

KAY 492



Turkish Administrative History

Week 7

Ottoman Central Administration

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Unannounced Pop-Quiz Questions



- Please answer the following questions:
 1. Explain what «primogenituras» and «senyoritas» systems mean (1 pt.)
 2. State the arguments for and against whether the Ottoman Empire was a state ruled by sharia or not (2 pt.s)
 3. What were the three sources/formulas of political legitimacy for the Ottomans? (2 pt.s)



Ottoman Government Organization

- Central and Provincial Governments
- Central Government
 1. Sultan and Palace
 2. Divan-ı Hümayun and affiliated bureaus
 3. Vezir- Azam and Bab-ı Ali
 4. Bab-i Fetva and Ilmiyye Organization
 5. Defterdarlık (Treasury) and Finance Organization
 6. Kapıkulu (Centralized Army) and Navy



Sultan and Palace

- The Sultan was the head of the central organization
 - In the early days, "Bey" or "Han" titles were used
- Military Tradition:
 - A simple protocol
 - Customs and customs are based on a consultation style
 - There were representatives of major influential groups and dynasties around
 - A primus inter pares (first among equals) tapering with warrior personality and abilities
- Beginning with Yıldırım Bayezid
 - A flamboyant protocol
 - An absolute ruler
- Fatih Sultan Mehmed, who originally created the Sultan type
 - Protocol guidelines
 - Laws



Ruling Requirements

- Being a member of Hanedan (Ottoman Dynasty)
 - Unlike Oguz and the Seljuk tradition, the country was not a common property of the dynasty
 - Not every dynasty member had no right to inherit the crown, only the sons of the sultan
- Primogenituras (Eldest son of the sultan gets the throne)
 - First fratricide (killing of brothers/princes), Yıldırım Bayezid
 - Fatih Sultan Mehmed's laws made fratricide legal
- Senyoritas (the eldest man of the dynasty gets the crown, after Ahmet I)
 - Crown princes was no longer appointed to the provinces but they lived a secluded life in the harem



Sources of Sovereignty & Legitimacy

- Political formulas that provide legitimacy:
 1. Claims to be descendants of "Oghuz Han"
 - Claims that the «Kayı» tribe is the noblest of the Oghuz
 2. Mystical narratives:
 - i.e. Osman Gazi's dream, Sheikh Edebali's comment
 - Motifs of rising to power with divine signs/intervention
 - Similar narratives in Russian Rurik Dynasty and the Austrian Habsburgs
 3. The legitimate source of the dynasty's dominion is based on God
 - Caliphate institution (Caesaro-papism)



Education of Crown Princes (Şehzade)

- Up to the 17th century, crown princes were sent to provinces to get administrative and military training and experience
- After Selim II, the princes began to be imprisoned in the palace
 - They lived with fear of executioner
 - They often did not get a good administrative education
 - They have lived a life apart from domestic and foreign intellectuals



Sultans and the Caliphate

- In the 15th century, Ottoman Sultans adopted the title of Roman Caesar rather than the president of the Oguzs
 - Protector and commander of the Muslims
 - Fatih and Bayezid II used similar titles
- The narration that Selim I received ceremonial symbols of caliphate was put forward in the 18th century
 - Selim I did not use the title of caliphate
- With the 1789 Treaty of Aynalı Kavak, the annexation of Crimea by Russia was accepted
 - Caliphate authority has been proposed to establish spiritual authority over Muslims in Crimea and beyond
 - Establishing an international spiritual institution
 - Used by Abdulaziz and Abdülhamit II
 - Cesaro-papizm

Was the Ottoman Empire a Sharia State?



- A controversial topic

1. According to some authors, there was a system that shari'a rules were prevailing in the administration and the judiciary
2. Some others say that tolerance is shown to non-Muslim groups; that they had autonomy in terms of administration and justice, that it is a kind of secularism
3. A third group also says that in practice customary laws and customs were more dominant than religious laws
 - According to them, the basic institutions and associations of society and state life were regulated by traditional law, even by local traditions and customs



Was the Ottoman Empire a Sharia State?

- In some cases, the religious authorities accept what ever rule the wordly authority declares
- The social organization was based on both shar'ia and traditions
- In the secular state, centrally determined laws apply equally to all
 - In this sense, the Ottoman order is not secular
 - The millet system
 - In areas such as taxation, jurisdiction, education, census, judicial and administrative organization was based on some kind of religion-based decentralization



Sheik ul-Islam

- Responsible for solving the problems of sharia
- Limited the sultan's authority
 - Gave fatwas on subject matters such as declaration of war and the killing of vazirs
- From the 18th century, he was the mufti of the capital city
 - In the 19th century he entered the cabinet as minister of sharia
 - While he had no role in state affairs in the classical period, his social roles increased after the 16th century
 - Religious oppression and intrusion in the 17th and 18th centuries
 - The way to deal with the catastrophes of the 18th and 19th centuries had been to ideologize Islam



Palace Organization/Departments

1. Harem (Private Quarters)

- Private living quarters of the ruling family
- Since the 16th century, rulers began marrying slaves/concubines instead of daughters of neighboring state rulers
 - Harem's importance had increased
- Pressure groups formed around Valide (mother) and Haseki (wife) Sultans
- Graduates of Enderun were married with concubines from harem before their appointment

2. Enderun (Palace School)

3. Birun (Outside, Place of Appointment after Palace School)

- In all three sections, both private and public services are conducted
 - However, beyond the Babessaade gate begins the private residence of the ruler



Enderun (Palace School)

- The place where the sultans' servants served him and the daily life of the sultans had passed
- Enderun School
 - The place where the Ottoman ruler was born and developed
 - On-the-job training for students (içoğlanları)
 - The most intelligent and elite devshirmes
 - Training with master-apprentice relationship
 - When the devhirme system was abolished, Enderun did not become an aristocratic school
- Abolished after 2nd Mesrutiyet (Constitution)
 - After the Tanzimat Period, Mekteb-i Sultani (Galatasaray), and the modern bureaucracy school (Mülkiye) were founded.



Birun

- In Persian, meaning "countryside, exterior"
 - All duties/appointments outside the Babassaade gate
 - Going from Enderun to Birun means graduation and assignment to the province with external duties
- Including palace services
 - Palace employees who work in banquets, protocols, stables, hunting birds and dogs, medicine, tailoring, calligraphy etc.
- Over time, the increase of staff numbers caused financial problems



Kul (Subject)/Devshirme System

- Governance of state by kul/devshirme of the sultan
 - An unshakable centralism (?)
- However, the devshirme system had a short lifespan
 - Until the 14th century, members of the local dynasties i.e. Çandarlı family and families of Kösemihaloğulları were in command positions
 - In the second half of the 16th century, after the abolition of the devshirme system the Turks and other elements regained the control of the army and bureaucracy
 - E.g. the Köprülü Family in the 17th Century
 - A significant part of army (timarli sipahi) was not devshirme
- As a result, the devshirme system was short-lived and was not the only source of power



Imperial Divan (Divan-ı Hümayun)

- A highest level responsible body in state affairs
 - It had not been able to maintain its development as a core cabinet
- It was the special advisory body of the sultans
 - Continues to meet in times of battle and peace
 - The state, military and sharia affairs were discussed on behalf of the sultan, either decided on his behalf or he was assisted in his decision

Imperial Divan (Divan-ı Hümayun)



- The Sultans did not attend the meetings after Mehmed II, and they approved the provisions that were negotiated and offered to them.
 - Kazasker was responsible from the judiciary & general administration,
 - Defterdar from financial affairs
 - The grand vizier presented general decisions
- Decisions were announced in the name of the sultan
- With the acceptance of the sultan, it is recorded in the mühimme books
 - In the mühimme books, there were issues related to the provinces & other states such as appointments and proposals



Divan-ı Hümayun

- At the same time, the high appeal authority
 - Decisions were final
 - The judiciary had been referred to Kazasker, no approval from the sultan was necessary
 - Those decisions were not recorded in muhimme books
 - Corruption and persecution complaints are also listened to



Divan-ı Hümayun

- Decisions that do not require the opening of the Divan or the attention of the sultan were discussed on the divan of the grand vizier's own palace.
 - From the seventeenth century, Divan-ı Hümayun's importance decreased and it was gathered less frequently.
 - With the proliferation of specialization and subjects of duty, there are offices affiliated to the Grand Vizier were formed
- The divans collected in war was called «ayak divanı»
 - In Janissary riots
 - Victory and ulufe (tri-monthly salary) divans

Divan-ı Hümayun



- Member groups
- Primary/Noble Members (Erkan-ı Devlet)
 - High-ranking statesmen participating and voting in discussions
 - Vezir-i azam
 - Rumeli and Anatolian Kazasker
 - Rumeli and Anatolian Beylerbeys
 - Nisancı
 - Rumeli Defterdar
 - Veziers (3-7, experienced high-ranking commanders)
 - Naval commander (Kapdan-ı derya) and janissary commander
 - Şeyhül Islam (not a member until the 19th century)



Parts of Divan-ı Hümayun

- Bureaucratic organization
 - The head of the organization is a nisancı until the 17th century
 - Wrote and sealed some of the resolutions written in the name of the sultan
 - Acted both as the counsel of the divan and the executioner of the decisions about the laws
 - Keeps the land tahrir books
 - It keeps all the land registry records of the empire
 - After the 17th century, when the land system began to deteriorate, the importance of the nişancı had decreased
 - The specialist offices attached to the grand vizier have taken the place of the nişancı



Parts of Divan-ı Hümayun

- The chief of the correspondence was reis-ul küttab (the head of the clerks), who was originally the assistant of the nişancı.
 - Over time, he was transformed into an officer of foreign affairs
- There were divan and treasury clerks at his disposal
 - A small staff
 - In one period, there were 25 clerks in the offices of the nişancı and the defterdar
 - It's hard to talk about an intense centralized control



External Relations System

- It was organized by Divan-ı Hümayun until the 18th century.
 - In the 18th century, these bureaus were connected to grand vizier's office
- Temporary envoys/ambassadors sent until the 18th century to
 - Notify other rulers about a new sultan
 - Making peace and trade agreements
 - Friendship, courtesy, return visit
 - Sending letters and gifts
 - With the request of that country
- The Ottoman rulers did not consider all foreign rulers equal in terms of protocol
- In the 19th century, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established
 - Constant envoys sent to other states



Grand Vizier and Bab-ı Ali

- Grand Vizier, sadrazam, sahib-i devlet
 - The Sultan's absolute deputy, carries his seal
 - Accountable only to the sultan
 - He is the owner of high-income dirlik called Has
 - Sees the Ambassadors
 - He has the right of political killing (siyaseten katl)
- Can not intervene in judicial (kazasker) and financial (defterdar) affairs
- Had no power over kapıkulu (Sultan's) soldiers
 - But as serdar-ı ekrem, in battles he could be the commander instead of sultan



Grand Vizier and Bab-ı Ali

- Most of the viziers came from the Turks and the ilmiyye class during the foundation period
 - With the reign of Mehmed II, the Conqueror, devshirmes gained power
 - During the reign of Mehmed IV, the Turkish element regained power with the Köprülüler era
- The government affairs were conducted by gathering various divans
 - Every vizier was responsible against monarchy individually
 - Cabinet concept took hold only after the second Constitutional period
- Grand vizier's affiliated officials
 - Sadrazam kethudası: Responsible for all internal affairs
 - Mektubcu: Special correspondence
 - Sadaret kaymakamı: Grand vizier's representative while he is in campaign
 - Tax collectors on behalf of the Grand Vizier