

retrieved both his wealth and influence.³⁰ Given the broader socio-economic background in which the scribal profession evolved in this period, Şâmîzâde's wealth appears even more extraordinary.³¹

The *kasides* written to celebrate Şâmîzâde Mehmed by the seventeenth-century Ottoman poets reflect his influence as a major patron of the period's political and literary circles. Nâilî-i Kadîm (d.1077/1666), Neşâtî (d.1085/1674), Tıflî (d.1070/1659-60) and Vecdî (d.1661 or 1663), who not only had collections of poetry but were also all from scribal backgrounds, all wrote *kasides* praising Şâmîzâde.³² Among these panegyrists, it was Tıflî, who pulled the most critical string and emphasized his patron's uniqueness in a world characterized by

³⁰ Some brief research at the Public Endowment Archives turned out the copies of the deeds of the public endowments (*vakıf*) registered under Şâmîzâde Mehmed's name. In Istanbul, two undefined *vakıf*s, one in Küçük Ayasofya, the other one in the vicinity of the Kadırga harbour; in Tosya a house with two rooms, a jewellery store with eight rooms and three vineyards; a *vakıf* in the Ilgın district of Konya; and three more unnamed *vakıf* properties are registered as Şâmîzâde endowments. Evliya Çelebi in his account on Edirne, listed his palace '*Reîsülküttâb Şâmîzâde Sarayı*', among the palatial residences that prominent public figures embarked on building once the sultan had decided to take permanent residence in the city. See Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi: 3.Kitap: Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 305 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu-Dizini*, edited by Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 257.

³¹ The seventeenth-century archival sources offer us a picture, albeit an incomplete one, about the number of scribes in different administrative divisions, their economic well-being and their social backgrounds. The consolidation of the territorial and political integrity of the empire during the sixteenth century necessitated the intake of an increasing number of scribes into the central bureaucracy. However, on account of the nature and the current state of the archival sources, the total population of the scribal body at the beginning of the seventeenth century cannot be precisely estimated. For estimates on the sixteenth- and the early-seventeenth-century scribal populations, see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "H.933-934 (M.1527-28) Mali Yılına Ait Bütçe Örneği", *İFM* 15 (1-4), 1953/4, 238-329; and Christine Woodhead, "Research on the Ottoman Scribal Service, c.1574-1630", in Christa Fagner and Klaus Schwarz (eds), *Festgabe an Josef Matuz: Osmanistik-Turkologie-Diplomatik* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1992), 31-28. Some information about the material conditions of scribal existence has nevertheless surfaced. For example, based on my study of the petitions submitted by scribes in the seventeenth century, it becomes evident that many scribes or apprentices, worked without any income, either prebendal or cash (*tımarsız ve ulıfesiz*), and asked to be assigned one. It is also clear that while the numbers of *dırlıklı* (with prebend) and *ulıfeli* (with cash) scribes were increasing, many were still working without any compensation and that there was fierce competition for the income of the retired or deceased scribes. For a discussion of these sources see Tuşalp-Atiyas, "Political Literacy", 91-103.

³² Haluk İpekten, *Nailî-i Kadîm Divânı* (Istanbul: MEB, 1970), 168, 169; Mahmut Kaplan, *Neşati Divânı* (İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1996), 48-53; Ahmed Meirmer, *XVII.yy. Divân Şairi Vecdî ve Divânçesi* (Ankara: MEB, 2002), 97-100.

ignorance. It was Şâmîzâde's experience and knowledge of the affairs of the state that distinguished him from others. Among the reports of his scandalous acts and deeds, only Tıflî and to a certain extent Evliya touched on the tension between Şâmîzâde and others who resented his knowledge of the inner workings of imperial politics. However, while Tıflî stopped short of explaining what 'knowing the language of the state' meant, Evliya framed this tension as an infraction of the hierarchy between the grand vizier and the chief scribe.

2 The Secretary-Grand Vizier, Râmi Mehmed

Twice the *reîsülküttâb* and then the grand vizier of the seventeenth-century *fin-de-siècle*, Râmi Mehmed was the least anonymous of the Ottoman scribes. In Ottoman history he epitomizes the transition in the political cadres 'from the men of the sword/*seyfiyye* to the men of the pen/*kalemîyye*' as the first chief scribe to be appointed as the grand vizier. The scholarly consensus is that, beginning with Râmi Mehmed's rise, the position of the *reîsülküttâb* became a stepping-stone for higher political posts that previously excluded people from a civilian bureaucratic background.³³

Râmi Mehmed was recruited as an apprentice to the office of the chief scribe and then taken into the household (*kapı*) of Musâhib Mustafa Pasha (d.1685/6), the vizier and companion to Mehmed IV.³⁴ After serving as the master scribe of Musâhib Mustafa Pasha's vizierial council (*divân efendisi*), Râmi Mehmed began to rise within the imperial administration.³⁵ He first served six years

³³ In the eighteenth century, from among the forty-three chief scribes, six would become grand viziers, while seven attained the rank of vizier. Some of the most important Ottoman political figures of the eighteenth century would begin their careers as scribes in the imperial council. See Christoph K. Neumann, "Political and Diplomatic Developments", in Suraiya N. Faroqhi (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 3: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (New York: CUP, 2006), 54.

³⁴ On the structure of Ottoman households, see Rifa'at Abou El-Haj, "The Ottoman Vezir and Pasha Households 1683-1703: A Preliminary Report", *JAOS* 94 (4), 1974, 438-447; Robert Dankoff, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman: Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588-1662), As Portrayed in Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels (Seyahatname)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Carter V. Findley, "Patrimonial Household Organization and Factional Activity in the Ottoman Ruling Class", in Halil İnalçık and Osman Okyar (eds), *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi 1071-1920* (Ankara: Meteksan Limited, 1980), 227-35; Jane Hathaway, "The Military Household in Ottoman Egypt", *IJMES* 27 (1) 1995, 39-52.

³⁵ Mirzazâde Sâlim Mehmed Emin Efendi, *Tezkiretü's-Şuarâ Sâlim Efendi*, edited by Adnan İnce (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2005), 313.

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