

GRAND VIZIER KOCA SİNAN PAŞA AND
FACTIONAL POLITICS IN THE COURT OF MURAD III

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“Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Paşa and Factional Politics in the Court of Murad III,” a thesis prepared by Elif Özgen (107671010)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with Koca Sinan Paşa's (ca.1520-1596) grand vizierate, and the factionalism that dominated the court politics and the political discourse during the reign of Murad III. Koca Sinan Paşa used dismissals, appointments, and audits in order to get rid of his foes. Since he was not the only statesman using these tactics, and he also became a victim of factionalism, in addition to being an aggressor. Another major tool of factional strife was slander and gossip, which enabled rivals to make allegations about one another instead of making legal accusations. Koca Sinan Paşa was very successful in manipulating hearsay and accusations, probably with an intention to control public opinion. He also carried out important reforms about the standardization of the coinage and the integration of different monetary zones of the empire. He implemented changes about the system of taxation, in order to reduce the budget deficit he tried to meet the need of the treasury for ready cash by introducing tax farming in the southern and eastern provinces. I compared the accounts of four chroniclers and historians who were Koca Sinan Paşa's contemporaries about his command of the Ottoman forces during the Hungarian campaign in 1593-1594, in order to trace the effects of factionalism on Ottoman historiography.

ÖZET

Bu tez Koca Sinan Paşa'nın (ölümü 1595) sadrazamlığı ve III. Murad'ın dönemi saray politikaları ve siyasi söylemine damgasını vuran hizipçilik hakkındadır. Koca Sinan Paşa görevden alma, atamalar ve teftişler vasıtasıyla hizipçilik politikası gütmüştür. Bu araçları kullanarak hizipçilik yapan tek devlet adamı Koca Sinan Paşa olmadığından, kendisi de zaman zaman bu taktiklerin kurbanı olmuştur. Ayrıca, devlet adamları kendi hiziplerine fayda sağlamak için rakiplerini Divan-ı Hümayun'da dava etmek yerine onlar hakkında dedikodular çıkarmışlar ve iftira etmişlerdir. Koca Sinan Paşa da söylenti ve ithamları manipüle etme konusunda son derece başarılı politikacılardandı. Aynı zamanda, sikke tashihi ve akçenin tedavüldeki tek gümüş para olmasını sağlamak için bazı reformlar yapmıştır. Vergilendirme sisteminde değişikliğe giderek, bütçe açığını kapatmak için hazinenin ihtiyaç duyduğu nakit parayı doğu ve güney eyaletlerinin vergilerini iltizama vererek çözmeye çalışmıştır. Koca Sinan Paşa'nın çağdaşı olan tarihçi ve vakanüvislerin 1593-1594 Macaristan Seferi sırasında serdar ve sadrazam olan Koca Sinan Paşa hakkındaki çelişkili anlatılarını karşılaştırarak hizipçiliğin Osmanlı tarih yazımı üzerindeki etkisini inceledim.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about factional politics during the reign of Murad III. By studying the workings of political factions during the grand vizierate of Koca Sinan Paşa between 1580-1595, I seek to answer the following questions: How did Koca Sinan Paşa and his contemporaries perceive factions and factional affiliations? What were the aims of factions and how did factions achieve these aims? In addition, I examine how the factional discourse impacted contemporary political language. And how gossip, slander, rumor and denunciations functioned in the court of Murad III. Finally, I investigate how factional affiliations shaped the biases of late-sixteenth century Ottoman historians.

The secondary literature on Koca Sinan Paşa largely reproduced the biases of sixteenth century chroniclers about him, who were affiliated with different factions.¹ In fact, the biographies of most viziers and grand viziers, had taken the views of chroniclers and historians about them at face value, unless it had been the subject of a study that aims to do otherwise.² The contribution I make is two-fold, first, I aim to understand who was Koca Sinan Paşa and what he did to enrich himself, to rise in the bureaucracy, to come to power, to stay in power independent of the value-judgments of late-sixteenth century writers about wealth, power, ruthlessness, heedlessness, and arrogance. Second, I analyze court

¹ With two notable and recent exceptions: Emine Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005). Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). On the use of advice literature for factionalism, see Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 151-152.

² There are many exceptions such as Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453-1474)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Christine Woodhead, "Consolidating the Empire: New Views on Ottoman History, 1453-1839." *English Historical Review* 123, no. 503 (2008): 973-987.

politics by focusing on the role of legal and extra-legal means of coming to and staying in power during the reign of Murad III.

A faction can be defined “as a political group whose members are bound to a leader by a variety of personal, informal ties and which vies for power with other, similar groups.”³ Within a court faction, personal and informal ties bond the faction’s members such as friendship at school and service, kinship, ethnic-regional solidarity (*cins*) religious denomination, ideological and political persuasion, and pragmatic ends.⁴ Within this thesis, I focus on the political and pragmatic ends that brought the members of a faction together, rather than shared cultural and religious values.⁵

Factional understanding of Ottoman court politics helps us place the vested interests of different groups of actors.⁶ Analyzing factional politics in the court of Murad III necessitates prosopographical research about the households

³ Robert Shephard, “Review: Court Factions in Early Modern England” in *The Journal of Modern History* 64, no. 4 (1992): 722.

⁴ Shephard, 726. For a study of ethnic-regional solidarity among the member of the Ottoman political elite in the seventeenth century, see İ. Metin Kunt, “Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment” in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 3 (1974): 233-239.

⁵ Late sixteenth century Ottomans might have also perceived shared cultural values a necessity of factional affiliations. The historian Mustafa Âli considered Koca Sinan Paşa a hater of learning, and the chronicler Selaniki wrote that the poets all of who suffered during the grand vizierate of Koca Sinan Paşa rejoiced about his death. See Fleischer, 164-165. Talikîzade enlisted their love of poetry as one of the strengths of Ottoman sultans, see Christine Woodhead, *Ta’likî-zâde’s Şehnâme-i Hümayûn: A History of the Ottoman Campaign into Hungary, 1593-1594* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983). For the general cultural values that bound the Ottomans see Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7-25.

⁶ Studies that influenced the author of this thesis dealing with earlier and later periods include Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Baki Tezcan, “Lost in Historiography: An Essay on the Reasons for the Absence of a History of Limited Government in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 3 (2009): 477; “The Debut of Kösem Sultan’s Political Career.” *Turcica* 40, no. 01 (2008): 347-359; “The History of a ‘primary Source’: The Making of Tughi’s Chronicle on the Regicide of Osman II.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72, no. 01 (2009): 41-62; “The Ottoman Mevali as ‘lords of the law’.” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 383-407; “The Ottoman Monetary Crisis of 1585 Revisited.” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52 (June 2009): 460-504.

of each vizier and grand vizier. Although prosopographical research has many benefits for demonstrating interrelationships between factions and shifting alliances, I have limited the present study to grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa's policies and political discourse.⁷ Still, the current study has been very much informed by the scholarship on factions that emerged since the 1970s.

There are two periods in which historians working on the Ottoman Empire looked at the factional strife at the Ottoman court during the reign of Murad III. In the first half of the twentieth century, a generation of historians published primary sources and descriptive works based on archival documents, chronicles and travelogues. Their interests range widely from the harem and the navy to the *ulema*, from the army and the "structure" of the palace to the relationships between the members of the dynasty. Among these we can name İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hami Danişmend, M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, M. Çağatay Uluçay, Zarif Ongun and Şerafettin Turan. Their works represent an awareness of the factional strife. In addition to these academic historians, there were also popular historians such as Ahmed Refik Altınay and Reşat Ekrem Koçu who wrote on 'palace intrigues', plots, the janissaries and rebellions. *Hayat Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, the popular history magazine of *Hayat* (Life) Magazine, active from the 1950s onwards, published their articles.⁸

⁷ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Society and Political Power in the Ottoman Empire: A Report on Research in Collective Biography (1480-1830)" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 1 (1985): 109-117.

⁸ Şerafettin Turan, *Kanunî'nin oğlu Şehzade Bayezid Vakası* (Ankara, Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi, 1961); "Şehzade Bayezid'in Babası Kanuni Süleyman'a Gönderdiği Mektuplar," *Tarih Vesikaları* 1, no. 16 (1955): 118-127; "Lala Mustafa Paşa Hakkında Notlar ve Vesikalar," *Belleten* 22 (1958): 551-593. He also wrote the encyclopedic articles on "Koca Sinan Paşa", "Hoca Sadüddin," and "Ramazanzade" in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* published by T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı. İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, 5 vols (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1961). İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965); *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1948); *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945); *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları*, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943-1944). Çağatay M.

The second phase of studies on Ottoman factionalism is a result of the works of scholars working on the political history of the Ottoman Empire from the mid-1970s onwards. Metin Kunt's prosopographical study of the district governors (*sancakbeyi*) explains the transformation of provincial administration between the 1550-1650.⁹ Cornell Fleischer's biography of the historian and bureaucrat Mustafa Âli, Leslie Peirce's study of the Ottoman Harem paved the road for recent studies.¹⁰ Jane Hathaway studied politics in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen through factional analysis of households.¹¹ Political history of the Ottoman Empire benefit from Emine Fetvacı's work on the patronage of illuminated manuscripts, and Giancarlo Casale's book on Ottoman presence in the Red Sea, which are also informative for the current study.¹²

Ottoman political (*intisap*) and artistic patronage (*hamilik*) became important concepts in modern historiography of the Ottoman Empire since 1970s. This has started with cultural and intellectual history, as well as Ottoman art and architectural history of the last thirty years. Fleischer's study of Mustafa Âli, and a number of studies on the patronage of Ottoman illuminated

Uluçay, *Harem* (Istanbul, 1956); *Osmanlı Saraylarında Harem Hayatının İç Yüzü* (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1959); *Osmanlı Sultanlarına Aşk Mektupları* (Istanbul: Şaka Matbaası, 1950); *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1980). For popular history-writing in this period, Ruth Barzilai-Lumbroso, "Turkish Men and the History of Ottoman Women: Studying the History of the Ottoman Dynasty's Private Sphere Through Women's Writings" *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5, no. 2 (2009): 53-82.

⁹ İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government: 1550-1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), originally published in Turkish as *Sancaktan Eyalete: 1550-1650 Arasında Osmanlı Ümerası ve İl İdaresi* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 1975).

¹⁰ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: the Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and more recently, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2003.)

¹² Emine Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005). Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

manuscripts, architectural patronage focused on patron-client relationships.¹³

Recently, Emine Fetvacı problematized the concept of artistic patronage by showing that indirect patron-client relationships that affected the choice of artist and of subject existed along with commissions from a client by actual payment of patron.¹⁴

One of the most well studied courts in terms of factionalism is the Elizabethan court. Within the literature on the Elizabethan court, factions were conceived as informal organizations, whose members came together for pragmatic or ideological factors. There were different kinds of relationships within a court faction, which consisted of a factional leader, his friends, followers and servants. The friends were people of comparable influence at court who helped each other; they were more or less equal to the factional leader. The followers were the most evasive category within a faction; they were those who tried to procure the influence of the leader of a court faction for obtaining a favor on their behalf from the ruler. The servants were often of modest backgrounds that entered the service of a factional leader and often had long-term employment in positions such as a secretary, steward, and scribe. The servants relied as much on gratuities and gifts as on salaries, indeed some did not receive any salary but accumulated considerable amounts of wealth through the gifts they received.¹⁵ These terms were derived from contemporary usages. Francis Bacon's collection of essays that were written as counsel for the prince is one source of the

¹³ Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Günsel Renda and Zeren Tanında, *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı* (Istanbul: TC Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2006). Maurice M. Cerasi, *The Istanbul Divanyolu: a Case Study in Ottoman Urbanity and Architecture* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004). Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Halil İnalçık also worked with the concept of patronage: Halil İnalçık, *Şair ve Patron* (Istanbul: Doğu ve Batı Yayınları, 2003). For architectural patronage, the list is much longer that can be found in the bibliography of Necipoğlu, *the Age of Sinan*.

¹⁴ Fetvacı, 1-24.

¹⁵ Shepherd, 723-728.

vocabulary of factional belonging. Bacon's essays "Of Followers and Friends", "Of Faction" and "Of Great Place" define the relationships that existed within factions.¹⁶

Ottomans also used certain terms to denote factional affiliation. Among these the affiliates of a factional leader were referred to as "tābi" (feminine "tābi^ca, pl. *tevābi^c*), which can be attested in many sources from the period. According to James Redhouse, "tābi" could have the following meanings: that follows; a follower; who follows the practice of another; who follows a leader in a service of worship; a servant; a subject of a state or a sovereign (plural *teba^ca*).¹⁷ For instance, Selanikî talked about the dismissal of the members of Koca Sinan Paşa's faction after his dismissal from his first term in the grand vizierate in 1582 under the heading "*tevābi^cinün hizlānidır*" (Abandonment/desertion of his Followers). Under this heading, Selanikî stated, "the following people from his followers (*tevābi^c*) and *mensūbāt* were dismissed."¹⁸ Nelly Hanna notes the use of the term for the followers and clients of the merchant Abu Taqiyya without receiving a salary from him, but benefitting from his influence.¹⁹ Apparently, his wives had their own *tābi^c*s, or followers.²⁰ *Mensūbāt* is the plural of *mensūb*, which means "Related to, connected with; Attributed to".²¹ Koca Sinan Paşa often linked dismissal, belonging with the circulation of falsehoods. For instance he

¹⁶ Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (London, Penguin, 1985), 205-206; 211-212; 90-93.

¹⁷ Sir James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon, Shewing in English the Significance of the Turkish Terms* (Constantinople, 1890), s.v. *tābi^c*.

¹⁸ Selanikî, 137.

¹⁹ See, Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and the Times of Ismail Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 106, 155-156.

²⁰ Hanna, 150.

²¹ *A Turkish and English Lexicon*, s.v. *mensūb*.

once wrote, “those who are dismissed are dying because of their envy... whose followers are troublemakers that produce lots of falsehood.”²²

Koca Sinan Paşa also used the word *dost*, or friend. For instance, the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa advised Koca Sinan Paşa would be better of if he had made friends with David Passi (“dost edinseniz evlâ idi”).²³ In another report he quoted a janissary who claimed to have important friends (“büyücek dostlarımdan bazısı”).²⁴

Another term that comes up for factional protection is *hîmāye*, which means “A protecting, a defending; protection, defense.”²⁵ This term was also used for artistic patronage of works of art in the Arabic *fâil* declension *hāmî*. Koca Sinan Paşa uses this term in his précis correspondence with the sultan a lot. In one précis he wrote the following: “it had been slandered that we protect a person. Thanks god neither my son nor my brother is a tax-collector.”²⁶ In another précis, he accuses someone of protecting a “thief” in the following words: “As his protection (*hîmāye*) and overlooking (*îgmaz*) continue, the theft comes to this extent”.²⁷ He swears to God that he does not protect (*hîmāye*) his own son.²⁸

“Places” (*yer*) and “belonging to places” were way of talking about factions. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote the following “many falsehoods such as many ships were wrecked, they have come across with infidels et cetera were circulated from big places” (“büyük yerlerden hay bu kadar kadirga gark oldu, hay kafire

²² “ma^czûllerin ^cazl canına geçdi hasedlerinden ölüyorlar... Tevâbi^cleri mürtekeb olub dünyanın tezvîrâtın ederler.” In Sahillioğlu, Telhis 27, 36.

²³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 8, 13.

²⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 174, 218-219.

²⁵ *A Turkish and English Lexicon*, s.v. *hîmāye*.

²⁶ Sahillioğlu, 6.

²⁷ Sahillioğlu, 21.

²⁸ Sahillioğlu, 94. Among many other mentions of *hîmāye* (protection) by Koca Sinan see Sahillioğlu, 12; 31; 39; 42.

buluřtular, falan oldu deyu dũnyanın yalan haberleri çıktı.”²⁹ Another usage of place to talk about faction had to do with some scribes who forged documents. Koca Sinan Pařa wrote, “those scribes who did this sordidness have each belonged to a place” (“Bu řenaati eden kũttabın her biri bir yere mensub idi.”)³⁰ In short, a number of different kinds of relationships existed between members of factions at the court of Murad III. I define these relationships by taking into account at contemporary perceptions in the following chapters. Another way of talking about faction is through households, which were called *kapu* in Ottoman. In one report, Koca Sinan Pařa answered to allegations about him, according to which whereas his household had been clean from bribery, now his steward (*kapu kethũdası*) Mustafa Çavuş became infamous for taking bribes (“Sinan Pařa’nun evvelden kapusu irtişadan pâk idi... fe-amma kethũdan Mustafa’nın dest-i tetâvuli ziyade mesmũ’dur.”)³¹

The loyalty of the members of a court faction sometimes fluctuated. The most stable type of relationship was the one between the faction leader and his servants. Friends, who were quite equal to the leader of the faction they belonged to, benefitted from being loyal as much as from changing sides depending on a given situation. Followers were the least committed type of members; it was not rare for followers to seek the influence of multiple faction leaders at the same time in order to obtain a favor. The followers often bought the services of a factional leader, and served as their agents.³²

²⁹ Sahilliođlu, 41. This has to do with rumor and gossip, I deal with in Chapter 4.

³⁰ Sahilliođlu, 80.

³¹ Sahilliođlu, Telhis 64, 93-95.

³² Shephard, 731- 736.

Koca Sinan Paşa also wrote about friends who turned into enemies because of not getting an appointment.³³ Cornell Fleischer's study of Mustafa Âli's career and life shows that, he too enjoyed different types of relationships with different members of the court. He entered the service of Prince Selim in Konya and Kütahya, which he left because of personal problems with other members of his court for a possible position at Istanbul.³⁴ When Süleyman the Magnificent turned down his petition for a position in the capital, he entered the service of Lala Mustafa Paşa, the tutor of Prince Selim II as a secretary.³⁵ However, this service came to an abrupt end as factional strife concerning the Yemen campaign of 1568 created an explosion, and for a reason or another Mustafa Âli was estranged from his patron Lala Mustafa Paşa.³⁶ The factional relationships of Mustafa Âli after this point had been of a more transitory kind, more of a follower than a servant (except for the period he had been the campaign secretary of field marshal Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa.³⁷

Here I will discuss the relevance of the animosity between these figures for understanding events and the political culture of late sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. Cornell Fleischer deemphasized the importance of animosity and strife. Yet, he acknowledged the perceived motivations of one's self versus others within the language of animosity in which Âli described events and characters:

“...Âli, as an interested party, places what modern historians would view as undue emphasis on the importance of personal animosities between Lala Mustafa Paşa and Sokollu Mehmed on the one hand, and Lala Mustafa Paşa and Sinan Paşa on the other. Even so, Âli's analysis of the

³³ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 72, 104-106.

³⁴ Fleischer, 33-39.

³⁵ Fleischer, 39-40.

³⁶ Fleischer, 44-54.

³⁷ Fleischer, 120-121.

situation is valuable in that it explores the participants' perceptions of their own and each other's motivations."³⁸

Fleischer's analysis of the networks of patronage (*intisab*) and how alliances shifted within these networks is at the center of his study. Partly in the shadow of the sources I used, I focus on the disruptive impact of factional strife on these networks. Moreover, rather than conceiving court politics as a collegial endeavor during the reign of Murad III, I emphasize conflict and factionalism. So, I bring to the center the various manifestations of the animosity between the members of the Ottoman political elite.

The period between the death of Süleyman the Magnificent in 1566 and the enthronement of Ahmed I in 1605 saw great transformations. The expansion of the physical boundaries and increase in resources that marked the reign of Süleyman came to an end during the reigns of Selim II and Murad III. Among the major changes that marked the end of the sixteenth century were recurrent budget deficits, debasement of Ottoman coinage in 1585, the disintegration of the *timar* system, the sultan's giving in to the demands of beheading officials by janissaries and cavalrymen during insurrections, farming out the tax revenues of rich provinces to local notables by appointing them governor-generals³⁹, favoring communication by writing over imperial audience as the sultan became more and more secluded in the harem, nepotism and bribery.⁴⁰

The interpretation of these transformations has been a problematic issue of the historiography on the Ottoman Empire. It was precisely during the reign of

³⁸ Fleischer, 48.

³⁹ This starts as a new tendency at the end of the sixteenth century in the face of recurrent budget deficit, but this becomes the new structure during the course of the seventeenth century. Such as the appointment of Alaüddin to Defterdar of Diyarbekir by dismissing Canboladoğlu Hasan Paşa because of KSP's preference, which created a major problem for him when the Kurd bey could not deliver the amount he promised that involved Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa and Melik Ahmed Paşa. See Sahillioğlu, 61-62, 132-133, 191; and chapter 3 below.

⁴⁰ For Ottoman idea of decline as voiced by Mustafa Âli see Fleischer, 101-103.

Murad III that these new dynamics became manifest as changes, which contemporary historians and chroniclers considered decay.⁴¹ Modern historiography on the Ottoman Empire was shaped by the biases and criticisms of these Ottoman chroniclers and historians. However, since the 1980s revisionist historians have attempted to dismantle the so-called “decline paradigm”.⁴²

The legitimacy of the House of Osman rested on just rule by the sultan and his absolute deputy, the grand vizier. Although in the sixteenth century Mustafa Âli criticized Sultan Selim II for giving all the authority to his grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and spending his time with pleasurable pursuits⁴³, in the seventeenth century Koçi Bey, writer of a “mirror for princes”, saw in the deterioration of the power of the grand vizier after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa a graver problem.⁴⁴

The grand viziers of Süleyman fell into the category of favorite-minister’s who operated as the right arm of powerful monarchs throughout early modern Europe. This period saw the long terms of three such grand viziers, Makbul/Maktul İbrahim Paşa (grand vizierate 13 Şaban 929/June, 27 1523- 22 Ramazan 942/March, 14-15 1536)⁴⁵, Rüstem Paşa (grand vizierates 1544-1553 and 1555-1561)⁴⁶, and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (grand vizierate 1565-1579)⁴⁷. They created substantial wealth for themselves and for their factions through speculative commercial ventures, war booty and gifts and bribes. They were able to retain their power for long terms, and dominate the political, social,

⁴¹ Fleischer, 243-244; 101-103.

⁴² Donald Quataert, Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of "Decline" in 1 (2003) *History Compass* ME 038, 1-9.

⁴³ Fleischer, 259.

⁴⁴ Koçi Bey, 11-12.

⁴⁵ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "İbrâhîm Paşa."

⁴⁶ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Rüstem Paşa."

⁴⁷ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Soğollu Mehmed Paşa."

economical and cultural spheres of the empire.⁴⁸ However, the speculative endeavors of grand viziers were also seen in a negative light. This might be one of the reasons why the chroniclers and historians of the time were generally silent about the commercial ventures of the viziers throughout the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.⁴⁹

The function of the grand vizier as the absolute deputy of the sultan ceased to be in the reign of Murad III. Murad III's reign started with divesting Sokollu Mehmed Paşa of his power by the strong anti-Sokollu faction that were close to the sultan as his boon companions.⁵⁰ The assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa marked the end of long terms in the grand vizierate. From Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's assassination in 1579 to Murad III's death in 1593, six viziers came to the office of grand vizier in eleven terms. If we extend the period from the time Murad III ascended to the throne in 1574 to the death of his son Mehmed III in 1605, twelve different individuals became grand vizier in twenty-two terms. We can further extend the period from 1574 to 1656 when Köprülü Mehmed Paşa became the grand vizier. He held his position for five years, the first grand vizier to have a term longer than three and a half years in a century.⁵¹

International trade interests of grand viziers are hard to map especially in Europe. Viziers who enriched themselves through international trade such as Koca Sinan Paşa, Hasan Paşa and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa built khans where they

⁴⁸ For Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's control of and personal interest vested in the spice trade see, Casale, 139-143.

⁴⁹ Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima," *Raiyyet Rûsûmu' Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986): 191-217. Casale, 139-143. İ. Metin Kunt, "Derviş Mehmed Paşa, *Vezir* and Entrepreneur: A Study in Ottoman Political-Economic theory and Practice," *Turcica*, 9, no1 (1977): 197-214.

⁵⁰ For a description of this faction see, Fleischer, 47-54.

⁵¹ For an easily browsable list of grand viziers in this period, see İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzâhlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. 3, (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1961), 490-514. For a similar point, see Fetvacı, 142-143.

were involved in trade through their clients and agents. These khans were endowed for pious foundations, which make their speculative nature less obvious.⁵² However, Ottoman chroniclers and historians are silent on these issues, as these relations must have remained largely unknown, or outside their interests and discursive vocabulary. For, they talk about oppression of the peasants as a source of enrichment.

Commercial interests, tax farms of customs duties and other forms of taxation, was divided along factional lines. Appointments and dismissals of judges to major cities of the empire, as well as of professors to major medreses were centrally approved and displayed the influence of factional preferences. In order to understand the choices of this period, we need to look at the vested interests of different factions.

In chapters one, I look at the factional politics in the court of Murad III and the three terms of Koca Sinan Paşa. In chapter two, I focus on tools of factional rivalry, namely appointments, dismissals, audits in relation to factionalism, and rotation of grand viziers. In chapter three, I look at Koca Sinan Paşa as a reformer and how factionalism infiltrates even to the discourse on reform. In chapter four, I focus on the most important tools of factional rivalry in the court of Murad III, that are also the most difficult to pin down, namely gossip, rumor, slander and denunciation. In chapter five, I study four accounts of the Ottoman Campaign in Hungary between 1594 and 1594.

⁵² For Sokollu's commercial buildings endowed for his foundations (waqf), see Gülru Necioğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 348-352; 358-359; 364. For Koca Sinan Paşa's commercial building in Egypt see M. Tarek Swelim, "An Interpretation of the Mosque of Sinan Pasha in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 98-107.

Sources

Koca Sinan Paşa's Telhisat, or Précis Correspondence

The correspondence between Murad III and grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa survived in the form of summarized written reports called *telhīs* (literally, a précis).⁵³ It has been argued that this form of summary report (*telhīs*) correspondence emerged during the terms of Koca Sinan Paşa.⁵⁴ Collections of summary reports of grand viziers before Koca Sinan Paşa seem not to have survived, but at least two grand viziers after Koca Sinan Paşa also had their summary reports (*telhīs*) collected.⁵⁵ This may be due to a random absence of such documents from the preceding period or a change in the designation of this type of correspondence. It is unlikely that the “*telhīs* ‘suddenly’ appeared” at this time, or replaced personal contacts between the sultan and the grand vizier as Pál Fodor suggests.⁵⁶ Halil Sahillioğlu, who edited the critical edition of the précis correspondence, argued that this form of writing to emerged because of a need for secret communication between the sultan and the grand vizier. Yet, he observed that both the grand vizier and the sultan dictated their responses to scribes.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s. v. “Telhkīş.” İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), 66-67.

⁵⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s. v. “Sinān Pasha, Khodja.” Pál Fodor, “Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral Telhīs,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung* 47 (1994): 67-85. Halil Sahillioğlu, ed., *Koca Sinan Paşa'nın Telhisleri* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2004).

⁵⁵ The telhisat of Yemişçi Hasan Paşa, who was one of the most loyal servants of Koca Sinan Paşa also survived in a collection and had been published. See Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı Tarihine âid belgeler: Telhisler, 1597-1607* (Istanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1970). The collection of Koca Ragıp Paşa's (1698-1763) *telhisat* survived in various manuscript copies. See *Telhīsât* in Austrian National Library, Turkish Manuscripts, Mxt. 244 and Mxt 484; Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Turkish Manuscripts, MS Turk. d. 49; German National Library, Turkish Manuscripts Ms. Or. Oct. 3056; Egyptian National Library, Turkish Manuscripts, Edebî Türkî 167 and Mecâmî Türkî 21; Atıf Efendi Manuscript Library, Istanbul 34 Atf 2028.

⁵⁶ See Fodor, 67. For similar writing in content, if not in name, from Rüstem Paşa to Sultan Süleyman in which he reports on certain issues, see M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Tarih Dergisi* 8, no. 11-12 (1955): 32-33.

⁵⁷ Sahillioğlu, v-vi.

In *précis/telhīs*, the grand vizier either responded to an inquiry of the sultan or presented an issue to him. The sultan responded to the *telhīs/précis* with short answers in his hand or that of his scribe above the writing of the grand vizier. In certain reports, Koca Sinan Paşa quoted Murad III's question, then answered it. At the top margin of the paper, the sultan wrote his response to Koca Sinan Paşa's *telhīs*. Because Koca Sinan Paşa made use of documentation whenever he was accused or whenever there was a rumor about him, he might have bound his reports in a volume, which must have helped their survival. Although, Koca Sinan Paşa and Murad III seem to have corresponded a great deal, there's evidence of their meeting in person in these documents, because the sultan responded to many reports with the words "ağız cevabı" (an oral answer.)

The reports can be dated to mainly to the second term of Koca Sinan Paşa, when he was in the capital busy with making reforms.⁵⁸ His *précis* collection exists in three bound manuscript copies. Two of these copied have been preserved in Topkapı Palace Library (Revan 1943 and Revan 1951), and one copy had been in the Süleymaniye Library (Esad Efendi 2236).

Selanikî Mustafa Efendi's Representation of Koca Sinan Paşa

We know that Selanikî Mustafa Efendi was from the city of Salonika because he referred to himself as "Selanıklü" (from Salonika), and he wrote that his father passed away in that city. The exact dates and places of his birth and death are not known, but he must have died circa 1008/1600 in Istanbul.⁵⁹ He

⁵⁸ I have tried to date the reports I used by comparing their content with the chronicle of Selanikî Mustafa Efendi. Suraiya Faroqhi dated the *telhisat*, but I have not been able to access her PhD dissertation. Suraiya Faroqhi, "Die Vorlagen (*telhise*) des Grosswesirs Sinân paşa an Sultan Murâd III." Ph.D. dissertation (Universität Hamburg, 1967).

⁵⁹ Mehmet İpşirli, "Giriş", *Selanikî Mustafa Efendi, Tarih-i Selanikî* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), xix. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Selânîkî Mustafa Efendi." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Selânîkî, Muşafâ Efendi."

spent most of his life in Istanbul working at the imperial palace in various mid-level bureaucratic and financial posts, although he left the capital for Sultan Süleyman's Szigetvar campaign in 1566, and the Gence campaign in 1588-1589. Selanikî held various administrative positions, such as a secretary, scribe, bookkeeper of the imperial treasury (*ruznameci*)⁶⁰ and accountant (*muhasebeci*)⁶¹ of Anatolia.

Selanikî enjoyed the patronage of Koca Sinan Paşa's archenemies Ferhad Paşa in 999/1591, and Siyavuş Paşa in 1000/1592. At the same time, Koca Sinan Paşa appointed Selanikî Mustafa Efendi the master of ceremonies (*mihmandar*) for the sojourn of a politically significant guest in the capital, Prince Haydar Mirza of the Safavid Empire in 997/1589.⁶²

Selanikî Mustafa Efendi's wrote a chronicle that spans the years 971/1563 to 1008/May 1600. It is known as *Tarih-i Selanikî*. Selanikî's chronicle exists in numerous manuscript copies, and had been published incompletely in 1281/1864. Mehmed İpşirli published the critical edition of the entire text in 1989.⁶³ Selanikî did not refer to the works of other historians, and instead cited oral reports, documents, rumors, personal observations, and letters while he recorded his chronicle. Mehmet İpşirli considers Selanikî's chronicle to have a memoir-like quality, because it was based solely on personal observation without reference to

⁶⁰ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Rūznāmedji."

⁶¹ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Muḥāsaba."

⁶² Selanikî, 217-219.

⁶³ *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Selânîkî Mustafa Efendi." Selanikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selanikî*, ([Istanbul] : Matbaa-i Âmire, 1281 [1864]). This version had been reprinted; see Selanikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selanikî* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1970). For the list of manuscript copies, see Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1927), 136-137.

other works.⁶⁴ I think that although Selanikî does not assert himself and his own views while he recorded the events, he seems very conscious of his role as a chronicler.

Selanikî's prose, sources, and abstinence from asserting himself set Selanikî's text apart from those of Mustafa Âli and Peçevî.⁶⁵ Selanikî's prose is not ornate. He records the events that happened at court, and the events that were reported to the court like a bookkeeper. Although there are some periods he recorded without much detail, his account becomes more detailed at certain times, probably depending on his position within the bureaucracy. After grand vizier Ferhad Paşa appointed him a day logger (*ruznamçeci*) on 13 Şevval 999/August 4, 1591, his account became much more detailed.⁶⁶ Selanikî registered the events in his chronicle from the perspective of a mid-level bureaucrat, who did not cherish an inflated dream of becoming the chancellor like Mustafa Âli, or effectively rose in the bureaucracy like Peçevî.

Selanikî is consistently circumspect in his portrayal of the grand vizier and of also other grandees at court. In spite of his criticisms concerning Koca Sinan Paşa and other statesmen, he seems to have observed decorum in his text that neither Peçevî, nor Mustafa Âli did. The string of events Selanikî recorded in his chronicle with deference, criticism, and ominousness leaves the modern reader with a sense of cyclical repetition: glory and shame of grandees, deaths and enthronements of rulers, departure and arrival of armies, celebrations of royal weddings and circumcisions, punishment of criminals, building of ships,

⁶⁴ *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Selânîkî Mustafa Efendi." Fleischer, on the other hand, thinks that Selanikî might have had access to Mustafa Âli's *Kühû'l-ahbar* and other works. See Fleischer, 130-131.

⁶⁵ For a comparison of the similarities between Selanikî and Mustafa Âli, see Fleischer, 130-131, and n58 in 160.

⁶⁶ Selanikî, 249.

appointments and dismissals of bureaucrats... Peçevî and Mustafa Âli, on the other hand, assert themselves in their chronicles more boldly and bluntly than Selanikî. Selanikî used ominous anticipation about the outcome of events concerning the politicians he did not approve. For instance, Han Ahmed of Dilan, who was famed for his prophecies, foretold that an uprising of the janissaries was to happen, and Koca Sinan Paşa, Ferhad Paşa and other vizier who had been out of office were to be reappointed. The next entry was about the janissary uprising that led to the replacement of grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa with Koca Sinan Paşa.⁶⁷ Koca Sinan Paşa's dismissal from grand vizierate became the subject of another prophesy by a mad dervish (*meczip*), along with the rebellion of the voivode of Wallachia and the death of sultan Murad III.⁶⁸

Selanikî's Istanbul-centric chronicle of the Empire has analytical sections, within the flow of events. These interpretative sections are devoted to the changes (or the decline) of various aspects of government in the Ottoman Empire. Although İpşirli considered Selanikî's criticisms to be harsh, when compared to Peçevî and Âli, he seems to rather decorous in his language and style.

Cornell Fleischer also likens Selanikî's views on changes in the bureaucracy and the administration of empire to be similar to those of Mustafa Âli. The chroniclers belonged to the same milieu, and in this case both Âli and Selanikî observed similar problems in the bureaucracy.⁶⁹ Even Talikîzade's observations of the essential principles of the Ottoman Empire in the

⁶⁷ Selanikî, 300-301.

⁶⁸ He wrote that he recorded the prophesy in his chronicle because he was too much saddened by what he heard. See Selanikî, 417.

⁶⁹ Fleischer, 130-131. For Fleischer's comparison of Talikîzade's and Mustafa Âli's ideas of decay see n40, 249.

introduction of *Şehname-i Hümayun* show a similar concern with decline of various institutions.

Mustafa Âli's Representation of Koca Sinan Paşa

Mustafa Âli of Gallipoli lived between 1541 and 1600. He was a prolific writer of prose and verse, and a disappointed and bitter bureaucrat who held many mid- to high-level bureaucratic posts. Mustafa Âli's father was a well-to-do merchant and patron of the literati in his hometown Gallipoli. He completed the highest level of classical education for an *ilmiye* career; however he never became a member of the *ulema*. Instead, he opted for a bureaucratic career, while at the same time looking for patronage for his literary and historical works from the sultan and grandees. However, his career as a court-poet was stalled; and he had to make do with the patronage of Lala Mustafa Paşa, with whom he traveled to Aleppo, Damascus and Egypt. He belonged by association to the anti-Sokullu faction, and was an open adversary of Koca Sinan Paşa. After 1580, he enjoyed literary commissions from influential people such as the historian and imperial tutor Hoca Sadüddin (d. 1599) and the palace overseer (*babüssaade ağası*) Gazanfer Agha (d. 1603). He never rose to the top administrative level, and attain the chancellorship. As a littérateur and historian he produced many works, and became the most influential historian of his period, thanks to his universal history entitled *Künhü'l-Ahbâr*.⁷⁰

Mustafa Âli began composing his universal history in the early winter of 1000/1591-1592. He dedicated the last eight years of his life to the composition of this extensive work.⁷¹ Fleischer considers that this work to have no affiliation with

⁷⁰ Fleischer. Jan Schmidt, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims: A Study Of Muşşafâ "Âlî of Gallipoli's Künhü l-Ahbâr* (Leiden, Het Oosters Institut, 1991).

⁷¹ Fleischer, 140.

any sort of official historiography since this work was not commissioned by or dedicated to a statesman or a sultan. Rather, his ambition was to hand down a cultural and intellectual legacy.

Künhü'l-ahbar was a widely read history, which survived in numerous manuscript copies in libraries across the world.⁷² It had been published in Istanbul in 1861?-1869. Parts of the text and a version of its introduction and parts of the fourth pillar had been published.⁷³

The work is organized in four volumes, described by the author as pillars (*rükn*). The first pillar is on cosmology, geography, and the creation of mankind. The second one is about the pre-Islamic prophets and Islamic history until the Mongol invasions. The third pillar is about Mongol and Turkic dynasties, and the last one is about Ottoman history. The format of each volume varies, however the last one, the last chapter of which I use here, is of interest because it deals with the Ottoman Empire.. The Fourth Pillar is organized chronologically by the reigns of sultans. The sections on reigns of sultans do not proceed in a strictly annalistic manner, but revolve around major events.⁷⁴

Fleischer considers Âli's criticisms to be "the analytic historian's voice to criticize either accepted historical interpretations or acts of individual monarchs, particularly when these had been his contemporaries."⁷⁵ Fleischer further asserts that Âli wrote *Künhü'l-Ahbar* with a sensibility he shared with his contemporaries

⁷² Fleischer, 333-336. Babinger, 129.

⁷³ Jan Schmidt, *Mustafâ Âli's Künhü'l-Ahbâr and its Preface according to the Leiden manuscript*, (Istanbul: Netherlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Institut, 1987.) Faris Çerçi, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli ve Künhü'l-Ahbâr'ında II. Selim, III. Murat ve III. Mehmet devirleri*, 3 vols (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000.) M. Hüdayi Şentürk, ed., *Künhü'l-Ahbâr: Fatih Sultan Mehmet Devri 1451-1481*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003.)

⁷⁴ Fleischer, 245-246.

⁷⁵ Fleischer, 241-242.

about the changes and decay of the empire at the end of the sixteenth century, which required a historical perspective.⁷⁶

Mustafa Âli of Gallipoli's factional alliances and enmities are reflected in his work. Fleischer devoted an entire chapter of his biography of Mustafa Âli to the reign of Murad III in the Fourth Pillar of *Künhü'l-Ahbâr*. In this chapter, Fleischer made general observations about Mustafa Âli's historiography by analyzing the organization of information concerning Murad III's reign. Fleischer noted that Mustafa Âli had personal knowledge of the people and the events he described in this section, and that the period coincided with his greatest professional disillusionments.⁷⁷

The account of the reign is organized chronologically (from event number 1 to event number 38); after event 38, the chronology is abruptly broken with the following sections: "Third Grand Vizierate of Sinan Paşa," "Conquest of Korman (Komárno)," and "Hungarian Wars."⁷⁸ I read the sections that break the chronological order of the chapter that dealt with Murad III's reign.

Âli seems to be more interested in making his argumentations stronger (or more heated) by narrative ploys, than in dating events carefully. And a characteristic explanatory scheme Mustafa Âli adopted in this part of his universal history was the use of anecdotes.

Here I will digress on Robert Darnton defined anecdotes, "a piece of information but one that had been hidden, that need to be dug up or uncovered or unveiled... it had a special attraction. It was likely to be scandalous."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Fleischer, 243.

⁷⁷ Fleischer, 293.

⁷⁸ Fleischer, 294, 297-298.

⁷⁹ Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water, or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 269.

According to an eighteenth century French dictionary definition, an anecdote was a “secret occurrence or circumstance of history, which had been omitted or suppressed by earlier historians”; the example the dictionary gave was “*The Anecdotal History of Procopius*.” In this sense, secret meant both the secrets of statecraft, and the personal secrets of courtiers. Another eighteenth century encyclopedia considered Procopius’ use of anecdotes a weapon of abuse. Robert Darnton analyzed how this old tool of secret historiography worked in eighteenth century French libel literature. French libel literature consisted of illegally printed works, whether small pamphlets or volumes of books that posed as gazettes, histories, collections of letters, and memoirs about contemporary events and personages. Darnton asserted that libels became convincing because they posed as something else, whether as memoirs, letters, diaries or histories. In libels that pretended to be histories, their authors “pretended to provide the secret, inside versions of events that could not be found in conventional versions of the past” by using anecdotes.⁸⁰

I am not claiming that Mustafa Âli was a sixteenth century Ottoman denunciation writer. However, he was like Voltaire who dug up anecdotes to write his *Histoire de la guerre de 1741* after his appointment as historiographer at the top of his courtier career in 1745. Darnton argued that Voltaire did not intend to write a piece of propaganda or denunciation, but the more he researched, the more Voltaire became more absorbed in the causes and conduct of war, the consequences of decisions, miscalculations and accidents. He collected insider’ account of the war, in addition to accessing state papers. Since the war culminated in embarrassing defeats and a peace treaty where France returned all its

⁸⁰ Darnton, 275.

conquests, a full account with insider's knowledge could only be a highly suspect book from the perspective of the French crown and censoring authorities. So, although Voltaire did not intend to write anything comparable to a libel, his history woven with anecdotes, imaginary speeches and a full account of the events, made him a person non grata when a copy of the text slipped out of his control.⁸¹

To return to Mustafa Âli, as I show below, for his account of the Ottoman campaign into Hungary, he too collected anecdotes, composed imaginary speeches and letters, and offered a insider's view about a campaign he never joined. It was the section of *Künhü'l-Ahbar* that dealt with contemporary history, i.e. the reign of Murad III, in which Mustafa Âli used anecdotes in this manner, distorting the truth to show his favorite people such as Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa in a favorable light, and his enemies Koca Sinan Paşa and his son Mehmed Paşa as evil, coward soldiers lacking entirely in strategy.

Panegyric histories written by historians attached to the crown (such as Talikîzade) are often seen suspect by modern historians. However, critical histories of contemporary events can be just as suspect in their mixture of truth and distortion as paeans sung to rejoice commanders who lost on the battlefield, but won the hearts of the soldiers...

Peçevî İbrahim Efendi's Portrayal of Koca Sinan Paşa

Peçevî İbrahim Efendi (982-ca. 1060/1574-ca. 1649-50) was born in Pécs in southwestern Hungary.⁸² He belongs to a younger generation compared to Selanikî, Mustafa Âli, and Talikîzade, who all died around 1600. He was a child

⁸¹ Darnton, 276-278.

⁸² *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Peçuylu İbrâhim."

when Sokollu was assassinated and Koca Sinan Paşa contended for the grand vizierate. Yet, he was a close observer of events between 1590-1632, during which time he joined the Ottoman campaigns (starting with the Hungarian campaign of Koca Sinan Paşa) and held various bureaucratic positions, such as land registrar, *defterdar* and governor-general. At a young age he entered into the service of his maternal uncle Ferhad Paşa, then the governor-general of Buda, who belonged to the Sokollu clan. He worked for fifteen years in the service of another relative, Lala Mehmed Paşa, beginning with the Hungarian campaign in 1593-94. His personal participation in the so-called Long-War made his account a reliable source. He spoke Hungarian as well as German, as a result of which he had been involved in the negotiation of the Ottoman surrender of the fortress of Estergon in 1595, and of the Austrian surrender of the same fortress in 1605.⁸³

He had a much more successful career than Selanikî and Mustafa Âli, for he continuously rose in the military-administrative bureaucracy, eventually becoming a Paşa in 1632.⁸⁴ He composed his history of the Ottoman Empire, which covers the period between the accession of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520-1566) to the death of Murad IV in 1640, during his retirement in Budapest from about 1641 until his own death in 1650.⁸⁵ He lists the historical works he consulted, in addition to oral witnesses and also included personal observations. Since he held many positions in the Balkans, and in the eastern provinces, his account is rich in detail about the Balkans. He used Hungarian words, in addition to using the works of Hungarian historians without naming them for his sections on the peace

⁸³ Colin Imber, "İbrahim Peçevi on War: a Note on the 'European Military Revolution'" in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Imber et al. (London and New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 7-22.

⁸⁴ *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Peçuylu İbrâhim."

⁸⁵ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Peçewî , Ibrâhîm." Piterberg, 46.

treaties. The first part of Peçevî's history is "rarely more than a translation of the [Mustafa Âli's] *Künhü'l-Ahbar* into slightly simpler language."⁸⁶ Peçevî also relied heavily on Hasanbeyzade's chronicle. However, he also used eyewitness accounts, other historical works and his own notes. The reign of Sultan Süleyman, and of Mehmed III constituted the lengthiest chapters in his two-volume history of the Ottoman Empire. Peçevî's self-titled history (*Tarih-i Peçevî*) exists in numerous manuscript copies, and had been printed in two volumes in 1281-1283/1864-1866.⁸⁷

Although Peçevî's disapproval of the members of the imperial standing army, known as the *kul*, on account of their interferences in the political life through uprisings, and his biases toward various grand viziers can only be done justice in a separate study.⁸⁸ However, his Bosnian origin, and kinship to the Sokollu clan, and his explicit dislike and suspicion of Albanians made him an enemy of Koca Sinan Paşa. Moreover, he participated personally in the unsuccessful Hungarian campaign Koca Sinan Paşa led during 1593-1595 as a protégé of Lala Mehmed Paşa, a rival of the commander-in-chief. Furthermore, because Peçevî abridged Mustafa Âli's narrative, which is marked by an extreme hostility toward the grand vizier, into simple Turkish he reproduced Mustafa Âli's prejudices in his work. In spite of the uneasy relationship of Peçevî's text with Mustafa Âli and Hasan Beyzade's works, he incorporated Mustafa Âli's work selectively. Peçevî also opted for an anecdotal mode of explanation for certain events like Mustafa Âli. Yet, he filtered Mustafa Âli's anecdotes and

⁸⁶ Fleischer, n25, 51.

⁸⁷ *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Peçeyli İbrâhim." Franz Babinger, *Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen*, 192. Peçevî İbrahim Efendi, *Tarih-i Peçevî*, 2 vols, (Istanbul: Matba'a-i 'Âmire, 1283/1866).

⁸⁸ Piterberg, 91-113.

embroideries, and left out, such as the imaginary letters of Koca Sinan Paşa and the Habsburg King. On the other hand, he had his own embroideries and anecdotes that revealed the secrets of the past.

Talikîzade's Depiction of Koca Sinan Paşa

A different picture of Koca Sinan Paşa emerges in the narrative of the court historian Talikîzade Mehmed. Court historians constitute another category for Ottoman historiography, because they were paid by the sultan or prominent statesmen, their works did not circulate among the reading public, but existed in a few lavishly produced copies, kept in the private libraries of the royal family or other patrons. Sultan Süleyman created the office of court historian (*şehnameci*) in 1550s. The main duty of the court historian was to compile literary histories of the Ottoman sultan(s) in the literary style called *şehname*. This style of panegyric court literature was modeled on the Persian *shahname* tradition, after Firdevsî's *Şehnâme*, written in Persian in the *mesnevi* form of rhymed couplets, using the same meter as Firdevsî⁸⁹ The main difference between Ottoman Şehnames and Firdevsî's epic was the content, whereas the former dealt with recent or contemporary events and military campaigns, the latter was a combination of historical and mythical adventures.

The works of *şehnameci*s were produced as lavishly illustrated manuscripts in the Ottoman imperial workshop. The first two occupants of the office of *şehnameci* were of Persian origin. However, Murad III favored ornate prose construction in Turkish (*inşa*) over Persian verse in the form of *mesnevi*.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 1. See also, Christine Woodhead, "An Experiment in Official Historiography: The Post of Şehnâmeçi in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1555-1605," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 75 (1983): 157-82.

⁹⁰ Woodhead, *An Experiment*, 157-159.

The biography of Mehmed ibn Mehmed el-Fenarî, known as Talikîzade is less well known than the three historians discussed above. He entered the service of Prince Murad in Manisa in 1562, and worked there until his accession to the Ottoman throne in 1574. In the capital, he worked as a scribe (*katib*) and recorder of events (*vakanüvis*) for the Imperial Council until 999/1591. On occasion, he was sent to the provinces as a campaign clerk (*sefer kâtibi*) and land registrar (*tahrir kâtibi*). Also in 999/1591, Koca Sinan Paşa appointed Talikîzade Mehmed as court historian (*şehnameci*) alongside the senior Seyyid Lokman, who was making appeals to the grand vizier for private patronage. Talikîzade kept his position until his death ca. 1008/1600.

Talikîzade left behind five works, three of them dedicated to Murad III, and two of them dedicated to Mehmed III.⁹¹ *Şehname-i Hümayun* exists in a unique manuscript, located in Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, presented and dedicated to Mehmed III.⁹² Talikîzade Mehmed's *Şehname-i Hümayun* about the Ottoman campaign into Hungary between 1593-1594, has been published by Christine Woodhead.⁹³ His *Eğri Seferi Şehnâmesi* has been studied and transcribed in a Ph.D. dissertation.⁹⁴

Talikîzade portrays Koca Sinan Paşa as a military hero in *Şehname-i Hümayun*. However, this has as much to do with genre, as with the reality of the

⁹¹ Christine Woodhead, "Taliqizade Mehmed," <http://www.ottomanhistorians.com>; eds. C. Kafadar, H. Karateke, C. Fleischer (Date Accessed: April 17, 2010). See also, Christine Woodhead, "From Scribe to Littérateur: The Career of a Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Katib," *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 9, no. 1 (1982): 55-74.

⁹² Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*, 15-16.

⁹³ Christine Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*. For Mustafa Âli's views on Talikîzade's prose, see Fleischer, 155.

⁹⁴ Vahid Çabuk, "Talîkî-zade Mehmed Subhî Efendi'nin Eğri Seferi *Şehnamesi*" (Ph.D. diss., Istanbul University, 1986).

grand vizier's military prowess. Moreover, having enjoyed Koca Sinan Paşa's favor, he must have felt indebted to the grand vizier.⁹⁵

Emine Fetvacı has shown the changes in the patronage of the *şehnameci*; when Sultan Süleyman created the position, he exclusively patronized this form of historiography. However, by the late-sixteenth century, grand viziers such as Koca Sinan Paşa, palace officials such as the chief black eunuch Mehmed Agha, the queen mothers Nurbanu Sultan and Safiye Sultan, and other members of the Ottoman political elite could commission such works to be presented to the Sultan. Fetvacı has explained this differentiation of patronage in relation to the increased factionalism at court, arguing that competing narratives for competing factions emerged.⁹⁶

Talikîzade's work dealing with Koca Sinan Paşa as a military hero treats the initial part of the so-called "Long War," the Ottoman offensive against the Habsburgs between 1593-1606. Mustafa Âli, Peçevî and to some extent even Selanikî (who was less overtly hostile to Koca Sinan Paşa) consider this campaign as a great failure of Koca Sinan Paşa and a clear sign of his military ineptitude.

⁹⁵ Emine Fetvacı, "The Office of the Ottoman Court Historian," in *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond: The Freely Papers*, ed. Robert G. Ousterhout, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2007), 19-20.

⁹⁶ Fetvacı, *Ottoman Court Historian*, 17-19.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL SETTING: KOCA SİNAN PAŞA'S CAREER AND CONTENDING FACTIONS

Introduction

Contemporary Ottoman authors depicted Koca Sinan Paşa as a cruel, arrogant, ambitious, insulting, and proud man. However, Ottomans were not alone in thinking that, in an anonymous Venetian diplomatic dispatch from 1579, the contender for the grand vizierate was portrayed in similar terms.⁹⁷ In addition to providing a biography of Koca Sinan Paşa, I will try to portray the political setting in the court of Murad III and offer an alternative description of Koca Sinan Paşa based on his self-representation in his précis correspondence (*telhisat*).

Biography of Koca Sinan Paşa

Koca Sinan Paşa was an Albanian *devşirme* [recruited through the child levy], but from a Muslim father called Ali. In his reports he often referred to himself as Muslim son of a Muslim. He was born in the village of Topoyan in the province of Lurë around 1520.⁹⁸ He was referred as *koca* (senior) because of his old age. His two brothers and son had also been in the state service as governor-generals. His elder brother Ayas Paşa was the governor-general of Erzurum when the war between Süleyman's sons Bayezid and Selim broke out. Ayas Paşa helped the desolate Prince Bayezid on his way to Iran, as a result Lala Mustafa Paşa had him dismissed from his post and executed.⁹⁹ He had another brother called

⁹⁷ For contemporary Ottoman depictions of the grand vizier, see chapter five below. *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, vol. 3, 446.

⁹⁸ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

⁹⁹ Fleischer, 48.

Mahmud Paşa, who was the governor-general of Karaman during Koca Sinan Paşa's second term as grand vizier. Koca Sinan Paşa had his brother promoted to the post of governor-general of Anatolia in 999.¹⁰⁰ His son Mehmed Paşa held many posts during his father's lifetime and became a vizier, however Ahmed I executed him following his failure to subdue a Celali rebellion in 1603.¹⁰¹ Koca Sinan Paşa was married to Sultan Yavuz Selim I's granddaughter Esmihan Sultan, and had a daughter by the name of Emine Hatun.¹⁰² He lacked a strong imperial marital alliance like those of grand viziers or viziers who also enjoyed a status of being a royal favorite.¹⁰³ The imperial marriage ensured the development of a strong harem backing, including the support of the queen mother, the chief black and white eunuchs, and the harem stewardess. Instead, during all his terms, he had been at odds with all these people.

Early Career

Koca Sinan Paşa had the important position of the chief taster (*çaşnigirbaşı*) of Sultan Süleyman. He was promoted to the position of governor of Malatya, Kastamonu, Gazze, and Tripoli in Syria, and governor-general of

¹⁰⁰ See Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 39, 57 where Koca Sinan Paşa identifies the Karaman Beylerbeyi as his elder brother who is in his 80s: "Karaman'da bu kulunuzun doksana karîb bir koca karındaşı vardır, bakiyetü's-selefdür, merhûm sultan Selim-i kadîm devrine yetişmiştir. Belki akranı ve emekdarlıkde ana sâni yoktur. Ecel ile tamam bey'leşmişdür." Murad III's approval of the succession of promotions Koca Sinan Paşa suggested is reported above in Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 38, 54 probably due to a scribal error in both Esad Efendi 2236 and Revan 1951. Koca Sinan Paşa informs the sultan about the orders having been sent to the governor-generals who had been promoted in Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 203, 242. For the dating to H. 999 see, Selanikî, 236. Mahmud Paşa was governor-general of Sivas in 1578, when Lala Mustafa Paşa was the commander of the Eastern Campaign. See Selanikî, 130 and İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, Vol. 3, (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1961), 19.

¹⁰¹ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 243. For Mehmed Paşa's promotion to vizierate see chapter five below.

¹⁰² *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Koca Sinan Paşa." For the identification of a deceased Esmihan Sultan as Koca Sinan Paşa's wife see, Halil Sahillioğlu's edition of Koca Sinan Paşa's *telhisat*, Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 34, 46-47.

¹⁰³ Rüstem Paşa was married to Mihrumah Sultan and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was married to İsmihan Sultan.

Erzurum and Aleppo. In his article on Koca Sinan Paşa in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Geza David and Franz Babinger traced a different career line through archival sources. Accordingly, his promotion from the position of chief taster (*çaşnigirbaşı*) to the to the governorship of Tripoli took place on 17 Cemaziyelahir 963/April 28, 1556.¹⁰⁴ Sinān, the former governor of Tripoli, is referred to on 4 Rebiülevvel 967/December 4, 1559.¹⁰⁵ In April 1560, he was mentioned as the governor of Gazze.¹⁰⁶ He was transferred to Malatya on 28 Cemaziyelahir 968/March 16, 1561.¹⁰⁷ After some years, Sinan appeared as the governor of Erzurum in Mühimme registers in 1564 and 1565.¹⁰⁸ His position is also documented in October 1565.¹⁰⁹

The Anti-Sokollu Faction

Sultan Süleyman appointed Sokollu Mehmed Paşa grand vizier after the death of his predecessor in 1565. Having married İsmihan Sultan, the daughter of Süleyman's only surviving son Prince Selim, he made a very strong marriage that might have been one of his strongest alliances in guarding his position. However, the courtiers of Prince Selim were against Sokollu Mehmed Paşa who tried to curb the influence of Selim's courtiers from his principedom. Additionally, he had a huge patronage network of Bosnians. The reign of Selim II saw a cold war between Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's faction and his opponents, where the grand vizier continued to have the upper hand.

¹⁰⁴ Istanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Mühimme defteri 2, 68, no. 618 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁰⁵ Mühimme defteri 3, 234, no. 666 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁰⁶ Mühimme defteri 3, 317, no. 929 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁰⁷ Mühimme defteri 4, 191, no. 1998 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁰⁸ Mühimme defteri 6, 9, and Mühimme defteri 5, 144, no. 325 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁰⁹ BBOA, Kepeci 7502, 115 cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

When Murad III ascended the throne in 1574, the courtiers of his father Selim II started a campaign for undermining the power of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. A major factional undercurrent of the Sokollu years was the strife between Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and the members of the anti-Sokollu faction, which included Şemsi Ahmed Paşa, Lala Mustafa Paşa, Üveys Çelebi/Paşa and chief justice of Rumelia Kadızade, Şeyh Şüca, the harem stewardess Canfeda Hatun, and palace overseer Gazanfer Ağa.¹¹⁰ In Şevval 982/February 1575, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa made the first move and ordered the audit of Üveys Çelebi, at the request of treasurer Lalezar Mehmed Çelebi. However, Şemsi Paşa organized the opposition and helped the exoneration and promotion of Üveys Çelebi to the position of the head of the second branch of the treasury (*şikk-ı sani*). The anti-Sokollu faction got the upper hand, and they succeeded in bringing about the dismissal of the chancellor Feridun Ahmed was dismissed along with thirty other members of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's faction. Among these, the grand vizier's cousin the governor-general of Budin Sokollu Mustafa Paşa was executed, and Üveys Paşa was appointed instead.¹¹¹

Sokollu Mehmed Paşa and the imperial tutor Hoca Sadüddin supported Takiyüddin Muhammed el-Raşid ibn Mahmud's project of building an observatory in Istanbul. The construction of the observatory began in early 1575, and was probably completed in 1577.¹¹² Meanwhile, on 5 Cemaziyelevvel 982/August 23, 1577, upon the death of the chief juriconsult, the chief justice of Rumelia Kadızade Şemseddin Ahmed Efendi was promoted to this important

¹¹⁰ Fleischer, 71-75. Mustafa Âli started his account of the reign of Murad III with a list of his confidants and companions. Çerçi, vol. 3, 230-239. Following Mustafa Âli closely, Peçevî also began the reign of Murad III with a description of the anti-Sokollu faction. See Peçevî, 2:5-8.

¹¹¹ Fleischer, 73.

¹¹² Serpil Bağcı, "The Falnama of Ahmed I (TSM H.1703)" in *Falnama: The Book of Omens*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı (Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery/the Smithsonian Institution, 2009), 72.

position.¹¹³ Takiyüddin reportedly attributed the comet that was seen in November 1577 to an Ottoman victory against the Safavids, the army did not achieve a conclusive victory, or suffered a defeat. But, the chief juriconsult Kadızade attributed the plague that was taking many lives in the city to the inauspiciousness of the comet and of Takiyüddin's false predictions, and demanded the closure of the observatory claiming that the science of astrology was violating basic tenets of Islam. Kadızade's denunciation resulted in the destruction of the observatory in January-February 1580.¹¹⁴ Ironically, Mustafa Âli, a member of the anti-Sokollu faction, had an illustration of Takiyüddin along with his tools observing the comet in the beginning of his illustrated campaign history, *Nusretname*, which deals with the heroism of Lala Mustafa Paşa.¹¹⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa figured in the intense factional struggle between the boon companions of Selim II and grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa after he rose a little in the bureaucracy. Koca Sinan Paşa's position was determined by an old enmity he had against Lala Mustafa Paşa. The animosity between the two went back to the battle of Prince Bayezid and Prince Selim [later Selim II] of 1550s, after which Lala Mustafa Paşa ordered the execution of Ayas Paşa, the elder brother of Koca Sinan Paşa. Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (grand vizier between 1565-1579) exploited the animosity between the two during the Yemen campaign of 1568-1569 in order to weaken his enemy Lala Mustafa Paşa.¹¹⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa belonged to the dominantly Bosnian faction of grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa.¹¹⁷ Koca Sinan Paşa and Sokollu Mehmed Paşa had a common enemy in

¹¹³ Danişmend, 3:523.

¹¹⁴ Bağcı, 73. Casale, 162.

¹¹⁵ Fetvacı, 147-148.

¹¹⁶ Fleischer, 47-54.

¹¹⁷ Casale, 132-133.

Lala Mustafa Paşa. After Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's assassination, his son Hasan Paşa became a member of Koca Sinan Paşa's faction.

At the end of 1567, Koca Sinan Paşa was promoted to the governor-generalship of Egypt. On 20 Safer 976/August 15, 1568, Koca Sinan Paşa was appointed vizier and commander-in-chief during the campaign of Yemen while he was the governor-general of Egypt. Sokollu Mehmed Paşa used the Yemen campaign to get rid of his rival Lala Mustafa Paşa. In the Yemen campaign of 1568-69, the grand vizier appointed Lala Mustafa Paşa as commander-in-chief, and ordered him to get the forces and the treasury needed to prepare for the campaign in Egypt. The encounter of two enemies resulted in a series of denunciations from both Lala Mustafa Paşa and Koca Sinan Paşa, which were full of accusations about each other. Lala Mustafa Paşa claimed that Koca Sinan Paşa was not giving the necessary resources for the provisioning of the army. Koca Sinan Paşa, on the other hand, accused Lala Mustafa Paşa with not obeying the orders of the sultan by delaying his departure for Yemen.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, Lala Mustafa Paşa united with other enemies of Koca Sinan Paşa such as the Governor of Sana Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa, governors Gazalgüveği Mustafa Bey, Güllizade Mehmed and Kuyruklu Yıldız Mehmed Bey; the supply master (*nüzul emini*) müteferrika Acem Menla Ağa. The strife in the form of reports (*arz*) written by Lala Mustafa Paşa and Koca Sinan Paşa with the aim of denigrating one another resulted with the victory of the latter.¹¹⁹ He was appointed the commander-in-chief of the campaign instead of his rival. He even got orders for

¹¹⁸ Fleischer, 48-51.

¹¹⁹ Fleischer, 49. Selanikî, 73-75.

the execution of Gazalgüveği Mustafa Bey and Kuyruklu Yıldız Mehmed Bey, in addition to an order for the execution of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa.¹²⁰

Sokollu Mehmed Paşa reportedly said that Lala Mustafa Paşa deserved execution because of his disobedience. Upon his return to the capital, Lala Mustafa Paşa underwent an audit, was only pardoned through the efforts of the boon companions of Selim II, that were united with Lala Mustafa Paşa against Sokollu Mehmed Paşa.¹²¹ Saved by Sultan Selim II's protection, Lala Mustafa Paşa was appointed commander-in-chief of the army next year, for the campaign on Cyprus. It was a complete success.¹²²

Meanwhile, Koca Sinan Paşa successfully suppressed the revolt of the İmam Mutahhar and regained the territory, for which his panegyrists gave him the epithet “conqueror of the Yemen”. He went on the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in 1571, and was again appointed governor of Egypt on 18 Zilhicce 978/May 13, 1571. He remained in this position for two years.¹²³ In the spring of 1574, he was appointed the commander-in-chief to suppress a rebellion of Tunis, moving there with grand admiral Kılıç Ali Paşa. Goletta (Ḥalka'l-Vādī) was stormed after a long siege and Tunis incorporated once again in the Ottoman Empire (consequently, Sinan Paşa used the epithet “conqueror of Tunis”). He was promoted to the rank of fourth vizier, in which position his old rivalry with third vizier Lala Mustafa Paşa continued.¹²⁴

Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's use of their rivalry led to the unprecedented double nomination of Koca Sinan Paşa and Lala Mustafa Paşa as commanders-

¹²⁰ Fleischer, 50-51.

¹²¹ Fleischer, 53.

¹²² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Muṣṭafā Paşa, Lala."

¹²³ Mühimme defteri 12, no. 542, cited by Hulûsi Yavuz, *Kâbe ve Haremeyn için Yemen'de Osmanlı hâkimiyeti (1517-1571)*, Istanbul 1984; 117, n. 92, cited in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinân Paşa, KHodja."

¹²⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sinân Paşa, KHodja."

in-chief of the campaign against Iran in 1577. Later, Koca Sinan Paşa lost this position, but when Lala Mustafa Paşa was unsuccessful, he was charged with the continuation of the warfare alone. Koca Sinan Paşa was an active contestant for the grand vizierate after the assassination of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in 1579, until his own death in 1596. He remained in power longer than his rivals and the biggest number of comebacks.

The anti-Sokollu faction greatly undermined the power of the grand vizier who effectively ruled the empire by himself for eight years. Nevertheless, they were not able to cause his dismissal. The second vizier Lala Mustafa Paşa was the candidate for the grand vizierate if Sokollu Mehmed Paşa was taken out of power. However, the grand vizier successfully sabotaged Lala Mustafa Paşa's claims to the grand vizierate by appointing him commander-in-chief in the Yemen and eastern campaigns through manipulation, and eventual replacement with his rival Koca Sinan Paşa. In the end, it was not through politics that brought an end to Sokollu Mustafa Paşa's power, but his assassination by a madman in his own palace. The assassination is considered to be a plot of the strong anti-Sokollu faction at court.¹²⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa: the new leader of the Indian Ocean Faction

Like Sokollu's involvement in spice trade long before his appointment to the grand vizierate, there are indications that Koca Sinan Paşa was also interested in this trade before he rose to power.¹²⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa's mosque at the port of Bulaq in Egypt was completed in 979 (1571-72).¹²⁷ In a report datable to Receb-Şaban 999/June 1591, Koca Sinan Paşa answered to accusations about having

¹²⁵ Mustafa Âli was of the opinion that Şemsi Ahmed Paşa wanted Sokollu Mehmed Paşa dead. Çerçi: 241-242.

¹²⁶ For Sokollu's involvement in the spice trade, see Casale, 139-143.

¹²⁷ Swelim, 98.

been bribed by Üveys Paşa for the appointment to Egypt. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that when Üveys Paşa was promoted to vizierate, he sent 20.000 gold pieces to the sultan, and 5000 gold pieces to him. He stated that he did not protect Üveys Paşa, and that the sultan knew who protected him.¹²⁸ He claimed to have declined the offer, and asked instead to send his rents from the khan and the shops he had in Egypt, from which a revenue of 4000 gold pieces a year was due. He wrote that he had not been able to receive cash from those endowed properties, and the trustee (*mütevelli*) of his endowment in Egypt only sent rice and sugar since he departed from Egypt after his second governor-generalship [in Zilhicce 981/April 1573].¹²⁹ Although Koca Sinan Paşa belittles the rice and the pepper sent from Egypt annually, they were probably worth more in gold than rents! As Giancarlo Casale shows, all of Yemen's taxes were sent not in cash but in Calicut pepper to Egypt, where it was valued at three million akçes, or fifty thousand gold pieces.¹³⁰ So depending on the quantity of pepper and rice, what he underplays in his report to the sultan as "some rice and pepper" may very well be a source of enrichment.

Koca Sinan Paşa built a mosque in Bulaq on the banks of the Nile, as part of a commercial complex that included three khans. They were called Khan al-Kabir, the Khan al-Tawil, and the Khan al-Saghir, which incorporated a sabil-maktab. Other buildings in the complex were a qafir, a bayt, a mathara; and a

¹²⁸ In fact, this was true because he tried to remove Üveys from his position as governor of Egypt. See Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 106, 148-149. It can be dated to around Ramazan 998, when Üveys Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa was appointed Trablus Beylerbeyi (Selanikî, 223) and before Üveys Paşa's death in 999 (Selanikî, 242).

¹²⁹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 119, 159-160. Koca Sinan Paşa was appointed on 18 Zilhicce 978/May 13, 1571 (Mühimme defteri 12, no. 542, cited by Hulûsi Yavuz, *Kâbe ve Haremeyn için Yemen'de Osmanlı hâkimiyeti (1517-1571)*, Istanbul 1984, 117, n. 92 cited in EI2, s. v. "Sinân Paşa, K̲H̲odja." For the date of dismissal date, Tarek Swelim gives an exact date based on sources in Arabic that I have not been able to consult, see Swelim, 98.

¹³⁰ Casale, 141.

hammam with shops around it.¹³¹ The complex was an important addition to the commercial hub of the city, in addition to being the most prominent structure facing those who arrived in the port from all over the Mediterranean.¹³² Perhaps, he acquired one of these khans (if not a fourth one) from Hasan Paşa during his grand vizierate, because Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that he had bought a khan the construction of which remained incomplete from Hasan Paşa.¹³³ The acquisition of the khan from Hasan Paşa point to Koca Sinan Paşa's continued interest in spice trade. Yemen and Egypt was central to the control of the spice trade, and the situation of Koca Sinan Paşa's khans in Bulaq point to the fact that these commercial structures was an important node in this trade.

Giancarlo Casale showed that after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, Koca Sinan Paşa became the political leader of the Indian Ocean faction, which aimed to increase Ottoman presence in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean with the intention of controlling and profiting from the spice trade. Thanks to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's appointments, Koca Sinan Paşa served in Egypt and Yemen between 1567-1573, and reconquered Tunis from Spain together with Kılıç Ali Paşa in 1574. Koca Sinan Paşa must have made his fortune during these years, although the details of his commercial activities are not known, but he seems to have invested in trade with private merchants. As I stated above in the introduction, Ottoman chroniclers and historians are entirely silent about business enterprises of governor-generals and grand viziers.

Koca Sinan Paşa was reputed to have invested his own money as well as state capital in the construction of warehouses, rest houses, and other commercial

¹³¹ Swelim, 102.

¹³² Swelim, 105-106.

¹³³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 210, 248.

facilities on the route from Egypt to Yemen for the merchants involved in the spice trade through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.¹³⁴ So his complex in Bulaq might be considered the starting point of a series of commercial complexes. Filippo Pigafetta described Koca Sinan Paşa's caravanserai in Suez, together with its promenade and shaded tables "truly the ornament of Suez."¹³⁵

Sokollu's Indian Ocean faction consisted of grand admiral Kılıç Ali Paşa; finance director, later governor-general of Egypt Hazinedar Sinan Paşa; Hasan Paşa, whom Koca Sinan Paşa appointed governor of Yemen; Hızır Bey, a captain of Suez and future governor of Eritrea, and the corsair Mir Ali Bey in Mocha.¹³⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa's précis reports testify to his continued efforts to guard the interests of this group.

For the Indian Ocean Faction, the chief adversary was Üveys Paşa, who belonged to the faction of Siyavuş Paşa. Siyavuş Paşa replaced Hazinedar Sinan Paşa with Üveys Paşa as the governor-general of Egypt at the end of Rebiülevvel 995/March 1587.¹³⁷ In Zilkaade 995/October 1587, Üveys Paşa sued Hazinedar Sinan Paşa with the accusation that he has embezzled a great sum. Selanikî wrote that although Hazinedar Sinan Paşa was put on probation (*göz hapsi*), he escaped because he was very good at tricks and collusion.¹³⁸ Meanwhile Koca Sinan Paşa became the grand vizier, following the dismissal of Siyavuş Paşa. When Üveys Paşa died in Receb 999/May 1594, Hazinedar Sinan immediately sued the deceased Üveys Paşa and his steward (*kapu kethüdası*) Ali Çavuş with the accusation that they have embezzled a great amount of money. Ali Çavuş was

¹³⁴ Casale, 156.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Casale, 256.

¹³⁶ Casale, 155-156.

¹³⁷ Selanikî, 180-181.

¹³⁸ Selanikî, 192.

imprisoned for an audit.¹³⁹ The audit was only possible because Koca Sinan Paşa, a long-term supporter of Hazinedar Sinan Paşa was back in power, who was probably appointed governor-general of Egypt by Sinan Paşa in the first place.¹⁴⁰

Even before Üveys Paşa's death, Koca Sinan Paşa tried to replace him with Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's son Hasan Paşa as the governor-general of Egypt.¹⁴¹ However, the grand vizier was not able to secure this appointment. After the death of Üveys Paşa, Hafız Ahmed Paşa appointed governor-general of Egypt by the imperial decree.¹⁴²

Post-Sokollu Politics in the court of Murad III

Following the death of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, the second vizier Semiz Ali Paşa was appointed grand vizier on 21 Şaban 987/October 13, 1579. The historian Peçevî argued that Koca Sinan Paşa hesitated to make grandiose statements in front of grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. However, after Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's death, "his tongue became longer" and he talked about conquering all of Iran and lining up the boundaries with the heads of the people he would kill. Peçevî asserted that there was no one to answer him, because the new grand vizier Semiz Ahmed Paşa (also of Albanian origin) never opposed Koca Sinan Paşa. So the vain vizier talked and spent money as he liked and somehow managed to replace Lala Mustafa Paşa as commander-in-chief through scheming.¹⁴³

However, after six months Semiz Ahmed Paşa passed away on 13 Rebiülevvel 988 /April 28, 1580. Upon the death of Semiz Ahmed Paşa, the second vizier Lala Mustafa Paşa was closer than ever to realizing his long-held

¹³⁹ Selanikî, 242.

¹⁴⁰ I have not been able to find the appointment date of Hazinedar Sinan.

¹⁴¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 106, 148-149.

¹⁴² Selanikî, 242.

¹⁴³ Peçevî, 2:63. On Peçevî's bias towards Koca Sinan Paşa, see chapter five below.

ambition of becoming grand vizier. However, Murad III appointed Lala Mustafa Paşa a deputy grand vizier for three months; during which period the position of the grand vizier was effectively nullified. It is possible that the Sultan wanted to increase Koca Sinan Paşa's motivation ("sefere rağbet için") in the eastern campaign by appointing him grand vizier.¹⁴⁴ Peçevî argued that Koca Sinan Paşa's supporters (*hevadarları*) argued that if Lala Mustafa Paşa were appointed grand vizier, he would oppose ("muhaleteti mukarrerdir") Koca Sinan Paşa, who replaced him as commander-in-chief.¹⁴⁵ It was reputed that Lala Mustafa Paşa died because of envy, or alternatively God accepted his death wish.¹⁴⁶

The first grand vizierate of Koca Sinan Paşa

On 25 August 1580, the imperial seal was sent to the commander Koca Sinan Paşa with the Kapuağası Yemişçi Hasan Paşa. According to Peçevî everyone cheered at the news, and the soldiers fired their guns three times for celebration.¹⁴⁷ Koca Sinan Paşa was to spend two years of his first term on the Eastern frontier (between August 25, 1580-July 22, 1582).¹⁴⁸ Murad III appointed as the deputy grand vizier his rival Kanijeli Siyavuş Paşa.¹⁴⁹ It is hard to trace the details of the first term of Koca Sinan Paşa from chronicles, both Selanikî Mustafa Efendi and Peçevî wrote about what was happening in the capital or on the battlefield very briefly.

Feridun Bey, the former secretary of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, had been dismissed earlier from his post of chancellor as part of the anti-Sokollu faction's efforts to dismantle the power of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. However, in 989, he was

¹⁴⁴ Danişmend, 3:54.

¹⁴⁵ Peçevî, 2:65.

¹⁴⁶ Danişmend, 3:55.

¹⁴⁷ Peçevî, 2:64-65.

¹⁴⁸ Danişmend, 3:55;58.

¹⁴⁹ Selanikî, 129-130.

reappointed Chancellor and in addition to that the Sultan ordered him to marry Ayşe sultan, a daughter of Rüstem Paşa and Mihrümah Sultan. On 11 Rebiülevvel 990, they had a big wedding in the former palace of Ali Paşa. Selanikî claimed that Koca Sinan Paşa had an unfavorable esteem of this family [e.g. Rüstem Paşa's]. He felt he was not chosen because Feridun Bey had the love of the Sultan, so Koca Sinan Paşa spoke ill of him in front of the sultan, which Selanikî considered to be showing extreme heedlessness.¹⁵⁰

Koca Sinan Paşa returned from the winter camp in Erzurum and started the preparations for a pompous celebration: the Circumcision Festival of Prince Mehmed in 990. The scale and pomp of the festival set a new standard for Ottoman festivities. Ibrahim Paşa Palace on the Hippodrome was repaired and used as the imperial loggia for watching the ceremonies and the performances. Selanikî wrote that the staircase and the entrance were changed into a small pavilion with a door on the corner of the palace. The structure and the ceremonial of this imperial circumcision festival served as a model for later celebrations.¹⁵¹

On the last day of the 55-day-and-night-long celebrations, a quarrel among the cavalrymen (*sipahi*) and the janissaries took place. Selanikî Mustafa Efendi summarized the event briefly, leaving out many details:

“Between the cavalrymen (*sipahi*) and the janissaries the age-old atrocity, enmity and row took place again. Two unfortunate soldiers who were drunk as dead were taken to a spot that could be seen from the window of the pavilion where Sultan Murad III was sitting. Upset by what he saw, the Sultan dismissed the Agha of the Cavalrymen (*Sipahi-oğlanlar*) Osman Ağa and the Agha of the Janissaries Ferhad Ağa and the silahdarbaşı. The row and the sedition were suppressed with the

¹⁵⁰ Selanikî, 130-131.

¹⁵¹ Selanikî, 133-134.

order of these dismissals and with this event. On 3 Receb 990/July 2, 1582.”¹⁵²

Peçevî İbrahim Efendi attributed to this event the origin of the enmity between Koca Sinan Paşa and Ferhad Ağa (later commander, vizier and grand vizier Ferhad Paşa), in addition to telling the cause of the row between the sipahis and the janissaries. According to Peçevî, cavalrymen (*sipahi*) have brought prostitutes to their rooms. The prefect (*şehir subaşı*) Ahmed Çavuş broke into their rooms and started taking away the prostitutes along with some janissaries and night watchmen. Comrades of cavalrymen did not consent to their rooms to be being broken into, so they attacked the prefect and freed the prostitutes. They beat and injured the janissaries. They have left the prefect into the Hippodrome (At Meydanı) where the celebrations had taken place. When the yasakçis and janissaries positioned in the Hippodrome heard about the situation of their comrades, they attacked the cavalrymen (*sipahi*). When the fighting got bigger the agha of the Janissaries Ferhad Ağa went there in order to stop it. However, the number of janissaries increased after Ferhad Ağa got there and two cavalrymen (*sipahi*) were killed.

The Grand Vizier Sinan Paşa, watching the events from his pavilion, had Ferhad Ağa brought to him and rebuked him harshly: “Ye black dog, why did you come and cause the blood of two, now beat it!” Then the janissaries went along with Ferhad Ağa and the fighting came to an end. The grand vizier reported what happened to the sultan and had Ferhad Ağa replaced by the miralem Frenk Yusuf Paşa. This was, according to Peçevî, the origin of the enmity between Koca Sinan Paşa and Ferhad Paşa.¹⁵³ The same Ferhad Ağa had been part of the anti-

¹⁵² Selanikî, 135.

¹⁵³ Peçevî İbrahim Efendi, *Tarih-i Peçevî*. (Istanbul: Matba'a-i 'Âmire, 1283/1866), 2:72-73.

Sokollu faction (led by Lala Mustafa Paşa) during the reign of Selim II, and carried out the execution of the governor-general of Budin Sokollu Mustafa Paşa, the uncle of the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. So it comes as no surprise that he succeeded Lala Mustafa Paşa as Koca Sinan Paşa's nemesis.

Just before the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa from the grand vizierate, an entire network of bribery was discovered. It all started with the banishment of Murad III's dwarf Cüce Nasuh from the court because 'his hands extended to the common people.' The dwarf was sent to the residence of the governor-general of Rumelia İbrahim Paşa. Along with the Dwarf named Nasuh, treasurer Okçuzade Mehmed Çelebi, finance director of Anatolia Sinan Efendi, vice treasurer Süleysi Ahmed Çelebi were dismissed from their positions. Selanikî's title for the event suggests that they were involved ('The banishment of the Dwarf Nasuh Ağa and that the 'teachers of Nasuh' were left helpless.') Selanikî does not make the reason for their dismissals explicit.

After Nasuh Ağa's banishment, certain registers and memorandums of bribes were found in his pouch (*temessük kesesi*). Chief justice of Rumelia Bostanzade Efendi supervised an audit; as a result of which the finance director of Anatolia Sinan Efendi was dismissed from his position, witnesses came forward and he was charged with taking bribes through the Dwarf Nasuh. As a result of this the dwarf was imprisoned in Yedikule, whereas Sinan Efendi was to be imprisoned by the governor-general of Rumelia İbrahim Paşa. A retired chief justice of Anatolia Molla Çelebi Efendi was appointed auditor. Under logs of

firewood and in other places it may have been hidden, gold was discovered that were stashed by the finance directors who had been audited.¹⁵⁴

Right after the dismissal and imprisonment of so many leading members of the financial bureaucracy along with a dwarf that was powerful in the palace service, Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed from the grand vizierate on 10 Zilkaade 990/December 6, 1582. After Koca Sinan Paşa's dismissal, the members of his faction were also dismissed. Selanikî refers to these members as (“tevâbii ve mensubattan”). The following member of Koca Sinan Paşa's faction were imprisoned in Yedikule: Müteferrika Kenan Bey, Galata Emini Mihaliçlü Ahmed Çavuş, Tezkireci Katib-i Divan Lam Cafer Çelebi, ‘Masatçı’ Mustafa Çavuş, and Arpa Katibi Cafer Çelebi. Soon afterwards, Murad III exiled Koca Sinan Paşa to his farm in Malkara, with the message that “he should not consume the provisions of Istanbul.”¹⁵⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa might have been dismissed from the grand vizierate because he lied to the Sultan Murad III about the peace with Iran. Koca Sinan Paşa might have represented the Safavids seeking peace negotiations. However, a diplomatic envoy that arrived in the capital at around the same time with Koca Sinan Paşa made it clear to the sultan that the grand vizier had been misrepresenting the truth. After the initial meeting with the diplomatic envoy, the sultan requested the letters from the Safavids, and found that Safavids did not demand the peace negotiations.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Selanikî, 136. Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, “Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? Dwarfs And Mutes At The Ottoman Court In The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries” (MA thesis, Sabancı University, 2006), 83-86. Fleischer, 108.

¹⁵⁵ Selanikî, 136-137.

¹⁵⁶ Danişmend, vol. 3, 61-62.

The other, and more likely, reason for the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa could be the grand vizier's request to Murad III concerning His Majesty's command of the army during the campaign against the Safavids in the tradition of his forefathers. Here the opposition to the idea might have been stronger from the harem quarters. It is said that members of the harem, the dwarfs and other servants closely associated with the sultan opposed the idea because they were afraid of losing their power over the sultan. Murad III was not disposed to mount the horse and to gallop toward the enemy lines either.¹⁵⁷ According to a Venetian ambassadorial report, Koca Sinan Paşa's support of Murad III's wife (*haseki*) Safiye Sultan as opposed to the powerful queen mother Nurbanu Sultan resulted in his dismissal.¹⁵⁸

Out of Power

The end of Koca Sinan Paşa's first term in the grand vizierate opened the political arena for his rival, the second vizier Siyavuş Paşa and his faction. One month after Koca Sinan Paşa's exile to Malkara and six months after his own dismissal from the office of Agha of the Janissaries at the end of the circumcision festival on 3 Receb 990/July 2, 1582, Ferhad Ağa made a glorious comeback as the governor-general of Rumelia on 3 Zilhicce 990/December 29, 1582. We can assume that Siyavuş Paşa was responsible for Ferhad Paşa's swift rise. Ferhad Paşa's comeback was followed by swift promotions. Soon after his new appointment, he was also made a vizier of the Imperial Council and made a commander-in-chief for the Eastern Campaign.

¹⁵⁷ Danişmend, 3:62.

¹⁵⁸ Peirce, 91.

Within a year after Siyavuş Paşa's appointment to grand vizierate, group dismissals and promotions took place within governor-generalships, and the judiciary (military-judgeships.)¹⁵⁹ Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa, who Koca Sinan Paşa tried to eliminate during the eventful campaign of Yemen in 1568-69, successfully avoided the executioner and went on to a long campaign on the eastern front. He seems to be the most successful of commanders who had been sent to the eastern front after Süleyman's campaigns.¹⁶⁰

The end of the campaign was marked by a very significant event: the rebellion of the Khan of Crimea Mehmed Giray. The Crimean Khanate had a semi-autonomous status with formal allegiance to the Ottoman crown and sent a yearly payment. They contributed to the Ottoman campaign on the European front, among others. The rebellion of the Crimean Khan resulted in a change in the power structure. Selanikî told a rumor he heard that the Khan of Crimea Mehmed Giray did not actually rebel against the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Instead the mischief-makers made it seem so.¹⁶¹ According to Peçevî's account, Sultan Murad III sent an order to get rid of the rebellious Crimean Khan Mehmed Giray, which conflicts with Selanikî's account Osman Paşa took the initiative of deposing Mehmed Giray and arranging İslam Giray's succession. Selanikî wrote that the news have reached to Istanbul that "Osman Paşa besieged the castle of Kefe, destructed the aqueducts, built breastworks, brought cannons, and fought for 37 days." In response to this message, Osman Giray was informed

¹⁵⁹ These took place On Dec 24, 1582 and October 9, 1583. Selânikî lists these. Selânikî, 140-141.

¹⁶⁰ Selanikî praises Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa immensely, giving a full account of the praises of Sultan Murad III during the royal audience. Selanikî, 143-146.

¹⁶¹ For Selanikî's account of the rebellion of Mehmed Giray Khan, see Selanikî, 143-145. Selanikî wrote that, "during the conversation of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa with Mehmed Giray Khan in Demirkapı certain people with evil designs intervened and revolting rude words followed. Being subjected to the malice of grief-stricken gossipers, [although] no injudicious situation emerged from his decree, those who caused his deposition became the recipients of God's wrath." Selanikî, 144.

by the order of the sultan about the imminent arrival of Kılıç Ali Paşa was battleships.¹⁶²

Mustafa Âli further embellished the account by quoting the Sultan's order to get rid of Mehmed Giray, and that that when Osman Paşa received the order he considered it not such an auspicious solution, as the war with the Safavid Shah was not over and responded to the sultan that this is not a good solution. However the sultan disagreed, as a result of which Osman Paşa annihilated Mehmed Giray.¹⁶³ İsmail Hami Danişmend claimed that the Crimean Khan Mehmed Giray invited Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa twice to Bahçesaray. However he went to Kefe and did not go to Bahçesaray on purpose. Based on a history of Crimea called *Umdetü't-tevarih* by a certain Hacı Abdülgaffar, Danişmend claimed that because of an old enmity between Mehmed Giray and the Paşa, he reported to Istanbul that Mehmed Giray rebelled against the House of Osman.¹⁶⁴

Selanikî wrote that the sultan ordered all the viziers to welcome Osman Paşa upon his arrival and that the Agha of the Janissaries, the aghas of cavalrymen, the aghas of the Sublime Porte, members of the court and the janissaries made a perfect reception.¹⁶⁵ Peçevî wrote what Selanikî omitted: "Because he had the title of the second vizier (*vezir-i sani*) the grand vizier did not go to receive him", he added that instead the Agha of the Janissaries and other aghas went. Murad III admitted Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa to royal audience.

¹⁶² Selanikî, 143-144. Cf. Peçevî, 90. Peçevî repeats that the order of replacing Mehmed Giray came from the Sultan in the next page as well, see Peçevî, 91.

¹⁶³ Çerçi, 3:427-428.

¹⁶⁴ Danişmend, 70.

¹⁶⁵ Selanikî, 145.

Selanikî did not give any detail of this royal audience, he just listed the gifts Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa brought and received. So Selanikî left out the factional competition, the jealousy of his patron-the grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa and of other viziers. The only thing Selanikî noted was the dismissal of Kapıcılar Kethüdası Hüseyin Ağa, (promoted during the term of Siyavuş Paşa) after it was heard that he spoke in an uncouth manner to Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa. Mustafa Âli, who was working for Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa at the time, wrote a very detailed account of the imperial reception.

Mustafa Âli went further in explicating the factional alliances of the viziers: “The majority of the viziers being son-in-laws of the sultan, because the aforesaid commander was like a marble column among the pillars of the state, they said of him that ‘Why did this foreigner came among us?’ They were astonished to find him in the position of the second vizier. Some even tried set out to start his dismissal (by rejecting his *ruus* register saying that he had gone to excess in his taxes).”¹⁶⁶ Peçevî wrote that when the Sultan Murad III heard about the rejection of the *ruus* register, he immediately dismissed Siyavuş Paşa and appointed Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa grand vizier. Siyavuş Paşa was exiled to his farm and left on the day of his dismissal.¹⁶⁷

Soon after Osman Paşa’s appointment to the grand vizierate, reports from the new Crimean Khan İslam Giray arrived in Istanbul, informing that the sons of the “murdered” khan Mehmed Giray went to the Nogay-ı Kebir Tatar and asked for help in avenging the blood of their father. Together with 10.000 Tatars they

¹⁶⁶ Çerçi, 3:446.

¹⁶⁷ Peçevî, 2:95. Khan of Crimea Mehmed Giray rebelled in March/April 1584 (Rebiülevvel 992). Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa came to Istanbul in July 992, being admitted to royal audience on July 6, 1582 (27 Cemaziyelahir 992). Selanikî gives the date of dismissal as on July 25, 1584 (17 Receb 1584) and the date of the appointment of Osman Paşa is Selanikî, 145-146.

attacked and looted the capital Bahçesaray and defeated the soldiers of İslam Giray, whom they injured. The Janissaries who were in charge of the fortress of Kefe fought with the Tatars and there were many casualties on both sides. The city of Bahçesaray had been burned down and looted. Nogay was reported to have asked to become the Khan of Crimea from the ‘threshold of Ottoman state’. Upon the reading of this report, Sultan Murad asked ‘what should we do about this? Who is to go?’ Osman Paşa ‘This servant of yours will go my Sultan’. When the grand vizier came out of the Chamber of Petitions, orders to prepare for a Black Sea campaign were sent to the Grand Admiral Kılıç Ali Paşa. War preparations started. However, ‘the intelligent people’ were astonished and considered it an impossible scheme because the Forty days of winter were approaching. The navy set out on 20 Şevval 992/October 25, 1584 for Kefe.¹⁶⁸

Another set of promotions in the bureaucracy took place on the day of the departure for the campaign. Selanikî narrated how Kılıç Ali Paşa read out loud an imperial order on his ship where members of the ruling elite were present to bid him farewell, addressing each appointee ‘My brother’: the governor-general of Rumelia Ali Paşa was promoted to the rank of vizier, the Agha of the Janissaries Mehmed Ağa was promoted governor-general of Rumelia, the silahdar-ı hassa Halil Ağa was promoted to the position of Agha of the Janissaries.

On 23 Şevval 992/October 28, 1584, Sultan Murad III ordered his newly appointed favorite governor-general of Rumelia Doğançı Mehmed Paşa to enter imperial audience (*arz*) by himself with what Selanikî called ‘*istiklal-i tam*’ (complete independence), as well as accompanying the sultan while hunting like the deceased Şemsi Ahmed Paşa. Serving Murad III since his days in Manisa,

¹⁶⁸ Selanikî, 148-149.

Mehmed Paşa was also entrusted with overseeing the war effort under the command of Osman Paşa and receiving all the *arz* and *telhis* he sent from the front.¹⁶⁹ Peçevî described Mehmed Paşa as a very witty person, who was discreet and not at all a boring and wrote that the sultan liked him and took him as a royal companion because of these qualities. However, Peçevî attributed Doğancı Mehmed Paşa's freedom in entering the royal audience alone to his own request to the sultan by saying that "the governor-generals of Rumelia had entered the royal audience separately in the days of your blessed ancestors." Peçevî also noted that he began meddling in affairs that he was not responsible for.¹⁷⁰ Whether he personally requested this privilege or not, the period following Osman Paşa's departure for the Crimean campaign resulted in the swift rise of Doğancı Mehmed Paşa's sphere of influence. However, his life was to come to an end in a revolt of the cavalrymen, called the Beylerbeyi Incident, which was a turning point for Murad III.

Soon after Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa left for the campaign in Crimea, the news of İslam Giray's suppression of the uprising in Crimea reached the capital. Upon receiving this bit of news, the sultan appointed Osman Paşa to campaign against the Safavids. The current commander of the Eastern Campaign Ferhad Paşa was dismissed from his duty and summoned to Istanbul. On his way to Istanbul, Ferhad Paşa had a meeting with Osman Paşa, who wrote a letter of reference (*terbiye-name*) for his junior. In his reference letter, Osman Paşa wrote that "He deserves copious honors and acclamation, he is to do good works and a most deserving slave of the sultan." Selanikî reported Murad III's reaction to this report: "Thank God, the gazis are without malice." According to Selanikî's

¹⁶⁹ Selanikî, 150.

¹⁷⁰ Peçevî, 2:22.

account, the former and the current commander of the campaign left one another in friendship.¹⁷¹ The friendliness of Osman Paşa with Ferhad Paşa cannot be surprising. They were both members of the anti-Sokollu-Mehmed Paşa faction. Ferhad Paşa rose after he put to death Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's uncle Sokollu Mustafa Paşa, the governor-general of Budin.

The sultan showed his preference for grand vizier and commander Osman Paşa: when the governor-general of Anatolia Rıdvan Paşa passed away, Murad III proclaimed that the commander-in-chief would appoint the governor-general. Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa appointed Hasan Paşa governor-general of Aleppo to the governor-generalship of Anatolia. The governor-general of Cyprus Okçuzade Mehmed Paşa was promoted to the governor-generalship of Aleppo. Mahmud Paşa, the son of Şemsi Paşa was appointed to the governor-generalship of Cyprus.¹⁷² As we have seen with other promotions in a row, the lowest position in the hierarchy was often filled with someone who was dismissed and not currently employed. In this instance, Osman Paşa appointed the son of his fellow anti-Sokollu faction member Şemsi Paşa. So factional ties survived beyond the generation of fellow factional members and their main opponent.

However, when the news of Osman Paşa's death reached the capital, his deputy Mesih Paşa succeeded him as grand vizier on 8 Zilhicce 993/December 1 1585 (Mesih Paşa was dismissed on 24 Rebiülahir 994/April 15 1586.)¹⁷³ Mesih

¹⁷¹ Selanikî, 153. Osman Paşa wrote in praise of Ferhad Paşa: "Saltanat tarafından külli izzet ü saadete sezâvârdur ki ancak olur, iyilikler edecekdür ve çok himmete lââyık kuldur ve mustahıktır." The sultan's comment is ""

¹⁷² Selanikî, 153. Selanikî notes that this Hasan Paşa was previously imprisoned in Yedikule, after being the governor-general of Egypt. However, I could not identify during whose term in the grand vizierate he was audited and imprisoned.

¹⁷³ Danişmend, 3:494-494.

Paşa was dismissed because of his more powerful rival Siyavuş Paşa's successful ploys.¹⁷⁴

The Beylerbeyi Incident

A turning point in Koca Sinan Paşa's political career as a contestant for the highest political office in the Ottoman Empire was the military uprising of 1589, the so-called Beylerbeyi (governor-general) Incident. Although the Beylerbeyi Incident is popularly thought of as a janissary revolt, the cavalrymen (*sipahi*) who stayed in the city revolted, after the departure of the janissaries for the campaign against the Safavids. The Beylerbeyi Incident marks a milestone in the careers of many leading members of the Ottoman political establishment, as well as of Sultan Murad III. The janissaries revolted because of the shrinking of their purchasing power, when debasements of the Ottoman silver coinage resulted in a high inflation, and the disruption of the fixed market price system (*narh*).

Before the revolt, the soldiers demanded a pay rise or correction of the akçe went from various officials such as the chief juriconsult Şeyhî Efendi, who considered the reduction of their payment illegal. When they protested to the grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa, he told the soldiers that the correction of the coinage was going to be carried out by the governor-general of Rumelia Doğançlı Mehmed Paşa. Upon hearing this, the revolting soldiers went to Mehmed Paşa's house to demand correction of their salaries or the coinage. They told him that they would talk to him tomorrow in front of everyone during the Imperial Council meeting.

The next day, the entire Ottoman Imperial Council tried to appease the soldiers by offering pay rise and bonuses. However, the soldiers did not accept it,

¹⁷⁴ See chapter two below.

but demanded the head of the governor-general. In the end, because the soldiers threatened the sultan with dethronement if he did not execute his favorite minister Dođancı Mehmed Paşa. The sultan finally gave in to the demands of the soldiers and let them execute Dođancı Mehmed Paşa. Murad III dismissed all the viziers, the grand vizier, the chief juriconsult, and many palace officials in a fury. He reappointed Koca Sinan Paşa grand vizier.¹⁷⁵

The cavalrymen insisted that they wanted the head of governor-general of Rumelia Dođancı Mehmed Paşa, who was the favorite of Murad III. When the soldiers entered the third courtyard of the palace, the sultan ordered that they should be given whatever they wanted. However, Murad III was not able to appease them with money. The soldiers threatened the sultan with deposition, saying that they wanted a sultan who would prefer all his slaves (soldiers) to one slave (e.g. Dođancı Mehmed Paşa).¹⁷⁶ According to Selanikî, when the sultan heard their threats himself, he was angered because of their disobedience and ordered the closing of the outer door of the court, and the killing of all the rebellious cavalrymen by the Bostancı and the pages with the ammunition kept in the Imperial Artillery. However, the viziers and other statesmen considered the decision to be a great error, and the chief justice Bostanzade wrote to the sultan to let the cavalrymen behead the governor-general Mehmed Paşa. The sultan decided to follow their advice, and he gave in to the soldiers' demands. In addition to Dođancı Mehmed Paşa, at the last minute the treasurer (başdefterdar) Mahmud Efendi was also brought out and executed.¹⁷⁷ Peçevî argued that the cavalrymen did not originally want his head, but they killed

¹⁷⁵ Selanikî, 209-212. On the debasement of 1585-1589 that led to the Beylerbeyi Incident, see chapter three below.

¹⁷⁶ Peçevî, 2:23-25.

¹⁷⁷ Selanikî, 211.

Mahmud Efendi in order to make the killing of the governor-general Mehmed Paşa seem less spiteful (e.g. legitimize his execution).¹⁷⁸

This bloody riot caused a reshuffling of power relations at court. All the viziers were dismissed. These included grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa, chief juriconsult Şeyhî Efendi, viziers İbrahim Paşa and Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa. Many of the aghas of the cavalymen and of the palace were dismissed. Koca Sinan Paşa, who had previously been dismissed from his position as the governor-general of Damascus, was in Üsküdar. After the incident, the sultan sent the imperial seal to him and appointed him grand vizier.¹⁷⁹ After the incident, two fires broke out in different part of the city. Since the rebels were considered to be the arsonists, the agha of the janissaries was also dismissed.¹⁸⁰

The Second Term

Koca Sinan Paşa's second term spanned between 16 Cemaziyelevvel 997/April 2, 1589 and 10 Şevval 999/August 1, 1591. It is the best-documented term of Koca Sinan Paşa in the grand vizierate. Most of his précis correspondence (*telhisat*) with Murad III date from this period, since he was not away from the capital for military campaigns. Moreover, Selanikî gave a more detailed account of the two years, which help with the dating of his précis reports. Koca Sinan Paşa came to power after a turbulent event following the economical problems caused by debasement, disruption of market price control (*narh*), and outbreaks of fires that he personally had to help put out. In this respect, his second reign was

¹⁷⁸ Peçevî, 2:23.

¹⁷⁹ Koca Sinan Paşa was exiled to Malkara at the end of his first grand vizierate in December 6, 1582 (10 of Zilkaade 990). After four years of exile, he was able to procure the governorship of Damascus in 1586. He was reappointed grand vizier for the second time right after the Beylerbeyi Incident. *Encyclopædia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s. v. "Sinân Pasha, Khodja."

¹⁸⁰ Selanikî, 211-212. For Koca Sinan Paşa's reports on these fires, see Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 25, 34-35; and Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 26, 35.

marked by reform. He was successful in reforming the coinage, he worked diligently to diminish the budget deficit and to increase the treasury, and he brought about urban order.¹⁸¹

Once again, his political conflicts with his rivals that materialized as audits, denunciations, and calumny brought an end to his second term.¹⁸² On 11 Şevval 999/August 2, 1591, Koca Sinan Paşa's second term came to a end abruptly. One possible reason for his dismissal was Ferhad Paşa's denigration campaign against Koca Sinan Paşa because of the expenses of his project connecting the Black Sea with the Gulf of İzmit by digging a canal via Sapanca Lake.¹⁸³ However, the project was presented in the end of Cemaziyelahir 999/March-April 1591, months before Koca Sinan Paşa's dismissal.¹⁸⁴ Koca Sinan Paşa's auditing Ferhad Paşa through Hızır Bey (see chapter two below) at the end of Receb 999/April-May 1591 could have stirred up his slandering.¹⁸⁵ But the most likely reason for the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa was his dismissal and imprisonment of Divane İbrahim Paşa, brother of the powerful harem stewardess Canfeda Hatun, at the end of Ramazan 999/June-July 1591.¹⁸⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa mentioned that he was being slandered because of the janissary attack on İbrahim Paşa, and that Canfeda Hatun considered the imprisonment to be based on Koca Sinan Paşa's spite.¹⁸⁷

Ferhad Paşa was appointed grand vizier after Koca Sinan Paşa's dismissal. However his term came to an end because of a denunciation the agha of the

¹⁸¹ For his reforms during his second term, see chapter three below.

¹⁸² For factional politics during his career as grand vizier, see chapter two below.

¹⁸³ Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition, s.v. Sinān Paşa, KHodja."

¹⁸⁴ Selanikî, 238.

¹⁸⁵ Selanikî, 240.

¹⁸⁶ Selanikî, 246-247.

¹⁸⁷ For Koca Sinan Paşa's reports dealing with the imprisonment of Divane İbrahim Paşa, see chapter two below.

janissaries wrote after he was dismissed from his duty because of an uprising of janissaries from Erzurum. Selanikî wrote that the sultan considered to send the imperial seal to Koca Sinan Paşa, but changed his mind because of the fear that the situation of the people (“ahval-ı halk-ı alem”) [of the palace or the public?] would be disordered. Murad III appointed Siyavuş Paşa grand vizier for a third time. Siyavuş Paşa’s third term in grand vizierate lasted for nine months.¹⁸⁸

Third Term

Koca Sinan Paşa came to power after Siyavuş Paşa was dismissed from the grand vizierate for a second time because of a bloody janissary rebellion. Like the Beylerbeyi Incident, the bloody revolt brought Koca Sinan Paşa to power again for a third time. Along with him, previously dismissed viziers returned to the Imperial Council, such as Ferhad Paşa, Damad İbrahim Paşa, Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa.¹⁸⁹ The greater part of the third term of Koca Sinan was spent on the Hungarian campaign away from the capital. The factional event of the term was the campaign, along with the audits and other policies of his enemy Ferhad Paşa, who stayed in the capital as the deputy grand vizier.¹⁹⁰ Soon after the succession of Mehmed III to the throne, Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed on 6 Cemaziyelahir 1003/February 16, 1595.

Koca Sinan Paşa as a Patron of Arts and Learning

Emine Fetvacı showed that those who vied for the position of the grand vizierate, or for more influence in the court during the reign of Murad III commissioned or presented illustrated campaign histories (*gazaname*). These

¹⁸⁸ Selanikî, 264-265. For the denunciation paper of the agha of the janissaries concerning Ferhad Paşa, see chapter five below.

¹⁸⁹ Selanikî, 303-305.

¹⁹⁰ For the details of the campaign, see chapter five below. For the factional mechanizations of Ferhad Paşa, see chapter two below.

were panegyric works written to show a commander in a positive light to the sultan. Koca Sinan Paşa was a patron of such works. Before the end of his first term, Koca Sinan Paşa commissioned Mustafa Âli to write a continuation of *Nusretname*, this time dealing with his campaigns on the Safavids. Mustafa Âli did not complete the work, which was to be titled *Fursatname*, because Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed from the grand vizierate. During his second term he commissioned a history of his conquests in Yemen and North Africa. During his third term, he commissioned *Şehname-i Hümayun* from Talikîzade, about the Hungarian campaign of 1593-1594.¹⁹¹

Although Âli and Selanikî portray Koca Sinan Paşa as an uncouth man, disinterested in poetry, he commissioned literary works of another sort. The first illustrated campaign histories that he commissioned was *Tarih-i Feth-i Yemen* by Rumuzî Mustafa, which lauds Koca Sinan Paşa as a military hero and conqueror of Yemen, as well as of Tunisia. This is a huge work comprising of 669 folios with 68 illustrations, copied in 1594. The illustrations of the *Tarih-i Feth-i Yemen* are quite remarkable in that they try to represent the topography of Yemen, which consists of steep hills on top which fanciful castles are depicted.¹⁹² Four illustrations depict the generosity and wealth of the grand vizier. In one scene he rewards soldiers for their successes, giving alms to the poor of Mecca, ordering the repair of domes around Caabe, the building of a pavilion in Cairo and the repair of the port of Alexandria. Koca Sinan Paşa commissioned this work, because the conquest of Yemen was such a sordid affair that involved the

¹⁹¹ Fetvacı, 141-142.

¹⁹² Fetvacı, 181. For an analysis of the relationship between the real castles and those imagined in the illustrations of *Tarih-i Feth-i Yemen*, see Caesar E. Ferah and Irmgard E. Farah, "Depicting the Art of Fortification in Yemen: A Contrast between the Real and the Imagined," in *Festschrift Hans Georg Majer: Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte, Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Simurg, 2002), 491-512.

dismissal of his archenemy Lala Mustafa Paşa, and another adversary
Özdemiroğlu Sinan Paşa.¹⁹³

Illustrated literary history of the campaign the audience of which was the sultan show how the Ottoman elites used patronage of such works to win the favor of the sultan. Fetvacı argued Koca Sinan Paşa's interest in illustrated histories was also attested by his owning a copy of *Şemailname* of Talikîzade, which he did not personally commission. Official historian (*şehnameci*) Seyyid Lokman tried to win the patronage of Koca Sinan Paşa by praising him in his works and presenting him odes.¹⁹⁴ Instead Koca Sinan Paşa promoted two of his campaign secretaries to the position of official historian, Talikîzade Mehmed Efendi and Hasan Hükmi.¹⁹⁵

Giancarlo Casale argued that it was Koca Sinan Paşa who commissioned the anonymous *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî* ("History of the West Indies") that was dedicated to Murad III.¹⁹⁶ The book dealt with the exploration and the conquest of the New World, although the introduction of the work was devoted to convincing arguments about the necessity of opening a canal that would allow the Ottomans to control the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea. The author of the only book written in Ottoman Turkish about Americas in the sixteenth century was probably a member of the observatory that was established by Takiyüddin in late 1570s. The canal project was originally an idea of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, taken up by the Indian Ocean Faction once again. Kadızade Ahmed Efendi and his followers from the former anti-Sokollu faction that brought the observatory to

¹⁹³ Fetvacı, 179-184.

¹⁹⁴ Fetvacı, 191-194.

¹⁹⁵ Fetvacı, 174-175.

¹⁹⁶ Casale, 160. For more information on *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî*, see Thomas Goodrich, *The Ottoman Turks and the New World, A Study of Tarih-i Hind-i garbi and Sixteenth Century Ottoman Americana* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990).

an end opposed Koca Sinan Paşa and the canal project that was presented for a second time.¹⁹⁷

Takiyüddin remained in Istanbul after the destruction of his observatory. We learn from Koca Sinan Paşa's reports that the ulema wanted to sue him with religious law (*şer' ile*), accusing him with blasphemy and being an infidel. Koca Sinan Paşa wanted to protect Takiyüddin by exiling him to Egypt, although he himself wanted to go to his birth city Damascus. The grand vizier thought that people would know about him in Damascus and the ulema there would make similar appeals to execute him on account of blasphemy. He wrote to the sultan that although it was difficult to prove these charges, in the time of Sultan Süleyman people were executed on account of that. Koca Sinan Paşa seems to be critical of Takiyüddin, who he claims would try to postpone his departure and cause trouble, or a possible meeting (*cemiyet*) of the ulema. Koca Sinan Paşa wanted to send him with the first ship to Egypt, along with his concubines and servants.¹⁹⁸

Koca Sinan Paşa's Self-Representation

Koca Sinan Paşa was not the most popular of grand viziers. However, he used his unpopularity to derive legitimization for his rule. In the précis reports he wrote to the sultan, he often represented himself as an upright vizier who sacrificed popularity to gain the favor and consent of the sultan. Many times he complained to the sultan about the abundance of his enemies. In one report, he

¹⁹⁷ Casale, 160-163.

¹⁹⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 172, 215-216. About the process of legal trial of those charged with blasphemy and being infidels, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler: 15-17. Yüzyıllar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 66-70. For other cases of such trials, where Koca Sinan Paşa accused a judge and a finance director from Kefe with being followers of Bedrettin-i Simavnî, see Sahillioğlu, Telhis 96, 138-139 and Sahillioğlu, Telhis 95, 137-138.

wrote that all viziers had many enemies, but especially him, because he was being stingy with state resources and did not protect anyone, and gave everyone only what they deserved. He claimed that his enemies reported unfounded lies to the sultan about him.¹⁹⁹

In another report, he wrote that he had so many enemies because he did not consider whether he would lose someone's regard when he was trying to collect what was due to the treasury from embezzlers or when he dismissed oppressive officials regardless of whose faction they belong to. He claimed that because of these reasons, those grandees who had large factions ("kibardan bazı müte'allikat ve tevâbi'i çok olanlar") were angry with him. The grand vizier argued that they were slandering him at the urging of Siyavuş Paşa and others. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he did only what was necessary to bring about order. He claimed that Monla Çelebi, who belonged to the faction of the chief juriconsult were such a possible slanderer. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that although he had reported to the sultan about the requests of the chief juriconsult for extra monetary resources, His Majesty did not see it fit to give him that. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that now he had become a foe because he thought the grand vizier was the one who did not give him the extra resources.²⁰⁰ Indeed there are three précis by Koca Sinan Paşa in his collected correspondence in which he relayed the request of the chief juriconsult to the sultan and got definitive replies in the negative.²⁰¹ It is possible that Koca Sinan Paşa was sincere in his expression of disillusionment with the chief juriconsult.

¹⁹⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83, 120.

²⁰⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 100, 141-142.

²⁰¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 131, 171-172; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 181, 224-225; and Sahillioğlu, Telhis 28, 38.

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the number of his enemies increased so much because he had found out about and punished embezzlers, as well as scribes who were involved in forging state documents. He wrote that he feared their slander, and asserted that he reached the end of his life, when his only wish was to serve the sultan well. He asked the sultan to question him about any accusations that may be made to him, and hoped that he would embarrass those who tried to denigrate him.²⁰² He indeed discovered a forgery ring consisting of scribes in the imperial service.²⁰³ In another précis, Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that even those who befriended him for long now turned against him because they asked for positions and he did not appoint them.²⁰⁴

Since Koca Sinan Paşa was afraid of slander by his enemies, he repeatedly pleaded to the sultan to confront him with those who slandered him. He claimed if he was proven guilty, he was ready to be punished; if he was innocent, he wanted the sultan to know that.²⁰⁵ Koca Sinan Paşa's constant appeals to the sultan for confronting his slanderers seem plausible. To answer the accusations presented in denunciations, he often sent documents and registries to prove his case. I am aware of the biases of registries and documents, however presentation of written documentation, as opposed to oral testimony, shows a different sensibility of the grand vizier.²⁰⁶ On the other hand, Koca Sinan Paşa did not refrain from slandering others while he claimed that they were trying to denigrate him.

²⁰² Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 101, 142-143.

²⁰³ For the forgery ring Koca Sinan Paşa discovered, see chapter three below.

²⁰⁴ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 72, 105.

²⁰⁵ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 94, 137.

²⁰⁶ For Koca Sinan Paşa's answers to denunciations, see chapter four below.

Koca Sinan Paşa represented himself as a loyal servant of the sultan. He argued that he had no power backing him besides the choice of the sultan, thus he did not seek anyone's approval but His Majesty's. He claimed he had no one to get support from but the sultan.²⁰⁷ In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that everyone had a backer (*mesned*). But his only backer was the sultan; he was without a group (*bî-kesim*).²⁰⁸

Koca Sinan Paşa portrayed himself as a diligent worker, who abstained from sleeping, eating, and sitting down. In one report, he wrote that he was working with all the power a human could muster to the point that he did not get any sleep at night at all.²⁰⁹

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that his objective was to bring a just rule in order to avoid any subject to curse the sultan. He claimed that it was not worth obtaining a little more gold at the expense of causing grief and despair of the peasants. Thus, he gave up on resources in order to prevent peasants cursing the sultan. He wrote that his objective was to ensure lack of regret in both worlds (i.e., in the world and in the after-life), and health and well being of the sultan. He claimed that lacking in these things was not worth all the gold in the world.²¹⁰ Koca Sinan Paşa used this discourse in a report about not giving an appointment to someone who requested it, because he thought the person would derive more revenue by exploiting the peasants. So this piece of benevolent discourse had a larger political context.

²⁰⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 68, 99. This précis is datable to Koca Sinan Paşa's second term, because he mentions the deceased governor-general [Doğancı Mehmed Paşa].

²⁰⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 94, 136.

²⁰⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 69, 101. This précis is datable to his second term because he mentions that the treasury and the state had been ruined during his 7-8 year long absence.

²¹⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 71, 103.

Koca Sinan Paşa also exploited the discursive effect of his old age. In numerous reports, he referred to himself as a very old man, who had given up on the bounty of this world and worked for that of the other. He claimed that his only wish was to serve the sultan as best as he could, and make everyone pray for the sultan's well being. He wrote that he hoped in exchange for his sincerity and slavery [servitude], he would bring this about.²¹¹ In another report, he wrote he was so old that he had no desire to acquire wealth or any otherworldly desires.²¹² In another report, he wrote that he had no malice (*garaz-ı fâsîd*), and that his only wish was to restore order and to gain the good wishes of the sultan.²¹³

Koca Sinan Paşa often expressed sensitivity if he felt the sultan did not trust him. In one instance, when the imprisonment of a certain Hızır Bey was delegated to someone else, he protested to the sultan about why he did not order the imprisonment to him, whether he considered him disobedient or protecting the person who was to be imprisoned. He interpreted that the sultan considered him negligent of his orders. He asked the sultan to dismiss him, if he considered Koca Sinan Paşa to have such a fault.²¹⁴ In fact, Hızır Bey was someone Koca Sinan Paşa appointed, who belonged to his own faction. But by adopting this type of dignified vizierial discourse, Koca Sinan Paşa tried to manipulate the situation.

Koca Sinan Paşa often claimed that he had no clientele or protégés. In a report he wrote to answer accusations about distributing zeamets to his own men and dependents (“ademine ve tevabi’ine”), Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that apprentice or a nominee for a position (“mansıb mülazimleri”) had always been following (“mülazemet edegelmişlerdir”) grand viziers. From that perspective, it

²¹¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 77, 111.

²¹² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83, 120.

²¹³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 94, 137.

²¹⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83a, 121.

was true. But he claimed that he did not have his own men. Whoever served him was a slave of the sultan, who fought in many campaigns, who showed much loyalty. Koca Sinan Paşa asked whether if the sultan did not take him as a slave in the first place (“baştan bu kullarını saadetlü padişah kullanmayaydı”), would so many people serve him? He wrote that it had been less than sixty, more than forty years that he had been a governor and governor-general. He asked the sultan to have his registry checked to compare the number of his men to those of who served the sultan for only ten or fifteen years. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that people said anything they wished because he did not protect them or consider their feelings.²¹⁵ In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa repeated that he had no faction (“ne tevâbi ğim vardır”). He claimed that he was accused of giving zeamets to his own men, because at least thirty people demanded each position or zeamet, and those who could not get it slandered him in this fashion.²¹⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa claimed to be clean of selling offices or taking bribes.²¹⁷

In another report where he responded to the sultan’s admonishment, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he thought that the sultan was happy with his service. He claimed that if he knew that the sultan doubted him, he would have stepped down himself and prays for the wellbeing of the sultan. He swore to God that he would have gone to one of the holy cities to devote his life to prayer after he was dismissed from the governor-generalship of Damascus. He wrote that, he could not do that because of the upheaval [the Beylerbeyi Incident] in the capital. He

²¹⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 84, 122-123.

²¹⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 151, 192.

²¹⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 94, 137.

expressed that he came to power with the intention of ordering the sultan's domains.²¹⁸

Koca Sinan Paşa had a very long career in which he served four sultans. He outlived his generation, and competed with new rivals such as Siyavuş Paşa and Ferhad Paşa. The political discourse or the basic tools of factional struggle were similar before and after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. But after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, no grand vizier was able to hold the position for more than two and a half years. Instead of having slightly longer terms, both Koca Sinan Paşa, and his main rivals (Siyavuş Paşa and Ferhad Paşa) came to power multiple times. Their grand vizierates ended with janissary uprisings or successful denigrations. In sum, the politics in the court of Murad III were marked instability, petty factionalism, gossip, slander and scandal mongering.

The last years of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's Grand vizierate, which coincided with the first years of Murad III's reign, was a time of intense factional strife between the Sokollu and anti-Sokollu factions, with members of the Harem faction, and Albanians serving as a buffer zone. Koca Sinan Paşa came to power by taking advantage the power vacuum created after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa by ousting his main rival Lala Mustafa Paşa out of power. However, he could not keep his position, because the same instability that helped him come to power easily took him out. He suffered from the antagonism of the anti-Sokollu faction that included Lala Mustafa Paşa, Siyavuş Paşa and Üveys Paşa. New adversaries such as Ferhad Paşa were attached to this faction as well.

²¹⁸ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 156, 202.

He also lacked support from the harem, as a result of which he could not keep his position.

When the problems about the coinage and the treasury worsened, a major uprising of the soldiers brought Koca Sinan Paşa back to power. However, since the revolt left Murad III crippled with fears of dethronement, with which the soldiers threatened him. From this point onwards, the sultan became especially suspicious, and could not believe any one. Murad III became obsessed with filling the treasury, Koca Sinan Paşa catered to the sultan's needs for emotional security, however could not move him because Murad III was too fickle to follow any one person's advice. Moreover, the midgets and fools in imperial service started manipulating the sultan through his fears. As a result, Murad III was afraid to go out of the palace.

The reason Koca Sinan Paşa made so many come backs had to do with the fact that he understood the needs of the times well: He strived to keep the soldiers paid and happy, and reform the coinage, fill the treasury. Additionally, he himself was very rich; he could lend money to the treasury at times. The reason he was dismissed so many times had to do with allegations and rumors. The sultan was very credulous and seems to have believed the slander of rival parties, according to which he dismissed grand viziers and set the terrible pattern of very short terms in the office of the grand vizier.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS OF FACTIONAL STRIFE

From grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's assassination in 1579 to Murad III's death in 1593, six viziers came to the office of grand vizier in eleven terms. As factional leaders replaced one another in the grand vizierate, their servants, friends and followers replaced each other in offices high and low at court, in the provinces, and as vassals. During this period, politicians tried to oust rivals from power by imposing audits, not accepting land surveys (*tahrir*) carried out by members of opposing factions.

In war, grand viziers could postpone the sending of the resources commanders demanded from the battleground, or not send them at all. If the grand vizier went on war as commander, the deputy grand vizier could postpone sending the pay of soldiers, ammunitions, or other provisions. After a commander returned from a campaign, the grand vizier could challenge his *ruus* register (the registry of appointments kept by the commander during the campaign). Late sixteenth century Ottoman historians such as Selanikî Mustafa Efendi thought that factional leaders were jealous of one another's successes, because of which they tried to prevent them from reaching victory on the battlefield by not sending ammunitions and provisions, as well as in the conclusion of peace talks.

Dismissals

One manifestation of factional strife was rapid changes of bureaucrats each time grand viziers replaced one another. Selanikî referred to some of these

dismissals as a person's "sudden dismissal" ("nagehânî mazul").²¹⁹ The first grand vizier after Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's assassination was Semiz Ahmed Paşa. He came to power on 21 Şaban 987/ October 13, 1579 and died on 13 Rebiülevvel 988/April 28, 1580.²²⁰ In Safer 988/March-April 1580, he had the finance director of Erzurum Lalezarade Ahmed Efendi dismissed and imprisoned. However, Semiz Ahmed Paşa was not successful in purging out members of rival factions. Because in Rebiülevvel 988/April 1580, one his own followers, Hayali Beyzade Ömer Efendi (the *tımar* registrar of Algiers), was suddenly dismissed and ordered to be imprisoned in Yedikule. His rivals were getting back at him. At the same time, the secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*) Abdülmuhiy Çelebi was dismissed. Selanikî wrote that the grand vizier got ill because of his sorrow about these dismissals and did not come to the Imperial Council. He soon died.²²¹

After the death of Semiz Ahmed Paşa, Koca Sinan Paşa was appointed grand vizier on 14 Receb 988/ August 25, 1580.²²² For his first term, it is not possible to follow the dismissals and appointments from Selanikî's account, because the entire two and a half years is narrated in seven pages, as opposed to his detailed account of later periods.²²³ However, after Koca Sinan Paşa's dismissal on 10 Zilkaade 990/ December 6, 1580, Selanikî called the next entry "Tevâbi'inün hızlanıdır" (the fall of his followers). Apparently, right after the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa, his followers and servants müteferrika Kenan Bey, Galata Emîni Mihaliçlü Ahmed Çavuş, secretary of the Imperial Council Lâm Ali

²¹⁹ Selanikî, 127.

²²⁰ Danişmend, 3:490-491.

²²¹ Selanikî, 128.

²²² Danişmend, 3:491-492.

²²³ Selanikî, 129-136.

Çelebi, Mustafa Çavuş also known as Masatçı, and the scribe of barley (*arpa kâtibi*) Cafer Çelebi were all dismissed and imprisoned in Yedikule. Soon afterwards, the sultan exiled Koca Sinan Paşa to his farm in Malkara as well.²²⁴

After Koca Sinan Paşa, Siyavuş Paşa was made grand vizier on 28 Zilkaade 990/ December 24 1582 (to be dismissed on 17 Receb 992/July 25, 1584).²²⁵ Soon after his appointment, he promoted Ferhad Paşa, an enemy of Koca Sinan Paşa, to vizierate and to commandership.²²⁶ The new grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa made more appointments to the key positions in the financial and judicial bureaucracy such as governor-generals and chief justices of Rumelia and Anatolia, and the judges of Edirne and Istanbul.²²⁷

Following Siyavuş Paşa's dismissal, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa was appointed grand vizier on 20 Receb 992/ July 28, 1584 (he died on 5-6 Zilkaade 993/October29-30 1585).²²⁸ He did not make thorough changes in the bureaucracy, however, when the governor-general of Anatolia passed away, the sultan ordered that whomever Osman Paşa appointed would be the governor-general.²²⁹ Soon after his appointment, Osman Paşa left the capital to lead the to suppress a revolt in Crimea. Instead, Mesih Paşa was appointed deputy minister. Selanikî complained about the dismissals and appointments the deputy grand vizier Mesih Paşa made. Selanikî listed the officials who had been dismissed with or without reason ("cürm ü günahı olup olmayan") by the deputy grand vizier Mesih Paşa. These officials included scribes, accountants, and other secretaries.

²²⁴ Selanikî, 137.

²²⁵ Danişmend, 3:493.

²²⁶ Selanikî, 138.

²²⁷ Selanikî, 140-141.

²²⁸ Danişmend, 3:493.

²²⁹ Selanikî, 153-154.

Mesih Paşa also dismissed high-level finance directors, which Selanikî considered with bad excuses (“der-edna bahane”) on 15 Şaban 993/August 12, 1585.²³⁰

Soon afterwards Mesih Paşa succeeded as the grand vizier when Osman Paşa died on 8 Zilhicce 993/December 1, 1585 (Mesih Paşa was dismissed on 24 Rebiülahir 994/April 15, 1586.)²³¹ Soon afterwards, the finance directors were changed again, and the treasurer Burhan was audited and the money he collected from the people illegally was discovered.²³² On 10 Rebiülahir 994/March 31, 1586 Üveys Paşa, who had rose to governor-generalship, was appointed treasurer, as well as retaining his position as governor-general. Finance director of Aleppo was dismissed and instead Üveys Paşa’s brother Ramazan Efendi was appointed. However, in the case of Mesih Paşa, it was not him who controlled the situation. Days after the dismissal of treasurer Burhan Efendi, one of the people Mesih Paşa had appointed earlier, Mesih Paşa was also dismissed. Selanikî wrote that the sudden dismissal of Mesih Paşa from the grand vizierate was caused by a fatwa of the chief juriconsult Çivicizade Efendi. It can be said that, a more powerful faction that included Siyavuş Paşa, Üveys Paşa and Ferhad Paşa was opposed to grand vizier Mesih Paşa and somehow brought him down.²³³

Siyavuş Paşa became grand vizier for the second time on 25 Rebiülahir 994/April 15, 1586 (he was dismissed on 16 Cemaziyelevvel 997/April 2, 1589).²³⁴ In the beginning of the month of Ramazan 994/August 1586, the chief justice of Anatolia Molla Ahmed Efendi was suddenly dismissed.²³⁵ In mid-Zilhicce 994/November 1586, the governor-general of Aleppo Maksud Paşa was dismissed,

²³⁰ Selanikî, 156.

²³¹ Danişmend, 3:493-494.

²³² Selanikî, 166.

²³³ Selanikî, 167.

²³⁴ Danişmend, 3:494.

²³⁵ Selanikî, 174.

and in his place Hasan Ağa who had been previously dismissed from Küçük Mirahurluk was appointed.²³⁶ At the end of the month, Koca Sinan Paşa who had been exiled to Malkara after his dismissal from the grand vizierate in 990/1580 was appointed the governor-general of Damascus.²³⁷

Siyavuş Paşa was dismissed because of the Beylerbeyi Incident, when rebellious soldiers were able to execute the favorite vizier of the sultan Doğançı Mehmed Paşa, and the treasurer Mahmud Efendi.²³⁸ When Koca Sinan Paşa succeeded him as grand vizier, he made further changes. He replaced the agha of the janissaries in 998; appointed governor-generals, finance directors, judges of Bursa and Edirne.²³⁹ When Koca Sinan Paşa dismissed the Secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*) Hamza Bey, Selanikî wrote that it was Koca Sinan Paşa's custom to jokingly say that he was a liar and plotter. Selanikî wrote that the grand vizier ordered the retirement of Hamza Bey, and appointed the chief secretary (*baştezîkireci*) Dal Mehmed Çelebi instead. Selanikî wrote that Hamza Bey had been dismissed four times, but he was both a good professional and an experienced servant. He reported that it was said that like before he would again be employed in imperial service.²⁴⁰ However, in his précis reports to the sultan, the grand vizier wrote that although he had previously doubted the secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*) Hamza Bey, when he discovered the forgers, he knew he was innocent.²⁴¹ Before his dismissal, Koca Sinan Paşa made thorough changes in the judiciary, replacing the chief justices of Anatolia and Rumelia, the judges of Istanbul, Bursa, Edirne, Aleppo, and

²³⁶ Selanikî, 176.

²³⁷ Selanikî, 177.

²³⁸ On Beylerbeyi Incident, see chapter 2 above.

²³⁹ Selanikî, 220-224.

²⁴⁰ Selanikî, 226-227

²⁴¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 73, 107.

Damascus.²⁴² Koca Sinan Paşa also dismissed the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa, and the judges of Galata, Mecca, and Damascus.²⁴³ More judges were replaced in Üsküdar and Salonika, along with appointments to the medreses.²⁴⁴

After the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa, his archenemy Ferhad Paşa succeeded him on 11 Şevval 999/August 2, 1591. Three days after he came to power, Ferhad Paşa changed the governor-generals along the border. He dismissed Koca Sinan Paşa's son from his position as the governor-general of Damascus after four days. He replaced the secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*) Dal Mehmed Çelebi with Lam Ali Çelebi Efendi, replaced the judge of Bursa Mevlana Maruf Efendi with Remzizade Efendi.²⁴⁵ Ferhad Paşa made changes in the treasury staff at court, in addition to the governor-general and the finance director of Basra.²⁴⁶ Zal Mahmud Paşa's son Mehmed Bey was promoted to the governor-generalship of Tomanis, whereas his own son Mehmed Bey was appointed a 135-akçe müteferrika position, along with the governorship of Kastamonu. Selanikî wrote that the father and the son were sad to depart from each other, and the sultan surprised them with a decree ordering the promotion of Mehmed Bey to the prestigious position of governor-generalship of Aleppo.²⁴⁷ He changed more provincial governor-generals in Revan and Baghdad.²⁴⁸

Soon Ferhad Paşa himself was dismissed because of a written denunciation the former agha of janissaries Mehmed Ağa sent to the sultan, and

²⁴² Selanikî, 235.

²⁴³ Selanikî, 237.

²⁴⁴ Selanikî, 240-241.

²⁴⁵ Selanikî, 249-251.

²⁴⁶ Selanikî, 254-255.

²⁴⁷ Selanikî, 260.

²⁴⁸ Selanikî, 261.

Siyavuş Paşa replaced him as grand vizier.²⁴⁹ Siyavuş Paşa also made appointments in the financial bureaucracy. Among the dismissals and appointments Selanikî recorded, he sometimes emphasized the factional belonging of the dismissed. For instance, he wrote that Tezkirecizade Mahmud Efendi replaced Ferhad Paşa's follower (*tâbi^c-i Ferhad Paşa*) Turban Ali Bey as the finance director of Damascus. In the next entry, Selanikî described the dismissed steward of the janissaries Mahmud Bey as a useful old veteran of the army who was dismissed to be sent to a provincial governorship but did not want that and "remained with the calamity of dismissal" (*"şedaid-i 'azl ile kaldı"*).²⁵⁰ Soon afterwards, the dismissed grand vizier Ferhad Paşa was to undergo a critical audit.

During the rest of Siyavuş Paşa's third term, there had been many more dismissals and appointments. Ferhad Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa, who was the governor-general of Damascus, was demoted to the position of governor-general of Maraş. Siyavuş Paşa also changed the governor-generals of Cyprus, Tripoli, Sivas, Kars, and Diyarbakir.²⁵¹ He had the registrar of janissaries dismissed on a pretext (*"der-edna bahane"*). Siyavuş Paşa also made changes in the judiciary. These included the replacement of the chief justice of Anatolia with the chief justice of Rumelia, the promotion of the judge of Istanbul Sunullah Efendi to the position of the chief justice of Anatolia, and the appointment of Hoca Ataullahzade Şems Efendi the judge of Istanbul.²⁵²

Another high profile replacement was that of chief juriconsult Bostanzade Efendi with Zekeriyya Efendi because of a rumor about Bostanzade Mehmed

²⁴⁹ Selanikî, 264-265. On Mehmed Ağa's denunciation letter, see chapter 4.

²⁵⁰ Selanikî, 267.

²⁵¹ Selanikî, 275.

²⁵² Selanikî, 279-280.

Efendi on 27 Receb 1000/May 9, 1592.²⁵³ However, Bostanzade returned to service soon as the chief justice of Rumelia on 29 Safer 1001/December 5, 1592. Selanikî praised both the dismissed and the newly appointed by describing them as “a’lemü’l-ulema” (the one who knows more among the learned), and “efdalü’l-ulema” (the more deserving among the learned) respectively.²⁵⁴

Siyavuş Paşa was dismissed because of a janissary revolt, and Koca Sinan Paşa succeeded him as grand vizier, just like after the Beylerbeyi Incident. Soon after coming to power, Koca Sinan Paşa dismissed Divane İbrahim Paşa from his position in Diyarbakir as the governor-general.²⁵⁵ He changed the judges of Aleppo, Edirne, Bursa and Istanbul.²⁵⁶ He changed many provincial governor-generals such as those of Tripoli, Sivas, Maraş, Adana, Buda, and Rumelia. Koca Sinan Paşa spent the greater part of his third term in office as a commander against Hungary.²⁵⁷ Before Koca Sinan Paşa left for the campaign, he made major changes in the scribal service, including the replacement of the secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re’isülküttab*) Dal Mehmed Efendi with Yahya Çelebi Efendi. Selanikî noted that among the scribes that were appointed the second secretary (*tezkireci-i sani*) was a protégé of Koca Sinan Paşa (“ademlerinden”). Selanikî considered the changes in the scribal service to have been made without taking into consideration merit and worthiness.²⁵⁸

When Koca Sinan Paşa left for the Hungarian campaign, his archenemy Ferhad Paşa was appointed deputy grand vizier.²⁵⁹ During the deputy vizierate of

²⁵³ Selanikî, 270. About the rumor concerning Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi, see chapter 5 below.

²⁵⁴ Selanikî, 293-294.

²⁵⁵ Selanikî, 305. For the first dismissal of Divane İbrahim Paşa at the end of his second term, see chapter 1 and chapter 5.

²⁵⁶ Selanikî, 312.

²⁵⁷ About the campaign, see chapter 5 below.

²⁵⁸ Selanikî, 324.

²⁵⁹ Selanikî, 327.

Ferhad Paşa, many appointments were made and unmade. He changed the judges of Üsküdar and Baghdad²⁶⁰, the chief accountant of Rumelia, tax collectors of Bursa, and other financial bureaucrats.²⁶¹ He changed the finance directors of two important provinces, of Erzurum and of Diyarbakir,²⁶² the finance director of Anatolia, and the Vice finance director.²⁶³

During his deputy vizierate, Ferhad Paşa had an argument with the Grand Admiral Ciğalazade Sinan Paşa, who was to go on a sea campaign to support the Ottoman campaign in Hungary. According to Selanikî's report of the dispute in the house of Ferhad Paşa, Ciğalazade Sinan Paşa claimed that Ferhad Paşa was not worthy of this office, because he was trying to send the navy with unmerited soldiers and without the necessary preparations. Ciğalazade Sinan Paşa argued that the navy could not be sent with undeserving soldiers who did not understand from sailing. Ferhad Paşa told him that he had never been employed in any position that he did not deserve; he had been raised in the harem serving the sultan with honesty, and accused Ciğalazade Sinan Paşa of having tamed Ferhad Paşa with a long appointment in the Iranian border. Selanikî wrote that their dispute caused many rumors.²⁶⁴ More changes of provincial governors and Imperial Council secretaries took place.²⁶⁵

When complaints about a former steward of Koca Sinan Paşa, the governor-general of Revan Mustafa Paşa, reached the capital, the sultan ordered his dismissal.²⁶⁶ Among the people Ferhad Paşa got rid of was Kara Ömer Çelebi, a former registrar of janissaries, who had become the registrar of cavalrymen.

²⁶⁰ Selanikî, 335.

²⁶¹ Selanikî, 337.

²⁶² Selanikî, 338.

²⁶³ Selanikî, 344.

²⁶⁴ Selanikî, 358.

²⁶⁵ Selanikî, 358-360.

²⁶⁶ Selanikî, 375.

Selanikî wrote that when Kara Ömer Çelebi had been slandered. Although he had been appointed the Timar Registrar of Temeşvar, when he came to Istanbul for a brief stay, the deputy Ferhad Paşa had him brought and questioned him, as a result of which he was exiled to Cyprus.²⁶⁷ Selanikî did not write Ömer Çelebi's crime or how it was proven, but that he was questioned and exiled...

All newly appointed grand viziers replaced key government functionaries with the members of his own faction, in fact this had been in practice before the reign of Murad III. However, it was the rapid succession of grand viziers that caused a high rotation of key bureaucrats, administrators and judges. The Ottoman economy was already undermined by a budget deficit, debasement of the silver coin (*akçe*) etc. Especially during the wartime, there were two centers of authority, both the grand vizier and commander, or the deputy grand vizier and the commander-in-chief (the grand vizier) could make double appointments. It may even be possible that some appointments were only made on paper, because sometimes people were dismissed before they could reach their post in the provinces.²⁶⁸ The disarray of appointments had to do as much with the factional struggle between the grand vizier and the commander, or between the grand vizier and his deputy in the capital, as it had to do with the quick succession of grand viziers.

Vassals

I will try to show how rival nominees enlisted the support of factional leaders to become voivodes of Transylvania and Wallachia. Following the beginning of the Ottoman campaign into Hungary in 1593-1594, the voivodes of

²⁶⁷ Selanikî, 422.

²⁶⁸ Fleischer, 121-123.

Wallachia and Transylvania revolted in Rebiülevvel 1003/November 1594. On account of the rebellion, Mustafa Âli wrote a retrospective account of what went wrong regarding the administration of the vassalages following the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. He wrote that from the time of Sultan Süleyman and grand vizier Rüstem Paşa onwards, when one voivode died, his son or a relative succeeded him. A kapucubaşı from the court would be appointed with 300 men to protect the peasants and to represent the Ottoman state in the vassal provinces. Each time a voivode was appointed, the grand vizier would get 100.000 *filori* service fee (*hizmet*) as a gift from the newly appointed voivode. Even the kapucubaşı sent from the court would receive 3 *yük akçe*, a çavuş would receive 1 *yük*, and each kapucu would get 3000 *akçe* and a horse.²⁶⁹ Mustafa Âli claimed that this custom (*kanun*) was broken during the reign of Murad III. The voivodes started to change each year, and from each newly appointed voivode the 100.000 *filoris* were taken two or three times. Viziers apart from the grand vizier started to demand gifts from newly appointed voivodes. Âli claimed that as a result of this, the voivodes began to collect from the peasants twenty year's worth of tax in a couple of years.²⁷⁰ However, this was an invented custom. In fact, an anonymous letter informed Sultan Süleyman that whereas the dismissed voivode Radul gave 100.000 pieces to the treasury of the sultan, the newly appointed Mirçe gave that sum to Rüstem Paşa as a bribe.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Çerçi, vol. 3, 615-617. For the present (*peşkeş*) in cash by the voivodes see, Marie-Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "Sur le peşkeş du Bayram envoyé a la Porte par les principautés roumaines (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)" in *Seljoukides, Ottomans et L'Espace Roumain*, ed. Cristina Feneşan (Istanbul: Editions ISIS, 2006), 611-621. Roumainan vassalages were also important for the provisioning of the capital, see Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "Quelques données sur le ravitaillement de Constantinople au XVIe siècle" in Feneşan, 521-534. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "Sur le ravitaillement d'Istanbul au XVIème siècle en relation avec les Principautés Roumaines" in Feneşan, 535-544.

²⁷⁰ Çerçi, vol. 3, 615-617.

²⁷¹ See, Gökbilgin, 33-34.

When we look at Selanikî Mustafa Efendi's account and Koca Sinan Paşa's précis correspondence we see the frequency with which voivodes were dismissed. Short appointments of voivodes also happened before the reign of Murad III. Like the rapid succession of rival viziers in the grand vizierate, rival Boyar princes succeeded one another as the voivodes of Wallachia and Transylvania. For instance, a member of a rival family, Vintilă, succeeded Alexandru II Mircea, after his first term between 1568 and 1574. Before long, Alexandru II Mircea was appointed again for a second time from 1574 to 1577. Upon his death in 1577, his minor son Mihnea II Turcitul succeeded him as the voivode of Wallachia.

Mihnea II Turcitul's term lasted until 1583, when a rival, Petru Cercel, replaced him for two years. Petru arrived in Istanbul in 1581, and influenced the Porte to seek appointment as the voivode of Wallachia with the backing of the French ambassador. He competed with Ecaterina Salvaresso, mother of the child-voivode Mihnea (Mihnea Turcitul) in bribing Ottoman administrators and intrigue. Petru succeeded and had Mihnea and Ecaterina exiled in Tripoli. However Petru himself fell from grace in 1585 allegedly because of Mihnea's plotting along with some Turkish beys. He ran away, but was imprisoned in Medias until 1587, when he escaped and travelled to Warsaw, Vienna, and Rome. He returned to Istanbul in 1589 to seek co-option into the system. However, Mihnea arranged to have him killed by allegedly promising the sultan and Koca Sinan Paşa great sums of money.²⁷²

When we look at Koca Sinan Paşa's précis reports, we see that he was backing Mihnea. In a report datable to 1589 or 1590, he wrote to the sultan that

²⁷² Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, "L'origine des khatt-i šerif de privilège des principautés roumaines" in Feneşan, 411.

Petru Cercel was in Istanbul. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that Petru had secretly taken Muslim women, converted them to Christianity, and married them to Christians. He claimed that the current voivode Mihnea discovered and returned these women to Istanbul, about which the sultan could learn more by asking Piri Kethüda. The offenses of Petru were numerous, instead of returning to Istanbul upon dismissal, he fled and gave the Ottoman banner (*alem*) to the Hungarians. He gave the money he collected from the Wallachian peasants with oppression to the Hungarians, and the Poles. Mihnea became the voivode with the promise of paying the amount owed by Petru, most of which he already paid.

Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that after fleeing from prison, Petru travelled to Germany, Moscow, Hungary, Vienna, Spain and Rome to gather support to be reappointed the voivode of Wallachia. He reported that he had stayed in Venice for a long time, and became “one heart” with them, but now he was in Istanbul under the pretext of requesting the principedom of Wallachia. Koca Sinan Paşa demanded that he should imprison Petru and take what he owed to the Porte, after which he would force him to write everything he saw in Europe during the last four years. The grand vizier requested that he should be executed immediately after he paid the Porte what he owed, and informed on the affairs of European states.²⁷³

Koca Sinan Paşa must have got rid of Petru Cercel during his second term. But, Mihnea’s appointment as a voivode of Wallachia also came to an end in 1591, a few months before Koca Sinan Paşa’s dismissal from the grand vizierate. According to Selanikî, a former voivode of Wallachia who had been lawfully imprisoned in Rhodes had been reappointed by vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa in the

²⁷³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 41, 59-61.

middle of Receb 999/May 1591. He came to Istanbul for the appointment, but there before he proceeded to his seat in Wallachia, he killed certain people. As a result of which he was imprisoned in Yedikule and another voivode was sent to Wallachia.²⁷⁴ In late Receb 999/May 1591, the newly appointed voivode Aleksandre was admitted into the Imperial Council, where he wore his crown in a ceremony, kissed the ground under the feet of the sultan, and was ordered to leave without delay.²⁷⁵

In a report shortly after the dismissal of Mihnea from his position as the voivode, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he received the sultan's order to exile Mihnea to Karaman, but that there were many rumors about the richness of Mihnea. He argued that Mihnea collected the money from the peasants, which should be taken from him. So he wanted to settle Mihnea's account by sending Kurd Ağa, and exile Mihnea to Karaman after he paid.²⁷⁶ We do not know the exact motivation for this, but if Koca Sinan Paşa indeed had received money from Mihnea in the past, he could also use this payment of overdue taxes from Wallachia as a pretext to postpone Mihnea's exile to Karaman.

Koca Sinan Paşa's support for voivode Mihnea continued after both their dismissals. Mihnea done an unexpected thing, he converted to Islam. So after his dismissal he was appointed a governor-general in the Ottoman system as a slave of the sultan. During his third term, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote a report to the sultan requesting the appointment of Mehmed Bey, the former Mihne voyvoda, to Niğbolu instead of Prizrin, which he wanted because it was closer to Wallachia

²⁷⁴ Selanikî, 239.

²⁷⁵ Selanikî, 241.

²⁷⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 141, 180-181.

and because Prizrin did not bring enough revenue to make ends meet (“geçinmeğe imkan yoktur deyu”).²⁷⁷

In his fifth term, Koca Sinan Paşa helped Mehmed Bey, formerly known as voivode Mihnea, to establish his minor son Radu (Radval) as the voivode of Wallachia. Selanikî’s chronicle informs us about the request of the peasants of Wallachia, who in Cemaziyelevvel 1004/January 1596 requested that they too be pardoned by the sultan for their crimes and sins like the peasants of Boğdan (Moldavia) and that Radval, son of Mihne, to be appointed their voivode. The peasants promised to work diligently to rebuild the province and pay their taxes. The peasants wrote that Mihal [Michael the Brave] had caused the death of many poor Wallachian peasants to be killed by the swords of the soldiers of Islam, and they believed was to be punished by the sword and the wrath of the sultan soon. The sultan asked where Radval, son of Mihne, to be found, and soon Koca Sinan Paşa established him as voivode of Wallachia by sending a perfect horse and crown.²⁷⁸

Selanikî wrote another section about the appointment of Radval son of Mihne (Radu Mihnea) as the Wallachian voivode. He wrote that Radval has escaped with his mother to Wallachia, leaving Mihne as the sancakbeyi of Niğbolu. Now, Mihne was softened by his fatherly feelings towards his son, he presented Radval with letters from the Polish King and from the brother of the

²⁷⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 183, 226. In this report Koca Sinan Paşa mentions that the dismissed voivode was being sent to Rhodes, since the only voivode that was sent to Rhodes when Koca Sinan Paşa was in power was Alexandru cel Rau (Alexander the Evil), who was dismissed in September 1593, this must be during Koca Sinan Paşa’s third term.
<http://www.eliznik.org.uk/RomaniaHistory/wallachian-rulers.htm>

²⁷⁸ Selanikî, 554.

Crimean Khan Fetih Giray. Now Mihne requested that his minor son to be granted the position of voivode of Wallachia, and the request was granted.²⁷⁹

However, within a few months, Koca Sinan Paşa passed away on 5 Şaban 1004/April 4, 1596.²⁸⁰ Within a week, a letter of Mihal (Michael the Great) reached the capital through the kapucubaşı of governor-general of Rumelia Vizier Hasan Paşa. Mihal requested an imperial pardon, and he pledged his son, daughter, wife, güveygü, and eminent clergymen in return for his appointment as voivode of Wallachia, and promised to pay the taxes due to the treasury. The governor-general of Rumelia Vizier Hasan Paşa reported that the peasants wrote to the governor-general that they did not accept Radval, son of Mihne who became Muslim to Wallachia as their voivode, and did not let him enter the province, who the governor-general wrote Koca Sinan Paşa sent there illegally (“hilaf-ı şer-i şerif”). According to the governor-general, the peasants were united against the minor voivode Radval, and they requested the appointment of Mihal (Michael the brave). As a result, an imperial pardon (*istimalet*)²⁸¹ was sent to Mihal to pardon him on 12 Şaban 1004/April 11, 1596.²⁸² It is clear that the appointment of voivodes was one of the contested issues, in which different factions in the Ottoman court supported different contenders.²⁸³

Mihnea secured the backing of Koca Sinan Paşa by gifts and bribes, whereas his rival must have had another backer at court. When Koca Sinan Paşa appointed the son of Mihnea, soon after the death of the grand vizier, governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa requested the reappointment of Mihal (Michael

²⁷⁹ Selanikî, 562-563.

²⁸⁰ Selanikî, 581-584.

²⁸¹ Literally, pulling to your side by showing tolerance.

²⁸² Selanikî, 586.

²⁸³ Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “L’origine des khatt-i şerif de privilège des principautés roumaines” in Feneşan, 411-412.

the Brave). Different court factions supported different contenders for the voivode of Wallachia, and the support could continue into the next generation, as we see in the case of Koca Sinan Paşa and voivodes Mihnea Turcitul and Radval.

Audits

Audits were used to find out about the corruption of officials. The officials who were most often audited were commanders, governor-generals and finance directors. However, in the instable court of Murad III, even the audit of a grand vizier could be ordered. As we saw above in chapter one, audits were used in factional politics before the reign of Murad III and the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa. For instance, Sokollu Mehmed Paşa ordered the audit of Üveys Çelebi from the opposition faction in Şevval 982/February 1575²⁸⁴, or he ordered the audit of Lala Mustafa Paşa after he returned from the Yemen campaign in Receb 976/January 1569.²⁸⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa demanded the auditing of Ferhad Paşa multiple times from the sultan when he had been grand vizier. In one report, Koca Sinan Paşa reminded the sultan that it had been requested multiple times that Ferhad Paşa be audited on account of a rumor that he embezzled 1000 *yük akçe*. Other people he wanted to have audited included Ciğalazade Sinan Paşa and governor-general of Rumelia [Hasan Paşa].²⁸⁶

Koca Sinan Paşa must have succeeded in having Ferhad Paşa audited. For Selanikî wrote in Receb 999/May 1591 that a Hızır Bey had written a malicious

²⁸⁴ Fleischer, 73.

²⁸⁵ Fleischer, 53-54.

²⁸⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 37, 52. This telhis mentions the death of the grand admiral at a time when Ferhad Paşa was in Istanbul, on account of this it can be dated to Ramazan 999/May 1591, when grand admiral Hasan Paşa passed away, see Selanikî, 246. Other things the report mentions such as governor-general of Rumelia, who was dismissed in Receb 999/February 1591, see Selanikî 236. Another report related to this one about the belongings of the admiral mentions David Passi see Sahillioğlu, Telhis 226, 260.

denunciation in order to accuse Ferhad Paşa of having embezzled a large sum during the four year long campaign against the Safavids. Selanikî claimed that Hızır Bey carried this out with the teaching of the grandees (“ayan-ı saadet talimi ile”). Hızır Bey was appointed to audit the commander Ferhad Paşa’s registries of four years of campaigning in exchange for a 1400-*yük-akçe*-worth tax farm. He had worked for many days diligently (“cidd ü cehd ile çalışıp”). Yet, he was unable to come up with legal proof of embezzlement by Ferhad Paşa. As a result, the sultan ordered Hızır Bey to be imprisoned in the middle of Receb 999/May 1591.²⁸⁷

Upon hearing the imprisonment of Hızır Bey, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote a précis to the sultan complaining about why the imprisonment was not ordered to him. He inquired whether the sultan considered him a protector of Hızır Bey, or negligent in these matters. Koca Sinan Paşa expressed that he was offended because he thought the sultan considered him negligent, and requested to be dismissed if the sultan thought so about him. Koca Sinan Paşa further protested about the decision. He wrote that the sultan should know who Hızır Bey was, and explained that Hızır Bey tried to come up with 1200 *yük akçe* from the revenues of Revan that was previously embezzled. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the embezzlers took their revenge on Hızır Bey. He further claimed that the enemy of Hızır Bey, the former registrar Hüseyin Ağa, tried to offer a bribe of 30.000-40.000 gold coins in order to avoid the audit, about which Kurd Ağa and Yemişçi Hasan Ağa informed the grand vizier. Koca Sinan Paşa concluded his report by

²⁸⁷ Selanikî, 240.

assuring the sultan about his loyalty, and ensuring him that he would imprison one of his own two eyes if the sultan ordered.²⁸⁸

In his first report about the division of current timars into smaller lots (*ifraz*) in the land registry of Erzurum, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that Hızır Bey was to recover resources for the Treasury, but he was imprisoned before he could do that. Koca Sinan Paşa requested that Hızır should be released from prison, and the registries should be taken from both Hızır and Hüseyin, and be sealed and sent to the vizier in Erzurum.²⁸⁹

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa accused Hüseyin with dividing the current timar lots into smaller lots (*ifraz*), and distributing the newly created lots. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the objective of the land survey was to increase lands held by the sultan (*havass-ı hümayun*). Koca Sinan Paşa reminded the sultan that he approved to stop the division of lands into smaller lots (*ifraz*) when he first reported about this issue. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that when he gave the registries to Hızır Bey in order to have him review them; Hüseyin provoked the cavalymen of Erzurum to revolt and to say that they were not happy with Hızır Bey's resurvey. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the audit was being interrupted by the people who were being audited by provocations and visits to grand vizier's house and to the Imperial Council. The grand vizier claimed that their objective was to prevent the demonstration of how resources were lost to the treasury by the division of timars into smaller lots (*ifraz*).²⁹⁰

Selanikî wrote that Hızır Bey was later released from the prison and was entrusted with the task of redistribution of the *timars* in Erzurum according to the

²⁸⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83a, 121.

²⁸⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 159, 206.

²⁹⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 40a, 58-59.

newly resurveyed registers to cavalrymen (*sipahi*). Selanikî claimed that Müteferrika Hüseyin caused disputes with the cavalrymen (*sipahi*), but he was forced to accept Hızır Bey as the finance director of Erzurum.²⁹¹ In this case, the audit of the land holdings distributed by the commander Ferhad Paşa through his men Müteferrika Hüseyin coincided with the challenging of the survey of the lands.

One of the tools of all grand viziers could use against a commander who returned from the campaign was to reject his *ruus* register (appointment and land distribution) and to audit his accounts. We learn from Peçevî that this was exactly what Siyavuş Paşa did before the end of his first term: “Saying that Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa went to excess in the taxation, the grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa rejected his *ruus* register. His intention was to denigrate Osman Paşa.”²⁹²

During his third term, Siyavuş Paşa that ordered an exceptional audit, this time of the former grand vizier Ferhad Paşa in 1592. Although Siyavuş Paşa had been supportive of Ferhad Paşa’s rise (probably because they shared a common enemy in Koca Sinan Paşa) he ordered an anti-Ferhad Paşa purge from the bureaucracy after his dismissal on 25 Cemaziyelahir 1000/April 8, 1592. Ferhad Paşa had been dismissed because of a written denunciation the former agha of the janissaries Mehmed Ağa sent to the sultan. Now, as a result of the same denunciation, Ferhad Paşa was to be audited and questioned for the second time (“tekrar teftiş olunması”) about the expenditures and the revenues during his appointment as a commander. The auditing committee consisted of vizier and Chancellor Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa, the judge dismissed from Mecca Arabzade Abdulrauf Efendi, and finance director of revenues Seyyid Mehmed Efendi.

²⁹¹ Selanikî, 240.

²⁹² Peçevî, 2:94.

Selanikî wrote that they were appointed not only to question Ferhad Paşa, but also to show animosity (“sual idüp husumet etmek üzere tayin buyrulduklar”).

Furthermore, finance director of Anatolia Hasan Efendi, Hüseyin Efendi who had been the finance director of Erzurum and divided the tımar lots (ifraz), and the chief doorkeeper of Ferhad Paşa Sinan Ağa were imprisoned. Ferhad Paşa said that Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa was an honest person, but the former judge of Mecca Arabzade should not be on such a committee because he used be under his authority. Ferhad Paşa further claimed that his imprisoned servants and followers did not know about the affairs of the state, he claimed he had the registry and the memory of what he gave and what he took, and that there could be no use of those poor servants’ words. Because of Ferhad Paşa’s message, the meeting was delayed.

The sultan also sent for Koca Sinan Paşa to take part in the audit, however, he declined the offer saying that everything that was being said would be attributed to him, and he would rather pray for the health of the sultan in his farm in Malkara. Koca Sinan Paşa also said that it was a newly invented and ugly thing to audit former grand viziers. He advised them not to do it because he thought it was something that would later be regretted.²⁹³ Both Ferhad Paşa and Siyavuş Paşa were Koca Sinan Paşa’s main enemies; he was merely being diplomatic by not taking part in the crashing of one enemy by the other.

Demanding audits was not limited to grand viziers. Sometimes his rivals also demanded audits. For instance, when the sultan wrote to the grand vizier about complaints he received concerning the governor of Bolu İbrahim Bey, Koca Sinan Paşa answered that the governor of Bolu was Behram Bey, who had just

²⁹³ Selanikî, 268-269.

arrived in Bolu a few days ago. He claimed that since Bolu was a nearby town, if there were complainers they would have come to the court. Koca Sinan Paşa argued that if there were papers about Behram Bey, these might be the denunciations of people who wanted to be appointed governor of Bolu. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that since a tax farm and fifteen ships were commissioned to Behram Bey, dismissing him on account of a rumor would be inappropriate before the completion of these commissions.²⁹⁴

In the beginning of his third term, Koca Sinan Paşa promoted Behram Bey to the governor-generalship of Kefe, when the former holder of the position passed away. Selanikî wrote that the appointment was given to Behram Bey on the condition that he supplied the Imperial Kitchen with butter (*revgan-ı sade*), whereas the other taxes (“mîrî cizye, adet-i ağnam ve sair hukuk-ı rusum-ı şeriyye ve örfiyye”) he would keep for himself (“kabz u zabt idüp”). In addition to Behram Bey’s appointment to Kefe, his young son was appointed the governor of Bolu on 15 Şaban 1001/May 17, 1593.²⁹⁵ Although Selanikî does not comment on it, it is obvious that this was a very controversial double appointment. But, Behram Bey’s appointment did not last very long.

Within less than a month, in the beginning of Ramazan 1001/June 1593, the finance director of Anatolia Burhaneddin Efendi sued him (“külli dava idüp”) for his selling and buying of imperial lands in 990, the registries of which Burhaneddin Efendi argued were deficient. When the finance director’s petition was read to the sultan, he ordered the organization of committee under the supervision of the Second Vizier Ferhad Paşa, composed of experts of

²⁹⁴ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 175, 219. Since Selanikî Mustafa Efendi wrote that the governor of Bolu Behram Bey (also known as Rum Bey oğlu) was appointed Kefe Beylerbeyisi on 15 Şaban 15 1001/May 17, 1593, it must be before that date. See Selanikî, 313.

²⁹⁵ Selanikî, 313.

bureaucracy and finance (“cümle erbab-ı kalem ve ashâb-ı rakam”), members of the ulema such as former chief justices of Rumelia Çelebi oğlu Mevlana Hasan Efendi, Mevlana Abdülbaki Efendi, and Mevlana Ali Çelebi. The sultan ordered this committee to audit and investigate the selling and buying of lands, and to make Behram Bey pay for what he owed to the state.²⁹⁶

The audit of Behram Bey was an issue of controversy. It is obvious that Behram Bey belonged to the faction of Koca Sinan Paşa, and Ferhad Paşa was responsible for auditing him along with other members of his own faction. Selanikî wrote that some members of the ulema were against this lawsuit, along with the grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa. In the second hearing, Mevlana Abdülbaki Efendi ruled that Behram Paşa owed to the Imperial Treasury 60 yük akçes. Selanikî claimed that Behram Bey did not have the amount in cash because he had spent what he collected on giving bribes and presents in the households of the grandees (“ayan-ı saadet kapularında pişkeş ü hedaya tarikiyle”). The sultan sent Ferhad Paşa another order for making Behram Bey pay the treasury. Soon afterwards, on 10 Ramazan 1001/June 10, 1593, the governor-generalship of Kefe was given to Ramazan Paşa. Ramazan Paşa was the brother of Üveys Paşa, who was another enemy of Koca Sinan Paşa. So the law suit against Behram Bey was a factional affair, where the members of the anti-Koca Sinan Paşa faction came together.²⁹⁷

As a result of the audit, Behram Bey was imprisoned on 4 Şevval 1001/July 4, 1593 in Yedikule for the tahsil of the 60 yük akçe. In a few days, he was released from Yedikule to be sent to another prison (“mal talep olunmak için

²⁹⁶ Selanikî, 316-317.

²⁹⁷ Selanikî, 317.

zindana gönderildi”).²⁹⁸ His son went to the house of Ferhad Paşa to request the prevention of the sale of his father’s house and other properties and paid 11.700 golden coins towards his father’s debt to the treasury.²⁹⁹ Selanikî’s next entry is about the dismissal of the finance director of Burhaneddin Efendi. According to Selanikî, Koca Sinan Paşa reported to the sultan that he wanted to dismiss Burhaneddin Efendi, but the sultan did not let him saying that those who work for increasing the treasury could not be dismissed. However, within a week he was dismissed, and vice finance director Mahmud Efendi was promoted to the position of finance director of Anatolia instead on 14 Şevval 1001/July 11, 1593.³⁰⁰

However, grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa and Burhaneddin Efendi combined their powers for a massive audit in Şaban 1002/April-May 1594. During his third term, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan for the approval of the auditing of the holders of the positions of finance directors of Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli, Diyarbakir, Erzurum and Karaman in the past ten years. The aim of the audit was the retroactive calculation and collection of the tax resources the finance directors did not send to the treasury. Koca Sinan Paşa had some estimates of the unpaid amounts. He claimed that Hakkak Mahmud Çavuş, who had previously been appointed with the overseeing of the unsent taxes of Aleppo, calculated a sum of 20 times 100.000 *filori*. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed finance directors, tax collectors, tax farmers, scribes and accountants had embezzled this amount. He claimed that most of these people were present in the capital and could be tried by a committee consisting of Miralem Hasan Ağa as the supervisor, the dismissed finance director Burhaneddin Efendi, İbrahim Efendi, Müteferikka

²⁹⁸ This might be Zindan Han in Eminönü across from the Yeni Valide Camii, where people who owed money were imprisoned.

²⁹⁹ Selanikî, 324.

³⁰⁰ Selanikî, 324.

Mansur who had the complete trust of the commander, Mevlana Hamza who had been the auditor of unsent amounts under Mesih Paşa for many years, and the aforementioned Hakkak Mahmud Çavuş. The sultan's answer to this request was positive, he ordered the grand vizier to carry out the audit.³⁰¹

Selanikî Mustafa Efendi also wrote extensively about the audit, and made the dating possible.³⁰² Selanikî named the finance directors of Aleppo that were not identified by Koca Sinan Paşa. They were Nuh Paşa, Lala Ramazan Paşa, Mustafa Efendi, Yahya Efendi, Tezkirecizade Mahmud Efendi, Hayalîzade Ömer Efendi and Seyyid Ahmed Efendi. Selanikî claimed that it was Burhaneddin Efendi who wrote to the sultan in order to audit these persons and received a positive answer.³⁰³ When the auditing took place Koca Sinan Paşa was away from the capital for the Hungarian campaign. Selanikî's account suggests that the main figure behind the audit was not Koca Sinan Paşa, but the deputy grand vizier Ferhad Paşa. Because in Selanikî's account of the outcome of the audit, he wrote that the sultan wrote to Ferhad Paşa about the finance directors of Aleppo who had previously been audited. According to Selanikî, the final hearing of the finance directors took place in the house of the [deputy] grand vizier Ferhad Paşa in front of the chief justices of Rumelia and Anatolia, Mevlana Sunullah Efendi and Mevlana Ali Çelebi Efendi. Selanikî wrote that the former finance directors Nuh Paşa and Lala Ramazan Paşa were seated across on chairs, along with six other finance directors. The first hearing took place in the house of Vizier Hasan Paşa. They were each questioned and defended themselves. Selanikî reported that Ferhad Paşa asked them a question the sultan posed. The question was why

³⁰¹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 177, 221-222. For dating, see, Selanikî, 367.

³⁰² Selanikî, 367, 379, 388, 389.

³⁰³ Selanikî, 366-267.

the revenue of Aleppo, which had been over 400.000 gold coins each year, was now less than 200.000 gold coins. The answer of the finance directors was that if it was to be calculated it would be over 400.000 gold coins.

Upon hearing this, the chief justices said that it was not possible to pronounce a ruling based on the hearing, and left (“Bize şer-i şerifle istima edicek ve hükm idecek kazıyye varsa görelim”). Selanikî noted that they said that there could not be ruling based on these hearings because most of what was said was said in animosity (“bir nice meclis olsa meal u netice çıkmaz ve faysal bulmaz, niza lafzidür.”) Selanikî wrote that the bone fide people (“ezkiya-yı halk”) said things that were acceptable about the treasury of Aleppo. They said that the previous sultans would not let the governor-generals control the revenues, the independence of the finance directors of Aleppo made it in the past such an important source of revenue. If the governor-generals continue the control the province’s resources, the tax revenues will hardly exceed 100.000 gold pieces.³⁰⁴

The explanation Selanikî gave was again anecdotal and political; the reason for the decrease in the revenue of Aleppo was caused by decline (i.e. changes) in the political supervision of the taxes. It is clear from Selanikî’s account that the entire hearing and audit was considered a factional clash between different groups, and what Ferhad Paşa and Burhaneddin Efendi represented was animosity towards the defendants.

Concomitant with this lawsuit, Burhaneddin Efendi also accused the finance director of Anatolia with using the resources of another budget (*şikk-i sani kalemi*) for the imperial expenses and giving orders with the imperial seal for the revenues and expenditures. When the sultan heard the dispute, both Hasan

³⁰⁴ Selanikî, 388-389.

Efendi and Burhaneddin Efendi were dismissed. However, it was Hasan Efendi who had been imprisoned in Yedikule. The steward of doormen (*kapucular kethüdası*) was ordered to seal the houses, gardens and belongings of Hasan Efendi.³⁰⁵ Selanikî wrote that the belongings and properties of Hasan Efendi were recorded because of a possibility that he had embezzled huge amounts of money. What was found mostly consisted of tradable goods such as fabrics, pepper, lapis lazuli, sugar and other valuable products. Selanikî reported that it was said that Hasan Efendi must have had a buried treasure. Hasan Efendi was “frightened” with chains and other things, whereas his steward and other servants were tortured. A small account book of the money he lent on interest to Muslims was found. Selanikî wrote that because Hasan Efendi had good relations with the people, everybody prayed for his release.³⁰⁶

Selanikî wrote that at the same time as the hearing of the finance directors of Aleppo in the house of Ferhad Paşa, Hasan Efendi was taken out of the Yedikule prison to the house of Vizier İbrahim Paşa for a hearing. İbrahim Paşa offered Hasan Efendi a settlement. The offer was if Hasan Efendi came up with 30.000 gold coins by selling his house, gardens, and other belongings, he would be given the finance directorship of Egypt along with a governorship in Egypt. Selanikî reported that İbrahim Paşa told him if he had friends among all the years he worked, he should seek their help now. Selanikî wrote that everything he owned during his life time was sold in the palace by criers. According to Selanikî, Hasan Efendi came up with 20.000 gold coins when his friends intervened, and gave his properties for the rest.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Selanikî, 379.

³⁰⁶ Selanikî, 380.

³⁰⁷ Selanikî, 389.

Thus, both the audit of the finance directors of Aleppo, and the finance director Hasan Efendi remained inconclusive. But it is clear from Selanikî's account that the deputy grand vizier Ferhad Paşa used law suits and audits to get rid of his enemies. Another vizier, İbrahim Paşa intervened in the audit of the former finance director Hasan Efendi. Although the form of the attack might have initially given it credibility, it is clear from Selanikî's account that it was seen as a lawsuit that represented the interests of one group. Since the collection of revenues was a pressing issue during the financially strained reign of Murad III, the sultan was ready to let his viziers go to great lengths to collect what was due to the treasury. If Ferhad Paşa and Burhaneddin Efendi had been able to prove some of the defendants guilty, they would be able to legitimately get rid of their political opponents, or the clientele of his rivals. However, the chief justices did not support the lawsuit or pronounced rulings that favored Ferhad Paşa's interests. Ultimately, the decrease in the tax revenues of Aleppo probably had as much to do economic regression caused by the Price Revolution as with the embezzlement of finance directors.

Uprisings

Uprisings were another form of political action used in factional strife. In the Beylerbeyi Incident, instigating the soldiers without considering the collateral damage of such an action could be carried out because of factional rivalry. The vocabulary concerning the rebellions is quite vague. Murad III refers to rebellion as a movement (*hareket*)³⁰⁸, Koca Sinan Paşa, among others, refers to it as *fitne*³⁰⁹ and *fesad*.³¹⁰ Whereas *fitne* carry the connotation of subverting the social and

³⁰⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 90, 130-131.

³⁰⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 186, 228-229.

³¹⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 86, 125-126.

political order, *fesad* can be defined as disloyalty, disobedience or malice.³¹¹ In addition to these terms, Koca Sinan Paşa used the word *cemiyyet* (meeting) to talk about the gathering of judges, along with movement (*hareket*, and *fitne ve fesad*.)³¹²

Political rivals accused one another of instigating military uprisings in order to get rid of their opponents. Koca Sinan Paşa's précis collection, Selanikî's chronicle and other contemporary sources are full of these controversial claims of conspiracies. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote about "muharrik"s (provocateurs) and "tahrik" (provocation.) Although I am aware that bottom-up military rebellions and the involvement of higher-ups are not mutually exclusive, I focus on the latter here, for the sake of explaining the workings of court factions.

Of the grand viziers who came to power during the reign of Murad III, Siyavuş Paşa had been dismissed twice from office on account of military rebellions. He was dismissed from his second term thanks to the rebellion known as the Beylerbeyi Incident in 997/1579, and from his third term because of a janissary rebellion in 1001/1593. Both rebellions had to do with the payment of the soldiers with debased coinage.³¹³ Ferhad Paşa was dismissed twice because of janissary rebellions. Koca Sinan Paşa was removed from his second term because Ferhad Paşa instigated the janissaries of Erzurum to rebel.³¹⁴ Ferhad Paşa was dismissed from both his terms because of janissary rebellions, and both times Koca Sinan Paşa was accused of instigating them.³¹⁵

³¹¹ Jane Hathaway, "Introduction" in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jane Hathaway (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2002), 3.

³¹² Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 18, 35, 57, 76, 81, 120, 128, 158, and 172.

³¹³ Selaniki, 301-304.

³¹⁴ Danişmend, vol. 3, 494.

³¹⁵ Danişmend, vol. 3, 494-495.

However, uprisings were not limited to the janissaries. During Koca Sinan Paşa's second term, the judges also held political meetings (*cemiyet*) in order to voice their dissent and achieve their goals. Selanikî's chronicle and Koca Sinan Paşa's précis reports give a lot of information about the uprisings of the judges. According to Selanikî, the reason for the uprisings of the judges had to do with the imprisonment of the judges who prevented the collection and sending of tax resources in Rumelia. When the judges heard about the imprisonment, they provoked the students of law and religion in coffee houses ("danişmend ve suhte taifesini tahrik edüp") they held a meeting in the courtyard of Fatih Mosque and said, "This is a great betrayal of the ulema, and we will soon all be betrayed." Selanikî wrote that the provocateurs were imprisoned in Yedikule, and the chief justice of Rumelia Zekeriyya Efendi was dismissed. Instead chief justice of Anatolia was promoted.³¹⁶ Selanikî did not comment on the issue, but Koca Sinan Paşa provided the details, the identification of the grandees supporting the meeting, and the possible consequences of the event.

First of all, we learn from Koca Sinan Paşa's reports that the reason for the imprisonment of judges in the first place had to do with the collection of *avârız* tax.³¹⁷ Koca Sinan Paşa accused a certain judge, the judge of Samakov with embezzlement of the iron and provocation.³¹⁸ Koca Sinan Paşa argued that the reason for the uprising of judges had to do with the fact that he uncovered their embezzlement of this form of tax. Koca Sinan Paşa accused the chief justice of Rumelia for not reporting the uprising although he knew about it prior to their

³¹⁶ Selanikî, 225.

³¹⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 18, 27-28. For the judges' role in the collection of *avarız*, see chapter 3 below.

³¹⁸ There was an iron foundry in Samakov, which was essential for the building of the navy. Although there was a *çavuş* in charge of the foundry, orders for iron were sent to the judge. For the use of nails made in Samakov for the Ottoman navy, see Colin Imber, "Reconstruction of the Ottoman Fleet after the Battle of Lepanto" in *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, (Istanbul: Editions ISIS, 1996), 91.

meeting. He claimed that when the judges went to him, and the chief justice Zekeriyya Efendi provoked them rather than forbidding them. Koca Sinan Paşa identified the small provokers as Kara Kemal, Kaya and Subyanîoğlu. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that the imprisonment of these provocateurs and the dismissal of the chief justice of Rumelia were necessary to restore order. In order to convince the sultan, the grand vizier argued that the meeting and uprising of judges would inspire meeting and revolting of the janissaries, which was the greatest fear of Sultan Murad III. Murad III's reply to the report was to order the imprisonment of these judges, and the dismissal of the chief justice Zekeriyya Efendi.³¹⁹

Koca Sinan Paşa later wrote that, after the imprisonment of the provocateurs, some judges came to him and claimed that those who had instigated the rebellion were those who were embezzling avârız resources, that they should be imprisoned, and that they saw nothing but the religiosity of the grand vizier. Koca Sinan Paşa also quoted the janissaries' comment about the uprising of the judges, who allegedly said that they would have vanquish the judges who were trying to bring about disorder by rebelling if the sultan let them, because they themselves were suffering from the recent revolt [e.g. the Beylerbeyi Incident]. Koca Sinan Paşa's objective in quoting the supportive words of the judges and of the janissaries, which were ultimately irrelevant, was to legitimize his decisions.³²⁰

Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that behind the small provocateurs there was the plotting of some grandee's and furthermore that there involvement ought to be brought out in the open. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that if he named the bigger

³¹⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 18, 27-28.

³²⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 35, 47-48.

provocateur, the sultan would not believe him. He tried to make the sultan guess the conspirator by asking certain questions such as “Who appointed the judge of Samakov? To whose faction the judge of Samakov belongs?” Koca Sinan Paşa requested the sultan to learn the answers to these questions from a trusted informer. He sent the sultan a letter he received from a certain Cenani of Aleppo who had supposedly confessed being a provocateur. Koca Sinan Paşa concluded his report by protesting about the daily visits of the son of the dismissed chief justice Zekeriyya Efendi to the court, and opined that there could not be a bigger provocation than this. The sultan wrote back to the grand vizier that, he now knew the identity of one of the provocateurs, and the rest should also be uncovered.³²¹ So the puzzle Koca Sinan Paşa sent to the sultan worked. He identified the rest of the provocateurs in another report.

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa requested the sultan to be decisive about the punishment of instigators, and claimed that the conspirators were among themselves, meaning that factional leaders were involved in the uprising of judges. Koca Sinan Paşa must have circulated the identities of the conspirators of the meeting of judges in rumors, because he asserted that Sultan Süleyman had killed his own son because of a rumor, and that sultan Murad should not overlook this issue.³²²

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa accused Ferhad Paşa of being insincere when he wrote a paper to the sultan about how the judges’ uprising was an unpardonable event. The grand vizier claimed that because he was uncovering the embezzlement of the faction of Ferhad Paşa (“Ferhad Paşa’nın tevabi ğinin beliyatına yapışıldığından beri”), he was busy with opposing to the grand vizier

³²¹ Sahilliođlu, Telhis 35, 47-48.

³²² Sahilliođlu, Telhis 57, 82.

and with trying to bring him down. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that Ferhad Paşa was one of the provocateurs of judges himself but because the conspiracy did not bring about the result he envisioned, he now disapproved of the judges who revolted.³²³ So instigating the janissaries or the judges was an accusation Koca Sinan Paşa made in order to remove his rivals from power. As we saw with the Beylerbeyi Incident, rebellions could cause dismissals of grand viziers. It is not possible to prove if rival factional leaders in fact instigated these rebellions, because these are conspiracies.

Conclusion

The tools of factional struggle in the court of Murad III included appointments and dismissals, audits and uprisings. Animosity and friendship could cause appointment and dismissal. The number of high-ranking officials who could circumvent factional belonging and strife seem to be rather low. When a grand vizier replaced another, he changes officials high and low, near and far. It has been argued that some of the provincial appointments never took effect, because an official could be dismissed before arriving at his post.

Although auditing an official seems to be part of the legal process, how it worked for the political elite was rather convoluted. Since there was no court to settle the accounts of the members of the political elite, committees composed of chief justices, *çavuşes*, and finance directors were organized for the trial of accused officials. However, the narrative accounts of these audits suggest that the entire process of audit was perceived as a factional affair, often described in terms such as enmity and revenge.

³²³ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 45, 65-66.

Uprisings were a subversive technique for getting rid of the grand vizier in power. In the Beylerbeyi Incident, İbrahim Paşa used it to get revenge on Dođancı Mehmed Paşa, but it blew out of proportion. Other janissary revolts that resulted in the change of the grand vizier could also be the result of conspiracies of rivals. Koca Sinan Paşa often blamed his adversaries for trying to bring about a revolt (*fitne*) among the soldiers. However, uprisings were not limited to the military. During Koca Sinan Paşa's second term, the judges also tried to organize an uprising, however the grand vizier suppressed them. He used the judges' uprising to blame his rivals such as Ferhad Paşa with conspiracy. I tried to show here the pervasiveness of accusations of conspiracies, although it is not possible to prove or disprove them. This attests to the fact that the instability that became inherent in the political after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa had a lot to do with the ubiquity of conspiracies.

CHAPTER 3

KOCA SİNAN PAŞA'S REFORM POLICIES

Koca Sinan Paşa considered himself a great reformer and wrote that he was brought to power for a second time after the Beylerbeyi Incident in order to reform various institutions which were in disarray.³²⁴ In the following pages, I will look at Koca Sinan Paşa's reform policies during his second term concerning the debased coinage, the market price control, budget deficit, increasing revenues by the introduction of tax-farming, ordering the payroll registries of janissaries, building the navy, forged documents, and corrupt officials. Even his reform policies were colored by factional strife. He made allegations about his adversaries as he explained his reforms to the sultan in his précis correspondence (*telhis*). The policies Koca Sinan Paşa adopted to reduce the budget deficit were challenged by his adversaries in a similarly slanderous manner.

The Correction of the Debased Coinage

There had been a huge debasement of the *akçe* from 1585s to 1589. The debasement had been explained by the influx of silver from Americas, and the fluctuations it created on prices. However Şevket Pamuk explained that the primary cause of the debasement was the treasury's shortage of silver. The budgets from the period present a positive picture. Based on the budgets, Baki Tezcan argued that the debasement of the *akçe* resulted mainly from the market forces, which imposed a de facto debasement *akçe*, because of the integration of silver and gold currency zones in the empire. Tezcan argued that before the arrival of the American silver in 1570s, the markets preferred Safavid silver coin

³²⁴ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 151, 195.

şahi over *akçe*. He claims that it was not the fiscal problems and the long wars that left the treasury deplete, but the greater demand for currency, which resulted in the overvaluation of the *şahi* disproportionately to its silver content.³²⁵

Because the exchange rates of the *şahi* and the *akçe* were not regulated by the government, the spread of *şahi*, which had less silver content than *akçe* but was overvalued, in Anatolia and the Balkans was the cause of the actual debasement of the *akçe*. So the debasement of 1580s was a measure to combine different monetary zones by the central government, however it was not a successful policy because the southern provinces did not debase their coins at the same rate.³²⁶

Akçe was a coin that had 0.61 gram of silver in it; in 1585 the government devalued the *de facto* debased *akçe*, but continued to pay the salaries with the good *akçes*. It was in 1589 that the government debased all the *akçes*, reducing the silver content to 0.35 gram. The debasement was used to counter the budget deficit by pushing more money in the economy. Because debasement caused inflation, the soldiers who received a fixed salary lost their purchasing power. They demanded either pay rises in accordance with the percent of the debasement, or correction of the coinage.³²⁷

The soldiers who were unhappy with receiving their pay in debased coinage and the steep inflation demanded the head of Murad III's favorite-minister Dođancı Mehmed Paşa, along with the treasurer Mahmud Efendi in a

³²⁵ Baki Tezcan, "The Ottoman Monetary Crisis of 1585 Revisited." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52 (June 2009), 460-463; 481-482.

³²⁶ Tezcan, 487.

³²⁷ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Paranın Tarihi* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 143-148. Şevket Pamuk, *100 soruda Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi: 1500-1914* (Istanbul: K Kitaplığı, 2003), 134-139. Tezcan, 497. Because different monetary zones existed in the empire huge profits could be made by exchanging different currencies that were in circulation, see Tezcan, 486-489.

brutal janissary revolt (i.e. the Beylerbeyi Incident) in 1589. In his account of the Beylerbeyi Incident, Selanikî Mustafa Efendi explained how the debasement took place by quoting the real marked values of silver and gold coins. He claimed that the salary of a cavalryman was reduced by half—from 10 to 5 gold coins. Selanikî wrote that whereas 500 *akçes* would be minted from 100 *dirhems* of silver before, now 2000 *akçes* were being minted from the same amount of silver. He wrote that the fixed market prices (*narh*) became double, the shopkeepers traded in actual prices they set instead of the government-controlled fixed prices (*narh*).

Selanikî and other chroniclers and historians were silent about the reform policies of Koca Sinan Paşa. But the grand vizier's précis correspondence with Murad III has many details concerning the reform of the coinage. Tezcan considered Koca Sinan Paşa's efforts to correct the *akçe* as the continuation of the debasement process began by Doğançlı Mehmed Paşa and treasurer Mahmud Efendi. However, the silver content Koca Sinan Paşa quoted in his reports point to a corrective reform that aimed the standardization of the silver content of *akçe* throughout the empire.³²⁸ However, Koca Sinan Paşa himself claimed to increase the value of the *akçe*.

The earliest report he sent to the sultan about the reform of the coinage included his explanation of the causes of the debasement. Koca Sinan Paşa used more familiar explanatory schemes of uncovering corruption of officials and displaying the effects of decline, which were also used by Ottoman historians, advice literature writers, and politicians. Koca Sinan Paşa exposed the corruption of officials, and their collaboration with frauds. According to Koca Sinan Paşa, the revolution of the Imperial Treasury and the revolt of the soldiers took place

³²⁸ Tezcan, 496-497.

because certain officials were exchanging the red and tin *akçe* into gold and silver coins through the collaboration of certain urban tax-collectors (*ümena*). Thus they filled the treasury with debased coins, and because the soldiers were paid in those debased coins they revolted. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that there were many anecdotes (*kıssa*) but he did not want to give the sultan a headache, and prayed for the destruction of the corrupt officials and the goldsmiths involved in this scheme.³²⁹ In this report Koca Sinan Paşa slandered financial bureaucrats and goldsmiths without naming them, or making legal accusations.

In order to standardize and correct the *akçe*, Koca Sinan Paşa sent sample coins in purses to the governor-generals with orders to mint the coins according to the sample in the provincial mints. He wrote them that he would have the provincial mints inspected within a few months. Secondly, Koca Sinan Paşa gathered the merchants and told them that “previously it was forbidden to trade in silver, and not a single dirhem silver would be exported from Istanbul, and it is still forbidden.” He thus warned them: “We have sent prohibition orders to the ports, and to certain gates, along with guards. Whoever carries silver will be executed and his properties will be confiscated.” He wrote to the sultan that the prohibition of the export of silver was announced continually throughout the city.³³⁰

Sometime soon after the beginning of his second term, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that 800 *akçe*s were being minted from 100 *dirhem* silver in accordance with a recent imperial decree. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he had been very cautious regarding the new mint and that more coins were being struck

³²⁹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 6, 10.

³³⁰ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 6, 10-11. There’s no information available on the amount of silver that entered and exited the market, see Tezcan, 485.

gradually. He wrote that there were not enough *akçes* to pay the ulufe of the soldiers. But he suggested that one troop could be given 10 purses of corrected *akçes* and 5 purses of debased *akçes*. He wrote that he was working day and night, and collecting everyone's debased coinage to be reminted. If the owners of debased coins did not agree to give their *akçes* to be reminted, they could sell it. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the sample coins were about to be sent to the provincial mints along with orders to mint the *akçes* according to the sample. The sample coins bore the tuğra of the sultan, Koca Sinan Paşa asked if he could order that all the newly minted coins to have the tuğra. He reported to the sultan that there was an inflation of the prices of foodstuff, and clothes in the market. He promised to control the prices like before. In this report Koca Sinan Paşa also proposed to collect the *şahi* from the markets, and not to mint any *şahi* coins in the Ottoman Empire.³³¹

So the other policy Koca Sinan Paşa pursued to standardized the silver coinage was purging the Safavid persion coin, the *şahi*, from the market. The Ottomans had struck their own *şahis* following the conquest of Iranian cities during the reign of Sultan Süleyman.³³² In three reports he boasted about having suceesfully cleaned the empire from the *şahi*. He referred to this coinage as “the fâsid [disordering] object that had the name of *şahî* in the Ottoman lands” (“*şahî* namına memleket-i Osmaniyye’de olan fâsid nesneden eser kaldı mı?”)³³³

A year and a half after the Beylerbeyi Incident, Koca Sinan Paşa reflected on his accomplishment about the correction of the coinage. He wrote to the

³³¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 185, 227-228.

³³² Tezcan, 472.

³³³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 13, 23. In another report he referred to *şahi* as *zeğal*, a term I have not been able to locate in any dictionary. See Sahillioğlu, Telhis 156, 203. Tezcan, 496-497.

sultan that, the situation of the imperial coinage was in a terrible state, but one could not find a single coin without the fixed silver content in the market.³³⁴

Koca Sinan Paşa used even the correction of the coinage for factional politics. He made allegations about a scheme of government officials to exchange the normal akçes of the treasury with the debased coinage that was found in the market without legally trying or auditing the accused in a court. He accused the judges with embezzlement and tried some of them, which resulted in their uprising. As we saw in chapter two above, he blamed his rivals for instigating the uprising of the judges. Koca Sinan Paşa's efforts to correct the coinage went largely unnoticed in contemporary Ottoman accounts, as well as the modern scholarship on the grand vizier.

Avarız

Another policy Koca Sinan Paşa implemented for the correction of the coinage had to do with *avâriz akçesi*, temporary surtaxes (*avâriz*) levied to aid a specific need such as a war campaign or fees for certain services such as sending an oarsman (*avaid*). *Avâriz* was the general category of traditional taxes in kind or cash, but it gained the specific meaning of an extraordinary war tax that was collected during wartime from certain household that were obligated to pay this taxes. In a form of *avâriz*, every 40 *avâriz* household had to supply one oarsman for the imperial navy. A certain amount could be paid in cash instead of sending an oarsman.³³⁵ There were many professional groups such as *derbentçi*, *doğancı* and *celep* that were exempt from this form of taxation. It was the duty of the judges to register the households responsible for *avâriz*, and collect these taxes. In

³³⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 13, 23. Other reports where Koca Sinan Paşa expressed that he was reforming the disordered affairs including the correction of the imperial coinage were Sahillioğlu, Telhis 72, p 104, Sahillioğlu, Telhis 100, 141-142, and Sahillioğlu, Telhis 151, 193-194.

³³⁵ *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Avarız."

a report Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the judges were sending only half of the *avâriz akçesi* they collected, so he warned the chief justices not to give them their appointment documents (*kadılık tezkiresi*) without getting the entire sum.

However, the judges were offended and some of decided to gather to protest.³³⁶

Soon Koca Sinan Paşa created a new office for the collection of this form of taxation in the financial bureaucracy. He wrote to the sultan that since *avâriz* used to be an extraordinary tax that was not collected every year, the registries the judges sent were supervised by the *Şikk-ı Evvel Kalemi*. However, because it began to be collected every year, he wanted to appoint an accountant who was specialized solely in the collection of this form of tax, so that he would be able to prevent the embezzlement of this form of taxation by the judges.³³⁷

One year after the Beylerbeyi Incident, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan about his accomplishments in a report that answered the accusations found in a written denunciation. He claimed that he was collecting the tax revenues that had not been collected for 7-8 years, and that reduced the illegitimately high taxes; and that he corrected the coinage and sent sample coins to provincial mints, where now there was regular minting of the imperial coinage.³³⁸ In another report where he complained about the slandering and gossip of his enemies about him, he claimed that those who invented the debasement and other disorders were now criticizing him.³³⁹ In a similar report about gossip among the janissaries, Koca Sinan Paşa repeated that he was working diligently on the correction of the coinage, and the collection of tax revenues.³⁴⁰

³³⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 18, 27. About the protest and imprisonment of the judges see chapter two above.

³³⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 125, 165-166.

³³⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 151, 194.

³³⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 152, 197.

³⁴⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 174, 218.

In the same précis, the grand vizier reported that there had been a peasant uprising in Perlepe, where the peasants who did not want to pay *avârız* for the third or fourth time attacked the court and the soldiers. He claimed that the reason behind this was the oppression in the collection of the *avârız*, and that in some provinces the judges collected *avârız* multiple times without reporting or sending the revenue to the treasury.³⁴¹

Narh (Fixed Marked Prices)

Narh was an Ottoman urban institution for determining the prices of various goods by official authorities. The officials who regulated and fixed the prices included the judge of the city, along with the suggestions of craftsmen such as the guild *kethüda*, *yiğitbaşı*, *ehl-i vukuf*, and of the *muhtesib* (prefect). They regulated the prices of almost all commodities, however the prices of basic consumption goods such as food, clothes, shoes, and wood were more carefully supervised. Narh for food was carried out seasonally. The prices of vegetables being determined daily, and meat and milk seasonally. The prices were lowered before the beginning of the month of Ramazan. In addition to these seasonal adjustments, inflation caused by debasement and correction of the coinage (long with floods, drought, and blockades) resulted in the readjustment of the prices of all goods.³⁴²

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that because of the debased coinage that was in circulation clothes, goods and other commodities were being sold with an increased price (*ziyade baha ile*) than the fixed market price (*narh*). But, it has

³⁴¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 90, 130-131.

³⁴² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Narkh." Some of the readjusted price lists from the turn of the century that were sent to the Baş Muhasebe Kalemi (Chief Office of Accounting) were published, see M.S. Kütükoğlu, *1009 (1600) tarihli narh defterine göre İstanbul'da çeşitli eşya ve hizmet fiyatları*, in *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 9.

been shown that the prizes rose before the debasement and the devaluation.³⁴³

Koca Sinan Paşa reported that after the distribution of the *ulufe* of the soldiers, he was going to readjust the *narh* by recalculating the prices of clothing and other needs with the newly minted coinage. He argued that with this form of readjustment neither the sellers nor the buyers would suffer a loss. For this reason he was ordering the market people, and forbidding them to sell commodities with increased prices.³⁴⁴

Koca Sinan Paşa's wrote a report about his inspection of the markets along with the prefect, the agha of the janissaries, and the *çavuşbaşı*. He claimed that everyone was happily praying for the health of the sultan. He wrote that *narh* only had a name, and no real application before the readjustment. Wheat sellers and bakers who had debased coins complained to Koca Sinan Paşa because those were no longer accepted. They complained that if they were to sell the bread they made with the wheat they bought at incredibly high prices they would go bankrupt. The grand vizier claimed that what they said was indeed true, and it was not just to make only them suffer. His solution was to exchange the debased coins (a sum of 54 *yük akçe*) the bread and wheat sellers had into *guruş* and *padişahi* with scales. He also reported that he warned and admonished the bakers about baking the bread cleanly, and punished a few bakers. He informed that the ships were sent to buy more wheat, so that the population would not suffer from expensive bread.

Koca Sinan Paşa reported that whereas the price of bread was fixed to 1 *akçe* per 200 *dirhems* before, he lowered the price by changing the *narh* to 1 *akçe*

³⁴³ Pamuk, *Paranın Tarihi*, 129-139. Şevket Pamuk, "Prices in the Ottoman Empire, 1469-1914." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36 (2004), 451-68.

³⁴⁴ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 185, 228.

per 250 *dirhems*. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he consulted with experts (*ehl-i vukuf*) that it was better to lower the prices gradually. When the criers announced the new price of bread, the poor people prayed for the sultan, as well as the grandees and the middle classes. The only problem that remained for the poor was the lack of water in the fountains because of the summer heat.³⁴⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa's report concerning the *narh* of sheep was about the *çavuşes* who went to Rumelia to bring the sheep to the capital. Allegedly, these *çavuşes* were taking a bribe of 150.000 akçes from the farmers. For this reason, the grand vizier dismissed them and sent honest *çavuşes*. Koca Sinan Paşa swore that if it were his own son who was receiving bribes about this he would have hanged him. He said that because sheep are slow to move, it would take some time for them to arrive, so unfortunately it was not possible to prevent the current scarcity of meat.³⁴⁶ In another report, the grand vizier wrote about the inspection of the *narh* of wood. He wrote that many ships loaded with timber docked, and that now timber was abundant.³⁴⁷

Budget Deficit

The budget deficit was more an issue of factional strife than the fixed marked prices or the correction of the silver coinage. Koca Sinan Paşa blamed his adversaries and wrote constantly about increasing and collecting the tax revenues due to the Imperial Treasury (*hazine*, or *beytülmal*).³⁴⁸ He reported multiple times to the sultan that the problem was the budget deficit. In response to an order to build new ships for the navy for a possible campaign on Spain and France during his second term, the grand vizier explained the impossibility of

³⁴⁵ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 211, 248-249.

³⁴⁶ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 90, 130-131.

³⁴⁷ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 211, 248-249.

³⁴⁸ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "K̲h̲azīne."

undertaking such a venture, because the revenues were 1, and the expenditures were 1 ½. He claimed that he faced great obstacles in collecting even that much, and that he was constantly trying to recover uncollected revenues in Diyarbakir, Damascus and Tripoli.³⁴⁹

In response to a question of the sultan about the reason for paying for the expenditures in the provinces from the provincial treasuries, the grand vizier repeated the problem of the budget deficit, and asserted that this was the old custom, so that the provincial suppliers would not come to Istanbul to collect the money owed to them.³⁵⁰ Koca Sinan Paşa cited the same ratio of budget deficit (1 to 1½) in many reports to legitimize certain decisions he had taken.³⁵¹

In a report about his past achievements during his second term, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he had reduced the deficit, which was more than 500 yük akçe, which he reduced to a minimal amount (“cüzi nesne kalınca”).³⁵² It is hard to prove or disprove the truthfulness of his words, but he seems to have been successful economically, as the slandering of his enemies in this report had to do with the allocation of revenue-raising lands to his own men.

Koca Sinan Paşa also wrote countless times that he concentrated on collecting the *beytülmal*, or what was due to the treasury.³⁵³ Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he was working on collecting tax revenues everywhere by replacing the dishonest officials with honest ones, and recovering the money the dishonest embezzled. He claimed that he did not protect anyone because they had strong backers in the capital and worked on increasing the treasury, because of which he

³⁴⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 3, 4-5.

³⁵⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 19, 28-29.

³⁵¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83, 119; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 130, 170.

³⁵² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 156, 203.

³⁵³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 101, 142-143; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 108, 150-151; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 174, 218-219; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 110, 154-155.

made many formidable enemies.³⁵⁴ In another report, he wrote that it was not in everyone's capacity to touch the hearts of the grandees and the small ones in order to collect the *beytülmal*, if it was so those who preceded him would have succeeded in doing so.³⁵⁵

There are also reports about the embezzlers Koca Sinan Paşa fired, or investigated retrospectively. For instance, he reported that the revenues of the province of Aleppo had been adding up to a sum of 20 times 100.000 filori since Murad III's accession to the throne. However, a sum exceeding this was collected from the peasants but did not make it to the treasury. He now wanted to investigate the finance directors and tax collectors who used to be in Aleppo, but many of who were now in the capital. So Koca Sinan Paşa wanted the sultanic approval to collect tax revenues from embezzlers retrospectively by creating a committee. The sultan's answer to Koca Sinan Paşa's request was in the affirmative, and urged the grand vizier not to protect anyone because of consideration for anyone's feelings.³⁵⁶ Although collecting what was due to the treasury by uncovering embezzlers seems to be part of Koca Sinan Paşa's reform, it was also a means to consolidate his power by curbing the power of the followers of his rivals. He dismissed members of rivaling factions in this manner.

In a report datable to the end of Zilhicce 998/October 1590, Koca Sinan Paşa complained about the governor-general of Gence Hızır Paşa, who asked for cash from the central treasury to pay for the soldiers' pay and other expenses of the province. The grand vizier claimed that the province of Gence was able to raise enough revenue to cover all expenses of the province in addition to yielding

³⁵⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 100, 141.

³⁵⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 108, 150.

³⁵⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 177, 221-222. See chapter two above.

an extra amount that would be sent to the treasury. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the truth of matter was that the governor-general embezzled the sources of revenue (“sıhhati budur ki bir küllîce mahsûl gelecek yeri hep me’kel edinmişlerdir.”)³⁵⁷

The grand vizier claimed that appointments should be made to the financial bureaucracy in relation to the capacity of the nominee to collect and send revenues. He listed a number of officials who were candidates for going to Revan and Gence to increase its revenue for the payment of its own expenses, and sending a sum to the central treasury. This report seems to be about embezzlement and increasing tax resources, but indeed it is about the introduction of tax farming in these newly conquered provinces.³⁵⁸

The Introduction of Tax Farming

In addition to collection of taxes, Koca Sinan Paşa introduced tax farming to newly conquered provinces such as Gence and Revan. Tax farming can be defined as the contracting of the collection of taxes and other state revenues to private bidders instead of state-owned monopolies. Since individual bidders outbid each other at an auction to secure the tax farming rights, often the revenue yield could be lower than the contracted amount. The tax-farmers are considered to have oppressed the peasants by collecting more taxes than those assessed in Ottoman tax surveys (*tahrir*). Tax farming was considered to be a clear sign of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, because it resulted in the exploitation of the

³⁵⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 89, 128-129. For the dating, cf. Selanikî, 227.

³⁵⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 89, 128-129. For the dating, cf. Selanikî, 227.

peasants by uncontrolled tax farmers, the state depended on the cash they would supply the treasury and thus was weakened.³⁵⁹

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the governor-generals of Revan, Gence and Tabriz should be changed, because they were not sending anything to the central treasury. He claimed that if they were not pushed, they would not send anything to the central treasury for the twenty years. He reported that there were nominees who were promising to deliver considerable sums each year such as Abdullah Paşa, who promised a tax farm of 100 *yük akçe* for Gence. However, the sultan answered him to further think about this matter, warning him that the grand vizier would be the one to regret.³⁶⁰

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa expressed more explicitly the link between the embezzlement of Hızır Paşa, and his desire to appoint a tax farmer who bid an annual sum of 1000 *yük akçe*. The grand vizier claimed that Hızır Paşa opposed the tax farm because he benefited from the tax revenues of various villages himself. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that in order to answer the various oppositions of Hızır Paşa, he sent a registrar to do a survey of the tax revenues of the province. The result of the survey was that the province could yield this amount.³⁶¹

Koca Sinan Paşa reported to Murad III that Ferhad Paşa has opposed the tax farming of Revan and near by provinces, and warned that they should not involve tax farming (*iltizam*) in these provinces. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the amount the province yield (which he argues was 1200 *yük akçe*) was a big sum,

³⁵⁹ However, recent research showed that it had been practiced before the so-called decline period, and that its application did not necessarily mean the oppression of the peasants, or corruption of officials. See Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 119. Müge *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Mültezim." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Muḳāṭa'a."

³⁶⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 215, 252-253.

³⁶¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 109, 152-153.

which he wanted to channel to the central treasury. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that because this sum was being used by Ferhad Paşa and Hızır Paşa, they argued univocally that the province would become desolate, the peasants would flee, the soldiers would organize an uprising if tax farming were introduced in Revan. The grand vizier considered these to be fabricated nonsense (*mağlatalar*) because they have been personally benefitting from these resources. He also claimed that Ferhad Paşa and Hızır Paşa introduced tax farming in the province for the last 3-4 years, but now they were lying as if tax farming was unheard of in Revan. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he had no personal benefit from introducing tax farming in Revan, but considered the benefit to the treasury.³⁶² However, it is very likely that Koca Sinan Paşa was going to receive a present from the newly appointed tax farmer, in addition to increasing the revenue to the treasury.³⁶³

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that Hızır Paşa who had previously opposed the tax-farming of Revan on the pretext that the province would not yield the amount of 1000 *yük akçe*, now proposed to undertake the tax farm himself for an amount of 1050 *yük akçe*. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that they could only be silenced because the registrar anticipated the amount of 1000 *yük akçe* in the land survey. The grand vizier asked to appoint Hızır Paşa for an additional sum of 50 *yük akçe* as governor-general of Revan. However the sultan answered the report by saying that it was not necessary to change the governor-general of Revan at that time.³⁶⁴

³⁶² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 110, 154-155.

³⁶³ Fleischer, 120-121.

³⁶⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 214, 251-252.

In the beginning of the month of Zilhicce 998/October 1590, Koca Sinan Paşa succeeded in appointing Davud Paşa, former *silahdarbaşı*.³⁶⁵ Later Koca Sinan Paşa reported Davud Paşa's message about the embezzlement of the finance director (*defterdar*) of Gence. Koca Sinan Paşa wanted to dismiss the finance minister. The sultan answered that he should nominate an honest person, and dismiss the current finance director.³⁶⁶

Koca Sinan Paşa had to answer to the sultan about the governor-general of Gence, about whom the sultan received complaints. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the governor-general of Gence went from the capital, and had been a follower of Ferhad Paşa. However, because the finance director of Gence had recently been dismissed on account of embezzlement thanks to a report of the governor-general of Gence, Ferhad Paşa now wanted to have the governor-general dismissed. Koca Sinan Paşa enumerated the good services of the governor-general of Gence in that province. He claimed that the governor-general did not belong to him faction, and that Ferhad Paşa was slandering the governor-general because his own follower, the finance director had been dismissed. The sultan answered this report by saying that the grand vizier should supervise the control of the provinces carefully.³⁶⁷

The factional aspect of the dismissals and appointments in these border provinces is obvious from the reports surveyed above. Furthermore, the grand vizier's introduction of tax farming was met with the opposition of the commander Ferhad Paşa who conquered these provinces, and his successor Hızır Paşa. They had argued that the province would not yield such high revenues, and

³⁶⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 102, 143.

³⁶⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 170, 214.

³⁶⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 155, 200-201.

the peasants would be forced to flee because of oppression of tax farmers. Koca Sinan Paşa, on the other hand, argued that they themselves applied tax farming in those provinces, and they were opposing the tax farm because they were embezzling the tax resources. He further claimed that the registrar they sent has announced in the capital that the provinces would yield these revenues without the oppression of the peasants.

There's a plausibility of Ferhad and Hızır Paşa's opposition to the introduction of tax farming in a newly conquered city on the Iranian border such as Revan, the Ottoman rule there was at best flimsy, and the exploitation of peasants could result in the loss of the province. Yet, Koca Sinan Paşa adopted policies such as tax farming in the provinces in order to increase the treasury and to decrease the budget deficit by taking the ready cash from tax farmers. However, factional side taking colored the views of the administrators about these reforms.

Selanikî also testified the problems about the budget in his chronicle. In Muharrem 1001, he wrote that the expenditures of the Royal Family, and of the state were great; as a result of which an extra amount was added to the poll tax (*cizye*) of non-Muslims subjects because the revenues of the Treasury were less than the expenditures.³⁶⁸ However, this measure did not seem to have made a big difference. Because in Cemaziyelevvel 1002/February 1594, Selanikî noted that the problems of the Imperial Treasury were greater than before, due to the expenditures of state, of the sultan, and the long Hungarian campaign. He wrote that the experienced ones were praying for the mitigation of these problems.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Selanikî, 292-293.

³⁶⁹ Selanikî, 356.

Ordering the Payroll of Soldiers

Koca Sinan Paşa came to power for the second time after the Beylerbeyi Incident, the uprising of the soldiers who were paid in debased coinage, so paying the soldiers on time and in undebased coinage became one of his biggest worries. Among the reformatory policies of Koca Sinan Paşa was the review of the registries of the soldiers' payrolls. In a number of reports he wrote that the registries of both the janissaries and the cavalymen were in great disorder.³⁷⁰

Koca Sinan Paşa explained that the dead soldiers were not taken out of the registries, but instead people who were not soldiers had been receiving their pays. He named his informer, Bargir Memi, who was an old, honest and experienced official. He requested to the sultan to appoint Bargir Memi as the Registrar of Janissaries.³⁷¹ In another report, he wrote that he wanted to take out the dead soldiers gradually out of the payrolls, because he did not want to cause an uprising.³⁷² In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa complained to the sultan about the disorder of the payroll registries of soldiers, which, he argued, had been in disarray since he was dismissed from grand vizierate in 990/1590. He had no choice but to cleanse the registries of non-soldiers gradually. The sultan answered him by saying that he should do it gradually.³⁷³ In a report he wrote right after the payment of the soldiers (*ulufe*), he complained that even in this time 300-400 people showed up to get the salaries of dead soldiers. He complained that the aghas of janissaries did not control the situation, and in order to have a good relationship with the soldiers they incorporated non-soldiers among them. The gradual decay of the army resulted in the uprisings. The sultan wrote back to him

³⁷⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 94, 136-137; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 69, 100-101; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 23, 33.

³⁷¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 94, 136.

³⁷² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 23, 33.

³⁷³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 69, 100-101.

that he warned the aghas each time, but would no longer do that; instead they would be executed or insulted.³⁷⁴

Koca Sinan Paşa started the revision of payrolls. In one report to Murad III, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that during the registrarship of Mahmud 1889 people were registered into the payrolls although they were not all janissaries. The former governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa registered 3148 persons during the course of nine months. The grand vizier sent the registers to the sultan for inspection, and asked to have Mahmud dismissed from his current position as the vice finance director (*küçük defterdar/şikk-ı sani defterdarı*). The sultan agreed and ordered Yaş Hasan to replace him.³⁷⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa reported that he had warned the aghas for not adding to the registries the soldiers that came from Şirvan and Tabriz in the Iranian border without his personal approval. However, he saw a cavalryman complaining because he did not receive his pay. However, he found out that he had been recently added to the payroll according to a registry supposedly sent by Cafer Paşa earlier. Upon inspection, Koca Sinan Paşa found out that the registry that was supposedly sent by Cafer Paşa before his death was indeed produced by Siyavuş Paşa, and that the registry did not bear the signature or the seal of Cafer Paşa. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the registry consisted of a troop of 390 from the unemployed of the capital who had not even seen the barracks in Üsküdar.³⁷⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa made allegations without initiating audits or law suits about his adversaries such as Üveys Paşa, while he was busy implementing important reforms.

³⁷⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 66, 96-97.

³⁷⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 12, 20-21.

³⁷⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 24, 33-34. Cafer Paşa died in 996, Zilkaade so it can be dated to KSP's 2nd term. Cf. Selanikî, 208 for Cafer's death.

In another report he complained about the treasurer (*başdefterdar*) and the agha of the janissaries because the two of them could not get along. He wrote that one of them was responsible of the soldiers, the other for the treasury, and that it was key that they got along. The sultan however, did not dismiss either, but asked the grand vizier to warn them about carrying out their duties responsibly.³⁷⁷

Paying the Ulufe on Time

There was an inner treasury called *hazine-yi enderun* or *hazine-yi hassa* that was kept in various structures within the harem and the third courtyard of the Topkapı Palace. The outer treasury was called *mîrî hazine*, *divan-ı hümayun hazinesi*, *hazine-yi birûn* or *taşra hazinesi*. The expenditures or taking money out of the inner treasury happened only by the order of the sultan. The inner treasury served as a central bank because it lent money to the outer treasury when the need arose. The outer treasury was under the responsibility of the grand vizier and the treasurer. The surplus of the outer treasury would be transferred and kept in the inner treasury. In order to relieve the shortage of cash of the outer treasury for the payment of soldiers or for war expenditures, the grand vizier and treasurer could demand loans or debts from the inner treasury.³⁷⁸

At certain times, Koca Sinan Paşa lent money to the treasury personally, which was a liability because there was the possibility that he would be dismissed or borrow from the sultan in order to pay the soldiers on time. He often complained that it was with great difficulty that he could pay the soldiers on time.³⁷⁹ At one payment time, because the silver content of the coins had been

³⁷⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 78, 113.

³⁷⁸ Ahmet Tabakoğlu, "Osmanlı Devletinin İç Hazinesi" in *Osmanlı Maliyesi: Kurumlar ve Bütçeler*, vol. 1, edited by Mehmet Genç and Erol Özvar (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2006), 51-52.

³⁷⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 3, 4.

increased, they had a shortage of 40-50 *yük akçe*. In order to be able to pay all the soldiers, the viziers in the Imperial Council decided to lend this sum to the treasury themselves. However, when the sultan heard of this, he wrote Koca Sinan Paşa an angry letter in which he wrote that this was a terrible idea, and if anyone heard about this, the outcome would be terrible. It was apparent that the sultan feared an uprising of the soldiers.³⁸⁰

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote back to the sultan saying that whoever informed on him had malicious designs, because it was much better to pay all the soldiers on time with borrowed money, rather than postponing the payment like they did last year which caused an uprising among the soldiers, i.e., the Beylerbeyi Incident. He also complained that when he came to power last year, he could not find two purses of *akçe* in the treasury, whereas now he was receiving 700.000 gold coins from Diyarbekir, and 130.000 gold coins from Damascus, the delivery of which was postponed. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the spring holiday (*nevruz*) was approaching. He claimed that when the accounts would be read out at *nevruz*, it would become clear that he raised the revenue of the state by double. He claimed that only the treasurer (*başdefterdâr*) and himself worked day and night for paying the soldiers on time. He claimed that, although all the viziers decided together to contribute by lending to the treasury the necessary sum, Koca Sinan Paşa in the end did not take a single *akçe* from anyone.³⁸¹

In the middle of Cemaziyelevvel 998/March 1590, the grand vizier answered a letter of the sultan about the debt to the sultan's personal treasury from the outer treasury. The grand vizier explained that from the 80 *yük akçe* they borrowed, a sum of 20 *yük akçe* remained unpaid. The reason for this was that for

³⁸⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 4, 6-7.

³⁸¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 4, 6-7.

the last three or four payments of the soldiers, the provincial finance directors had sent nothing, so he had to pay the soldiers by stretching far and wide.³⁸²

In another report from Koca Sinan Paşa's second term, he wrote that the sultan knew how much akçe had to be borrowed just to pay the soldiers and for some other important expenditures. He considered it a good service on his part that he had been able to pay the entire sum back to the sultan.³⁸³ In a report Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to answer accusations of his enemies, he enumerated among his various services to the sultan that he had lent 700 *yük akçe* to the treasury to pay the soldiers.³⁸⁴

On another occasion, the sultan ordered the grand vizier to pay the soldiers' pay the next day, and warned him not to let "anything" (i.e. an uprising) to happen. The grand vizier answered him that even if the sum to pay them were ready for the next day, they could not pay the soldiers because their registers did not come to the payment office yet ("henüz defterleri mukabeleye gelmemişdür.") He reported that their registers would come to the payment office the next day, and they would get paid on Tuesday. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that because the soldiers were uneasy about their agha and the payment, he wanted pay them on Tuesday. But, the necessary sum for the payment of the soldiers was not ready, so he requested the sultan to lend the treasury 150 *yük akçe* from his personal treasury. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he was expecting the arrival of a provincial payment, but was afraid that it would not make it because of the winter in time for the payment of the soldiers on Tuesday. He pleaded the sultan to lend the money on Monday night if the expected payment did not arrive. He promised

³⁸² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 22, 32. For the dating see Selaniki, 32.

³⁸³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 83, 119.

³⁸⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 156, 202.

he would pay back in a fortnight, and even if he died, the sultan could get back that amount by confiscating some of his belongings. The sultan answered him that he should try to receive the due amount, if not he could take it from the inner treasury early on Tuesday morning.³⁸⁵

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that he was not able to pay the soldiers on the next Imperial Council meeting, but the one after that, because certain amounts due to the treasury did not yet arrived. And since the janissaries have already received their clothing (*çuka*), he thought it would not be a problem because their registries will not be ready before the Imperial Council meeting. He explained that the problem was related to the fact that the provincial finance directors sent nothing.³⁸⁶

The collection of revenues from provinces was crucial for the payment of the soldiers on time. In one report, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the Eflak revenue was used toward the payment of the soldiers, and the sultan answered him that he should collect at once, and pay back the debt to the treasury of the sultan with undebased coinage. The sultan reminded the grand vizier that he still did not receive the payback of the last debt he gave to the treasury.³⁸⁷ In another report dated to the end of Zilhicce 998/October 1590, Koca Sinan Paşa complained about governor-general of Gence Hızır Paşa who wanted a sum from the central treasury to pay the soldiers in the province of Gence. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he found it extremely difficult to pay the soldiers in the capital, let alone paying the ones in the provinces.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 59, 86-87.

³⁸⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 130, 169-170.

³⁸⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 200, 239.

³⁸⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 89, 129. Cf. Selanikî, 227.

Building the Navy

The sultan asked Koca Sinan Paşa to build ships for the navy without spending money from the treasury. The solution Koca Sinan Paşa proposed had historical precedence: He wanted the ships to be built in provinces at the expense of governor-generals, like in was done during the reign of Sultan Süleyman.³⁸⁹ In a report datable to 10 Rebiülevvel 999/January 6 1591, the grand vizier requested the sultan to tell to the members of the Imperial Council in the next meeting that they should contribute each for the building of the ships, because if they heard it from the sultan they would contribute rapidly and more he argued.³⁹⁰

In another report, he clarified what he meant by building the ships in the provinces. He answered to the earlier letter of the sultan about building ships without spending from the treasury, and he had now proposed two different options for building the navy. To make each ship perfect 260.000 *akçe* was necessary, he argued that the governor-generals should have the ships built in their provinces. He claimed that more than a hundred ships could be built if each governor-general was asked to supply ships in accordance with his means. The other source was the *bakaya*, or the amount of tax revenues that remained unpaid to the treasury. If each governor-general was ordered to collect these sums quickly, this would also be a great opportunity to collect the past dues that have been lingered for almost twenty years. Koca Sinan Paşa argued that the governor-generals who are by the sea should have ships built; those who were in inland provinces would send the sum to the imperial dockyards. The grand vizier sent a list of how many ships each governor-general would build; he wrote that fifty ships

³⁸⁹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 83, 119-121.

³⁹⁰ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 82, 118-119. Because of the death of Ebna-yı Sipahiyan ağası Ali ağa also mentioned in the report, one can date this report. Cf. *Selanikî*, 229.

was the responsibility of His Majesty.³⁹¹ In a later report, he wrote that he was building ships for the navy with 1000 yük akçe that had not been collected over a decade, called the *bakaya*. He claimed that not another slave would be able to do such a thing.³⁹²

Selanikî also wrote about the building of ships with the *bakaya* and sponsored by the viziers. He wrote that in the year of Cemaziyelevvel 999/February 25, 1591 the sultan ordered the building of ships. According to Selanikî, Koca Sinan Paşa sponsored the building of seven ships (*kadırga* and *başarda*). Commander Ferhad Paşa sponsored five *kadırgas*, Nişancı Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa sponsored three *kadırgas*, Hızır Paşa sponsored two *kadırgas*, governor-general of Rumelia, Anatolia, and of other provinces were to contribute cash according to their wealth. The collection of the cash from governor-generals was the responsibility of the registrar of the Imperial Treasury Hasan Çelebi Efendi. The peasants all over the empire were sent orders to cut and send timber for the construction of ships. Selanikî reported a rumor that the navy would be ready for a naval war next year under the commandship of the grand vizier. In Cemaziyelahir 999/April 1591, the registries of overdue revenues from the provinces were sent to the governor-generals in order to defray the costs of ships from these *bakayas*, so that the cost of ships would be collected without oppressing the peasants.³⁹³

At another time, Koca Sinan Paşa responded to a demand of the grand admiral to build more ships negatively, saying that each ship costs 3 *yük akçe* and even the repair of a ship costs a lot. He claimed that he wanted to take care of the

³⁹¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 169, 213.

³⁹² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 156, 203.

³⁹³ Selanikî, 234.

navy, but the financial situation was too bad to make it possible. He inquired whether it was possible to pay from the personal treasury. However, the sultan ordered him to pay for the ships with the sum that was used for meaningless and reasonless expenditures (*bi-vech ve bi-mana*).³⁹⁴

Koca Sinan Paşa considered the building of the navy to be a secret of the state. When the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa asked him to consult with David the Jew about the provisioning of the navy, Koca Sinan Paşa opposed this idea. David Passi was a favorite of the sultan, so by challenging the trustworthiness of David Passi, Koca Sinan Paşa took a big political risk. However, he succeeded in convincing the sultan that David Passi was a multi-sided agent to Spain and Venice.³⁹⁵

Forged Documents

Koca Sinan Paşa uncovered a forgery scheme in the middle of Zilhicce 998/October 1590. Selanikî wrote that when Koca Sinan Paşa came to power for the second time he uncovered the problem of forgery. According to Selanikî, many scribes of the Imperial Council and the Treasury were involved in forging documents, and they had invented a type of ink that could be wiped off the paper without leaving traces, and they stole blank sealed documents that were prepared for commanders. As a result of the investigation, two scribes responsible for murderous and traitorous offences were executed; one hand of six scribes were cut, and seven scribes were sentenced to be galley slaves.³⁹⁶ When we look at the précis correspondence of Koca Sinan Paşa, we learn more details about how the forgers were discovered, and who was punished.

³⁹⁴ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 3, 4-5.

³⁹⁵ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 8, 12-15. For Koca Sinan Paşa's dealings with David Passi, see chapter 4 below.

³⁹⁶ Selanikî, 227.

Preparation and selling of forged documents was a political crime that was punished with capital punishment, cutting of the hand, and imprisonment as a galley slave.³⁹⁷ Koca Sinan Paşa explained how he discovered the forgers when certain people came about with orders that bore the imperial seal (*nişan*) about land-holding rights and promotions that were not registered in the land registries. When Koca Sinan Paşa consulted with the secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*), he learned that the orders were not authentic, although the imperial seal (*nişan*) was. The grand vizier reported that he had advised the chief scribe (*başkatib*) to investigate this, because he believed that something would come up behind this. The grand vizier wrote that a scribe who knew about this was found. Unfortunately he did not specify how and where this scribe came forward. The said scribe alleged that forging documents had been going on for more than fifteen years in the Imperial Council. When he was asked how it was carried out, the scribe told that they would process the paper with a chemical after which the scribe would write a legal order with a different type of ink from the one that was being used in the Imperial Council. When the Chancellor got these documents, because the order was legal, he would mark them with the imperial seal (*nişan*) without doubting their authenticity. Afterwards, the paper was taken from the custodian of documents (*kağıd emini*) and the writing on it was deleted with a wet sponge, whereas the seal remained. If the writing was still visible, they would daub it with rakı soap (*rakı sabunu*), and then they would write whatever they wanted, be it about land holdings, promotions in salary, and even the execution of a person in the provinces.

³⁹⁷ Mehmet İpşirli, "XVI. Asrın İkinci Yarısında Kürek Cezası ile İlgili Hükümler," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, no. 12 (1981-1982), 211.

After this testimony, they have searched for such deleted sealed documents, and found some with some scribes and apprentices, and some undeleted documents were also found and sent to the sultan for royal inspection. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that there were such brave forgers who became party to sultanic authority. He considered this crime to be political, rather than an issue of corruption, it was about imperial authority. He claimed that their number reached to 50 or 60. He wrote that one of those scribes who went to Rumelia with many forged documents was to be brought back by a messenger *çavuş* sent after him. He wrote that he considered the discovery of the forgers to be a greater service than the correction of the coinage.³⁹⁸

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa named the forger scribes and their crimes. A scribe named İsa, who was previously the scribe of the chief justice of Anatolia, and his brother Ahmed had nine patents and two orders related to some endowments and the Ezher Mosque/Medrese in Egypt. The seals were executed by the aforementioned İsa, and they have confessed to have written them together. Twenty chemically processed documents were found at a financial scribe by the name of Kadri, who had confessed to having written anything he wanted after he erased the legal orders. Another financial scribe by the name of Şeker-pare Mustafa Bey confessed that the patent of an agha, two pieces of chemically-processed paper, and three patents to have been his creation. Eleven pieces of chemically processed paper and twelve blank pieces of paper with the seal were found on a scribe of the Imperial Council by the name of Mansur. Firuz, another scribe of the Imperial Council had an order with the seal that he himself

³⁹⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 73, 106-107. Bilgin Aydın and İshak Keskin, "Osmanlı Bürokrasisinde Evrak sahteciliği, Diplomatik ve Diplomatika Eğitimi," *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 31 (2008), 201-202.

copied. İshak, the scribe of the Imperial Council, had an order in his own hand written for a Korkmaz ibn-i Korkmaz, and confessed that the seal was copied by the apprentice in the Imperial Council, called Ahmed from Aleppo. Another Privy scribe Rıdvan was found with two orders written in his own hand on chemically processed paper. Another Imperial Council scribe by the name of İbrahim confessed that while he was the purse apprentice of the current Secretary-in-chief of the Imperial Council (*re'isülküttab*) Hamza, he had stolen five pieces of sealed blank documents and had written on four of them orders about tımar land holding, and another type of patent to the other one.³⁹⁹

The question of punishment had been the subject of another report by Koca Sinan Paşa. He wrote that 8-9 scribes who had been forging documents had been imprisoned; a couple more were yet to be imprisoned. He explained that they were of a few types, some would forge both the document and the seal to sell them, and others would delete a normal document and after a chemical process create a new document with the seal marked by the chancellor. He wrote that he sent the products of both kinds of “craft” to the sultan for royal inspection. He wrote that now they would be tried in the Imperial Council, after a public inspection of each, those whose crimes had been established would be sentenced by the chief justice either with the cutting of the hand, or taking away of their land holdings and exiled to Algiers and other places. However, the trial and punishment was postponed until the end of the feast.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 167, 211-212.

⁴⁰⁰ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 55, 79-80.

Conclusion

Koca Sinan Paşa was not often portrayed as a reformer. However, his second term saw a series of reforms. He standardized and corrected the debased silver coinage (*akçe*) and regulated fixed market prices (*narh*). In order to minimize the budget deficit, he introduced tax farming. However, this was a contested issue as his rivals wanted to keep tax farming out of the eastern provinces. He also sponsored and made his peers sponsor the building of the navy. He uncovered a gang of forgers. Factional animosity colored even the reports about his reforms.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL USES OF GOSSIP, RUMOR, SLANDER AND DENUNCIATION

Gossip, rumor, slander and written denunciation have been used to bring down politicians in numerous courts from different periods and places. Especially in times of instability, historians and chroniclers reported more rumors, gossip, slander, and denunciation that were in circulation. Murad III's reign was instable because of the quick changes in power (a succession of twelve grand viziers), shorter appointments of bureaucrats, military revolts, debasement of the coinage, and intense political strife among both the *ulema* and the statesmen. Factions competed with one another through various mechanisms. Among these, manipulation of information, fabrication and dissemination of rumor, gossip, slander, and denunciation loom large in contemporary writing from the late-sixteenth century. Here I will try to show how accusation and hearsay figured out in late-sixteenth century Ottoman political discourse and played a role in certain events, without reducing complex political problems and events to talk and denunciation. Written evidence of talk (whether it is praise, criticism or slander), and of written denunciations survived selectively. Here I will study evidence of slander, gossip and written denunciations that randomly made it into the self-evidently subjective accounts of Koca Sinan Paşa and Selanikî Mustafa Efendi.

Gossip, rumor, slander, and denunciation have been the subjects of recent historical studies.⁴⁰¹ Although gossip, rumor, slander and written denunciation abound in all periods and societies, the difficulties involved in determining their

⁴⁰¹ Hans-Joachim Neubauer, *The Rumour: A Cultural History*, trans. Christian Braun (London: Free Association Books, 1999).

veracity, the haphazard way in which they come down to us, and their personal nature caused them not to be studied in their own right until recently. Since the influential work of Max Gluckman who defended for the study of gossip by anthropologists in 1963, debates about social, political, and linguistic theories of gossip emerged.⁴⁰² Since anthropologists analyzed talk in contemporary societies, rather than reported speech in writing, some of the theoretical arguments are hard to apply to past societies, because of lack of sound recordings. Medievalists contributed to the study of talk by focusing on *fama* during the Middle Ages.⁴⁰³ Robert Darnton's study of libel and slander in France during the ancien regime, the revolution, and the Terror is based on an analysis of small pamphlets that were published anonymously or under false names to slander the king, the courtesans, and other grandees by "unveiling" their decadence of their private lives.⁴⁰⁴ Darnton's sources are books and pamphlets that pose as secret histories, collections of correspondence, memoirs, and news. The scandalous character of these texts, which originates in their exposition of what happened in people's bedrooms and houses, in addition to their circulation by illegal presses in France, and in England set the French *libelles* apart from Ottoman written denunciation.

Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı wrote on gossip and slander among lovers and the beloved in poetical circles and poetry in their comparative

⁴⁰² For a discussion of the debates, and the problems of theorizing gossip see Niko Besnier, *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009) especially, 12-19. *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, s. v. "Gossi"

⁴⁰³ Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, ed., *Fama: the Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). Susan E. Phillips, *Transforming Talk: the Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007). Cristoph Brachmann, *Memoria, Fama, Historia: Schlachtengedenken und Identitätsstiftung am lothringischen Hof (1477-1525) nach dem Sieg über Karl den Kühnen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2006). For an earlier work on the moral meaning of fama in the middle ages, see Achatz Freiherr von Müller, *Gloria bona fama bonorum: Studien zur sittlichen Bedeutung des Ruhmes in der frühchristlichen und mittelalterlichen Welt* (Husum: Matthiesen Verlag, 1977).

⁴⁰⁴ Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water, or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

social history of love and the beloved in early modern Ottoman Empire and Europe.⁴⁰⁵ Cornell Fleischer wrote about the gossip, slander, and rumor Mustafa Âli complained about. Gabriel Piterberg analyzed rumors among the janissaries during the uprising that resulted in the dethronement and execution of Osman II in early seventeenth century.⁴⁰⁶ However, there are not any extensive studies on gossip, rumor, and slander that were used to voice political opposition, criticism and accusations. Except for examples of *kağıt/rika* (written denunciation) from the reign of Sultan Süleyman that M. Tayyib Gökbilgin published and analyzed, there are no studies on written denunciation (*kağıt/rika*) either.⁴⁰⁷ I do not attempt to offer an exhaustive account; my contribution to the Ottoman court history has to do with manipulation of one's reputation through talk and writing written denunciations.

Gossip

The difficulty of defining gossip lies in its relativity, what one observer considers gossip may be just a simple exchange of information for the gossiper. Niko Besnier argues that gossip is often dismissed as a social activity because it lacks importance. At the same time, it is an objectionable activity one should avoid. Yet it is universal and pervasive. It has close affinities to rumor, and scandal.⁴⁰⁸

I define gossip as talk about [the shortcomings of] somebody who is not present, a great sin according to Islam, called *gybet*, even if the content of the

⁴⁰⁵ Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of the Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁴⁰⁶ Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁴⁰⁷ M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Tarih Dergisi* 8, no. 11-12 (1955), 11-50.

⁴⁰⁸ Besnier, 12-13.

statements were true. There is gossip, rumor and slander in every level of society, however I limit my interest here to gossip, rumor and slander concerning the political elite. Most of the gossip I analyze here seems to be carried out with ill will to reflect on someone's shortcomings or decisions. Koca Sinan Paşa also talks about gossiping for killing time, but I will focus on gossiping with ulterior motives.⁴⁰⁹ Koca Sinan Paşa associated gossip with evil designs, (*garaz, li-garaz, ehl-i garaz*) and ulterior motives. Gossip in this sense is very close to slander, yet there is a nuance, whereas the former can damage someone's reputation, the latter is fabricated deliberately to do that.

Koca Sinan Paşa referred to sinful idle talk (*zemm* and *gybet*) in relation to coffeehouses. He wrote that the frequenters of coffeehouses were occupied with "eating each other's flesh with gossip" ("zemm ve gybetle birbirlerinin etin yiyeler") in reference to Quran 49:12.⁴¹⁰ In the same report, Koca Sinan Paşa used the words *gybet/gaybet* to talk about those who gossip about him out of animosity. He expressed his fear of being gossiped about and asked the sultan to confront him with his gossipers.⁴¹¹ Koca Sinan Paşa explained the motive of his gossipers: "They say things in order to give you a hesitation about me, so that they could surpass me. They are all *ehl-i garaz* (people of [evil] designs). Their words should not be heeded. Our hope is that the words the *ehl-i garaz* say in our *gaybet* (absence) will be disregarded by your majesty."

⁴⁰⁹ For instance İbrahim Paşa who came to visit Koca Sinan Paşa gossiped a lot (vafir kiyl u kal ve mecalden sonra), in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 71, 103.

⁴¹⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 33, 44. Quran 49:12 is about gybet and reads as follows: "O ye who believe! avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...but fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful." Available [online]:

http://www.guidedways.com/chapter_display.php?chapter=49&translator=2&mac= [25 April 2010].

⁴¹¹ He wrote "in our absence [*gaybetimizde*] if they say I caused a loss to the treasury, please ask them to come and have a legal and rational dialogue with this servant of yours, and they'll see who will be silenced."

Most often than not the same terms were used interchangeably to talk about gossip and rumor. Koca Sinan Paşa used the following words to talk about hearsay: He referred to gossip and rumor by *dedikodu*, *güft u gû*, *kıyl u kal*, *zemm*, *kadh*, *gybet*, and *lâf ü güzâf*⁴¹², and by expressions such as “gossip in the mouths of the public.”⁴¹³

Rumor

As opposed to gossip, which is a verbal exchange about a third person by two or more people, rumor is popular. It is what people say, the talk of town or of a specific group such as the janissaries. Its often impossible to find the source of rumors, they circulate through hearsay. The main difference between gossip and rumor is that, whereas the gossiper and gossipee know one another, and they can change their roles, rumor is anonymous. The author and the subject of rumors are removed from one another, because of which the suppression of circulation of rumors is not really possible. Yet, it goes without saying that gossip can sometimes turn into rumor and spread to a wider audience.⁴¹⁴

Rumor is often related by expressions such as “it is said that,” “there is a rumor going around,” and “people are saying that.”⁴¹⁵ Koca Sinan Paşa refers to rumor by expressions such as “it is said in the mouths”⁴¹⁶, and “the tongues of the masses are mischievous” in addition to words that could mean gossip or rumor such as *güft u gu*, *kıyl u kal*, and *dedikodu*.⁴¹⁷ Selanikî wrote about rumor by using

⁴¹² “Vafir kıyl u kal ve taliku'l-mecalden sonar...” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 71, 103. “bazı güft u gu ederlerse,” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 85, 124. “belki inada binip dedikodu ederlerdi” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 86, 125. “Dünyanın lâf ü güzâfını peydâ edüb mağlata vermekten hâlî olmasalar gerekdir” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 110, 153.

⁴¹³ “Halk dilinde güft u gu olmağı caiz görmezem,” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 70, 102.

⁴¹⁴ Neubauer, 3-4.

⁴¹⁵ Neubauer, 1, 4-5.

⁴¹⁶ “Halen yeniçeri taifesi ağalarından hoşnud degillerdir deyu efvâhda söylenür” Sahillioğlu, Telhis 11, 19.

⁴¹⁷ “Muhassalî elsine-i avam yaramazdır” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 20, 30.

expressions such as “in the tongues of the common people.”⁴¹⁸ The sultan, the grand vizier and other high-ranking officials were afraid of rumor among the soldiers, the ulema, the judges, and the society at large. After the Beylerbeyi Incident, Murad III and his viziers and other members of the political establishment feared rumors among the soldiers. When combined with mob mentality rumors could result in executions, lynching, and dismissal.⁴¹⁹ In a report about the meeting and protest of the judges, which resulted in dismissals and appointments of chief justices, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the instigators of the meetings were responsible for spreading rumors. He urged the sultan to take rumors seriously, reminding him that his grand father Sultan Süleyman did not spare his own son because of rumors [among the janissaries].⁴²⁰

The sultan became especially fearful about rumors among the soldiers after the Beylerbeyi Incident when some rebellious cavalymen beheaded his favorite minister Doğançlı Mehmed Paşa.⁴²¹ For instance, in an undated report, Koca Sinan Paşa quoted the sultan “It is said in the mounths that the janissaries are not happy about their agha. What have you heard, if there is such a thing report to me.” In answer to this question, the grand vizier wrote that the agha was not a bad servant, and worked diligently, but it was true that he did not get along with the janissaries. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the agha told him that the janissaries stoned him recently, and he warned him not to tell this to another soul. He proposed that the agha could be appointed the governor-general of Anatolia.

⁴¹⁸ “Avām-ı nās lisānında erācīf haberler söyleniyordu,” in Selanikî, 248.

⁴¹⁹ See the lynching of the queen mother Safiye Sultan’s kira (agent) Esther, and her son Salomon by the janissaries in the Hippodrome Square below. Also the execution of Sultan Murad III’s favorite Doğançlı Mehmet Paşa (he was the governor-general of Rumelia) in the Beylerbeyi Incident in chapter 2.

⁴²⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 57, 82-83.

⁴²¹ For Beylerbeyi Incident, see chapter one.

But the sultan's answer urged him to further investigate the situation, which was a sign of disbelief in the words or the solution of the grand vizier.⁴²²

In another undated report, the grand vizier answered the sultan's question about whether it was true that the janissaries were unhappy about their agha, and not to protect the agha if that was the case. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he had spies among the janissaries but did not hear a thing about their discontent with their agha; he wrote that he would further investigate and report to the sultan.⁴²³

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa answered the sultan's question about the movement of the cavalymen (*sipahi taifesinin hareketi*). He wrote that he went out with the prefect (*şehir efendisi*), and the agha of the janissaries to inspect the order in the city. He reported that there were no rumors about the cavalymen, and if there were he would have reported immediately.⁴²⁴ In a report about the payment of the janissaries, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he was working so hard to come up with their payments on time so there would be no rumors among them.⁴²⁵ It is clear that the fear of rumors is in fact the fear of uprisings among the soldiers.

The imprisonment of Divane İbrahim Paşa, who was the brother of the powerful harem stewardess Canfeda Hatun, is an example of the marriage of rumor, gossip, and slander with military uprisings. The sultan wrote to Koca Sinan Paşa asking whether the soldiers were planning to revolt on the morning of the holiday. The grand vizier wrote that this was in fact true, and that was why he wanted to imprison Divane İbrahim Paşa in order to prevent an uprising among the janissaries. He claimed that he had no interest in the dismissal and

⁴²² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 11, 19.

⁴²³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 59, 86-87.

⁴²⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 90, 130-131.,

⁴²⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 60, 88-89.

imprisonment of İbrahim Paşa, but perhaps things to lose. He claimed that Canfeda Hatun suspected that Koca Sinan Paşa was behind İbrahim Paşa's dismissal, but it was the janissaries who had a strong enmity against İbrahim Paşa. He wrote that he became very frightened when he heard the rumors. The sultan ordered the grand vizier to secretly dismiss and imprison Divane İbrahim Paşa.⁴²⁶

It probably did not remain a secret for a long time, because Selanikî wrote that at the end of Ramazan 999/ July 1591, after putting out a fire in the city, the janissaries went to the house of Divane İbrahim Paşa in order to "oversee the justice of the people" (*hukuk-u nas görülsün diye*) because he was reputed with oppressing the peasants. Selanikî wrote that recently a janissary claimed that İbrahim Paşa killed a janissary in Erzurum without reason; he provoked them to take revenge on him. But somehow at that time they could not take their revenge on him. So they decided to take the revenge for the janissary İbrahim Paşa killed now and broke into his house. They burned his house, and looted the presents of gold and jewelry İbrahim Paşa prepared for presenting the sultan. When the agha of the janissaries and the grand vizier arrived they put out the fire.⁴²⁷ As a result the sultan ordered the dismissal of İbrahim Paşa and all the soldiers who revolted. Selanikî wrote that the ulema had been busy praying for the dismissal of İbrahim Paşa in the Great Hagia Sophia, and the small Hagia Sophia mosques day and night.⁴²⁸

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan after the night of the fire that he was afraid that his enemies would make His Majesty to suspect him for the event. He reported that the soldiers were appeased by the imprisonment and dismissal of

⁴²⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis, 92-93.

⁴²⁷ Selanikî, 246-247.

⁴²⁸ Selanikî, 248.

İbrahim Paşa. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that the soldiers went to the Hagia Sophia a few days before the raiding of İbrahim Paşa's house and publicly prayed that "We went to the Sultan, to the viziers, to the chief justices, but they did not give us justice. They make us confront our Lord, here we came to your house but they hold the regard of a woman [Canfeda Hatun] over your will."⁴²⁹ Just before his own dismissal, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote a report to the sultan in which he answered the accusations against him. The accusation was that if it were not for the neglect of Koca Sinan Paşa, the burning and looting of İbrahim Paşa's house would not have happened. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote he heard that the sultan believed these words. He claimed that these were the words of malicious people ("ehl-i garaz sözüdür"), and that some people wanted to turn this into an opportunity for themselves.⁴³⁰ Koca Sinan Paşa seems to have been right about this, because within a few days Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed from his second term, and his archenemy Ferhad Paşa replaced him.⁴³¹ İbrahim Paşa was soon released from prison and returned to his duty, his sister Canfeda Hatun invited him to dinner at the Old Palace with the permission of the sultan.⁴³²

There were rumors about the members of the ulema as well. Right after the second appointment of Koca Sinan Paşa, the sultan sent a decree to the grand vizier in which he wrote that the chief justice of Rumelia, Karaçelebizade was inauspicious. In response, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that, there were many rumors

⁴²⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 79, 114-115.

⁴³⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 86, 125.

⁴³¹ Selanikî, 248-249.

⁴³² Selanikî, 256. However, their days of glory came to an end in the beginning of Receb 1002/March-April 1594 when Mehmed III sent a firman for the imprisonment of Divane İbrahim Paşa with handcuffs, fetters and a chain around his neck in Yeni Hisar. (Selanikî, 362) His request to be transferred to Yedikule, because of the remoteness of Yeni Hisar from the city, was accepted. (Selanikî, 367). He was executed on 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1003/February 3, 1595, and his body was thrown into the sea of Marmara from Narlukapu, but his servants recovered his body from the sea and buried him to Çizmecibaşı Tekke in Tophane. (Selanikî, 439)

among the public to this effect. He confessed that he did not want to cause Karaçelebizade his position, because he himself just came to power and wanted to get along well with the ulema. He requested the sultan to inquire about the inauspiciousness of Karaçelebizade from Hoca Sadüddin Efendi, to whose faction he belonged to, in order to save Koca Sinan Paşa from gossip and slander (“bu kulları dilden halas buyurulmak rica eder”). However, the sultan ordered the grand vizier to consult with (*müşavere*) Karaçelebizade, not with the imperial tutor [Hoca Sadüddin].⁴³³

Slander (iftira ve bühtan)

Slander was considered to be one great ill of the society. Everybody complained about it. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that he was dismissed from his first term because of slander (*kizb ve iftira*) of people with evil designs.⁴³⁴ By destroying one’s reputation, slander could move one out of politics for a long time (four years of exile in Koca Sinan Paşa’s case), or cause heads to roll (as in the case of Ferhad Paşa). Among the words Koca Sinan Paşa used to talk about calumny were “*iftira ve bühtan*” (slander and calumny)⁴³⁵, “*iftira*” (slander)⁴³⁶, Often “*kizb*” (lie) and “*tezvir*” (fake, fraud)⁴³⁷, “*telbis*” (fraud)⁴³⁸

⁴³³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 46, 67-68.

⁴³⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 153, 198.

⁴³⁵ “Hak ta’ala iftira ve bühtan şerrinden emin eylete’ in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 19, 30; “... havfım heman iftira ve bühtandır. Muhassalı Allah’tan korkmayub hazz-ı nefis için her iftira ve bühtanı eylemek caiz olandan korkaruz... inşallahu ta’ala bir kimesne parmak basacak terde olmayam meğer iftira ve bühtan ve hata ola” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 47, 69; “Havfımız budur ki bu derdden niçeleri ittifak edüb bu kullarına buldukları iftira ve bühtanları edeler” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 72, 105;

⁴³⁶ “Lakin iftira-yı mahz ve garaz-ı sırf idüğünden kat’an şübhe yokdur” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 29a, 39; “Heres iftiradan korkan” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 31, 42; “İtikadım budur ki iftira ola” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 64, 94;

⁴³⁷ “Şimdi hod tezvir edüb...” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 21, 31; “Amma her kişi garaza hizmet eder, hiç günah yoğiken, kâh tezvir ile ve kah el ağzından haberleri yoğiken, kaidlar yazmağla, su-i zanna sebep olacak tezvirât edenlerün ötesi görünmeyüb ve yoklanmayı her kişi eyledüğü yanına kalıcak vallahi’-azim eyu olmaz” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 31, 42;.

⁴³⁸ Bu tezvir ve telbis in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 85, 123-124.

“*mağlata*”(deception)⁴³⁹, “*karartı*” (denigration)⁴⁴⁰, *düruğ* (lie), and “*türrehat*” (nonsense), “haber, pl. ahbar” (news) together with words that specifically mean gossip, slander or paper/hand writings (*rika* and *kağıt*).

Political Consequences of Talk and Written Denunciation

I distinguish between rumor, gossip and slander based on the context. Written denunciation (*kağıt* or *rika*), on the other hand, constitutes another category, although the content of these written denunciations was a mixture of gossip, rumor, and slander. The sultan’s confidants and high-ranking slaves, his imperial tutor and the queen mother could slander and gossip about the people they resented. They were able to talk to the sultan because they could access him with ease. Dwarfs, fools and personal attendants of Murad III derived a great power from their access to the sultan. Selanikî Mustafa Efendi claimed that the dwarfs and fools made Murad III fearful of leaving the palace after the Beylerbeyi Incident.⁴⁴¹ Leslie Peirce observed that within the inner and outer world of Ottoman court politics “the more intimate one’s service to the sultan in the inner

⁴³⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 5, “böyle mağlata peyda eden haşa sümme haşa devletlu padişahımın dünya ve ahiretini kayıranlardan değildir” 9; “Suret-i hade groin sa’y mağlatasıyla çok kimesne ezdirüb dünya ve ahiretin tamam etmişdür” Sahillioğlu, Telhis 9, 16, “İş görmüş kulunuzun, bu saltanatın böyle mağlatasın çok görmüşüm” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 59, 88; “... ahirü’l-emr tekml eyledim yine anlardan alırım deyu vâfir mağlata dahi eylemiş. Hele neyleyelim böyle mağlata çok olur” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 65, 96; “bu makule kelimât mağlata-yi avamdır” Sahillioğlu, Telhis 95, 137; “dünyanın lâf u güzâfın peydâ edüb mağlata vermekten halî olmasalar gerekdir” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 110, 153; “Huzur-ı padişahîde mağlataya cevâz gösterilmediği malum-ı saadetleri olsun” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 128, 167; “Kazak hususu bir bahane dahi olsun deyu böyle bir mağlata peyda etmiş” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 192, 234; “Bu te’vilat sahih, bir münasebeti vardır. Bu haber hemân mağlata mıdır, hâtır beklemek midür? Cevab-ı sahih veresin” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 199, 238.

⁴⁴⁰ “Bazı karartı peyda edip sunarlar” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 5, s. 8; “Mal-ı miriyi şîr-i mâder gibi yerler ve israf ederlerve yetmez tahsil edenlere dahi bu vechile karartı asarlar” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 139, 179; “Farzan müşahede eylediğinde dönüp defterini ahâr surete koyup, niçe gayr-ı vaki mesarif tedarük edüp külli karartılar asıp muhassal-ı kelam diledikleri gibi defter peyda eylemek olur” in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 53, 77.

⁴⁴¹ Selanikî, 444-445. Also see Ayşe Ezgi Dikici, “Imperfect Bodies, Perfect Companions? Dwarfs And Mutes At The Ottoman Court In The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries” (MA thesis, Sabancı University, 2006), 76-83.

world, the greater was one's standing in the outer world."⁴⁴² As we will see below, the sultan's personal attendants also functioned as go-betweens between the writers of anonymous papers (written denunciation) and the sultan. On the other hand, high level bureaucrats' access to the sultan was bound by the ceremonial of the court; their gossiping in front of, or with the sultan was limited.⁴⁴³

Within the court culture of later sixteenth century Ottoman Empire, gossip was used to defame someone without making legal accusation. Gossip was often about a specific subject, and the gossipier and gossipee were known to each other and to the audience of the gossip. Members of the Ottoman political elite used gossip to bring about audits and dismissals of officials, as well as the discovery of finding illegally obtained money buried or hidden in an official's house.⁴⁴⁴ Slander is based on falsehood, whereas it is possible to establish the veracity of gossip by investigation. On the other hand, a serious allegation could be dismissed sometimes on the pretext of it being gossip or slander.

Gossip and slander could cause the dismissal, execution, and auditing of grand viziers and other officials. Koca Sinan Paşa's reports about gossip and slander make it clear that denigrators addressed the sultan. Most cases of gossip and slander I look at are about the public personalities of Ottoman statesmen, and about their use and abuse of the power they derived as holders of certain positions by accommodating embezzlement, bribery, and selling of offices. There are some cases, in which the distinction between public and private lives of

⁴⁴² Peirce, 12.

⁴⁴³ Mehmed II formalized the ceremonial of the imperial audience (arz) meetings in his code (Fâtiḥ Kanunnamesi). The code regulated the order and protocol of entering and speaking of this austere event. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı's almost timeless description of the arz reception is based on mostly late-sixteenth century narrative sources such as the works of Mustafa Âli. See İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Arz Günleri" in *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 30-35. Mücteba İlgürel argues that by mid-sixteenth century the meetings were held twice a week. See *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Arz."

⁴⁴⁴ Selanikî, 136, 172.

statesmen is blurred. As we will see below, Koca Sinan Paşa could denigrate the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa by writing to the sultan that he was lacking in religiosity and morality. But I have not come across with slander about the private lives, and sexual relations of fellow slaves of the sultan. Because I study reports of slander as conserved in other texts, what these texts do not tell are as meaningful as what they tell. Since Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı showed that in poetic circles slander about the private lives (sexual relations, the number of lovers, etc) was common, it is perceivable that there had been gossip and slander about the private lives of Ottoman statesmen even if it did not come down to us in writing. Furthermore, many prominent statesmen had their own literary salons, so these circles often overlapped.⁴⁴⁵

Koca Sinan Paşa made it clear that competition among rivals was what motivated gossip about one another.⁴⁴⁶ Gossip as such was not anonymous, but an open form of rivalry the grand vizier tried to persuade the sultan to disregard. So without naming them, Koca Sinan Paşa explained who might gossip about him with what intention.⁴⁴⁷ In a *telhis* datable to Cemaziyelahir-Receb 999/March-April 1591, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that because he was afraid of slander through gossip. He pleaded to the sultan to investigate whatever they said, and not to believe gossip about things that did not happen (“olmadın

⁴⁴⁵ For Şemsi Ahmed Paşa’s salon in late 1570s, see Fleischer, 74-75.

⁴⁴⁶ Another instance in which Koca Sinan Paşa says that his rivals who have ulterior motives say things to make gains (“... bu kelimat ehl-i garaz sözüdür. Belki bunu bir fırsat tutub bazu kimesne kendüsüne hisse çıkarmak isteye”) in Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 86, 125.

⁴⁴⁷ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 33, 45. The report is actually about the cancelling of a recently established tax-farm on wine while Koca Sinan Paşa was away from capital after his dismissal from his term as grand vizier. The cancelling of the tax farm was accompanied by the closing down of all the meyhanes (taverns) within the wall city. Koca Sinan Paşa has in mind the people who have an interest in the tax-farm of wine as his potential gossipers. The reason he mentioned coffeehouses was that he wanted to persuade the sultan change his order to close them down with the taverns, saying that he has not been inside a coffeehouse in his long life and they’re the places where people gossip, yet the people need an outlet (halka bir eğlence lazım). There are other précis about the closing down of newly emerged wine tax-farm and taverns, see Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 5, Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 6 and Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 135.

dedikoduya iltifat-ı ali buyurulmaya”). Koca Sinan Paşa argued that everyone had some self-interest from service to the sultan. Some wanted to obtain appointments for their children and followers (*evlad ve etba'ına*), some wanted to obtain wealth, in short each had an end according to their dispositions. The grand vizier claimed that to achieve these ends, people were ready to gossip about him.⁴⁴⁸ Koca Sinan Paşa often wore this shield against gossip, rumor, slander and written denunciation. Koca Sinan Paşa's aim was to secure the sultan's distrust in accusations he heard or read about him.

Indeed, high profile office holders could be dismissed on account of gossip and rumor alone. For instance, the chief juriconsult Bostanzade Efendi a was “suddenly” dismissed took place on 27 Receb 1000/May 9, 1592. According to Selanikî, the sultan sent a letter to the grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa ordering the replacement of the chief juriconsult Bostanzade Efendi with Zekeriyya Efendi. Selanikî noted that people were shocked when they heard about this dismissal. The next day, Mevlana Muslihiddin Efendi, the brother of the dismissed chief juriconsult, was also dismissed from his position as the judge of Istanbul. The judge of Edirne Cafer Efendioğlu replaced Muslihiddin Efendi. Selanikî explained that the reason for the dismissal of Bostanzade was that the conspirators and immoral ones who pretend to be bohemian types (“*rindân nâmina kallaşân u evbâşan*”) whom the grandees feared because of their gossiping and malicious acts had circulated a rumor about Bostanzade. Selanikî reported the rumor: the chief juriconsult wanted to go to another country where there was no oppression, and wished that the Khan of Uzbeks Abdullah Khan were alive. When the sultan

⁴⁴⁸ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 218, 254-255.

heard this, he dismissed Bostanzade immediately.⁴⁴⁹

Gossip seems to be an umbrella term for Koca Sinan Paşa, for he could refer to the opposition that was voiced against his economic policy as gossip. In a report he wrote about Hızır Paşa's bid for the tax-farm of Revan, he recalled that earlier when Koca Sinan Paşa tried to tax-farm Revan for the first time, "there has been so much gossip about how the province will be ruined, and that its population does not have enough resources to pay the tax farmer for his 100.000 *akçe* bid." He claimed that although he and others have gossiped in this manner, now Hızır Paşa was making a higher bid for the province he claimed would not raise 100.000 *akçe* in tax revenues.⁴⁵⁰

Koca Sinan Paşa often claimed that he did not ever slander or gossip. But in his reports, he wrote many allegations against his archenemy Ferhad Paşa that were not legal accusations. In one instance, in order to address allegations against himself about obtaining resources (*zeamet*) for his own men, he made counter allegations about how Ferhad Paşa had 300-400 followers. After stating that he had only 60-70 protégés, he claimed that it was Ferhad Paşa who allocated these resources to his followers. These imprecise statements can be considered gossip, bordering on slander.

Selanikî also wrote a lot about gossip among the members of the Ottoman ruling elite. He sometimes just reported that there was gossip but did not write what the gossip was about. For instance, he wrote that the famous Sakarya-Sapanca and İzmit canal project of Koca Sinan Paşa created some gossip without explaining what the gossip was about. Koca Sinan Paşa went on a site trip with Commander Ferhad Paşa, chief justice of Anatolia Ali Çelebi Efendi and other

⁴⁴⁹ Selanikî, 270.

⁴⁵⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 214, 251-252.

“pillars of the state”. After the three-day-long trip, “strange news was presented to the supreme hearing of the sultan from the tongues of some blessed notables (“ayan-ı saadet”), as a result of which the sultan ordered the halting of the project.”⁴⁵¹ Here Selanikî identified the gossipers (“ayan-ı saadet”) and the gossipee (Koca Sinan Paşa), this sort of gossip was the tool with which one could get rid of one’s enemy. In a few days, not only the project was halted but also Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed from his second term in grand vizierate because of Ferhad Paşa’s gossiping about the canal project.⁴⁵²

Selanikî wrote about rumor in many instances. His entry before the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa from his second term in 999/1591 was about the Ramazan Holiday. Selanikî wrote that everybody took their places in the “Divan-ı mualla” (the Imperial Council) according to old customs and ceremonies of the sultanate and kissed the foot of the sultan. He stated that, “in the tongues of the common people, fabricated news were circulating. Thanks to God, everything went well.” His next entry is “the sudden taking away of the imperial seal from Koca Sinan Paşa.”⁴⁵³ We do not know what was the content of the fabricated news that circulated among the masses, yet their circulation right before the grand vizier’s dismissal in the trajectory of Selanikî’s narrative suggest a relationship between them.

Selanikî wrote about Koca Sinan Paşa’s fear of being slandered with accusations that he was the source of rumors, when his nemesis Ferhad Paşa was dismissed from his first term in the grand vizierate in Receb, 1000 (April/May 1592). The sultan ordered the former grand vizier Ferhad Paşa to be audited.

⁴⁵¹ Selanikî, 238. Cemaziyelahir 999.

⁴⁵² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. “Sinân Paşa, KHodja.”

⁴⁵³ “Avam-ı nas lisanında erâcîf söyleniyordu” in Selanikî, 248.

Murad III invited Koca Sinan Paşa to take part in the audit commission. Koca Sinan Paşa, who had been in exile in his farm in Malkara, wrote to the sultan that he was occupied with praying for the sultan there; if he was to arrive in Istanbul, every word that was being said [all the gossip and rumor] would be attributed to him, so he begged for permission not to come there. Selanikî showed his approval of Koca Sinan Paşa's attitude with the title of the section, "Sinan Paşa expressed true words in this issue."⁴⁵⁴

Selanikî stated that rumors about Baş-Ruznamçeci Mehmed Çelebi resulted in his dismissal in 999/1591. He did not use the usual words of *dedikodu* or *kıyl u kal*, but instead myth (*efsane*), "the whimsical told myths about Mehmed Çelebi" ("erbab-ı heva bazı efsane nakl itmeğle azl olundu").⁴⁵⁵

Written Denunciation

Voluntary informers sent written denunciations (called *kağid/rika*) to the sultan through doorkeepers and other palace officials, or simply thrown them into the inner courtyard of the palace in order to inform the sultan about corruption, embezzlement, treason, or oppression by a member of the Ottoman political elite. What I call written denunciations, or shortly written denunciation, were named after their physical qualities in late sixteenth century Ottoman Empire: *kağid* (paper) and *rika* (the bureaucratic handwriting). Thus, they do not constitute a genre such as a précis (*telhis*), report (*arz*), or letter (*nâme*). *Kağit/rika* remain a largely an unexplored form of communication within the Ottoman court during the sixteenth century.⁴⁵⁶ Halil Sahillioğlu, who published Koca Sinan Paşa's

⁴⁵⁴ "Koca Sinan Paşa bu bâbda kelâm-ı hak beyan eyler" in Selanikî 269.

⁴⁵⁵ Selanikî, 246.

⁴⁵⁶ The only dictionary article id on ruka: "Yazılmış kağıt, mektup yerine kullanılır bir tâbirdir. Yan yazılacak kağıt, deri parçası yerine de kullanılır. Vesikalarda geçer" (It is a term that means written paper, letter. It also means a piece of paper or parchment that is to be used vertically. The

précis correspondence, pointed out in his introduction that this must be a specific form of communication during the reign of Murad III.⁴⁵⁷ Within this study, I only focus on the reports about these kağıts/rikas in Koca Sinan Paşa's précis collection, rather than the documents themselves.

M. Tayyip Gökbilgin published five written denunciations from the Topkapı Palace Archives against the grand vizier Rüstem Paşa during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520-1566). Tayyip Gökbilgin called anonymous written denunciations "informer's letters". These letters inform the sultan about the factionalism, corruption, and bribe taking of the grand vizier. The nameless writers of these papers accused Rüstem Paşa with causing the death of Prince Mustafa by fabricating gossip about him. Gökbilgin also published two "complaint letters" by the soldiers about their agha and the grand vizier. These are written denunciations, submitted anonymously to inform about the misdeeds of the grand vizier.

Koca Sinan Paşa used the following expressions to talk about written denunciations (*yalan kağıd, tezvîr kağıtlar, bazı vaki ve gayri-vaki mevad yazdırub, vaki ve gayri vaki türrehât*), reporting things that did not happen as they did ("bazı gayri vakı'ı vakıa mutabık şekilde tasvir edip")⁴⁵⁸. He also used the expression "ratıb ve yabis söylemek/arz etmek" (saying/reporting dry and wet things) to talk about someone who said or reported true and false things together.⁴⁵⁹

term is used in documents) in Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimler Sözlüğü*, s.v. "ruka." Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi and Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Ed. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s. v. "Arzuhal."

⁴⁵⁷ Sahillioğlu, vii.

⁴⁵⁸ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 100, 142.

⁴⁵⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 84, 122. Sahillioğlu, Telhis 139, 179 about Ciğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa.

It was during the reign of Murad III that written denunciations (*kağıt/rika*) became a major problem. Mustafa Âli explain how the problem of *kağıt/rika* emerged in his universal history *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, where the chapter on the reign of Murad III is organized in the form of numbered events.⁴⁶⁰ The first event he described is titled “The Situations and the Regrettable Deeds of the Malicious Regarding the Disorder of the Accumulation of Rika”:

“Şemsi Ahmed Paşa had been first royal companion (*müşahib*) of his grand father, secondly to his father. Thirdly, because he was close (*mukarın*) to Murad [III], he was ready in the imperial presence (*rikâb-ı hümâyûn*) every time the sultan went horse riding, and because there was an old enmity between himself and the grand vizier [Sokollu] Mehmed Paşa, he tried to cause his dismissal, and perhaps even murder. Because of this Şemsi Paşa advised the sultan to collect rikas, and said “You majesty, do not believe the grand vizier, or assume that what he reports (*arz*) is true. It is better if you personally supervise the situation of the people.” He even composed some couplets about this. For instance, they said ‘Let’s go to rika hunting, like a falcon I will move and take the letters (*name*) that was presented in our claws and prey on.’ And Murad III followed this advice. But, they let loose the malicious of the time. As a result everyone started to present rikas about their enemies, and wrote nonsense with numerous slanders and gave them. The peasants complained about their judges on despicable pretexts, and were able through this channel to bring about their dismissal or audit. Yet, the starting of this did not bring about any results. Every time they went horse riding, many thousand rikas were submitted, which were not possible to read. The disorder of the world started firstly because of this.”⁴⁶¹

So Mustafa Âli alleged that Şemsi Ahmed Paşa was single handedly responsible for the intensification of written denunciations. Peçevî repeated the same story about the origin of *rika*. He wrote that Üveys Paşa and chief judge of Rumelia Kadızade joined forces with Şemsi Ahmed Paşa in order to curb Sokollu Mehmed Paşa’s power through a number of means. Among these was the collection of *rikas*.⁴⁶² Mustafa Âli’s description can be likened to what Robert Darnton called anecdotes, paragraphs where the historian unveiled the secret

⁴⁶⁰ See chapter 5.

⁴⁶¹ Çerçi: 242.

⁴⁶² Peçevî, 2:5-6.

history behind certain developments and events in their historical works.⁴⁶³ Peçevî copied some of those anecdotes in addition to writing his own.⁴⁶⁴

Anecdotes as weapons of abuse were used to denigrate the grantees by exposing their private lives. They often reduced the explanation of complex events to personalities.⁴⁶⁵ By reducing the increase in the submission of *rika* and *kağıt* to a single statesman's advice and encouragement, Mustafa Âli found an easy explanation for one of the problems of Murad III's reign. Still, Mustafa Âli's placement of the proliferation of written denunciations as the first disorder (*ihtilal*) of the reign is significant. However simplistic his explanation is, Âli's observation can be considered as a testimony to the fact that although written denunciations existed before Murad III's reign, they became a major political problem only with the factionalism that culminated in the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa.

Koca Sinan Paşa reflected on how the submission of complaints and written denunciations changed over time in a report where he suggested a solution to this problem. He said that people who were removed from office because of corruption or other crimes had been busy writing written denunciations ("gayr-ı vaki rika") without coming forward. He recalled that during the time of Sultan Süleyman and other ancestors of His Majesty, those who presented *rikas* would be run by a *bostancı* together with their *rikas*, after which they would be sent to the Imperial Council, where their claims would be overseen with justice. If their claims were true, the rightful thing would be done, if the claims were false (*telbis*), the presenter of the *rika* would be punished. Koca

⁴⁶³ Ultimately coming from Anecdotes, which was the Greek name of Procopius' Secret History

⁴⁶⁴ See chapter 5 below. For Darnton's analysis of anecdote, see Darnton, 269-270.

⁴⁶⁵ Darnton, 441-442.

Sinan Paşa complained that there was no supervision, and everyone wrote many papers, gave the paper to a criminal along with 10 *akçes*, and thus had it submitted, and was able to get away with destroying the reputation of anyone. Koca Sinan Paşa pleaded to the Sultan that this situation was not good in itself, because His Majesty became sad thinking there was oppression outside, and also because the honor of many Muslims was being damaged. He asked the sultan to order the *bostancıbaşı* to oversee the submission of papers, and send the presenter of the paper to the Imperial Council, and thus stop the vicious circle of written denunciations. Koca Sinan Paşa's style of argumentation is very similar to that of Mustafa Âli, Selanikî and Peçevî. He justified his solution to the problem through historical precedence, and observed the corruption of the institution of presenting complaints to the Imperial Council.⁴⁶⁶

He came up with another solution to the rika problem whereby some literate *kapucus* would encircle the sultan when he mounted on horseback and skim through the rikas and catch the presenter if the rika is libelous. The sultan considered this to be a better solution. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, if someone was trying to complain of the sultan, they would be caught and brought to the inner court to be heard by the chief justices. The grand vizier wrote that he asked the agha of the janissaries why he did not find the writer of the written denunciation, and the agha answered that he would have easily found the writer if it had been a janissary.⁴⁶⁷

These denunciation memorandums were often anonymous, or signed in relation to one's profession such as "*biçaregân-ı piyâdegân*" (the unfortunate ones of the infantrymen). Koca Sinan Paşa wrote frequently about slander

⁴⁶⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 143, 182-183.

⁴⁶⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 27, 36-37.

transmitted through *kağıt/rika*, but also he wrote on ‘forged denunciation memorandum.’ Forged denunciation memorandum can be defined as a denunciation memorandum that was signed to belong to a particular group such as the janissaries or the *ulema*, but was in fact written by third parties. It is hard to know how much rikas circulated in the court circles. However, Selanikî Mustafa Efendi copied a gazel written in a *rika*. The poem was not about a specific complaint. It was a general complaint about how things went wrong, and how the world would turn upside down, the poor families would disintegrate, and the houses of the peasants would be demolished because of oppression. Selanikî’s insertion of the poem suggests that certain rikas did circulate.⁴⁶⁸

It is possible to use slander, denunciation, gossip and rumor both as a shield and a sword. When accusations were directed at you, you could claim them to be fabrications and slander, when they were about your enemies (which you or your protégés could have fabricated by gossiping or stirring up rumors among the janissaries) you used them to eliminate them. There were many papers written about Koca Sinan Paşa. The writers of these papers aimed to remove Koca Sinan Paşa from his position by damaging his reputation in the eyes of the sultan. However, as we will see below, Koca Sinan Paşa went on witch-hunts to find the writers of these written denunciations. He had officials dismissed and imprisoned with allegations about their involvement in the fake written denunciations.

Accusation and hearsay that was transmitted through denunciations enter the narrative trajectory of Selanikî Mustafa Efendi’s chronicle as causes of dismissals, appointments, executions, and imprisonments. Selanikî wrote about signed and unsigned denunciations: “the possessors of enmity and jealousy, in

⁴⁶⁸ Selanikî, 228.

accordance with their dislike and difficulties presented *rıkas* about the pillars of the state (*erkan-ı devlet*) full of various accusations.... The sultan [Selim II] did not compliment any of these by reading and burned them and said: ‘if your adversary is not here, I will not hear of it.’⁴⁶⁹ Selanikî claimed that a denunciation was the cause of Ferhad Paşa’s audit upon his return from the eastern campaign: “the trouble-maker known as Hızır Alay Beyi presented to the crown some *rıkas* with the instruction of blessed notables (*ayan-ı saadet*), and as a result he was given the position of auditor for the expenses and income of the war during the four years Ferhad Paşa was a commander.⁴⁷⁰ An audit could result with dismissal, confiscation, exile and execution. A more significant political consequence of denunciation Selanikî wrote about involved Ferhad Paşa’s dismissal from the grand vizierate in 1000/1592. A signed denunciation by the former agha of the janissaries Mehmed Ağa caused Ferhad Paşa’s dismissal from grand vizierate. Mehmed Ağa had been dismissed from his job because of a janissary revolt, but he had been promoted to the governor-generalship of Anatolia. Still, Mehmed Ağa went home in anger to he write a detailed kağıd/paper with personal grudge (*garaz-ı nefis*) that denigrated Ferhad Paşa. He informed the sultan that the janissaries were going to unite for an uprising the next day. The sultan believed this presentation to be true and in his fury he dismissed Ferhad Paşa.⁴⁷¹

When the former governor-general of Egypt Sinan Paşa was imprisoned with embezzlement, he claimed from Yenihisar in a *rıka* that Üveys Paşa and his steward (*kapu kethüdası*) Ali Çavuş stole his treasury. Selanikî called this act “dâd-hâhlık eylemeğın” (pleading for justice) as a result of which Ali Çavuş was

⁴⁶⁹ Selanikî, 44.

⁴⁷⁰ Selanikî, 240.

⁴⁷¹ Selanikî, 264-265.

also imprisoned.⁴⁷² Selanikî Mustafa Efendi did not quote the content of denunciations and gossips as opposed to Koca Sinan Paşa, who tended to express more explicitly what they were about, what the motivations for writing these were, etc. Still, my study of these denunciations is based on these second-hand narrations.

It was possible to attribute denunciations to certain high-ranking writers. For instance, Koca Sinan Paşa accused his nemesis Ferhad Paşa with writing *kağıds*/denunciations full of lies in a précis to the sultan. Rather than denunciations, these could have been written reports of Ferhad Paşa.⁴⁷³ Another author of written denunciations was a former treasurer İbrahim. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that after his dismissal in 996, İbrahim busied himself with writing denunciations about him and his son day and night. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that he had accomplices that were also thieves (i.e. embezzlers) like himself.⁴⁷⁴ Koca Sinan Paşa stated that he did not want protection for himself or his son; he just wanted the truthfulness of these denunciations to be investigated by the sultan before taking an action.⁴⁷⁵

Kağıt and *rika* constituted the most cunning way of using hearsay and accusation because the authors often remained anonymous, and hence, in theory unpunished. Secondly, these anonymous reports functioned in a vicious circle. Members of the grand vizier's faction could plant these reports as well as those of

⁴⁷² Selanikî, 242.

⁴⁷³ Koca Sinan Paşa accused Ferhad Paşa in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 37; Selanikî identifies Hasan Paşa as an author of denunciation against Koca Sinan Paşa in p. 236.

⁴⁷⁴ Selanikî, 197.

⁴⁷⁵ Başdefterdar iken azl ve teftiş olunup zimmetinde mal-ı miri lazım olan İbrahim... şimdi bunda gelip bu kullarından bilip kendi akran ve emsali olan bazı hırsızlarla gece ve gündüz telbis ve tezvîr kağıtlar yazmaya başlamış. Kah bu kulları, kah oğlum kulları hakkında dünyanın iftira ve bühtan ve kizbin edermiş. Devletli padişahım, gerek bu kulları gerek de oğlum kulları hakkında zerre kadar himaye istemezem. Hemen ricam budur ki gavrine ermeğe inayet edip bu makule şehri ve telbis ve hırsızlar kelamıyla su-i zan buyurulmaya. (Sahillioğlu, Telhis 31, s. 42)

his opponents' factions. Sultan Murad III consulted the people involved and grand viziers about the truthfulness of these anonymous reports numerous times. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed the reports to be true when they involved the misdeeds and shortcomings of his enemies and their friends, followers and servants. On the other hand, if the *rika/kağıt* concerned him or his family, friend and followers, he just claimed that whoever was writing that was lying and slandering. For instance, the sultan sent Koca Sinan Paşa a *rika* about the chief justice of Anatolia in order to investigate its truthfulness. The grand vizier wrote to the sultan that he had investigated the claims from trustworthy people and came to the conclusion that the claims the judges the chief justice appointed were all worthy candidates. Koca Sinan Paşa explained that because at least 20-30 people are nominated for each position, those who do not get it become enemies and complain. He thought that must have been the reason for that paper. The sultan answered the grand vizier give the chief justice of Anatolia a serious warning.⁴⁷⁶

The problem about slander, rumor and gossip is the difficulty of establishing their truthfulness. Selanikî claimed at various turns that Koca Sinan Paşa or Ferhad Paşa and “his protégés” or “dependents” sent to the sultan papers to denigrate their enemies. In a report Koca Sinan Paşa urged to sultan not to heed the words of his enemies such as Siyavuş Paşa, who he claimed might be writing denunciations against him. Because he dismissed corrupt and oppressive officials since the beginning of his second term, some grandees and their dependents hated him. It was possible that Siyavuş Paşa would report falsehoods to the sultan.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 134, 174.

⁴⁷⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 100, 141.

In theory, Koca Sinan Paşa could easily sent anonymous reports to denigrate his enemies, so when the sultan asked him his opinion of these reports, he argued that they were true. So because of the circularity, the system short-circuited. Selanikî Mustafa Efendi and Koca Sinan Paşa were aware of the deliberate use of denunciation, gossip and slander as tools in factional strife.

A Case Study: Rumeli Beylerbeyi Hasan Paşa, David Passi, Rumor Among Janissaries, Gossip, Denunciation and Forged Denunciation

Koca Sinan Paşa came up with the identity of the writers of denunciation. He called these “papers from the mouth of the soldiers,” or “kul ağzından kağıt.” He claimed that dismissed officials and other conspirators wrote these. Unfortunately, I studied these written denunciations through Koca Sinan Paşa’s reports, which provide a fracture of a glimpse into their content. He wrote that he cried upon reading these, and the sultan himself wrote he did not feel very well afterwards. If these denunciations are similar to the denunciations about Rüstem Paşa supposedly written by the soldiers during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, they may include threats about imminent janissary uprisings, if not deposition of the sultan himself. Thus, it is possible to refer to these denunciations as “false conspiracies” following Carlo Ginzburg’s categorization. Ginzburg argued that “conspiracies exist, and false conspiracies always conceal real ones.”⁴⁷⁸

David Passi was at least a quadruple agent to the Spanish, the English, the Ottomans, and the Portuguese at the end of 1580s, if we discount the Venice from the list of his possible patrons.⁴⁷⁹ In Istanbul, he became a trusted servant of

⁴⁷⁸ Carlo Ginzburg, “Learning from the Enemy: On the French Prehistory of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion” (paper presented at Aptullah Kuran Lectures, Boğaziçi University, April 1, 2005).

⁴⁷⁹ He appeared as a Venetian agent in 1560s-1570s. See Fodor, 196-197. See Richard Wilson, “Another Country? Marlowe and the Go-Between” in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 199.

Murad III, who reputedly turned to him for advice on various issues, including the building of the navy. Since he was playing to all sides, from the British who wanted to co-attack Malta with Ottomans, to Spain of Philip II, which as the enemy of both Protestant Britain and the Ottoman Empire needed intelligence on the state of the fleet, things soon got out of hand.⁴⁸⁰ Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that he might be a spy to the Spanish and the Venetians, since he was eating and drinking with the Frenks all the time.⁴⁸¹ But his downfall came from the allegations of the grand vizier about his involvement in a forged denunciation scheme, which was held responsible for writing an anonymous paper to the sultan by a member of the janissary army.⁴⁸²

Governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa, nicknamed Apostle because of his fortune telling skills, was imprisoned with the charge of forged denunciations along with his accomplice “David the Jew.”⁴⁸³ According to the chronicle of Selanikî Mustafa Efendi, the agha of the janissaries Hasan Paşa was promoted to the rank of the governor-general of Rumelia on Rebiülahir 999/January-February 1591, because of rumors among the janissaries concerning their discontent about their agha.⁴⁸⁴ In Receb 999/April-May 1591, Hasan Paşa was dismissed from his new position on account of the *ırkas* the discontented janissaries presented. The janissaries were complaining because they did not get their promotions while Hasan Paşa was their agha. He was imprisoned along with his steward (*kethüda*),

⁴⁸⁰ Fodor, 197-198. Wilson, 178-179, 185, 192-193, 198-199.

⁴⁸¹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 8, 14.

⁴⁸² Wilson rightly argues that the grand vizier was resolved to destroy David Passi’s downfall, based on ambassadorial reports from the *Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1581-91*, for which see Wilson, 178. But he concludes that Passi was sentenced to exile in Rhodes when his Spanish bribes were exposed, Wilson, 199. Fodor thought his fall from grace had to do with both the personal rivalry of the grand vizier with Passi, and the grand vizier’s anti-Jewish sentiment. See Fodor, 199-206.

⁴⁸³ Koca Sinan Paşa referred to David Passi as Yahudi David, or David the Jew. He was called Frank David, which means either David the European or David the Catholic. Fodor, 196.

⁴⁸⁴ Selanikî, 231.

scribe (*divan katibi*), kapucubaşı, and kapucubaşı kethüdası. Selanikî stated that Hasan Paşa had someone write rikas full of truth and falsehood (“bazı vakı, bazı gayri vakı”) about Koca Sinan Paşa with malicious designs (“li-garazın”). It is obvious from Selanikî’s account that the dismissal of the governor-general of Rumelia had to do with the presentation of written denunciations.⁴⁸⁵ We learn from Koca Sinan Paşa’s précis collection how it was uncovered that it was Hasan Paşa who wrote the rikas about him.⁴⁸⁶

Shortly after the dismissal of Hasan Paşa from his position as the agha of Janissaries, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote a précis to the sultan about Hasan Paşa. Firstly, he claimed that Hasan Paşa told people that if he stayed a little longer in his post as the agha, he would have known what to do. The grand vizier implied that Hasan Paşa would have started an uprising, or some other upheaval among the janissaries. This is a powerful accusation because Murad III’s greatest fear was the uprising of janissaries. Koca Sinan Paşa reported that although he had overlooked Hasan Paşa’s mistakes during his term as the agha, he found out that he slandered him. He reported that there were rumors among the janissaries about Hasan Paşa that if there had been a fire in the city while he was their agha, they would have left him there to burn.

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he did not want to upset the sultan by reporting these rumors, so he wrote to the governor-general personally five or six times to warn him. Koca Sinan Paşa reported that after his dismissal Ferhad Paşa considered that the agha should be promoted to another duty, and worked toward

⁴⁸⁵ Selanikî, 236.

⁴⁸⁶ See Sahillioğlu, Telhis 8, 12-15; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 31, 42-43; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 38, 54-55, Sahillioğlu, Telhis 39, 56-57, Sahillioğlu, Telhis 62; 90-91; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 67, 97-99; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 120, 161-162; Sahillioğlu, Telhis 14 24, Sahillioğlu, Telhis 203, 242-243. Also see Selanikî, 221 and 236.

that end, which resulted in the appointment of the agha as the governor-general of Rumelia. Koca Sinan Paşa considered this a huge error. So, we can understand that Hasan Paşa was most probably a follower of Ferhad Paşa. Koca Sinan Paşa repeated that he did not want to give the sultan any grief, but the mistake needed to be corrected. If we are to believe Koca Sinan Paşa, the entire population hated Hasan Paşa; he would be the cause of some disorder sooner or later. Koca Sinan Paşa accused Hasan Paşa with being arrogant, not knowing his place, and reporting what he heard from the sultan to him in an inappropriate manner. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he warned him about not repeating the “secrets of the state” to anyone, but learned that he also repeated them elsewhere, and tried to invent mischief (*fitne*).⁴⁸⁷

In another report full of complaints against the governor-general of Rumelia, Koca Sinan Paşa gave the account of a recent conversation between Hasan Paşa and himself. Apparently, the governor-general of Rumelia told him that the sultan ordered the grand vizier to consult with (*müşavere*) David Passi about the provisioning of the imperial navy, and carry out the provisioning in accordance with David’s advice. The grand vizier told Hasan Paşa that the provisioning of the navy was going to take place next year, and asked why would he consult with that Jew about an issue as sensitive as the navy. Koca Sinan Paşa told him that God has ordered them not to trust the Jews, and quoted Quran 5:82, and that he will not have a Jew inspect the navy. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that because Hasan Paşa became vexed about Koca Sinan Paşa’s answer, he might have denounced him to the sultan afterwards.

⁴⁸⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 67, 97-98.

In the same report, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that Hasan Paşa made fun of him by saying that he did not know that Jew, it would have been better if he had made friends with him, that Jew was very rich, that he enriched many people, even the sultan listened to his word. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that he answered Hasan Paşa by saying that the sultan would never believe the words of that wretched one, and quoted Quran 5:51. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that Hasan Paşa became more vexed and insisted on his delusion. Koca Sinan Paşa expressed that he was afraid that Hasan Paşa and David Passi would write denunciations against him. He also complained to the sultan that Hasan Paşa claimed that His Majesty has instructed him to protect David Passi previously, because he knew Koca Sinan Paşa might be plotting the assassination of David Passi. Koca Sinan Paşa expressed that he would not assassinate anyone; Jews and other non-Muslims were living in the Islamic state and were protected.

Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that he did not only work for the sultan's life on this world but also for his afterlife. He claimed that Hasan Paşa was a young and profane person. The other issue Koca Sinan Paşa accused David Passi with was the delay of Polish tribute and ambassador. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that David Passi might be the agent of Spain and Venice, who meddled in the Polish affair. We know from other sources that David Passi was indeed on the payroll of the Spanish king, as well as working for Venice.⁴⁸⁸ Koca Sinan Paşa argued that who ever was David's friend, whether it is the governor-general, or the chancellor, or others, lacked in religious belief. He claimed they all were busy day and night with mischief and lies. Koca Sinan Paşa asserted that he himself was

⁴⁸⁸ Pal Fodor, "An anti-Semite Grand Vizier? The crisis in Ottoman-Jewish Relations in 1589-91 and its Consequences" in *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 196-199.

a very old man and may have at most the lifetime of a sheep; he wanted to do the right thing by God and by the sultan. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that David and Hasan Paşa tried to make the peasants who lost their livelihood curse the sultan with the newly established wine tax, and he repeated the rumor about how the janissaries would have burned Hasan Paşa if there had been a fire. He claimed that he had written to Hasan Paşa numerous times to save him from this danger, which he thought would secure Hasan Paşa's support. However, Hasan Paşa kept gossiping and opposing him day and night. Koca Sinan Paşa concluded his long report by saying that it was not appropriate to consult with no one else but with the sultan and the grand admiral about the secrets of the navy.⁴⁸⁹

The sultan wrote to Koca Sinan Paşa, "The inventor of mischief is now known to be governor-general of Rumelia, Hasan Paşa. Let's not send him to Rumelia for camping (*dernek*) for I fear a damage to our honor." Koca Sinan Paşa expressed his gratitude and happiness at receiving this message, and repeated that the governor-general was a provocateur and a fraud. He wrote that he had initially trusted him, but stopped when he saw that no good could emanate from him. Koca Sinan Paşa accused the governor-general with lack of religiosity ("mütedeyyin değildir"), and with possibly denying the existence of afterlife (*dehri*). He argued that, even if dismissed he should be driven away from the capital, perhaps with a sancak appointment in the provinces. The sultan's order in answer to this report was to appoint Hasan Paşa governor-general in a province, because sancak was too low after his current position, yet better than dismissal.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 8, 12-15.

⁴⁹⁰ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 39, 56-57.

The sultan sent Koca Sinan Paşa an order to imprison Hasan Paşa's Kapıcılar kethüdası Hüseyin.⁴⁹¹ In his response Koca Sinan Paşa thanked the sultan for the imprisonments, saying that the governor-general of Rumelia was the source of the gossip. He expressed his fear that the soldiers would have lynched Hasan Paşa if there were an urban revolt ("şehri dahi bir cemiyet"). Koca Sinan Paşa accused the governor-general's kapuağası İbrahim Ağa as well, saying that he was writing tezkires ("writing") at the toilet when the governor-general was in the Imperial Council. The grand vizier also asked the sultan to imprison another former kapucu of the governor-general by the name of Haydar. He claimed that he was not happy to report these things, but he felt obliged to.⁴⁹²

In another report, Koca Sinan Paşa reported to the sultan that the kapucular kethüdası of Hasan Paşa, who is called Hasan, had sent a letter to his servant, asking that the grand vizier should have him brought because he had things to say. Apparently, the kapucular kethüdası wanted to inform on Hasan Paşa previously, but two thugs by the names of Abdi and Berdi went in and changed his mind by force. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that the handwriting of the kapucular kethüdası matched with the handwriting of the paper that pretended to be written by the soldiers. He sent both to be inspected by the sultan. Koca Sinan Paşa also thought it was proper to scare the kapucular kethüdası a little, and perhaps give him a little a taste of [things] (*çaşni*), by which he must have meant torture. The sultan wrote to Koca Sinan Paşa to have the kapucular kethüdası brought.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ The name of the kapucular kethüdası is written as Hüseyin in this report (Sahillioğlu, Telhis 120), and as Hasan in Sahillioğlu, Telhis 14. Selaniki does not name the imprisoned servants of Hasan Paşa.

⁴⁹² Sahillioğlu, Telhis 120, 161-162.

⁴⁹³ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 14, 24.

In another report about Hasan Paşa, Koca Sinan Paşa explicitly stated all his accusations against him. These included provocation of the soldiers to bring about an uprising, having written denunciations (*müzevver kağıtlar*) written with strange words (*elfaz-ı acibe*) that pretended to be written by the soldiers to the sultan, and his efforts to bring about an incident like the Beylerbeyi Incident. He considered him to be an enemy of the sultanate. He claimed that the most important thing in the world is religiosity and fear of God. He asked the sultan if no one reported him about Hasan Paşa's way of life. He also wrote that some dependents of Hasan Paşa came to him, because of the arrest of Hasan Paşa's men. Koca Sinan Paşa learned that İbrahim, someone called Burhan, Mahara Tiryaki were coming together with David Passi to write lies (*kizb ve dürûğu*) in order to destroy his reputation. Koca Sinan Paşa reflected that if one did not have religion or faith it would be easy to write whatever they wanted. If they were honorable, and brought forward their accusations one by one, he would have answered everything. They claimed he had given the empty timars to his own men, but he gave only 20 since he came to power.⁴⁹⁴

When the kapucular kethüdası of the governor-general was questioned, he claimed that he did not write a single paper. He accused the governor-general, who he claimed consulted (*müşavere*) with David the Jew, and brought some scribes to an unfrequented place to write some papers. He claimed that he did not know the content of what they wrote. He said that some people with the janissary and cavalryman (*sipahi*) garb used to come downstairs to whom they would give the papers. He asserted that he did not know where they went to. The kapucular kethüdası named the scribes of David the Jew. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed that

⁴⁹⁴ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 38, 54-55.

David's scribe corroborated the story of the kethüda. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote to the sultan that when he had brought David Passi, he understood that he wrote most of the papers with Hasan Paşa. Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that David Passi was not mistreated in any way, and that he sent him home, telling him to pray for the sultan without getting involved in any intrigue.⁴⁹⁵

The grand vizier wrote to the sultan that he cried when he read the paper that pretended to be written by a soldier but was allegedly faked by David Passi and Hasan Paşa.⁴⁹⁶ What were "the papers from the mouth of the soldiers"? What were their content? Koca Sinan Paşa's précis correspondence with Murad III shed some light on their content. The accusations about Koca Sinan Paşa included the distribution of revenue bringing lands to his own men, using the imperial galley slaves for the construction of his own buildings in three construction sites, scolding the court public and cursing the sultan. The last one was what Koca Sinan Paşa found most unbearable and explained how he worked for the sultan's happiness and approval. He represented himself as a reformer to the sultan, who served the crown sincerely and diligently. The grand vizier thought that the gossip that consisted of lies should not be heeded. Otherwise gossiping with malice will become more widespread.⁴⁹⁷

The grand vizier asked to the sultan if he could brought the soldiers and question them about these anonymous papers. The sultan considered this to be a very bad idea, because he thought that it would make them aware of things they would better remain unaware of. The grand vizier wrote that the soldiers cried and claimed that if they could find the writer of the written denunciation, they

⁴⁹⁵ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 143, 182-183.

⁴⁹⁶ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 38, 55.

⁴⁹⁷ Sahillioğlu, Telhis 150-151, 191-195.

would have eaten his flesh. Koca Sinan Paşa tried to ensure the sultan that the soldiers were loyal to the sultan.⁴⁹⁸

In the end, Koca Sinan Paşa achieved to have both David Passi and the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa brought down. In a report datable to 1591, the sultan sent an order to Koca Sinan Paşa to imprison David Passi in Yeni Hisar. However, the grand vizier wanted to execute him, claiming that David Passi was an agent of both the Spanish and of the Venetian Republic. He explained in this report that David Passi was spending all his time with Ferhad Paşa and governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa, who he claimed had their protégés involved in the Polish and Transylvanian issues. But the sultan's answer to Koca Sinan Paşa was that there was time for it [the execution], he should be imprisoned and that he should not meet anyone in prison.⁴⁹⁹ In his answer, Koca Sinan Paşa wrote that postponing an auspicious event was unnecessary, but that he would do it if the sultan wished that. He repeated his accusations about how David Passi was a European agent who used his proximity to the sultan to get commissions in Europe. He repeated that David was better executed and that the imperial tutor Sadüddin Efendi also agreed. The Grand vizier requested that David should be exiled to Rhodes on the first ship that was bound for Egypt.⁵⁰⁰ In the next report Koca Sinan Paşa got the order from the sultan to have David Passi exiled to Rhodes in 1591 on account of his meddling with the Ottoman-Polish relations.⁵⁰¹

Soon Koca Sinan Paşa himself was dismissed on 10 Şevval 999/August 1, 1591. When Koca Sinan Paşa came to power for the third time, he replaced one

⁴⁹⁸ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 27, 36-37.

⁴⁹⁹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 62, 90-91.

⁵⁰⁰ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 142, 181-182.

⁵⁰¹ Sahillioğlu, *Telhis* 9, 16. Fodor, 199.

enemy Divane İbrahim Paşa with Hasan Paşa as the governor-general of Diyarbekir in late Rebiülahir 1001/January 1593. Hasan Paşa had been dismissed since Receb 999/April-May 1591, but made a comeback to an important province.⁵⁰² David Passi also made a comeback to the imperial capital, where he tricked the Poles and the English into funding an impostor, but when the Spanish bribes he was taking came out he was exiled to Rhodes for a second time in 1594 with a chain around his neck.⁵⁰³

To return to Carlo Ginzburg's theory of false conspiracies concealing real conspiracies, there is not enough evidence to establish what happened with certainty. Thus, it is hard to establish whether this was the false conspiracy of Koca Sinan Paşa that covered his conspiracy to get rid of David Passi and Hasan Paşa; or was it David Passi and Hasan Paşa's conspiracy that was shielded by a false conspiracy about an imminent janissary revolt that had the aim of bringing down the grand vizier.

Leaving what really happened aside for a moment, my aim was to show that such conspiracies and false conspiracies existed in Ottoman factional politics during the reign of Murad III. As with most conspiracies, it was not always the conspirators who derived the benefit from them. Both David Passi and Hasan Paşa seemed to have enough reason to conspire in order to bring Koca Sinan Paşa down. He might have taken advantage of their conspiracy and turned it around to bring them down, which he did on this pretext in any case.

⁵⁰² Selanikî, 305.

⁵⁰³ He escaped from Malta after two months. Wilson, 199.

CHAPTER 5

FACTIONALISM IN HISTORY-WRITING

Gabriel Piterberg compared and analyzed conflicting narratives about the uprising that led to the dethronement and execution of Sultan Osman II in May 1622. He showed the factional alliances and strife between the persons involved in these events, as well as between the historians and the historical personages. Piterberg asserted, “Ottoman historiography... was conflictual and deeply ingrained in the politics and ideological accents of its time.”⁵⁰⁴ Following Piterberg’s lead, here I attempt to show the conflictual and factional aspect of Ottoman historiography at the end of the late sixteenth century. To this end, I will read accounts of the Hungarian campaign in 1593-1595 from Mustafa Âli’s universal history’s *Kühû’l-Ahbar*, Selanikî Mustafa Efendi’s chronicle, Peçevî İbrahim Efendi’s history, and Talikîzade Mehmed Efendi’s literary history of the campaign. The first three shared a background in holding mid- to high- level posts in the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the latter was a court historian who received a stipend to compose a literary histories for the consumption of the sultan and select members of the court.

The Events

I will look at how Mustafa Âli, Selanikî and Peçevî recounted certain stages of the Hungarian campaign of 1593-1594, such as the cause of war, the declaration of war, the departure of the army, the timing of the departure, the initial fighting, a letter of Koca Sinan Paşa, the winter camping, the castle of Tata,

⁵⁰⁴ Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 30.

the Crimean Khan's reception by Koca Sinan Paşa, the peasant uprisings, the promotion of Koca Sinan Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa to vizierate, and the conquest of the castle of Yanık.

Causes of the War

Border skirmishes undertaken by the governor-general of Bosnia, Hasan Paşa, were the immediate cause of the Ottoman campaign in Hungary. On account of these skirmishes the Habsburgs did not send the annual tribute to the Ottoman crown and attacked Ottomans. Hasan Paşa had been busy undertaking offensives against the Habsburgs at least since the fall of 1592.⁵⁰⁵ Selanikî recorded that Hasan Paşa sent two-thousand heads, and some "tall and wide-bodied" prisoners of war in chains to Istanbul on 20 Zilhicce 1000/September 27, 1592. Selanikî wrote that the intelligent and experienced officials and courtiers in the capital were shocked: "Things between us [the Ottomans] and the wretched enemy are complicated and disorderly. He [Hasan Paşa] forfeited the peace that was long standing between us."⁵⁰⁶ In the beginning of the month of Muharrem 1001/October 1592 the governor of Göle also sent heads and hostages to the imperial capital. At the same time, the Habsburg ambassador in the capital brought a letter from the King that asked the sultan to inquire about the delay of the tribute from his governor-general and other governors.⁵⁰⁷ Mustafa Âli explained that Hasan Paşa had his backers in the harem as well as among the

⁵⁰⁵ The first news of Hasan Paşa is reported on 5 Zilhicce 1000/September 12, 1592, for which Selanikî, 285-286. Within two weeks, on 20 Zilhicce 1000/September 27 1592, the heads of the infidels Hasan Paşa killed, along with hostages arrived in the capital. See Selanikî, 288.

⁵⁰⁶ Selanikî, 288.

⁵⁰⁷ Selanikî, 290.

viziers who helped him keep his position in spite of the requests of the Habsburg ambassadors.⁵⁰⁸

Meanwhile, grand vizier Siyavuş Paşa dismissed Koca Sinan Paşa's son from his position as the governor-general of Buda, and dismissed Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa's from the governor-generalship of Rumelia. Instead, he appointed another Hasan Paşa (who had been previously governor-general of Temeşvar) as governor-general of Rumelia, and appointed Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa as governor-general of Buda.⁵⁰⁹ Soon enough, on 25 Rebiülahir 1001/January 29, 1593 Koca Sinan Paşa was reappointed grand vizier for the third time.⁵¹⁰

According to Selanikî, the governor-general of Rumelia, Hasan Paşa, set out for the plain of Sirem on 12 Cemaziyelevvel 1001/February 14, 1593. At the same time, reports from the border about the gathering of Habsburg forces across the border reached the capital.⁵¹¹ At the end of the month of Şaban 1001/end of May 1593, the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa was dismissed, and Koca Sinan Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa was appointed instead, who left for camping in all his glory.

Mustafa Âli's chronology of events conflicts with Selanikî's. According to Âli, it was during the end of Siyavuş Paşa's term when the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa was going to the aid of the governor-general of Bosnia Hasan Paşa, because of the reports Hasan Paşa sent from the Bosnian border. Âli rarely gives dates. Selanikî does not openly criticize the dismissal like Mustafa Âli

⁵⁰⁸ Çervi, vol. 3, 570-573.

⁵⁰⁹ For the dismissal of Koca Sinan Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa from the governor-generalship of Buda and the dismissal of Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa from the governor-generalship of Rumelia, and the appointment of Hasan Paşa as the governor-general of Rumelia, and Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa as governor-general of Buda, see Selanikî, 304. For the appointment of Koca Sinan Paşa governor-general of Rumelia, and the appointment of his predecessor Hasan Paşa as the governor-general of Temeşvar, see Selanikî, 314-315.

⁵¹⁰ Selanikî, 304-305.

⁵¹¹ Selanikî, 306.

and Peçevî; however, he writes that the knowledgeable people said that it was not a good decision.⁵¹²

In the beginning of the month of Şevval in 1001/July 1593, the news of the martyrdom of the governor-general of Bosnia Hasan Paşa and Sultanzade Mehmed Bey, the son of Ahmed Paşa and Mihrümah Sultan and Rüstem Paşa's daughter, reached the capital.⁵¹³ The mother of Mehmed Bey was Ayşe Sultan (she was the daughter of Rüstem Paşa and Mihrümah Sultan). Mustafa Âli explained the origin of the animosity between Koca Sinan Paşa and the governor-general of Bosnia Hasan Paşa, resulting from the selling of a house. According to Âli, during Koca Sinan Paşa's first term (988-990/1580-1582), he wanted to acquire the house of Derviş Hasan Paşa, who agreed to sell him the house. Soon afterwards Koca Sinan Paşa was dismissed and Derviş Hasan Paşa forwent his offer, because his house was a very valuable palace. With thoughts of revenge, Koca Sinan Paşa tore up the reports from the governor-general of Bosnia that demanded auxiliary troops.⁵¹⁴ Peçevî reproduced the same story in his account of the cause of the war, writing that Koca Sinan Paşa had a great anger (*ğayz-ı tām*) towards Derviş Hasan Paşa because of the animosity mentioned above, and he took his revenge on Derviş Paşa by not sending the auxiliary troops that he was

⁵¹² Selanikî, 314-316.

⁵¹³ The identity of the parents of Sultanzade Mehmed Bey is obscure. Peçevî İbrahim Efendi does not mention his name Mehmed, on which see Selanikî, 320-321. Peçevî refers to him as "Governor of Hersek son of Grand Vizier Ahmed Paşa and the daughter of Rüstem Paşa" ("sulţān-zāde denilen maḥdūm ki Hersek Beyi Vezīr-i a'zām Aḥmed Pāşā'nın oğlu ve Rüstem Pāşā'nın kıızı oğlu.") From Çağatay Uluçay has identified the princess as Ayşe Hümaşah, who was the daughter of Rüstem Paşa and Mihrümah Sultan; see Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1980), 39 and Danişmend, vol. 3, 490-491. However, this Ayşe Sultan was married to The Grand Vizier Ahmed Paşa was Semiz Ahmed Paşa, who became grand vizier after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Paşa in 1579, and died in 1580. There is a problem with Çağatay Uluçay's identification because both Selanikî Mustafa Efendi refer to this Ahmed Paşa as the Kilis sancak beyi, not as the deceased [Semiz] Ahmed Paşa. Furthermore, Mustafa Âli refer to Governor of Hersek Mehmed Bey as the son of Grand Vizier Mehmed Paşa and Rüstem Paşa's daughter. In the same paragraph, Mustafa Âli referred to him as son of Ahmed Paşa.

⁵¹⁴ Çerçi, vol. 3, 568-570.

expecting.⁵¹⁵ Selanikî did not record any demand from the governor-general of Bosnia Hasan Paşa for auxiliary troops, nor did he record the sending of the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa from the plain of Sirem for his rescue.⁵¹⁶

Talikîzade stated in his introduction that he joined the Yanık campaign with disappointment about the reception of an earlier work he presented to the sultan, and that he wrote the work while in the entourage of grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa whom he praised sumptuously.⁵¹⁷ His account also begins with the cause of the war, the death of the governor-general of Bosnia Hasan Paşa. He portrayed Hasan Paşa as being impressed with the conceit of military glory, coupled with the irresponsibility and naïveté of youth, which resulted in destruction because of his unwarranted attacks.⁵¹⁸ Talikîzade wrote that Hasan Paşa invited other governors to join him, but started an offensive without waiting for them. Talikîzade did not mention Hasan Paşa's request for auxiliary troops. Talikîzade wrote that Hasan Paşa was daring, but without foresight. He accused Hasan Paşa of not listening to the advice of people who asked him to check if the enemy had more troops, and of executing these people because of his vainglory. Like Mustafa Âli and Peçevî's counting of the mistakes of Koca Sinan Paşa, Talikîzade counted Hasan Paşa's errors.⁵¹⁹ On the other hand, Talikîzade's list of the good deeds and characteristics of Koca Sinan Paşa is extensive. He recounted

⁵¹⁵ Peçevî, 2:128.

⁵¹⁶ Selanikî, 320-321.

⁵¹⁷ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 19. "giryân-u-sûzân Yanık seferine gidüb, düstür-ı mebrûru'lemel-i meşkûru'l-^camel, müşîr-i efham vezîr-i a^czam Sinân Paşa, şidku-hu bilâ ğişâ—eyyede-hü'llâhü li-te'yidi'd-dîn ve-tedmîri'l-mütemerridîn—ha žretlerinüñ hidmet-i maħmedet-âşâr, hażret-i devlet-dişâlarında olub; nemed-i zîni bâlin ve hâk-i pâk-i mifreş-i munaķķaş eyleyüb, bâmdan şâma şabâhdan aķşâma deñlü nazarlarında görünüb, ve hidmet-i âfitâb-hâşşiyetlerinde sâye-âsâ sürinib: Kanda gitse ol sa^câdet-aķteri/Sürinürdüm sâye-veş bir kemteri; ^cAzm-i rezm itse ne demde şîr-veş/Çalışurdum ben daħi şimşîr-veş." 132-133.

⁵¹⁸ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 137-138.

⁵¹⁹ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 138-139.

his military successes in Yemen, Tunus and Halka'l-Vadi, and describes him as a sound vizier. Talikizade's list contrasts sharply with the descriptions of Mustafa Ali and Pecevi.⁵²⁰

The Declaration of War

Pecevi claimed that after becoming grand vizier for the third time, Koca Sinan Pasa appointed viziers to the Imperial Council who had previously been out of office, including his own archenemy Ferhad Pasa.⁵²¹ Pecevi argued that because Ferhad Pasa became famous through his success in the recent campaign against the Safavid Iran and concluded the peace agreement, Koca Sinan Pasa was burning with envy ("odu yakdi yandirdi.") Because Koca Sinan Pasa wanted military glory, he desired to be appointed commander-in-chief of Rumelia against the Habsburgs. To this end, Koca Sinan Pasa used the death of Hasan Pasa as a pretext to declare war, for which he was personally responsible. Koca Sinan Pasa tried to convince the sultan that the Habsburgs did not get their share of the soldiers of Islam since the time of Sultan Süleyman, and promised to exact revenge. Pecevi noted that the sultan showed compassion for the tears of the princess, whose son [Sultanzade Mehmed Bey] was killed, and ordered a consultation (*müşavere*) with the members of the Imperial Council, the chief jurisconsult Bostanzade Efendi and the royal tutor Hoca Efendi. The importance of the tears of the princess is specific to Pecevi's narrative, for both Selaniki and Mustafa Ali did not mention it. They simply state that a *sultanzade* (descendent of a princess) was martyred, which must have made the martyrdom more lamentable than that of a layman in the court.

⁵²⁰ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 140-141.

⁵²¹ It is the sultan who appoints viziers, for Selaniki's reporting of their appointment, see Selaniki, 305.

Peçevî reported an oral eyewitness account of the consultation (*müşāvere*). According to Peçevî's informer, Koca Sinan Paşa said many things about taking revenge on the enemy; but Ferhad Paşa told him that fighting in long campaigns had fatigued the soldiers. The royal tutor Sadüddin Efendi and Chief jurisconsult Bostanzade repeated that the soldiers of Islam were tired of the hardships, and it would be foolhardy to set out on another campaign. At this point, Peçevî recorded a play concerning history and historiography: the royal tutor Sadüddin Efendi, who was also a historian, told Koca Sinan Paşa that he was about to complete his history of Ottoman wars and conquests. He said: "I wanted to conclude his work by saying that a humble slave of the sultan [Ferhad Paşa] had conquered the lands of the Shah of Safavid Iran, and made the peace by taking his son as hostage. Previously the deceased Taymaz Ferhad Paşa secured two year's worth of tribute from the Austrian king without war. Do like him, and let me finish my history by saying that the two year's tribute arrived, let's not give [the enemy] an opportunity." Koca Sinan Paşa interjected "No Efendi, do not write like that, İnşallah you will write that one humble slave of our blessed sultan has conquered all these lands in Iran and took the shah's son. Another slave has campaigned against the King of Hungary and after looting and destructing his domains, after all the killing, sent the king handcuffed to the sultan." Hoca Sadüddin's answer was telling: "May God forgive! Dear Pasha, these words come from extreme pride. I am afraid of the inauspicious consequence of these words" and got up at which the meeting was adjourned. Neither Mustafa Âli, nor Selanikî recounted the story, as it was an oral report Peçevî alone had access to.

Selanikî's section about the appointment of Koca Sinan Paşa the commander-in-chief of the Hungarian campaign is not detailed. He started it with

a simple sentence: “Grand Vizier Sinan Paşa, *may god continue his eminence*, was appointed the commander-in-chief of the victorious soldiers by imperial decree.” There’s no mention of the consultation meeting, or the grand vizier’s thirst for military victory. Instead Selanikî gives details about the organization, provisioning and logistics of the campaign.⁵²² Since Selanikî did not criticize Koca Sinan Paşa before the campaign, he narrated the campaign without anticipating the terrible losses the army was to endure.⁵²³

Mustafa Âli, on the other hand, had a different explanation about why Koca Sinan Paşa wanted to start a campaign in Hungary. He argued that an advisor of Murad III’s warned the sultan that this replacement of the governor-general of Rumelia Hasan Paşa with Koca Sinan Paşa’s son Mehmed Paşa could cause disorder, which in turn would bring Muslims defeat, and the infidels victory. The sultan dismissed the idea, and said that if such a thing were to happen, Koca Sinan Paşa would be held responsible and executed. Âli wrote that when the ill-advised elder found out about this, knowing that he had been at fault, he hurried to save his head by becoming commander-in-chief (“pîr-i bî-tedbîrin cânı başından şıçrayub serdârlik nâmiyla başın kırtarmağa mütehâlik oldu.”)⁵²⁴

According to Talikîzade, Koca Sinan Paşa addressed the sultan about the need to declare war and set out on a campaign against Hungary, saying that he reached the end of his life, and the end of his time of government, he wanted to bring victory in this war.⁵²⁵ This section is rather brief, and the narrative continues

⁵²² Selanikî 321-322.

⁵²³ Selanikî also anticipates terrible things to come while narrating the departure of the military forces at other instances, e. g., the departure of the navy for the campaign on Malta, where he makes a double anticipation. Firstly, the bad outcome of the war—warned by the Grand Vizier; Secondly, will the Grand Vizier make it- his upcoming death anticipated. [This notes needs to be rewritten more clearly!] See Selanikî, 7.

⁵²⁴ Çerçi, vol. 3, 575.

⁵²⁵ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 141.

to Koca Sinan Paşa's appointment as commander-in-chief and his arrival in Belgrade without going into the details of his ostentatious departure.⁵²⁶

The Departure of the Expedition

Selanikî's description of the departure of the expedition portrays Koca Sinan Paşa in all his glory: the dignified commander-in-chief came with his servants and followers (*hadem ü haşem*), all dressed up and adorned and ornamented with arms and instruments of war. In all stateliness and gallantry, he came to rub his face at the blessed ground under the foot of the blessed sultan. He stayed for a long time in the imperial chamber of audience, reporting on many issues concerning state and religion (*din ü devlet*.) When he came out of the imperial audience Koca Sinan Paşa was complimented with various imperial gifts. He wore a helmet ornamented with precious stones, and mounted a gold-saddled horse. After describing the ceremonies further, Selanikî concluded that fate has decided for him to be a vizier of experience, to whom the people were entrusted, and whose qualities of commandship were obvious. There was no question that he had the grandeur and the power and had in his person greatness (“aşâleten şâhib-devlet,”) for which everyone was thankful, and that the public prayed for the victory of the commander-in-chief and the army.⁵²⁷

Mustafa Âli criticized Koca Sinan Paşa's ostentatious ceremony of departure, he wrote that Koca Sinan Paşa wore ornaments all over, clothes and saddles with precious stones, and ornamented helmets for the sake of glory. Âli wrote that both the grandees and the public accused him for this inappropriate behavior, and said “the vizier who leads the soldiers of Islam should not bear an

⁵²⁶ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 142-143.

⁵²⁷ Selanikî, 324-325.

aigrette, and wear golden brocade like a youth if he is aged.” He further argued that no one prayed for him, or for his safe and victorious return, instead people made infelicitous remarks: “May you not return in good health, and never enter this city again. May you suffer from the wrath of the sultan! May your life and liver be cut with the sword of God.”⁵²⁸

Talikîzade wrote that when the commander-in-chief arrived in Belgrade, the local people provided the army with an abundance of provisions, and the experienced local warriors reported to Koca Sinan Paşa the situation in the border zone. Their advice had seven articles. First, the enemy was not able to build fortresses along the border for at least twenty years, because of the campaign in Cyprus and war with Iran the Habsburg border had been neglected. The commanders of the campaigns on Cyprus and Iran that caused the situation on the Rumelian border to deteriorate were enemies of Koca Sinan Paşa, namely Lala Mustafa Paşa, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa and Ferhad Paşa. Second, because of border skirmishes experienced warriors had been martyred, and inferior soldiers had replaced them. Thirdly, Ottoman administration in the region became corrupt. Fourth, the enemy used to be disunited, but now they are zealously united against Ottomans. Fifth, the castle of Yanık should be the prime target, because it was a strong fortress with abundant resources. But it was not an easy endeavor because they received papal aid. Sixth, the commander-in-chief should follow the footsteps of Sultan Süleyman in the Szigetvar campaign.

⁵²⁸ “Kibâr ü şîgâr bu evzâ^c-ı nâ-şâyestesine ʔa^cn-ı bî-şümâr ve ‘Leşker-i İslâmîñ ʔazîmetine bâ^cis olan vezîr otağalar taķınmak ve sâl-ḥordeligi ḥâlinde nev-civânlar gibi ser-â-serlerle şalınmak yañılışdır’ deyü ta^cyib-i bî-şümâr etdüklerinden ğayri bir ferdiñ lisânında du^câ vü şenâ ve uĝûr-ı dîn olunmasına ve seferinden sâlim ü ğânim dönmesine kelimât-ı sitâyiş-nümâ vâķı^c olmayub, ‘Bir gün şaĝlıĝla gelme ve bir daḥî bu şehre müteveccih olma, ğaḫab-ı pâdişâhiye uĝra, tiĝ-i ilâhî ile cân ü cigeriñ toĝra’ deyü ğarîb-i taḫayyurlar ve binâ-yı re’y ü tedbîri (nâ-sâz-kârî-i ve bî-tevfîķ olmasına müte^callîķ ʔacîb-i taḫavvurlar eylediler. Ve birbirlerine ‘Bu zâlim işbu seferden yüz aķlıĝıyla dönmez’ deyü söylediler.” Çerçi, vol. 3, 575-576.

Hungary's climate is wet, as a result of which grain cannot be stored for long; the locals have to be paid in advance to produce more foodstuffs. Seventh, because the campaign season is almost over, the commander-in-chief should leave the siege of the castle of Yanık to the following season, and instead focus on small castles held by the inhabitants of Buda.⁵²⁹ Koca Sinan Paşa answered the local elders expressing his gratitude for explaining the pearls of heaven of wisdom and the secrets and spreading precious stones on the heads of the grandees. The commander-in-chief promised that if necessary he would fight the enemy face-to-face by himself.⁵³⁰ Talikîzade used the advice of local notables to legitimize Koca Sinan Paşa's strategies. He claimed historical precedence in following the footsteps of Sultan Süleyman in the Szigetvar campaign, which made the untimely transfer and camping of soldiers, and the decision to take small castles valid.

Mustafa Âli criticized the swift transfer of soldiers to Belgrade before the beginning of the winter. According to Âli, some intelligent soldiers gave advice to the commander-in-chief about camping at Belgrade for the winter months, but he did not heed their advice because of his natural obstinacy and slanted thinking.⁵³¹

Selanikî wrote that after Koca Sinan Paşa left for the campaign, letters from his son, the governor-general of Rumelia Mustafa Paşa, arrived in the capital. According to Selanikî, the army would not be able to make it to the border, but instead camp for the winter months in Buda. Selanikî reported that experienced court officials did not consider this news auspicious, and asked, "if the commander-in-chief could not make it to the battle ground, why did he leave

⁵²⁹ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*, 143-153.

⁵³⁰ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*, 153.

⁵³¹ "Hulķundaki 'inād ü lecc-i tab^c-i nā-hem-vār-ı mu^cavveci muķtezāsınca mekrinden dönmedi" in Çerçi, vol. 3, 577.

in the first place?” Furthermore, they made many predictions about the future. Selanikî prayed that good will may come out of it.⁵³²

Some Castles around Buda

Selanikî wrote that the commander-in-chief sent reports concerning the fighting and the conquest of some castles around Buda. However, about the conquest of each castle, Selanikî reported that many stories that were circulated relating to the high number of martyrs. In addition, the soldiers sent letters to complain about the winter encampment.⁵³³

Talikîzade has already shown that, the taking of small castles because the campaign season was well-advanced was a strategic move of the commander, who was advised by the local notables. He further noted that when the commander-in-chief arrived in the border area, he asked the local Muslims which castles he should take, and they answered that he should take Polata, Pesprem and Tata, because the oppression of the infidels from these fortresses were greatest. So Talikîzade argued that Koca Sinan Paşa saved the peasants from infidel oppression by conquering these castles. He also sent his son Mehmed Paşa, who in Talikîzade’s account was generous in following orders (*necîb-i mücîb*), love-bound son (*ferzend-i cân-peyvendleri*), to fight the enemy.⁵³⁴

Mustafa Âli’s description of the winter months puts Koca Sinan Paşa in a very negative light. He explained that, the commander-in-chief took some small castles in order not to seem that he was losing time, and he reported these as conquests. He returned to Belgrade for winter camping, but sent the janissaries with their agha to Buda, letting the janissaries go back if they prefer, on the

⁵³² Selanikî, 330-331.

⁵³³ Selanikî, 335-337.

⁵³⁴ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 154-155.

condition they return in the spring. Since the janissaries asked for a raise in their ulufe, he gave them an increase of two akçe per day. Âli accused Koca Sinan Paşa for causing a loss of the treasury without any profitable deeds.

Soon the soldiers of the Habsburg king mobilized. When the governor-general of Buda, Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa found out about the ominous movement of the infidel soldiers, he reported to Koca Sinan Paşa. When the commander-in-chief got the letter of the governor-general, while in İstoni Belgrade, his fears outweighed his bravery, and he let the soldiers return to their winter camp. When he orders the sipahis through his man called Süleyman Ağa, his accomplice in ploys and plots either to remain there to fight with the enemy, or go to Buda. When the cavalrymen (*sipahi*) heard of this, they rebelled and asked to return to Belgrade, bringing down the tents of their agha and of the commander-in-chief.⁵³⁵ He then listed the troops who died because of Koca Sinan Paşa's poor decision-making.

Talikîzade's description of the same battle is quite different. He wrote that the enemy found the courage to establish themselves in Tata and Komran, and made offensives. Hasan Paşa, governor-general of Buda, attempted to relieve the siege of İstoni Belgrade. But he was not successful and he lost many soldiers and ammunitions. Sinan Paşa was not able to help him, so he delayed action in that quarter to the next season. The terrible news of the killing of the soldiers of Buda by the enemy caused great distress. Talikîzade reported that 400 zaims and sipahis, along with 3000 piyades were martyred.⁵³⁶ Talikîzade expresses the anguish of the commander-in-chief at long, but he had to keep the morale up,

⁵³⁵ Çerçi, vol. 3, 581-583.

⁵³⁶ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 160-165.

show patience without panicking and think strategically, so he had to postpone the revenge on the enemy until spring.

The Imagined Letter

Happier news arrived in the capital about the fleeing of the enemy soldiers when they got hold of letters Koca Sinan Paşa sent to the Ottoman commander on the border announcing the imminent arrival of his forces. After the Habsburg retreat, the Ottomans took many hostages, as well as the artillery they abandoned.⁵³⁷ The detailed reports Selanikî recorded show an implicit reverence toward Koca Sinan Paşa.

Mustafa Âli mentioned an arrogant letter Koca Sinan Paşa⁵³⁸ sent to the Habsburg King. It reads: “Aye Wretched one! Here, I came to attack you, to annihilate and burn your domains, to take your head. I should gouge out your eyes, cut your nose and ears. Get ready, know that I will be at your capital soon.”⁵³⁹ Âli argued that although the king was an infidel, Koca Sinan Paşa should have obeyed the rules of conduct appropriate to addressing a king. Furthermore, he asserted that as a result of Koca Sinan Paşa’s letter the princes at the assembly of the king became so unified under the whip of the letter. Âli claimed that if the king spent money, or counseled them, he would not be able to unite them in this manner. Mustafa Âli went on recounting the claims of the king to precede other European monarchs, and describing the special forces of the king.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ Selanikî, 339-340.

⁵³⁸ He calls him “sālār-ı b-i°tibār” (the commander without dignity).

⁵³⁹ Çerçi, vol. 3, 577.

⁵⁴⁰ Çerçi, vol. 3, 578.

Âli also copied the Habsburg King's answer to Koca Sinan Paşa's letter.⁵⁴¹

In the letter, the king addressed the commander-in-chief by numbering his points in the style of Âli: "Firstly, why did you transgress rules of propriety?" He wrote that he was the king of various countries and that the sultan addressed him in his letters as "my brother," and always observed rules of propriety. He accused Koca Sinan Paşa of not knowing his station. The king reminded him that he was a humble slave inexcusably breaching rules of conduct. The king's second point was about the oppression of the peasants. The King argued that in spite of religious differences, he was just towards his peasants. Âli voiced one of his own questions from the pen of the king: "Why did you hurry to set out on a campaign, and not delay your movement until the spring, knowing that such a delay would bring good?" He further told the commander-in-chief to do whatever he could before the arrival of his soldiers. The king warned him that those who considered themselves victorious and imagine the enemy to be defeated had never in any period found victory or opportunity. Lastly, he wrote "We will see who will capture whom, and who gorges whose eyes."⁵⁴² Âli used these imaginary letters to voice his opinion about Koca Sinan Paşa's imprudence. In response to Selanikî's news of a letter by the commander-in-chief that caused the enemy soldiers to flee, Âli composed two letters that showed Koca Sinan Paşa's dangerous breach of protocol, causing the princes to unite against the Ottomans, the peasants to be oppressed, and the treasury to be wasted.

⁵⁴¹ "Cevâb-ı kırâ-ı dâll be-cânib-i bâ'îş-i Serdâr-ı dâll 'unvân-ı nâ-besî bu hitâbla muqayyedir/ The answer of the Nefarious King to the Commander of Erroneous Title addressed with this discourse" in Çerçi, vol. 3, 579.

⁵⁴² Çerçi, vol. 3, 579-580.

Winter Camp Details

Talikîzade wrote that, after conquering two castles, Koca Sinan Paşa returned to Belgrade victorious along with the Muslim gazis, and kapu halkı returned to the capital to their barracks. Furthermore, Talikîzade wrote that when the commander-in-chief understood that the troops were scattered, he ordered them (“ağılların başlarına cem^c eyleyüb, fi'l-fevr taburların daşurdu ve zâğ-u-kalâğı başın üşürdi. Tata altında tabur bağladı.”) Talikîzade described that everyone was satisfied because the objective was accomplished, the sheiks, the ulema, the governors, the cavalrymen who received their promotions (*terakki*), the peasants because justice was restored.⁵⁴³

Selanikî recorded reports from Koca Sinan Paşa about the winter camp in which he complained about the soldiers, accusing them of not following orders, being unruly and insolent, and not reporting to duty but heading back to the capital.⁵⁴⁴ Those who headed back soon appeared in the palace to present their counter-complaints about the commander-in-chief. During a meeting outside the capital, the soldiers asked for provisions and artillery, saying that they needed to be well prepared to wage war in Rumelia. The field commander agreed, and said that they would become ready in a fortnight at the camp in Belgrade. However, the soldiers argued that the commander ordered them to raid the castle of Polata once they arrived in Belgrade. There were many martyrs, including the agha and the steward of the janissaries. They accused Koca Sinan Paşa of dishonoring the sultan, as the Habsburg King heard reports of what was happening in the

⁵⁴³ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 157-158.

⁵⁴⁴ Selanikî, 344-345.

Ottoman camp. They tried to legitimize their return to the capital on the pretext that they protected the peasants and returned to their barracks.⁵⁴⁵

Selanikî reported the main criticisms against Koca Sinan Paşa in the capital, which were his demand for more soldiers, and the enlistment of 6000 mercenaries from among the sons of the soldiers without the necessary equipment for war. He was also criticized for his obstinate insistence on enlisting new soldiers for the sword who were legally of peasant status.⁵⁴⁶

Mustafa Âli wrote that going to Belgrade was another instance of Koca Sinan Paşa's imprudence, because the river Danube often froze in winter, and the enemy could easily cross it. Âli claimed that Koca Sinan Paşa was very nervous about this possibility.⁵⁴⁷ However, because of the good luck of the soldiers of Islam, the river did not freeze that winter, and in spring both armies showed their military prowess to the army on the other side of the Danube.

Peçevî wrote a section called "Recounting some imprudence and maybe mistakes and errors of the commander-in-chief."⁵⁴⁸ Peçevî criticized Koca Sinan Paşa for gathering an incredible high number of soldiers, but never giving orders for a raid. When the khan, or other commanders asked for the permission to raid, he never gave them permission, saying that if we plunder these lands, and turn it into a ruin, what revenue can come for the *beytülmal*. Peçevî thought that if they were to loot and raid not until Pec, but until Prague, there would be no force to stop them. So the commander wasted the soldiers' time. Another "ruinous error" (*haṭā-yi fāḥiṣ*) of the commander-in-chief was that he looted and enslaved the

⁵⁴⁵ Selanikî, 345-347.

⁵⁴⁶ Selanikî, 347.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ammâ günde biñ kerre dendân-ı hayretle tudaqların dişledi... Ama müşr-i pür-hirâs günde biñ kerre ölürdi. "Mavi tönün çıkarub beyaz tona girerse hâlim nice olur" diye ağlardı.*

⁵⁴⁸ "Serdârîñ ba'cîzî sū'-i tedbîri, belki haṭā ve taqşîri zikrindedir" in Peçevî, 2:156-158.

people in the land of Buda, which was conquered by Sultan Süleyman. Peçevî was right, because this was in fact actually illegal, if Koca Sinan Paşa ordered it, he should have been tried. When people complained, he said, “a country can not be developed without destruction.” Peçevî wrote that he did not control the situation at all; he did not restrict or admonish the soldiers. In addition to enslaving the peasants with their children, they burned their villages. If the commander-in-chief protected this province, the peasant would not be in chains. Furthermore, the infidels would not have removed these peasants from their villages. Peçevî wrote that in this world, he was not held responsible, but in the presence of God, he will not be able to answer for this.

The Agha of the Janissaries

Another contested issue about the campaign was about the agha of the janissaries leaving the capital for the Hungarian campaign, for which Peçevî argued there was no precedence. But in Selanikî’s narrative the agha of the janissaries Mehmed Ağa was ordered by imperial decree to join the campaign in early Cemaziyelevvel 1002/January-February 1594. Selanikî reported that there were many rumors, and the soldiers demanded “We will not go to war without our sultan,” and “We will not go to war without taking our bonuses.” Some kağıts were dropped in the Orta Mescid.⁵⁴⁹ Yet, at a later stage of the campaign Selanikî wrote that the agha of the janissaries Yemişçi Hasan Paşa returned to the capital in Cemaziyelevvel 1003/January-February 1595 because it was against the law to spend the winter months away from the sultan.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁹ Selanikî, 355.

⁵⁵⁰ Selanikî, 424.

Mustafa Âli argued that Koca Sinan Paşa dismissed Mehmed Ağa before the siege of the castle on account of his Bosnian origin, without reason, and in his place he appointed another Albanian Yemişçi Hasan Ağa. Âli asserted that the impure commander-in-chief dared to replace the agha although the dismissal and appointment of the aghas of the janissaries was exclusive to sultanic decree. Âli argued that when the sultan heard the news, he cursed the grand vizier with the following words: “May God bring the destruction of your honor, as you trampled over mine.”⁵⁵¹ Furthermore, Âli said that Koca Sinan Paşa appointed the former agha Mehmed Ağa to the governor-generalship of Karaman. Mustafa Âli also found this inappropriate.

Peçevî argued that Mehmed Ağa himself was a gallant man; he joined Koca Sinan Paşa because he was duped by his empty promises in 1002/1594. However, when he became successful in his siege of the Castle of Tata, the commander-in-chief had him dismissed solely because of his enmity (*bugz*) and malice (*ğaraž*) in Zilhicce 1002/July 1594.⁵⁵² Here Peçevî reported that when the sultan got the précis report about the replacement, he was so angered that he prayed for the honor of the grand vizier to be lost, just as he diminished the honor of the lofty position of the agha of the janissaries.⁵⁵³

According to Selanikî, at the end of Zilkaade 1002/ August 1594, the reports of the conquest of Tate and the replacement of Mehmed Ağa with Yemişçi Hasan Ağa, and Mehmed Ağa’s appointment as governor-general of Karaman reached the capital through some janissary soldiers returning from the

⁵⁵¹ “Ol maħall niçe benim  arżıma noqşan virdi ise, Allahü Te alâ anıñ  arżını yıqsın” in Çerçi, vol. 3, 595.

⁵⁵² In his place, Koca Sinan Paşa appointed a fellow Albanian (kendi cinsinden Arnavud), Yemişçi Hasan.

⁵⁵³ Peçevî, 2:132-133.

campaign.⁵⁵⁴ Soon the news was confirmed by the kapucus sent from the court who returned in the beginning of Muharrem 1003/September 1594. When the sultan got this news, he changed the appointments and promoted Mehmed Ağa to the governor-generalship of Anatolia.⁵⁵⁵ Although Selanikî did not explicitly criticize Koca Sinan Paşa for dismissing the agha of the janissaries, he recorded that the sultan changed the appointments, which must have been done to reassert sultanic authority.

Talikîzade's description of the siege of Tata is rather detailed, he claims that that the newly arrived agha of the janissaries was dismissed during the siege, because he failed to prepare the trenches and earthworks Sinan Paşa ordered. The castle was taken in only six days. In Zilkaade 1002, the conquest and the appointment of a sancakbeyi was over.⁵⁵⁶

Ulufe

Koca Sinan Paşa's next dispatch to the capital was to demand the swift arrival of soldiers, the setting out of the navy while the season allowed it, and the demands for provision and artillery for the army.⁵⁵⁷ When Koca Sinan Paşa asked for cash to pay the soldiers, he asked that it be given as a debt by the sultan, and he said he would legally pawn his endowed and private property to the sultan. The sultan considered it appropriate and sent 500 *yük akçe* with Kapucu-başı Yemişçi Hasan Ağa on 25 Cemaziyelahir 1002/February 16 1594.⁵⁵⁸ More soldiers from among the mercenaries returned to the capital in Şaban 1002/April-May 1594,

⁵⁵⁴ Selanikî, 383.

⁵⁵⁵ Selanikî, 390.

⁵⁵⁶ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 196-208.

⁵⁵⁷ Selanikî, 357.

⁵⁵⁸ Selanikî, 360.

complaining of Koca Sinan Paşa, and begging in the streets of Istanbul, telling the people of their misfortunes.⁵⁵⁹

Koca Sinan Paşa reported to the capital further news about the arrival of even more enemy troops financed by Venice and other Christian powers. He asked again for moneys to be sent by way of a loan. Selanikî wrote that the enemy knew about the fact that the sultan was being stubborn about not sending the treasury. The janissaries who refused to proceed to the frontier without securing their *ulufe* sent a *kağıt* to Murad III, upon reading it, the sultan changed his mind, and the money was sent.⁵⁶⁰ However, Mustafa Âli has a very different story about why the sultan changed his mind. The Habsburgs captured the court *çavuş* Mustafa Çavuş, who was formerly the *kapucubaşı* of Özdemiroğlu Osman Ağa. When the king heard that the hostage was a *çavuş*, he had him freed and had his man show him his country. Mustafa said Çavuş came back to the capital and reported the things he saw, the justice and the protection of the peasants, the abundance of agricultural produce and foodstuffs, the abundance of money, the bravery and readiness of their soldiers. The *çavuş* claimed to have conversed with the king, who told him “a country can be governed with heathenism, but not with oppression. Meaning that, the country of the just infidel will prosper, but not that of an oppressive Muslim sultan.”⁵⁶¹

Such a conversation, not to mention the involvement of the sultan is very unlikely. Mustafa Âli uses the voice of the other (i.e., the Habsburg King) in order to express his ideas about just rule, and what should be done. Mustafa Âli claimed that the sultan decided to send the treasury for the payment of the soldiers, after

⁵⁵⁹ Selanikî, 367-368.

⁵⁶⁰ Selanikî, 371-373.

⁵⁶¹ Çerçi, vol.3, 591-593.

hearing the story of the *çavuş*. He asserted that the sultan was not obstinate about the treasury, but he rightfully asked and expected the commander-in-chief to pay the soldiers from the provincial treasury in the Balkans. However, the treasury was in a state of complete disorder, because of the exhaustion of the *mukaata* (tax) resources due to the chaos overriding in the countryside. Âli further claimed that the commander-in-chief and others were afraid to report the situation of the provincial treasury for fear of sultanic wrath.

The Khan of Crimea

Selanikî reported the arrival of the Khan of Crimea, Gazî Girây, rather dryly and without accusing Koca Sinan Paşa of mistreating the Crimean Khan.⁵⁶² Mustafa Âli's story of the reception of the khan of Crimea is exceptional in terms of narrative organization. Mustafa Âli starts by describing how the commander-in-chief received the khan with much respect, presented many gifts, and treated him to abundant meals without any criticism. At the end of this surprisingly upbeat paragraph, he writes that according to the wrong assumption of the commander-in-chief, he did not fail to breach rules of courtesy and attention, but indeed did. Then, Âli has a digression about the appropriate rules of conduct concerning the reception of Khans of Crimea.⁵⁶³ He explained what his former patron Lala Mustafa Paşa considered the appropriate way of receiving the khan of Crimea by a commander, and how Sultan Süleyman received one in the battlefield. He claimed that the Sultan treated him as his equal.

Âli then began his criticisms of the commander-in-chief, these included inviting the khan to his own tent, organizing a dinner for the khan and the

⁵⁶² Selanikî, 373.

⁵⁶³ Çerçi, vol.3, 597-598.

grantees in public, and seating him to his right side like a governor-general. He claimed that people of intelligence were united in thinking that the commander-in-chief received the khan with a lack of courtesy, disregarding his own humble station. This Âli argues caused the khan to converse with, and pay attention to Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa, and not with the grand vizier.⁵⁶⁴

Peçevî reproduces the same story critical of the commander-in-chief in a less complex fashion. He asserts that khan in their [political] language is the equivalent padişah in ours, and he is the padişah son of a padişah, going back four hundred years, whereas Koca Sinan Paşa is only the absolute deputy of a great sultan Peçevî repeated that the khan talked to Hasan Paşa, and ignored Koca Sinan Paşa.⁵⁶⁵

In Talikîzade's description of the arrival of the Khan of Crimea with the Tatar soldiers, Koca Sinan Paşa sent his son Mehmed Paşa, and Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa to welcome the Khan, who according to Talikîzade brought the Khan in accordance with good conduct (“aḥsen-i âdâb.”) Talikîzade wrote that when the Khan of Crimea was in sight, everyone felt joy (“Ḥân-ı ʿâlî-şân pedîdâr olduđı gibi seyl-i revân baḥr-i firâvân oldu.”) After which the khan sat down and rested with the commander-in-chief (“ḥâzret-i Paşa-yı saʿâdet-medâr iḳbâl-i dâ'imîyü'l-istiḳrâr gibi ârâm-u-ḳarâr buyurdılar.”)⁵⁶⁶ Talikîzade described the conversation of the khan with Koca Sinan Paşa positively: From the beginning of the reception until the end there had been an increasing deference, reverent and excellent dialogue, which was concluded with the presentation of the gifts the blessed

⁵⁶⁴ Çerçi, vol.3, 598-601.

⁵⁶⁵ Peçevî, 2:150-151.

⁵⁶⁶ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 231-232.

sultan sent.⁵⁶⁷ Talikîzade failed to notice any breach of protocol, and concentrated lauding the prestige and glory of the khan. On the other hand he portrayed the khan to be ready to offer his services to the grand vizier. Talikîzade wrote that the khan and the grand vizier talked about the Tatar forces, and the various issues concerning the campaign. Talikîzade explicitly states that the khan answered to Koca Sinan Paşa's courteous manners (“ḥazret-i Paşanuñ ḥüsn-i mücâmelesine luḡ ile muḡâbele buyurub.”)⁵⁶⁸ The banquet Koca Sinan Paşa gave in the honor of khan was well received, and caused no friction in Talikîzade's account.

The Promotion of Koca Sinan Paşa's Son to Vizierate

Selanikî wrote that Koca Sinan Paşa's son governor-general of Rumelia Mehmed Paşa was promoted to the position of vizier, and an honorary robe was sent for him from the capital on 4 Zilkaade 1002/July 22, 1594.⁵⁶⁹ Selanikî's narration of this appointment is dry compared to his panegyric prose concerning the appointments of his own patrons, or the statesmen he admires.⁵⁷⁰ Mustafa Âli came up with a more elaborate story about the promotion. He wrote that Koca Sinan Paşa sent his own son governor-general of Rumelia Mehmed Paşa with 30.000 soldiers in response to an urgent request for auxiliary troops from the Governor of Hatvan Arslan Bey. Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa managed to defeat the enemy in spite of difficulties. However, there was a surprise attack, which caused Mehmed Paşa to run away, and Hasan Paşa to fight on in spite of his injuries.

⁵⁶⁷ “Bidâyātu't-tekrimât ilâ gâyâtî't-ta'zîmât bi-'tevfîr fi't-tevḡîr mülâkî olub, luḡ-ı mücâmele ve ḥüsn-i mükâlemeleriyle ḥazret-i Pâdişâh-ı zıllü'llâh-ı âsumân-bârgâhdan ithâf olunan çetr-i çarḡ-itṡşâf-ı sultâniye nüzül-i ḥüsvânî buyurdılar” in Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 232.

⁵⁶⁸ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 235.

⁵⁶⁹ Selanikî, 381.

⁵⁷⁰ On the appointment of his patron Siyâvuş Paşa, see Selanikî, 137. For Selanikî's narration of the private audience of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa with Murad III, and his appointment of grand vizierate, see Selanikî, 146, 148-150.

Mustafa Âli claimed Mehmed Paşa was afraid of blood, and when Hasan Paşa asked him not to run away, he did not listen, but took off.⁵⁷¹ Hasan Paşa went to the border and ordered the sipahis to raid the enemy, which resulted in total defeat. Mustafa Âli claimed that although Mehmed Paşa could reach Hasan Paşa in no time to help them, he did go to his help because he was a coward like his father. Âli claimed that Mehmed Paşa's evil-mentor father ("peder-i şe^camet-rehberi") reported his son to have fought like Rustem,⁵⁷² and the brave Hasan Paşa as a coward.⁵⁷³ Âli wrote that as a result of Koca Sinan Paşa's false report his son was appointed vizier, and received gifts from the sultan.⁵⁷⁴ Mustafa Âli wrote that everyone laughed at him.

Conquest of Yanık

Selanikî news about the conquest of Yanık castle reached the capital on 27 Safer 1003/November 11, 1594.⁵⁷⁵ Because this was a major conquest in the campaign, Selanikî copied in his chronicle a letter Koca Sinan Paşa sent to the viziers in the capital. Selanikî was reverent of Koca Sinan Paşa in his introduction to the letter.⁵⁷⁶ After Sinan Paşa's letter Selanikî inserted some chronograms on the conquest of Yanık castle, and then copied a longer and more ornate letter the Crimean Khan Gazî Girây addressed to a certain Kefelü Mevlana Hüseyin Efendi.⁵⁷⁷ The conquest is narrated as a happy incident in Selanikî's chronicle.

⁵⁷¹ Çerçi, vol.3, 587-588.

⁵⁷² Rüstem, or Rustam, is the principle hero of the Persian epic Shahname by Firdawsî. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Rustam."

⁵⁷³ "ale'l-fevr oğlını Rüstemâne şe^catle ve Hasan Paşa gibi dilir-i kemâl-i havf ü haşyetle bildirüb."

⁵⁷⁴ "oğlına bir muraşsa tiğ-i zerrîn hil^cat ve beglerbegiligine inzimâm-ı vezâret hümini taşşil eyledi" in Çerçi, vol.3, 589-590.

⁵⁷⁵ Selanikî, 395.

⁵⁷⁶ Selanikî, 395- 399.

⁵⁷⁷ Selanikî, 399-404.

Mustafa Âli considered the attempt to conquer the castle of Yanık and the strategy on the part of the commander-in-chief rash and careless, for he believed the endeavor would bring nothing but the wrath of the enemy. Âli accused Koca Sinan Paşa with loss of fiscal resources on futile battles. As he recounted the conquest, he praised the khan of Crimea and his Tatar soldiers, Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa, governor-general of Karaman Mehmed Paşa who is the son of Şemsi Paşa, and Rıdvan Ağa. However, Mustafa Âli wrote that the cowardice of Koca Sinan Paşa's son Mehmed Paşa took hold of him during this battle as well, allegedly when he saw the enemy, he turned and ran away. Later, the soldiers saw his great fear and hid him under some bushes in the protective shell of the earthwork. He then told an incident about the janissaries who saw him go into his father's tent after the battle and asked him where he was during the fighting to exhort money and other valuables from him.⁵⁷⁸ After recounting the conquest of the castle, Âli accused Koca Sinan Paşa of taking money from the enemy in order to let them surrender in peace. But when they requested a big cannon they had inside, because it was against religion and law to give the enemy artillery and arms, the grand vizier did not give them anything.⁵⁷⁹

In Talikîzade's narration of the siege of the Castle of Yanık, there's a brief section on the efforts of the grand vizier Koca Sinan Paşa.⁵⁸⁰ It starts with a couplet, informing the reader that the story of the "Sinan who arrived at the border."⁵⁸¹ Talikîzade wrote that Koca Sinan Paşa has deprived the bodies of many hell-dwellers' from their chicken souls to send them to their eternal abode

⁵⁷⁸ Çerçi, vol.3, 602-605.

⁵⁷⁹ Çerçi, vol.3, 608-609.

⁵⁸⁰ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 301-302.

⁵⁸¹ "hadîş-i sinân çün be-pâyân resîd / hikâyet be-dest-ü-girîbân resîd." Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyûn*, 301.

in the pit. Koca Sinan Paşa did not stop and rest from fighting day or night, whatever expedient Koca Sinan Paşa invented using his genius caused to annihilate the wicked infidels. (“ḥazret-i vezāret-penāh-ı devlet-destgāh irşād-ı hüdā-yı °aql-ı bā-reşādla ḳal°enün ḳal°ine her ne tedārük iḥtirā°-u-peydā itdiler ise, küffār-ı dāll daḥi idlāl-i ebāls-i pür-[beyleset] ile ref°-ü-def°ine def°i bir şeytanet ibdā°-u-ibdā eyledi.”) He further illustrates his point with two couplets.⁵⁸²

Newly Created Sancaks

When the news of newly created provinces around the castles that were successfully conquered reached the capital, Selanikî inserted more wise words by the elders. Again, the wise elders did not consider this appropriate, arguing that making small castles into provinces during a campaign was abnormal and a deviation from the law, the consequences of which would become manifest over time. Mustafa Âli also criticized the making of these small castles into *sancaks*, which he considered to be a tactic of Koca Sinan Paşa to exaggerate small victories.⁵⁸³

After the first siege of the castle of Komran failed, the commander-in-chief decided to wait until winter to make another try. Meanwhile, the voivodes of Wallachia and Transylvania revolted against the Sultan, and Murad III passed away. Peçevî held Koca Sinan Paşa responsible for the revolt of the voivodes, whereas Mustafa Âli and Talikîzade accused Ferhad Paşa. Selanikî was less overt in his accusations, but inserted a long section about the ideas of the wise on the changes that happened in the administration of Wallachia and Transylvania

⁵⁸² Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümâyün*, 301-302.

⁵⁸³ Çerçi, vol.3, 595.

during the reign of Murad III. Although, Murad III had been his patron all his career, he did not compose a special obituary for him when he passed away, unlike his obituaries of Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa in his other work *Tebriziye*, and of Koca Sinan Paşa in *Şehname*.⁵⁸⁴ Selanikî anticipated the death of Murad III by inserting the ominous prophecies of a mad sufi (*mecnun derviş*), in which Selanikî criticizes Koca Sinan Paşa implicitly. Soon after the accession of the new sultan, Mehmed III dismissed Koca Sinan Paşa from both the grand vizierate and the commandership. Talikîzade's account show that the death of Murad III was a turning point in the campaign, and he also uses a poem to celebrate the accession of Mehmed III to warn him about potential issues of corruption and decay. Talikîzade was sad to lose his patron and the hero of his *şehname* to lose his position. Like the campaign's first stage, his book also concludes with a loose end.

Conclusions

Each of these historians used different structures to legitimize and delegitimize events and decisions taken by Koca Sinan Paşa. Selanikî Mustafa Efendi had been circumspect and euphemistic in his recounting of events, say for the quotation of the ideas of the wise elders, the intelligent men and the experienced men. He also carefully recorded the criticisms of Koca Sinan Paşa made by the janissaries who returned from the campaign to the capital. In general, Selanikî is not as confident as Peçevî and Mustafa Âli to venture to voice his criticisms as his own, but projects them to these other people. Selanikî had been at the imperial court while the campaign was going and constructed his chronological record of events based on the reports, letters, oral testimonies of janissaries who arrived in Istanbul, and rumors.

⁵⁸⁴ Woodhead, *Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*, 61.

Mustafa Âli uses his literary prowess to construct imaginary letters and messages from across the border, or changes the chronology of events with the intent of telling what he thought was wrong. He is creative in his recounting the Hungarian campaign in 1593-1594. His disparaging verse and prose about Koca Sinan Paşa leaves little room to analyze the events and what was happening. Mustafa Âli did not take part in the campaign personally, and his distance to the events is reflected in his careless chronological structure and relative lack of dates. He must have embroidered oral reports with his own distortion.

Peçevî relies heavily on Mustafa Âli's narrative, but has his own ideas about what was wrong. His personal hatred also seemed to have taken a hold of him, like Mustafa Âli. Peçevî is also more balanced than Mustafa Âli; he does not denigrate the commander-in-chief about every move he made and about every stage of the campaign. In Mustafa Âli's emotional prose and verse about Koca Sinan Paşa, there is almost no room for recognizing any good deed or decision of Koca Sinan Paşa. Peçevî, on the other hand, liked to explaining what happened and why. Since he took part in the campaign personally, some of his criticisms of Mustafa Âli, such as not ordering the soldiers to raid until Pecs (Vienna) are colored with local knowledge.

Talikîzade was different from Peçevî, Selanikî, and Mustafa Âli with whom he shared a milieu that was marked by the swift dislocations of bureaucrats and politicians in the instable period of Murad III. Unlike the others, T. represents the voice of official historiography commissioned to glorify the commander. Talikîzade joined the campaign under the patronage of Koca Sinan Paşa. Yet because of his literary objectives, the details of events are often blurred in the ornate style of his text

CONCLUSION

I argue that only a factional approach to late sixteenth century Ottoman realities enable us to map the interests of different power groups. Different factions represented a collection of internal, foreign, economic, military and cultural interests.⁵⁸⁵ For instance Koca Sinan Paşa succeeded Sokollu Mehmed Paşa as the head of the Indian Ocean Faction, however the spice trade and the increasing Ottoman presence in the Indian Ocean, was but one among many interests.

Koca Sinan Paşa needs to be reevaluated in the face of his own writings, in addition to those of his contemporaries. He was a multi-faceted figure who not only amassed a considerable wealth, but also established endowments to perpetuate his name, prestige and prosperity. He was very much a man of his times, not only because he was pragmatic, but also because he shared the political discourse of his contemporaries. Although, it is hard to argue that Koca Sinan Paşa was a cultural or social idealist, his discourse conforms to the ideals of legitimacy in sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire. He legitimized his policies with reference to custom, historical precedents and legal consciousness. In this regard, his discourse has many parallels to that of Mustafa Âli, the historian who was responsible for denigrating the powerful grand vizier for posterity.

Koca Sinan Paşa also shared explanatory schemes with Âli, Selanikî, and Peçevî. He explained many problems he encountered by secret animosities, conspiracies, corruption of officials, and slander. Late sixteenth century Ottoman

⁵⁸⁵ Membership in different factions was not limited to men. Although I have not explored their factional affiliations, imperial wives and queen mothers also had vested interests. For Süleyman's royal wife Hürrem Sultan's diplomatic relations, see Peirce, 220-221. For Safiye's diplomatic contacts see Maria Pia Pedani, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy" in *Turcica* 32 (2000), 9-32.

political discourse was permeated by factionalism. The terms that were in currency included *fitne* and *fesad* (rebellion or malice), *tahrik* (provocation), and *iftira* and *bühtan* (slander). Koca Sinan Paşa used these terms along with both his rivals and historians such as Peçevî, Selanikî, and Mustafa Âli.

Auditing a commander-in-chief upon his return from a campaign, or the audits of financial bureaucrats also turned into factional affairs. The audits resulted in dismissals, imprisonments, and exile. Narrative sources attest to the perception of these law suits as manifestations of enmity. This brings us to the question of the legal structure that governed the political elite, whose members were legally in the *kul* (slave) status. Because of their status as *kul*, their properties were confiscated when they died, while their houses returned to the treasury and were used by other politicians. As stated above, allegations of slander, conspiracy and provocation were widespread. But even lawsuits that were heard by a special committee selected from among the members of the Imperial Council turned into factional denigration campaigns, and sometimes as a result they remained unresolved, like in the case of the finance directors of Aleppo.

Koca Sinan Paşa was also an economic reformer who carried out regulatory policies. These included the standardization of the silver coin (*akçe*); he also removed the Safavid *şahi* silver coins from circulation and thus integrated different monetary zones of the empire. In order to minimize the budget deficit he economized, and introduced tax farming in the southern and eastern provinces. The introduction of tax farming was a contested issue that caused a confrontation of Koca Sinan Paşa with his archenemy Ferhad Paşa and his friend Hızır Paşa. Another appointment Koca Sinan Paşa made, of the local dignitary Alaüddin Bey as the tax farmer of the extremely rich province of Diyarbakir,

caused a prolonged audit that involved many foes, such as Ciğalazade Yusuf Sinan Paşa, Canboladoğlu Hasan Paşa, etc. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that different factions had vested interests in different types of provincial taxation. The decentralisation that observers of decline saw in this period in administration and taxation became manifest in the conflict between different factions about implementing different taxation policies.

In order to avoid dismissals due to a janissary revolt, Koca Sinan Paşa took extreme care to pay their salaries on time. Sometimes he lent money to the external treasury to be able to pay them, which created a liability because there was the possibility that the sultan could dismiss him in order to not pay him back. At other times, he convinced the sultan to lend money from the inner treasury. Since Murad III himself was very much afraid of another janissary revolt, he often consented. Hence, it was a primary objective of Koca Sinan Paşa to pay the soldiers on time. To make the payments easier, he revised the payrolls of the soldiers, and gradually weeded out dead soldiers whose salaries were being collected by people not in the army.

He also tried to build the navy without spending money from the treasury. To this end, he sponsored the building of ships personally, in addition to making other viziers and governor-generals to sponsor the building of ships, or to contribute a sum of money. Among other reform policies Koca Sinan Paşa pursued was the elimination of corrupt officials from state service. He had uncovered a gang of scribes in the service of the Imperial Council, who were involved in selling forged documents. He considered this to be a greater service than the correction of the coinage. The factional discourse permeated this

operation too, for he alleged that these scribes had backers in important positions, i.e. factional affiliations.

As I mentioned above in relation to the political discourse during the reign of Murad III, gossip, rumor, slander, and written denunciations permeated the everyday political discourse. These forms of verbal attack were a major tool of factional clashes, because members of different factions could denigrate the people they wanted to have dismissed without making formal accusations to the Imperial Council. So these extra-legal accusations could function in the same way as legal audits worked, as a vehicle of animosity. Rumor on the other hand has more to do with conspiracies and the fear of military rebellions than with making accusations. Koca Sinan Paşa's closure of taverns and coffeehouses might be related with his desire to control both the flow of information through rumor and gossip. He also tried to manipulate their reception by the sultan.

He also made use of written denunciations to get rid of his foes by claiming that some anonymous texts supposedly written by the soldiers and informing the sultan about the possibility of uprisings were in fact written by factional leaders who were plotting to remove him from office. By uncovering their plot, Koca Sinan Paşa succeeded in removing Saatçi Hasan Paşa and David Passi from the political arena, even if for a brief period. It's almost impossible to establish the truthfulness of these reports, and it is not relevant either. Nevertheless, it is important to understand how information was received and how the reception of a denunciation piece of gossip was manipulated. Koca Sinan Paşa claimed to seek justice or establish the truthfulness or falsity of the accusations made against him through gossip, slander and denunciations.

However, the lawfulness he demanded seems to have been dislocated during the reign of Murad III.

Murad III's reign also saw an increase in historiographical output. I tried to show how factional affiliations of the historians and chroniclers, their explanatory schemes and narrative strategies shaped their accounts of the Ottoman campaign into Hungary between 1593 and 1594. Historians and chroniclers all held positions in state or palace service, and had their own factional affiliations. Mustafa Âli, Peçevî, Selanikî and on the more prestigious end Talikîzade and Lokman reflect their times from the perspective of their factional positions and patron-client relations.⁵⁸⁶ Koca Sinan Paşa is portrayed through the biased views of Mustafa Âli, Peçevî and Selanikî, who belonged to rival factions and held personal grudges against him.⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, especially Mustafa Âli and Peçevî relied heavily on anecdotes that unveiled the truth of events that other historians did not venture to write about before them. However, anecdotes gave much room for made up stories and letters, as well as actual oral and eye witness accounts. Selanikî, on the other hand, was more reserved and he employed historiographical conventions such as the “the words of the elders” or “the words of the intelligent and the experienced.”

As contemporary historical accounts, the texts of Peçevî, Selanikî and Mustafa Âli became the main sources of modern Ottoman historiography. As a result most studies dealing with Koca Sinan Paşa portray him through their lenses. In this thesis, this distorted view is balanced by a close reading of Koca Sinan Paşa's précis correspondence with the sultan Murad III and the campaign

⁵⁸⁶ For an excellent review of Ottoman historiography during the sixteenth century, see Fleischer, 235-272.

⁵⁸⁷ The only exception is Emine Fetvacı, who recently challenged this in her Ph.D. dissertation. See Fetvacı, 140-201; 330-334.

history of Talikîzade Mehmed Efendi. Lastly, military victory was not only publicly prized by the Ottoman society at large, but it was also a great way of legitimization. Koca Sinan Paşa's rise had been related to his military victories in Yemen, Georgia and Tunis. When a faction supported a war during the reign of Murad III, everyone's fortune depended on this campaign. In order to become victorious, courtiers and pashas created misinformation and resorted to other illegitimate means. Likewise, to get rid of a foe who went on a campaign, they resorted to slander and denunciations. The lack of a defined legal system that bound the members of the Ottoman political elite seems to be the major problem of the system. *Kanun* and *örf* are often brought up as a discourse; however members of competing factions did not have any kind of recourse against slander and denunciation, nor against the impediments by which their enemies held up their war efforts, even though such actions might result in losses on the battlefield. Like Lala Mustafa Paşa, who was accused by Sokollu Mehmed Paşa after his dismissal from the Yemen campaign, the accused also resorted to the influence of harem members and favorites of the sultan.

This thesis is largely an exploration of “soft” issues that are hard to prove with reference to narrative, or even archival sources. The voice we hear through the texts analyzed often favors what was sanctioned by the sultan. Denunciations, conspiracies, gossip, and rumor were only recorded if they resulted in the dismissal, audit, or exile of an official or statesman. I have largely focused on Koca Sinan Paşa's relationship with his peers, contenders for the grand vizierate and their friends and followers. Thus, this thesis suffers from its omission of Koca Sinan Paşa's relationships with queen mother Nurbanu Sultan, Murad III's legal wife Safiye Sultan, the palace overseen Gazanfer Ağa, in spite of the existence of

scholarship and evidence relating to these. In the future I intend to work on Koca Sinan Paşa's relationships with members of the *ulema*, as well as denizens of the harem and palace officials, who were gaining more ground in precisely this period.

In the background of factional strife lies the legal structure of the Ottoman Empire that I have pointed to, but not really explored. Here I will only raise certain questions about the seeming legal vacuum, which was indeed filled by the practice of customary law. Slander could be used, both as a sword and a shield. I argue that the circularity of these memorandums has to do with the practice of customary law that applied to the political elite. The sultan was the chief dispenser of justice. In the light of evidence concerning Murad III's immediate predecessors' disregard for these anonymous papers, the personal characteristics of sultans seem to have determined how customary law was implemented.

Furthermore, as the ongoing research of Engin Akarlı shows that, there is a gap between legal doctrine and legal practice concerning customary law that puzzles scholars. About the customary law that governed the elites of the Ottoman Empire who were of *kul* status, I consider inconsistent capricious pragmatism to be the rule of the day, rather than a consistency between legal norms and practice. Akarlı shows that "the Ottoman way (*âdâb-ı Osmâniyye*) or the "örf" (custom) of the Ottoman ruling elite" established the theory and practice of law for the sultan's servants, who were of *kul* status. The custom was the accumulation of centuries of Ottoman experience in statecraft. Land laws and

the land tenure system, and the changes they underwent, were also in the realm of customary law.⁵⁸⁸

The legal practice concerning statesmen occupying the highest echelons of the Ottoman military-administrative bureaucracy was overseen by the Imperial Council. The appeals to the decisions of committees organized by the Imperial Council with the sultan's approval could be appealed to the sultan. Hence, who the sultan was and how well he understood the Ottoman customary law mattered a great deal. Here, it is possible to make a few concluding remarks about Murad III. There are various reasons that made his reign a difficult period of transformation, political strife, and dissent. Yet, it was Murad III, who was bombarded from accusations by rivals, who wavered in his opinions, and changed his decisions concerning the truthfulness of accusations. As a result, he rotated the same viziers (Koca Sinan Paşa, Siyavuş Paşa and Ferhad Paşa) until they took one another out of the game by execution (like it happened to Ferhad Paşa) or were themselves taken out of the game by natural causes (the death of Koca Sinan Paşa). The factions of deceased factional leaders continued to maintain group solidarity, even if they lost some blood. Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's faction was transformed into Koca Sinan Paşa's, Koca Sinan Paşa's faction was transformed into a new faction led by his son Mehmed Paşa and his protégé Yemişçi Hasan Paşa, which only disintegrated with the bloody Zorba rebellion of 1605.

⁵⁸⁸ I am indebted to Engin Akarlı for sending me the text of the lecture he delivered on customary law at the Hamilton A.R. Gibb Lecture Series in Islamic history, social studies and culture at the Center of Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University on May 12, 2010.

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