The purpose of this contact is not spelled out in the sources; however, the precipitous reaction from the court points to conspiracy. Ali Bey was a favorite nephew of the grand vezir and would not, in all likelihood, have attempted to reach Prince Ahmed without his uncle's blessings. Furthermore, a few days following the departure of Ali Bey, Huseyin Paşa's chamberlain Şehrizarlu Hasan Aga was singled out for removal.\textsuperscript{31} This time the retainer was elevated to the rank of vezir and sent to govern his native eyalet. A few months later, however, orders were sent for his execution. Again, the contemporary sources offer no explanation for the kyahya's departure. In Hasan's case, however, a sequel to these events can be followed, for the agent who was sent to execute him was unable to perform his mission,\textsuperscript{32} and the Paşa managed to go into hiding until the outbreak of the rebellion, when he was invited to take the office of kaymakam deputy for the rebel grand vezir in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{33}

It is quite obvious that the sultan and his close advisor Feyzullah Efendi must have felt threatened by the machinations of these officers who were in Huseyin Paşa's service. The grand vezir in turn lost hope of ever retaining freedom of action due to interference of the mufti in state affairs and the refusal of Mustafa II to curb Feyzullah's ambitions and greed. It is only then that he must have decided to explore the alternatives to the continuation of Mustafa II in office. The contact with Prince Ahmed would have been the first step in effecting the change of sultans. It is in light of this interpretation that the circumstances leading to the death of Kiblizade Ali Bey and the dismissal of kyahya Şehrizarlu Hasan Aga would have to be understood.

\textsuperscript{28} Feyzullah acted like a typical ambitious vezir or paşa of the second half of the seventeenth century. His sons were placed in the very highest ilmiye posts. His eldest son, Fethullah, was elevated to the nekabet and was guaranteed simultaneously the şeghultisamate at his father's death. The youngest son was given the preceptorship/hocalik of Mustafa II's eldest son. For fairly detailed treatments of Feyzullah Efendi, see the article "Edirne Vakası" in Islam Ansiklopedisi, Istanbul, 1940-, and Sabra Meservey, "Feyzullah Efendi: An Ottoman Şeyhülislam," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Princeton, 1966.

\textsuperscript{29} Kibleli Mustafa Paşa-oghlu Ali Bey served both Fazil Mustafa and Ameazade Huseyin. He was kapetkar kyayyasi for Huseyin Paşa for three years before his promotion to buyuk mirahor. It is perhaps significant that five days following his dismissal from his post as mirahor, the sultan's son, Mahmud Sultan, was assigned a hoca from amongst Feyzullah's sons. The information on Ali Bey comes from Silidhar, Tarih, II, 543-44, and Nusretname, I, III, 307; II, I, 45, 83, 86; and manuscript 255b, 267a, 276b-277a.

\textsuperscript{30} Reported in Silidhar, Nusretname, II, I, 90-91, 116 and only hinted at by Raşid, Tarih, II, 531. Deftedar, Zubdat, 393a reports the issuance of the order for Ali Bey's execution, but claims ignorance of the motive. The anonymous author of "Tarih-i Sultan Suleyman . . . ," (Berlin, Staatbibliothek, Diez A quart, 75) 292a-94a claims that Ali Bey was removed from the office of mirahor and sent to Egypt. There, he apparently wrote and predicted the fall of Feyzullah Efendi and Mustafa II and of the eventual accession of Ahmed III. This last author does not claim that Ali Bey had tried to reach Prince Ahmed, Mustafa II's brother, in the harem. Nevertheless, he attributes Ali Bey's execution to the fact that the latter had predicted Ahmed III's accession and therefore also predicted the fall of Mustafa II. In both accounts by Silidhar and the anonymous history Feyzullah is accused of being the man responsible for Ali Bey's execution, though the crime as reported by both had to do with the wish or desire of Huseyin's nephew for seeing a new sultan replace Mustafa II.

\textsuperscript{31} Biographical information on Şehrizarlu Hasan Aga/ Paşa is based on Deftedar, Zubdat, 388a, 319b and Silidhar, Nusretname, II, I, 89/manuscript 277b, 92/278a, 120/281b.

\textsuperscript{32} Reported in Silidhar, Nusretname, II, I, 120/281a; Deftedar, Zubdat, 405b-06a and Muhimme defteri 114, 2a, 12a, 53a, 73a.

\textsuperscript{33} Silidhar, Nusretname, II, I, 170-71.
The intrigues to rid themselves of both Feyzullah Efendi and Sultan Mustafa II were carried out by Amcazade Huseyin's successors in the grand vezirate, Dal Taban Mustafa (1702-03) and Rami Mehmed (1703). The first was discovered and paid for his failure with his life, while the second triggered the rebellion whose leaders were Amcazade Huseyin's brother-in-law Sohrabli Ahmed Paşa and his former pyaşya Şehrizorli Hasan Paşa.

A complex of factors lies behind the rebellions of 1687 and 1703. The discussion and analysis of the underlying causes of these upheavals and the predisposition of Ottoman polity to such violent reactions in the seventeenth century must await further detailed consideration. At this stage of knowledge it can be asserted with a fair amount of accuracy that the growing power of the vezir and paşa households, here demonstrated by the Köprülü family and its satellite kapilar, made them equal to the supreme task of creating and depositing sultans.

The vezir and paşa households must have evolved, like the palace and military institutions, ostensibly to serve the interests of the dynasty. In time however, they seem to have superseded these institutions and in the second half of the seventeenth century developed their own raison d'être.

Since the households rarely acted in a monolithic fashion, factions flourished, some were drawn to support and act in concert with similarly inclined parties from the palace or the military or both. Heretofore, it has been claimed, the struggles for political ascendancy at the center of power were played out by the palace and military factions with the bureaucracy acting as a third but weak partner. The rise of the vezir and paşa households adds a new component to the power struggle and their kapili-polities contributes a further complexity to the structure of Ottoman history in the seventeenth century.

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34 Dal Taban Mustafa triggered a rebellion among the Tartars as a prelude to his coup to rid himself of both the mufti and Mustafa II. Some of the details of the Tartar rebellion are discussed in “The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe,” Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 89, no. 3 (1969).

35 Rami Mehmed's role in the coup d'état of 1703 requires a much more detailed treatment than is possible in this essay. The sources are not in total agreement about his role in the upheaval of that year. Though most of our sources implicate him in the plot against Feyzullah Efendi, some exonerate him of all “wrong-doing.”

36 Through a policy of confiscations, the sultans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were able to curb the power of vezirs and paşas who had graduated from the palace service. Since these men were regarded as the personal slaves of the sultans, their effects following dismissal or demise were turned over to the royal treasury (enderun). By tapping their wealth through this policy the dynasty was effective in its attempt at curtailing the capacity of the palace graduates for self-perpetuation. As the palace turned to recruit Muslims to its service, the policy of confiscations was also extended to Muslim-born officials. These men were viewed by the sultans as kuls/domestics of the sultans' household and they therefore were governed by the same regulations. (Even Köprülüzade Mustafa was not immune from this law. See Silihdar, Tarì, II, 598, for details.) If, however, this policy which was applied throughout the second half of the seventeenth century at least, was meant to curb the ability of the vezir and paşa householders to perpetuate themselves, it failed. Apparently, neither the sultans nor their chief administrators were seriously interested in the rigorous application of the confiscations. Several loopholes were available. One was the conversion of personal property into inalienable family endowments, a practice which had its early start in the sixteenth century. The sultans themselves violated the rule by turning over the household of a deceased vezir to his son. Such was the case of Birunsuz Mehmed Bey who following his father's death was given the rank of Karaman, awarded the sanecak of 'Ala'iyye and authorized to carry over his father's household. The law of confiscations was not abandoned, although in a large number of cases only its letter was followed. The pretense was kept up that every effort was expended in the collections of estates and effects for the benefit of the royal private purse. Once the law had been enforced, and with the pardoning of the officer in question, no further confiscations were allowed. A corollary to the law was a statute of limitations. From these observations, it would seem obvious that the sultans were not interested in crippling or making total destitutes out of their demoted high officials or their heirs.

37 The sultans' palace household used to be taken as the first model for any ambitious vezir or paşa in their identification with the dynasty, its ways and with high Ottoman culture. It is quite probable that the vezir and paşa kapilar came to serve, in the second half of the seventeenth century, as the second and actual model for the growing number of ambitious notables (ayan) and derebëys (provincial military) of the eighteenth century. It was after all from the kapilar that a growing
When viewed within the larger context of dynastic sovereignty, these same rebellions appear as minor interruptions in the further consolidation of an otherwise peaceful revolution. In vain Mehmed IV and his son Mustafa II tried to regain the absolute power and prerogatives of their sixteenth century predecessors. Their failure signified the end of traditional dynastic absolutism and the triumph for over a century of the rule of an oligarchy whose main beneficiaries were the vezir and paşa households.38 Not until the reforms of Mahmut II in the nineteenth century would the dynasty regain direct control over state affairs. The regression in the political power of the sultans contrasts with contemporary developments in continental Europe. While these states witnessed the consolidation of dynastic absolutism accompanied by centralism, the Ottomans moved in a parallel but opposite direction. The revolution which curtailed the personal rule of the Ottoman sultans through the de facto consolidation of the power of the households may have paved the way for the rise of provincial autonomies in the eighteenth century.

38 The power of the ulema was growing quite rapidly in this same period. An evaluation of their place and share in power must await detailed studies parallel to the one attempted here.