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MUSTAFA SELÂNİKÎ AND HIS HISTORY*

Preface - Mustafa Selânîkî's life - Mustafa Selânîkî's History-Selânîkî's information and observations on the various institutions and offices of his time : The Sultân and his household ; The central administration ; The military; The Ulemâ ; The state of the Economy; Foreign countries and envoys.

Mehmet İpşirli

PREFACE

The History of Mustafa Selânîkî occupies a unique position in Ottoman historiography, for, unlike most of the other works produced in the late sixteenth century, it had never been incorporated into the historical tradition, its author would seem to have remained practically unknown until the early eighteenth century. Its partial publication in 1281 (1864) at last made it available to historical study, but the text presented was based on a single manuscript, which contained many interpolations and modifications to what may be presumed to have been the original, and is, therefore, unsatisfying to scholarly study. But, in fact, no single existing manuscript can said to conform entirely to the orinigal work, which all the evidence goes to show was never put into final form and still remained in draft at the time of the author's death. It can be demonstrated that at least one historian, Solak-zâde Mehmed Hemdemî Çelebi, (d.1657-8), must have access to it, but neither he

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nor any others who may have seen the work attribute the information they derive to Selânikî.

In this study the ascertainable details of Selânikî's biography are presented; followed by a description of the language and style of his History. Emphasis is placed on the access to confidential information which his employment as secretary in the various government departments afforded him; and it is this aspect of his work which is found to give it a particular importance among the other histories of the period. Unlike most of the contemporary authors, he was not servile towards the men of power in the state, he does not hesitate to voice criticisms of even the Sultans when he feels the occasion warrants. As a chronicle of the daily activities of the administration, it allows us a view of life in Istanbul which can not be found in the other selective histories; and Selânikî's occasional comments on these events to some extent may be taken as representative of the reaction of men of culture to the mal-administration and the abuses were threatening to bring about the disintegration of the state and society.

It remains among the most important tasks of the student of this period of Ottoman history to re-construct to the extent possible the original text of this work, and to present in its entirety in a critical edition.

MUSTAFA SELÂNİKÎ'S LIFE

Although the importance of the history written by Mustafa Selânikî has long been recognized, even though much of it has remained unpublished, no detailed account of his life and career has come down to us. The information given by Bursalı Mehmed Tâhir in *Osmânî Mü'ellifleri*¹ is of the scantiest, while Cemâleddîn confesses in the *Âyîne-i Zurefâ*² that he was unable to find any account of his life apart from a few rumours. The section devoted to him in Ahmed Refik [Altunay]'s *Âlimler ve San'atkârlar*³, reprinted from an article which originally appeared in *Yeni Mecmu'a*⁴, is mainly concerned with pointing out the value and interest of the work, and the few facts pertinent to his biography given therein are tho-

1 Vol. III, p. 68.

2 Istanbul, 1314, p. 36.

3 Istanbul, 1924, pp. 34-58.

4 No. 5 (1917) pp. 89-92; No. 6 (1917) pp. 109-112.

se immediately ascertainable by a reading of the History. The most serious attempt at compiling the materials for his biography is to be found in the article on him in the *İslam Ansiklopedisi*⁵ and what follows here will attempt to supplement the information which it provides⁶.

We have no precise information concerning Selânikî's family, his education and private life, nor do we know when he was born or at what age he died. What little information we can extract from his History concerns his official appointments and his opinions contemporary affairs. The bare facts which can be learned from his History are that his father died in Salonika and that he identified himself with Salonika, and referred to himself as «Selâniklü»⁷, that he was a man experienced in state affairs, that he must at some stage in his life have learned to recite the Koran with some degree of proficiency⁸, and that, as he was acquainted with several of Kanûnî Süleymân's high officials and yet lived until about 1600, he must have reached old age when he died.

Both during the period of preparation for the Szigetvár campaign of 1566, and during the course of the war, we see the Historian as an active participant and a keen observer of contemporary events. Having a close relationship with the Nişancı Ferîdûn Beğ and Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, during the campaign he was employed by them in several tempo-

5 *İ. A.*, article on Selânikî, X, pp. 349-51. The author of this article is known to be Bekir Kütükoğlu.

6 For other sources for his life see: F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 136; an article by the same author in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st ed.; G. Elezovic, «Selânikli Mustafa Efendi'nin inşaatı ve tarihî» *GLAS (Srpska Akademije Nauka, CXCI, Odeljenje društvenih nauka)* 96, pp. 73-103, (Belgrade, 1949). Klaus Schwarz, in a reprint of Selânikî's History (Freiburg, 1970), which is a reprint of the Istanbul edition of 1281, has added an introduction outlining the life Selânikî. This introduction is based upon the above-mentioned studies.

7 In a request for leave of absence from Sokullu Mehmed Paşa he excuses himself on account of his father's death «*Selânikde merhûm peder intikâli haberi gelmeğle*», *Târîh-i Selânikî*, Süleymaniye, Esad Ef. Lib., No:2259, f. 6a [E]; *Târîh-i Selânikî*, Ist., 1281, [Sel]. In Şa'bân of 1003 (May 1595), he explains that he failed to receive an appointment: «*Altı dahi kâtib olmak buyurıldı ve Selâniklü baka kaldı*» (E, 263a-263b). Similarly, the contemporary Historian Topçular Kâtibi Abdülkâdir Efendi in *Vakâyi-i Târîhiyye* (Süleymaniye, Esad Ef. Lib., No. 2151, f. 55r.) while is mentioning Selânikî's appointment to the post of Ruznâmecî says «*Selânikli Mustafa Efendi Paşa'nın rûznâmecîsi hizmetinde idiler*».

8 He recounts that he was appointed one of six *hâfız* who recited from the Koran by the body of Kanûnî Süleymân (E, 29a; Sel, 62).

rary duties. There is no mention, however, of his holding official office, but he was apparently in a position to observe at close hand most of the events which transpired. On the occasion of Kanûnî Süleymân's death, Sokullu made every effort to keep this a secret from the army, and during the night he sent Ferîdûn Beğ to summon the viziers to a meeting of the Dîvân on the following day. Selânîkî accompanied Ferîdûn Beğ in order to point out to him the tents of the viziers⁹.

Selânîkî gives some of his recollections of this campaign under the title of *hikâyet*s. These directly relate to Selânîkî's life and character, and show him to be an inquisitive observer who impatiently awaited the result of the events. This facet of his character is well illustrated by the following *hikâyet*:

«One day while I was wandering among the soldires I met a person who was famous for geomancy. Sitting beside him I took the lots in my hand, with the intention of finding out whether this city would fall and whether its commander would be taken alive or dead, then I drew the lots. The geomancer looked at me and said that the fates were strange. It seems that this castle would be removed from its place and its dust would disappear into the sky, and the commander of the city would be apprehended by the Muslim soldiers and would be teased like a piece of cotton. This interpretation was to come true.»¹⁰

After the capture and restoration of Szigetvar, the army moved towards Istanbul. Before entering Belgrade, where the new Sultan was waiting, Sokullu Mehmed Paşa ordered some *hâfız* to recite the Koran and to perform *zikrs* near the late Sultân's carriage. Selânîkî, who was one of these *hâfız*s¹¹, approached the grand vizier and informed him that as the vicinity of the carriage was an important place, the *ağas* would not allow them to pass. The grand vizier, however, assured him that he would tell Sinan Ağâ, the *Kapuci-başı*, to deal with the matter. When the six *hâfız*s approached the carriage, the *solaks* objected but they commenced the *zikrs* regardless of the *ağas*.¹²

9 E, 22b-23a; Sel, 48.

10 E, 27b-28a; Sel, 59.

11 «Altı nefer hâfız yoldaş idük» (E, 29a; Sel, 62).

12 E, 29a; Sel, 62.

The Sultân stopped in Halkalı Saray, near Istanbul. At the same time the army halted in the village of ليتورز. Leaving Halkalı, on the way to Istanbul, Selânikî saw Janissaries assembled with torches in their hands and approached them with his friend Gınâyî Çelebi. They realized that the soldiers were planning a revolt for the following day. Selânikî immediately returned to Halkalı and informed Ferîdûn Beg of what he had seen. But by this time it was too late to take measures.¹³

In the early days of Selîm II's reign Selânikî was able to attend the meetings of the state officials, and thus learnt the underlying nature of the events which he describes.¹⁴ He held several important post in the offices of the administration, not all of which, however, are specified as to date of appointment and dismissal.

While recounting the death of the Grand Vizier Ahmed Paşa in Rebi'ü'l-evvel 988 (Apr 1580), Selânikî also mentions his own dismissal from the post of *mukata'acı* of the *Harameyn*. However, he makes no mention of his appointment to this post in the previous chapters.¹⁵

Selânikî twice mentions that he was in the service of Boyalı Mehmed Paşa (Kara Nişancı) as *devâtdâr*, without however specifying the dates during which he filled this office. Recording the Paşa's promotion from the *nişâncılık* to the vizierate¹⁶ in 988 (1580), Selânikî praises his character and indicates that he had been in the service of the Paşa for four years as *devâtdâr*.¹⁷ Four years later 992 (1584), when envoy of Şâh 'Abbâs came to the Dîvân, Selânikî says that he had held the post of *devâtdâr*.¹⁸ Moreover, in the same year while the Grand Vizier Özdemir-oğlu Osmân Paşa was in Üsküdar about to depart on campaign, Selânikî, together with his master Nişancı Mehmed Paşa,¹⁹ delivered to him 5000 *tuğralı kağıd*.

13 E, 33a; Sel, 71.

14 As an example see: the conversation between Sokullu Mehmed Paşa and Ferîdûn Beg, (E, 38a-38b; Sel, 82).

15 E, 75a-75b; Sel, 159.

16 In the printed text the chapter heading erroneously says his appointment to *nişâncılık*; Ms E, however, says that his appointment was to the vizierate.

17 E, 76a; Sel, 161.

18 E, 85b; Sel, 181.

19 Although it is known that Mehmed Paşa definitely held the post of *nişancı* in 992, (1584) according to Atâ'î (*Hadâiku'l-hakâ'ik fî tekmileti's-şakâ'ik*, İstanbul, 1268, p. 337) the paşa was out of office at this time. He states that Boyalı Mehmed became *nişancı* for the second time in Safer 985, was made fourth vizier in Ramazân 988, dismissed in Safer 990, and in Zî'l-hicce 996 became *nişancı* for the third time. However,

Selânikî seems to have made a favourable impression on Osmân Paşa, who recommended to his *kā'im-makām* in Istanbul that he should be given any suitable post which fell vacant.²⁰

There is some obscurity regarding Selânikî's tenure of the office of *devâtdâr*. If his four year period of employment was prior to 988, then he must have been in the service of Mehmed Paşa twice, as it is clear from his statement that he was *devâtdâr* in 992. If his employment was after 998, then he obviously revised at least this part of his work.

In Zi'l-hicce 995 (Nov 1587), the secretary of the *Sipahîs* and the secretary of the *Silâhdârs* were both promoted because of their good service, the one to a *müteferrikalık* and the other to the post of *çaşnigâr*. The secretaryship of the *Silâhdârs* also fell vacant at this time, and Selânikî was promoted to this office. While serving in this capacity, he was ordered in Cemâzü'l-âhîr 996 (Apr - May), to participate in the Gence campaign. At this point Selânikî says that since he was absent from the capital the history of the campaign would be an eye witness account, while the events in Istanbul would be written from the reports.²¹

Towards the end of this campaign, he was transferred to the secretaryship of the *Sipahîs*, and in 997 (1589) he mentions his role in the assignment of the iç-oğlans to their corps. He notes with some disapproval and regret the burden placed on the Imperial Treasury by the great numbers of troops used in this war, pointing out that 700 soldiers were appointed to the *Sipahî* corps alone while he was its secretary.²² When the entire *Sipahî* corps was recalled to Istanbul, Selânikî accompanied them, arriving in the capital in Ramazan 997 (Jul - Aug 1589), along with Kethüdâ Beg. Upon his arrival, he paid the *Sipahîs*' wages for the *reşen* quarter.²³

On the 25th of Şevvâl 997 (7th of September 1589), he was unexpectedly dismissed from this secretaryship, which was then given by imperial decree to a certain İbrâhîm Çelebi. Selânikî was saddened by his dis-

Hasân Beğ-zâde mentions the death of the *nişancı* Ferîdûn Beğ on 21 Safer 991 (16 March 1584) and says that the *orta defterdâr* Abdülmuhî became *nişancı*. After 40 days this man was dismissed and succeeded by Boyalı Mehmed Paşa, who had been demoted from rank of vizier (Hasan Beğ-zâde, *Târik*, Nuruonmâniye Lib., No. 3134, f. 54b).

20 E, 87b; Sel, 185.

21 E, 114b; Sel, 242-243.

22 E, 121a; Sel, 255.

23 The *Sipahîs* were paid quarterly according to the Hicrî calender. The *reşen* quarter covered the months of Receb, Şa'bân and Ramazân.

missal from this office, which he maintains he had earned through long service, and at his replacement by an inexperienced person. Criticizing the authorities, he considers this situation a pernicious innovation. He once again repeats his conviction that the public treasury was constantly suffering from this type of maladministration.²⁴ His fears were to be borne out for upon the death of Ali, Ağâ of the *Sîpâhîs*, there was found amongst his property nineteen *kises* of *akçe*, each bearing the seal of this İbrâhim Çelebi. These monies were returned to the public treasury, and İbrahim was dismissed from office on account of his corruption. Selânikî, mindful of İbrâhim's own accusations against him, considered his dismissal a punishment from God.²⁵

In preparation for the visit to Istanbul of the delegation led by the Persian prince Haydar Mirza,²⁶ Selanikî, who was unemployed at the time, was commissioned by the Grand Vizier Sinân Paşa to vacate Per-tev Paşa's palace and to prepare it for these distinguished guests, advising him to discuss the details and financial matters with Emîr Efendi, the *defterdâr*. Selânikî recounts in detail the preparations made for these guests, the official ceremonies, the reception in the Dîvân and the great enthusiasm with which the people of Istanbul turned out to view this splendid mission.²⁷

On the 13th of Şevvâl 999 (4th of July 1591), the new Grand Vizier, Ferhâd Paşa, appointed Selânikî to the post of *rûz-nâmecî*,²⁸ and sometime later the *muhâsebecîlik* of Anatoli was also given to him. However, the dismissal of Ferhâd Paşa from the grand vizierate affected Selânikî's position, and on the 4th of Receb 1000 (17th of April 1592), he was dismissed as *muhâsebecî*²⁹ and Ali Çelebi was appointed in his place. Selanikî

24 «Müddet-i ömrümüzde vâsıl olduğumuz mansıba zamâne ihdâsı bî-tekellûf nâ'il oldılar. ...Bu makule nâ-mahal ü münâsib evzâ', gurûr-ı kâmrânî ile, ihtiyar oluna oluna umûr-ı devlet ü saltanat güzel üslûba girdi. Hazîne-i 'âmire gitdükce muzâyakaya düşdi» (E, 122a-b; Sel, 258).

25 E, 130b; Sel, 273.

26 Haydar Mirzâ was the son of the late Crown Prince Hamza Mirzâ, and the nephew of Şâh Abbâs. He was brought to Istanbul as a pledge of their good faith in the negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Persia. See: B. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri*, Istanbul, 1962, pp. 193-195.

27 E, 124a; Sel, 261.

28 E, 141a; Sel, 295.

29 E, 150a; Sel, 312.

says that this Ali Çelebi had already been accused of several corrupt practices, and of malicious acts and had been exiled to Cyprus. But a little later, the *Ağa* of the *Silâhdârs* and Cuhûd Cüce, after accepting bribes, defended Ali Çelebi's integrity, and consequently he was pardoned and appointed to Selânikî's post. The appointment of such a person in his place was the cause of much distress to Selânikî.

A few days after his dismissal from the *muhâsebecilik*, on the 4th of Receb 1000 (16th of April 1595), Selânikî petitioned the Grand Vizier Siyâvuş Paşa, explaining that while he was secretary of the *Silâhdârs* his promotion to the *müteferrika* corps, with a salary increase of three *akçe* a day had been recommended in the General's *Ru'ûs*³⁰ in recognition of his services in the construction of the fortress at Gence. Siyâvuş Paşa granted Selânikî's request, and he was included in the body of the *müteferrikas*³¹.

In Rebî'ü'l-âhir 1001 (Jan. 1593) Hân Ahmed, the ruler of Gilan, arrived in Istanbul. Selânikî was appointed as special escort to this important visitor. After embarking on his duties, Selânikî reported that he had accommodated the Hân in the palace of the late Yusuf Paşa, formerly a vizier, which was at Kırk Çeşme. The Hân was afforded a reception in accordance with the established protocols. As Selânikî was intimately involved with this affair, he chooses to go into the details of the preparations, the meals served, and the nature of the accommodation provided. On this occasion he was assisted by Yusuf Çavuş and fifteen men from the *bölük halkı*.

Selânikî did not miss the opportunity of discussing scholarly matters with guest in his charge, and assessed Hân Ahmed as a man of scholarship and virtue, well-versed in *hadîş* and *tefsîr*. Selânikî provides his reader with a verbatim account of a conversation he held with his guest. As Hân Ahmed had come to Istanbul in order to request political and military support in his struggle with the Şâh of Persia, who had invaded his territories, Selânikî first of all consoled him in his hour of distress, and then went on to explain his own ideas concerning the Ottoman position. He assured the Hân that up to that time no request for help had ever been turned down, and he provided examples from the reign of Süleymân the Magnificent in particular, when rulers came from as far afield as India.

30 For this term see Nejat Göyünç, 'XVI yüzyılda Ru'ûs ve Önemi', *Tarih Dergisi*, Vol: XVII, No. 22, pp. 17-34.

31 E, 150a; Sel, 313.

Selânikî wound up his discussion with the Hân by giving him a brief summary from the history books by way of proof of the generosity of the Ottoman Sultâns to those who sought assistance from them, even though they be infidel, as in the case of the young prince of Transylvania.

Hân Ahmed confirmed Selanikî's own views by providing the example of Süleymân's attitude to Hân Muzaffer, his own ancestor. When the subject turned to the Kızılbaş, Selânikî suggested that the Kızılbaş problem was partly the fault of the *hâns* of Gilan, as previous *hâns* had given protection to Kızılbaş elements. Hân Ahmed, while not entirely agreeing with Selânikî, congratulated him on his deep knowledge of history and politics.

Six days later, on the 8th of Rebî'ü'l-âhir 1001, (12th of Jan. 1593) the Grand vizier summoned Selanikî and entrusted him with two robes of honour to be given to Hân Ahmed, with instructions that if they were worn on the morrow, the Hân would be admitted to the Sultan's presence. This audience is then recounted in detail. Towards the end of the month, Selânikî had the opportunity to hold a discussion with Hân Ahmed on the subject of occult sciences.³² On the 25th of Rebî'ü'l-âhir the seal of the vizierate was given to Sinân Paşa. He then received Hân Ahmed, who declared his complete satisfaction with the services of our Historian.

In Cemâzü'l-âhir 1001 (March 1593), Hân Ahmed, realizing that he would be unable to obtain the help he sought, presented a petition expressing his desire to go to Kerbelâ. The new grand vizier, Sinan Paşa, summoned Selânikî and asked why he had not tried to dissuade Hân Ahmed from making his proposed journey. In reply, Selânikî said that he had tried hard to persuade him, but in vain. A certain sum of money from the Baghdad treasury was therefore assigned to the Hân and his retinue. Afterwards the Grand Vizier twice summoned Selânikî to give him orders relating to Hân Ahmed's journey.³³

In Zî'l-hicce 1002 (Aug - Sep 1594), when the secretary of the Imperial Kitchen died, Selânikî applied for his post, and the Kâzî-'asker Sun'ul-lâh Efendi strongly recommended Selânikî to the high officials saying that he is an honest, reliable person and capable for this post. However, the viziers replied that this post had already been given by a *hatt-ı hümayûn* to

32 E, 165b-169a; Sel, 344-350.

33 E, 173a-174b.

Fedâ'î İsmâ'il, one of the clerks who dealt with the expenses of the kitchen. Selânikî was upset by this appointment, and objected to the officials responsible that if attention was to be paid to the established tradition, an honest, capable person, knowledgeable in the affairs of the Imperial Kitchen ought to have been appointed. Sultâns in the past had never appointed a servant of the Imperial Kitchen to its secretaryship. With the appointment of such unqualified people to this post, contrary to tradition, the Imperial Treasury had fallen into financial hardship. Selânikî then gives certain figures to prove his argument.³⁴

Selânikî tells us that, in addition to his other duties, he was at various times responsible for distributing salaries to the troops. In Cemâzü'l-âhîr 1003 (Mar 1595), the *bölük halkı* returning from the campaign requested of the Grand Vizier Ferhâd Paşa that, after a roll-call had been held, accession gifts should be distributed. These payment were made under the supervision of Selânikî after the roll-call.³⁵ In the same way, in Receb 1003 (Apr 1595) Selânikî was ordered to pay salaries and accession gifts to those who had remained in Istanbul by permission, to other members of the *bölük halkı* and to those who had been recently admitted into the ranks.³⁶ The following month, 1600 *sipâhîs* returning to Istanbul were given the accession gift, but 150 soldiers who came later seeking their *ulûfe* and accession gifts were ordered to return to the front, where this money would be paid to them. At this, great commotion broke out amongst the *Sipâhîs* and Selânikî was instructed to distribute to them 48 *yük akçe* taken from the Treasury. However, because of this disorder, it was not possible to distribute the money, and Selânikî had to deposit it in the *Bâb-ı Hümayûn*. The Grand Vizier İbrâhîm Paşa later announced that the salaries would be paid in his own palace, and this was carried out under the supervision of Selânikî.³⁷

In Ramazan 1003 (May 1595), although Selânikî was apparently hoping that he himself would be appointed to an official post, when Süleymân Ağa, who had been dismissed from the post of *Sipâhîler Ağası*, was

34 «Ve Kâzî-asker Mevlânâ Sun'ullâh Efendi sadr-ı izzetde olanlara 'bu kişi kârdân u kâr-âğâhdur, şer'ile ve kânûn ile su'âl ve cevâba kâdir kadîmî sâdk u istikamet üzre hidmet idgelmişdür. Bunu istihdâm eylesenüz yeğ değılmidür' didiler. 'Cümleden eyüdür biz de şahidüz' diyü cevâb virüp, 'velâkin Pâdişâh-ı âlem-penâh hazretleri Fedâî'ye virdi' didiler». E, 214a-214b.

35 E, 252b-253a.

36 E, 256a.

37 E, 258b-262b.

appointed in place of Husrev Ağa, the secretary Ali became his *kâtib*, and Selânîkî was passed over. This grieved Selânîkî greatly, and he criticized the sale of those offices for a high price.³⁸

On the appointment of Mütferrika İbrâhîm Çelebi to the post of *Rumeli timar defterdârı* in Ramazân 1004 (May 1596), Selânîkî was appointed to the post of *evkâf muhâsebeci*, in addition to the post of *Rûznâme-i hümayûn* which had been assigned to him by the Grand Vizier.³⁹ In Rebî'ü'l-âhîr 1005 (oct 1596) Selânîkî, while *evkâf muhâsebecisi*, was one of those ordered by the *sadâret kaymakâmı* Hasan Paşa to take possession of the goods and property in Istanbul of those who had fled from the army during the battle of Hocova. Selânîkî reports that the houses of about 30 well-known people were closed up, which caused great suffering to their families. However, certain people had been warned beforehand, and managed to conceal some valuable goods.⁴⁰

When the *Dârü's-Sa'âde Ağası* Osman Ağa was appointed administrator of the imperial *evkâf*, Selânîkî's post was given to the Ağa's accountant. During his two-year tenure of office Selânîkî had come to know much about the running of the *evkâf*, and complained that the standard of administration was deteriorating, that control was passing from hand to hand every three months through bribery, and that the revenues themselves were falling to unworthy and incompetent people.⁴¹

In Şâ'bân 1007 (Feb - Mar 1599), the registers of the *bölük halkı* were sent from the *serdâr* Satırcı Mehmed Paşa at the front and were checked against those which had been kept in Istanbul. Selânîkî was then made supervisor of the payment of salaries in the grand vizier's palace to those soldiers who had attended the campaign.⁴²

When accusations of irregularities in Treasury affairs were made to the Grand Vizier İbrâhîm Paşa, he ordered an investigation, as a result of which many changes were made amongst the clerks of the Imperial Treasury. At this time (18 Ramazân 1007/14 th April 1599), Lonka-zâde

38 E, 263a-b.

39 *Vakâyi-i Târihiyye*, f. 55a

40 E, 352a-352b.

41 «Hakkaten evkâf-ı selâtîn-i izâma za'f gelüp, üç ayda bir küllî pîşkeş ve hedâyâlar ile tevliyet birinden birine virilmekle mahsûlât-ı evkâf mâl-i rüşvete vefa itmeyüp ve erâzil ve nâ-müstühaklar dahi zevâ'id-i evkâfdan vezâ'ife mutasarrıflar olup, zabtı u rabtdan kalmış idi». E, 401 b-402a.

42 E, 430b.

Mustafa Çelebi was appointed to the post of *harac muhâsebeci*, and his former post of *Anatolî muhâsebeci* was given to Selânîkî.⁴³ In the same month Selânîkî was responsible for distributing *ulûfe*, half in *altun*, half in *akçe*, for the *recec* and *reşen* quarters to the *bölük halkı* who had just returned from the front.⁴⁴

Almost a year later, in Şa'bân 1008 (March 1600), he was charged with a similar duty. When the soldiers from the *bölük halkı* arrived in Istanbul from the front, suffering from lack of provisions and other necessities, they demanded payment of their salaies. Since the officials had not yet received the troop registers from the *Serdâr* they decided to make payment according to the old registers which had remained in the Capital. Selânîkî, together with other officials, supervised these payments, which were given half in *kuruş* and half in *altun*.⁴⁵

The final detail concerning Selânîkî's own life which is given in the History is that he was sent by the Şeyhülislâm Sun'ullâh Efendi to İbrâhîm Paşa, governor of Haleb, with a message. The Paşa, who was in Istanbul at that time, was, at the beginning of Şevvâl 1008 (April 1600), promoted to the vizierate on account of his experience in financial affairs. Selânîkî was sent to inform him that approval had been given for him to remain in the Capital. However, İbrâhîm Paşa considered that to ensure good administration in Haleb was his first priority, and told Selânîkî that he would go and explain personally to the Müftî.⁴⁶

MUSTAFÂ SELÂNİKÎ'S HISTORY

The work commences with the account of a torrential rainfall which occurred in Safer 971 (Sep 1563) and ends with the escape of Kâsım Voyvoda from the *çavuş* who was holding him prisoner in Şevvâl 1008 (May. 1600)⁴⁷. In part or in whole, the reigns of four sultans are covered by the History: the last three years (1563-1566) of Süleymân Kanûnî, the entire reigns of Selîm II (1566-1574) and Murâd III (1574-1595), and the first five years of Mehmed III (1595 - 1600).

43 E, 433a-433b.; *Vakâyi'-i Târihiyye*, 33b.

44 E, 433b-434a.; *Vakâyi'-i Târihiyye*, 52b.

45 E, 360b.

46 E, 466b-467a.

47 All the Mss, apart from those which are obviously defective, end with this rather unimportant incident, and one is led to assume that the work came to a halt here due to illness or the sudden death of the author; ch. Selanikî, IA, X, p. 350.

The work is in the form of a chronicle, or rather, of a diary, of the events which came to the notice of Selânikî and on which he may have intended to base a formal history of his own times. There is some evidence that parts of it were reviewed and rewritten in the light of subsequent developments - notably the account of the aqueduct of Sultân Süleymân with which the work opens - but in general it gives the impression of notes hastily compiled without too much regards for style or grammar. An event which continues over a long period, such as a campaign on the frontier, is related piecemeal as information about it reaches the capital and receives the attention of the Dîvân,⁴⁸ and consequently there is little comprehensive presentation⁴⁹. While this may seem to create difficulty for the study of any single aspect of the history of the times, it has the compensating benefit of allowing incidents and events to be related to the complex of the total life of the state and society. He gives some hint of his method of compilation, and also an indication that he intended his work to form part of the *corpus* of Ottoman history in his introduction to the events of the year 1001, which is given *in extenso* below.

The amount of information contained in the earlier sections of the History is considerably less than that for the later years. For certain of the early years, Selânikî merely reports one or two noteworthy events, without entering into other less significant details. For instance, in 977 (1588-1589) he devotes only a few lines to the preparations for the conquest of Cyprus.⁵⁰ From the end of Murâd III's reign onwards, however he records more events in detail.⁵¹

Although general characteristics of the work suggest that it was written in diary form, there are nevertheless certain points to be taken into account here. In the early part of the work, there are some errors in dating and information, and vague references are made to the future.⁵² At

48 Such as the Ferhâd Paşa's Eastern campaign and Mehmed III's Eğri campaign.

49 In this respect he differs from most of the other historians, such as Hasan Beğzâde and Peçevi. Since their histories are written much later than the events they describe, major events occurring over a long period of time could be treated in their entirety with all the advantages of hindsight.

50 *E*, 46b; *Sel*, 100-101.

51 For instance in 1003 (1594-1595) he mentions more than 200 events.

52 The «*Beylerbeği vak'ası*» which took place in Cemâziyü'l-evvel 997 (Apr 1589), is given in the printed text and in some copies as 17 Cemâziyü'l-evvel 996 (14 th of

the beginning of the work, after he had recorded the strange incident between Semiz Ali Paşa⁵³ and Gürz Nikola, the Greek water engineer, Selânikî gives Semiz Ali Paşa's forecast that hardship would come to the state after thirty years⁵⁴. However, this does not necessarily imply that Selânikî's account of the event was written thirty years later, when the state was indeed suffering hardship. More likely the 'thirty years' is just a conventional figure of magnitude used to denote a long period of time in the future. The detailed nature of much of the information, giving names and dates, provides evidence that the early part of the History was written sometime later, compiled from his own notes and from other written sources. His account of the progress of events in the early days of Selîm II's reign⁵⁵ and also his enumeration of the names and ranks of all high officials who took part in the accession ceremony of Murâd III⁵⁶ are clear examples of such detail.

But from the last years of Murâd III's reign onwards, Selânikî even records a number of insignificant daily incidents, in addition to the major political and financial events concerning the imperial palace and the Dîvân. All the evidence indicates that even in these later years Selânikî was making use of various documents and contemporary accounts, both written and verbal. In Muharrem 1001 (October 1592) he offers this explanation of his method of working:

Şehr-i Muharremü'l-harâm sene-i ihdâ ve elf mine'l-hicreti'n-Nebeviye aleyhi efdalü't-tahiye.

Vaka'yi'-i devrân ve havâdis-i dîvânîyeden sultânü'l-guzât ve'l-mücâhidîn Pâdisâh-ı zamân u zemîn hazret-i Sultân Murâd Hân -hullidet hilâfetü-hü ilâ yevmü'd-dîn-zamân-ı şerifle-

March 1588). However, the reliable copies, especially Mss *E* and *H* (Hamidiye Lib. No. 902) give the date correctly. But in all copies the chronogram (وضع قيه) yields 996. There is no doubt that this is the date of Mehmed Paşa's innovation of collecting money from the Lealthy people to stabilize the coinage (see Ö. Lûtfî Barkan, 'XVI asrın ikinci yarısında Türkiye'de Fiyat Hareketleri', *Bellelen XXXIV*, 1970, pp. 557-607).

53 All the copies except the Ms *H* (Hamidiye Lib., 902) here mention Rüstem Paşa. This obviously is wrong because Rüstem Paşa died 1561, two years before the event. This might be copying mistake.

54 «Fî'l-hakika otuz yıldan sonra saltanata lâzım gelecek muzâyakayı kayırub haber vermişler» (*Sel*, 5-6; *E*, 3b).

55 *E*, 26a-37b; *Sel*, 52-80.

56 *E*, 58b-59a; *Sel*, 126-7.

lerinde tahrîr-ü-zabt olınan vâkı'atdur ki sene-i merkûmden ibtidâ defter tutulup memâlik-i mahrûsa-i İslâmîyeden veserhadd-i mansûrede yukû' bulan ahvâl ü ef'âl umûr-ı mülk ü millet her mîr-i mîrân-ı nâmdâr u şecâ'at-şî'âr u adâlet-iştihâr ve pesendide-etvâr ve ümerâ-i zevi'l-itkidâr re'y ü tedbirlerinden zuhûr u be-dîdâr eyleyüp, südde-i sa'âdet-medâra inhâ ve 'arz olman hâlât hıfz u zabt olunup, işbu perîşân evrâka sebt olındı. Mürûr-ı eyyâm ve şuhûr-ı a'vâm ile yâd ohndukta sebeb-i du'â vü senâ ola dinildi. Ve mine'llâhi'l-ismeti ve't-tevfîk⁵⁷.

On the other hand, another factor indicating that incidents were recorded daily is that information relating to one event is spread over a period of time instead of being narrated as a whole as it would have been at a later date. In Cemâziyü'l-âhîr 1004 (Feb 1596) in a special chapter he mentions Hasan Paşa's removal from his post as *muhâfız* of Tebrîz and his replacement by Hızır Paşa. Two chapters later he gives a continuation of the incident⁵⁸. Similarly on the 1th of Cemâziyü'l-evvel 1006 (13th of Dec 1597) he records that Elvend-oğlu Ali Paşa was given the governorship of Baghdad with the rank of vizier and was presented with a robe of honour⁵⁹. Eight chapters later, however, on the 10th of Cemâziyü'l-âhîr 1006 (18th of Jan 1598) after making a brief reference to this appointment Selânîkî reports that the Paşa had died in Istanbul before he could take up his new post⁶⁰.

It was already been mentioned that Selânîkî's history is unique. Since he was writing about the events of his own times it is very unlikely that he could have used any other histories as a source. However, from the context of the work, and from his own statements, it is clearly seen that he did glean information from certain quarters, though the bulk of the work chiefly depends on his own observations. Besides reporting at first-hand various ceremonies, social events, and occurrences such as fires, epidemics and floods, Selanîkî also recounts in full his own eye-witness account of the Szigetvar campaign. Before he participated in the eastern campaign in Cemâziyü'l-âhîr 996 (Apr - May 1588), as secretary of the *Silâhdars*, he explains that, in addition to his account of the campaign itself, he

57 E, 162b; Sel, 338.

58 E, 310a-b.

59 E, 390b.

60 E, 392a-b.

would write a report of events in the capital as news of them was received at the front⁶¹.

Vâkı'ât ve havâdis-i rûzgâr, buradan Şark seferine gitmeyle anda olan vakayi' yazılıb, Südde-i Sa'âdetde olan tebeddülât ve havâdis rivâyet ile tahrîr olunmak lâzım geldi.

Ve sene-i 996 Cemâzi'l-âhiresinde bu fakîr-i hakîr silâh-dârlar bölüğü kâtibliği ile diyâr-ı şark seferine me'mûr olub Serdâr-ı Âliye gidüp, vâkı' olan tebeddülât ve vâkı'ât ve hâdisât-ı devrân orada yazılmak lâzım gelmegin bu mahallde karâr olındı.

Selânikî did not hold a high position, but due to his long services in the Government departments and the offices connected with them, he met leading figures in the central administration and consequently had opportunities to learn the true nature and the processes of affairs. Ferîdûn Beğ, Şokullu Mehmed Paşa, Kızıl Ahmedlû Mustafa Paşa, Ferhâd Paşa, Koca Sinân Paşa, the famous poet Abdûlbâkî Efendi, Şeyhülislâm Sun'ullâh Efendi are mentioned among these people and there is no doubt that they were oral sources for Selânikî's History. He occasionally mentions the name of the person from whom he had information about a particular event. For instance, he records Kanûnî Süleymân's words to Mîr-âhûr Ferhâd Ağa as they were told to him by the latter.⁶² But, in general, Selânikî does not mention those who provided him with oral information, but merely says «it was heard from reliable people and written down»,⁶³ or «it has been verified and set down in this place».⁶⁴ Concerning private meetings with the Sultân he generally gives the news without entering into detail, saying «secrets were closely guarded, no information was given away»,⁶⁵ or «...but no word spread from behind the curtain».⁶⁶

The other source of information used by Selânikî were official documents which came to the Imperial Dîvân or which were sent from there

61 E, 114 b; Sel, 242-243.

62 «Fakîr-i hakîrîn hakk semâ'idur, hikâyet eyledüklerinde aceb buyurdıkları ne ola dîdük beyân itmedilerdi». E, 5b; Sel, 10.

63 «sikâtdan mesmû olunup sebt olundu». E, 11a; Sel, 22.

64 «hatm-i kelâm eyledükleri tahkik olunub bu mahalle sebt olundu». E, 3b; Sel, 6.

65 «sırr mektâm oldu, taşra haber sızmadı». E, 370 a.

66 «lâkin perdeden taşra hiç kelâm şâyi' olmadı». E, 428b.

to the various parts of the country. In his statement, the text of which is given above, he says that «the reports which were sent to the capital by the governors of the provinces have been preserved and set down in these pages». While reporting the campaigns on the various frontiers of the Empire from the letters or official reports which arrived at the Dîvân, he often introduces his account with the words «the true report which was stated in the letter is that...»,⁶⁷ or «let it be seen as it is recorded in the book of ceremonies»,⁶⁸ and «(these gifts) have been described as they are registered in the book of ceremonies.»⁶⁹

Although Selânîkî's History is a primary source for its period and has thus a particular value, it seems that it was not widely used or copied until the early eighteenth century. A close examination of certain events clearly shows that Hasan Beğ-zâde, Peçevî, Kâtib Çelebi in the *Fezleke*,⁷⁰ and Na'imâ,⁷¹ though covering the same period in part or in whole, are quite different from Selânîkî, both in respect of information and the style of narration. However, there is no doubt that Selânîkî's History was known and used even in the first half of the seventeenth century, Solak-zâde Mehmed Hemdemî Efendi⁷² used Selânîkî's History as his source, especially for the time of Kanûnî Süleymân and Selîm II, quoting some passages with little alteration, but also criticizing Selânîkî, without however mentioning his name. The following passages are clear examples of this:

Târih-i hicret-i Nebviyenün-salla'llâhu aleyh ve sellem-sene ihdâ ve seb'in ve tis'a mi'ede vâkı' selh-i Muharremü'l-harâm ve gurre-i Safe-rü'l-muzafferün dü-şenbih gününde seherden hazret-i Pâdişâh-ı dîn-pe-

67 «mekâtibde beyân olunan ahbârdan nakl-i sahîh bu ki», E, 390a.

68 «teşrifât defterinden nakl olunan surete nazar oluna», E, 357 a.

69 «...teşrifât defterinden nakl olundu zikr olunur» E, 196 a.

70 B. Kütükoğlu (in Kâtib Çelebi «Fezleke»sinin kaynakları, İstanbul, 1974, p. 17) says that as a result of comparing the *Fezleke* with the main sources, he reached the conclusion that Kâtib Çelebi had not seen Selânîkî's work.

71 Ahmed Refik (in *Âlimler ve San'atkarlar*, p. 55) maintains that Na'imâ had studied Selânîkî's History but had not used information from it. He does not, however, mention his evidence for this.

Also Lewis V. Thomas, in *A Study of Na'imâ* (New York, 1972) does not mention Selânîkî among Na'imâ's sources.

72 Solak-zâde, Mehmed Hemdemî Çelebi, d. 1068 (1657-1658), Ottoman historian and poet. His history starts from the beginning of the Ottomans and ends about the middle of the seventeenth century. For his detailed biography, see M K Özergin, Solak-zâde, I A, X, 748-750.

nâh- *ebbede[hu]* 'llâh ta'âlâ ve kavvâhu-Halkalu deresine şikârgâha tevec-cüh buyurup, etrâf ueknâfda alâmet-i bârân müşâhede eylemegle lebi-deryâda vâkı' Ayastefanoz dimegle meşhûr karye kurbında Mîrî İskender Çelebi bâğçesine sür'atle yetişüb nüzûl-ü-iclâl buyurduklarında ev-za'-ı felekiye ve ecrâm-ı 'ulviyenün harekâtı bir vechle oldu ki hiç bir devirde görülmüş ve işidilmiş degül, acîb ü mehîb berk-ı hâtîf ve sâ'ika-ya âgâz eyleyüb, gerdûn-ı gerdân güm güm gümleyüp âfâk inlemeğe başladı. Azîm furtınalar-ile bir gün bir gice kâmil şiddet ile bârân-ı bî-pâyân yağdı. Mehâbet üzre yetmiş dört def'a yıldırım indi.

(*E*, 1 b; *Sel*, 2-3)

Târîh-i hicret-i Nebeviye-salla'llâhu aleyhi ve sellem- ün tokuz yüz yetmiş Saferinün evâ'ilinde Şehriyâr-i âli-vakâr hazretleri arzu-yi temâ şâ-yı sayd-u-şikâr ile Halkalu Bınar câniblerine hareket buyurmuşlar idi...etrâf u eknâfda alâmet-i bârân müşâhede kılınmağın leb-i deryâda vâkı' İskender Çelebi bâğçesine sür'at u şitâb ile yetişüb nüzûl ü iclâs buyurduklarında ol sâ'at 'âlemi zulmet kaplayub mehâbet üzre yetmiş dört def'a yıldırım inüb sadâ-yı ra'd-u-berkden gerdûn-ı gerdân güm güm gümleyüb bir gün bir gice kâmil şiddetli bârân-ı bî-pâyân yağdı.

(*Târîh-i Solak-zâde*, İstanbul, 1297, p. 568)

After the death of Süleymân, in order to prevent disorder among the troops, at the sixth halting place a person from Bosnia who resembled the late sultân was placed in his carriage to give the impression that he was still alive. Solak-zâde, quoting Selânikî's description of this person says that it is not very similar, but he does not mention his evidence for it.

Araba içinde hâs oda oğlanlarından Bosnavi'l-asl, mümtâzü'l-kadr ark (ق) ' yüzlü toğan burunlu, köseç sakallı hasta mizaclu, boynu sargılı/ Hasan Ağa nâm kimesne asâkir-i mansûrenün yemîn ü yesârına selâm virdi.

(*E*, 29a, *Sel*, 62)

Bir rivâyetde hâs ota oğlanlarından mütekâ'id Bosnavi'l-asl, uzun boylı ak yüzli toğan burunlu kösece sakallı ve boynu sargılı hasta mizâc Hasan nâm kimesne asâkir-i mansûrenün yemîn ü yesârında gâh u bî-gâh selâm virur idi. Amma ki bu nakl 'akldan dîr görünür.

(*Târîh-i Solak-zâde*, p. 580)

One of the most striking aspects of Selânîkî's History is that, in addition to narrating the event itself, he adds his own criticisms. This is in general a common characteristic of all the chronicles of the time. However, Selânîkî differs from other historians in that not only does he criticize particular events, but he also gives special chapters criticizing the general decline of the state. Before giving examples of this, the factors which influenced the Historian in this direction should be mentioned.

The changing society in which the author lived affected him deeply. After a life reasonably prosperous, comfortable during the reign of Süleymân I, and only a little less congenial in the time of Selîm II, the increasing decline in the institutions of the Empire in the last quarter of the century grieved and worried Selânîkî, just as it did most thoughtful people. He had been in the centre of the administration and had followed the deterioration in the various institutions of the Empire, and did not hesitate to criticise whenever he came across a harmful innovation.

This he does in various ways. In addition to his direct criticisms, he sometimes, in accordance with the Muslim tradition of historiography, quotes a verse from the Koran, a saying of the Prophet (*Hadîs*) or a critical poem to demonstrate his disapproval.⁷³ He also attaches great importance to the anxiety of highly-regarded people about the situation; and to the complaints of provincial people about the injustices they suffer from central and provincial administration. The prayer sentences at the end of these chapters suggest that the Historian himself was also discontented about the situation.⁷⁴ Similarly, on the occurrence of a natural disaster, such as fire, earthquake, or flood, Selânîkî considers these phenomena as the punishments of God for those people who had diverged from the right path and reminds his reader that everyone should take warning from them.⁷⁵

His personal fortunes also affected his thinking and writing. His frequent dismissal from office, and certain accusations made against him

73 See the poem for Murâd III (*Sel*, 272-273) and the verse quoted in connection with Mehmed III's visit to the *saray* of Dâvûd Paşa. (*E*, 378 b).

74 See Azîz Mahmûd Hüdâî's concern (*E*, 411 a); Boyalı Mehmed Paşa's statement about bribes (*E*, 76a; *Sel*, 161).

75 When, after the «*Beglerbegi vak'ası*», a fire broke out, Selânîkî expresses his opinion that this is a sign of divine wrath. (*E*, 121a-121b; *Sel*, 255-256).

during the reign of Murâd III and Mehmed III made the Historian anxious and disillusioned with regard to the future of the state.

In his critical passages Selânikî frequently returns to the criticism of the various classes, such as the *ulemâ*, the high officials, the merchants, and expresses disapproval and pessimism with regard to the general deterioration of state. The following passage is a good example of his style of criticism:

Şikâyet-i bâ-hikâyet-i rûzgâr-ı
perişân-etvâr

Hakikaten zamâne hâkim ve vâlîleri gaflet-ü-gurûr-ı kâmrânî ile müştehiyâtlarına meşgul olub, dîn ü devlet umûrında bir mertebe müsâheleye vardılar ki her taraftan a'dâ-yı dîn ahâlî-yi İslâma hücum eylemeğe âğâz eyledi. Küffâr-ı dalâlet-âyîn birbirine düşmen iken ittifâk idüb, yardımlaşmağa başladılar. Hiç bir yerde evvelki düzen kalmadı; kulûbda havf-u-haşyet-i Hakk olmayacak, düşmen korkusu galebeider. Allâhü ta'âlâ kulına nusratı istediği üzre virür. Leşker-keşlik ve kâr-âgah ve kâr-fermâhk idecek kuvvetlü ve kudretlü ricâlden nâmdâr ve nâmver kimse kalmadı. Katı çok zamândur gelüb geçen Pâdişâhlar-rahime-hümüllâhü ta'âlâ-merd-i merdân bulub terbiye etmekden fârig olmuşlardı. Agrâz-ı nefsâniye ile ve hubb-i mâl ve câh sevdâsı-yle hâl tebâh oldu. 'Ömr-i girân-mâye gecüb gitdi. Şevket ve haşmet-i devlet hadden mütecâviz ve debdebe-i saltanat mütezâyid olmakda itlâfât ve isrâfât-ı müzahrefât bir mertebe yetişdi ki Hazâ'in-i Beytü'l-mâl kifayet etmekden kaldı. Re'âyâ-yı memlekete nice yıllardur 'avâriz ve kürekci vesâ'ir tekâlif-i şâkka salınmak vâcib derecesine vardı. Ve mahsûl-i mukata'ât-ı müteceddidü'l-emsâl mütezimîn-ü-'ummâl ellerine düşdi. Defterdârân-ı emvâl ve erbâb-ı kalem ve ashâb-ı rakam nâmına olanlar mansıba bi-lâ-rüşvet ve câ'ize gelmek muhâl oldu. Ve geldüğü takdîrce âsâyîşe mecâl yok, der-'akab biri dahi gelüb, perişân-hâl ve kesirü'l-bâl kalub âvâre ve sergerdân gezer. Ve ra'iyet-i çift bozan rüşvet ile Pâdişâh kulı oldu, rusûm-ı ra'iyet taleb olunacak az kimse kaldı. Ve pâye-i sadrda olanlar ise ene

ve lâ-gayr diyüb biribirinün re'y-ü-tedbirin kabûl itmeyüp, muktezayâtın kazâ itmek sevdâsında dîn-ü-devlet umûrında mücâhede idecek yerde müsâhele ola ola Kitâbu'llâh ve Sünnete muhâlif ahvâl ve akvâl ulemâ ve meşâ'ihden zuhûr eyleyüb, emr-i ma'rûf ve nehy-i münker olmaz oldu. Ve belki el-'iyâzü bi'llâh 'aksi olur oldu. Allâh ta'âlâ yaramazlıkları hayra tebdîl eyleye. Fî-sebîli'llâh gazâyâ kimse gitmeyüp, sa'âdet-i şehâdete râğbet itmez oldılar. «Ben bu dirliği bu denlü bahâyâ aldım» diyüp, galib oldugina cevri-ü-bî-dâd etmeg [le] re'âyâyı yakub yandırır oldılar. Allâhümme aslih ahvâle-nâ ve ahvâle Sultânî-nâ ve ahvâle sâ'iri'l-Müslimîn. İnni-ke ente'l-gafûrur-rahîmü'l-cevâdü'l-kerim.⁷⁶

«In truth, the rulers and governors of our times are occupied in following their own desires, in heedlessness and vanity; and in their negligence with regard to state affairs, they have reached such a degree that the enemies of religion from every side have started to attack the Muslims. The infidels were previously hostile to each other, but now begin to unite and co-operate. Nowhere has the previous order remained. When the fear of God does not exist in the heart, fear of the enemy becomes predominant. God gives aid to those whom He wishes. No famous and renowned individuals remain who would lead the army and direct affairs.

«In fact, for some time the Sultâns have ceased to single out able persons and educate them. In personal desires, in love of wealth and rank, valuable time has passed and the situation has worsened. The ostentation of the state is excessive, and the imperial pomp is increasing; wastage and excessive expenditure have reached such a peak that the public treasury can no longer suffice. For many years, *avârız* and *kürekci* and certain other extraordinary taxes have been forceably exacted from the people. The revenues of the mukata'ât have fallen into the hands of tax farmers.

«It has become almost impossible for financial, clerical and accountancy officials to be appointed to posts without giving bribes or gifts. But even when someone is appointed, there is no stability; another person comes along and the former is ruined, and becomes wretched and idle. Peasants who have left their land [*çift bozanlar*], by paying bribes, have enter-

76 E, 264 b-265a.

ed into the Janissary corps, and consequently fewer people remain to be taxed. On the other hand, those holding high rank rely solely on their own opinions and do not accept the advice and suggestions of others. They concentrate on their own ideas, and fall short in their duty to uphold the interests of the state. The learned class and the sheikhs act contrary to the Koran and the Tradition, they have stopped encouraging people to do good, and forbidding them to do evil. God forbid that the opposite should occur! May God transform these evils into good. Nobody care any longer to go campaign for the sake of God. People do not now desire the bliss of martyrdom. Saying «I purchased this fief for so much money» they have coerced the people and caused them extreme hardship.» Selânikî finishes his review by asking God to improve the situation of the people, the affairs of the Sultân and the position of all Muslims.

It is evident throughout this work that Selânikî very seldom revised what he wrote, and consequently his style often loose and his grammar faulty, and in certain places his meaning is obscure. Later copyists tried to improve the language by adapting it to the style current in their own times, and this accounts for the lack of uniformity observable in the various manuscript traditions of the work. It can be assumed, however, that his language and style would be characteristic of late sixteenth century Ottoman and that where it departs from this in vocabulary, grammar or construction this due to the interference of copyists.

The events of which Selânikî was an eye-witness are, in general, written with more care than those for which he had to depend on the reports of others. In the former the descriptions are minute, the grammar is correct and the style controlled, and passages such as these may be presumed to represent what the final revised work would have been like.⁷⁷ However, when he is summarizing the contents of documents or transmitting oral accounts the language not seldom becomes ragged, losing grammatical structure and drifting towards obscurity⁷⁸.

The impression one is left with is that Selânikî had no pretension to stylistic artistry, like Celâl-zâde, 'Âlî or Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi, and he

77 See: the circumcision feast of Şehzâde Mehmed (Mehmed III) (*E*, 77a-79b *Sel*, 163-168); the arrival of the English ambassador to Istanbul (*E*, 186b); and the ceremonial departure of Satırcı Mehmed Paşa for 1005 campaign (*E*, 374b-375a).

78 see: the information which came from Mehmed Paşa, who was sent to quell the revolt of Kara Yazıcı in Anatolia (*E*, 452b-453b); and the accusation made against the clerk of the Imperial Dîvân (433a-433b).

chose to write in a simple, direct manner, employing the vocabulary current among the educated people of the time. Words of European origin are hardly ever met with - *soltat* («soldat») and *centilum* (gentil homme) from the French; *planka*, *varoş* and a few other Hungarian words; the Italian and Greek terms connected with sea-faring and on the whole the vocabulary is that which was to become standard in literary Ottoman over the following centuries. It is clear that he had some difficulty in representing foreign sounds; whereas he can be specific in mentioning the names, ranks and functions connected with other Islâmic states, such as the Özbeks, the Safevids or the rulers of Gilân, when he is dealing with Europeans, he frequently avoids specifying individuals and places, or he leaves a blank followed with the *nâm* to indicate that a proper name is intended.

The Manuscripts of Selânikî's History

1. Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi Ktb.,	2259
2. Üniversite Ktb., TY	2608
3. Süleymaniye, Hamidiye Ktb.,	902
4. Süleymaniye, Hamidiye Ktb.,	901
5. Topkapı Sarayı, Revan Ktb.,	1138
6. Topkapı Sarayı, Revan Ktb.,	1139
7. Topkapı Sarayı, Bağdat Ktb.,	202
8. Süleymaniye, Hamidiye Ktb.,	903
9. Nuruosmaniye Ktb.,	3132
10. Topkapı Sarayı, Revan Ktb.,	1137
11. Topkapı Sarayı, Emañet Hazinesi Ktb..	1426
12. Üniversite Ktb., TY	2380
13. Üniversite Ktb TY	6027
14. Nuruosmaniye Ktb.,	3133
15. Süleymaniye, Hekimoglu Ali Paşa Ktb.,	698
16. Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi Ktb.,	2144
17. Atıf Efendi Ktb.,	1844
18. Türk Tarih Kurumu Ktb.,	59
19. Bayezid, Veliyüddin Efendi Ktb.,	2368
20. Vienna, Nat. Bibl.	1030
21. Uppsala, Univ. Bibl.	284
22. Paris, Biblio. Nat.	1060
23. Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi	2167
24. Rouen	1506
25. The Free Library of Philadelphia	93

SELÂNIKÎ'S INFORMATION AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND OFFICES OF HIS TIME

The Sultân and his house hold

The Sultân and the activities centred about his person constitute the main thread of Selânîkî's History. The work pays close attention to incidents concerning the lives of the sultâns both inside and outside the Palace, their families, their relations with the people, the duties of the officials of the Palace, and the operation of its various departments.

While the information given in the History on Süleymân and Selîm II is sparse and summary that on Murad III and Mehmed III is comparatively profuse in detail. He was, indeed, an acute observer when the opportunity presented itself; and in fact, his most detailed account of Süleymân deals with the Sultân's illness and death during the Szigetvar campaign in which Selânîkî participated⁷⁹. His praise of Süleymân must not be taken as the automatic panegyric common to most Ottoman histories, for he is prepared to criticize other sultâns in the strongest terms when he feels they deserve it.

Of Selîm II he remarks disapprovingly that he failed to go on campaigns, preferring the comfort and security of the Palace; but he accepts that it was probably not really necessary, because under the skillful direction of the Grand Vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa the armies continued to gain victories. He mentions eight achievements of Selîm's reign, any one of which would be sufficient to assure its greatness:

firstly, the reconquest of the Yemen by Sinân Paşa, the governor of Egypt, from the descendents of the Mutahhar family;

secondly, the building of 360 cupolas around the Ka'be, thus providing peace and comfort for pilgrims, and the expenditure by Mihri-mâh Sultân of 500,000 gold pieces to have water brought to the Harem-i Şerif from the mountain of Arafat;

79 E, 9a-27b; Sel, 18-59.

thirdly, the conquest of Cyprus by Lala Mustafa Paşa from the Venetians;

fourthly, the building of the Selîmiye mosque in Edirne by Sinân Ağa, the chief architect - and here Selânîkî adds parenthetically that no ruler in the world possessed such a magnificent monument and he quotes numerous chronograms which were composed on its completion;

fifthly, the compulsory purchase by the state of all the houses close to the Ayasofya and their demolition in order to create an open space around the building, together with the restoration of Ayasofya itself, under the supervision of Sinân Ağa;⁸⁰

sixthly, the completion of the bridge at Büyük Çekmece, which had been started in the reign of Selîm II;

sevently, the building of a strong fortress at the entry to the harbour of Anavarin and equipping it with cannon and a garrison to ensure the security of the Muslims living in the town;

lastly, the capture of the city of Halkulva'd and the province of Tunis from Spain by the Commander-in-Chief Sinân Paşa and the *Kapudan Kılıç 'Alî Paşa*.

Selânîkî's account of Selîm II's death is interesting and rather different from other early sources, casting a more favourable light on the Sultân. He says that Selîm had repented of his past ways, and had definitely stopped drinking and partaking of drugs, and, despite the advice of the palace physician to gradually discontinue taking drugs, Selîm had insisted on giving them up immediately, and as a result was physically weakened. The former Chief Physician, Mustafa Çelebi, was consulted and he diagnosed the Sultân's illness as brain fever (*sersâm*), prescribing certain medicines for him. However, in spite of all efforts to cure him, a few days later, on the 1st Ramazan 982 (15th December 1574), he died⁸¹. At the end of the chapter dealing with the death of Selîm II Selânîkî gives his reign as having lasted eight years, eight months and eight days.⁸²

After describing the ceremony of Murâd III's accession to the throne

80 Selânîkî here erroneously remarks that 135 years had passed since the conquest of Istanbul up to the reign of Selîm II. It is probably a copyist's error.

81 *E*, 57b-58b; *Sel*, 123-125.

82 This is clearly wrong, for he gives the date of Selîm's accession to the throne as 15 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 974 (30 Sep 1566), and his death as 1 Ramazân 982. The period between these two dates is eight years, five months and 16 days.

and his visit to certain places in the City, Selânîkî then praises the new Sultân on account of his keen interest in; and great zeal for, the affairs of the state. He says that on Saturday 25th Ramazan 932 (8th January 1575), early in the morning the Sultân had called for the *kāzî-askers*. After he had read their programmes⁸³ for that day, he attended the Dîvân to hear some of the cases. The viziers had also presented their programmes. Because of the Sultân's keen interest and his early attendance at the Dîvân, the problems of the poor people had been solved and the affairs of the Muslims tended to run smoothly.⁸⁴

However, towards the middle of the reign of Murâd, he does not spare his criticism on several occasions: for instance, in Muharrem 999 (Nov 1590), under the heading «The *gazel* which was written to the Sultân in *ruk'a* (petition)»⁸⁵:

Durmayub pâdişâhum zulm ile dünyâ yıkılır
Dûdmân-ı fukarâ beyt-i re'âyâ yıkılır

Dehre her dîn-u-denî hâkim ü vâli olah
Kalb-i câhil yapılır hâtır-ı dâna yıkılır

Böyle dönerse eger 'aksine bu çarh-ı felek
Korkaruz üstümüze kubbe-i minâ yıkılır

Kesr-i 'ırz itme şehâ yok yere hâtır yıkma
Kalb-i mü'min ki sına 'arş-ı mu'allâ yıkılır

Yıkılır diyü dilâ gam yime bu çarh-ı kühen
katı çokdan yıkılubdur dime hâlâ yıkılır

After recording the death of Murâd III, Selânîkî reviews the personality of lae Sultân and looks back over his reign. Of his physical appearance he describes him as being of handsome aspect, with wide-spaced eyebrows, black eyes, a round beard, of medium height tending towards fat, and having strong arms.⁸⁶

83 *Kazâyâ* is the word used here; for this term see N. Göyünç, 'XVI yüzyılda Ruus ve Önemi', *Tarih Dergisi*, XVII (1967) p. 28.

84 *E*, 61b-62a; *Sel*, 133.

85 *E*, 129b; *Sel*, 272-73.

86 A similar description of his physical appearance is given in H. G. Rosedale, *Queen Elizabeth and the Levant Company*, London, 1904), p. 21.

The Sultân is severely criticized on account of the Persian wars which occupied the larger part of his reign and caused great distress throughout the country. Selânîkî says that although Murâd III had annexed many important places and built the necessary fortresses, these wars drained the financial resources of the country and corrupted the discipline of the army. During the war years, not even half of the revenues of the eastern cities had been paid into the Public Treasury because of local expenditures which were incurred. Previous Sultâns had not concerned themselves with the conquest of these eastern areas, being aware that the revenues they would obtain there would hardly be sufficient to cover the cost of their administration.

In this connection, Selânîkî takes the opportunity to expound his own views on the conduct of state affairs. As a true Muslim, he of course believes that the government and administration of the country should be carried out according to the commandments of God. If affairs are based on personal desires and conducted for individual gain then government is liable to corruption and decay; he recalls that in the past unjust governments had caused the death of millions, citing the invasion of Baghdad by Hulagu in 656 (1258), in which twelve hundred Muslims were killed, and Timur's invasion of Anatolia in 804 (1402). From these instances he concludes that despotic and unjust administration can never bring prosperity.

Selânîkî also complains about the morals of certain classes in society, such as the *ulemâ'* and the merchants, finding little that was pious or praiseworthy in their activities. In the past, prescient holy men used to pray, «O God, do not let us live to see troubles of the year of 1000 AH» and they had died, leaving others to cope with the situation. He wonders how God could allow a state to prosper while such immorality flourished. Here he quotes the following verses:

Devlete göre âsitâne olur
Her kuş için bir âşiyâne olur
Sanmanuz halk olur zamâna göre
Belki halka göre zamâne olur

Selânîkî points out that Murâd's frequent and arbitrary changes of grand vizier, *şeyhülislâm*, *kāzî-askers* and *defterdâr* caused disorder and confusion in the Empire. However, he also mentions Murâd III's excuse for

these frequent changes in the top posts, quoting a *gazel* by the Sultân explaining this:

Gönlümün istediği bana bir âdem olsa
Havf-ı Mevlâ'dan iki dîdesi pür-nem olsa

Usrû yüsürünî kayırmasa iki dünyada
Cümleten âlem iki aynine bir dem olsa

Nefesi olsa hayât irgürici mürdelere
Bir kelâmı nice bin yâreye merhem olsa

Zâhir ü bâtını ma'mûr ve yüzi nûr-ı mübîn
Tâ ebed nâzır olanlar ana hurrem olsa

Mahzen-i ilm-i ledün kâşif-i sırrı hikmet
Ey Murâdî bize bir şöylece âdem olsa

Finally, concluding the chapter on Murâd III's death, Selânîkî explains that Murâd did not have a very high opinion of the military. Several times the *kapıkulu* had forced their way into the *Dîvân-ı hümayûn* and had shamelessly insulted the viziers. Such misbehaviour destroyed the Sultân's confidence in them.⁸⁷

Concluding the account of Murâd's death and the rather lengthy review of his reign, Selânîkî begins his chronicle of the reign of Mehmed III. Although he begins by severely criticizing both the strangulation of the nineteen *şehzâdes*, (without, however, identifying a guilty party) and the marrying-off of their mothers to certain soldiers, in general, he speaks approvingly of the new Sultân.⁸⁸

In describing the numerous changes in the top posts and in the Palace service, Selânîkî especially emphasizes the Sultân's attitude toward the dwarves and jesters, and seems pleased that they have been expelled from the Palace.⁸⁹ Again and again attention is given to the new Sultân's active efforts to stabilize the country and reform its administra-

87 E, 236-239b.

88 E, 239b.

89 E, 244b.

tion,⁹⁰ and to the consultations he held with Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi and the grand vizier and other high officials for this purpose.⁹¹

The social activities of Mehmed and the previous Sultâns outside the Palace are unfailingly dwelt upon: their excursions to other palaces; their public attendance at the Friday prayers, usually in the imperial mosques; their visits to their ancestors's tombs and certain other shrines. These are related in exceptional detail, with any interesting incidents which may have occurred in connection with them.

Recounting Mehmed III's attendance at the Friday prayer at the Sultân Selîm mosque on 8th of Cemâzü'l-âhir 1003 (18th of February 1595), Selânikî says as the Sultân rode to and from the mosque, seven viziers approached him in order of precedence, according to the old custom, and discussed with him affairs of state. This continued until the Sultân had ridden as far as the Cebe-hane on the return journey. Selânikî remarks that this was an admirable tradition which had fallen into disuse during Murâd III's reign.⁹²

On Friday in Receb 1003 (Mar-Apr 1595), when Mehmed was leaving the Ayasofya after the service he was accosted by the cries of a group of people from Silistre complaining about the miseries they were suffering due to the invasion by the enemy. A *çavuş* approached these people to ascertain the nature of their complaints and was struck by a stone from the hand of Yemişçi Hasan, the Ağa of the Janissaries, who, being observed by the Sultân, was dismissed the following day.⁹³

Likewise, while he is giving an account of the Sultân's Friday prayer in the Bâyezid mosque, he indicates that it was not the established custom for the Ottoman Sultâns, to go to this mosque for their Friday pra-

90 One may see the documentary evidence for these efforts in the *addîlet-nâme* published by Ç. Uluçay in *XVI ve XVII Yüzyılda Sarıhanda Eşkiyalık ve Halk Hareketleri* (İstanbul, 1944), p. 163-169, and in the *hükmi* addressed to the *kâzı-askers* (Ramazân 1006/April 1598) regulating the affairs of the *ulemâ* which is given in İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilâtı*, (Ankara 1965), pp. 243-9.

91 At these meetings Mehmed III generally discussed the current affairs of state, matters of urgency and measures to deal with them. Consultations with Hoca Sa'deddîn are mentioned for example in *E*, 406a; 435a; and with the grand vizier in *E*, 435a.

92 *E*, 248b.

93 *E*, 255b-256a.

yer. Selîm I paid only one visit there on a Friday, during his preparations for a campaign.⁹⁴

Selânîkî also reports in some detail the major events of Sultân's life. He describes the ceremonies which took place on the occasion of his accession to the throne, his setting out on campaign and on his return to Istanbul, on the completion of a new palace or any other important building, besides the annual religious festival of Râmazân and Kurban Bayram. He usually reports the whole ceremony giving the names of the high officials who participated and their rank within the hierarchy of officials.

Frequently included in the History are incidents which concerned not only the Sultân, but also the *şehzâdes* and *hanım sultans* and *vâlide sultâns*. In 990 (1582) Selânîkî was present at the circumcision feast of Şehzâde Mehmed (who was to become Mehmed III), and his report, which covers several chapters, deals both with the feast itself and with the significant events concerning it.⁹⁵

Murâd III, having decided in 990 (1582) to arrange a magnificent circumcision feast for his son Mehmed, postponed the preparations for the eastern campaign. *Çarşıgırs* and *müteferrikas* were sent to announce the Şehzâde's circumcision to the provincial governors and neighbouring rulers, who sent their envoys to the Capital with abundant presents and messages of loyalty and friendship. İbrahim Hân, the envoy of the Şah of Persia, Muhammed Hüdâbende, accompanied by a retinue of one thousand men, was among the first to arrive, bringing with him lavish presents and proposals for peace between the two countries. Abdullâh Hân, the ruler of the Üzbek hanate of Transoxiana, Samarkand and Bukhara, sent his envoy with gifts and congratulations, as did Mehmed Giray Hân of the Crimea and the Kıpçak steppe, and the rulers of *Magrib-zemîn* and Morocco. The envoys from Georgia, Moscow, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia (Bohemia), France, Venice, Ragusa, Wallachia and Moldavia also arrived with presents, and they were accepted according to the normal protocol.

94 E, 290b-291a.

95 For events such as these Selânîkî's work is particularly valuable. His account of the circumcision is more detailed than that of Hasan Beğ-zâde, (*Târîh*, 50a-52a) or that of Peçevî, (*Tarih*, II, p. 271), for while they describe only the ceremony itself, Selânîkî is also concerned with the preparations which went on behind the scenes.

The *müteferrika* Kara Bâli Beg, who was formerly *emîn* of the Imperial Kitchen, was appointed as director (*emîn*) of the circumcision, and Hamza Beg, a former *Nişancı*, superintendent (*nâzır*). A sum of 600,000 *akçes* from the Imperial Treasury was assigned to them to cover the expenses of the preparations. The pantry equipment was put in the palace of Sinan Paşa, the late *Kapudân-ı deryâ*, which overlooked the Hippodrome, and kitchens and hearths were set up in front of the Imperial Bakery. 1500 copper plates and trays were made, each of them beign three and a half *vakîye*, which is to say, more than 2000 *dirhem* in weight, with a capacity of one *şinik*⁹⁶ of pilaf. 600 strong *sipâhîs*, and 1000 soldiers under the command of Hüseyin Ağa, the *Cebeci-başı*, were appointed to serve at the circumcision feast.

The palace of İbrâhîm Paşa was restored, the staircase and doors opening onto the Hippodrome were removed, and a magnificent pavilion was built in front of it. In the Imperial *Mehterhâne* an audience-hall, 95 *zirâs* in height, was built for the important officials. In the lower part of the hall a place was designated for the envoys from the Christian states. The brother of the Tatar Hân and the Polish envoy were placed on the opposite side of the hall. Twice a day, in the morning and evening, a special meal was served to the Tatar and Polish envoys. Three times a day, meals were served to the Persian İbrâhîm Hân and his attendants, some consisting of fifteen dishes, while even the less elaborate consisted of nine.

In order to view the ceremonies the Grand Vizier Sinân Paşa selected a chamber above the newly-built pavillion, while Mesîh Paşa, İbrâhîm Paşa the *Beglerbegi* of *Rumeli*, Siyâvuş Paşa, Mehmed Paşa, Abdülmuhyî Efendi the *defterdâr* of *Anatoli*, Mahmûd Efendi the *defterdâr* of the *şikk-i sâni*, Ca'fer Paşa the *Beglerbegi* of *Anatoli*, and Hasan Paşa the *Beglerbegi* of Şâm, were given suitable places to from which to view. Kılıç Ali Paşa, the *Kapudân-ı deryâ*, had a special viewing-chamber built for himself, and after the ceremony was over he made it a pious foundation for teaching Muslim children to recite the Koran. The two *kâzî-askers* were ordered to continue performing their duties as usual in their own housus throughout the period of festivity.

The duty of performing the circumcision was assigned to Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa, whose expertise in this operation was famous; in return

96 Measure of cereals equalling a quarter of bushel.

for this he was given various robes of honour, 500 pieces of gold, a golden bowl and ewer and thirty valuable lengths of cloth. The ceremony lasted fifty-five days, during which various feasts and entertainments took place. Towards the end of the period a quarrel broke out (as had often happened in similar situations) between the Janissaries and the palace *Sipâhîs*.⁹⁷ One or two soldiers, who were drunk almost to the point of death, were laid out in a place where they could be seen by the Sultân. As a result Ferhâd, Ağa of the Janissaries, and Osmân, Ağa of the *Sipâhîs*, and the *Silâhdâr-başı* were dismissed and the situation returned to normal. The imperial circumcision ended on the 3rd of Receb 990 (24th of July 1582)

The Grand Vizier presided over the three feasts. [During previous circumcision feasts the Sultân himself had presided, but Murâd III abandoned this practice.] The first feast was given in honour of the Müftî Efendi and Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi and other members of the *ulemâ'*, the second in honour of the descendents of the Prophet (the *sâdât* and the *eşraf*), and the third for The *meşâ'ih*. the *tâ'rîh* was given thus:

طوقوز یوز طقندنه سنت اولدی

In 990 the circumcision took place.⁹⁸

The circumcision ceremonies which had taken place in the reigns of previous Sultâns had been different. The high officials, the *ulema'* and the *meşâ'ih* would foregather in the presence of the Sultân and enter upon scholarly discussions, during which the *ulema'* would expound passages from the Koran. During this circumcision feast, however, Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi, the Müftî Malûl-zâde Efendi, Bostân-zâde Efendi, Civi-zâde Efendi, Molla İvâz and Şeyh Efendi were not able to hold such discussions, due to certain arguments about precedence and rank, which created such a bad atmosphere that the members left the gathering before the proceedings could begin.

In the same year, just after the circumcision feast, Selânikî describes the brilliant ceremony which took place according to the established cus-

97 The text has: *içerüden çıkan celeb sipâhî tâ'îfesi*.

98 In this form the *tâ'rîh* would yield 985. It should probably be altered to. طوقوز یوز طقندنه سنت اولدی (E, 79a-79b; Sel, 168).

toms to mark the occasion of Şehzâde Mehmed's departure for the governorship of Manisa.⁹⁹

On several occasions, Selânikî gives information about the *hanım sultâns*. His accounts of their wedding ceremonies are especially worthy of mention. As an eye-witness Selânikî gives in detail the marriage ceremony of Murâd III's daughter Â'îşe Sultân to the vizier İbrâhîm Paşa. He mentions the preparations, the presents which were given by both parties, the feast prepared for the *Nakîbü'l-eşraf* and the *sâdât*, for the *Şeyhülislâm* and the *ulemâ'* and for high officials.

At the end of his account of this ceremony, Selânikî compares it with the customs surrounding previous weddings. He recalls that when Mihrimâh Sultân, the daughter of Kânûnî Süleymân, left the Old Palace for her future husband's house, the Grand Vizier Hadım Süleymân Paşa, out of respect for the sovereign, had dismounted from his horse and walked in front of Mihrimâh Sultân's carriage. Likewise, when Hümâ Sultân, the daughter of Şehzâde Mehmed, left the Old Palace for her husband's house, the Grand Vizier Rüstem Paşa escorted her to the walls of the palace. In the same way, when the daughter of Selîm II left the Old Palace on the occasion of her marriage to Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, the Grand Vizier Semîz 'Alî Paşa apologized for his inability to walk during the procession - due to foot trouble - and was permitted to ride instead. Selânikî says that this time the Grand Vizier Siyâvuş Paşa, according to the established custom, came out from the Palace, but then mounted a horse and rode in front of the procession.¹⁰⁰

Selânikî also records the banquet and ceremony in connection with the marriage of Ferîdn Beg [the compiler of the *Münşe'âtü's-Selâttîn*] to Â'îşe Sultân, the daughter of Mihrimah Sultân, at which he himself was present, and was given two robes of honour.¹⁰¹ The other two major wedding ceremonies fully described by Selânikî are those of Murâd III's daughter to Halîl Paşa in 1003,¹⁰² and of Vizier Mehmed Paşa, the son of Sinân Paşa, to the Hanım Sultân in Rebî'ü'l-âhîr 1007.¹⁰³

Selânikî gives information about two *Vâlide Sultâns*, Nurbânû Sultân the mother of Murâd III, and Safiye Sultân, the mother of Mehmed

99 E, 82b-83a; Sel, 174-6.

100 Sel, 205-209.

101 E, 76b; Sel, 162.

102 E, 190a-192a.

103 E, 421a-b.

III. He reports the death and burial ceremony of Nurbânû Sultân in detail: on Wednesday, the 22nd of Zi'l-ka'de 991 (7th December 1533) the Vâlide Sultân died at Bağçe Sarây in the district of Yenikapı. The *ulemâ*; the *meşâ'ih* and even the Sultân, dressed in mourning and weeping; followed the funeral procession to the mosque of Mehmed the Conqueror. After the funeral prayer, the Sultân went through the crowded streets to the Palace, and the high officials attended the Vâlide Sultân's burial in the tomb of Selîm II near Ayasofya. For forty days, both morning and evening, the viziers and the *Mevlî* visited her tomb, read the Koran and made charitable donations to the poor.¹⁰⁴

While the information on Nurbânû Sultân is sparse and practically restricted to her death, that on Safiye Sultân is profuse in detail. Starting during the reign of her husband, Murâd III, especially after the death of her mother-in-law Nurbânû Sultân (1583), her influence steadily increased.

During the whole of her son's reign, partly due to Mehmed III's great respect for his mother¹⁰⁵, and partly due to her own ability, she acquired great influence, not only in the Palace, and in internal politics, but also a reputation in foreign dealings, and corresponded with certain European rulers.¹⁰⁶

Selânîkî's information, however, is mainly concerned with her influence over her son, her active personality and certain rumours about her. He reports her important role during the illness and death of her husband: after consultation with certain viziers, she sent a letter to Mehmed in Manisa, informing him that, as the Sultân was dying, he ought to be preparing to ascend the throne. However, she kept secret the death of Murâd from the viziers. Whenever a question was asked on the Sultân's medical condition, she let it be understood, through Ferhâd Paşa, the *kâ'im-makâm*, that he was still alive. However, she secretly sent the news of his death with Ferhâd Ağa, the *Bostan-başı*, to the new Sultân, explaining to him that as the viziers had not yet become aware

104 E, 82a; Sel, 173-174.

105 See: İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı*, (Ankara, 1945), p. 243.

106 For her letters to Queen Elizabeth I during the reigns of her husband and son, see: S. A. Skilliter, «Three letters from the Ottoman 'Sultana' Safiye to Queen Elizabeth I», *Oriental Studies III, Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, (Oxford 1965), pp. 119-157.

of the Sultân's death no official letter from them could be expected. As previously arranged with her son, Safiye sent him a silver goblet as a token that the news of the Sultân's demise was true, and that he, Mehmed, was now Sultân.¹⁰⁷

Events recorded in the History give a clear indication that the Vâlide Sultân had an important influence in the Capital during the absence of Mehmed III on the Egri campaign: in Rebi'ü'l-âhir 1005 (Nov-Dec 1596), Ahmed, the *aga* of the *kapucılar*, arrived, bearing the Sultân's letter to the Vâlide, in which he promised that whatever she requested would be done. When Bîzebân Aga brought news of the victory, in a detailed letter to Mehmed III the Vâlide Sultân requested the appointment of İbrâhîm Paşa to the grand vizierate, and of İbrâhîm Aga to the office of Mîr-âhur, and of Hızır Aga, who was then attached to the Harem, to the *kethüdalık* of the *kapucılar*. She also sent lavish presents for her son on the occasion of his victory. When Bîzebân Aga arrived at the imperial camp at Harmanlı, her request was granted, and Cagala-zâde Sinan Paşa was replaced as grand vizier by Dâmâd İbrâhîm Paşa.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, Selânikî mentions that in Cemâzü'l-evvel 1005 (Jan 1597) Hoca Efendi-zâde Mehmed Efendi, the *kāzî-asker* of *Anotolı*, was dismissed from that office, and in his place, through the intercession of the Vâlide Sultân, the former *kāzî* of Mecca Kuş Yahyâ Efendi was appointed.¹⁰⁹

Selânikî indicates that the Vâlide Sultân, in addition to her obvious influence over, and interference in, state affairs, was also involved in various intrigues, although he is very careful in the wording of his criticism of such a powerful personage.¹¹⁰ When recording various appointments, Selânikî merely says that bribes were paid to the Harem, without being more specific.

The Vâlide Sultân was deeply distressed by the death of the Jewess Kira, the confiscation of her property and the consequent fate of her

107 E, 235b-236a.

108 E, 352b-353a.

109 E, 258a.

110 Hasan Beğ-zâde, (*Târîh*, 102a) and Peçevî, (*Târîh*, II, 210), who relied on Hasan Beğ-zâde for his account, in reporting the appointment of Hâdım Hasan Paşa to the grand vizierate and his later execution, mention that the Paşa had openly admitted giving presents to the Vâlide Sultân. Selânikî, however, although reporting the Paşa's vizierate and execution over several chapters, makes no mention of this.

sons, and complained about the indifference shown to this affair by her sons-in-law, saying «My sons-in-law are my enemies. Is this how they should defend the integrity of the state? Both of them hold some responsibility for the part played by the soldiers in the death of this woman. If her execution was necessary, did it have to be carried out like this? She could have been thrown into the sea. The execution in such a way of a woman so closely connected to the Harem is damaging to the integrity of the state».¹¹¹

Because of the great respect Mehmed III had for his mother, the Vâlide Safiye Sultân was provided with various revenues, and Selâniki devotes some to describing the nature of these, and certain irregularities and complaints which occurred from time to time in connection with them. On 12th Receb 1003 (23rd March 1595), Mehmed III decreed that his mother should receive 3000 *cil akçe* per day, which should be paid in monthly installments by the *Şehr emîni*. She should also receive every year 300,000 *akçe* for her summer expenses, and same sum during the winter. In addition, the following year the Sultân decreed that more than 10 *yük hâs paşmaklık* should be given to her.¹¹² These fiefs and their revenues were administered by an official known as the *Vâlide Sultân hâsları voyvodası*.¹¹³

The Central Administration

The centralized system of administration by which the Empire was governed centred about the *Dîvân-ı Hümayûn* and the offices associated with it. All political, financial and military activities of even the most remote regions of the realm had ultimately to be considered and decided upon in this chamber, and here, too, the dismissals and appointments of responsible officials were made. In the second half of the sixteenth century the *Dîvân* was at its most powerful, and it was at this time that Selâniki was in a position to observe its operations from the inside and report on the character of the individuals involved therein. We are, also, allowed to see through his eyes the gradual growth of irresponsibility that was later to vitiate this central organ of government and at periods leave the Empire in a state bordering on anarchy.

111 E, 467a-467b, 468b.

112 E, 310a-310b.

113 E, 314b.

On several occasions he mentions the names and ranks of the dignitaries comprising the *Dîvân*. For instance, in describing the ceremonial departure for the Szigetvar campaign Selânikî mentions the names of high officials: the grand vizier was Sokullu Mehmed Paşa; the second vizier, Pertev Paşa, went on campaign as commander; the third vizier was Ferhâd Paşa; the fourth vizier, Ahmed Paşa; the fifth vizier, Kızıl Ahmedlî Mustafâ Paşa¹¹⁴; the *kāzî-asker* of Rumeli was Hâmid Efendi and of *Anatoli*, Pervîz Efendi; the *Baş-defterdâr* was Murâd Çelebi Efendi, and the Ağa of the Janissaries was 'Ali Ağa.¹¹⁵

On the occasion of Murâd III's accession to the throne, Selânikî mentions the names of the six *kubbe-altı* vizier, together with those of other high officials. However, towards the end of Murâd III's reign, in 1001, we see the number of viziers had risen to seven. Selânikî shows Sinân Paşa as grand vizier, Ferhâd paşa as second vizier and Dâmâd İbrâhîm Paşa third vizier, Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa fourth vizier, Cagala-zâde Sinân Paşa fifth vizier, Nişancı Mehmed Paşa sixth vizier and Hızır Paşa seventh vizier. He concludes his chapter with Cagala-zâde's successful claim to precedence over Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa.¹¹⁶

Besides these dome viziers (*kubbe vezîrleri*), Selânikî occasionally mentions *hâric vezîrleri*, who hold the rank of vizier, but serve in the *eyalets* as governors or commanders. In a special chapter, Selânikî says that after the return of Mehmed III from the Egri campaign, the viziers were İbrâhîm Paşa, who was grand vizier; Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa; Hâlîl Paşa, who was both vizier and *kapudan*; Hızır Paşa, who had been *muhâfız* of Baghdad; Hadım Hasan Paşa, who was *muhâfız* of Istanbul; Sinân Paşa-zâde Mehmed Paşa, who had been in Belgrade during the campaign; Satırcı Mehmed Paşa, *muhâfız* of Vidin; Mahmûd Paşa, *muhâfız* of Tebrîz. Apart from these viziers, there were also some *hâric* viziers - Mehmed Paşa-zâde Hasan Paşa, the current *muhâfız* of Belgrade; another Hasan Paşa, who was serving in the Yemen; Hâfız Ahmed Paşa, serving in Bosnia; Saatçı Hasan Paşa, serving in Tebrîz; Yemişçi Hasan Paşa,

114 Although İ. H. Uzunçarşılı (in *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, p: 188) says that in the reign of Kânûnî Süleymân the number of viziers was not more than four, Selânikî provides evidence that there were five viziers on the eve of the Szigetvar campaign.

115 E, 9b; Sel, 19.

116 E, 171b.

serving in Şîrvân; Mustafâ Paşa, serving in Erzurum. In total, there were nine *dâhil* viziers, and seven *hâric* viziers.¹¹⁷

However, in recounting a conversation he held with certain experienced persons, Selânîkî expresses his anxiety about the increasing number of officials receiving payments from the imperial treasury. On this occasion, he gives the number of both *dâhil* and *hâric* viziers as twenty-three.¹¹⁸

In the sixteenth century, the *Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn* met four days a week -Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.¹¹⁹ From the information given by Selânîkî, however, it can be seen that on various occasions, such as the death of certain dignitaries,¹²⁰ the departure of the army on campaign¹²¹, the reception of envoys¹²², and the occasion of imperial wedding ceremonies¹²³, the *Dîvân* meeting was not held.

Incidents were often reported which indicate to the reader the type of matters with which the *Dîvân* dealt: its discussions, decisions, appointments and dismissals, complaints and their investigations, relations with foreign countries, etc. For example, there was the investigation of the *Defterdâr* Kara Üveys. The register of Murâd III's financial affairs while he was *şehzâde* had been brought to the *Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn* and given to the *Baş-defterdâr*. The following day Kara Üveys, one of the *defterdârs*, was brought before the *Dîvân* and charged with opening sealed money boxes and paying '*ulûfe*' to certain people without authorisation. According to custom, he and his accusers sat down on a carpet in front of the viziers, while the grand vizier listened to the proceedings. Kara Üveys insisted that since he had become *defterdâr* the treasury had been opened and closed only by him, and that he had done what was necessary. If there was anything missing, he was ready to repay it a thousand-fold. Sokullu Mehmed Paşa sought the opinion of Murâd III's Lala (Ca'fer Beg)¹²⁴ who,

117 E, 359b-360a.

118 E, 462.

119 B. Lewis, EI², *Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn*, II, p: 338.

120 See: the death and funeral of the *Dârû's-Sa'âde Ağası*, (E, 130a; Sel, 274).

121 See: the departure of Hasan Paşa (E, 141a-b; Sel, 296) and Satırcı Mehmed Paşa (E, 374) on campaign.

122 Because of the reception of Hân Ahmed., the ruler of Gilan, the *Dîvân* did not meet for two days.

123 See: the wedding ceremony of Halîl Paşa and Hanım Sultân.

124 See: M. T. Gökbilgin, 'Kara Üveys Paşa'nın Budin Beglerbegiligi', *Tarih Dergisi*, Vol II, no 3-5, p: 18.

after listening to the details, said that he had explained to Kara Üveys- that his responsibility [as Lala] had ceased on the accession of Murâd to the throne and that the authority had then passed into the hands of the grand vizier. Although, as a personal opinion, he thought that there was no need to open the boxes, nevertheless the matter depended on the grand vizier's decision 19 Şevvâl 982 (1 Feb 1595).¹²⁵

Selânikî gives detailed and comprehensive information about the grand vizier, his authority and control over affairs. There are indications that he held meetings in his palace to discuss major governmental matters with the high officials, in addition to his regular meetings in the *Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn*.

One such meeting is described in detail, with mention of those who participated and the matters they discussed. In Şa'bân 1003 (Apr - May 1595) the Vizier İbrâhîm Paşa, Cerrâh Mehmed Paşa, the Vizier and Kapudan Halîl Paşa, Hadîm Hasan Paşa, the *Kāzî*-*asker* of Rumeli Abdülbâkî Efendi, the *Kāzî*-*asker* of *Anatoli* Ebu's-Su'ûd-zâde Mustafâ Efendi, the *Mîr Tevkkî*, Hamza Paşa, the *Baş-defterdâr* Hasan Efendi, the *defterdâr* of *Anatoli* Mahmûd Efendi, the *defterdâr* of *Şikk-ı Sâni* Dervîş Efendi, the *defterdâr* of Tuna Mustafa Efendi, the Ağâ of the Janissaries Ahmed Ağâ, and the other ağas of the *Rikâb-ı Hümâyûn* and of the *Bölüks* gathered in the palace of the Grand Vizier Ferhâd Paşa. The *Şeyhülislâm* Bostân-zâde Efendi also took part in the meeting. When the *Serdâr* asked for opinion about where the next campaign should be led, İbrâhîm Paşa and Mehmed Paşa favoured a major advance to Buda, while at the same time sending well-equipped troops to Moldavia and Wallachia to protect those regions. Halîl Paşa, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of stamping out the sedition in Moldavia and Wallachia. The *Serdâr* expressed agreement with Halîl Paşa, but Hasan Paşa was of the same opinion as İbrâhîm Paşa.

Selânikî is much more severe in his criticisms of the officials of the central administration than of any other section of the society. In Muharrem 1001 (Oct - Nov 1592), making a comparison with the previous position of the empire, he says that the reign of Selîm II, due to the skillful administration of Sokullu Mahmed Paşa, the country was peaceful and well-ordered. At present however, since the administration had fallen into the hands of incompetent administrators, the people's lives were in a mise-

125 E, 65a; Sel, 139-140.

rable condition.¹²⁶ In particular, he expresses his anxiety about the increase of corrupt practices amongst the top officials. He reports the opinion of Boyah Mehmed Paşa, whom he served as a *divittâr* for four years, that the door of bribery had been opened, and that this would not lead to the prosperity of the Empire.¹²⁷

In Muharrem 1004 (Sep-oct 1595), when a messenger from Esztergorn arrived in Istanbul, bringing news of the hardships suffered by the soldires there, he also accused those in the capital as being responsible for this situation. Selânikî describes in detail the messenger's accusation, as follows: the enemy have attacked Muslim territory, paying no heed to warnings given them. Although the late Sultân Kânûnî Süleyman had conquered many of these places and added them to the Empire, those at present in charge of the government have allowed them to fall into the hands of the infidels, thus destroying the honour of the state. The Muslims and their households have fallen into slavery. What reply will be given to God and His Prophet? The divine trust has been abused. The vengeance of God will fall on those responsible. Selânikî concludes the chapter with a brief statement in which he expresses agreement with the messenger's criticisms of the high officials.¹²⁸

Selânikî also reports certain irregularities which occurred in the operations of the Dîvân. He quotes the following example: when Sinân Paşa was appointed to the grand vizierate, he noticed that, as a result of negligence on the part of the high officials, many unqualified persons had been appointed to offices and thus abuses were being committed. Certain dishonest clerks of the Dîvân and finance departments, obtaining blank forms, headed with the imperial monogram, had forged letters patent and various other certificates. After this inquiry, Sinân Paşa discovered that other clerks had invented a removeable ink, and being enable thereby to erase the content of previously written official documents, were able to write what they wanted instead. Two clerks, named Acduran and Şemsi Ahmed, were put to death at the end of this investigation. Six clerks were punished by cutting off one hand, seven were condemned to the galleys, and others were expelled from the Dîvân. Zi'l-hicce 998 (Oct 1590).¹²⁹

126 *Sel*, 339

127 *E*, 76a; *Sel*, 161.

128 *E*, 281a-281b.

129 *E*, 128 a-128 b; *Sel*, 271-272.

The Military

In his remarks about the central administration and the social life of Istanbul, Selânikî gives much important information concerning the *kapıkulu* organization which was one of the main institutions of the Empire. While narrating incidents concerned with the militray, he does not hesitate to add his own criticisms, and these leave no doubt that the discipline and good order of the Corps was almost daily deteriorating. Most alarming was the way in which the Janissaries were neglecting their military duties and turning to trade in order to increase their incomes, without however abandoning any of their traditional prerogatives¹³⁰. Whenever an opportunity presented itself, they engaged in rioting and looting.

Thus, in the entry for 18th Cemâzû'l-âhir 1003 (28th February 1595) he reports that certain Janissaries who had been ordered to go to strengthen the defences of the Danube (*Tuna yalıları*), instead of fighting the enemy, set about looting the countryside, and Selânikî, of course, is unsparing in his condemnation of this conduct.¹³¹ In 1003 (1594 - 5), the people of Wallachia and Moldavia rose in rebellion against the oppression of the Janissaries and a corrupt judiciary, and asked for help from the neighbouring Christian states. Selânikî clearly shows that his sympathies lay with the rebels rather than these arms of the government, on whom he places the whole blame.¹³²

In the early days of Selîm II's reign, Selânikî was present when the Janissaries instigated riots in order to gain an increase in the bonus which was traditionally bestowed upon the accession of a new sultân, and in their quarterly salaries. He reports their attacks on the viziers, and the concessions made to them by Selîm to get them to break up their meeting and disperse, complaining bitterly about such conduct.¹³³

The slightest provocation was capable of triggering off the most extreme reaction by the Janissaries. Thus when a party of people came from Erzurum to Istanbul to complain about the behaviour of the Janissaries when they passed through there on the Gence campaign, some members of the local regiments stopped the Grand Vizier, Ferhâd Paşa,

130 E, 51b-52a; Sel, 111.

131 E, 250a.

132 E, 253a-253b.

133 E, 34a; Sel, 73-4.

while he was on the way to a meeting of the Divân. They showered insults on him and exhibited such hostility that shortly afterwards, in Cemâzû'l-âhir 1000 (Apr 1592), both he and the Ağa of the Janissaries were dismissed from office.¹³⁴

In the opinion of Selânikî one of the most important reasons for the corruption which he observed in the Janissary Army was the lack of any consistent policy towards this institution by the sultâns and their ministers. When Yemişçi Hasan Paşa was appointed Ağa in place of Ahmed Ağa in Şevvâl 1003 (Jun - Jul 1595), he adds to his mention of the event the remark that in past time the sultâns used to regard the administration of this military elite as deserving of the greatest care and attention, and that consequently the Janissaries were held high in the esteem of the people. Now, however, *ağas* and *kâtibs* were changed three or four times a year, allowing for no consistency in administration and in addition, placing an excessive financial burden on the Treasury. He ends these remarks with a prayer that God will bring about an improvement in this state of affairs.¹³⁵

He has no illusions either about their military efficiency. When Gence was captured in 996 (1588), he breathes a sigh of relief that such troops, more concerned with their own material advantage than in serving the sultân, had been spared suffering defeat, as they most certainly would have had if the enemy had attacked them with his full force.¹³⁶

Information about the quarterly salaries of the Janissaries, for the payment of which Selânikî was from time to time responsible, is given throughout the History. Being several times entrusted with this duty, he recounts in some detail how the salaires were distributed, what steps were taken by the government to provide the money, and the manner in which many tragic incidents took place during the payments. On several occasions he gives the number of soldiers, the gradual increase in this number, and the amount of money which was distributed to them. Some of these details are given in the section concerning the economy of the Empire.

Finally, beside the information about the *kapıkulu*, Selânikî also recounts some incidents and considerations concerning the provincial soldiers of the Empire. For instance, in a chapter dated Rebî'ü'l-âhir 1006

134 *E*, 149a-149b; *Sel*, 310-311.

135 *E*, 269a-269b.

136 *E*, 118b-119a; *Sel*, 251.

(Nov - Dec 1597), reviewing the general situation of the Empire, he says that provincial soldiers had not seen peace for twenty years. During Murâd III's reign, they had been on campaign against Persia, and at the present time they were fighting with the enemy on the European front.¹³⁷

The Ulemâ'

Selânikî gives a great deal of varied information about the *ulemâ'*, who were one of the most important social elements in the Ottoman Empire. Although the Historian had a great deal of respect for certain members of the learned class as individuals, he criticizes the *ulemâ'* severely as a body for allowing their standards to deteriorate. These general criticisms occur several times in very similar language throughout the History. In the early part of the work Selânikî says «...the *ulemâ'* have knowledge of the divine truth. When they ceased commanding good deeds and forbidding evil, society deteriorated, because the people followed blindly the lead given by the *ulemâ'* and the *meşâ'ih*. The decline in their standards is a sign of the coming of the day of judgement.¹³⁸ Later Selânikî repeats the criticism of the declining standards amongst the learned class. These people were complaining that no one posed questions to them, and that even if they did command good deeds and forbid evil, no one paid attention to them.¹³⁹

However, in addition to these general criticisms, there are many events mentioned in the History which show the active role of the *ulemâ'* in society, their strong reaction against injustices, their efforts to improve the condition of the country and the people. Selânikî notes some of these efforts with approval: in Cemâzü'l-evvel 1006 (19 Dec 1597), when Frenk Mehmed Ağa, the former secretary of the Janissaries, set out on the Pilgrimage, the rumour that he had died became current, and at the same time a letter arrived from the Şerîf of the Ka'be, complaining about Frenk Mehmed Ağa's bad behaviour in Mecca. The Sultân issued a *hatt-ı hümayûn* ordering confiscation of all his property for the Treasury. Şems Efendi, the *Anatoli defterdârı*, and other officials went to take possession of it. On the following day, when Frenk Mehmed Ağa returned unexpectedly, cer-

137 E, 389a-389b.

138 E, 52a; *Sel*, 111.

139 E, 386b.

tain of the *ulemâ*' raised strong objections to the seizure of his property, saying «How can the property of a Muslim be confiscated thus? It is contrary to the Şerî'a». As a result, all the property was restored to him.¹⁴⁰

Likewise, under the heading «The care taken by the Şeyhülislâm to prevent unlawful deeds and to restore order» Selânîkî recounts in detail Sun'illâh Efendi's *fetvâ* on the subject, and praises his zeal in protecting the revenues of the pious foundations. Sun'ullah Efendi had stated that the trustees of these *evkâf* should prevent the offering of food on ornamented metal trays and of various fruit drinks in glasses on the occasion of the *Mevlîd* ceremony in the imperial mosques, as this was an innovation which infringed the rights of the poor, for whom the *evkâf* revenues had been originally provided. If the trustees fulfilled the conditions of the founders, and provided meals for the poor in the *medreses* and public kitchens, this would be excellent. Otherwise, this pernicious innovation would steadily increase. The Müftî also stipulated that women should not walk in the market among the men; that the Sultân should at all costs stop judges and officials from receiving bribes, prevent women and eunuchs from intervening in affairs of state, and should take decisive measures to stabilize the coinage.¹⁴¹

Another notable example occurred in Rebî'ü'l-evvel 1007 (Oct 1598). After Mahmûd Paşa left on campaign, Hoca Sa'deddîn, the Şeyhülislâm, issued a *fetvâ* against those who had not gone on campaign, contrary to the Sultân's *fermân*. Nasûh Ağa, the *kapuci-baş*, punished these people.¹⁴²

Appointments, promotions and changes in the posts of *müderris* and *kâzî* are frequently given in the History. Selânîkî, who had opportunity to follow all these appointments at first hand as they were discussed in the *Dîvân-ı Hümayûn*, mentions the dates, the places and even sometimes the reason for these changes. If certain appointments are linked one with another, Selânîkî gives these in one chapter, under the heading «The chain of promotion in the *medreses* and *kâzîlıks*.» In Receb 1006, for instance, he records that Mevlânâ Mustafa Efendi was appointed, with a daily stipend of 100 *akçes*, to the medrese of the Vâlide Sultân from the *Dârü'l-hadîs* of the Sultân; Memek-zâde Mevlânâ Mehmed Efendi was promoted from the *Dârü'l-hadîs* of Sultân Süleymân to Mustafa Efendi's

140 E, 390b-391a.

141 E, 446b-447a.

142 E, 417a-417b.

place; Mevlânâ Haydâr Efendi from the medrese of Şehzâde was appointed in his place; to his place Kara Çelebi-zâde Mevlânâ Mehmed Efendi was appointed from the *Sahn-ı Semâniye*; and to his place Mevlana Hasan was appointed. All the men involved in this chain of promotion came to the Divân and, according to seniority, kissed the throne of the sultanate.¹⁴³

In Selânikî's History there are also isolated incidents about the *ulema*' class, which illustrate facets of their characters, their place in society and the respect and esteem of other people for them. He reports that the fortune of Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi, the tutor of Murâd III, began to diminish in the early days of Mehmed III's reign. His reputation during Murâd's reign had been so great that had he died at that time, the Sultân would have honoured him by attending his funeral personally. However, when Mehmed III ascended the throne, certain opportunists who had previously tolerated Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi's disagreeable behaviour, seeing that his influence was waning, now began to criticize him, and demanded the return of the presents they had given him earlier.

Selânikî also relates the following anecdote¹⁴⁴: one day Murâd III the late Sultân, gave two pieces of *harâc defteri* to his son Şehzâde Mehmed, later Mehmed III, and said, «Take these and give them to your tuteur, Mevlânâ Azmî Efendi.» The Şehzâde took them to the classroom and placed them near Azmî Efendi. When the latter learned that they were brought for him, he refused them, saying «We have neither need nor desire for these things». The Şehzâde then returned them to his father Murâd III, who remarked, «Your teacher abides by the Şerî'a, and does not accept such a gift, but my teacher [Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi] does¹⁴⁵».

Selânikî reports the deaths of eminent *ulemâ*' and provides an obituary for each, as in the case of Müftî Zekerîyâ Efendi¹⁴⁶, Hoca Sa'deddîn Efendi,¹⁴⁷ Abdülbâkî Efendi,¹⁴⁸ and Ebu's-Su'ûd-zâde Mustafa Efendi.¹⁴⁹ Selânikî recounts the death of the last-named as follows: Mus-

143 E, 393b-394a.

144 For the same incident and details, see İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletini Saray Teşkilatı*, p. 361.

145 E, 246b-247a.

146 E, 180a.

147 E, 445b-446a.

148 E, 465b-466a.

148 E, 465b-466a.

149 E, 444b.

tafa Efendi, the former *kāzî*-*asker* of Rûmeli, suffered for a long time with stomach trouble, and eventually died because of this. High officials, viziers, *ulemâ* and *meşâ'ih* attended his funeral at Fatih Sultân Mehmed's mosque. Şeyhülislâm Sa'deddîn Efendi led the funeral prayer. The late Efendi, in his last moments, said to his servant, «My father's prayer rug is spread near Ebu Eyyûb Ensarî's prayer rug. They are ready to pray. They are waiting for me. Make haste and prepare my prayer rug, and let me go to them.» The foolish servant said «Where is the prayer rug? I do not know.» Mustafa Efendi replied «Do as I tell you, do not offend me.» It is reported that at that very moment, the teacher and students in the classroom near Ebu's-Su'ûd's tomb [Mustafa Efendi's father] heard a verse of the Koran being recited in a very loud voice from this tomb. From this they inferred that Mustafa Efendi had died, and in fact, he was buried there the following day. 15th Safer 1008 (6th September 1599).

The State of the Economy

Selânîkî had on several occasions held positions of financial responsibility in the army, and he reports certain significant events which give an indication of the economic difficulties facing the country, dwelling in particular on the high cost of living, the devaluation of the *akçe* and the efforts to stabilize the coinage.

Among the major reasons for the aggravation of the financial hardship, in his eyes, were the arbitrary nature of the appointments to, and dismissals from, government posts, the enormous increase of the personnel in the Kapıkulu organization, and the disastrous wars on both the Eastern and Western fronts. All were contributing to the malaise of the country and the impoverishment of its people.

In Ramazan 1003 (May - Jun 1595), under the title «A complaint about the troubled conditions of the time», he states that the pomp and display of the state had increased, and that expenditure had grown so out of hand that the public treasury could no longer afford it. He adds that many farmers had abandoned their lands, through bribery, gained entry into the army, with the result that the number of tax-payers was diminishing year by year.¹⁵⁰

150 E, 264b-265a.

In Ramazan 1008 (Mar - Apr 1600), Selânikî again alludes to the subject of the finances of the State. Recounting a conversation he had held with men experienced in government, he makes the point that while in the past the viziers numbered no more than seven, and their *kapıcı başıs* no more than fourteen, at this time the *kapıcı-başıs* had increased to twenty-one and there were fully twenty-three viziers in the central and provincial administration (*dâhil ve hâric*). The salaries (*dirlik*) of all the above-mentioned officials had to be paid out of the havâss-ı hümayûn. Selânikî observes that even were the contents of the Treasury as vast as the sands of the desert they would not suffice to meet such expense; and while [such conditions persisted, the state could never enjoy prosperity; nor, in fact, did it augur well for its survival.¹⁵¹

Inflation, which was causing the cost of living to soar, provoked disorder among both the people and soldiers. In 997 (1589), while on the eastern campaign with the army, Selânikî received official reports from Istanbul about the revolt of the *Bölük-halkı* over the debasement of the coinage, (the «Beglerbegi vakası»), and he gives his own explanation for this devaluation. It would appear that people were with impunity dividing the existing *akçe* into five pieces, leaving no trace of the original coin. Although the law required that only 500 *akçes* could be minted from 100 *dirhems* of silver, at this time 2000 *akçes* were being minted, and naturally they had little of their former value. Similarly, the *kuruş*, which had previously been worth 40 *akçes*, and the *altun*, which was valued at 60 *akçes*, had respectively risen to 80 and 120 *akçes*. Consequently, the prices of goods and food-stuffs doubled in the shops, and a salary of 10 *altun* would be worth only five in the market-place.¹⁵²

Regarding the debasement of the coinage another major row blew up concerning the Jevess Kira in Ramazân 1008 (Mar-Apr 1600).¹⁵³ Before entering into the details of the incident, Selânikî had, in the previous chapter, described the causes which underlay the affair: in Ramazân of that year food was very expensive, the poor people were suffering great hardship and no one seemed to care about them. As there were no fixed prices for food, marked traders bought and sold butter, honey, meat and bread at whatever price they chose, and paid no attention to the ru-

151 E, 462a-462b.

152 E, 120a; *Sel*, 252.

153 E, 462b-463a.

lings of the authorities; a *keyl* of barley sold for 60 *akçes*; a *vaktıye* (*okka*) of meat for 20 *akçes*; and bread, which was hardly edible was sold in short weight. Similarly, the price of clothing was increasing enormously: shoes (*pabuç*) had risen to 100 *akçes*, and boots (*çizme*) to 200 *akçes*. The *akçe* was no longer considered a viable currency, gold and silver coins being preferred as units of exchange. Selânikî states that the *altun* had four different exchange rates, depending on the circumstances in which it was used. He says that amongst the people the value of the *altun* was 190 *akçes*, but for goods such as butter, rice, barley etc, its value was 160 *akçes*. However, when people paid their taxes to the government, it was the law that the *altun* should be valued at 118 *akçes*, but when paid to the soldiers as salary it was counted as 120 *akçes*. Thus, when a soldier received his pay, the *altun* was valued at 120 *akçes*; however, when he spent the *altun* in the market he could expect to receive the popular value of the coin, thus profiting by some 70 - 80 *akçes*.¹⁵⁴ Having described this confused situation and the hardship it gave rise to among the people, Selânikî then goes to give brief account of decisive and successful policies of certain European rulers with regard to their own currencies.¹⁵⁵

While describing the daily deterioration of the economy and the devaluation of the *akçe*, Selânikî touches upon certain remedial measures which were taken by the government to stabilize the coinage, to punish counterfeiters, and to compel merchants and the wealthy people to fulfill their financial obligations towards state. He tells us that in Safer 1006 (Sep - Oct 1597), the high officials assembled in the Grand Vizier's palace to discuss measures for dealing with the prevailing chaos, but even after long discussion they were still unable to diagnose the real malady, and merely proposed some useless remedies. For example, they stipulated that the *çavuş* should not wear expensive embroidered clothes like those of women, and that everyone in government must avoid unnecessary expenditure. However, none of these superficial remedies brought about an improvement in the *altun*; and the *kuruş* continued to be exchanged in the markets at a level above the official rate. He says that some people

154 Ö. L. Barkan, in his informative article (XVI asrın ikinci yarısında Türkiye'de fiyat hareketleri, *Belleten*, XXXIV, 1970, Nr, 136, pp. 557-607) examines the economic situation, giving the changes in the prices of several items, quoting relevant information from Selânikî's History.

155 E, 463a.

were making a living out of minting false coins from silver plates and that extravagant high officials were neglecting their duties in respect of economies. The neighbouring Christian rulers, on the other hand, were keeping a close eye on their currencies, and the price controls they imposed ensured that no counterfeiters were able to enter their countries; consequently, they had allowed their subjects to live in prosperity.¹⁵⁶

Foreign Countries and Envoys

Like most of the members of his class, Selânikî exhibits no particular knowledge of the European nations, nor any but the most casual interest in the events transpiring there. However, the importance of the position held by the Ottomans in international affairs and the power they wielded over commerce by virtue of their domination of Mediterranean, assured that Europe could not display the same indifference towards them; and period covered by History is marked by an almost unbroken succession of ambassadors and emissaries, arriving in Istanbul with imposing retinues and sumptuous gifts. The ceremonies with which these representatives of the Christian nations were received were solemn and lavish, and it is to these that Selânikî devotes the most attention.

In Muharrem 1002 (Oct 1593), on the occasion of the arrival of the English envoy¹⁵⁷ to Istanbul, Selânikî gives information about England: it is an island whose perimeter measures 1700 miles, and which is 3700 miles from the Haliç of Istanbul. The woman who rules this island is absolute monarch. The people worship according to the Lutheran rite. The envoy brought lavish presents. Until that time no such ship had come to the Bosphorus. It carried 83 cannon and other fire-arms, and on her prow was depicted the shape of a pig. For this reason Selânikî considered it one of the wonders of the world, and made special mention in his History.¹⁵⁸

Similarly, when the French ambassador came to request the support of the Ottoman government in the matter of the Meddecel *tâ'ife*,¹⁵⁹ Se-

156 E, 383b-384a.

157 For the arrival and mission of this envoy, see I H. Uzunçarşılı, «On dokuzuncu asır başlarına kadar Türk-İngiliz münasebâtına dair vesikalar», *Belleten*, VIII, 51 (1949), p. 577.

158 E, 186b.

159 see M. Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*. İstanbul 1971. II, p. 434.

lânîkî takes this opportunity to mention the Ottoman position towards France: France, with her abundant provinces and extensive territory, is the first among the Christian countries, and since the beginning had been on terms of friendship with the Ottoman empire. So far she has always submitted her respects to the Ottoman sevreignty. Mehmed the Conquerer's mother had said concerning the French king «our prince, and of our race».

When the Ottoman Sultâns campaigned in Hungary, it was an old custom that the French ambassadors should take part, and consequently they had been present on each of Kanûnî Süleymân's western campaigns. However, the English ambassâdor¹⁶⁰ participated in the Egri campaign both on his own behalf and also as the representative of the French ambassador, who was absent in France at the time. The French ambassador (*Kabasakal*),¹⁶¹ who had been carrying out this duty for a long time, read and wrote Turkish fluently, and did not need an interpreter. He returned to Istanbul with a great number of presents, and was received at the *Kalaba Dîvânı*, where he presented his gifts and offered congratulations on the Egri victory. Twenty-five nobles from his retinue were also admitted to the Dîvân. Selânîkî then reports the proposal of the ambassador on the affair of the Meddecel *tâ'ife*.¹⁶²

In Receb of the same year (March 1597), Selânîkî explains French ambassador's pro-Ottoman speech, in which he said that the Ottomans had put the enemy in their place, and although France had given them advice many times, their stubbornness and pride had brought disaster on their heads. Nevertheless, the belief of the Christians had been this, that if the Sultân had wintered in Belgrade, or even in Edirne, it was certain that the Hungarians (fearing a new campaign in the spring) would have sent urgent missions, asking for peace.¹⁶³

160 Selânîkî does not mention the name of the English Ambassador, giving only «İngiltere ilçisi Galatalu nâm ilçî». However, certain Mss leave a space between *Galatalu* and *nâm*. In this period the English ambassador was Edward Barton, who after returning from the Egri campaign; died in Istanbul and was buried in Heybeli-ada. I H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol, III, part 2, p. 227.

161 Selânîkî does not give the actual name of the ambassador, mentioning him only as قباصل (*Kabasakal*). The man who represented France throughout the reign of Mehmed III was François Savori de Breve. (cf. T. Gökbilgin, 'Mehmed III', article in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*)

162 E, 357b-358a.

163 E, 365b-366a.

On the other hand, Selânikî expresses his anxiety and sorrow with regard to the increasing interference of, and active role played by, these ambassadors in the affairs of the Empire, and gives some examples, in particular the following: in Şevvâl 1007 (May 1599), five ships from the fleet of the *Duka-i França*¹⁶⁴ made an unsuccessful attack on the island of Chios. Selânikî, reporting the event in detail, explains the French ambassador's role in the matter of prisoners of war taken at sea. Cağala-zâde Sînân Paşa had captured some Spanish pirates in the Mediterranean. Several hundred heads were brought to Istanbul, together with other captive who had been taken alive, some of whom were wounded. The French ambassador, resident in Istanbul, became aware of the affairs of the Divân and of the arrival of these prisoners in particular. He did not neglect to take necessary measures. Spending florins to sow discord amongst the high officials, the ambassador obtained permission to free 100 captives. That such a thing had taken place in the Muslim land through the intrigue of a French ambassador indicated the growing strength of the enemy.¹⁶⁵

On the other hand, the protracted struggle of the Ottomans with Safavid Persia, affecting as it did the very heart-lands of Islam, was matter of very deep concern to the Porte; and as this enemy, unlike the Christians, was able to appeal to the minds and hearts of the Muslim people by offering an alternative dispensation, it was to be expected that hostility shown towards him should be bitter and implacable.

Selânikî, however, takes a practical view as to how this confrontation should be pursued. Mentioning the curse laid on the Persians by the Prophet - *mazzaka' allâhü mülke-hü ke-mâ mazzaka kitâbî* -, he sees their country as a region of poverty from the conquest of which no profit can be expected; whenever one of its rulers did manage to bring some prosperity there, he was invariably followed by another who destroyed this by his tyranny. It should be noted that this is a change of attitude on the part of Selânikî: in 975 (1567-68), when the Kızılbaş emîr Şâh-kulî Han arrived in Istanbul to convey the congratulations of the Şâh to Sultân Selîm II on his accession to the throne, Selânikî, after commenting on the lavish hospitality shown to him and followers, concludes his remarks with a pra-

164 Selânikî says *Duka-i França lâ'ini*. This is probably a mistake for *Duka-i Florensa*. Uzunçarşılı mentions that this attack was made by a ship of the Duke of Raçyana which belonged to Florence, (I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. III, part 2, p. 147).

165 E, 435b-436a.

yer that God may grant that the earth be cleansed of the foul Kızılbaş by the swords of the true believers, that their lands be taken from them and settled by orthodox Muslims, and that the honour of achieving this be accorded to the Ottomans.¹⁶⁶ Again, in 984, when another such delegation arrived from the Şâh to congratulate Murad III on his accession, Selânîkî cannot let the occasion pass without disparaging remarks about the Kızılbaş, this time dwelling on the ingratitude they showed for the extraordinary marks of honour which were shown them.¹⁶⁷

In addition to these details concerning the foreign countries themselves, Selânîkî also gives very valuable information about their emissaries - the customs surrounding their arrival in Istanbul, certain changes in these traditions, the conduct of these representatives, and the interest shown by the people in the splendid ceremonies.

On the arrival of the Venetian Bailo in Istanbul in Cemâziyü'l-evvel 1005 (Jan 1597), to offer congratulations on the recent victory, Selânîkî mentions two traditions concerning the envoys. Previously the Venetian Bailo, like the envoys of Transylvania, Moldavia and Ragusa, used not to be feasted. After the defeat of the fleet¹⁶⁸ however, the Bailo offered 1000 gold pieces as expenses for a feast, together with 120,000 *sikke-i hasene* war indemnity, and a feast was subsequently provided for him. Later, however, the Bailo did not give money for a feast, and this practice did not continue.¹⁶⁹

Similarly it was the custom that when the envoy came to the Dîvân the grand vizier would receive him standing up. The *kāzî-askers* also stood, out of respect for the high officials. This time, however, the *kāzî-asker* of Anatoli, Yahya Efendi, demonstrating a particular firmness, did not stand up. After he had dined with the grand vizier, the envoy, accompanied by twelve noblemen from his retinue, then entered the presence of the Sultân.¹⁷⁰

Selânîkî also mentions another significant change in the tradition concerning the reception of envoys. Recounting the Grand Vizier Hasan Paşa's feast given for the envoy of Abdullâh Hân of the Üzbeks, in

166 *E*, 43b; *Sel*, 94-5.

167 *E*, 66b; *Sel*, 140-141.

168 The İnebahtı (Lepanto) naval battle, 1571.

169 *E*, 359a-359b.

170 *E*, 359a-359b.

Şa'ban 1006 (Mar - Apr 1598), Selanikî remarks that, in the past when envoys from Iran and other countries had come to the capital, it had been the custom for each vizier to provide a feast, spending incalculable sums of money. Since the coming of the envoy of Şâh 'Abbâs, however, the other viziers had avoided giving such a feast, and consequently this duty became restricted to the grand vizier only.¹⁷¹

171 E, 397b.

ÖZET

XVI. asrın ikinci yarısına ait kıymetli bir eser yazmış olan Mustafa Selânîkî Efendi'nin hayatı hakkında bildiklerimiz eserinde yer yer verdiği kısa bilgilerden ibaret bulunmaktadır. Ailesi, gençliği, tahsili hakkında hemen hiç bir şey bilmediğimiz Selânîkî'nin, Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'ın Szgetvar seferinden itibaren bir çok mühim hadisenin şahidi olduğu ve hatta bazılarında görev aldığı eserindeki beyanlardan anlaşılmaktadır. Szgetvar seferine katılmış, Sokullu Mehmed Paşa ve onun sır katibi Feridun Bey'in maiyetinde bulunmuş, savaş alanında ölen Kanunî'nin tecviz ve tekfininde görev almış, merhum Sultan'ın tabutu başında Kur'an okuyan altı hafızdan biri olmuştur.

Selim II nin cülûsu günlerinde Başkent'te cereyan eden olayları, Sultan-aşker ilişkilerini ulema ve halkın tutumunu yakından izleyen ve değerlendiren Selânîkî bu devrenin olaylarını ve kendisinin yorumlarını eserinde açıklıkla anlatmıştır.

Selânîkî Selim II, Murad III ve Mehmed III devirlerinde Haremeyn mukataacılığı, Sipahiler ve Silahdarlar katibliği, Anadolu muhasebeciliği, evkaf muhasebeciliği, devatdarlık, Vezir-i azam Ferhad ve İbrahim Paşalar'ın ruznâmeciliği hizmetleri gibi mühim görevlerde bulunmuştur. Ayrıca çeşitli zamanlarda Vezir-i azam Sinan Paşa, Ferhad Paşa ve Siyavuş Paşa tarafından, İstanbul'a gelen Gilân hakimi Han Ahmed, Şehzâde Haydar Mirza gibi misafirlere mihmandarlık vazifesi ve bazı nazik zamanlarda ulufe tevzii veya nezareti işi Selânîkî'ye verilmiştir. Bütün bunlar Selânîkî'nin devlet hizmetinde tecrübeli, itibar sahibi bir kişi olduğunu göstermektedir.

Ancak Selânîkî'nin gerçek şöhreti kendisine havale edilen bu görevlerden ziyade kendi devrinin olaylarını içine alan eserinden gelmektedir. Eser XVI. yüzyılın ikinci yarısının (1563-1600) olaylarını, o devrin ricalinin şahsiyet ve karakterini, devlet ve hükümetin işleyiş tarzını, Saray ve Divan-ı hümayun arasındaki temasları, Osmanlı müesseselerinin işleyen ve aksayan yönlerini canlı ve samimi bir dil ve üslupla anlatmaktadır. Bahisleri anlatılırken münasebet düştükçe kendi görüş ve kanaatını belirt-

mesi, ayrıca yer yer «Şikâyet-iahval-i rûzğâr», «Etvâr ve evzâ'-ı rûzğâr», «Hasbîhâl» gibi başlıklar altında yapılan genel değerlendirmeler ise XVI. asırdaki bir Osmanlı münevverinin haksızlık ve bozukluklar karşısındaki reaksiyonunu ve gelecek hakkında duyduğu endişeleri gösteren kısımlardır. Ancak kendisinin sık sık uğradığı aziller ve karşılaştığı muameleler bu şekilde tenkitler yapmasında büyük etken olmuştur.

Selânikî tayin edildiği görevlerin kendisine sağladığı imkanlardan eseri için büyük ölçüde yararlanmış, Dîvan-ı hümayun kayıtlarından, teşrifat defterlerinden, cephelerden merkeze muntazam gelen raporlardan bilgi toplamıştır. Ayrıca Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, Feridun Beğ, Kızıl Ahmedlü Mustafa ve Şemsi Paşalar, Vezîr-i azam Ferhad Paşa, Siyavuş Paşa, Sinan Paşa, Cağala-zâde Sinan Paşa, Şeyhulislâm Sun'ullah Efendi gibi XVI. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Devlet'in idaresinde yetki sahibi olan kişilerin sohbetlerinden ve açıklamalarından faydalanarak bir çok hadisenin iç yüzünü öğrenmek imkanını bulmuştur. Bu özellikleriyle eser büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Selânikî eserinde çok sade bir dil kullanmış, sun'iliğe kaçmadan görüp düşündüklerini ifade etmiştir. Bilhassa başkalarından naklen verdiği bahislerde, karşılıklı konuşmaları naklettiği kısımlarda yer yer cümle düşüklükleri ve ifadelerde mübhemlik görülmektedir. Bunlardan bazılarının müstensihler tarafından yapıldığı da âşikârdır.

Selânikî Tarihi'nin İstanbul ve yabancı ülkeler kütüphanelerinde bir çok nüshası tesbit edilmiştir. Ancak bunlardan hiçbiri müellif nüshası olmadığı gibi, çoğunluğu XVIII, yüzyılda istinsah edilmiş nüshalardır, ve aralarında büyük ifade ve muhtevâ farkı görülmektedir.