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Yüksek Bürokrasi İçin Osmanlı Sarayında Elit Eğitimi

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ELITE EDUCATION AT THE OTTOMAN COURT FOR HIGHER BUREAUCRACY

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Bülent ARI

Abstract: It can be concluded that despite some of its weaknesses and side effects, Ottoman administrative mechanism owe all its successes to unique appointment and promotion system within the concept of reward and punishment. This was only possible not through nobility and blood descendancy, but through a system which was based on competence, merit, and loyalty. The young boys of non-Muslim families at the age of 15-20 were collected from the villages and recruited at the Ottoman court. There were certain rules to be promoted within the court educational mechanism. If they reached to *Hasoda*, after strict education, they could be appointed to higher positions. There are precious registers of contemporary foreign writers about Enderun (inner court). When they were appointed higher positions in the countryside, they since they would follow similar behaviour with the court, there would be an administrative harmony. The article focuses on the sensitivity of this mechanism throughout the Ottoman Classical period. The most important point, which was emphasized in the article is that in case of any failure, they were heavily punished. This process opened new positions to the bottom lines. Ottoman system basically owe its success to this special application. The possibility of renewal of the administrative personnel, created an enthusiasm among the young generation. The article also touch upon the conversion of the unique Ottoman elite educational model to modern European systems towards the XIX th century.

Keywords: Enderun, Devşirme, Saray, İçoğlanı, Ottoman Court

Öz: Her türlü yan tesirine rağmen, Osmanlı bürokrasisinin başarısı, mükâfat ve mücazat çerçevesinde çağına göre sıkı ve nevi şahsına münhasır bir eğitim veren Enderun sitemine bağlıdır. Gayrimüslim tebanın çocukları arasında seçilen 15-20 yaş arasındaki devşirme gençlerin en akıllı, dirayetli ve yakışıklı olanları saraya alınıp orada kariyerlerine devam ederlerdi. Buradaki çeşitli basamaklardan geçip elenenler Hasoda'ya kadar ulaşırlarsa yüksek idari mevkilere tayin edilirdi. Buradaki eğitim modeli hakkında çağdaş yabancı gözlemcilerin kayıtları önemli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Saray ve merkezî idarenin inceliklerini öğrenenler, tayin edildikleri yerlerde merkezle aynı dili konuşacak ve uyum içinde çalışacak mahallî idareciler olacaktırlar. Makale Osmanlı Klasik Döneminde bu işleyişin inceliklerini ve hassas noktalarını tarihi örneklerle anlatmaktadır. Makalede vurgulanan en önemli husus, başarısızlıkların cezalandırılmasıyla aşağıdan gelen nesillere yeni kadrolar açılmasıdır. Osmanlı sistemi başarısı biraz da buna borçludur. Bu suretle kadrolar sürekli yenilenmekte ve aşağıdan gelenlerin iştiyakı kesilmemektedir. Makale XIX. asrın sonlarına doğru bu sistemin modernizasyonu ve dönüşümüne de kısaca temas etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Enderun, Devşirme, Saray, İçoğlanı, Osmanlı Sarayı

It can be concluded that despite some of its weaknesses and side effects, Ottoman administrative mechanism owe all its successes to unique appointment and promotion system within the concept of reward and punishment. This was only possible not through nobility and blood descendancy, but through a system which was based on competence, merit, and loyalty. Throughout the Classical Age¹ which lasted until the end of XVI th century, most of the higher bureaucratic positions were occupied by the collected and recruited subjects.²

¹ For Ottoman institutions in the Classical Age, see Halil İnalcık, *Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973; *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ (1300-1600)*, by Ruşen Sezer, YKY, İstanbul 2003.

² In the Ottoman terminology, they were called "kul", which meant "slave". They were of non-Muslim origin, but converted to Islam at their young ages. However, they were not slaves in dictionary meaning but considered to be the servants of the Sultan. For Ottoman recruitment (servant) system see Halil İnalcık, "Ghulam", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd Ed., 1965, 1085-91.

From Mehmed the Conqueror time, higher bureaucratic positions were mainly occupied by the servant originated officials. There were certain justifiable reasons of this case. Soon after the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II (who had inherited the Eastern Roman Empire) had established a central system in which all the authority was collected in the personality of the Sultan. This authority was never shared.³ The servant originated bureaucrats began to gain weight within this administrative system. In this new system, kinship, citizenship, and even original nationality was not important. The only criteria was to be successful. Neither the Sultan, nor the administrative system tolerated any kind of failure. For a sustainable success, all the relevant and sensitive measures were taken at the initial steps of the administrative ladder. To prevent the domination of a certain geographic and demographic region, young boys were collected and recruited from the different regions of Ottoman dominions, brought to Istanbul, and were delivered to the *Agha* of Janissaries.

In such a system, the young boys could only be promoted in two ways: to join *ilmiyye* (university-academic career) or to *seyfiyye* (military classes). The way to climb the ladders of *ilmiyye* (scholars) passed through diploma from the *madrasas* (universities) of Istanbul, rather than of countryside. The graduates of these *madrasas* were appointed according to their competence. Gradual promotion was either as higher scholars or as *kadis* (judges) of big cities.⁴

This article will not focus neither on the elite group among the scholars, nor their education and promotion system, but will concentrate on the future elite administrative authorities, their educational atmosphere and promotion mechanism.⁵

How Young Boys are selected and Recruited at the Court

Throughout the Classical Age, ie. roughly until 1600, the main source of the future higher administrative positions was *devshirme* (recruitment) system. For this reason, the court and Sublime Porte have given utmost importance on its operation. Since they would be either Janissaries or court servants, young boys were selected from among the families whose father and mother is known, and brought to Istanbul. To carry out the selection of the boys, an experienced, just, trustable, and religious person was appointed as *yayabashi* (chief sergeant).⁶ When he arrived any village, he collected all the subjects with their children, and then selected only one of the boys at the age of 15-20, from among the families who have more than one boy.⁷ The conditions of how the boys to be selected is clearly defined in the *kanunname* (legal regulation): “Boys of the noble families, boys who are smart, and clever, if possible of clergy should be preferred. Only one of the boys who have two, should be taken. Orphans, and sons of shepherds should be eliminated. Since they are grown up on the mountains, they are not civilised.”⁸

³ For the function of the Sultan (*padishah*) within the Ottoman administrative mechanism, see Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlı Padişahı”, A.Ü. SBF Dergisi, XIII, 1958, pp. 68-79.

⁴ For the gradual promotion within the *ilmiyye* class, grades and types of *madrasas* and their curriculum, see Cahid Baltacı, XV-XVIII. Asırlarda Osmanlı Medreseleri, İstanbul 1976; Hüseyin Atay, Osmanlılarda Yüksek Din Eğitimi, Dergâh, İstanbul 1983; Cevat İzgi, Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim, İz, İstanbul 1997.

⁵ For detailed information on Enderun, see Ülker Akkutay, Enderun Mektebi, Gazi Ün., Ankara 1984; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı, TTK, Ankara 1988, pp. 297-357.

⁶ “Müstakim ve umur-dide yayabaşlılar tayin olunurdu”. Kitâb-i Müstetab, Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatına Dair Kaynaklar, Haz. Yaşar Yücel, TTK, Ankara 1988, p. 5.

⁷ “... Kefere-i reayanın ne kadar oğlanı var ise babaları ile cem edüb yanına getirdüb bizzat nazar edüb, görüb, kanğı kâfirin müteaddid oğulları ola, içlerinden birini ki, on beş yaşından yirmisine varınca ola, yeniçerilik için alub, yazub zabt ü hıfz ede, amma müteaddid olmayanın oğlu alınmaya ve müteaddidin biri alındıktan sonra ziyadeye dahletmeye ...”, sicilde 701 no. ile kayıtlı 998/1589 tarihli berat, Halit Ongan, Ankara'nın İki Numaralı Şer'îye Sicili, TTK, Ankara 1974, p. 54.

⁸ “Kâfir evladını cem eylemek lazım geldikde ekâbir oğlunu alalar ve papas oğlunu ve kâfir arasında aslı eyü olan kâfirin oğlunu alalar ve iki oğlu olanın birin alalar; ikisin bir uğurdan almayalar ve oğulları olanın dahi güzelce olanın alalar ve babası ve anası ölüb yetim kalan oğlanı almayalar, zira gözü aç ve bî-edeb olur ve sıgırtaç ve

Since the control of huge numbers and their travel could create troubles, they were conveyed to Istanbul under the control of a trustable sergeant. Their names with father and mother names and detailed body descriptions were registered in two copies and one of them was sent to the Agha of Janissaries. Two copies of registers were compared in Istanbul to prevent additions and changes of the boys on the way to the capital. Some of the families resisted, while some others consented voluntarily, their child to be recruited into the Ottoman army. When the families were not consented, there were certain malpractices to change the boys. The father could announce that his son was lost, or bribe the priest to erase his name from the church registers.⁹ Another method was to save his son through bribing the sergeant. In some cases the villagers collected Money among the residents to keep him away from their village:

Another injustice in Rumelia is that a young rather than an experienced sergeant was sent to collect the boys. To save his son, the poor peasant sells his oxen and even vineyard and takes him back. Since he had no place to settle, he should move to far distances. They go as if to take the boy, but they attempt to take his life. The peasant does not give his life, but gives all his accumulation.¹⁰

When all the boys were gathered in Istanbul, they were seen by the Sultan personally. In the meantime, a respected scholar, who was competent at *ilm-i kıyâfet* (characterology)¹¹ examined the appearance of the boys. He looks at lines and other signs on faces, and selected certain boys who fit to the requirements.¹² Boys who have good character, modest and smart were selected for the court, by the approval of the Sultan. Others were given to the Turkish peasants for a limited period of time to learn Turkish language and Turkish customs. They would be the future Janissaries.¹³

Most of the contemporary western authors praised the selection and education system of the boys into the court. They wrote that the senior officials were very dignified, and behave very impressive even on small events. Robert Withers, whose book was published by John Greaves in London in 1653 mention that the young servants in the court were very smart and magnificent. They prove that they would be very precious rulers in future.

According to ancient traditions, the young servants in the court should be selected from among the most noble and civilised Christian families. He added that the Turks believe in the nobility by birth, when supported by a good education, resulted with virtuous personality. This could only be done in the court. The lectures in the court are marvelous. They were educated very carefully by the teachers. They were also taught propriety, good dressing, religious

çoban tâifesinin oğlunu almayalar, zira dağlarda büyümüşlerdir, bî-edeblerdir.” “Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân-i Dergâh-i Âli”, Haz. Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, C. 9, OSAV, İstanbul 1996, p. 138.

⁹ Goodwin, Godfrey, *Janissaries*, Saqi Books, London 1997; Türkçesi, *Yeniçeriler*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul 2001, p. 34.

¹⁰ “Rumilinde bir zulm dahi budur ki, Rumili’ne acemi oğlan devşürmeğe bir sâlih ihtiyar yayabaşı gönderilmez, ekâbir dileğiyle bir rüşvet-hor taze yiğit yayabaşı gönderilir. Reaya oğlun halas eylemek için çift öküzün ve bağın ve tarlasın bi’l-küllüye satub bu yayabaşına verür, oğlunu kurtarur. Dahi ol kafirün oturacak ve duracak yeri kalmaz, oğlu ve kızı ile başın alub gider. ... Zira kafirün oğlun almağa giderler, güya ki canın alırlar, canın vermez, cümle malın verür.” *Kitâb-i Mesalih-i Müslimin ve Menâfi’i Mü’minin*, Ed. Yaşar Yücel, TTK, Ankara 1988, p. 106-7. Actually since most of the families were volunteer to deliver their boys, it looks like that it was widespread. However, according to the historical documents, some of the peasants were resistant. For previous discussions on the topic, see Ahmet Akgündüz, *Bilinmeyen Osmanlı*, İstanbul 1999, OSAV, p. 44; Alaaddin Haşim, “Malumun İlamı: Bilinmeyen Osmanlı”, *İslamiyat*, vol 2, no 4, 1999, pp. 168-9.

¹¹ For *ilm-i kıyâfet* see Taşköprülüzade Ahmed Efendi, *Mevzûatü’l-Ulûm*, vol 1, İkdâm Matbaası, İstanbul, pp. 379-80.

¹² İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *age*, p. 289.

¹³ “Yayabaşlar eyüce yarar oğlanlar cem’ ederlerdi ve her vilayetin Devşirme sürüsü ikiyüz ve üçyüz ve dahi ziyade nefer olub kızıl abalar ile Divân-i hümayuna getirülüb saadetlül padişadımız Arz odasında iken birer birer manzur-i hümayunları oldukdan sonra kapu ağası cümlesin gözden geçürüb ve her sürüden içlerinde göze dokunur eyü oğlanları emr-i hümayun ile iç oğlanlığına intihab olundukdan sonra Edirne ve Galata ve At Meydanı saraylarına tevzi olunub ve sair oğlanları Yeniçeri Ağası marifetiyle İstanbul ağaları Türk üzerine yazdururlardı”, *Kitâb-i Müstetab*, p. 6; Eyyubî Efendi *Kanunnamesi*, Haz. Abdülkadir Özcan, Eren, İstanbul 1994, p. 40; “Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân-i Dergâh-i Âli”, Haz. Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnameleri*, C. 9, OSAV, İstanbul 1996, p. 136.

knowledge and other useful information.¹⁴ In his treatise, written in 1585, Gianfrancesco Morosini mentioned the careful and disciplined education of the young boys within the Ottoman court.¹⁵ The court registers of the names of the young boys are still kept in the Ottoman archives.

Their initial selection to the court affected whole life of those young boys. The apprentice boys (*Acemi Oğlanı*) were sent to peasant families in the countryside to learn Turkish language. When they learned Turkish and local customs, they were recruited in the army as Janissaries. However they were never promoted to senior positions. The highest posts were allocated for the previous *Enderun* members, who were appointed to their professional carrier from the higher, but not from lower levels. In such a close system, within the court, ranging to 300-400 young men, who were well educated, loyal to him were at the sultan's service. They were first settled at the Grand Room, then at the Small Room, and respectively promoted gradually to *Seferli Odası* (Expedition Room), *Kilerli Odası* (Store Room), *Hazine Odası* (Treasury Room), and the best to *Has Oda* (Special Room).¹⁶ The ones who were not promoted, left the Palace and appointed to lower levels of administration in the countryside. They were predominated all the affairs of the court and state mechanism, so that when they were appointed as governor (*sancakbeği or beglerbegi*) in the countryside. They could easily form an integral part of the state mechanism:

The servants at the court were first educated 7-8 years, and then taken to the *Seferli, Kiler, Hazine* and *Has* rooms. In each room, as they proved their competence and loyalty to the Sultan, they could be even promoted to the position of Grand Vizier. According to the ancient Ottoman legal tradition, they leave the court with governorship. They rotated into many governorships and viceroyship all around the Ottoman dominions. When he was appointed into the position of Vizier, he was so experienced about the state affairs that in case of a complaint by the subjects at Divan, he does not need to ask anything to other bureaucrats. But the ones who were not competent on state affairs were appointed to lower levels of administration and they could never ascended to Vizierate.¹⁷

Nevertheless, one could always coincided with the violation of the rules, disloyalty, corruption, and injustice. When these kinds of violations were reported to the Sultan, the responsables were heavily punished: dismissal, banishment, and in some cases, even execution. So, new positions were opened to well educated young bureaucrats. The magic which sustained

¹⁴ Robert Withers, *Büyük Efendi'nin Sarayı*, translated by Cahit Kayra, Pera, İstanbul 1996, p. 64.

¹⁵ "The handsomest, most wide-awake ones are placed in the Seraglio [palace] of the Grand Signor, or in one of two others used only for this purpose, and they rise to the highest government offices. The Turks care not at all whether these boys are the children of noblemen or if fishermen and shepherds. All of this explains why their major officials are all good-looking and impressive, even when their manners are uncouth. Eunuchs have charge of them, and for any little offense they beat them cruelly with sticks, rarely hitting them less than a hundred times, and as much as a thousand." Gianfrancesco Morosini, 1585, "Turkey is a Republic of Slaves", in *Pursuit of Power*, Ed. and translated by James C. Davis, Harper and Publishers., NY, p. 136.

¹⁶ In XVII th century, there were 41 servants at *Hasoda*, 112 at *Hazine Odası*, 73 at *Kiler* and 108 at *Seferli odası*. Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhisü'l-Beyan Fi Kavanin-i Al-i Osman*, (1673) Haz. Sevim İlgürel, TTK, Ankara 1998, pp. 61-4.

¹⁷ Saraya tevzi olan oğlanlar sarayda yedişer ve sekizer yıl terbiye olunurlardı. Bادهû içlerinde göze dokunur ehl-i ma'rifet ve akl-i basiret üzere olan oğlanları Hasoda'ya alınub ba'dehû umümen çıkma oldukda her odadan ferman olunduğu üzere tayin olunub taşra çıkarlardı. Ba'dehû giderek her birlerinin liyakat ve kabiliyetlerine göre dirlik ve mansıb, tâ Veziriazam oluncaya değin yolları vardur ve Hasoda'da olan Silahdar ve Çukadar ve Rikabdar, bölük ağalıklarından biriyle çıkmağa kanunları olub ba'dehû liyakat ve istihkakına göre hıdmeti sebkat etdikce büyük Mir-i ahur ba'dehû Kapucubaşı ve andan Mir-i alem ve andan Yeniçeri Ağası ve andan Kastamonu sancağı ve andan beğlerbeğilik, ba'dehû her vilayetin beğlerbeğiliklerin tasarruf etdikden sonra Mir-i miran-ı Anadolu, ba'dehû Rumili ve andan Vezir ve giderek Veziriazam olan kimesne cemi' kul taifesinin ahvallerine ve ağalıklarına vakıf olmuş olur ... ve Divan-ı hümayunda bir umur vaki oldukça veyahud bir memleketden şekvacı geldikde "Acaba buna nice cevab vereyüm ve bunun aslı nicedür" deyu Reis ağzına ve kethüdası ve sairlerin ağzına bakmağa ihtiyac olmaz ve şunlar ki ağalıklarında ve sancak ve beğlerbeğiliklerinde imtihan olub liyakati olmayanları ilerü götürülüb vezaret verilmez idi. Kimi ağalıklarda ve kimi sancakda ve kimi beğlerbeğilikde kalub ve kiminin hilaf-ı Şer' ü kanun vaz' u hareketleri sebebi ile ebedi azl olub kalurlar idi." *Kitab-i Müstetab*, p. 6.

the Ottoman system for centuries were renewal of the posts, and open positions for young generations.¹⁸

Education at Enderun

The education at *Enderun* was under strict discipline. The young servants were almost isolated from the outside World, and adopted the court life as a whole:

When a young boy was recruited in the court, no one from outside knew him, as if live or dead. No one from outside knew how they were educated, and promoted. Only old members of Enderun knew it. There were strict rules on their education. They could not even make a conversation with other personel in the court, so that their letters should not be transmitted to their relatives outside. When an Enderun young boy caught talking a man outside, both of them were heavily beaten by their seniors.¹⁹

Within the court, the young servants had chosen a hobby in accordance with their interests, and ability. The ones who were succesful in certain fields were favoured soon. In his treatise, Bobovi, who taught music at the court, tell us about the extraordinary efforts of the abled young men.²⁰ Some of them were so successful in their fields that their professions had become their nicknames.

From early periods onwards, the Ottoman sultans had given utmost importance to literacy. Especially Selim I were strictly sensitive on the issue, and at his time no one remained illeterate.²¹ The hard educational procedures continued for long years in the court. When one was appointed to an outside job, he has fulfilled all the orders, and he was the most patient man in the World. Because the result of the faults were to be heavily beaten. Some of them wish to be appointed to an outside job, under unbearable punishments, although little time has remained for higher positions. So they consented to remain as a simple cavalry.²²

When the court servants who were selected with great sensitivity, were appointed to outside jobs, they started from higher positions. They rapidly climbed the administrative ladders, according to their competence and loyalty, and reached to vizierate. Since they trained with palace aducation, and aware of the local affairs, they could easily dominate the state affairs

¹⁸ “The court servants expected the Sultan to be happy with their services, so that they would be appointed to outside positions. Thus, they could easily get rid of heavy jobs in the court, under strict rules, and take an administrative position. The rulers are frequently changed, because the Grand Signor had many subjects who wished to be promoted”. R. Withers, *Büyük Efendi'nin Sarayı*, p. 78.

¹⁹ “Kânun-i kadîm budur ki bir oğlan saraya girdükden sonra ayruk taşradan anı kimesneler bilmezdi ki sağ mıdır, ve İçoğlanı dedükleri nicedür ve tarikleri nedir ve ne işler, kimesne anı bilmez idi, meğer ancak saraydan çıkanlar bilürdü; ta bu şekl üzere zabt ü edeb ve erkân var idi ki, mesela bir zülüflü baltacı bir İçoğlanı ile musahabet eylese zâbit olan ağalar İçoğlanına bî-hadd değnek urub kezalik baltacıya dahi kethüdası let ururdu ve bundan murad budur ki, İçoğlanı içerü ahvalinden bir söz taşraya çıkarılmaya veyahud baltacı ile taşraya mektubları varub gelmeye.” *Kitâb-i Müstetâb*, p. 26.

²⁰ Bobovi was Polish origin. He was enslaved by the Crimean Tartars and sold to Istanbul. His ability on music took attention. He served 19 years at the court and had to leave because of his addict to alcohol. Approximately in 1657, he has written the treatise *Serai enderun sic, cioe, Penetrate, dell' Serajio detto nuoveodei G. sri e Re Ottomani* is in this respect, an important historical source. Original was Italian, but translated into German and French in those days. “Some of the pages study more than the others, each according to his own ability. The Sultan's intention is not to make them great scholars. Progress in their study depends on their own interest. Many want to acquire a knowledge that will distinguish them from the ignorant. Those, who by natural inclination have this ambition, are favored over the others in the halls.” C. G. Fisher, and A. Fisher, “Topkapı Sarayı in the Mid-Seventeenth Century: Bobovi's Description”, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, c. X, (1985) 5-81, p. 77. I am grateful to then Director of Topkapı Palace, Filiz Çağman, who informed me about the article many years ago.

²¹ “Yavuz Sultan Selim Han hazretleri Asr-ı hümayunlarında dahi okuyub yazanların nail-i iltâf ve iltifât oldukları gibi aksi halde bulunanları dahi darba kadar tahdîd edildiği cihetle saray-ı hümayunlarında câhil ve bî-himmet kalmamış ve ekser ağavât kendi bahisleriyle zâbitlerinin teşvikiyle okuyub yazmağa sarf ü ikdâm ederek Enderun-i hümayundan nâil-i merâtib-i celile ve menâsıb-ı sâniye olarak kesb-i tefvîz edenlerin büyük büyük hizmetlere muvaffak oldukları malumdur.” From *Anonim Enderun Tarihi*, İstanbul Belediye Kütüphanesi, K 470, *Muallim Cevdet Yazmaları* E 11-12, Ülker Akkutay, *Enderun Mektebi*, Gazi Un., Ankara 1984, p. 153.

²² R. Withers, *age*, p. 64-5.

at Divan. Their success was almost inevitable there. According to Lucette Valenci, *Enderun* was both a school, a machine of selection of precious persons, and of shaping bodies and heads. The Enderun institution only prepare the young servants into loyalty to the Sultan. They learn not to take, but to give orders.²³ Nevertheless, the Western witnesses were surprised for desperation of these well educated, able, and strong people, against the decree of the Sultan, in case of any failure. According to Valenci, these servants obey their fates willingly, but not forcefully. Vis-a-vis the decree of the Sultan, the powerful pashas, and viziers quietly surrendered their necks to the executioner. They even spoke as “the most happiness was to be servant and slave of the Sultan”.²⁴

There were many examples to this situation. Antoine Galland, who were in Istanbul in 1672-73, narrated how Kasım Paşa consented his own execution in an astonishing manner.²⁵

This situation was clearly summarised and advised by Machiavelli in his book *II Prince*. The ones who intended to occupy the Ottoman territories should not rely on the insurrection of anyone other than the Sultan himself:

Occupation of Turkey is very difficult, but once it was occupied, management is so easy. Since the Sultan accepted not any partner, everyone is his servant, and they owe all their potential to him. The higher authorities cannot start up a rebellion. They did not have any instrument for rebellion. They cannot drag people behind. On the contrary they will be united. Thus, any country or king should only rely on his own forces. But, once the Sultan is defeated and the country is occupied, no other authority should be feared other than the Sultan. Because no one other than the Sultan is rejected.²⁶

This political structure reflected the powerful central authority until late XVIIIth century. XVIII th century was an era that local authorities shaked the Sultan. In that period, Sultan Selim III in one hand tried to achieve reforms, while on the other tried to put powerful governors under control. For example, when the Grand Vizier determined dismissal of Cezzar Ahmed Pasha from governorship of Damascus, he wrote a note: “My Vizier, You have discussed the issue of Damascus, and determined the dismissal of Cezzar. If Cezzar was dismissed, and if the new governor was not powerful enough, he is worthless. If powerful enough, he would be another Cezzar, and Cezzar would be twice. Then what will happen to the old Cezzar?”²⁷

Surprisingly, although they were at highest ranks, the Sultan still go on educating them. This situation continued until XIX th century. The note and advise of Selim III to Grand vizier Seyyid Hasan Pasha in 1205/1791 is astonishing:

My Vizier, you had no reference from anybody. I myself have assigned you as Grand Vizier. However, you were unsuccessful during the military expedition. Your brother Mehmed was also cruel vis-a-vis the subjects. Do you think that I do not check the running

²³ Lucette Valenci, *Venedik ve Bab-ı Ali*, Bağlam, İstanbul 1994, p. 56.

²⁴ L. Valenci, *age.*, p. 56.

²⁵ The rebellious Kasım Paşa had collected 60 thousand troops. One of the pashas has shown him a Sultan’s decree for his execution at a lunch. He quietly had accepted the result. No other pashas on the table conflicted the execution. On the contrary, all went to their own tents. The next day they were on the way to their cities. Antoine Galland, *İstanbul’a Ait Günlük Hatıralar 1672-73*, c. 1, TTK, Ankara 1998, p. 206.

²⁶ “Osmanlı ülkesini istila edebilmenin pek güç, fakat bir kere zapt edildikten sonra da muhafazasının kolay olduğu görülür. Hâkim olan Sultan ortak kabul etmediğinden başka herkes padişahın kulu olup ellerindeki imkânları padişaha borçludur. Memleketin büyükleriyle birleşerek bir isyan çıkarmak imkânsızdır. Ellerinde böyle bir fesada alet olabilecek imkân yoktur; ifsâd edilseler bile halkı arkalarında sürükleyemezler. Osmanlı devletine hücum etmek isteyen kimse onları karşısında birleşmiş olarak bulacaktır. Bu yüzden sadece kendi kuvvetine güvenmelidir. Fakat bir kere muharebede mağlub olup Sultan yeni bir ordu çıkaramayacak hale düşünce artık saltanat mensuplarından başka korkacak kimse kalmaz. Çünkü halk nazarında saltanat hanedanından başka kimsenin itibarı yoktur.” Nicolo Machiavelli, *Hükümdar*, translation by Haydar Rifat, İstanbul 1932, p. 41.

²⁷ “Benim vezirim, Şam maddesini söylemişsiniz. Cezzar’ın azlını vâcib addeylemişsiniz. Şimdi Cezzar azl olsa, yerine gelen muktedit olmasa işe yaramaz. Muktedit olsa o da bir Cezzar olur ve Cezzar ikilenir. Ol vakit eski Cezzarı ne yapmalı?” Enver Ziya Karal, *III. Selim’in Hatt-ı Hümayunları*, TTK, Ankara 1992, p. 138.

state affairs? Is it the way of appreciation of my favour? While you were out of the state hierarchy, I have appointed you as Grand Vizier. Since I will not fire you, it is my duty to educate you. If you do not regret, it is your decision, but the result will be different than you thought.²⁸

Conclusion

After the strict rule of Selim III, central and strong administration went on during the reign of Mahmud II. However, from Tanzimat onwards (1839) we do not observe that kind of strict rules by the Sultans. From then onwards, Enderun was only an educational institution which prepared the students for the bureaucracy.²⁹ Maarif-i Umûmiye Nizamnâmesi (General Rules of Education) in 1869 has classified the primary, secondary, and high school education out of the court. Then preparations for Darü'l-Fünûn (university) has started. Nevertheless, the regular education at Darü'l-Fünûn would start not before 1900.

In 1868, a high school was established at the building of old *Galata Sarayı* (Galata Court). It was soon after the return of Sultan Abdülaziz from trip to European capitals of Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna. The education at Galatasaray High School would be in western standards. Strange enough, the higher bureaucracy and intellectuals of the late XIX th and early XX th century was graduates of Galatasaray High School.

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²⁸ "Benim Vezirim, Seni bana kimse tarif etmedi. Bizzat kendim intihâb edüb vekâlet-i kübrâyı sana sipariş etdim. Sen ise umûr-i seferde küllî tekâsülünden başka Beytül-mâl-i Müslimîn'i kat'â sıyânet etmeyüb karındaşın Mehmed'in etmediği mezâlîm kalmadı. ... Sen beni taharrî etmez mi sanırsın. Benim seni intihâbımın teşekkürü böyle mi olur? Nazardan sâkit olarak anda bunda gezerken seni getirüb sadrazam etdüm. Senden geçmeyeceğime binâen seni terbiyeye ihtimâm-i hümayunum lâzım geldi. Eğer bundan sonra mütenebbih olmaz isen sonra sen bilürsün. İşte ben yazacaklarımı yazdım, vesselam". Ahmed Cavid, *Hâdika-i Vekâyi'*, Ed. Adnan Baycar, TTK, Ankara 1998, pp. 112-3.

²⁹ The list of the lectures at Enderun in the year 1292/1876, weekly programme and the names of the lecturers are kept at Topkapı Sarayı Archive, D 4783/1. The names of the students were listed on the document D 4783/2. A similar student list is also kept in the same Archive D 8815, under the title "Hazine-i Enderun-i Hümayun hademelerinden olup saye-i maarif-vâye-i şehin-şâhîde mekteb-i münîfede tahsil-i ilm etmekde bulunan bendelerinin isimlerini mübeyyin bir kıta defterdir".

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