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**PROMOTION PATTERNS OF OTTOMAN BUREAUCRATIC  
STATESMEN FROM THE LÂLE DEVRİ UNTIL  
THE TANZİMAT\***

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In traditional bureaucracies the regular promotion systems were often bypassed by ambitious and talented men through the advantage of either birth, wealth, or patronage. This practice gave rise to informal promotion patterns which were never clearly defined and which formally acknowledged the official regulations. By studying the careers of individuals and the career backgrounds of the holders of particular offices, we can delineate these informal patterns from the official promotion systems. A comparison of such informal promotion patterns would increase our understanding of how traditional societies absorbed talented men into their hierarchical structures.

With this perspective in mind, I present here a general outline of the informal promotion system whereby gifted men rose to the top of the bureaucratic career of the Ottoman central administration during the period from

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Abbreviations Used in the Notes:

- HHT Hatt-ı Hümayun Tasnifi, BBA.  
BBA Başbakanlık Arşivi, İstanbul.  
CT Cevdet Tasnifi, BBA, İstanbul.  
dâh. Dâhiliye section of CT.  
EI<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, first edition.  
EI<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second and revised edition.  
FO Foreign Office Papers, Public Record Office, London.  
HA Hâriciye Arşivi, İstanbul.  
hâr. Hâriciye section of CT.  
IA *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*.  
SO *Sicill-i osmanî*.

the Lâle Devri until the Tanzimat (1730-1839). As an indicator of success and achievement within this sector of the Ottoman government, I have chosen the office of *reisülküttâb* because previous studies, notably those of Professor Norman Itzkowitz, have shown this office to be the most important post for bureaucratic achievement. I have, therefore, limited the study to the sections of the central administration under the *reis efendi's* jurisdiction or from which the *reis efendi's* were recruited. Lastly, from this study I have noted that this informal system of advancement reflects two important features of the period: 1) the close connection between the knowledge of foreign affairs and successful bureaucratic careers and 2) the non-static nature of the pre-Tanzimat bureaucracy.

#### *Entrance into the Bureaucratic Career*

The purpose here is to delineate the career path from entrance into the bureaucratic career (*tarîk-i kalemiye*) to the post of *reisülküttâb*. As the regular promotion system had been described elsewhere in detail<sup>1</sup>, we need only mention here a few features pertinent to the informal system.

The potential statesman in whom we are interested would have entered the central administration by assignment as apprentice, student, or scribe (*mülâzim*, *şakird* veya *kâtib*) to one of the bureaus of the central chancery, viz., *divan-ı hümayun*, *tahvil veya rûûs kalemleri*. Most aspiring young men entered the *divan kalemi* which was larger in size and relatively freer in access for young men without influential connections<sup>2</sup>. Herein the young man hoped to catch the attention of a powerful patron and thereby begin his rise upward. The attraction of this bureau for hopeful young men is demonstrated by the general increase of this bureau in size during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and, despite the attempts to reduce its staff in number during the reign of Sultan Selim III, further increase in the early nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>.

As soon as the new bureaucrat secured a placement as a *kâtib*, he sought to spend as little time as possible in the aforesaid bureaus. Through family, patronage, or wealth, the rising scribe jumped the rankings

1 Norman Itzkowitz, *«Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities»*, *Studia Islamica*, XVI (1962), 73-94; Carter Findley, *«The Legacy of Tradition to Reform: Origins of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry»*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, I (1970), 339-42 and 345-52.

(kaide-i tesellül) and circumvented the seniority system to obtain transfer to a smaller, more prestigious, and better paid bureau, such as the mektûbî, kâtibi veya âmedci odaları<sup>4</sup>. In the eighteenth century, the most common transfer was to the mektûbî-i sadâret odası, where the young scribe was close to both the reis efendi and the sadrazam, who might further his career, as well as to the mektûbî who himself was most often a bureaucrat on the rise. After the establishment of the mühimme odası (where the mühimme defterleri were prepared and kept) within the divan kalemi in 1797, transfer to this section was generally the first move and preceded transfer to the mektûbî odası.

At the same time the young bureaucrat endeavored to receive early in his career ranking among the hâcegân-ı divan-ı hümayun, which not only carried honorific rewards but also eligibility to all positions in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Originally limited to the few, by the end of

2 Despite the tendency in the later eighteenth century to restrict entry into the bureaus to the sons and relatives of bureaucrats (BBA, CT, dâh., no. 14064; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı devletinin merkez ve bahriye teşkilâtı* [Ankara, 1948], pp. 50-51; Stanford J. Shaw, *Between the Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* [Cambridge, Mass., 1971], p. 174), the wide variety of personal background reflected in the personnel of the divan kalemi during the early nineteenth century shows that entrance into this bureau was still relatively free (BBA, muhtelif ve mütenevvi defterler, no. 39).

3 The reduction mentioned by Shaw (pp. 172-74) was only temporary and the figures of 120 scribes in the divan kalemi (Joseph von Hammer Purgstall, *Des Osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung* [2 vols; Vienna, 1815], II, 111-12) and of 150 scribes (Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire ottoman* [7 vols.; Paris, 1788-1824], VII, 160-61) are too low. Based on the names given in the *Atiye-i Hümayun defterleri*, we find at least 134 scribes in this bureau in 1797, 192 in 1805, 220 at the end of that year, and a steady increase to about 250 by 1825 (BBA, CT, dâh., nos. 873, 1824, 2189, 2297, 2530, 8307, 8642, 8657, 10854, 12764, and 15493; HHT, no. 4852). In 1834, the bureau, with the exclusion of the mühimme odası, numbered at least 130 scribes (BBA, CT, dâh., no. 9314; saray, no. 2245), while the number of clerks in the mühimme odası had risen from the original thirty to about 100 (BBA, mahzen defteri, no. 37, *passim*).

4 There seems to have been a change of nomenclature connected with this transfer. The personnel in the divan, tahvil ve rûûs kalemleri were referred to as kâtib while those in the mektûbî, kâtib ve âmedci odaları were referred to as kalfa (or halife).

the eighteenth century many scribes in the bureaus held this rank and many had received it through bribery or influence when quite young and unqualified. Its importance as described elsewhere<sup>5</sup> declined significantly in the later eighteenth century. It became so delased a rank that it was lowest of the honorific grades of the bureaucratic career when these were instituted by Sultan Mahmut II in 1834<sup>6</sup>.

One should note that transfer to one of the more select bureaus did not guarantee the scribe any major advances thereafter. Although many scribes graduated from these bureaus to the minor positions of government (particularly the *münevebât*), the larger number often grew old in the service of these bureaus and provided the expertise upon which the continuity of these bureaus rested. These latter scribes, of course, fell subject to the normal system of promotion for the bureau and the honorific rankings. Yet, transfer to these bureaus clearly indicated a process whereby the more talented and those with better connections either by birth or patronage were selected. This process is clearly demonstrated by the much larger proportion of relatives of bureaucrats, *ricâl-i devlet*, and illustrious families in these bureaus and by a greater percentage of *hâcegân-ı divân-ı hümayun*.

It is at the point of entrance to one of the smaller bureaus of central chancery that the features comming to the whole period end. While the initial steps of advancement are common throughout the period, the rapidity with which one passed through them increased during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Concurrently, there were transformations in the higher levels of promotion. We can attempt to explain these transformations by studying the role of several bureaus intraining potential statesmen.

#### *Mektûbî-i sadâret odası*

During the eighteenth century the most prestigious of the bureaus of the central chancery was the *mektûbî odası*. At that time the *mektûbî* served as an assistant to the *reis efendi* both in clerical affairs and in the conduct of foreign relations. In clerical matters he and his bureau

5 Itzkowitz, «*Ottoman Realities*,» 87ff; *idem.*, «*Mehmed Raghib Pasha: The Making of an Ottoman Grand Vezir*,» unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1959), pp. 92-93; Findley, pp. 345, 349 and 352-53.

6 Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi* (8 vols.; Istanbul, 1290-1328/1873-1911), V, 26; BBA, HHT, nos. 24039, 24039A, 24039C, and 24047A.

handled the incoming and outgoing correspondence of the sadrazam with the provinces and with the chiefs of other bureaus and processed the important orders emanating from the sadrazam. Through these tasks the mektûbî became privy to the highest matters of state, especially in foreign affairs, a knowledge which paved the way for his promotion eventually to the reisülküttâblık.

Although smaller in size than the divan kalemî, the mektûbî odası likewise increased in number in the course of the century<sup>7</sup> to number about sixty to seventy five scribes by the early nineteenth century<sup>8</sup>. Professor Itzkowitz has concluded that a position in this bureau was a highly sought placement because of its closeness to the reis efendi and through that official to the sadrazam. This bureau, thus, provided an almost unique opportunity for talent and performance to be appreciated by those at the very top of the bureaucracy<sup>9</sup>. Being closely associated with the reis efendi, the mektûbî benefited from the reis efendi's increase in importance within the Bâb-ı âli<sup>10</sup>.

The mektûbî, in general, was recruited from the present or former staff of that bureau<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the elect of bureaucrats often passed to the top through this bureau, for the mektubculuk was one of the first posts of the Bâb-ı âli by which one reached the top. On the other hand, service in this bureau throughout most of the eighteenth century was longer before transfer upward than in the later period. On the lower levels of the bureaucracy and especially at the level of baş kalfa prolonged

7 Attempts to reduce the size of the staff to the original thirty during the reign of Sultan Selim III (BBA, *mahzen defteri*, no. 37; CT, *dâh.*, no. 15216) were ineffectual, for these regulations were soon violated or exceptions were made. In result, the size of the bureau continued to increase.

8 BBA, CT, *dâh.*, nos. 873, 1824, 2189, 2297, 2530, 8307, 8642, 8657, 10854, 12764, and 15493; HHT, no. 4852.

9 Itzkowitz, «*Raghib Pasha*,» p. 88.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90; *idem*, «*Ottoman Realities*,» pp. 86 ff.

11 Despite the practice of horizontal movement among the various sectors of the government on the level of *hâcegân*, this pattern of selecting bureau chiefs from other bureaus rather than from the personnel of the bureau concerned was modified somewhat during the eighteenth century (*ibid.*, pp. 92-93). By the nineteenth century, this selection process seems to have held for most of the important bureau chiefs of the Bâb-ı âli to come from the staff of their respective bureaus, as will be seen below with the *âmedci ve tercüme odaları*.

tenure in the bureau appears to have been the rule rather than the exception. Likewise, seemingly longer tenures of office for the mektûbî and presumably for the other bureau chiefs of the central administration occurred in the earlier period<sup>12</sup>.

Also during most of the eighteenth century, the promising bureaucrat moved from the mektubculuk to become beylikçi-i divan-ı hümayun, küçük ve büyük tezkereciler, ve reisülküttâb<sup>13</sup>. This advancement practice gradually waned around the turn of the century, when it became common to draw upon the âmedci odası to fill these positions<sup>14</sup>. The âmedci odası in turn drew in part upon the mektûbî odası for men of outstanding qualities and connections. Nonetheless, the mektûbî odası continued to graduate men directly to many of the minor posts of the central government (münavebât).

The general increase in the size of the bureaus during the latter part of this period resulted only partly from an increase in business in the bureaus<sup>15</sup>. More importantly a quest for security within Ottoman society produced an upsurge from the provincial population, seeking positions in the central government, the religious corps, and other occupations of the urban centers. This pressure pushed all sectors of the Ottoman ruling institutions to incorporate within their ranks more personnel than was necessary and to lower the standards that had been maintained in the bureaus. In result, at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, the standards of the more important bureaus had fallen and attempts were made to counter these deficiencies<sup>16</sup>.

Because of the state secrets that passed through the âmedci ve

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 107-10.

13 Itzkowitz, «*Ottoman Realities*,» pp. 88-89. That the recruitment of bureaucrats into the paşa ranks was mainly through this promotion sequence has been argued by Professor Itzkowitz (*ibid.*, pp. 86 ff.).

14 Lütfi, I, 67; Findley, pp. 348-49.

15 This factor is more true for the nineteenth century, especially after the abolition of the Janissary Corps and the great bureaucratization of the Empire begun by Sultan Mahmut II.

16 BBA, *mahzen defteri*, no. 37, passim. Many political figures sought to secure entry for their informants into these important bureaus (Findley, p. 352 fn.) and attempts were made to mend this breach of security (*mahzen defteri*, no. 37, p. 18).



*mektûbî odaları*, greater care was given in the selection of their personnel. With the lowering of standards in the late eighteenth century, it became crucial that the scribes of these bureaux be competent and trustworthy. The previous degeneration of these bureaux is reflected in the edict of Sultan Selim III that the scribes to be assigned to these bureaux were at least to have experience in the other bureaux of the central chancery, and examination of their competence and were to receive the express approval of the sultan, conditions which had to be repeated by Sultan Mahmut II<sup>17</sup>.

As the number of personnel increased, the *mektûbî odası*, already a bureau of some size, became congested and suffered a loss of prestige as had the *divan kalemi* earlier. To attract the attention of the *ricâl-i devlet* and more lucrative salaries, ambitious scribes sought transfer to one of the smaller and more favorable bureaux, such as the *âmedci vekâhya kâtibi odaları*, although the latter likewise was becoming glutted. Thus, the *mektûbî odası* became a recruiting pool for these bureaux rather than directly providing personnel for the higher positions of the *Bâb-ı âli*. In turn, it was the close association of the *âmedci odası* with the *reis efendi* and with foreign affairs that secured its new role in advancing future statesmen.

*Âmedcilik-i divan-ı hümayun ve âmedci odası*

The *âmedci odası* was a late creation, the exact date of origin of which is uncertain, but most probably should be placed shortly before the mid-eighteenth century<sup>18</sup>. Its rise to prominence was rapid. Two reasons for this rise were: 1) the connection of this bureau with the most important matters of state and the close connection thereby with the *reis efendi* and

17 The promotion and transfer of scribes were not to be influenced by intercession or favor (BBA, *mahzen defter*, no. 37, pp. 18-19 and 30-31). That many of these injunctions were dead letters in practice is shown by the insistence of Sultan Mahmut II that they be enforced (HHT, no. 18020).

18 The previous dating of the formation of the *âmedci odası* in the second half of the eighteenth century (Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netâ'icül-vukû'ât* [4 vols; Istanbul, 1294-1327/1877-1909], III, 87 and 89; Tayyib Gökbilgin, «Âmed i,» *İA*, I, 396-97; Halil İnalcık, «Reis ül-Küttâb,» *IA*, IX, 674 and 675) is too late. Since Ahmed Resmi Efendi states that in 1759 *Âmedci Abdullah Abdi Efendi* was appointed *reis efendi* while *âmedci-i divan-ı hümayun* (*Halifet-ür-rüesa* or *Sefinet-ür-rüesa*, with appendix and continuation by Süleyman Falk Efendi [Istanbul, 1269/1853], p. 101), the position must have existed before that date. Furthermore, the biography of *Âmedci Abdullah Efendi* in the *Sicill-i osmanî*



the sadrazam and 2) the connection of this bureau with the conduct of foreign affairs. In the first of these two associations, the *âmedci* wrote the final copies of the reports of the reis efendi and the *kâhya bey* for presentation to the sadrazam. He also wrote the final copies of the sadrazam's communications with the sultan (*telhis ve takrirler*), which naturally touched all matters of the highest order<sup>19</sup>. Because of this handling of state secrets, great attention was paid that those scribes who were taken into the bureau were extraordinarily discreet and trustworthy<sup>20</sup>. With the breakdown of standards and the desire to obtain admission into this office quickly by ambitious scribes, efforts were made to secure these qualifications<sup>21</sup>.

The concern of the *âmedci* with foreign affairs occurred in the last half of the eighteenth century as the reis efendi definitely became the official primarily responsible for the conduct of relations with foreign states. Prior to the establishment of the *âmedci odası*, the reis efendi had been assisted in foreign relations by the *beylikçi-i divan-ı hümayun* and the *mektûbî*<sup>22</sup>. As the staffs and business of the *divan kalemî* and the *mektûbî odası* increased, the reis efendi turned to his own newly created secretariat, the *âmedci odası*. In time this bureau handled most of the documents—incoming and outgoing—concerned with foreign affairs. By the nineteenth century, the *âmedci odası* had become a depository for the documents and treaties concerning diplomatic affairs, which had previously been a responsibility of the *beylikçi*<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, the *âmedci* became the recorder at discussions and conferences, the assistant to the reis efendi in negotiations, and an official

(III, 385-86) refers to his holding that post before 1755. Another reference to the post and bureau at this time is found in the biography of Edhem Rahmi Efendi (SO, I, 313). Thus, it seems more probable that the post of *âmedci* and his bureau were introduced shortly before the middle of the eighteenth century.

19 From a description of the duties of this bureau in BBA, *mahzen defteri*, no. 37, pp. 30-31 and Uzünçarşılı, pp. 55-57.

20 BBA, *mahzen defteri*, no. 37, p. 30.

21 *Ibid.*, passim; Uzünçarşılı, pp. 57-58; Shaw, pp. 172-74. This bureau also increased in the number of staff from the original six to about thirteen or fourteen in the first quarter of the nineteenth century (*mahzen defteri*, no. 37, p. 22).

22 Itzkowitz, «Raghib Pasha», pp. 77 and 98-101.

23 «Reis-ül-Küttâb», IA, IX, 675.

representative of the government in many negotiations at which the reis efendi was not present. Previously, the mektûbî or the beylikçi had served the reis efendi in these ways. With the establishment of Ottoman permanent ambassadors in the capitals of Europe, the âmedci odası assumed the duties of registering the reports from these ambassadors, writing the answers, decoding cyphers, and other related business<sup>24</sup>.

While the âmedci odası gained importance and prestige during the reign of Abdulhamit I (1774-89), it seems to have become one of the important sections of the Bâb-ı âlî during the reign of Selim III<sup>25</sup>. This transformation seems concurrent with the withdrawal of the mektûbî from the conduct of foreign relations. Because of the close association of the âmedci with the reis efendi and the withdrawal of the mektûbî, one would expect to find more instances of the recruitment of reis efendis from among those who had served in the âmedci odası. This shift in recruitment indeed took place.

Professor Itzkowitz has demonstrated the role of the mektûbculuk as a recruiting source for reis efendis<sup>26</sup>. Studying the background of the reis efendis from the years 1697 until 1774, he found that the majority of these had been in their careers mektûbî, while some had been beylikçi. Only one, Âmedci Abdullah Abdî Efendi, appointed reis efendi in 1759, had been âmedci. Only in 1779 was another former âmedci, Hamid Halîl Paşa, appointed reisülküttâb<sup>27</sup>. It was perhaps due to his influence that the âmedci odası began to vie with the mektûbî odası as a way to quick advancement, for he furthered the career of at least one subsequent reis efendi, Ebübekir Râtîb Efendi, by bringing him into the âmedci odası and Râtîb Efendi furthered the career of others. Râtîb Efendi succeeded Hamid Halîl Paşa as âmedci and became rikâb reisi in 1789<sup>28</sup>.

24 BBA, *mahzen defteri*, no. 37, pp. 30-31; Pisani to Ponsonby, 21 March 1838, enclosure to Ponsonby to Palmerston, no. 77, 21 March 1838, FO 78/330; d'Ohsson, VII, 166; «Âmedci», IA, I, 396-97 or EI<sup>2</sup>, I, 433; Bernard Lewis, «Divan-ı Humayun», EI<sup>2</sup>, II, 338; Reis ül-küttâb, IA, IX, 675; Uzunçarşılı, pp. 55-58.

25 «Reis-ül-Küttâb», IA, IX, 675.

26 Itzkowitz, «Raghib Pasha», pp. 90-91.

27 *Sefinet-ür-rüesa*, p. 119; SO, II, 299.

28 *Sefinet-ür-rüesa*, pp. 137-38.

After Ebübekir Râtîb Efendi, the reis efendis more frequently had served in the âmedci odası. Four of the next thirteen reis efendis had clerks in the âmedci odası and four as âmedci (one as âmedci vekili). Significantly, the last five had no connection at all with the mektûbî odası. From among the rikâb reisleri, one had served in the mektûbî odası, then transferred to the âmedci odası, and later became âmedci<sup>29</sup>.

Among the next and last three reis efendis, Süleyman Necîb Efendi is described only as being trained in a kalem<sup>30</sup>. However, with the other two the pattern of promotion as it emerged in the early nineteenth century is clearly shown. Mehmed Said Pertev Efendi served in the rûûs kalemi (1219 AH), divan-ı hümayun kalemi (1220 AH), mektûbî odası (1221 AH), and the âmedci odası (c. 1226 AH) where he remained until becoming âmedci in 1236 AH. Elhac Mehmed Âkîf Efendi, having trained in the provinces, entered the divan kalemi (1229 AH), but after six months transferred to the âmedci odası where he remained until he became âmedci in 1241 AH. Both men had served as âmedci, beylikçi, and reis efendi in that sequence<sup>31</sup>.

Among the first five umûr-ı hâriciye nazırları (with the exception of Âkîf Paşa), Ahmed Hulûsî Paşa was trained in an unspecified kalem but held none of the posts we are studying here<sup>32</sup>. Of the others, Mustafa Reşid Paşa and Mehmed Sadık Rifât Paşa began their careers in the mektûbî odası and then transferred to the âmedci odası. The other two, İbrahim Sarım and Şekib Mehmed Paşas, began in the divan kalemi and then entered the âmedci odası. Three of these had been âmedci and the fourth, Sarım Paşa, was âmedci vekili.

One other change this promotional system was the elimination of the posts of küçük ve büyük tezkereciler from the chain of

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 145-95.

30 *SO*, III, 96-97.

31 Şerâfeddin Turan, «Pertev Paşa», *JA*, IX, 554; Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, «Âkîf Paşa», *IA*, I, 242; İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal Inal, *Son asır türk şairleri* (3 vols.; Istanbul, 1930 [1942]), I, 80-89; II, 1312-24.

32 *SO*, II, 281-82.

advancement by the second quarter of the nineteenth century. None of the reis efendis or *hâriciye nazırları* held these posts as they rose to the top.

By the 1830's the *âmedci odası* had achieved a firm place in the line of promotion and most of the bureaucratic statesmen of this and the subsequent decade were trained in this bureau. The *mektûbî odası* and the *divan kalemi*, particularly the *mühimme odası*, supplied the incoming clerks for the *âmedci odası*. We find in the history of Lütü Efendi the mention of thirty-six persons in the *âmedci odası* between 1826 and 1839, of whom at least fifteen had previously served in the *mektûbî odası* and nine in the *divan kalemi*. Of the other twelve, three came from other backgrounds and nine are mentioned as from unspecified bureaus of the *Bâb-ı âli*. Presumably, therefore, the number of persons recruited from the *mektûbî odası* and the *divan kalemi* is much higher<sup>33</sup>.

Placement in the *âmedci odası* was also sought because of the lucrative financial rewards<sup>34</sup>. For example, the amount of money granted as an Imperial Gift by the Sultan in the month of Şevval of each year was almost always greater for the clerks in this bureau than for the clerks of other bureaus<sup>35</sup>. Secondly, the clerks of the bureau had the opportunity for supplementary sources of income. Temporary service in the Ottoman embassies in Europe or on special mission to the provinces provided additional, and sometimes lucrative income<sup>36</sup>. The clerks of the *âmedci*, like those of the *mektûbî odası* and the *kâtib kalemi*, shared in the rotated positions of the government, which were conferred on a yearly basis, without losing their bureau status and ranking<sup>37</sup>.

That the *âmedci odası* was the final training ground for poten-

33 The information was drawn from the references in the first six volumes of Lütü Efendi and the corresponding biographies in the *Sicill-i osmani*.

34 Findley, 352-54.

35 BBA, CT, *saray*, no. 2245; *dâh.*, no. 9314; *saray*, no. 4859.

36 Lütü, II, 47; III, 28, 29, 142-45; 194-95; IV, 18, 26, 28, 107; V, 34, 43, 44, 57, 91 and 101.

37 According to Mustafa Nuri Paşa (*Netâ'ic-ül-vukû'ât*, III, 89-90), this system gave income to those employees of the government who did not share in the fief system. The *âmedci odası* was one of the bureaus, which because of its late introduction, was not assigned such sources of income.

tial statesmen is reflected in the relatively long tenure in this bureau after rapidly passing through other bureaus. Pertev, Âkif, Recai, Kudsî and Sarım Efendis spent ten years or more as clerks of the *âmedci odası*. A more rapid advancement practice and personnel turnover took place during the 1830's. Of the clerks cited by Lütfi Efendi in the year 1244 AH (1828-29) not one was still in the bureau ten years later in 1254 (1838-39). Of the clerks in the bureau in March 1838, after the reorganization of the bureau, we find that the two chief clerks were the seniors of the bureau with five to six years service<sup>38</sup>. One reason for the rapid turnover was the demand placed on this bureau for secretaries in the Ottoman embassies in Europe and for special diplomatic missions.

After the brief suppression of the *âmedci odası*, it was restored in 1839 with the restoration of the post of sadrazam. Although it continued to provide men for the secondary ranks of the bureaucratic hierarchy, its former prominence as a main provider of the top bureaucratic statesmen had passed.

#### *Tercüme odası*

As the *âmedci odası* was the preparatory bureau for statesmen for the 1830's and 1840's, the *tercüme odası* in the Bâb-ı Âlî began in the 1830's to train the men who rose to the top bureaucratic positions of state during the subsequent period. In telling the story of the development of this bureau we can see the nature of the significance of this bureau.

With the outbreak of the Greek Revolt in 1821, the exclusive prerogative of the Phanariot Greek families over the post of *divan-ı hümayun tercümanı* ended. Upon the dismissal and execution of the *tercüman* Kostaki on 16 April 1821, the Ottoman government decided to seek out capable Muslims for this service<sup>39</sup>. In the interval, Stavraki Aristarchi was appointed *tercüman vekili*<sup>40</sup>. The duties of translation and the task of training capable young Muslims as translators, however,

38 HHT, no. 24037; *Moniteur ottoman*, no. 131, 5 May 1838.

39 BBA, HHT, no. 17529; Mehmed Ata'ullah Şânizâde Efendi, *Tarih-i Şânizâde* (4 vols; Istanbul, 1284-91/1867-74), IV, 20-21; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 2nd and rev. ed. (12 vols.; Istanbul, 1309/1892), XI, 145 and 166.

40 Şânizâde, IV, 22; Cevdet, XI, 162 and 166; XII, 43.

fell upon the shoulders of employees of the Mühendishâne-i Berr-i Hümayun, Bulgaroğlu Yahya Nâcî Efendi and Zenob Manesh<sup>41</sup>.

Meanwhile no Muslim of distinction could be found to accept the post of tercüman<sup>42</sup>. Given little choice, the Bâb-ı âli relieved Yahya Efendi of his teaching duties at the Mühendishâne and appointed him tercüman<sup>43</sup>. Thereafter, the Bâb-ı âli relied heavily upon the Mühendishâne to staff the tercüme odası and to train young scribes as translators. Even under the famous Başhoca Ishak Efendi, the tercüme odası failed to produce translators of sufficient quality and in sufficient quantity. Until 1833, only Mehmed Namık Paşa and Yusuf Hâlis Efendi displayed any proficiency as a result of their training in the tercüme odası<sup>44</sup>.

The heavy reliance upon the staff of the Mühendishâne and the failure to produce translators in sufficient number—despite the emphasis placed upon this duty by Sultan Mahmut II<sup>45</sup>—indicates that the organization and program of the tercüme odası was temporary and makeshift. During the 1820's the functional staff of the bureau was small, consisting of the tercüman, the tercüman muavini, and a mütercim<sup>46</sup>. The bureau ranked low among the bureaus of the Bâb-ı âli and its staff was undistinguished.

Two factors pressured the government to change this situation and to improve the training of qualified personnel. First and most important was the increased flow of materials to be translated an increase which resul-

41 BBA, HHT, nos. 16749 and 16749A; CT, hâr., no. 6033; dâh., no. 3379; Şânizâde, IV, 33-34; Cevdet, XI, 166; Mehmed Esad, *Mirât-ı mühendishâne-i berri-i hümayun* (Istanbul, 1312/1894-95), pp. 33-34.

42 Şânizâde, IV, 34-35; Cevdet, XI, 166.

43 Şânizâde, IV, 33-34; Cevdet, XI, 166; XII, 43; Cevdet, first ed., XII, 105; BBA, HHT, nos. 16749 and 16749A.

44 Carter Findley, *From Re'is Efendi to Foreign Minister: Ottoman Bureaucratic Reform and the Creation of the Foreign Ministry*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (Harvard University, 1969), pp. 53-54; Şehabeddin Akalın, *Mehmed Namık Paşa*, *Tarih Dergisi*, IV, no. 7 (Sept. 1952), 127; İnâl, *Son asır türk şairleri*, I, 524-27.

45 BBA, HHT, no. 16749.

46 BBA, CT, dâh., no. 11350; hâr., nos. 41, 1177, and 2326; İnâl, *Osmanlı devrinde son sadrazamlar* (4 vols; Istanbul, 1940-53), I, 4.



ted from the Greek and the subsequent involvement of the European powers in the Eastern Question, while the Ottoman government became more actively concerned with the diplomatic affairs of Europe<sup>47</sup>. The second factor was the uneasiness among the Ottoman statesmen caused by the dependence of the government upon a few individuals for translation, especially when suspicions arose over their trustworthiness<sup>48</sup>.

Recruitment from the *Mühendishâne* had resulted in staffing the bureau with men of little or no experience in foreign affairs and diplomatic documents. Furthermore, these men were outside the career lines of the central administration. However, during these years professionalization began through the advancement of men who had received several years of experience in this bureau. With the appointments of Halil Esrar Efendi and Mehmed Tecelli Efendi to head the bureau, the association with the *Mühendishâne* ended and incorporation with the career lines of the *Bâb-ı âli* began. The expertise of these men enabled them to produce able translators.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman armies at Konya in 1832 and Sultan Mahmut II's invitation of Russian assistance, the importance of diplomatic affairs for the future of the Empire was vital. Indeed, the *Bâb-ı âli* was again becoming dependent upon the services of non-Muslims in its dealings with foreign states<sup>49</sup>. As a result, the *tercüme odası* was expanded and its staff continued to increase rapidly during the rest of the decade<sup>50</sup>. These new additions to the staff are interesting for us because those who entered were intelligent, capable young men who proved their worth first by rapidly rising to the post of *tercüman* and then by becoming the leading bureaucrats of the later Tanzimat period. In short, during this time the *tercüme odası* replaced the *âmedci odası* as the final bureau of training ambitious young men for future success.

The background of these future statesmen and their colleagues who entered the *tercüme odası* during the 1830's is more varied than

47 Lütflü, IV, 176. The files of the *tercüme odası* show a great increase of materials for the 1830's (HA, especially the *siyâsi tasnifi*).

48 Lütflü, II, 143.

49 *Ibid.*, IV, 99 and 176-77.

50 BBA, CT, *hâr.*, nos. 2919, 3203, 3584, 4158, 4864, 5655, 5903, 7960; *saray*, no. 2322; HHT, nos. 23083 and 33700; Lütflü, IV, 99 and 176; V, 95; Inal, *Son sadrazamlar*, I, 4-5.



for the clerks of the *âmedci odası*. In general, this bureau recruited the promising young scribes of the *divan kalemi*. Yet, it also drew upon the staff of the *mektûbî* and *âmedci odaları*. In at least two cases, Keçecizâde Fuâd Paşa and Ahmed Vefik Paşa, young men were drawn into from outside the bureaucratic career because of their prior knowledge of French. The pattern is not definite for this period. Nonetheless, during these years we find the attachment to this bureau of Âli and Safvet Paşas in 1833, Fuâd and Ahmed Vefik Paşas in 1837, and Müftüzâde Mehmed Emin Paşa and the application of the historian Tayyârzâde Ahmed Ata Efendi in 1838<sup>51</sup>. Many of the others in this bureau rose to the second ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy. With the entrance of promising young men, the prestige of the bureau increased. During the 1820's, the bureau had very few individuals with honorific ranking in Ottoman protocol, while during the 1830's—before the ranking system was changed—several of the scribes held the rank of *hâcegân-divan-ı hümayun*<sup>52</sup>. As an office the *tercüman-ı divan-ı hümayun* ranked equal with the *beylikçi-i divan-ı hümayun* in the rankings instituted in the mid-1830's<sup>53</sup>.

### Conclusion

In summary, the road to success in the bureaucratic career passed upward through a series of bureaus to the post of *reisülküttâb*. In the eighteenth century service in the *kalems* of the *divan-ı hümayun* and then in the *mektûbî odası* was the normal training for the posts of *mektûbî*, *beylikçi*, *küçük ve büyük tezkereciler* which lead one to the *reisülküttâblik*. With the breakdown of the standards of the bureaucracy training in the preliminary levels was shortened. At the same time the separation of the *mühimme odası* from the rest of the *kalem* added that section as one of the preliminary levels of training for the rising bureaucrat. Likewise, service in the *âmedci odası* was taking precedence over service in the *mektûbî odası*. In the early nineteenth century, the *âmedci odası* became the final training

51 BBA, HHT, nos. 23083 and 33700; Lütflî, V, 43, 95, 97, 105, and 128; SO, III, 481-82.

52 BBA, HHT, nos. 23739 and 23083; Lütflî, IV, 168; V, 10, 24, 65, and 105; BBA, CT, *hâr.*, no. 6437; Mehmed Zeki Pakâlm, *Safvet Paşa* (Istanbul, 1943), p. 3.

53 BBA, CT, *dâh.*, no. 10,000; HHT, no. 23132; Lütflî, V, 25-26.

area for hopeful bureaucrats. Yet, very shortly the diplomatic and international needs of the Empire caused a shift of talented men from the central chancery to the *tercûme odası* and for a short time this bureau served as a nursery for future statesmen.

As we have seen, the Ottoman pre-Tanzimat bureaucracy was certainly not static. Also, its informal promotional pattern clearly reflected the shift in the international position of the Empire. No longer able to depend solely on force of arms, the Empire reached a stage where bureaucrat vied with the military-palace administrator to direct the course of the Empire. The bureaucrat most frequently in the fore of government was the quasi-foreign minister, the *reis efendi* and the successful bureaucrats trained and served in those bureaus which dealt with foreign relations. This connection is highlighted by the replacement of the *âmedci odası* for the *mek-tûbî odası* in the informal promotional system concurrently with the *âmedci* replacing the *mek-tûbî* and *beylikçi* as the *reis efendi*'s principal assistant in foreign affairs. Once again this connection of success and foreign affairs is made obvious by the rise to temporary prominence of the *tercûme odası*.

With the Tanzimat period and the rule of the bureaucrats, the avenues to the very top were closed for many years and only secondary posts were filled with the later generations of rising bureaucrats. While the *âmedci* and *tercûme odaları* continued to staff the secondary echelons with their graduates and were important training grounds for the civil servants of the Empire, their former brilliance in illustrious graduates who rose to the very top and figure prominently in the history of the period was over. In consequence, the informal promotion system we have described in the preceeding pages drew close to the regular system and the stagnation of formalism increased.