

130281 - Muhsinzade Mehmed  
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3461 *Muhsin-zâde Mehmed Paşa ve Ayanlık müessesesi, 1969, 198*  
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notably Ahmed Resmi and Ahmed Vâsif. They neglected, however, another important chronicle of the period, that of Sadullah Enverî, probably because his history is only accessible in manuscript whereas some of the work of the first two at least exists in printed versions.<sup>9</sup> All three served as part of the battlefield chancery for a majority of the war and recorded their impressions, Enverî and Vâsif as official historians, and Ahmed Resmi in *Hulâsat*. Drawing on the work of these three eye-witnesses, an attempt will be made to describe the Ottoman experience of the war, and its impact on traditionally held assumptions of Ottoman military superiority.

#### *Ahmed Resmi's Career in the War Years*

Ahmed Resmi had been made *Mektupçu* in August of 1764, upon his return from Berlin. As chief of the Grand Vizier's correspondence office, he was naturally privy to considerable information on foreign affairs. The following year, at the official appointment ceremony of 27 March 1765, Ahmed Resmi was appointed *Çavuşbaşı*, the second of the three offices then serving as stepping-stones to the grand vizierate.<sup>10</sup> During that same month, Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa was appointed Grand Vizier for the first time, beginning an association with Ahmed Resmi that would culminate in three years of shared responsibility for the Danubian battlefield. Ahmed Resmi admired Muhsinzade Mehmed for his expertise and his interest in the world about him, and felt that he should never have been dismissed in 1768 because he was a veteran of a previous Russo-Turkish war, especially the 1737-1739 Bender campaign, knew the Russian tactics

to (re)fortify the Dardanelles after the Çesme disaster of 1770, were a best-seller of the time. Porter's reflections are balanced and judicious although they do not cover the war period; Vergennes, in spite of serving as the Duc de Choiseul's agent in prompting the Ottomans into war with Russia (see Aksan, "Ottoman-French Relations," 41-58, and discussion below), continued to send military support to the Turks when he became French Ministère d'Etat; Louis Felix Keralio, *Histoire de la dernière guerre entre les Russes et les Turcs* 2 vols. (Paris, 1777); William Eton, *Survey of the Turkish Empire*, 2d ed. (London, 1799; reprint, New York, 1972), and other works of the period are imbued with the philhellenism of the late decades of the eighteenth century, the earliest guise of nineteenth century imperialism.

<sup>9</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte*, and Edward Shepherd Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks*, 2 vols. (London, 1854-56); also OT. The edition of Vâsif is *Mehâsin* (1804). The manuscript of Enverî, *Tarih*, IÜ Ms T 5994, 1194/1780 covers the period 1768-1774. The 1869 edition of *Hulâsat* is used for this discussion. No modern editions or translations exist of these works.

<sup>10</sup> *Mehâsin* (1804), 1:267.

and logistics, and was aware of the circumstances of the Ottoman army and provisions.<sup>11</sup> Muhsinzade, himself the son of a distinguished and experienced soldier, Muhsinzade Abdullah Paşa (d. 1749), was far and away the most able of the grand viziers to serve in the 1768 to 1774 period.<sup>12</sup> Born sometime around 1700, he joined the military branch of the government, as a member of the *Silâhşor* corps. He served as *Kapıcılar Kethüdâsi* while his father was Grand Vizier in 1737/38, and thereafter began his distinguished career as governor of provinces all over the empire. By the time he married into the royal family, husband of Mustafa III's sister Esma Sultan, he had served in various of the European provinces, including the important posts of Hotin and Özü.<sup>13</sup> When Ahmed Resmi served under him for the first time in 1765, Muhsinzade Mehmed was already well known as an expert on the Rumeli fortresses. Dismissed at the outbreak of the war because he opposed it, he was reappointed in November 1771 following his success in suppressing the Morea rebellion of 1770/71. From 1771 to 1774, Muhsinzade Mehmed remained in command, dying shortly after the signing of the Küçük Kaynarca treaty, en route to Istanbul. Muhsinzade Mehmed was one of the last of the generation of Ottomans who became grand viziers after lengthy apprenticeship in the provinces. With the exception of Silâhdar Mehmed, Muhsinzade Mehmed's immediate predecessor on the battlefield as Grand Vizier (24 December 1770-28 November 1771), the commanding officers of this war were ill-prepared for extended campaigning, as we will see shortly.<sup>14</sup>

For the next three years, 1765 to 1768, in spite of Ahmed Resmi's prestige and experience in foreign affairs, he transferred from office to office in the annual rotation system which made it practically impossible for anyone to gain experience in one particular bureau. For the year 1766, his name does not appear in the annual appointment rolls,<sup>15</sup> but on 6 March 1767, he was appointed as Overseer of

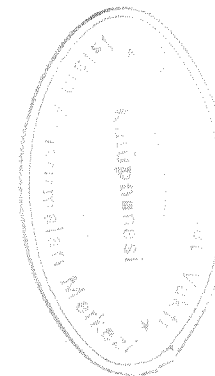
<sup>11</sup> *Hulâsat*, 9, for his comment on Muhsinzade Mehmed's experience; 82, where he noted that Muhsinzade Mehmed kept abreast of the world by reading the reports of events day and night, and was a man of experience, dignified and modest; *Hadiqat* (Cavid), 15; see also *Mehâsin* (1804), 2:311.

<sup>12</sup> On Abdullah Paşa, see OT 4:2, 343-47 and *Hadiqat* (Vahid), 55-9. Important sources on Muhsinzade Mehmed include OT 4:2, 399-404; Nagata's introduction, 13f and *Hadiqat* (Cavid), 12-16. He was appointed on 30 March 1765.

<sup>13</sup> OT 4:2, 399-400; Nagata, 13-14; *Hadiqat* (Cavid), 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> OT 4:2, 403-18; *Hadiqat* (Cavid), 14; *Hulâsat*, 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Mehâsin* (1804), 1:274. The *Çavuşbaşı* position went to Yenişehirli Osman.



*pāsha* a third time in 1774. From 1774 to 1776 he served as commander of *Khotin* [q.v.], also charged with the exchange of the Russian and Ottoman ambassadors. Governor of Belgrade 1776-9, he again became *Muḥaṣṣil* of Morea, then governor of Egriboz [q.v.], Egypt (1781), Belgrade, Candia (Ott. *Khandak*), Bender (1784) and Vidin (1786). Sultan Selīm III [q.v.] saved him from temporary disgrace, restored his vizier's rank and appointed him governor of Candia. On 12 Ramaḍān 1206/4 May 1792, Melek Mehmed Paşa received the imperial signet as token of his appointment as Grand Vizier. He stayed in office for two years and five months, being the senior of all viziers then living (*Sheykh ül-Wüzerā*).

He did not take part in the policy-making of the reformers around Selīm III, but loyally supported the Sultan's policy with the residual influence which he still had. The reason for his dismissal must have been extreme old age, having served the state for 59 years. Mehmed Paşa was allowed to retire to his waterside villa at Ortaköy on the Bosphorus, where he died on 16 Şhawwāl 1216/19 February 1802. His tomb is next to the *türbe* of his wife Zeyneb Sultān at the mosque founded by her at Soğukçeşme near the Bāb-i 'Āli.

*Bibliography:* 'Oḥmānzāde Tā'ib Ahmed, *Hadīkat ül-wüzerā*, continuation of Ahmed Djawīd, Istanbul 1271, 45-7; İ.H. Danişmend, *Osmanlı tarihi kronolojisi*, Istanbul 1971, v, 68; S.J. Shaw, *Between old and new*, Cambridge, Mass. 1971, 369 f.

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**MEHMET PASHA, MUḤSİN-ZĀDE** (1116?-1188/1704?-74), Ottoman Grand Vizier.

Son of the Grand Vizier Muḥsin-zāde 'Abd Allāh Paşa (held office in 1150/1737) and born in Istanbul, he entered the Palace service as a *Kapıdār Bāshī*. In 1150/1737 he became *Kapıdār Ketkhudāsi* and in 1151/1738 vizier and *Beglerbegi* of Mar'āsh. After 10 years of provincial governmental posts he was in 1160/1747 appointed to the reorganised province of Adana with special orders to hunt down the rebellious elements in Anatolia. From 1162/1749 onwards in various provincial posts in the European provinces, he became in 1171/1758 *Beglerbegi* of Aleppo. On this occasion he was married to the princess Esmā' Sultān (cf. A.D. Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, Oxford 1956, no. 1244, Table XLI), a daughter of Ahmed III. There followed quickly, one after another, the appointments as *Beglerbegi* of Diyārbekr, Anadolu (at Kütahya) and Bosnia (1760), staying one year with his wife at his palace at Kadırğa (Istanbul), before proceeding to his post. From 1175/1762 he occupied the governorships of Rumeli and Bosnia, twice each, before being called to the Grand Vizierate on 7 Şhawwāl 1178/30 March 1765. During his tenure of office, revolts in Arabia, Egypt and Georgia broke out and Russian pressure increased. The Grand Vizier did not think the Empire could sustain a war with that power, but his opinion did not prevail in the *Dīwān*.

Muḥsin-zāde Mehmed resigned on 23 Rabī' II 1182/6 September 1768 and was ordered to reside in Bozdja-Ada (Tenedos [q.v.]), Gallipoli (Gelibolu [q.v.]) and Rhodes (Rodos [q.v.]). In 1182/1769 appointed military governor (*Muḥāfiẓ*) of the Morea, he was able to defeat the Russian-inspired rebellion there in a battle at Tripolitza (Ott. Tripoliçe) in Dhu l-Hidjja 1183/April 1770, after which he restored Ottoman authority in the main centres of Patras (Ott. Balya Badra [q.v.]), Modon (Ott. Muṭun [q.v.]), Navarino (Ott. Navarin [q.v.]). In 1185/1771 he went as commander of the Ottoman troops to the Danube front. From Sha'ban/November 1771, Muḥsin-zāde

Mehmed was Grand Vizier again till his death on 26 Djumādā I 1188/4 August 1774. During those three years, Ottoman arms were unsuccessful against the Russians. The Grand Vizier opened peace negotiation again, first with the Austrians and then with the Russians (Bucharest conference, from November 1772 to February 1773). The Russian demands, including the independence of the Khanate of the Crimea [see *kırım*] and high war indemnities were not yet acceptable to the Ottomans, and peace was not reached till the Russian army under the Field Marshall Peter A. Rumyantsev encircled the Grand Vizier at Shumnu (Bulg. Shumen) and proposed negotiations again.

Muḥsin-zāde Mehmed Paşa accepted this proposal immediately. The negotiations between the two delegations, the Ottoman one led by his *Şadāret-Ketkhudāsi* (afterwards *Nishāndār*) Ahmed Rasmī Efendi [q.v.] (see idem, *Khulāṣat ül-i'tibār*, cf. GOW, 288, 309-12), were held at the Russian headquarters 17-21 July 1774 and led to the treaty of Küçük Kaynardja [q.v.]. The Grand Vizier became ill soon afterwards and withdrew to return to Istanbul. On the way near Karnobad (Tk. Karinābād) he died on 26 Djumādā I 1188/4 August 1774. On the orders of his widow Esmā' Sultān, he was buried at Eyyüb next to the gate of the great mausoleum.

*Bibliography:* Ahmed Vāsif Efendi, *Mehāsinu'l-āsār ve hakāiku'l-ahbār*, ed. M. İlğürel, Istanbul 1978, p. XXII, 92, 125, 399; *Şemdanī-zāde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi tarihi. Mür'i-i tevarih*, ed. M. M. Aktepe, 3 vols. in 4, Istanbul 1976-81, ii B (index), iii, 27-8; İ.H. Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı tarihi kronolojisi*, Istanbul 1971, iv, 42, 48, 52-3, 59; *İA* art. *Küçük Kaynarca* (C. Tukin); 'Oḥmānzāde Tā'ib Ahmed, *Hadīkat ül-wüzerā*, cont. by Ahmed Djawīd, *Ward-i muṭarrā*, repr. ed. Freiburg i. Br. 1969, 12-16; *İA* art. *Vāsif* (M. İlğürel); Y. Nagata, *Muḥsin-zāde Mehmed Paşa ve ayanlık müessesesi*, Tokyo 1976.

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**MEHMET PASHA, ÖKÜZ, DĀMĀD, KĀRA**, 964?-1029/1557?-1620) Ottoman Grand Vizier.

Born in Istanbul the son of a Muslim blacksmith, he entered the palace service in spite of the fact of his being of Muslim Turkish origin. After about 40 years service as a *silāhdār*, he left the Palace with the rank of a Vizier and became *Beglerbegi* of Egypt (Dhu 'l-Hidjja 1015/April 1607). Arriving there the same year in May (Muḥarram 1016), he became busy with administrative reform. He abolished the illegally-imposed levies of *ṭulba*, *kulfa* and *kushūfiyya*, which formed an excessively heavy burden for the tax-paying population. He was able to suppress a resulting rebellion of the (*kul*) *sipāhī*, *tüfenkçis* and *gönüllüs* of the Ottoman garrison, together with the Mamlūk cavalry corps (1017/1608). This "second conquest" of Egypt gained him the epithet *Kul-kīran* "Breaker of the Slave Soldiers". Thanks to his efficient government, Öküz Mehmed Paşa was able to send a surprisingly large sum as tribute of Egypt to the Porte. This success brought him 1020/1611 favour from on high. He was made *Kapudān Paşa* and Second Vizier instead of *Khalīl Paşa* Kayşariyyeli [q.v.]. Sultan Ahmed I [q.v.] gave him his seven-year old daughter Djawhar Khān Sultān in marriage (1020/1612) (cf. A.D. Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, Oxford 1956, Table XXXIV, no. 1154 "Gevherhân"). In spite of his new status, Öküz Mehmed Paşa was not successful in his opposition to the granting of an *'ahd-nāme* involving capitulations [see *İMTİYĀZĀT*] to the Dutch Republic 1/10 Djumādā I 1021/6 July 1612 [see *KHALİL PASHA KAYŞARIYYELİ*].