The Office of the Ottoman Court Historian or *Vak'anıvis* (1714-1922):
An Institutional and Prosopographic Study

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Robert Charles Bond

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2004
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

CHARLES C BOND
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication ........................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents .......................................................................................... iv

List of Tables .................................................................................................. vi

List of Figures ................................................................................................ vi

List of Abbreviations ...................................................................................... vii

Note on Transliteration .................................................................................. x

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................... xi

Vita .................................................................................................................... xii

Abstract .......................................................................................................... xiii

Introduction ..................................................................................................... 1

Chapter

One: History in Service to the State: From Beylik to the Office of Şahnameci ...... 8

Two: Origins of the Vak'anūvislik .................................................................. 27

Three: A History of the Vak'anūvislik (1714-1922) ........................................ 69

Four: A Prosopography of the Office of Court Historian ............................... 112

Appendix: Bio-Bibliographic Essays of the Holders of the Office of Vak'anūvis ...... 170

Mehmed Raşid Efendi ...................................................................................... 170
Kuçuk Çelebizade İmail Asum Efendi .......................................................... 174
Arpaeminizade Mustafa Sami Efendi ............................................................ 177
Hüseyn Şàkir Bey Efendi ............................................................................. 179
Hifzi Mehmed Efendi .................................................................................. 180
Mehmet Sufi Efendi ..................................................................................... 181
Süleyman İzz Et Efendi ................................................................................ 184
Seyyid Hâkim Mehmed .............................................................................. 187
Çeşmizade Mustafa Reşid Efendi .................................................................. 189
Musazade Mehmed Ubeypullah Efendi ..................................................... 191
Elhac Enveri Sadullah Efendi ...................................................................... 192
Antebli Beyçeti Hasan Efendi ...................................................................... 196
Şişman Molla Omerzade Süleyman Efendi ................................................ 197
Ahmet Vasif Efendi .................................................................................... 198
Teşrifatı Hasan Efendi ............................................................................... 204
Esseyyid Edib Mehmed Emin Efendi .................................................. 205
Halil Nuri Bey Efendi ................................................................. 206
Muvakkitzâde Pertev Mehmet Efendi ............................................. 208
Esseyyid Omer Amir Bey ............................................................. 209
Kamûs Ayuntaplı Mîtercim Ahmet Aßim Efendi ............................... 210
Şanîzâde Mehmed Atâullah Efendi ................................................ 215
Sahhaflar Şeyhizâde Mehmed Esad Efendi ..................................... 217
Reçai Mehmed Şakir Efendi ......................................................... 222
Akif Paşaçâde Nâ'il Mehmed Bey .................................................. 225
Ahmet Cevdet Efendi / Paşa ......................................................... 226
Ahmet Lütfi Efendi .................................................................. 239
Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi .......................................................... 242

Bibliography ................................................................................. 246

Archival and unpublished Documentary Material, Chronicles and Historical Commentaries ......................................................... 246
Biographical and Biobibliographical Material ................................ 248
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.0: Holders of the Post of Vak'anîvis and their Bureaucratic Origins .......... 103
Table 4.0: Place of Birth .............................................................................. 122
Table 4.1: Average Lifespan .......................................................................... 124
Table 4.2: Age Entered into Government Service ............................................. 125
Table 4.3: Age Entered into the Post of Vak'anîvis .......................................... 125
Table 4.4: Occupations of Vak'anîvis Fathers ................................................ 126
Table 4.5: Father vs. Son Career Paths .......................................................... 128
Table 4.6: Educational Background of Court Historians .................................. 132
Table 4.7: Vak'anîvis who were Calligraphers ............................................... 134
Table 4.8: Knowledge of Ḥiṣba ..................................................................... 134
Table 4.9: Languages ...................................................................................... 137
Table 4.10: Sources of Patronage ................................................................. 141
Table 4.11: Bureau Chief and Great Molla Attainment .................................... 143
Table 4.12: Career Paths of Court Historians ................................................ 158
Table 4.13: Average Number of Appointments .............................................. 160
Table 4.14: Vak'anîvis as Poets ..................................................................... 165
Table 4.15: Prose Works of the Court Historians by Genre ............................. 165
Table 4.16: Membership in Sufi Orders by Court Historians ...................... 167

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.0: ʾilmîye Hierarchy ................................................................. 147
Figure 4.1: Organization of the Finance Section of the Ottoman Government .... 152
Figure 4.2: Organization of the Sublime Porte ............................................. 155
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


A.VKN: Bab-i Asafi Vak’ânüvisîlik collection, documents relating to the office of court chronicler.


BBA: Başbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul.

BSB: British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin.


BÜD: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi.

CA: Cevdet Askeriye collection of the Başbakanlık, on military affairs.

CD: Cevdet Dahiliye collection of the Başbakanlık, on internal affairs.

CH: Cevdet Hariciye collection of the Başbakanlık, on external affairs.

CM: Cevdet Maarif collection of the Başbakanlık, on educational affairs.

DI: Der Islam.

EI¹: Encyclopedia of Islam, 1st ed.

EI²: Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd ed.

GDAAD: Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi.

PT: Poetics Today.


SI: Studia Islamica.


TD: Tarih Dergisi.

TM: Tarih Mecmuası.


TOEM: Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası.

TTEM: Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası.

WZKM: Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.

Y.EE: Yıldız Esas Evrâki collection of the Başbakanlık, essential documents from the Yıldız Palace archive.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Modern Turkish usage has been observed here in spelling most Ottoman Turkish proper names and technical terms. Turkish words in this text generally reflect spellings used in the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*. 13th ed., 1993. In the case of consonantal alternatives b/p and d/t, transliteration has been left to the discretion of the author. For Arabic and Persian words a simplified system of diacritical marks have been used.
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Office of the Ottoman Court Historian or Vak'ânîvis (1714-1922):
An Institutional and Prosopographic Study

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The chronicles of Ottoman court historians or vak'ânîvis have long been used by scholars as sources on the institutional history of the Ottoman Empire, but very little has been done to understand the institution, individuals, and historiography of this government post.

The place the vak'ânîvis holds in Ottoman historiography is examined in order to add to our understanding of the office. The office of court historian is shown to be a logical development within 'official' historiography which was first institutionalized in the office of Şahnameci in the sixteenth century.

A definition of the office of vak'ânîvis is established in order to cast light on the controversy over the origins of the office. The appointment of Mehmet Raşid Efendi in
1714 is recognized as the beginning of the office of court historian which would last until the end of the Ottoman Empire.

After the origins of the office are explored, the two-century history of the office of court historian is recounted. Finally, this study is concluded by examining the office on a prosopographic level. Data was collected on the men who held the post of court historian for various factors including: birth place, education, patronage, father's origins and occupation, literary accomplishments, and appointment patterns. The results of this study have shown that there was a strong competition between the religious class (ulema) and the scribal class (kalemiye) for appointment to this post and that appointments from each class were just about equal over the two centuries the office was in existence. In addition, a high level of literary accomplishment, strong scribal skills, and modest career advancement were other traits that a majority of the men who held the post of court historian held in common. Biographies of the men who held the post of vak'ânîvis are presented in an appendix at the end of the study.
INTRODUCTION

For about two centuries a group of government officials worked to record the history of the Ottoman Empire. These men came from varied backgrounds as judges, college professors and chief scribes, but almost all of them brought a set of scribal and literary skills that were recognized as being among the best of their day. The results of their efforts are a series of chronicles that document, in an almost unbroken manner, the history of the Ottoman central government from 1660 until the 1870's. These chronicles are invaluable resources for scholars examining Ottoman institutional history. The official rubric under which these men labored was that of the vak'anūvis or court historian.

The office of court historian continued a long tradition of Ottoman historiography that was characterized by its being patronized by the highest levels of the Ottoman government starting in the fifteenth century. The first institutionalization of history writing came with the office of the şehnanci which recorded the heroic deeds of the Ottoman sultans in poetry or prose and visually by miniature paintings. This experiment in official historiography lasted from 1555 until 1605. A century would pass until the people and events surrounding the crisis created by Feyzullah Efendi and destructive warfare with Europe would take the post of chronicler of the army and gradually transform it into the post of court historian by the 1720's.

The history of the institution of the vak'anūvis has been examined in detail by the dean of vak'anūvis studies, Bekir Kutūkoğlu.¹ Some of the works on court historians have been transliterated into modern Turkish with commentary, but only one court

¹ Bekir Kutūkoğlu, "Vak'anūvis," IA, s.v.
historian, Ahmet Cevdet, has been dealt with in any exhaustive scholarly fashion. The present study seeks to add to the discussion about the office of vak'ânîvis by examining not only the history of the institution, but also the people behind the office through collective biography. It is hoped that this will lay the groundwork for a future study on the historiography of the post of vak'ânîvis, because a good understanding of the chroniclers' lives and bureaucratic operation of the office are important to any discussion about their body of work.

Chapter 1, History in Service of the State: From Beylik to the Office of Şahnameci, examines the development of historical writing in the Ottoman state from its beginnings to the seventeenth century. Special attention is placed on what is called 'official' history or history patronized by the sultan or grand vezir. Historical writing took many forms and had many motivations in the formative period of Ottoman history. The office of the court historian can be seen as a logical development of the 'official' historical genre as changes occurred in language and literary circles during the seventeenth century.

Chapter 2, Origins of the Vak'ânîvislik, examines the debate over who the first court historian was and seeks to establish a definition for the office. A careful examination of those who held the post of court historian shows a bifurcation of the appointments to the post between the ulema and the scribal class. With this taken into account, major attributes which help define the office of court historian are an association with the Divan-i Hümayun Kalenderi or the offices which supported the Imperial Divan, having reached an advanced level in the scribal (kâlemîye) or religious (ilmiye) career paths, having a good literary reputation, keeping a day-book, and attempting to write a

---

2 Again Bekir Kutukoğlu led the way with a translation of Çeşmizâde's history. Others that have been transliterated have been the histories of Ahmet Vasif, Ahmet Cevdet, and Ahmet Lütfi. Ahmet Cevdet has been examined in monographs by Richard Chambers, Gustav Neuman, and Ebü'lüla Mardin, just to name a few.
chronicle. The above definition can then be applied to the chroniclers who have been identified as vak’aniviş in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to aid in ascertaining the origins of the post.

The origins of the office have been projected as far back as the end of the office of şahnameci in 1605 by historians seeking to build an unbroken line of chronicles covering the whole span of Ottoman history. The real origins center around the early eighteenth century which are marked by the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 and the Feyzullah Incident in 1703 which left lasting marks on the central administration and ushered in the Tulip Age of Ahmet III (1703-1730). During this period in time there was renewed interest in chronicle writing centered on describing the events of the previous decade. This interest led to the commissioning of histories from two of the most important chroniclers of the time, Mustafa Naima and Mehmed Raşid. Both have been identified as being the first court historian, but it has been generally accepted that Naima was the first.

Using the defining factors established above would rather suggest that Naima was a transitional figure in the development of the office of court historian and the first court historian was Mehmed Raşid Efendi who was given the title of vak’aniviş when he went with the Ottoman army on campaign in 1714. The office of court historian would evolve after his appointment into a regularly appointed post with varying degrees of access to documents, secrets, and the important figures of government.

Chapter 3, A History of the Vak’anivişlik: 1714-1922, looks at the history of the post of court historian from Mehmet Raşid’s appointment in 1714 to the last court historian Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi’s appointment which ended in 1922. The general history of the office has already been outlined well by Kutukoğlu in his İslam

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3 For the scribal class the advanced level would have been bureau chief or hace and for the ilmîye would have been the advanced levels of being a college professor (müdiderris) or in the advanced judgship grades (mahrec and above).
*Ansiklopedisi* article. This work seeks to build on his article by adding more contextual material and resolving some dating problems inherent in his and other works. By examining the men who held the post, the level of official interest in the office and the general course of Ottoman history we can periodize the office of court historian.

The period beginning with Raşid and ending with İzzi Efendi in the 1740's marked a formative period in the post of *vak'ânîvis*. This era was characterized by the post being held by some of the most noted poets of the day and, through 1730, the patronage of both Sultan Ahmet III and his grand vezir, Damad Ibrahim Paşa.

The period from the 1740's until the appointment of Enveri in 1768 was a period of decline for the post of court historian as the sultans during this period showed less interest in the patronage of history writing. This period coincides with the long peace between the Ottomans and the West that lasted from 1747 to 1768, a period marked by internal decline.

The appointment of Enveri Sadullah Efendi in 1768 to the post of *vak'ânîvis* at the outbreak of war with Russia marks the beginning of a new period of interest in the post of court historian. This period would reach its height during the reign of Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839) who both had a great interest in historical writing and gave ample support to the post of court historian.

The final period from 1839 until the end of the empire is marked by the reform effort that started under Mahmud II and culminated under the *Tanzimat*. The post of *vak'ânîvis* was characterized by the great work of Ahmet Cevdet, but also saw a general decline in the office as the holders of the office had less and less access to the upper reaches of the newly reorganized central government. By the time Ahmet Lütfi held the office of court historian between 1866 and 1907, the office relied on newspaper accounts
more than information obtained from internal governmental sources. The office’s last
holder, Abdurrahman Şerefi did little more that edit a volume of Lütfi’s work and write
textbooks for the modernized school system. The office of court historian did not go
away as the modern Turkish Republic has had a national historian since the 1930’s.

Chapter 4, *A Prosopography of the Office of Court Historian*, looks at the court
chroniclers as people. Prosopography or collective biography is a method that uses
biographical data to look at a particular group of people. This data can then be used to
examine birth, death, marriage, social status, education, etc. to make meaningful
conclusions about the subject group.

In this study biographical material was collected on the twenty-eight men who
held the post of court historian. The size of the data pool and the paucity of biographical
data on some of the court historians caution us to take the results of this study as
indicators, not as definitive results.

A majority of the information about court historians comes from biographical
dictionaries (*tezkere*, pl. *tekakir*) that comprise an important Ottoman literary genre.
These dictionaries were generally themed according to the person’s skill, such as poetry,
calligraphy, or belles-lettres. Additional biographical information was found in the
chroniclers’ own works and from secondary sources. Appendix A contains the lives of
all of the court historians based on available biographical data. Appendix A also acts as a
summary of most of the data used in the prosopographic study.

Results concerning birth, death, age, family and social origins, education,
patronage, bureaucratic appointments, literary pursuits, and sufism were collected and
given alphanumeric values to aide in analysis. The output of the analysis was, for the
most part, presented in either frequency or contingency tables. The results were further

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4 Lütfi himself even complains about the state of the office and its reliance on the material collected for the official Ottoman gazette, *Takvim-i Vekayi*. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'ana'vis," IA, 285-286.
refined by examining them in relation to career path (kalemîye or ilmiye) and by century (eighteenth or nineteenth) in order to better understand the dynamics of the office.

The results of this prosopographic study show us that a majority of court historians came from Istanbul and had fathers that were in government service before them. It is interesting to note that some of the most accomplished of men to hold the office of court historian came from provincial backgrounds, but in every case they came from cities which were centers of learning in the Ottoman Empire. For example, Ahmet Vasif (1739-1806) who held many important diplomatic posts and reached the rank of reisülküttab during the reign of Selim III came from Baghdad.

Their career lines appear to be very typical. Most reached the upper levels of their professions (the rank of bureau chief (hace) for the scribal class and the mevleviyet or upper judicial ranks of the religious branch of government), but they failed to reach the highest posts.⁵ Advancement in the Ottoman system was for the most part dependent on patronage, family ties, to some extent merit, and their skills in literary fields.

It was in literature, either poetry or prose, that many of the men who held the post of court historian excelled. As a group they produced over seventy works on everything from religious commentary to Ottoman grammar books. Many of them owe their positions and livelihoods to their ability to attract patronage for their works from the Ottoman elites.

This study has examined the office of court historian both as an institution and on a prosopographic level. The aim was to give the reader a sense of not only the long, two-century old tradition of historical patronage by the Ottoman state, but to have an understanding of the individuals who held the position; for the best way to understand an institution is through the eyes of those who were a part of it.

⁵ Among the thirteen men from the ulema only one reached the highest post of şeyhülislam. Of the fifteen men who were from the scribal class, only one reached the rank of reis efendi.
The study of Ottoman institutions, intellectual, and literary history are all inexplicably connected because those who wrote the histories, translated works from other languages, or wrote high divan poetry were for the most part products of and members in the Ottoman ruling class. Acceptable literary mores and historical methods were all determined by traditional literary models and the patronizing elites, either religious or bureaucratic, of Ottoman society with the sultan at the apex.

The men who held the post of vak'ânîvis then hold a special place within this milieu, as they were part of the only 'official' manifestation of elite patronage. The court historians as a group provide us with a sample by which to understand one aspect of Ottoman intellectual history over time. As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the study of the vak'ânîvis does not end here, but needs to be continued with a study of the historiography of the position. This study has raised many additional questions that can only be best answered by a through understanding of the chroniclers' historical methods and texts.

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6 The Ottoman ruling class would include all those who were attached to the Ottoman Palace, the military, the religious class and bureaucracy. This would not have been a large percentage of the total population of the Ottoman Empire who were considered the reaya or subject class. By the 19th century this concept would change and all people would become Ottomans under the 1876 constitution.
Chapter One: History in Service of the State: From Beylik to the Office of Şahnameci.

The foundation of the Ottoman Empire can be traced to the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453, but the House of Osman had a much more simple beginning as a beylik or emirate in 13th century western Anatolia.\(^1\) The historiography of the Ottomans before the Conquest (i.e. the conquest of Constantinople) has many diverse sources ranging from outside spectators to the few ālims who attached themselves to the Ottoman retinue.\(^2\) The chronicles written in Turkish and Persian at the time can be characterized as the Ottomans' attempts to legitimate themselves among the other beyliks of Anatolia and to substantiate their even greater claim to being successors of the Seljuk state in Anatolia.\(^3\)

After the interruption caused by Bayezid I's defeat by Timur in 1402, the Ottoman emirate began its quick rise to dominance in Anatolia and the Balkans that would in just a half century lead to the conquest of Constantinople and the extinguishing

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\(^1\) In late thirteenth century Anatolia, the Turco-Muslim leader who controlled a competitive, expansion-oriented realm was called a begi or emir; the name for his realm would then be beylik or emirate. For works on the origin of the Ottoman state see: Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1976), 12-15; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, 1995); Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1938).

\(^2\) Ālim means scholar or wise man, one who was educated in the Islamic sciences. The meaning of this term and its context in the Ottoman milieu will be discussed in a later section.

\(^3\) The Seljuks of Rum (the term is used to differentiate them from the Seljuk state based in Iran) were the first Turkic ruling dynasty to control a state in south central Anatolia after the Byzantine defenses were shattered at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. The Seljuks of Rum between c. 1118 and 1243 created a consolidated state based in Konya. In 1243 that state was thrown into chaos when the Seljuks' army was defeated by the Mongols. From that time until the rise of the Ottomans, Anatolia was characterized by the existence of a weakened Byzantine state and many competing Turkic emirates. For more on pre-Ottoman Anatolia see: Claude Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane* (Istanbul 1988); Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 1-9; and Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, 4-11.
of the Byzantine Empire. Historical works written during the early fifteenth century sought to explain the Ottoman's defeat at the hands of Timur and to reaffirm their preeminence as the most important beylik in Anatolia.

The historiography after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 was markedly different than before. The literature became even more influenced by Persian models of historical writing that were patronized by the sultan and ruling class. These chronicles placed greater emphasis on showing the development of 'court culture' among the ruling class and sought to legitimize the Ottomans as the heirs to the great Islamic empires of the past.

There were some elements of Ottoman historiography before the fall of Constantinople that would contribute to the development of "official" historiography in the Ottoman Empire, but the main developments can be found between the reigns of Bayezid II (1481-1512) and Suleyman I (1520-1566). During this period the development of historical writing coincided with the continued expansion of the empire and the development of its governing institutions. The development of "official"

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4 Timur was the last of the great nomadic leaders and claimed lineage to the Mongols. He attempted to create an empire which reached from China to the Near East. Timur began a campaign in Anatolia as a result of pleas from beyliks for help against the Ottomans. The culmination of his invasion occurred with the battle of Ankara in 1402. Bayezid's army was routed and Timur restored many of the former beylik rulers to their territories. The period from 1402 until 1413 is called the Interregnum (Fetret Devri) in Ottoman history and refers to the unstable period in which the sons of Bayezid II fought for control of the dynasty and for control over their former possessions. For additional information see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 32-39.

5 The Ottomans became even more conscious of legitimizing their rule in terms of being strict guardians of Sunni Islam, protectors of the Muslims holy sites, and quasi-inheritors of the caliphate after the conquests of Selim I which brought under Ottoman control much of the Arab Middle East by 1517. See: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 83-85.
historiography would become first institutionalized with the office of şahnameci, which was the precursor to the vak ’anüvislik.6

Finally, while generalizations about dynastic motivations concerning the patronage of historical works can be made, the role of the individual can not be ignored. The major incentives for the writing of historical literature remained the same throughout the formative period of the empire and beyond. Works were written by members of the ulema who wanted to write guides for just government, while others were written by gazi or former gazi who wanted to show the pious deeds of their Ottoman patrons. Most historical works were written either under or in order to obtain patronage from the ruling elites. Recognition among the literary elites of the time was also a factor influencing the production of historical works. Lastly, various historical works were written to be read out loud and entertain which continued a tradition dating from before the rise of Islam in the Middle East.7

Historians and the Ottoman Court: The Creation of the Ottoman Dynastic Myth

"There are no known historical accounts of Ottoman exploits by the Ottomans before the fifteenth century. But this must be seen as part of a broader phenomenon: the blooming of a literate historical imagination among the representatives of post-Seljuk frontier energies has to await the fifteenth century."8

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6 The term, "official" is used to designate works of history written by functionaries of the central government or as a result of patronage by the sultan or grand vezir. "Unofficial" works would be those written to gain patronage or those works written outside of the Ottoman milieu.


8 Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 93.
The sources for early Ottoman history are few and diverse. The primary sources for early Ottoman history are found in works called menakûnnames, which were pseudo-religious versified works on the deeds of heroes, and from chroniclers who were more often attached to rival beyliks or were Byzantine observers. Due to the nature of the early Ottoman polity there was no strongly developed bureaucracy and a court culture had just begun to be developed. The main contribution to this period by members of the Ottoman court can be seen in astrological works which are very important sources for early Ottoman history and are the precursors to Ottoman annalistic history and the vak'ânûvis.

Astrological works went by many names and constitute some of the earliest sources on Ottoman history. The most common names found in Ottoman historiography for astrological works would be ahkâm ve ihtiyarat or takvim and contained chronologies. The most important of these were written by müneccims for the Sultan's use and were called new year calendars. The earliest known of these were dated from H849 and H851. These sources, whether written by the Ottomans or others, were very important sources for the early chroniclers of the rise of the Ottoman state.

The earliest chronicle that we now have is that of the writer Ahmedî (1334-1413) who was attached to the court of the Germîyân beylik, a rival to the Ottomans in Anatolia. The earliest known redaction or edition of this versified work seems to have been written

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9 On menakûnname literature see: Ahmet Ateş, "Menâktip," IA, s.v.
10 A müneccim is an astronomer or astrologer. See: C.A. Nallino and Fatin Gökmen, "Astronomi," IA, s.v. and M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Müneccim-başı," IA, s.v.
11 1445 & 1447. The letter H before a date notes that the date is Hicri or dating based on the Islamic calendar rather than on the Julian calendar. Hicri dates are included for informational or emphatic purposes only. On early Ottoman calendars see: Halil Inalcık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography" in Lewis and Holt, Historians of the Middle East (London, 1962), 157-158; V.L. Ménage, The Beginnings ..., 170-171. Also see: Mehmet Zeki Pakaln, Osmanlı Tarih Davrmleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü (Istanbul, 1993), 2:43; Kafadar, Between, 96.
before 1396 and the Ottomans occupy only a small portion of this work. However it is not with Ahmedi that we find the real beginning of Ottoman historiography, but in the aftermath of the post-Timurid period. Timur left the Ottoman state broken-up with the siblings of Bayezid I fighting each other for control of the beylik. During this period a need arose for the Ottomans to record their presence in Anatolia and to try to understand and explain the causes for the beylik's defeat at the hands of Timur. This new historical writing, which marked a transition from oral to written traditions, was initiated by the Ottomans and resulted in works which established the Ottomans' Turkic heritage, legitimized them as the heirs to the Seljuk state in Anatolia as a basis for future claims, and explained the crushing defeat by Timur in religious and political terms.

There are two known works which were written under the patronage of Mehmed I (1402, 1413-1421) to justify his victory over his siblings after the death of Bayezid I. In addition to this literature there was a large body of literature which was by and large written post-1402 and continued to be written during the rest of the century which considers the reasons behind Bayezid's defeat. The most important of these works are: Yahşî Fâkih's Menâkib-i Al-i Osman, Aşıkpaşazâde, the anonymous Təvârih-i Al-i Osman, Uruç, a short section of Yazzâzâde's work on the Seljuk state in Anatolia, Şükurlâh, and Karamânlî Mehmed Paşa. These works mark the transition of Ottoman historiography from the literature of menâkibnames or gazavatnames to the 'courtly'

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13 Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 95; İnalçık, Rise of..., 155.

14 One work no longer exists and some of its material can be found embedded in Neşri's work. The other known work is the Halâlînâme of 'Abdu'l-vasî Çelebi written in 1414. For information on these works see: Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 95; V.L. Menage, Nesli's History of the Ottomans (London, 1964), ff.

15 Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 96; İnalçık, Rise of..., 154. V.L. Menage, The Beginnings..., 171-175.
literature which would later give birth to the court positions of sahnameci and vak'anvis.\textsuperscript{16}

Courtly literature, including historical writing, came into its own during the reign of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror (1444-46, 1451-1481).\textsuperscript{17} This was a period of intense political development that marked the final transition of the Ottoman state from a frontier principality to an empire. During this period there were dynamic institutional and ideological transformations which would lead to what is now called the "classical" Ottoman system.\textsuperscript{18}

Mehmed II patronized writers who wrote either menaktnames or gazavtnames in a high Persian literary style. Gazavtnames were often written to be read aloud to the sultan and were a source of entertainment. These works sought to glorify Mehmed's triumphs or past Ottoman conquests and were later lumped together and identified under the general title of sahname.\textsuperscript{19} This literature can be considered an early form of court historiography with its main function to glorify the exploits of the reigning sultan. Occasionally writers of this genre would also write a general history of the House of Osman.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Gazavtn literature generally contained descriptions of military exploits. "Courtly literature" is used here to denote both historical writing and poetry written for the Ottoman court either to gain patronage or by commission of a high court official.

\textsuperscript{17} İnalci, Rise of., 163; Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 96.

\textsuperscript{18} Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 97; Shaw, History of Ottoman Empire., Vol. 1, 112-167; İnalci, 

\textsuperscript{19} This was the beginning of the use of this term in the Ottoman context of historical writing and was directly related to the Persian works of the same title. Some of the works written at the time of Mehmet II and which can be considered as representative of this literature are by Kâsîfi, Hamidi, Mu'âli, and Şehdi. Another excellent work written during Mehmed II's time was Tursun Beg's Tarikh-i Ebu'l-Feth.

\textsuperscript{20} Kafadar, Between Two Worlds, 96-97.
Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) ascended the throne at the death of Mehmed II. After three years of campaigning, Bayezid II returned to the capital and began one of the great periods of Ottoman historical writing. Under his patronage the many oral traditions concerning the Ottomans’ establishment a century earlier were recorded, he also further developed the 
şahname genre of historical writing and he patronized the composition of two general histories of the House of Ottoman in both Persian and Turkish which would become two of the most influential and important works of Ottoman historiography. During this period many of the most essential chronicles, which actually preserved sections of accounts which no longer exist today, concerning early Ottoman history were written. It was also during this period that the Ottoman language became highly developed and acted as a counterweight to the heavy Persian influence in the court.\textsuperscript{21}

One of the major chronicles written during this period was written by Neşri who was a member of the ulema. His work, Kitabül Cihannümâ, was reportedly written by order of Bayezid II and attempted to bring many of the different Ottoman historiographic traditions together into one narrative.\textsuperscript{22} His work brought together the diverse views coming from the works of Ahmedî, Şükrullah, and other courtly histories with the gazi influenced works of Yahşı Fakih’s Menâqib-i dâ-i ‘Osmân, Aşkpaşazâde, and the

\textsuperscript{21} The Ottoman language was a composite language of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish written in Arabic script.

\textsuperscript{22} Part of Neşri’s introduction is quoted by Inalcik and is as follows: “I found that many works are written on the other ‘ulms[knowledge] but that those on history still remain scattered especially in Turkish.”, Inalcik, 
Rise of., 165. We can also see Bayezid’s interest in history found in another quote used by Inalcik which can be found in the introduction to Rühi’s work Tercüh’i Ali Osman written during the reign of Bayezid: “Sultan Bayezid said:” Histories of the prophets are regarded as the best and most preferable, and thus, the ‘Ulemâ prefer to write this kind of histories, but the history of the Ottoman Sultans who are the most distinguished and honorable among others has not yet been the subject of a compilation written in a language for everybody’s’ profit. It is desirable that it would have been.”, ibid. Also on Neşri see: V.L. Ménage, The Beginnings..., 175; and MC. Şehâbeddin Tekindağ, “Neşri,” 
IA, s.v.
anonymous Tevârih-i ʿAl-i ‘Osmān, along with the chronological information found in takvim.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Şahname} literature was patronized by Bayezid II and the number of works in this genre grew significantly. Many of these works were written by members of the ulema and most end with the years 1484 or 85. Some of the more important works of this time period were: Kâvâmi’s \textit{Fethname}, Kemal’s \textit{Selatinname}, Firdevsi’s \textit{Kuçbname} and the \textit{Gazavatname} by Safâyi. These works also were very favorable to Bayezid II who needed to shape opinion his way after the challenges made to his taking the throne from his brothers, especially Cem Sultan.\textsuperscript{24}

Excellent proof of Bayezid’s patronage of historical works can be seen in the introduction to Kemal Paşazâde’s work \textit{Tevârih-i ʿAl-i Osman} which states: “The Sultan remarked that if the histories and stories and anecdotes were not written down and thus the glories and the achievements of the great rulers were not perpetuated for the ages to come, they would be forgotten. He, therefore, asked that his achievements and those of his ancestors should be recorded. And in order to be useful for the distinguished as well as for ordinary people it should be composed in a clear style in Turkish and I was appointed by him to do this.”\textsuperscript{25} Kemal Paşazâde’s work was written in Turkish, but with the elaborate rhetorical devices used by Persian münsîs.\textsuperscript{26} It is widely recognized as one of the greatest works of Ottoman historiography.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{23} Kafadar, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 102

\textsuperscript{24} Inalcık, \textit{Rise of...}, 164-65.

\textsuperscript{25} Inalcık, \textit{Rise of...}, 166.

\textsuperscript{26} V.L. Ménage, \textit{The Beginnings...}, 168. A münsî is a composer in prose or secretary. The münsî will be considered later in the work when adab culture is discussed.

\textsuperscript{27} Inalcık, \textit{Rise of...}, 166.
At the same time that Bayezid II ordered the production of Kemal Paşazâde's work, he ordered the production of a similar work in high literary Persian to be written by a Persian rûnsî by the name of Idris Bitlisi. His work, the Hest Bihišt is a history of the Ottoman state written in the most complex form of Persian historiography. His account of the inner workings of the Ottoman government along with his influence on future Ottoman historians, especially Hoca Sa'deddin Efendi are very important facets of Ottoman historiography.  

This quasi-competition between Idris Bitlisi and Kemal Paşazâde can also been seen as a competition for the direction in which historical works would be written; either in high Persian or Ottoman Turkish. By the first half of the 16th century, Ottoman Turkish would become the main language of historical literature as well as of poetry. Bayezid II's patronage of historical writing was almost unmatched by any other Sultan in Ottoman history and it was with his patronage that many of the genres (i.e. chronicles or the poetic sahnames) in Ottoman historiography reach their definitive form.

The Sahnamecis: The First Ottoman Court Historians

During the fifteenth century Persian émigrés introduced the sahname genre of historical writing to the Ottoman court. By the middle of the sixteenth century, this genre

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28 For a comparison of both works see: V.L. Ménage, The Beginnings..., 176-77. It is also no coincidence that Idris Bitlisi spent time in the court of Uzun Hasan, the ruler of the Ak Koyunlu and major rival to the rise of the Safavids Dynasty in Iran. Bitlisi's work could have been as much a work to impress upon the Safavids the dynastic importance of the Ottoman state.


30 The only other sultan which comes close to matching Bayezid II's enthusiasm and involvement in the production of state history would be the reforming sultan, Selim III (1789-1807).
had reached its high-point with the creation of the post of şahnameci in the Ottoman bureaucracy. While there is no direct link between the two positions, it can be said that there is an indirect link between the post of şahnameci and vak'ânûvis. They are both, along with the müneccim who wrote imperial calendars, involved in the creation of "official" Ottoman historiography.

As discussed above, şahname literature was introduced into the Ottoman court by émigré Persian poets who had fled to Anatolia during the disruptions caused by Timur's invasion of the Middle East. These poets wrote highly flattering works for their imperial patrons in a high-Persian literary style which sought to imitate the epic Iranian work the Şehname by Firdevsî. Both Mehmed the Conqueror and Bayezid II patronized these types of eulogistic works. As discussed above, the predominant language of high court literature gradually changed from Persian to Ottoman Turkish both in prose and verse.

During the reign of Selim I or Yavuz Selim (1512-1520), şahnames were also produced and these have been sub-categorized by modern historians as Selimname literature. These works were written for many of the same reasons as previous şahname literature: to create a heroic figure in the Ottoman dynasty, to praise the many conquests of Selim I in Egypt and the Levant, to improve Selim's reputation as being "grim" (yavuz), to glorify the dynasty, and, finally, to impress other rivals, especially the Safavid Dynasty in Iran. The best of this genre of work is probably Hoca Sa'deddin's Tac'üt Tevârih written well after Selim's reign.

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31 The argument concerning the relationship between şahnameci and vak'ânûvis will be discussed in the next chapter.


33 On Selimname literature and Selim's reign see: Ahmed Uğur, The Reign of Sultan Selim I in the Light of Selim-nâme Literature (Berlin, 1985). On Hoca Sa'deddin see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 110-
After Selim I’s death in 1520, the official post of şahnameci was created by his successor Süleyman I (1520-1566). The origin of this office is still not well understood and there are only a few works written about the şahnameci and even fewer contemporary works which mention them. The post as it developed in the 1550’s was best defined by Christine Woodhead in her noteworthy article on the subject: “The post of şahnameci as established by Süleyman in the 1550’s provided the Ottoman state with a permanent, salaried official whose chief function was to compose literary accounts of contemporary or near-contemporary Ottoman history; as an early type of court historiographer, the şahnameci predates the vak’anûvis by almost 150 years.”

The origins of the office and who held the title of şahnameci first are still vague, but the most accepted version is that the post was created by Süleyman I for the poet Arif (d. 969/1561-1562) who was a well-known poet of Persian origin. It is generally accepted that the post existed for about 50 years and that there were five people appointed to it over that time. As stated above, the main duty of the şahnameci was to record, usually in a highly eulogistic manner, the glorious deeds of the sultan. The şahnamecis wrote these works in either in Persian or Turkish and were assisted in their

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111; and Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 123-126. Others who wrote Selim-nâmes were Keşfi Mehmed Çelebi, Şükri, and İshaq b. İbrahim.


36 Also known as ‘Arifi and Fethullah Arif Çelebi. For information on ‘Arif see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 49; Necip Aşım Balhasanoğlu, “Osmalı Tarih-nuvisleri ..”, 428-429; M. Fuad Köprüülü, “‘Arif,” IA, vol. I, s.v. Woodhead states that a contemporary account about ‘Arif by ‘Aşık Çelebi states the the position was created because of Süleyman’s satisfaction with the work he commissioned from ‘Arif. Christine Woodhead, “An Experiment.”, 159-160.
endeavors by a staff consisting of scribes (kâtibler), artists (musâvîr), gilders (müzehhib), and a chief miniaturist (nakkaş başı).³⁷

The appointment dates of Arif and his successor Eflâtun-ı Şirvani (d.977/1569), also a poet of Persian descent, to the post of şahnameci are not known, but the position was entrusted to Eflâtun at the time of Arif’s death.³⁸ After the death of Eflâtun in 1569 the post of şahnameci went to Seyyid Lokman (d. 1601) who held the position for more than 25 years and had a very powerful patron in the Grand Vezir, Sokullu Mehmed Paşa. He was dismissed from office in H1005/1596-1597.³⁹

Ta’lîkizâde Mehmed Suphi (d. H1008/1599-1600) went from an appointment on the şahnameci’s staff as a kâtib in 1590 to the post of şahnameci in 1596-1597. He held the position until mid-H1010/December 1601 at which time his chosen successor Hasan Hükmi was given the post. Hasan Hükmi, who had also been a kâtib, held the position for only a short time after which the post of şahnameci was left to lapse during the end of the reign of Mehmet III (1595-1603).⁴⁰ The possible reasons for the lapse of the post range from a change in the literary interests of the courts of Mehmed III and his successor Ahmed I (1603-1617) and Ottoman reversals on the battlefield to the evolution of the

³⁷ Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyînleri., v.III, 319. Pakalın also states that the post was originally named şahnamehan. He also states the the names şahname-nûvis and şahnamegîdy were also found in documents, though he fails to identify these documents; Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyînleri., v.III, 318.


position by Hükmî’s time to a more simple position as “keeper of the daybook” which
was performed by a scribe.\footnote{Christine Woodhead, “An Experiment..”, 180-181. The keeping of an official daybook (yevniye defteri or ceride-i yevniye) by a scribe and its relation to the position of vak’anûvis will be discussed in the next chapter.}

Arif, Lokman, and Ta’likizâde produced a total of fifteen known works in the fifty
years that the post existed. These works varied greatly in form, style and content as the
authors responded to the literary tastes of the court. According to Woodhead, the two
most important developments in this genre were the adoption of Turkish rather than
Persian as the major language of composition by the time of Lokman and the growing use
of prose rather than verse in the works.\footnote{Christine Woodhead, “An Experiment..”, 163-164. Arif produced two major works in Persian verse, Şâhnâme-i Al-i ‘Osmân and the Sûleymânname. Lokman produced ten major works while in the position of şahnameci. Five works were written in Persian verse, four in Turkish prose and one in Turkish verse. The Hünername and the Şâhîngâhname were written during the height of Ottoman miniature painting for Sultan Murad III. Ta’likizâde wrote three works in Turkish that discuss Ottoman campaigns and the strengths of the Ottoman dynasty. While the historical works might be mostly forgotten by Turks, the miniatures produced for the writings of the şahnamecis can be seen in calendars, posters and postcards all over Turkey.}

The works of the şahnamecis had no lasting effect on Ottoman historiography, but
the miniature paintings which accompanied the text have proven to be invaluable to
scholars as visual representations of the Ottoman court at its height. Their works written
in Persian and later Turkish verse accented with miniature painting was particular to their
post and was not greatly imitated among literary circles. The main style in Ottoman
historiography until the 19th century would be Turkish prose accented with either Turkish
or Persian verse. The greatest variable in writings would be the ornateness of the prose.

Woodhead best sums-up the importance of the şahnameci genre by saying;

> Although these texts were not widely disseminated and
appear not to have influenced the development of Ottoman
historiography to any great extent, they have nevertheless a
two fold significance: first, for their value as a corpus of
historical texts written over an important period of both
literary and political change, as illustrated in the varying
nature of their style and contents: second, in reflecting the interests and concerns of the sultans for whom they were composed, these texts provide some insight into the character and function of the şahnamecilik itself: what considerations lay behind the institution of the office by Suleyman, its continuation under his three successors, and its apparently abrupt disappearance early in the 17th century. 43

Trends in Ottoman Historiography in the Seventeenth Century

The Ottoman seventeenth century was a period of slowed military expansion. It also marked the beginning of an era in which the central administration suffered from external and internal challenges that would eventually culminate in the major reorganization of the Ottoman system in the 19th century called the Tanzimat. Ottoman historical writing changed too in the 17th century due to changing patterns in Ottoman literary circles and in royal patronage. Because of perceived Ottoman declines on the battlefield and in the bureaucracy, nostalgia grew for the golden past of the 15th and 16th centuries. From this nostalgia grew an important genre in historical literature called 'advice' or nasihat literature. It was also at this time that other important structural and topical developments affected historical literature. These developments would all influence the style and content of the works done by the vak'anîvîsleri beginning in the eighteenth century. 44

Advice literature (pendname or nasihatname) or 'mirror for princes' literature was not a new genre of historical literature, it can trace its introduction into the Islamic world

43 Christine Woodhead, "An Experiment...", 157.

44 The Seventeenth Century has long been ignored by Ottoman historians due to the source material and the difficulty in dealing with the Ottoman 'decline' paradigm. Some works which have begun to address this century and 'decline' paradigm are: Madeline C. Zilfi, The Politics of Piety (Minneapolis, 1988); Rhoads Murphey, "Continuity and Discontinuity in Ottoman Administrative Theory and Practice during the late Seventeenth Century," Poetics Today 14:2 (1993).
to the 8th century, but this genre was new to Ottoman literary circles starting in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. 45 This literature began to be patronized during the reigns of Murad IV (1623-1639) and Ibrahim I (1639-1648). To generalize, advice literature sought to give council to those in high places as to what was going wrong in the Empire and to give solutions to those problems through historical examples of Ottoman greatness in the not so distant past.

Many of the Ottoman writers of this genre were scribes or disillusioned bureaucrats. They sought, through their many treatises (risale) to analyze Ottoman society and point out the problems that affected it. 46 Most of the cures for society’s evils were based in the belief that the Ottoman administration was at its best during the ‘Golden Age’ of the Empire. This ‘Golden Age’ could be anywhere from the time of Mehmet II to Süleyman I. Their advice sought to bring those offending institutions back to past standards through either the proper observation of şeriat law or kanun law. 47 By following their advice, the Ottoman institutions would be re-invigorated and the chaos in government and military reversals would be ended. 48

45 The first writer of this genre was said to be the vezir of the Caliph al-Mansur. The most important works from the medieval period are: Qabusnamâ of Qa’i Qabus ibn Iskandar, the Siyârat-Muluk by Nizāmu’l-Mulk and the Nasihatâ’t-Muluk of al-Ghazali. See: C.E. Bosworth, ”Naşihat al-Mulük,” EI, new ed., s.v.

46 Ottoman society is best defined here as everyone who was Muslim and who belonged to one of the major divisions of the Ottoman ruling class: the kâdimîye (scribes), seyîfe (military), ilmiye (religion) and maliye (financial); all others belonged to the subject class. Thus, Ottoman society is a very limited term to describe a small group in the Ottoman Empire who held most of the power.

47 Religious and secular law respectively.

Some of the more important works of this historical genre are: the Åsafnâme by Lütfi Paşa (1488-1553) which gives council for grand vezirs and princes, Nasihatü's-Selâttin by Mustafa 'Ali which looks at the ailments of society and sought a stronger government to redress them, Koçi Bey's Risale of 1631 which was a collection of advice to reform the empire, and Kâtip Çelebi's short work entitled Destürü'l-'arrel li-işlâhi'l- têmâl, which is the summation of a series of council meetings ordered by the sultan in 1653 in which ways to reform the empire were discussed.  

Apart from the development of advice literature there were also general developments in Ottoman historical writing. The ornate style of the şahnamecîs gave way over the century to a revival of vernacular Turkish in Ottoman historical narrative which had not been seen since before the arrival of Persian émigré poets to the Ottoman court. Other developments that would be reflected in the writing styles of the court historians were the growing use of verbatim quotation of direct speech to enhance the narrative along with an avoidance of the use of unnecessarily wordy and indirect language. In addition there was the development of a rapportage style which replaced the metaphorical style of writing favored by 16th century writers. Chroniclers who had access to the Divan-i Hümayun would often quote verbatim the discussions of a council meeting or would copy the contents of official documents in their works.

These changes indicate a major shift in historical writing in the seventeenth century. The need for the sovereign to use historical writing as a legitimizing agent for the Ottoman state came to and end in this period. As indicated above this was one of the major reasons for the departure of the office of şahnameçî from the bureaucracy. Instead,

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49 On Lütfi Paşa see: M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Lütfi," IA, s.v. The life and works of Mustafa 'Ali is the subject of an excellent work by Cornell Fleischer, Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600), (Princeton, 1986). On Koçi Bey see: M. Çağatay Ulucay, "Koçi Bey," IA, s.v. for an overview. There has been much written on Kâtip Çelebi. One of the best accounts of his impact on literature in the 17th Century is still A. Adnan Advâr, Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim (İstanbul, 1982), 126-158.
historical writing reflected imperial sentiments, as well as popular sentiments when recording events of the contemporary or not so distant past. With the increased use of vernacular, the works of historians would reach a much broader internal audience.⁵⁰

Rhodes Murphey best summarizes developments in Ottoman historiography during the 17th century in the following section from his article on Ottoman historical writing:

Retrospective history, too, was naturally influenced by contemporary values and concerns, and most historians writing general histories of the dynasty (Tarih-i Al-i Osman) treated the events of their own immediate experience in greatest depth and detail. What is interesting about Ottoman historical writing in general is that its creators were at the same times participants in and observers of the events they set out to describe in their histories. While today we value distance, detachment, and "objectivity" in historical writing, it was expected that the writers of retrospective Ottoman history would give free reign to personal opinion in their accounts. A given writer's literary persona is thus often best approached from the standpoint of his professional identity and his status-group affiliations. Broadly speaking, Ottoman historians of the seventeenth century may be classified according to their membership in one of three principal groups: the 'alim historians representing the perspective of the shariah, the kâtib historians representing the perspective of members of the state bureaucracy, and an increasingly dominant group of historians who were members of the sultan's inner circle of palace advisers and household attendants, the enderunt historians.⁵¹

As Murphy has indicated there were three types of Ottoman historians of the seventeenth century. Alims were members of the ulema and thus were products of medrese educations. Kâtibs were scribes in the various bureaus of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Third were what Murphy calls musahib historians or historians who were personal

⁵⁰ Rhoads Murphey, "Continuity and Discontinuity...," 279-280.

⁵¹ Rhoads Murphey, "Continuity and Discontinuity...," 281.
attendants, companions, etc. to the sultan. Murphy, in his article, has not just developed a course of inquiry concerning historians of the seventeenth century, but has also given a general outline for examining Ottoman historiography in general. These themes will be enlarged upon in the development and history of the institution of the vak' anüvis.

The development of 'official' historiography in the Ottoman Empire can be seen best in regard to the needs of the Ottoman ruling class. Early, during the formative period, Ottoman rulers patronized historians to establish their claim as the premier gazis of Anatolia. Historical works were also used to justify their rule over rival states in Anatolia. Finally, they sought to explain the debacle of the defeat by Timur of Bayezid.

After the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottomans sought to glorify their new status of being lords over an empire. The works of the şahnameci, while not having a lasting impact on historiography, best exemplify the power and grandeur of the Ottoman sultan and his empire. Optimism and power began to wane as the Ottoman political system became corrupt and stagnant and the Ottoman military suffered numerous setbacks on the battlefield to the Europeans. This period of time ushered in new avenues in historical writing including 'advice' literature and the growth in popularity of chronicles written in a more simple form of Ottoman.

As the 17th century progressed Ottoman historiography began to reflect more and more the reporting of contemporary or near contemporary events by members of the Ottoman bureaucracy, religious establishment or confidants of the sultan. Along with verbatim recording of official documents and other sources, historians used their works to comment on the current maladies of the Ottoman Empire and suggest solutions taken from the past. Historical works became more and more an account of the 'general

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52 musahib can be defined as: gentleman-in-waiting (on the Sultan) or companion, associate or friend. Examples of this type of historian given by Murphy are: Solakzade (d.1657) who was a companion of Murad IV, Evliya Çelebi (d.1685), and Koçi Bey. He also mentions another group of historians who came
happenings' of government and not just a glorification of the sultan's deeds. As more and more of these works, called chronicles, were produced, there was a move to formalize and institutionalize the chronicle writing process. This process would lead to the introduction of the position of 'events writer' or vekayi-nūvis in the eighteenth century.
Chapter Two: Origins of the Vak’anûvislik

Scholars have debated the origin of the office of court historian or vak’anûvis for the last century. Was, as many historians have claimed, Mustafa Naim Efendi (d. 1716) the first court historian or was it Mehmed Raşid Efendi (d. 1735)? Was the office a creation of later Ottoman and Turkish historians to invent an uninterrupted group of men who chronicled the deeds of the Ottoman Empire from beginning to end? Did the post evolve from the position of sahnamesi? What is the documentary and literary evidence concerning the existence of the office?

The office of court historian grew out of the patronage of chronicles written by men in palace service, the bureaucracy, or religious institutions of government in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The office of vak’anûvis can definitely be said to have been established by the time Mehmed Raşid Efendi wrote his chronicle in the years 1714 to 1723. The office of court historian continued to exist, in one form or another, until the end of the Ottoman Empire.

This chapter will examine the debate behind the origins of the office of court historian or chronicler, the organization of the office and its relationship to the bureaucracy, and finally look at the figures associated with the foundation of the office of vak’anûvis.
To attempt a clear-cut distinction between a class of Ottoman official recording secretaries and a group of official historians is futile. To assume that every occurrence of the term vak'a- or vakayi-nūvis must mean “official historian” leads even further into error.

-Lewis V. Thomas from *A Study of Naima* 52

**Chroniclers in Government and on Campaign**

Part of the debate concerning the court chronicler centers around the origins and use of the words vak'anūvis or vakayinūvis in the Ottoman context. Both of these words can be found in Ottoman archival documents and literary sources. As Lewis Thomas pointed out in the above quote, all occurrences of these words certainly cannot be construed as referring to an appointed official in the Ottoman government who recorded the events of the House of Osman. What a closer examination of the existing documentary and literary evidence shows is that the term had three distinct uses: (1) recording secretary of the Imperial Council; (2) campaign chronicler; (3) Imperial Historiographer.

The term vak'anūvis is a compound word meaning historian/annalist, imperial historiographer, or government reporter according to dictionaries. Vakayinūvis is also a term used for the above definitions, but the compound begins with the plural of the word. 53 Lewis, in his critique of the position of court chronicler, more selectively

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53 Definitions for this word were taken from: Redhouse, *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul, 1992), 1216; Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Beirut, 1987), 2144; and Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* (New Delhi, 1981), 1476. The term vak'a is Arabic and means event, occurrence, or event of historical importance (i.e. battle, accession, etc.). The term -nūvis is a Persian suffix, which means: one who writes, author or writer. Vakayi is the plural of vak'a and is also found written as vakya or vekayi.
defines the terms as having the same basic meaning—“recorder,” “recording secretary,” or “keeper of the minutes.” He further states that there existed a nuance in the meaning of the words vak’anîvis or vakayinîvis. The term beginning with the singular vak’a referred to a secretary who recorded the minutes for one specific event, while the plural vakayi referred to a standing secretary who recorded for a standing committee.\textsuperscript{54} No evidence concerning this claim has been found in the Ottoman archives, but Lewis might have been confusing the term vakayinîvis with the position of vekâyi kâtibi who was a standing recorder of minutes for councils such as the kazasker divanı.\textsuperscript{55} The only evidence concerning the use of either term can be associated with the Imperial Council (Divan-i hîmayun) of the Ottoman state.

The definition of vak’anîvis or vakayinîvis as “events-writer” is very important in the context of the development of the group of men who held the ‘official’ position of court historian. The meaning of vak’anîvis or the plural in this context could best be defined as a secretary attached to the Divan-i hîmayun who recorded the events discussed in their meetings and who had access to documents which were associated with the different bureaus (kalem) which supported the Imperial Council.\textsuperscript{56} These vak’anîvis recorded the events that occurred and made copies ( sûret) or summaries (telhis) of

\textsuperscript{54} Lewis Thomas, \textit{A Study of Naima}, 36.

\textsuperscript{55} Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Devletinin Ilmiye Teşkilâtı} (Ankara, 1988), 154, describes that position of vekâyi kâtibi as one who wrote summaries of the court cases and their decisions from the meetings of the Kazasker’s council. There were two kazaskers or chief justices of Islamic law, one for Anatolia and another for Rumeli or the European part of the Empire. See: Stanford Shaw, \textit{History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey}, Vol. I, 138-139.

\textsuperscript{56} The Divan-i hîmayun is the Imperial Council. The bureaus that supported the Council were under the Divan Kalem which was the Office of the Imperial Chancery. More will be said about these organizations in a following section.
important documents in a daybook (ceride-i yevmiye). The official position of Imperial Historiographer emerged from this position during the early eighteenth century.\(^{57}\)

\textit{Vakayınûvis} and/or \textit{vak’}anûvis were often used before and even during the time of the office of Imperial Historiographer to mean, "recorder of campaigns." Indeed the word \textit{waqi’ā} in Arabic refers to an event, incident or battle and the recording of battles or campaigns has been an important part of Ottoman/Islamic historiography.\(^{58}\) When the sultan went out on a campaign (\textit{gaza}), a skilled writer would accompany the army to record the army’s “successes”. Their works, often called \textit{gazavâtnames}, were later presented to the sultan.\(^{59}\) An example of this type of writer was Nergisi Mehmed Efendi "Bosnevi" (d.1634) who described the departure of Murad IV’s army on the Revan Campaign of 1635\(^{60}\) In addition, some of the chroniclers who have been identified as Imperial Historiographers accompanied the army on campaign while leaving a substitute in their office in Istanbul. Some of the court chroniclers who accompanied the army on campaign were Enveri Sadullah Efendi, Pertev Mehmed Efendi, and Sahhaflar Şeyhi-zâde Mehmed Esad Efendi.

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\(^{57}\) The use of the terms chronicler, historiographer, or historian will be considered in a later section.


Finally, the terms also described the official position of Imperial Historiographer. The position of imperial historiographer or court chronicler/historian was attached to the Divan-i hümâyûn and had duties that were identical to the first definition, but the position included the additional duties that will be discussed later in this chapter. As can be seen from the above discussion, the term vak’anûvis was used in some contexts before the late 17th century, but occurrences of this word were not very common. The use of its component words vak’a and -nûvis had a much wider use in historical literature.

The later Ottomans perhaps in a measure through western influence came to feel that there should exist one unbroken chain of official Ottoman annals. This chain was to cover the whole span of Ottoman history, year by year, without gaps and without overlapping. The entire chain was to be printed. Any author whose work fell in that chain was, by that fact, an “official historian” quite irrespective of whether he himself had ever kept an official (or unofficial) calendar of events, or even of whether he had used such calendars as sources.

Recent writers have unwittingly projected this later concept backward in time. Searching for early “official historians,” they have been misled into finding them in every “event(s)-writer” of whom they find mention.

-Lewis V. Thomas from A Study of Naima

A Vak’anûvis Under Every Rock

Another more important argument made by Lewis Thomas concerns the idea that there was an unbroken chain of chroniclers who, by design, recorded the deeds of the

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61 The ‘post’ or ‘office’ of Imperial Historiographer is referred to in Ottoman and modern Turkish as either the Vak’anûvisîk or Vakayınûvisîk. The noun suffix -îk makes nouns of rank into offices of that person of rank. See: G.L. Lewis, Turkish Grammar (Oxford, 1991), 62.

62 Lewis Thomas, A Study of Naima, 39.
House of Osman sequentially from the beginning and without overlapping. This idea possibly began with the opening of Ibrahim Müteferrika's press in the 18th century and has continued to be propagated by commentators on the vak'anûvislik even today.\(^{63}\)

The argument that the Ottomans created an "imagined community" of Imperial Historiographers in the 19th century, possibly under western influence, is a very important tool in the analysis of the position of court historian. The argument is valid concerning attempts to link a group of Ottoman chroniclers dating from the founding of the dynasty until the 20th century together, but literary and documentary evidence shows that there were two official positions related to historical writing in the Ottoman government; that of sahnâmece in the late 16th century and that of Imperial Historiographer beginning in the 18th century. What Lewis' argument principally provides is a reminder to use caution when looking at all of the writers who have been identified as being a vak'anûvis.

The first known lists of Imperial Historiographers did not exist until the middle of the nineteenth century. Before the 19th century, the only records of court historians came from their own chronicles, a few documents from the Ottoman bureaucracy, and their being identified individually in biographical literature (tezkere, pl. tezâkîr) as vak'anûvis or vakâyınûvis.\(^{64}\)

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\(^{63}\) Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674-1745) opened the first printing press to publish works in Ottoman characters in 1727. His press operated from 1727 to 1797 and of the 24 works that were printed, five were works by vak'anûvis: Naılmâ, Raşid, Çelebizâde Asım, Samî, Suﬁh and Şakîr (the previous three were published in one volume), and İzzî. In Müteferrika's introduction to Naılmâ's work he forwards the idea of publishing a complete set of works which covers history from Adam to the present day which emphasized the use of Ottoman writers. On this see note 148 in Lewis Thomas, A Study of Naîmâ, 39. On Ibrahim Müteferrika see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. I, 236-238; Alpasy Kâbacaâ, Türk Kitap Tarihi (İstanbul, 1989), 31-41; Govsa, Türk Meşhûrlarî, 185; and T. Halâsi Kun, "İbrahim Mutaferrîka," IA, V/ii, s.v.

\(^{64}\) The documents from the Ottoman bureaucracy can now be found in the Başbakanlık Arşivi (BBA).
The earliest list of Imperial Historiographers dates from the work, *Ayine-i Zürefa*, by Karshizade Mehmed Cemîleddin (d. 1845). This work is a general survey of Ottoman historiography and listed both court historians and those who had been appointed as court chroniclers before them, the *şahnamecîs*. This work was originally written in 1843, but was edited and updated by Ahmet Cevdet, an Imperial Historiographer, and published in 1314 / 1899.\(^6^5\) The next complete list of court historians came with the publishing of the first volume of Vak'ânûvis Ahmet Lütfi's work in 1290 / 1873. In that work he states that the position of vak'ânûvis was a continuation of the post of *şahnamecî* and then lists both the *şahnamecîs* and a group of 28 men, including himself, that held the post of court historian.\(^6^6\) From these two works came the linking of the *vak'ânûvisîlik* with the older post of *şahnamecî*.\(^6^7\)

The linking of these two posts would give the appearance that there was at least an appointed government position which chronicled the events of the Empire from the 1550's until the end of the 19th century when Ahmet Lütfi was writing his chronicle.

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\(^6^6\) Ahmet Lütfi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, vol. 1 (İstanbul, 1290), 4-7. It is possible that Lütfi had access to the manuscript of Karshizade Mehmed Cemîleddin and used it for his list of court historians. Both had worked at the official government newspaper *Takvim-i Vekâyi*. See Appendix A for a translation of Lütfi's list of court historians.

\(^6^7\) Christine Woodhead in her article on the position of *şahnamecî* also comments that there has been nothing that can definitely establish a link between that office and the position of *vak'ânûvis*, but it is important to consider the fact that the *şahnamecîs* do, in fact, represent a form of official historiography that predates the *vak'ânûvisîlik*. See: Christine Woodhead, "An Experiment. . .", 169-170.
These lists of accepted ‘official’ chroniclers, both vak‘anūvis and şahnameci, have continued to turn up in Ottoman historiography until today.\textsuperscript{68}

There are two main problems with the connecting of the two posts. The first concerns finding ‘official’ chroniclers who recorded events of the Empire from the last şahnameci Hasan Hukmi, who had been appointed in 1601 and held the appointment for only a short time, and the creation of the post of vak‘anūvis by the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The second problem concerns the different aims and results of these two distinctive institutions.

Some commentators on Ottoman historiography solved the first problem by adding chroniclers between 1601 and 1699 who were commissioned by order of the sultan or grand vezir. The best example for this trend would be Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa who, by order of Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-1687), recorded the events of 1648 to 1682 in his work the 

{\textit{Vakayınama.}} Abdi Paşa has been claimed by some to be the first vak‘anūvis which would have moved the origins of the vak‘anūvis to the middle, rather than the end, of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{69}

As stated above, the ‘imagined community’ of court chroniclers was just that, a fabrication by commentators on Ottoman historiography. To try and connect the posts of şahnameci and vak‘anūvis is very problematic. The post of şahnameci was created to record, in a high literary style, an exceedingly flattering portrait of the Ottoman sultan’s accomplishments. On the other hand, the vak‘anūvislik was created to keep a record of

\textsuperscript{68} In addition to Lütfi’s and Cemâleddin’s work the şahnameci to vak‘anūvis argument can be found in the Mehmet Zeki Pakalın’s discussion of vak‘anūvis, \textit{Osmanlı Tarihi Deyimleri}, 574-575 and Ismail Hakki Uzuncaşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı}, (Ankara, 1988), 64-68.

\textsuperscript{69} Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa has been claimed to be the first court historian by M. Orhan Bayrak in his biographical / bibliographic work, \textit{Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarlari}, 6; Karsızade Mehmed Cemâleddin dates Abdi as the earliest vak‘anūvis, but is not clear on his ‘official’ status or not (Ahmet Cevdet, \textit{Osmanlı Tarih ve Müvərrehi}, 16 and 51-52); he is also found in Vak‘anūvis Lütfi’s list of his predecessors; and Mehmed Süreyya, \textit{Sicil-i Osmanı}, vol. III, 408. More about Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa will be discussed below.
the daily events of the Ottoman state and to record these events in chronicle form. Both positions had different support groups and different access to sources.

It can only best be said that they were both highly developed forms of 'official' historiography. Other forms of 'official' historiography, which were less developed, like the production of Imperial calendars, was discussed in the first chapter. To look before the advent of the post of şahnameçi for a systematic appointment of chroniclers of the state would be a futile endeavor. The most that can be said about the relation between the central government and historical writing is that the production of historical works was most closely tied with the literary trends of the time and the ebb and flow of Imperial patronage.

A Definition for Vak'anüvis

The office of Imperial Historiographer developed from the appointment of men to record the minutes of the Divan-i hämayun into a separate office which was attached to the Divan-i Hümayun Kalemi and whose job it was to record the important events of the time while compiling and writing a finished chronicle, based in part on their predecessors' notes, for presentation to the Sultan. Presentation of a completed work to the ruler's satisfaction was necessary to guarantee monetary support and continuance in the position of Vak'anüvis. Commentators on Ottoman historiography have alternately selected three such candidates as the first Vak'anüvis: Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, Naima Mustafa Efendi, and Mehmed Raşid Efendi. Which one was the first?

The origins of the office can best be seen as an evolutionary process, rather than a clear decision by the sultan or grand vezir to create an office. There is no evidence concerning the existence of a Hatt-i Hämayun or other such official document creating
the office. The best way to examine the origins of the vak'anûvislik is to define the main characteristics of the office as it existed in the nineteenth century, when it was an official office attached to the Divan-i hümâyûn Kalemi, and apply them to the early chroniclers who have been identified as the first vak'anûvis. The most important attributes which define the vak'anûvislik are: (1) access to the Divan-i hümâyûn, the departments which supported the Divan called the Divan-i hümâyûn Kalemleri, and access to official documents created by these departments, (2) having the rank of hace (chief or senior clerk) or being a highly educated member of the ulema in the scribal service, (3) having a good reputation for being an âlim (scholar), münşî (prose writer) or şair (poet), (4) keeping of a daybook (ceride-i yevmiye), and (5) the arranging and writing of a chronicle of recent history based, most often, on his predecessors' records for presentation to the Sultan. An examination of these attributes and an analysis of them in relation to the men variously identified as the first vak'anûvis is a very important step in the search for the origins of the office of Imperial Historiographer and an understanding of the office in general.

The defining factors listed above should not be construed as being all-inclusive. While a majority of the men who held the position of court historian possess most of the factors listed above in common, not all fit the mold. Some were appointed to this position as substitutes or through the gross misuse of patronage. More will be said about patronage in following chapters.

70 The cataloging of the Ottoman Archives is an ongoing process. Additional documents associated with the vak'anûvislik will no doubt surface in time.

71 As will be shown later in this chapter, the position of vak'anûvis did exist in the 19th Century. This can be confirmed by looking at the documentary evidence in the BBA.
The Divan-i hümayun and Divan-i hümayun Kalemleri

The office of Court Historiographer (vak'anüvislik) was attached to the offices (kalemleri) that administered the decisions of the Divan-i hümayun and supported other bureaucratic functions of the central administration. The Imperial Council was the most important decision making body of the Ottoman central government up until the late 18th century at which time many of its functions were transferred to the Grand Vezir’s residence, which was most commonly known as the Sublime Porte or Bab-ı âli. Because of an absence of archival material or contemporary accounts, one can only speculate about the transformation of the vak'anüvis from a simple recorder of Imperial Council minutes to a separate office attached to the Divan-i hümayun Kalemleri by the middle of the 18th century. By looking at the organization of the divan and its attached administrative offices and comparing it with the source material of the vak'anüvisleri’s chronicles, a discernible relationship between the two can be seen.

The Divan-i hümayun was the central decision-making body of the Ottoman Empire until the late 18th century. The Imperial Council, which was originally presided over by the sultan, was comprised of the following main members: Sadrâzam (grand vezir), Kubbe vezirleri (various governors, etc. of vezir rank appointed to the council), Kaptanpaşa (admiral), Rumeili and Anadolu kazaskerleri (chief military judges of the European and Asian sides of the Empire respectively), Şükür evvel, săni, and salis defterdarları (financial administrators of the first, second and third ranks), Nişancı

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(inscriber of imperial seal), Yeniçeri Ağası (head of the Janissary Corps) and after the sixteenth century, the Deryakaptanı (Chief Admiral of Ottoman Fleets). In addition, other members which would be present were: the Reisülküttab (head of the chancellery), Çavuşbaşı (chief of the sultan's personal guard), Kapular Kethüdası (functionary who took petitions to the sultan), members of the ulema, the Büyük and Küçük tezkereci (recorders), tercüman (translators), and other administrative officers.73

The Imperial Council discussed important matters and petitions brought before them. It would be the ultimate judgment of the sultan or grand vezir to implement decisions. Matters of state that were left undecided were often later discussed at a second council meeting called the ikindi Divanı which would meet following the afternoon prayers at the residence of the grand vezir. This second council meeting would gradually become more and more important as the sultan withdrew from active participation in the central administration. By the end of the 18th century the council which met at the Grand Vezir's residence (Bab-ı âli or Paşa Kapısı) would become the main decision making body of the Empire and much of the powers of the Divan-i Hümâyûn were transferred there, including the major administrative departments which supported the Divan, the Divan Kalemeleri.

The administrative departments connected to the Divan-i hümâyûn were under the direction of the reisülküttab and were responsible for administering the divan's decisions. The Reis Efendi, as he was also known, was also responsible for contact between the grand vezir and foreign dignitaries, etc. This position was the closest thing to a Foreign Ministry the Ottoman government would have until the 19th century. The number of offices / departments connected to the Divan-i hümâyûn Kalemeleri have been reported to

73 The sultan presided over the meetings personally until the time of Mehmet II, after which time, the sultan would view meetings through a covered screen (kafr). From Süleyman the Magnificent's time onward, the sultan only infrequently presided over these meetings.
have been as few as three and as many as eight, depending on the sources. The four main departments were: the Beylikçi or Divan Kalemî, the Tahvil Kalemî, the Rüûs or Nûsan Kalemî, and the Amredi Kalemî. Additional departments which have been said to have been identified with the Divan Kalemî are: the Taşrifatculuk, Vak'anûvisîk, Divan-i hûmayûn Hocaları and Divan-i hûmayûn Tercümanlarî.\textsuperscript{74}

The Beylikçi or Divan Kalemî had the job of keeping a record of the Imperial Council’s deliberations and decisions and of drawing up documents associated with these decisions. The head of the department was called the Beylikçi Efendi. Some of the documents that the Divan Kalemî produced were: ferman (decree), berat (letters of appointment), hatt-i hûmayûn (decree sent to the grand vezir by the sultan), nâmê-i hûmayûn (letter from the sultan), and ahînîname (treaty). This department also kept records of the deliberations and decisions of the council that were recorded in registers called Mühimme Defterleri.\textsuperscript{75}

The Tahvil Kalemî or Appointments Department recorded and issued patents (berat) or orders (tevcih ferma) for the appointment of provincial judges (vilâyet

\textsuperscript{74} In the above works mentioned concerning the Divan-i hûmayûn Kalemî, Shaw states that there are four departments (Beylikçi, Tahvil, Rüûs, and Amredi); Lewis states that there were three major (Beylikçi, Tahvil, and Rüûs), two lesser (Taşrifatçî and Vak'anûvisîk) and one later addition (Amredi); Halâçoğlu and Uzunçarsîlî both mentions all eight listed above and also discuss the personnel associated with record keeping and the archives. All eight of the above mentioned offices could very well have been attached to the Divan-i hûmayûn Kalemî while it still met at Topkâpi Sarayı, but there was a reorganization of these offices when the grand vezir’s divan became the central administrative council in the late 17th Century. It can be safe to say that the Vak'anûvis did not exist in its 18th Century form at the palace. All of these departments were affected by the major administrative changes made during the period of major reform known in Ottoman historiography as the Tanzimat (1839-1876).

\textsuperscript{75} On the Beylikçi (also spelled Beğlikçi) or Divan Kalemî see: Yusuf Halâçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlıda, 21; Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarsîlî, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 40-43; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 40-41. For information concerning documents produced by the Beylikçi Office, see: Reyçman & Zajaczkowski, Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomatics (Mouton, 1968), 135-139; and Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarsîlî, Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı (Ankara, 1988), 279-296; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire (Princeton, 1980), 70-91. It is also interesting to note that the recorder of mühimme registers was called a mühimmenevîs.
kadıları or mevâli), vezirs, beylerbeyi (governors-general), and sancakbeys (provincial governor). The department also issued brevets of assignment (tahvil tezkeresi) to assign incomes from benefices in land (timar, zemīt, has) to the above-mentioned officeholders. In addition, the department was responsible for the dismissal, and transfer of these high ranking officials. The tahvil kesedârî led this office.\textsuperscript{76}

The Rüüs Kalemi had similar duties to the Tahvil Kalemi, but was responsible for lower officials: e.g., dizdar (warden of a castle), vâiz (mosque preacher), or devrhan (reciter of the Koran) This department issued 'diplomas' which were called rûûs for appointment to offices which did not have benefices in land attached to them. Diplomas were also issued as pensions to needy individuals. This department was also responsible for the testing and assignment of religious scholars (müderris). In addition to diplomas issued by the Rüüs Kalemi, diplomas were issued by the army (ordu rûûslari) and to attendants in the retinue of the sultan (Rikâb-i hümâyûn rûûslari).\textsuperscript{77}

The Âmedî Kalemi or Office of the Receiver, like the vakânüvislik, was a later addition to the Divan Kalemi.\textsuperscript{78} The head of this department was called the Âmedî Efendi. This office had various responsibilities, particularly concerning both secret and normal correspondence, associated with the chief scribe and grand vezir. The office recorded the charges due to the chief scribe upon the assignment of a benefice of land to a holder. It also assisted the chief scribe (Reis Efendi) in preparing documents for the

\textsuperscript{76} This department was also known as the Niçan or Kese Kalemi. On the Tahvil Kalemi see: Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılarda, 21; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 43-45; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 307-308; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire (Princeton, 1980), 70-91.

\textsuperscript{77} İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 45-47; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılarda, 21-22; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 271; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform, 70-91.

\textsuperscript{78} The Office of the Receiver was established c.1777.

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grand vezir to submit to the palace (e.g. takrir or telhis) and the preparation of documents that were exchanged with foreign governments or entities.\textsuperscript{79}

Palace protocol, ceremonies and official etiquette were the responsibilities of the Teşrifatculuk. This office had many functions in the palace including the handling of foreign dignitaries, the mustering of the army and navy, organizing celebrations for imperial weddings, births and circumcisions, and recording the awarding of positions, honors, robes (hil'at), etc. by the sultan. In addition, the office handled many of the financial details of the above functions.\textsuperscript{80}

The Vak'ani visi\v{s}lik was a department in name only as there was only one person who held the position of Imperial Historiographer. The holder of this position was to record daily events connected with the central government in a daybook and had varying degrees of access to the documents and people connected with the Divan-i hümâyûn and Divan Kalenleri. If the person held the position for a long enough period of time, he might have had the opportunity to write a chronicle of events based on his and his predecessors' notes. He would have then presented the chronicle to the sultan for suitable remuneration, recognition, and encouragement to continue recording events.

The Divan-i hümâyûn Hocaları were also known as the Hacegân-i divan-i hümâyûn and were a group of senior scribes who were in charge of various offices associated with the Divan-i hümâyûn and later the Bab-ı âli. These senior scribes came from all departments of government and their make-up and organization varied over the years. The hacegân included members from: maliye and kapikulu ocakları kâtipleri

\textsuperscript{79} Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 55-58; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılar, 22-23; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 13-14; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform, 70-91; Shaw states that the office was purged of all non-Muslims after 1826 as a result of the Greek Revolution, Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. I, 281-282.

\textsuperscript{80} Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 58-64; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılar, 23-24; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 315.
(Administrative offices associated with the financial and palace service branches),

tersane emîni (Head of the Imperial Dockyard), şehremîni (prefect), arpa (Comptroller of
supplies of barley for Imperial Stables and Istanbul), matbah (director of Imperial
Kitchen), darphâne emînleri (director of the Imperial Mint), teşrifatçî (director of Palace
Protocol), tophâne (director of the Imperial Arsenal), and baruthâne emînleri (director of
Imperial powder-mill). The hacegân had the important positions of overseeing all scribal
activities connected with their appointments including the correction of apprentices'
work. As the departments in the Divan made the move to the Bab-î Âli, the hacegân
became a more ceremonial title and eventually the title came to be used by all scribes in
the 19th century. As discussed below, the hacegân were a major source for men who
were appointed to the vak’ânîvislik.

The Divan-i hükûyet Tercümanu or Office of the Translator of the Imperial
Divan is the last of the offices or departments of the Divan-i hükûyet Kalemi. This
office was unique in that it was held by a group of Istanbul Greek families, called
Phanariots, from the mid-seventeenth century to 1821. The translator was to render into
Ottoman Turkish all documents submitted to the Divan and later the Porte in foreign
languages. They were also to translate all addresses of European ministers to the sultan
or grand vezir in formal audiences. The office also translated all correspondence between
the reisülküttab and foreign representatives, and the chief translator often went on formal
visits to foreign diplomats. This position was probably the most important foreign affairs

81 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 68-71; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda
Osmanlılar, 24; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli Osmanlı, 121; Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, and Efendis: A
Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul, 1997), 72.
position, until the Tanzimat, in the Ottoman government next to the Reisülküttab's post and it was also the only one held by a non-Muslim.  

The connection between the Council (Divan), its supporting offices (the Kalemleri), and the Vak'anüvislik can be seen in the chronicles written by court historians. Chronicles were most commonly organized by year and topic. Examining the subjects recorded by the court historians as well as investigating the sources used in their chronicles can establish a close association between the two. A chronicle, from nineteenth century will be used to exemplify this connection.

Şanizâde Atâullah (d.1826) was vak'anüvis from 1819 to 1825 and recorded a chronicle, Şanizâde Tarihi, which included events in the Ottoman Empire from 1808 to 1821. The work is available both in manuscript and printed form.

The vak'anüvislik had access to the documents that were produced by the Beylikçi or Divan Kalemi and the Amedi Kalemi. These documents were either reproduced in their full or summarized form in Şanizâde’s chronicles. In Şanizâde’s work these entries make up about 13% of the 806 entries. Among these entries are copies of Hatt-i hümâyun (Imperial Decree), Emir-i şerif (another type of Imperial Decree), Emir-i dâ'ilFerman (Imperial Rescript), Beyannamé (declaration), Tasdikname-i hümâyun (Imperial Confirmation of a Treaty), and other official documents and letters.

The vak'anüvis also had access to the Rûûs and Tahvil Departments that were responsible for the appointment of higher and lower officials. Of the entries in Şanizâde’s chronicle, twenty-four percent of them concerned the functions associated

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82 Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 71-76; Yusuf Halacoglu, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılarda 25-26; Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimi Osmanlı, 81; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform, 70-91.

83 The organization of the Vak'anüvis's chronicles will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

84 The printed edition was used for this analysis. Şanizâde Ataullah, Şanizâde Tarihi (Istanbul: vol.1- n.d., vol. 2-1290/1873, vol. 3-1291/1874, vol.4-n.d.).

85 In Ottoman Turkish a copy is suret and a summary was generally referred to as icmal.
with these offices. Among the entries can be found information on appointments (*tevcih, 
pl. *tevcihat or *tayvin*), dismissals (*azl*), changes in position (*tebdil or tebeddiil*), 
banishments (*icaa or *nefy*), and executions (*idam* of officials from all over the Ottoman 
Empire.

The Palace Protocol Department (*Tescihatci*) was an important source for the 
Imperial Historiographer because of their knowledge of Imperial celebrations of births, 
weddings and circumcisions, arrival and departures of important personages to the 
palace, the giving and receiving of gifts and the deaths of members of the House of 
Osman. In *Tarih-i Şanizade* entries related to this department make up about 11% of the 
entries.

Entries concerning diplomacy which was the domain of the *Reisulkuttab* and the 
Translations Departments (*Tercuman*) can also be found in Şanizade’s chronicle. In his 
chronicle there are entries concerning the appointment and sending of ambassadors, the 
translation of documents, and the conducting of treaty negotiations. These entries make 
up about 2% of the entries in his chronicle.

Finally, the contribution of the *hacegân* is much more difficult to quantify, but it 
is possible to speculate on their contribution. As the *hacegân* were the chief scribes of 
many of the departments responsible for the everyday working of the central government, 
they would have provided the *vak’anivis* with copies of departmental reports and 
information on the happenings in their various departments.

The connection between the *vak’anivislik* and the other Divan Kalernleri can be 
seen in the material used in their chronicles. Of the eight hundred and six entries in 
Şanizade’s chronicle, fully one-half of the entries use the departments associated with the 
Imperial Council as sources. The above analysis not only shows the relation between the 
office of *Vak’anivis* and the Divan Kalernleri, but also the access that the Imperial 
Historiographer had to official documents. In addition to having access to important
documents and the Divan Departments, the court chroniclers needed to be well-established members of the scribal institution.

**The Scribal Institution and the Hacegân**

The Ottoman idea of a kâbit’s role in the state had been inherited, together with many administrative procedures, from the traditions of the preceding Islamic states, Arab, Iranian, and Seljuk. In basic terms, the kâbit was responsible for the faultless production and careful recording of imperial documents and correspondence. In practice he was much more than this. Tradition required, and contemporary practice encouraged, the primary functions of copyist and clerk to be supported by an encyclopaedic knowledge of all aspects of Muslim cultural heritage, embracing religion, law, philosophy, history and geography, language and literature (including both Arabic and Persian), astronomy, mathematics and other traditional Muslim sciences. -Christine Woodhead

The scribal institution (kalemiye), as it emerged in the 16th century, was probably the most important component of the central administration as it was responsible for keeping all of the government’s correspondence and its fiscal records. The other branches of the ruling institution were the military (süfiye), palace service, and religious (ilmiye). To be a scribe (kâbit) in the bureaucracy was not just being a mindless clerk, but required an elaborate system of education and apprenticeship (when the system worked well). The educational elements required for the job opened the door to the scribal institution to members of the ilmiye also, as they had extensive medrese

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educations. A career in the scribal class would be capped by the rank of chief scribe (hace, pl. hacegân) or if the person could jump to the vezirial ranks, even higher. Among all of the scribes in the many departments, the group of scribes that would become the most significant would be the scribes attached to the Imperial Divan after most of its functions were moved away from the palace to the Bab-ı Ali. The importance of the hacegân lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century when the title "hace" became debased and was applied to most members of the scribal institution. It further declined in importance with the reorganizations of the Tanzimat in the mid-19th century.

The career patterns in and a detailed analysis of the Ottoman bureaucracy as it relates to the men who held the position of vak'arâvis can be found in the following chapter concerning prosopography. To summarize briefly, a person would enter the bureaucracy at the rank of novice (mültazimi) and, if he were ambitious, work his way to the position of clerk (kâtib) and, finally, to the stepping-stone to higher-ranks, the position of bureau chief (hace). Christine Woodhead has best defined the position of scribe/clerk in the Ottoman milieu in the quote at the beginning of this section. As a part of this detailed education a kâtib had to learn the art of calligraphy and as important, a

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91 Carter Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 147-150. According to Lalor the rank of hacegân became so debased that the title became the lowest grade in the re-organization of the bureaucracy under Mahmud II beginning in 1834. See, Bernard Lalor, "Promotion Patterns of Ottoman Bureaucratic Statesmen from the Lale Devri Until the Tanzimat," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1 (1972), 80.

92 The term kâtib for clerk was used for clerks in the Divan, Tahvil and Rüdes Departments. The term kalifa or halife was used for clerks in the other departments. Sources on the study of the Ottoman bureaucracy will be noted in the following chapter.
mastery of the art of *inşa* or "belles lettres”. Because of this training a person reaching
the high position of chief bureau clerk would have a high degree of prose writing skills
that would have contributed well to the writing of official histories. In addition,
knowledge of the workings of the scribal service was very advantageous. Thus the
*hacegân* became an important source of men for the position of *vak'anüvis* because of
their senior status in the scribal institution and their ties with the Divan. This was not
always the case as patronage (*intisap*) and other factors also influenced the choice of
court historian.

*Poet, Scholar, Prose Writer*

The bureaucratic culture in which the prospective Imperial Historiographer had to
operate was heavily defined by traditional Islamicate culture and bureaucratic practices.
Scribal culture was delineated by *adab*, which can be narrowly defined as "manner of
conduct." The specific knowledge needed was called *inşa* or "the art of the scribe."
Finally, many in the scribal class had *medrese* educations and were from the *ulema.*
These men's educations gave them the designation as being an *älim* or "scholar."

To be an Imperial Historiographer one had to have a good background in the
written arts and one often also had a good general background in the Islamic sciences.
Many of the court historians were picked from among the ranks in the bureaucracy
because of their reputations for writing prose (*münşi*) and/or poetry (*şair*) and for their
knowledge in other areas of learning such as astrology (*münecçim*) or chronograms
(*tarih*). The writing of poetry and prose works for members of the ruling class had
always been a major method of advancement for both members within and without the
bureaucracy. It often could be a ticket to patronage and advancement. Many court
historians advanced into the position and advanced beyond the position because of their writing abilities.

As discussed above, many of the men who held the position of vak'anâvis were from the hacegân. As bureau chiefs, they were well schooled in the art of calligraphy and in inşa or the art of "belles letters". Inşa can be split into two areas of learning, epistolography and the art of literary composition. Epistolography is mainly the study of the organization of documents and the proper use of words and phrases in these documents. Literary composition was important for the proper writing of many types of documents.\(^9\)

A concept which is associated with inşa, adab, or rules for conduct, was a major influence on the culture and training of the scribal service. Some scholars have narrowly identified adab as "belles letters," but it means much more in the culture of the Ottoman bureaucracy.\(^4\) Adab comprised not only the literary tradition of inşa, but included manners of conduct and proper education. Adab defined what was the norm for the scribal class.

Some of the court historians were accomplished poets, especially men who held the position in the 18th century. Collections of their poetry (divan) can be found in many

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\(^9\) More will be discussed in further sections on the education of court historians and the style of the vak'anâvis' works. Much of the art of inşa was learned through either manuals which contained examples of high quality documents or through apprenticeship. For more on inşa see: Christine Woodhead, "From Scribe to Litterateur..", 60-62; H.R. Roemer, "Inshâ," Ep, s.v.; and Editorial Board, "INŞA," IA, VII, 1009-1010.

\(^4\) Adab is actually a very hard concept to define in a sentence or even to translate. Adab comes from Arab/Seljuk influences on the organization of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Adab has been changed in Turkish usage to edeb and can be found in modern Turkish usage as edebiyat, meaning literature. On adab see: F. Gabrieli, "Adab," Ep, s.v.; I. Goldziher, "Edeb," IA, s.v.; Carter Findley, Bureaucratic Reform, 8-11.
of Istanbul's libraries. Most of the contemporary biographical information concerning the lives of court historians can be found in tezkire literature that are collections of biographies of famous poets. Most of the chronicles written by Imperial Historiographers, especially those from the eighteenth century, contain many passages of poetry. Chroniclers often used chronograms (tarih) in the form of poetry in their works.

Being an ālim or one educated in the traditional Islamic sciences was also typical for many who were court chroniclers. Being an ālim meant that the person had a medrese education, thus the members in the bureaucracy with this type of knowledge came from the ulema. The main disciplines studied by the ulema were Arabic grammar and syntax (sarf and nahv), Koranic commentary (tefsir), Islamic law and jurisprudence (fikh), Prophetic traditions (hadith, hadis), logic and dialectics (mantık), rhetoric (belegat), and scholastic theology (kelam). The subject of the education of court historians will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

The Keeping of a Daybook (Ceride-i yevmiye)

One of the major day-to-day duties of the court historian was the keeping of a journal. In this journal he would keep records of daily events that were reported to him, copies or summaries of documents, rumors from others in the bureaucracy and personal notes. One major problem in the study of the vak'anûvis has been that these daily journals had not been found either in libraries or in the archives with the exception of notes from Vak'anûvis Ahmet Vasıf and Vak'anûvis Mehmed Esad's daybooks found at

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95 For example, in Suleymaniye Library can be found the Divans of: Mehmed Raşid Paşa, Küçük Çelebiizâde Asum Efendi, and Arpaemiazâde Mustafa Sami Efendi.

96 Madeline C. Zilfi, The Politics of Piety: the Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (Minneapolis, 1988), 44.
the Başbakanlık Arşivi. Until these daybooks come to light (some are known to have been destroyed in fires), the only evidence that they were kept come from archival documents and the occasional mention of a predecessor’s daybook in the chronicles themselves. For example, Mehmed Raşid Paşa used Naima’s daybook as a major source for the period it covered in his chronicle.  

The daybooks kept by the Imperial historiographers were very important sources for both their own and, if available, for their successors’ chronicles. The daybooks were also known to have been used by sultans and grand vezirs as reference sources for precedent or procedures.  

**Chronicle Writers**

Most of the men who held the position of Imperial Historiographer wrote a chronicle for presentation to the sultan. Other than keeping a daily record of events, this was their main function in the Divan-ı hümâyûn Kalemleri. Of the twenty-eight accepted vak‘anâvises, twenty-two wrote chronicles. Many of the others held the position of court historian for too short a period of time to write a chronicle. The events recorded by court historians who held the position and did not write a chronicle still exist in one form or another in the chronicles of others. The writing of a chronicle was the most important aspect of the Court historian’s position as it was the one that paid the most dividends. The presentation of a work that was praised by the sultan led to great reward in both monetary and ceremonial gifts.

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97 BBA, Yalnız Esas Evrak, Kışım 33, Evrak 554 & 555.  
To summarize, the office of Imperial Historiographer (Vak'anüvislik) in the 18th and 19th centuries was attached to the Scribal Departments of the Imperial Council (Divan-i hümâyûn Kalemeleri). The office was held by a single person who did not have any support staff, unlike the şehnâmeçî, but had varying access to the staff and documents of the other departments which supported the Imperial Council. Their positions required them to keep a daybook (ceride-i yevmiye) or journal of events that contained diverse material. From these daybooks, the Imperial Historiographer was expected to produce a chronicle of events that occurred in the Empire and present it to the sultan, though this was not always the case. Finally, the person who held this position was often of high rank in the scribal class and very often had the rank of chief scribe (hace). Among the many who held this position there were some who were from the uluma and not strictly from the scribal class.\textsuperscript{100} Despite having different backgrounds, they all had strong training in the scribal craft and many were well known for their writing abilities, both in prose and in poetry, as well as possessing other areas of knowledge that were considered important.

The Origins of the Vak'anüvislik

In December 1601, Hasan Hükmî was appointed the last şehnâmeçî. He held the post for only a short time after which the palace position disappeared.\textsuperscript{101} An appointed position in the bureaucracy with the specific function of recording the events connected with the House of Osman and the writing of a chronicle would not emerge again until a


\textsuperscript{100} The competition between the ibrâîye and kalemiye to provide qualified men to the position of vak'anüvis will be discussed in a later section.

\textsuperscript{101} For more details on the position of şehnâmeçî, see Chapter 1.
century later. In place of an “official” historian, the recording of events concerning the central government was entrusted to the recording secretary of the Imperial Divan or vak‘anûvis.

Historians have debated the emergence of the office of court historian since the 19th century. The literature has listed three individuals as being the first court historian: Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, Mustafa Nâîma Efendi, and Mehmed Raşid Efendi. In addition, a fourth chronicle writer named Masraflâde Şefik Efendi has been identified as a court historian by contemporary and later historians and literary biographers. His work recorded the Edirne Event and the accession of Ahmet III and was completed before Mehmed Raşid became court historian. He also must be accounted for in the context of the development of the vak‘anûvislik. Who was the first vak‘anûvis?

The emergence of the vak‘anûvislik comes from a renewed interest in the patronage of historical writing by the grand vezirs and sultans of the late seventeenth century. To understand the development of the office of court historian, we must examine these three men in the context of the events surrounding the writing of their chronicles, their patrons, the works themselves with an emphasis on their source material, and applying the definition of vak‘anûvis as developed above.

*Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa (d. 1692)*

Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa has been identified by some sources as the first court historian. M. Orhan Bayrak states in his work on Ottoman historians that Abdi was the

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first vak'anûvis and held the position from 1663 to 1682. Abdi as the first court historian, but he only can give the date he was appointed as H1074 (1663/1664). Other sources list him as a vak'anûvis, but do not identify him as the first or provide the dates he was appointed or dismissed from office.

Abdi received his education while in the palace service. He served in the Hass Oda until 1648. He held various bureaucratic positions including: Sadaret Kaymakamı, Rıktabıdar, Nişancı, Kubbe Vezir, and provincial governor (vali). On being appointed Nişancı in 1669/1670, Abdurrahman Abdi was elevated to the vezir rank and given the title Paşa. He also advised the Imperial Divan on Ottoman law (karun).

During the time he was in palace service, he gained the attention of Sultan Mehmet IV (1648-1687) and was appointed to the post of Sir Kâtibi or private secretary to the sultan in 1663. In that same year, Mehmet IV appointed his secretary to write a history of his reign. Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa wrote the Vakayiname, a chronicle which records the years 1648-1682.

103 Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 6.

104 Lütfî, Tarih-i Lütfî, 4.

105 For additional examples see: Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî, III, 408; and Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürela, 51-52.

106 The Privy Ward Chamber of Topkapı Palace. Abdi entered into palace service in a tumultuous period in Ottoman history that was marked by the removal of Sultan İbrahim I (1640-1648), also known as "İbrahim the Mad," and the period of political instability called the Sultanate of the Ağas, 1648-1651. See : Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 200-205.

107 Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürela, 51.

108 Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 3. The duration of his appointment as private secretary to Mehmet IV is not known, but it can be assumed that he left the position by the time he was appointed Nişancı in 1669. On the position of Sir Kâtibi see: Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri., vol. 3, 206.

109 CE1648-1682. The work is also known as Nişancı Abdurrahman Paşa Tarihi. He began writing it in 1664. There are many manuscripts of this work in Istanbul’s libraries. See: Fehmi Edhem Karatay.
Not only was Abdi an accomplished historian, but also an accomplished translator and poet. He translated the *Pendâname* of Şeyh Aṭṭâr from Persian into Ottoman Turkish and he translated from Arabic and added commentary to *Kaside-i Lâmiyye* by Kâb ibn Zuheyr.\(^{110}\) A collection of his poetry exists in manuscript form.\(^{111}\)

By looking closer at the bureaucratic life and the chronicle of Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa, one can see that he does not share many of the traits common to those identified as court historians after him. Although he was known as an accomplished scribe and one who epitomized the way of *inşa*, Abdi did not have a career in the scribal service. He rather had a career that included positions in inner palace service, having vezirial rank in the Imperial Divan, or as a provincial governor.

His chronicle, *The Vekâyîname-i Abdi Paşa*, was not primarily based on documents from the various departments of the *Divan Kalemlerî*, but was based on sources such as the sultan, Abdi Paşa's own observations, and information from various figures, especially those from the *Enderun-i Hümayun* or inner palace service. He was in a good position, being the personal secretary to the sultan, to hear many secrets and witnessed many events related to the sultan that other historians could not have hoped to see first hand. His work was also extensively influenced by the comments of Sultan Mehmet IV, who involved himself in much of Abdi's work on the chronicle.\(^{112}\)

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\(^{110}\) Examples of these works in manuscript are: *Müfīd Pend-i Attar tercümesi*, Suleymaniye, Mihrîşah S. 389/1;

\(^{111}\) A collection of his poetry can be found at Suleymaniye: *Kasa'id*, Halet Ef. 800/48.

\(^{112}\) Govsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 3. This has also been a source of criticism about his work.
Abdurrahman Abdi Paşa's life and chronicle do not fall in the sphere of historical works associated with the vak'anüvis, but rather fit into the category of historians, as defined by Rhodes Murphey in his article on 17th century historians, called enderunt historians.¹¹³ Murphey has further categorized these historians as coming either from the general category of nusahib historians or coming from the various palace corps of royal attendants. Abdi came from the latter category that included historians such as Mehmed Halife (d.1697) who was better known by his pen name Gîlmâni.¹¹⁴

As Murphy so aptly observes, Abdi and his enderun compatriots occupy a transitional place in Ottoman historiography. Gone were the days of aggrandizement of the sultan's deeds as the şahnameci historians so rightly represent; in their place, the enderunt historians begin to write about all of the detailed events (vekâyi), important or otherwise, of the Ottoman central government and court.¹¹⁵ This detailed recording of events at the center of the Ottoman state would become institutionalized by the 18th century in the position of vak'anüvis. The identification of Abdi as a vak'anüvis was an attempt by later historians to move the origins of the vak'anüvislik nearer to the demise of the position of şahnameci at the beginning of the Seventeenth century.


¹¹⁴ On Mehmed Halife see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 152.

¹¹⁵ Murphey, "Ottoman Historical Writing...." 282.
Mustafa Naima Efendi (1655-1716)\(^{116}\)

Mustafa Naim, better known under his *mahlas* Naima, was born in Aleppo to an influential Janissary commander. As a young man he left Aleppo and made his way to Istanbul and with his father's influence, he entered into palace service in the *Sarhai-i atik teberdarani* or more widely known as the *baltacilar* corps in 1688. It was while he was in the *baltacilar* that he received a scribal education. Because of the promise he showed during his education he was moved from the *baltac* corps to a post in the *Divan-i hümâyûn kâtipleri*. He would spend the rest of his career in various posts associated with the Divan scribal corps.

It was while he was in the scribal offices that he attracted the patronage of first, Kalaylık zo Ahmed Paşa (1645-1715) and then, more importantly, of Grand Vezir Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa (d. 1702). Kalaylık zo Ahmed Paşa, who had also been a member of the *baltac* corps, had the young scribe appointed as his own secretary and had him promoted to the rank of Divan efendisi.\(^{117}\)

Amcazade Huseyin Paşa, who was known as a great patron of history, had come into possession of a copy of an unfinished chronicle by Şarih ül-Menâr-zâde Ahmed


Efendi. Sometime in the period between 1698 - 1700, Hüseyin Paşa gave the manuscript to Naimâ and appointed him to rewrite it and add his own material to bring it up to Amcazâde's own tenure as Grand Vezir. For his work Naimâ was given a daily wage of 120 akçe drawn upon the customs revenues of Istanbul. It was this commission to write a history that many historians have pointed to as the appointment of the first vak'anüvis. Was he?

As we have done with Abdi Paşa, let us examine Naimâ using the criteria above in defining the post of vak'anüvis. Briefly again, these criteria are: Did he have access to the Divan-i hümâyûn kalenâleri?; Did he have the rank of hace?; Did he have a well-developed scholarly/literary reputation?; Did he keep a daybook?; and finally, Did he write a chronicle?

Mustafa Naimâ Efendi spent most of his professional life attached to the various departments of the Divan-i hümâyûn kalenâleri. Naimâ did not reach the rank of hace until after he finished writing his chronicle in 1704. At the end of that year he was appointed to the position of Anadolu muhasebeci and was elevated to the hace rank.

118 Amcazâde Hüseyin Paşa was from the famous Köprüli line of Grand Vezirs. He was Grand Vezir from 1697 to 1702. For more information on him see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 179; Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, III/2, 444-448; and: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 223-227. Şarihi ul-Menâr-zâde Ahmed Efendi (d. 1655) was a chronicler and a müdderis from Amasya. His chronicle covered the years 1591 to 1654 and was dedicated to the Grand Vezir, Kemânêş Mustafa Paşa. For additional information on Menâr-zâde, see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarih-i Yazarlari, 200; Lewis Thomas, A Study of Naima, 136-139; and Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 190-191.

119 For the account of his appointment to re-write Menâr-zâde in his own words see: Tarih-i Naima, Vol. 1, 8-12.


121 Ibid. The date of his appointment to the hacegân rank is in some dispute as one source does state that he was appointed to that rank at the time of his appointment as secretary to Kalaylıkız Ahmed Paşa. But it appears that he was raised to the rank of hacegân when Kalaylıkız Ahmed Paşa became Grand Vizier in 1704: see: M. Cavid Baysun, "Naima," 44 for more on this argument.
Among the other positions he held in the Divan kalemlerisi were baş muhasebeci, silahtar kâibi, and defter emrîni.

Naima did have at the time a good reputation for his literary skills, especially in the fields of history and astrology. There is some evidence that Naima gained entry into the circles of power because of his strength in astrology. He was much sought after by the elites of his day to write astrological forecasts and his chronicle has many references to astrology. His reputation in astrology also got him in trouble. He was exiled from Istanbul in 1706/1707 by Grand Vizier Çorulu Ali Paşa partially because of his astrological forecasts. His exile was short-lived and he spent most of his time in Bursa because of the intervention of Naima’s wife who petitioned the Grand Vezir for a diminished sentence.¹²² Naima also wrote poetry, but very few samples of remain.

It is in the field of history that Naima’s fame has been built. His chronicle, Ravâat al-Husayn fi hulâsat abbar al-hâfitkayn, is considered one of the great works of Ottoman historiography.¹²³ Naima’s work, also known as Tarih-i Naima, is made up of two volumes. The first volume is dedicated to Amcazâde Huseyin Paşa and is comprised to a large extent of the manuscript material from Menârzade’s work. The preface praises Amcazâde Paşa and includes events concerning the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699.¹²⁴ The second volume is dedicated to the Grand Vezir Damad Hasan Paşa (1655-1713) and

¹²² M. Cavid Baysun, “Naima,” 45. The biography found in Tayyarzade states that Naima was exiled during the short grand vizirate of Baltaci Mehmet Paşa, see: Tayyarzade, Tarih-i Atâ, III, 36-38.

¹²³ For more about Tarih-i Naima, manuscripts, printing history, etc., see: Lewis Thomas, A Study of Naima, 125-158; M. Cavid Baysun, “Naima,” 46-49; İstanbul Kütüphaneleri: Tarih-Coğrafya Yazarları Katalogları, I, 114; and M. Münir Aketepe, “Naima Tarihi’nin Yazma Nüshaları Hakkında,” Tarih Dergisi, v.1 (1949-50), 35-52. Tarih-i Naima was the first historical work published by the Müteferrika Press in 1734/35.

¹²⁴ Amcazâde Huseyin Paşa was appointed by the sultan to end the war and seek the best peace possible from the various combatants. His appointment was due mostly in part to his Köprülü heritage. For more on Karlowitz see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. I, 223-225.
includes a *risale* covering the Edirne Event of 1703.\(^{125}\) Because of the turmoil of the Edirne Event and the politics of the Ottoman court, Naima’s work was not completed to his master plan that would have brought his work to his own time. Instead, the second volume was completed in the last year of Damad Hasan’s grand vezirate (1703-1704) at which time Naima ended his work and the keeping of a daybook. The entire work chronicles the years 1591 to 1660 (H1000-1070).

It appears that Naima had worked on continuing his chronicle beyond H1070/1659-1660 to possibly H1118/1706-1707. According to an archive document and the biography of Şehrizade, a majority of his notes and drafts for his continuation, along with his books were destroyed in a house fire.\(^{126}\) Tayyarzade mentions one section of his notes that did survive in his chronicle.\(^{127}\) Naima also kept a daybook dating from the Grand Vezirate of Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa and possibly even before that time. It was not used by him as a source for his own chronicle, but it was a source used by Mehmed Raşid in his chronicle.\(^{128}\)

When we examine Mustafa Naima Efendi, we see that he meets all of the criteria for being a court historian. He began his career in the palace service, but later was

\(^{125}\) *A risale* is a treatise. The Edirne Event (*Edirne Vakası*) was precipitated by the fall from power of Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa and the rise to power of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi. In turn the abuses of Feyzullah Efendi led to a rebellion against Sultan Mustafa II while he was in Edirne. Mustafa II was deposed and Ahmet III became Sultan in 1703. Damad Hasan’s support of the faction supporting Ahmet III led to his appointment as Grand Vezir in 1703. He proved to be an important figure in bringing stability back to the government after Mustafa II’s deposition. For more on the Edirne Event see: Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 1, 227-228; and Metin Kurt et al., *Osmanlı Devleti 1600-1908* (İstanbul, 1995), 49-52. On Damad Hasan Paşa, see: Govsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 171.

\(^{126}\) It is possible that Naima did continue his notes past the time of the end of his appointment to write history in 1704, but there is no indication to prove it one way or another. On the house fire and his notes see: Kütküoğlu, “*Vak’anwivis,*” IA, 275 and Fahri Ç. Derin, “*Müvverih Naima Hakkinda bir Arşiv Belgesi*” Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi 2-3 (1973-1974), 115-118.


trained as a scribe. He did not reach the upper ranks of the scribal institution until after he ended writing his history. He had a well-developed reputation for his knowledge of history and his skills as an astrologer helped him enter into the circles of the elite. He wrote a chronicle and he kept a daybook.

While he does meet most of the criteria, Naima most likely appears, like Abdi Paşa before him, to be a transitional figure. The basis for this statement is threefold. One, Naima never refers to himself as a vak'anûvis in his chronicle. Second, his chronicle is distinct from that of other court historians, with the possible exception of Ahmet Cevdet. His chronicle relies heavily on other chroniclers' works, rather than on governmental documents and the methodology he puts forth in his preface is unique to Naima. Finally, Naima's position as vak'anûvis was established by Mehmed Raşid in his chronicle. He claimed to be Naima's successor as imperial historiographer and much of the basis for establishing Naima as the first court historian rests on Raşid's statements.

Mehmed Raşid, in his chronicle, records the appointment of Naima as vak'anûvis to record the events which occurred in the Ottoman state. If Naima had been appointed to record the events of the state in such a position, he would have mentioned it in the preface to one of his two volumes, but he does not. Raşid's statements on the position lead us to believe that Naima was rewarded for the writing of his preface to the first volume of history and appointed to the position of vak'anûvis in 1702/1703. It is very possible, as Lewis Thomas points out, that Naima wrote a chronicle under the patronage of the grand vezirs Amca-zade Hüseyin and Damad Hasan Paşas, but that he was also

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129 Mehmet Raşid, Tarih-i Raşid, II, 533. The section is titled, "Vürud-i û vazife be-Naima Efendi". This heading is under the events for the year H1114 (1702-1703) which puts his appointment about the time Amca-zade Hüseyin Paşa left office.
appointed to keep a daybook to record contemporary events. This was something that he had already been doing.\textsuperscript{130}

Naima’s chronicle is also different from chronicles generally associated with the post of vak’anûvis. First, his work has a highly developed preface with strong influences from the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, whose theories on the rise and fall of states can be found in Naima’s introduction, and from the advice literature popularized by Kâtib Çelebi.\textsuperscript{131} Second, the source materials for most of his work were not documents associated with the divan kalemleri, but contemporary chronicles.\textsuperscript{132} It must be noted that Naima never brought his chronicle up to contemporary times with the exception of the Edirne Event. His daybook would not have been a source for him to use realistically with the exception of his notes on the Edirne Event. Finally, the contents, with the exception of what was used by Raśid in his chronicle, of Naima’s daybook are not known. If it had survived, it would provide a wealth of information on Naima’s source material.

Finally, Raśid’s claims concerning Naima Efendi’s appointment as court historian need to be considered in the context of Raśid’s own tenure as vak’anûvis below. Mustafa Naima continues to be celebrated as one of the great writers of Ottoman history. His patronage by Amcazâde Hüseyin Paşa points to the origins of the office of vak’anûvis, but not to its establishment.

\textsuperscript{130} Lewis Thomas, \textit{A Study of Naima}, 36-42.


\textsuperscript{132} Some of the chronicles, other than Menar-zâde, cited by Naima are: Kâtib Çelebi’s \textit{Fezleke}, and works by Hasan Bey-zâde, Ali, Peçevi, Vecibi and Abdi Paşa among others.
Very little is known about the life of Masrafažade Şefik Mehmed Efendi. He was born in Istanbul to a family that had a long history of service to the sultan. He entered into government service in the divan kâtiplik and reached the rank of hâce. Before being recognized for his literary skills, Şefik Efendi went as an administrator on the campaign to retake Sakız (Chios) from the Venetian and Maltese alliance and he was also present with the group of Ottoman officials at the peace negotiations concluded at Karlofça (Karlowitz) in 1699. It was at these negotiations that he attracted the attention of the chief Ottoman delegate, Reisülküttab Râmi Mehmed Efendi (Paşa).134

It is at this point that the sources disagree or are very vague as to the appointment of Şefik to the post of vak'anûvis. One source, Cemâleddin Efendi’s work Ayine-i Zürefa, states that Şefik Mehmet Efendi was appointed to the vak'anûvislik in 1703 during the Grand Veziership of his patron and now father-in-law Râmi Mehmed Paşa.135 Other sources indicate that Şefik Efendi was appointed to write his chronicle at a later

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135 Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 50. Râmi Mehmed Paşa was Grand Vezir to Sultan Mustafa II for six months in 1703 and was removed as a result of the Edirne Event. For more on Râmi Mehmed Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 312.
time under the patronage of Şehid Ali Paşa who was grand vezir from 1713-1716,136 Finally, Orhan Bayrak states that he held the position from 1703 to 1713!137

In reality, most commentators on Şefik have not distinguished between two different works that he had written. His first work was written by order of Grand Vezir Râmi Mehmed Paşa and recorded in fairly obscure language the events surrounding the deposition of Mustafa II. This work was titled the Şefikname and was completed sometime at the end of 1706. The second work was written by order of Grand Vezir Şehid Ali Paşa and is a rewriting of his first work. This second work was written in a less obscure manner and included events up to the accession of Ahmet III. This work has been titled either Muvazzah Şefikname or Şefikname Zeyli.138

In neither of these texts does Şefik state that he was appointed in any official capacity to record the events of the Ottoman state. In both cases these two works were written under the patronage of grand vezirs. His first work discussed only the events concerning the fall of Mustafa II while the second work was to rewrite the first and add material up until the accession of Şehid Ali Paşa. There is also no evidence that Şefik kept a daybook or that his notes were used by subsequent court historians. Şefik Mehmed Effendi again represents a transitional figure in the development of an “official” bureaucratic position for the writing of history. He, like Naima before him, was

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136 Safaçy, Tezkire, Univ. Kutup., nr. TY 6189, 72-73; Belig, Nuhbeti’l-Asar, 39b; Mahmud Celâleddin (Paşa), Reşatı’l-Kâmilin-Şerh-i Şefikname, (Istanbul, 1290); Tayyar-zade Ahmed Ata, Tarih, II, 96.

137 Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 160. Bayrak seems to want to avoid the whole issue by having Şefik in the position of vak‘anûvis for the whole period between Naima’s departure and Mehmed Raşid’s arrival to the post.

138 The oldest known copy of the Şefikname can be found in Topkapısı library, Revan kutup. nr. 1502. The language used in the work is such that the identities of many of the people discussed are hidden in obscure language. The obscure language was used out of fear of retribution from those involved in the events surrounding the deposition of Mustafa II. For more on manuscript copies of both the Şefikname and Muvazzah Şefikname see: Fehmi Edhem Karatay, ed., Türkçe Yazarlar Kataloğu, (Istanbul, 1961), ff.
appointed by two different grand vezirs for specific reasons. His appointment was as much due to patronage as to his skills as a prose writer (münși) and to his reputation for being a man quite knowledgeable in the culture of adab.

Mehmed Raşid Efendi (d.1735)139

Mehmed Raşid Efendi was born in Istanbul. His father, Malatayalı Mustafa Efendi was a member of the ulama. Mehmed Raşid received an excellent education and entered into a career in the ilmiye. As a müderris, he rose through the ranks beginning in 1704 and reached the top of the medrese system with his appointment to Sülümaniye in 1718. His reputation as a scholar and poet was well established among the ruling elite.

His appointment to the position of court chronicler is of some debate. He himself states that he was appointed to the position by Grand Vezir Damad Silahdar Ali Paşa --the same Ali Paşa who appointed Şefik to rewrite his work-- in 1714 while other sources have him appointed by the same grand vezir to the position of court historian in 1715 in order to accompany the army on the Mora campaign.140 He also accompanied the army in the position of vak'anıvis for the disastrous Varadin Campaign in 1716 where Grand


140 For Raşid's own notes on his appointment see: Raşid, Tarih, V, 449-454. The other claim concerning his appointment is also strong and based somewhat on archival documents, see: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anıvis," IA, 275. Damad Silahdar Ali Paşa was also known as Şehit Ali Paşa. He held the grand vezirate from 1713 to 1716. He led the Ottoman army on the Mora Campaign beginning in 1715 and was one of the few Grand Vezirs to die in battle against the forces of Prince Eugene of Austria at Petersvaradin in 1716. For additional information on Ali Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meshurları, 37; Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 231-232; and Ismail Hakkı Uzuncaşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, IV/1, 97ff.
Vezir Ali Paşa met his end. It is known that he completed a description of the exploits of Şehid Ali Paşa on the Mora Campaign.\textsuperscript{141} According to some sources, it is also during the period from 1714 to 1718 that Raşid Efendi began to record the events from the accession of Sultan Ahmet III in 1703.\textsuperscript{142}

Mehmed Raşid Efendi's link to Naima came in 1718 when Grand Vezir Nevşehirli Dâmâd-Ibrahim Paşa asked him to begin recording the events of the Ottoman state from the date that Naîmâ left off (i.e. 1660). Using some of Naima's notes, other chronicles, his own recollections, and official documents, Raşid began to write his chronicle from where Naîmâ had stopped.\textsuperscript{143} Raşid Efendi continued his advancement in the ilnîye at the same time he recorded events and wrote his chronicle. His appointment to the position of chief judge of Aleppo in 1723 ended his career as vak'anûvis. In that same year, Küçük Çelebi İdris Aşım Efendi was appointed as his replacement in the position of vak'anûvis.

While in his tenure as court historian Raşid Efendi completed a chronicle which recorded the events from 1660 to 1722 (1071-1134AH).\textsuperscript{144} Raşid's chronicle is really two chronicles in one. The first section being from where Naîmâ left off in 1660 to 1703 and second, the reign of Ahmet III from 1703 to 1722. Raşid's chronicle represents an

\textsuperscript{141} His work on the Mora Campaign is titled, Fathnama-i cazira-i Mora and is found at the Suleymaniye Kütuüphanesi, Es'ad Efendi, No. 3655/4. The work exists in manuscript form only.

\textsuperscript{142} He began recording these events by the request of Dâmâd Ali Paşa in 1714. See: M. Kemâl Özergin, “Raşid,” 632; Kutukoglu, “Vak’anûvis,” IA, 275; and Raşid himself notes his appointment to write events, Raşid, Tarih, vol.1, 9.

\textsuperscript{143} M. Kemâl Özergin, “RAŞID,” 634. He relies heavily on Zübde-I veayi’ât by Sari Mehmed Paşa for the first volume of his work; see Kutukoglu, “Vak’anûvis,” IA, 276. Raşid appeared to have used Naima’s notes sparingly as he only notes that he used them for one section of his history. See Raşid, Tarih, II, 417.

\textsuperscript{144} For information on Tarih-i Raşid or Raşid Tarihi see: M. Kemâl Özergin, “Raşid,” 634 and Türkçe Tarih Yazmaları Masalî Matbaası, Istanbul Kütuüphaneleri: Tarih-Cografya Yazmaları Katalogları, (Istanbul, 1943), vol. 1, 131.
important source on the age of Ahmet III which is also known as the Tulip Age (*Lale Devri*).

Mehmed Raşid Efendi represents the second career path for court chronicler, through the *ulema*. He came from the learned branch (*ilmiye*) of the government. Based on his education, his fame as a *müdderis*, and reputation as a poet, Raşid Efendi was able to gain the attention of those in power. His closest connections, like his successor's Küçük Çelebizade İsmail Asim Efendi, were with Sultan Ahmet III and his supporters. It was because of these connections that Raşid Efendi was appointed as the first *vak'anûvis*.

Raşid represents the period in which the position of court chronicler solidifies as a position within the bureaucracy and patronage by grand vezirs and later sultans becomes an established tradition. It appears that the title *vak'anûvis* was attached to this bureaucratic position at this time by Damad Ali Paşa in 1714. As stated above, the term *vak'anûvis* had many definitions and the title seems to be given to Raşid as a result of his appointments to record the deeds of the imperial army on the Mora and Varadin Campaigns in 1715 and 1716. This appointment resembles earlier appointments of a man in the position of *vak'anûvis*; the best example being Nergisi Mehmed Efendi. After Raşid returned to Istanbul and began to write his chronicle of Ahmet III's reign and then later to rewrite his chronicle to include the events beginning where Naima left off, the name *vak'anûvis* continued to be attached to the position, even though he was not recording military events only.

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145 Both the *ulema* and the scribal branch (represented by the *hacgân*) were in constant competition for the position of *vak'anûvis*. More on this competition will be discussed in a later chapter.

146 M. Kemal Özergin, "Raşid," 632; Christine Woodhead, "Râshid," El, s.v.
The fact that the Grand Vezir Nevşehirli Dâmâd-Ibrahim Paşa requested that Raşid Efendi continue his chronicle from where Naima ended also shows that the patronage of chronicle writing by the ruling class reached a new high point since the end of the position of sahnameci. Of further note is the fact that Dâmâd-Ibrahim Paşa also appointed the successor to Raşid Efendi to the post of vak'anûvis.

Mehmed Raşid Efendi, while being the first true vak'anûvis, still did not possess all of the traits of the position as it was defined in next century. He did not have real access to the Divan-i hümâyun kalêmleri. While his chronicle does have examples of documents prepared by these offices, they were acquired due more to his connections to the ruling class than by his having access to the offices. In addition his chronicle used the work Zübede-i vekayî'dt by Sârî Mehmed Paşa on a vast scale for the first volume of history which includes much of the events from 1703 to 1718.147

There are a few clues to the question of Mehmed Raşid having a daybook. His chronicle, unlike Naima's, covers mostly contemporary events. Raşid was recording the events of Ahmet III's reign as they happened. The only other clue to his having a daybook comes from the fact that his successor's work covers the year before he was appointed to the position of vak'anûvis. There are some indications that he used notes from Raşid to compose that section of his chronicle.148

Based on the criteria established above, the actions of Dâmâd Silâhtar Ali Paşa and Dâmâd-Ibrahim Paşa, his own claims in his writings, and the fact that a successor to him was immediately appointed, Mehmed Raşid Efendi represents the best starting place for the office of Court Historian.

By examining the men who have been identified as the first court historian we can now see how the position developed from the time that the post of sahnameci was

147 For more information on Zübede-i vekayî'dt by Sârî Mehmed Paşa see: M. Kemâl Özergin, op.cit.
abandoned. Historical writing then fell to three major sources of “official” history as identified by Rhodes Murphy; the ālim, kātib, and nusahib. As the seventeenth century went on, a new interest in historical writing came about at the end of the century. This new interest was heavily influenced by the patronage of grand viziers. It is interesting to note that Naima, Şefik and Raşid all had some ties to the people and/or events surrounding the deposition of Mustafa II.

Both Naima and Şefik represent a transitional phase in the development of an official historiographer. We can really identify Raşid as the first court historian, but his position was still in the evolution phase. It appears that the title of vakʿanūvis was given to Raşid as a result of his appointment to record the events of the Ottoman army. He continued to use the title even after his return and appointment to record the events of state from the time that Naima had stopped. His position only vaguely resembled the position of vakʿanūvis that would develop in the next half century within the confines of the Divan-i hümayun Kalem. That position would be defined over time by the men and imperial patrons that would keep the position of court historian alive until the end of the empire.

\[148\text{ See more concerning the sources of Küçük Çelebizade Ismail Asım Efendi’s work below.}\]
Chapter Three: A History of the Vak’anūvislik (1714 to 1922)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Mehmed Raṣid Efendi can best be identified as the first court historian. His appointment must be seen as an evolution of the process of Imperial and grand vezirial patronage of history during the traumatic events surrounding the disastrous wars with Austria and Russia which ended with the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699 and the Edirne Event four years later.

Mehmed Raṣid was appointed first by Şehid Ali Paşa (1667-1716) in 1714 to record the events beginning with the accession of Ahmet III in 1703. He also accompanied the Imperial Army on the Mora and Varadin Campaigns of 1715 and 1716 and it is most likely that his appointment to the army led to the term vak’anūvis being officially attached to the position. While recording the events of Ahmet III’s reign, Raṣid was asked by Grand Vezir Nevşehirli Dâmâd-Ibrahim Paşa (d.1730) to rewrite his chronicle and add the events from the end of Naima’s chronicle to his own time.\(^{150}\) It was in this capacity that Raṣid Efendi wrote his chronicle that ends in the year 1722.\(^{151}\)

Mehmed Raṣid had to relinquish the post of vak’anūvis due to his promotion and appointment to the post of chief judge (kadi) of Aleppo (Halep) in 1723. The post of vak’anūvis was then given to Küçük Çelebizâde Ismail Asım Efendi by the Grand Vezir Dâmâd Ibrahim Paşa.

\(^{150}\) M. Kemâl Özergin, "Raṣid," 632; Christine Woodhead, "Raṣhid," El, 441 and Kütükoglu, "Vak’anūvis," la, 276. For Raṣid’s own comments on his appointments see: Tarih-i Raṣid, V, 451 & 1, 9 for his appointment by Nevşehirli Ibrahim Paşa. Concerning Damât Ibrahim Paşa, one of the most important figures of the Tulip Age, see: Govsî, Türk Meşhurları, 186; Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 233-240; and Ahmed Refik, Lale Devri, (Istanbul, 1997), 19-27.

\(^{151}\) Mehmed Raṣid’s completed chronicle, Tarih-i Raṣid, covers the years from 1660 to 1722.
Küçük Çelebi Zade Ismail Asım Efendi (1685-1760) was appointed to the position of vak'ânâvis on 2 July 1723.¹⁵² He, like Raşid, was from the ülema and had an excellent reputation as a müdderris and was one of the leading poets of his time.¹⁵³ He reached the pinnacle of his career shortly before his death in 1760 when he was appointed to the highest position in the ilmiye, the post of şeyhülislam. Asım Efendi, again like Raşid, was a favorite of Dâmédia-İbrahim Paşa and was appointed to the vak'ânâvislik as a result of his patronage. Asım Efendi recorded the events from the time he was appointed to the position until 1730 when Dâmédia-İbrahim Paşa was removed from office and executed during the Patrona Halil Revolt.¹⁵⁴

Küçük Çelebi Zade Ismail Asım Efendi wrote a chronicle that recorded the events from 1722 until 1729 (H1135-1141).¹⁵⁵ Manuscripts of his work exist as individual works, but his chronicle most often can be found as an addition (zeyt) at the end of Raşid’s history both in manuscripts and in its two printed editions.¹⁵⁶

Because of the disruptions caused by the Patrona Halil Revolt—which lasted from September 1730 until November 1730 when Patrona Halil was executed at the order of Mahmud I and the accession of Mahmud I (1730-1754), a court historian was not

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¹⁵² 28 Ramazan 1135. Kütükoğlu, "Vak'ânâvis," IA, 276. The Hijri date given by J.R. Walsh and M. Cavid Baysun’s encyclopedia articles on Asım are correct, but the conversion date is incorrectly given as 5th April 1723. See: M. Cavid Baysun, "Çelebi-zade," IA, III, 372 and J.R. Walsh, "Celebi-zade," EI², vol. 2, 20. All the sources used to trace the history of the vak'ânâvislik, unless otherwise noted, can be found in the biographical/bibliographic entries in Appendix A.


¹⁵⁴ This date is of some dispute as Asım’s chronicle ends in July 1729; see: M. Cavid Baysun, "Çelebi-zade," IA, III, 370-375. The Patrona Halil Revolt ended the reign of Ahmet III and thus the Tulip Age. For more on this revolt see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. I, 239-240; and Ahmed Refik, Lale Dave, (Istanbul, 1997), 93-114.

¹⁵⁵ 3 July 1722 until 29 July 1729. Bayrak incorrectly states that the work records the events until 1733; see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 76.

¹⁵⁶ Muteferrika Basmevi, 1740 and Istanbul Muteba-i Amire, 1865.
appointed. An unofficial account of the events of 1730 (H1142) was written down by a Mehmed Arif Bey (d.1733). Very little is known about his life or what position in the Ottoman bureaucracy he occupied, but he did write down the events of 1730 from some compiled works and from the *Divan-i Hümayun Mühimme Defterleri*.157 Arif Bey seems to have been included in the literature of the *vak' anıvîs* in order to keep the unbroken chain of chroniclers complete. The motivation behind his chronicle of events and any "official" capacity under which he wrote this chronicle has not yet been ascertained.158

The next official appointment of a court historian in the reign of Mahumâd I was given to Arpaeminizâde Mustafa Sami Efendi (d.1734) in 1730/1731.159 Sami Efendi was the son of a government official named Arpaemi Osman Efendi and he grew up in the Sublime Porte. With his father's influence he entered into a career in the bureaucracy reaching the rank of *hace*. Sami was well known for his poetry, eloquence of style and his calligraphy.160 It was because of this notoriety that he was appointed to the office of *vak' anıvîs*. The patron behind his appointment is not known and his chronicle holds no clues due to its being incomplete. An analysis of his poetry might hold some indication


158 His chronicle has been reprinted from the original manuscript, which is held at the archive of the Türk Tarih Kurumu in Ankara, in TOEM; nr. 4 (1328); nr. 5 (1328); and nr. 16 (1330), 1024 to 1034. The reprint is not a complete rendition of the original manuscript.

159 The exact date of his appointment is not known, the most accepted dates are 1730 or 1731 (H1143). The year of his death has also been stated as 1733 or 1734. Both Râmiz, *Tezkire* and Şehrizade, *Neş-peyde* have his death dated in 1733 (H1145). Many of the other biographers, including Müstakimzâde, *Tuhfi-i hattâtın*, Cemâleddin have his date of death as 1734. This date seems to be more acceptable as the last entry in his chronicle mentions Şeyh-ul-îslâm Dûrrî Mehmed Efendi who was not appointed to that position until June of 1734; see, *Tarih-i Seni, Şıkir ve Sübhî*, (Istanbul, 1784), 71b.

as to who his patron might have been. 161 Sami Efendi died in 1734 and was not able to complete a finished chronicle for presentation to the sultan, but a daybook for the events between 1731 and the time of his death and a rough draft (mişvedde) of his unfinished work were passed onto his successor. 162

Sami Efendi’s successor was Hüseyin Şâkir Bey-Efendi (d. 1742). Şâkir Bey was from the ulema and had been a müdderis before his appointment to the vak’ânûvislik. His appointment to the post of vak’ânûvis was based on his poetic skills, his calligraphy, and his recognized skills in inşa. 163

Şâkir Bey’s tenure as vak’ânûvis is of some debate. Some historians and biographers have contended that his tenure was from 1734 until 1739, while others have ended his tenure as court historian in 1735. The debate centers on when he was appointed to the position as kadi of Aleppo. 164 By examining the compiled chronicles of Sami, Şâkir and Suphi we can deduce that Kutukoglu’s dating is more accurate, though no records have been found to substantiate Şâkir’s appointment as chief judge of Aleppo in 1735. No completed chronicle was written by Şâkir, but manuscripts of the events he recorded exist. 165 He recorded the events from 1733 to 1735.

After Şâkir Bey’s departure from the post of vak’ânûvis, the post was filled by Râmi Mehmed Paşa-zâde Abdullah Re’fed Bey (d.1744) who was appointed on 22 July

161 His appointment would have been made during the Grand Vezirate of either Topal-Osman Paşa (d.1732) or three-time Grand Vezir Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa (1689-1758).

162 A copy of his rough draft can be found in the Istanbul University Library, nr. TY 9768 and covers the events from the two years 1143-1144 (1730-1732); Kutukoglu, “Vak’ânûvis,” IA, 276.

163 Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 47.

164 Both Babinger and Cemâleddin state that he took the post of Kadi of Aleppo in Şaban 1155/ Oct. 1742 while Kutukoglu states that his tenure ended in 1735 with his appointment to the post. See: Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 47; Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 277 and Kutukoglu, “Vak’ânûvis,” IA, 276.

165 The best manuscript copy is the one found in Cairo, Hidvîye Kutuphanesi, nr. 66/8862.
1735 and then by H菲尔 Mehmed Efendi (d.1752) who was known to hold the post of vak'anîvis in 1739. The exact tenure of both appointments are not known and very little is known about their lives.

Re'fed Bey was from the hacegân. H菲尔 Mehmed Efendi was from the ulema and had a reputation as a skilled poet. Based on evidence found in manuscripts from H菲尔 Mehmed Efendi's successor Mehmed Suphi Efendi, it can be determined that both Re'fed Bey and H菲尔 Efendi collected together the notes of Samî and Şakir and added the events from their own times. Between the two of them they added the material that would detail the events of the Ottoman Empire from 1735 until 1739. In 1739 Mehmet Suphi Efendi (d. 1769) was appointed vak'anîvis to replace H菲尔 Efendi. Suphi Efendi was the son of Beylikçi Halil Fehmi Efendi and had followed his father in a career with the office of the Grand Vezir and the Imperial Divan. The date of his elevation to the ranks of the hacegân is not known, but his career was well established, as well as his reputation as a master of inşa by the time of his appointment to the post of vak'anîvis. He had also been with the army during the war with Austria from 1736 to 1739.

At first he was ordered to collect and complete the events from 1736 until 1739; that is, all of the material that had been gathered from the time of Şefik until his own

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166 Kutuçoğlu, "Vak'anîvis," IA, 276.


168 See Kutuçoğlu, "Vak'anîvis," IA, 276-277. Concerning manuscript evidence of their tenure as court chroniclers see: Süleymaniye Library, Velîyuddin Efendi Ktb. No. 2371, Tarih-i Subhi, a marginal note states that this work includes the events collected together by Samî, Şakir and Re'fed Bey. On H菲尔 Efendi; see Topkapı Kütüphanesi, Revan 1255, which is a journal of events collected together by H菲尔 Efendi and includes the events from Samî until his time. The work is titled, Ku'a min tarih-i Samî that details the events from 1730 to 1737 (HI140-1150).

169 It is not known why H菲尔 Efendi was replaced at this time.

170 Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarlari, 153.
appointment. The terms of his appointment were changed in April of 1742 by the newly appointed grand vezir, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa. Suphi was now to compile all of the recorded events from the time of Sami, 1730/31, until his own appointment and then add the events dating from his appointment to the post of vak'anüvis until Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa's appointment as grand vezir.\(^{171}\)

Mehmet Suphi was appointed to the post of beyliği in 1743 and because of the heavy duties associated with his new position he was removed from the position of vak'anüvis in February of 1744.\(^{172}\) It was not uncommon in the Ottoman bureaucracy for someone to have multiple appointments. Some appointments would be actual work, while others would have been a source of revenue for that person to supplement his salary.

Mehmet Suphi's work exists only in manuscript form. A completed chronicle does not exist, but his manuscript along with those of his predecessors Sami, Şakir, Re'fed and Hafiz survive in printed form due to the efforts of Beyliği Raşid and Ahmet Vasif towards the end of the century. By order of the Sultan, they edited and added material to all of the events recorded between the time of Sami Efendi and Mehmet Suphi Efendi or the years 1730 until 1743 (H1143-1155). This work was one of the early works to be printed by the Müteferrika Press in 1784.\(^{173}\)

\(^{171}\) Hekimoğlu-Ali Paşa was in his second stint as grand vezir from April 1742 until September 1743. Ali Paşa's interest in Suphi's work might indicate that he was the patron of Sami during his first grand vezirate (March 1732 to July 1735), but there is no direct evidence of this. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anüvis," IA, 277 and Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 37.

\(^{172}\) On the position of beyliği see Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Beys, and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire, (Istanbul, 1997), 20 and Pakaln, Osmanlı Tarih Devirleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, vol I, 221.

\(^{173}\) The work also contains a supplement with additional events from 1155 and 1156. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anüvis," 277.

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Süleyman Izzi Efendi (d. 1755) was, like his predecessor, from the hasçegân. Izzi Efendi had entered into the bureaucracy with the influence of his father, Halil Ağa. He was with the army in its retaking of Belgrade in 1739 and had written a well received manuscript concerning the first siege during the times of Süleyman the Magnificent and his own observations concerning the siege of 1739.¹⁷⁴ As he progressed in secretarial positions, he acquired a reputation for his calligraphy, and skills in inça. He was never very successful in his career as a poet though his history contains many examples.

He was appointed to the post of Court Historian on 30 July 1745.¹⁷⁵ His appointment resulted from the recommendation of the Reis-ül-Küttab, Emâr-zâde Hacı-Mustafa Efendi. While in the position of vak'ânûvis he was appointed additional duties in the maliye or finance office of the central government, first as küçük evkaf ruhâsebesi and then to the position of chief of ceremonies or teşrifaci in 1747.¹⁷⁶ Izzi Efendi decided to participate in the Hajj and departed from Istanbul in Cemaziyelevvel of 1166 (March 1753). Seyyid Hâkim Mehmed Efendi was appointed vak'ânûvis in Istanbul in May of that same year either as a temporary replacement or Izzi was permanently removed from the post at his departure. If the assignment for Hâkim had originally been


¹⁷⁵ 1 Receb 1158. Izzi himself states that he was appointed on that date to replace Subhi Efendi; see: İzzi, Tarih, (İstanbul, 1785), I, 2b. The dating for Izzi’s tenure as vak’ânûvis is, as with many of the court historians, of some dispute. Küçükoğlu, states that he was appointed in 1745 as does Parmaksizoloğlu in his article in IA which was summarized in El, new edition. Bayrak states that he held the position beginning in 1743 that would not agree with the dating of the removal of Subhi. Bayrak also goes on to state that he was removed for a short time as court historian on his appointment to the position of küçük evkaf ruhâsebesi (1745-1746) which conflicts with Parmaksizoloğlu’s statement that he held the positions concurrently. Cemâledin, in Ayine-i Zürefa states that he was also appointed in 1743. Bayrak’s date for Izzi’s tenure as vak’ânûvis is incorrect, Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Tasarları, 123-124.

¹⁷⁶ İsmet Parmaksizoloğlu, “Izzi,” El, new edition, s.v. and his longer article in IA, “Izzi,” s.v. Izzi’s chronicle is dedicated to the sultan, the grand vezir at his appointment, Seyyid Hasan Paşa, who was grand vezir from 1743 to 1746, and his patron, Reis-ül-Küttab, Emâr-zâde Hacı-Mustafa Efendi; see: İzzi, Tarih, I, 2a-2b.
temporary, this would mark the beginning of a normal practice to appoint a replacement court historian in the capital while the appointed vak’anûvis went on campaign, etc. The title of the replacement court historian in the capital was either vak’anûvis vekili or rikâb vak’anûvis.¹⁷⁷ Izzi died in 1755.¹⁷⁸

Izzi Efendi, while holding the post of court historian, recorded and arranged the events from 1744 until 1752 (H1157-1165). His work exists in many manuscripts and was printed in Istanbul in 1785/H1199, again by Mutteferrika Press and under the supervision of Raşid and Vasif. Kutûkoğlu also mentions that there is some evidence that a third manuscript volume of material with events from 1753/H1166 might exist, but it has yet to be found/identified.¹⁷⁹

Another individual has been linked to the position of vak’anûvis during this period of time. His name was Kurîmî Mustafa Rahmi (d. 1750). In some of the literature on the position of vak’anûvis and in some biographies about him, he was noted to have been appointed to the post between the years 1747 to 1750. A survey of the literature and sources show this claim to be inaccurate. He was from the hâcegân and had an excellent reputation for his poetry. While in position of Tersane kâtibi he was appointed to accompany the diplomatic mission of Kâşrîa lî Ahmed Paşa to Iran as a recording

¹⁷⁷ It appears that the names of many who might have held the position of temporary vak’anûvis have not come down to us. The names and contributions of these men have been noted when known. Their notes for the most part were used by the court historian who returned from campaign with the army and wrote his chronicle. It is quite possible that their notes will turn up in some of the many undocumented mecmualar found in Istanbul’s libraries and museums.

¹⁷⁸ There is some debate as to the events surrounding Izzi’s pilgrimage and the location of his death. Cemâlîddin states the date of his departure on the Hajj and notes that he died in 1755 while on the Hajj. Other biographers have noted that he died in Istanbul in 1755 and do not mention his going on the Hajj. It is most probable that he went on and returned from the Hajj and that other biographers did not deem it necessary to include his Hâçî status. See: Cemâlîddin, Ayine-i Züretâ, 49. On Izzi’s death, see: Ahmet Vasîf, Mahshînî’l Âstî ve Hâckayhîkî’l-Abhâr, (Istanbul, 1805), I, 51.

secretary. It is in this capacity that the term vak'anūvis might have been used, but it can in no way be associated with the position of Imperial Historiographer. In his case the term vak'anūvis has the connotation of being a recording secretary on a diplomatic mission. Nevertheless, he returned to Istanbul from the mission and wrote an excellent account of the diplomatic mission to Iran and the court of Nadir Şah. He died of the plague not long after his return in 1750.\footnote{On Rahmi Mustafa Efendi, see: Bayrak, Osmani Tarihi Yazaları, 146; Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanı, vol. 2, 376; Bursali Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Osmani Müellifleri, vol. 3, 57-58; Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry, vol. 4, 73; Fatih, Tezkere, 130; Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 285; and Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zârifa, 52-54. His work, Sefaretname-i Iran, is an excellent geographical description of the places seen between Istanbul and Hamedan, their histories and stories about the court of Nadir Şah. On this work see: Unat, Osmani Şafirleri ve Sefaretnameleri, 86-91.}

Seyyid Hâkim Mehmed Efendi (d. 1770) was appointed to the post of vak'anūvis on May 4, 1753 as a replacement for İzzi who had departed for the Hajj\footnote{Kütükoğlu, "Vak'anūvis," 277.}. His position at first was probably as a temporary replacement for İzzi, but the latter's death in 1755 left the post to Hâkim on a permanent basis. Hâkim held the post of Imperial Chronicler from 1753 until 1766. He was from the hacegân. In 1766 he was appointed to the post of cebeciler kâtibi. and left the post of vak'anūvis.\footnote{Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanı, vol. 2, 101.} Hâkim's abilities in inşa and poetry earned him a good reputation. Hâkim's chronicle of events is in manuscript form and covers the years 1752 to 1766 (H1166 to 1180). His work and notes would be used extensively as a source for those years in a chronicle written by one of his successors to the position of vak'anūvis Ahmet Vasif Efendi.\footnote{See: "Müverrih Vânsî'nin Kaynaklarından Hâkim Tarihi," in Bekir Kütükoğlu, Vekâyl'nūvis Makaleleri, (Istanbul, 1994), 139-194.}

Çeşmizâde Mustafa Reşid Efendi (d. 1770), who was the next appointment to the post of vak'anūvis, was from the ulema. He had a very successful medrese career that
culminated in his appointment to the highest rank in the medrese system, Suleymaniye Darülhadis Müderrisliği in 1770. He earned a reputation for being an excellent religious scholar, poet and expert in inşa. On 1 Receb 1180 / 3 December 1766 he was appointed to replace Hâkim in the position of vak'anüvis. He held the position until Rebiülevvel 1182 / August 1768.\footnote{Some sources have Hâkim's tenure as court historian continuing until 1770 and then Çeşmizâde's term being only during the year 1770; for example see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarlari, 77. Manuscript evidence shows that he only recorded the events from the years 1766 to early 1768. The reason for his departure from the position of court historian in 1768 is not known, but could have been related to the Ottomans' preparation for war. Also see: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anüvis," IA, 277.}

His recording of events can be found in manuscript form and was used by Vasif Efendi in his chronicle as a source. His work was dedicated to the Sultan Mustafa III (1757-1774) and Grand Vezir Muhsinzâde Mehmed Paşa and recorded events from December of 1766 until June of 1768 (H1180-1182).\footnote{Çeşmizâde's history has been transliterated into modern Turkish with commentary. See: Bekir Kutukoğlu, editor, Çeşmi-zâde Mustafa Resîd: Çeşmi-zâde Tarihi, (Istanbul, 1993).}

The long Ottoman peace with her neighbors that began in 1747 ended with the Ottomans' entry into the most disastrous war yet for the empire in 1768. Çeşmizâde was replaced by two men as vak'anüvis in that year. In Istanbul Musazâde Mehmed Ubeydullah Efendi (1718-1782) was appointed as rikâb vak'anüvis.\footnote{Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anüvis," 277.} He, like Çeşmizâde, was from the ulema and held judicial and educational posts in the medrese system. He was best remembered by biographers for his appointment as müneccimbaşi after his removal from the post of vak'anüvis.\footnote{Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 55. On the position of Müneccimbaşi or Chief Astrologer of the Sultan see: Pakaln, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, vol II, 618-620.} Musa-zâde recorded the events from 1768 until 1770. No manuscript of his work or daybook has yet to be found, but two chroniclers after him used his notes as a source for their works. Şemdânizâde states that
he used Musâzâde’s notes in his chronicle as a source for the years 1769-1770 (H1183 to H1184).\textsuperscript{188} In addition, the Court Historian, Vasif Efendi used Musâzâde as a source in the first volume of his chronicle.\textsuperscript{189}

The other appointment was the main post of \textit{vak’anâvis} with the condition that the person accompanied the army on campaign against the Russians. The man picked for the job was Enveri Sadullah Efendi (1735? -1794) who would eventually hold the position of \textit{vak’anâvis} on five separate occasions. Enveri was born in Trabazon and came to Istanbul at a young age. Enveri was able, through patronage, to enter into the Bab-i Ağıf and eventually reached the rank of \textit{hace}. At the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, Enveri was found in the position of \textit{selâm ağası} to Grand Vezir Yağlıkçızâde Mehmet Emin Paşa.\textsuperscript{190} According to the sources his appointment to the post of \textit{vak’anâvis} to the Imperial Army was made on recommendation to the Grand Vezir by the famous Ahmet Resmi Efendi.\textsuperscript{191}

Enveri accompanied the Army of the Danube on its campaign in the Principalities during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774.\textsuperscript{192} The administration of the army and the

\textsuperscript{188} Şemâñîzâde, \textit{Mûr’i’t-tavârih}, II B, 27.

\textsuperscript{189} See Topkapı Sarayi Müzesi Arşivi, nr. E 10323 is a petition to the sultan by Vasif discussing his writing of a chronicle. A transliteration into modern Turkish of this document by Mücteba İlgürcel can be found in his transliteration of Vasif’s work, \textit{Mehasinî’l-Asâr ve Hakâtî’l-Ahâr}, (Ankara, 1994), 401.

\textsuperscript{190} Yağlıkçızâde Mehmet Emin Paşa held the position of grand vezir for a short nine months and 23 days during the reign of Sultan Mustafa III (1757-1774). He lost his head because of the failures of the Ottoman army. See: Govsa, \textit{Türk Meşhurları}, 114. \textit{Selâm ağası} is the position of master of ceremonies.

\textsuperscript{191} This account can be found in: Kutukçuğlu, “\textit{Vak’anâvis},” IA, 276-277. Ahmet Resmi Efendi (1700-1783) was one of the most senior diplomats of his day in the Ottoman Empire and was one of the few Ottomans to have extensively traveled to and commented on Europe. On Ahmet Resmi see: Faik Reşit Unat, \textit{Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri}, (Ankara, 1987), s.v.; Govsa, \textit{Türk Meşhurları}, 25; Baýrak, \textit{Osmanlı Tarihi Yazâlari}, 24-25 and Franz Babinger, “Ahmed Resmi,” IA, s.v.

events of this war became the material for his first volume that covered the events of the
army from March 1769 until September 1774 (Zilkade 1182 until Receb 1188). During
this period he was under the patronage of Grand Vezir Silâhtar Mehmed Paşa.(d. 1780) 193
On his return to Istanbul he began to write two volumes of a chronicle, one for events
during the war and another about the events in Istanbul, presumably with material from
Musa-zâde. While working on these volumes, he was replaced as court historian by
Antebli Behçeti Hasan Efendi in 1774. 194

Behçeti Efendi held the office of vak’anûvis from 1774 until sometime in either
late 1775 or early 1776. Other than that he was from the ulema, very little is known
about Behçeti’s life. 195 Both Enverî and Vasîf used his notes from the period when he
held this position as a source for their chronicles. Behçeti was replaced by another
member of the ulema, Sişman Molla Ömerzâde Süleyman Efendi (d. 1807). Sişman
Molla was a prominent member of the ulema and a respected müderris. He held the post
of vak’anûvis for only a very short time in 1776. He recorded very little of the events in
Istanbul which was noticed by both the Grand Vezir Derviş Mehmed Paşa (1735-1777)
and the Şeyhülislâm Vassafzâde Mehmed Esad Efendi (1707-1778), and he was promptly
replaced. 196 Enverî and Vasîf made use of his notes in their chronicles.

Enverî Efendi again was appointed to the office of Imperial Historian in
December of 1776 to replace Sişman Molla Efendi. His appointment was secured by the


194 Kutûkoğlu, "Vak’anûvis," IA, 277. It is also possible that Enverî was replaced due to the death of
Mustafa III in 1774. Often when new sultans or even Grand Vezirs came to power, the entire Ottoman
power structure was removed, replaced or shuffled around.

195 There has been some confusion about the name of this vak’anûvis. Some works, like Bayрак, list his
name as İbrahim while others list his name as Huseyin, see Cemâleddin, Ayırs-i Zürefa, 56. Baytrak seems
to mistake him for an earlier Behçeti who wrote a history of the Köprülü family earlier in the century.

196 Kutûkoğlu, "Vak’anûvis," IA, 277.
patronage of the very two people who removed Şişman Molla, Derviş Mehmed Paşa and Vassafzade Mehmed Esad Efendi. Enver Efendi’s second term as vak'anıvis was to last until September or October of 1783 at which time he was replaced by Ahmet Vasif Efendi (1739-1806) who would be beginning the first of three terms as Court Historian. This would mark the beginning of an often-bitter struggle between the two over the post of vak'anıvis. Enver Efendi was replaced because of his appointment to the post of büyük tezkireci during the grand vezirate of the reformer Halil Hamid Paşa (d.1785) and it was thought that he would not be able to advance if he held two positions simultaneously.

During his second tenure as court chronicler Enver began to record events dating from his appointment. However, on order of Silâhtar Seyyid (Kara Vezir) Mehmed Paşa, who had been appointed Grand Vezir in August 1779, Enver began to rewrite his notes and included both Behçetî and Şişman Molla’s observations. This would take form as the second volume of Enver’s chronicle that would cover the years 1774 to 1783 (H1188 until 1197). This volume of his chronicle would concentrate more on the central government than on military matters.

Vak'anıvis Ahmed Vasif Efendi was born in Bağdad. He began a scribal career, which, at first, concentrated on appointments to either provincial officials or army officials. He became an important peace negotiator in the Ruso-Turkish War of 1768 to 1774 that ended in the Peace of Küçük Kaynarca. Vasif then worked in various bureaucratic positions reaching the rank of hacegân. While working in the bureaucracy, Vasif was appointed to oversee the Ottoman press (Matbaa-i Âmire) that had been started.

198 The büyük tezkireci, also known as tezkire-i evvel was the first secretary to the grand vezir. Ibid.
199 Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 57.
by Müteferrika. It was during this period that Vasif had his first exposure to the works of the vak'anûvis when he co-edited and published the chronicles of Sâmi, Şâkir, and Subhi in one volume and then Izzî's chronicle in 1785.200

Vasif took up the duties of vak'anûvis on 3 November 1783 and began working from the point where Enveri had stopped.201 His first tenure as court historian effectively ended on July 1787 at which time he was appointed as a diplomat to the Ottoman delegation to Morocco and Spain. The sultan sent the delegation to negotiate with the Spanish and the Sultan of Morocco concerning Russian access to the Mediterranean.202

While Vasif Efendi continued to hold the position of vak'anûvis, on his departure a substitute or rikâb vak'anûvis was appointed to record the events of the capital. The substitute's name was Teşrifâtî Hasan Efendi (d.1797) and was appointed from among the hacegân.203 Hasan Efendi recorded the events from the departure of Ahmet Vasif until the outbreak of war with Russia and Austria later in that year.204

Enverî Efendi was then appointed for the third time to the post of vak'anûvis in 1787 and left in the company of Grand Vezir Koca Yusuf Paşa (d.1800) to meet the army which was gathering along the Ottoman/Austrian border. In his place at the capital, yet another rikâb vak'anûvis was appointed to record the events of the capital.

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200 Ilgürd, Mehâsinî'-Asâr, XXIII-XXIV.

201 Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," 278.

202 Vasif recorded his travels as an ambassador in a work that is in manuscript form. See: İspanya Sefaretnamesi, Istanbul Topkapı Sarayi Müzesi, EH no. 1438. The work was also summarized in Ahmet Cevdet, Tarih, IV, 348-358 and in Unat, Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri, 144-147.


204 Concerning this war that lasted from 1787-1792 see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 258-260.
Esseyyd Edib Mehmed Emin Efendi (d.1801) held the position of rikâb vak'ânûvis from 1787 to 1789 and again from 1792 to 1793. Edib was also from the hâcegân and had held the post of Teşrifatçî before being appointed to the chronicler's position. He was also a noted poet.\(^\text{205}\)

Both Enveri and Edib's tenures as chroniclers came to an end in 1789 with the succession of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807). Selim III was very interested in the writing of history and patronized Ahmed Vasif Efendi who had returned in late 1788 after his diplomatic mission to Spain. After his accession he appointed Vasif to the post of vak'ânûvis for the second time and sent him out to meet the Ottoman army in the field. Vasif was to hold the position of court historian until 1791 when Selim III appointed him to supervise the handing over of forts by the Austrians in accordance with the Peace Treaty of Sistova (August, 1791) that ended the war between the Ottomans and Austria.

So in 1791, Enveri was again made vak'ânûvis (6 Safer 1206/5 October 1291) for the fourth time and Edib Efendi was again appointed as rikâb vak'ânûvis (3 Şevval 1206/26 May 1792).\(^\text{206}\) Both of these appointments ended with return of Ahmet Vasif in 1793. Again, Sultan Selim III appointed him to the post of vak'ânûvis (June 1793) and entrusted him to write a new chronicle of the Ottoman Empire dating from his accession to the Sultanate.\(^\text{207}\) Mehmet Edib Efendi would leave his post having given his notes and

\(^{205}\) On Edib's appointment to the post of rikâb vak'ânûvis see: Mehmet Galib, "Vak'anûvis Teşrifatçî Edib Efendi-Selim Salîs'in bazı Ewamir múhimmesi," \textit{TOEM}, 1329, no. 8.

\(^{206}\) Some sources have Enveri holding the post of vak'ânûvis four times. The dispute comes about concerning his appointment in 1791 either lasting until 1793 or until his death in 1794.

\(^{207}\) For the official appointment of Vasif see: BBA, CD 2546.
a finished chronicle for the dates 11 Receb 1203 until 26 Muḥarram 1207 (8 April 1789 to 14 September 1792) to Vasif Efendi.208

Vasif took the chronicles (vekayinname) and notes of both Enveri and Edib and added material during his own tenure as vak'anîvis to write his chronicle of the Ottoman Empire dating from the accession of Selim III.209 Vasif Efendi presented the introduction of his chronicle to Selim III in Muharram of 1208 (August 1793). Selim was very pleased with the work, awarded Vasif a gift of 5000 kurus and ordered him to continue his chronicle in a simple style.210 Moreover, Selim III involved himself with Vasif's work by personally commenting on drafts of his work; a practice that would not go unnoticed by future commentators on Vasif's work.211

A year later, things had changed significantly. Selim III sent Ahmet Vasif into exile and Enver Efendi was appointed to the post of vak'anîvis for the fifth time. Vasif Efendi's exile was caused by his clash with the current Reisükütâb, Mehmet Râşid Efendi with whom he had worked at the Matbaâ-i Amire and, more importantly, a clash with Selim III. Ahmet Vasif wanted to improve his political and financial position in the central government by seeking a higher post while still holding onto the post of

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208 Edib's chronicle, Edib Tarihi, is in manuscript form, the best copy being Istanbul Universitesi, TY 9679. The work was used by Vasif and also by the Imperial Historiographer Ahmet Çevdet who was very critical of it. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anîvis," 278.

209 Vasif states in a note to the grand vezir his plans for writing his chronicle. See Yıldız Tasmî, nr. 33-554-73-90.

210 For a note on the gift to Vasif see: Çevdet, Tarih, VI, 90 and on Selim's order for Vasif to continue writing his chronicle, see: HH nr. 13135 and 13135A.

vak'anûvis. His petition to the Sultan to secure this higher post angered Selim III and secured him a sentence of exile. So, in July 1794 he was sent to Midilli.²¹²

Enver Efendi held the position from July 1794 until his death on 8 November 1794 (13 Rebi‘ülâhîr 1209). During this time, Enver completed his third volume of work that included events from his time as court historian in 1201 and 1206 (1787 to 1791). This volume included events that mainly concerned the army, as Edib recorded the events in the capital during the war with Russia and Austria.

After Enver’s death, Selim III gave the position of Imperial Historian to Halil Nuri Bey Efendi (d.1799). Nuri was selected from among the hacegân and had held the posts of tezkereci and amredçi previous to his appointment as vak'anûvis. Nuri Bey recorded the events of the Ottoman Empire from 1794 until his death in 1799. In January/February of 1797 he presented the first three volumes of his chronicle to the sultan. These volumes included material from Enver and his own events up to 1797. For his work he was presented with a gift (atiyye) of 3000 kuruş.²¹³ He continued to work on a fourth volume that he presented to Selim III in late 1797 or early 1798 and, again, he was rewarded.²¹⁴ The final two volumes of Nuri’s work were written from 1798 until his death in 1799.²¹⁵ Nuri Bey Efendi’s work exists only in manuscript form and was used as

²¹² On his banishment see: Mucetâ Ilgürâl, "Vâsif," JA, 216 and Asım, Tarih, I, 256ff. The banishment did not last long as he was forgiven and allowed to return to Istanbul in December of 1794.

²¹³ See CM 939 & 939A.

²¹⁴ See HH 8931.

²¹⁵ There are many manuscript copies of Nuri’s six-volume chronicle. Many have different ending dates. The volume with the latest date contains events from Zilkade 1213 or April 1799; see: University Kutuphanesi, nr. 239. The variation in dating could be explained by the decisions taken by the copyists.
a source in the chronicles of Vasif Efendi and Cevdet Paşa. His work is an important chronicle of the reform efforts of Selim III.\textsuperscript{216}

On the death of Nuri, the position of vak'anūvis was given to Vasif Efendi for the fourth and last time on the 20th of May 1799.\textsuperscript{217} Ahmet Vasif Efendi was appointed by Selim III to rewrite the chronicles and daybooks collected since the time of Izzi Efendi whose chronicle ended in 1751. He began at first by rewriting Nuri's work in his own style. Selim III rewarded Vasif Efendi for his work and requested him to continue his rewriting project.\textsuperscript{218} Vasif would eventually complete a chronicle entitled, Mehāsinü'l-Āsar ve Hakākī'l-Ahār.\textsuperscript{219} This work was a rewriting of events from 1752 until 1774.

Vasif continued his work by rewriting the chronicle of Enveri and adding material from his own time as court historian. The resulting work was a chronicle of events from 1188 until 1193 (1774 to 1779). This work exists only in manuscript form.\textsuperscript{220} Eventually, Vasif's chronicle would contain the events up to immediately before his departure from the post of vak'anūvis in 1805 with some exceptions.\textsuperscript{221}

On the 5th of August 1805 Ahmet Vasif was appointed to the lofty position of Reisūlkiyattāb. Because of the demanding nature of his new duties he was removed from

\textsuperscript{216} A summary of the regulations concerning Selim's reforms can be found in Nuri's fourth volume. For additional information on Nuri's work as a source for Selim's reform efforts and a general overview of his reform efforts see: S.J. Shaw, Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultān Selim III, 1789-1807, (Cambridge, 1971).

\textsuperscript{217} See TY 5979 var. 227b. İlgürel has his appointment as being in February of 1799; Mücteba İlgürel, "Vasif," İA, 216.

\textsuperscript{218} On his being rewarded for rewriting Nuri's chronicle see: HH 5243 & HH 14883.

\textsuperscript{219} This work was to be published three times; twice in Egypt and once by the Imperial Press (Mabsaa-yi Amire).

\textsuperscript{220} See Hazine Kütuphanesi, 1406.

\textsuperscript{221} His work ignores the events from 1193-1197 (1779 until 1782) and the period from his first tenure as court historian 1783 until Selim III's accession in 1789.
the post of vak'anüvis. The post would prove to be too much for the 70-year-old career bureaucrat and he was forced to resign from his post due to poor-health after 14 months in the position. He died not long after in October of 1806.\textsuperscript{222}

Because of Selim III's interest in history and the re-invigoration of the post of vak'anüvis, Ahmet Vasif was able to win fame as a court chronicler. Although his chronicle deserves attention as an important source for the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century (Vak'anüvis Ahmet Cevdet used his work extensively in his own history.), Vasif's contributions as a peace negotiator, diplomat, and head of the foreign affairs office make him one of the more important Ottoman figures of his time.

Muvakkırizade Pertev Mehmet Efendi (1746-1807) was appointed to replace Vasif in 1805. Pertev came from the hacegân and had been attached to the amedi office before his appointment to the office of court historian.\textsuperscript{223} In late 1806 a new conflict began between the Ottomans and the Russians. As was customary for the court historian, Pertev, in April of 1807, was sent to accompany the army on campaign in the Balkans. While with the army, he grew sick in Silistre and died in Edirne in September of 1807 while the army was withdrawn in winter quarters. Very little is known about his life and his tenure as court historian. He was apparently well known as a poet. A chronicle of events written by him is said to exist in manuscript form.\textsuperscript{224}

It was during Pertev's tenure as vak'anüvis that an important transition occurred in the Ottoman Empire. Selim III was deposed and eventually killed for his reform efforts by conservative elements in Ottoman society. For a short time he was replaced by

\textsuperscript{222} Mucteba İlgürel, "Vasif," \textit{IA}, 216

\textsuperscript{223} He is identified as being from the hacegân only in Lütfi's introduction to his chronicle.

\textsuperscript{224} While many of the biographers of Pertev have claimed that a manuscript exists, the author has failed to find a copy in either the palace or libraries of Istanbul.
Mustafa IV (1807-1808) who was supported by these conservative elements. Those who had supported the reform efforts of Selim III replaced Mustafa IV and his supporters within a year. These elements brought the son of Abdüllah I, Mahmud II (1808-1839) to the Ottoman throne. After a period of time in which he consolidated power, Mahmud II began to reform the Ottoman Empire to meet the challenges it faced in the world of the 19th century. The program of reform, which was very much influenced by Selim III’s efforts, would eventually be called the Tanzimat. Mahmud II, like Selim III, supported historical writing and patronized a new generation of court historians much the same way as Selim III had done.\(^{225}\)

The successor of Pertev Efendi to the post of vak'anûvis was Esseýid Omer Amir Bey (d.1815). His appointment was dated 22 October 1807.\(^{226}\) Amir Bey was also from the haseğân and held the position for only a short time in 1807. After his appointment he was sent to Edirne to replace Pertev at the army’s winter quarters. Omer Bey resigned from the post due to ill health caused by excessive drinking.\(^{227}\) It is also worth noting that during the tenures of both Pertev and Omer Bey, they were with the army and no known rikâb vak'anûvis was appointed in Istanbul.


\(^{226}\) Kutu köğtu, "Vak'anûvis," 280-281.

In 1807 or possibly at the beginning of 1808, the post of vak'\textit{an\text{"u}}vis was given to Kam\text{"u}s Ay\text{"u}ntap\text{"u} Muterce\text{"i}m Ahmet As\\\text{"u}m Efendi (1755?-1819).\textsuperscript{228} Muterce\text{"i}m As\\\text{"u}m Efendi was born and entered into the \textit{ulema} in Ay\text{"u}ntap, modern-day Gaziantep. He traveled to Istanbul and gained the favor of Selim III for his translation skills. In Ramadan 1220 / November 1805, he began the translation of his most important work, the translation of the dictionary, \textit{Kam\text{"u}s\text{"u}l Mu\text{hit}} by Muhiddin Fir\text{"u}zabdi, which is an Arabic-Turkish lexicon. Two years later, Selim III was deposed and his cousin, Mustafa IV ascended to the throne.

Ahmet As\\\text{"u}m Efendi began his duties as court historian by gaining access to the daybooks and other material dating from the point that Vasif’s chronicle had ended. He was able to secure the notebooks of both \textit{"Omer Amir} and Pertev from the \textit{beylikci} who had them sent from Edirne.\textsuperscript{229} He was also able to obtain some notes and other ephemera from Enver, Edib, Nuri and Vasif. These notes were not complete and a gap from 1804 until Vasif’s departure from the post of vak’\textit{an\text{"u}}vis had to be filled by As\\\text{"u}m.\textsuperscript{230}

It is important to note that As\\\text{"u}m Efendi should have proceeded to join the army at this time and take the place of \textit{"Omer Amir Bey} and a \textit{rik\text{"a}b vak’\text{"u}}vis be assigned in the capital. This in fact did not happen and Muterce\text{"i}m As\\\text{"u}m Efendi became the sole vak’\textit{an\text{"u}}vis. It appears that a \textit{k\text{"a}tib} named Ali R\text{"a}if Efendi from the grand vezier’s office

\textsuperscript{228} His date of birth has not been confirmed by documentary evidence. Concerning his appointment, Kutuko\text{"g}lu in his article on the \textit{vak’\text{"u}vis\text{"u}lk} has the date of appointment as being 8 January 1808 / H 9 Zilka\text{"u}d 1222; see: Kutuko\text{"g}lu, \textit{"Uvak’\text{"u}vis\text{"u}}, IA, 281. This also corresponds to As\\\text{"u}m’s own statement in his history. Others have dated his appointment in 1807 as to not have a break between court historians. See: Bayrak, \textit{Osmani Tarihi Yazarlari}, 164 or Franz Babinger, \textquote{\text{"A}sim}, EI, s.v. as examples.

\textsuperscript{229} Kuruko\text{"g}lu, \textit{"Uvak’\text{"u}vis\text{"u}}, IA, 281.

\textsuperscript{230} There had been notes made by Vasif for this period, but they had been removed from the \textit{Divan-i Humayun Kalerni Odasi} at some time.
was appointed to the army as secretary and he recorded the events of the army in an unofficial capacity.\textsuperscript{231}

The new Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) confirmed Asım Efendi’s position as vak'ânûvis. Asım rewrote the notes of previous court historians from 1803 until April, 1806 and presented his compilation to the Sultan. Unfortunately, his work was destroyed in a fire at the Bâb-i 'âli and he had to make a new copy. This new copy included additional events dating from the dethronement of Selim III.\textsuperscript{232} Sultan Mahmud II was very pleased with the chronicle presented by Asım and gave him a gift.\textsuperscript{233}

Mahmud II continued to reward Asım Efendi for his efforts by giving him additional revenue and advancement in the ranks of the ulema.\textsuperscript{234} Eventually, before his death in 1819, he became a müderris at Süleymaniye and held the position of kadi of Salonika. He retired from the position of vak'ânûvis shortly before his death of plague in January 1819. Asım’s chronicle eventually would cover the years from 1791 until 1808.\textsuperscript{235} His notes which would cover a majority of his tenure as vak'ânûvis, 11 years, were passed on to his successor Şanızâde Efendi.

Mütercim Asım Efendi was one of the great intellectuals of his era. While he did not excel in the Islamic sciences, his knowledge of Arabic and Persian were unequaled at the time. His abilities as a lexicographer were greatly respected by the Ottoman

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{231} His was officially attached to the Bâlûkât-ı Erbaa. His notes can be found in the work of Köse Mustafa Necib Efendi. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'ânûvis," IA, 281-282.
\item\textsuperscript{232} The presentation copy of this work to the Sultan can be found at İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, TY 6014.
\item\textsuperscript{233} H.H. 35239.
\item\textsuperscript{234} See: H.H. 16792 and H.H. 49493.
\item\textsuperscript{235} These years are covered in the presentation copy to the Sultan and are found in printed editions of his work. Additional material was added by Asım at a later date and copies of his manuscript exist which cover personalities and events which go back until 1787. See: Kutukoğlu, "Vak'ânûvis," IA, 282.
\end{footnotes}
intellectual community and he was probably more remembered for his translation of
dictionaries than his writings as an imperial historian.

Şanızâde Mehmed Atâullah Efendi (1771-1826) was appointed to replace Asim
on the 3rd of January 1819. Şanızâde, like Asim Efendi, was from the ulama and had
won fame for his knowledge of the Islamic sciences. He also was the first court historian
to have studied a European language, French. Shortly after his appointment, Mahmud
II approved a petition from Şanızâde to record the events from his accession in 1808 until
the present time. His chronicle used both his and his predecessor's notes. While
occupied in this endeavor he was only able to record the events up until the year H1236 /
1820-1821. In 1825, because of internal politics among the ulama, Şanızâde was accused
of being part of the Bektashi order of dervishes and was removed from his post as court
historian. He was banished to Tire and died not long after in September 1826.

Şanızâde Efendi's chronicle remained in manuscript form and a final copy was
never made by him. His manuscripts and notes for the years he was vak'ânîvis were
passed on to his successor, Mehmed Esad Efendi. His manuscript would eventually be
printed in four volumes and covered the events in the empire from 1808 until 1821.

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236 Cevdet, Tarih, I, 12; XI, 29 ff. 12 Safer 1235.


238 At the time of Şanızâde's banishment, Mahmud II had been slowly working to undermine the power of
the conservative Janissary Corps and its supporters, including the Bektashi order of dervishes. The Janissary
Corps was destroyed during what is called the Auspicious Event (vakayi hayriye) in June 1826. Shortly
before Şanızâde's death in 1826, the Bektashi order of dervishes was dismantled and forced underground by
the forces of Mahmud II. Concerning these events see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and

239 These volumes were printed in 1873/1874.
Sahhaflar Şeyhizâde Mehmed Esad Efendi (1789-1848) was appointed to replace the banished Şanizâde Efendi on the 28th of September 1825. Mehmed Esad Efendi was from the ulema and had been chosen from among candidates put forth by both the Porte and the office of the Şeyhülislam. Esad began by rewriting Şanizâde’s notes for the period beginning from Muḥarrem 1237 / September 1821. He presented a rough draft of his work to the sultan in the middle of 1826 and was rewarded and ordered to make a complete and clean copy of the work for the sultan. His work was interrupted by the destruction of the Janissary Corps or the Auspicious Event in 1826. This event marked another important step in Mahmud II’s efforts to reform the Ottoman Empire.

Rather than complete his copy of the history, he began a new work that was commissioned by the sultan to describe the events surrounding the destruction of the Janissary Corps. This work, which would have some corrections made by Pertev Said Mehmed Paşa, would be published in 1827 under the name, Ýss-i zafer. This work


241 Ibid. This is the only time that a specific reference was made concerning the process of picking a court chronicler. Because of the intense competition between the Porte and the ulema to see who would be appointed, these lists must have been created previously. No list has been found in the archives to date.


244 Pertev Paşa was the Reisüلكültâb at the time of the work’s completion.
was the official explanation of the reasons and events surrounding the Auspicious Event.245

Not long after he would make a clean copy of his chronicle that would contain the events from 1821 until 1826(H1237-1241). While Esad Efendi would hold the position of vak' anûvis until his death in 1848, he would never add to his chronicle though he would continue to record events of the state. His lack of writing was due to his occupation of many other posts in the government during the period he concurrently held the post of vak' anûvis.

In 1828 he briefly accompanied the army in the war with Russian as it left Istanbul and made its way to Şumnu in the province of Silistre in both the capacity of kâdi of the army and vak' anûvis. No replacement vak' anûvis was appointed and it was for this reason that he was recalled to Istanbul from the army after a short time.246 He would go on to hold many other important iltû and mülkî posts in the government; including, Nekibulesşraf, Rumeli Kazasker and Minister of General Education, a post he held only shortly before his death in 1848.

Mehmed Esad Efendi's impact on Ottoman history was much more than his recording of events while holding the post of vak' anûvis. He held many important bureaucratic posts concerning the reform of education. He was the first director of the Ottoman official newspaper, Takvîm-i vekâyi that published its inaugural issue in October of 1831. He was also well known in his own time for his love of history and of books.

245 While this work is not part of Esad's official chronicle, Úss-i zafer is an important work describing the events surrounding Mahmud II's reform efforts. For additional information on this work see: M. Münir Aktepe, "Es'ad Efendi," IA, 363-365.

246 BA, CM, nr. 33335.
Over his lifetime he collected a library of over 4,000 literary works, most of them manuscripts.247

With the death of Mehmed Esad Efendi, since the previous three appointments had been from the religious class, it was decided to appoint a vak'anîvis from the scribal class (Kâtib)... Recât Mehmed Şâkir Efendi (1803-1874) who was from the Ârmedî office and was one of the editors of the official Ottoman newspaper Takvim-i Vekâyi' was appointed to the post in January of 1848.248 At the same time he held his appointment as court chronicler he continued to hold his post in the Ârmedî office.

Not long after taking the post of vak'anîvis, Recât Efendi presented the Grand Vezir with a memo outlining the steps necessary for him to carry out the duties of his new position. He found it necessary to rewrite the official Ottoman history dating from Ahmet Vâsî Efendi until his own time. He stated that it would be necessary to set up an office for the court historian in the Ottoman archives with a few clerks to find and record the necessary information to complete the chronicle. In addition he wanted to have an official translator attached to the office who would translate material of importance from European sources for the vak'anîvis. Finally, he would rewrite the events beginning with the accession of Abdülmeclid (1839-1861) to the Ottoman throne.249

Recât Efendi's ideas concerning the reform of the vak'anîvislik appear not to have been received well by his superiors, but for what reasons is not yet known. He was not able to have any of the reforms he wanted instituted and he de facto resigned from the post a year later, but his official appointment lasted until 1853 when he was dismissed

247 This collection of manuscripts was once part of an endowed library next to his house in Yerebatan, Istanbul. The collection is now housed among the collections of Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi.

248 Kurukoğlu, "Vak'anîvis," IA, 283. See ID 8569 for his official appointment.

249 The original memo can be found in the Ottoman archives as: ID 8618. A fair reproduction of the text of this memo can be found in Çemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 105-111.
from both the posts of *vak'anûvis* and editor of *Takvîm-i vekâyi*. He never produced a chronicle, but future court historians used his notes.

After Recâi Efendi's removal, the post of *vak'anûvis* was appointed to another official from the *Amâdû* office, Akif Paşazâde Nâil Mehemed Bey (d. 1855) on February 28, 1855. Nâil Bey was also a member of the important legislative body for the Tanzimat, the *Meclis-i Vâlâ*. He was also, like Recâi, involved with the official Ottoman gazette, *Takvîm-i vekâyi*. He held the post of court chronicler until his death. Nâil Bey, like Recâi, never wrote a chronicle, but future court historians would use his notes. On the 18th of February 1855 the post of *vak'anûvis* then went to one of the most important Ottoman statesman of the late 19th century, Ahmet Cevdet Efendi/Paşa (1822-1895). Ahmet Cevdet was from the *ulema*, but as the nature and scope of his duties expanded in the central government he was enticed to leave the *ulema* and join the *müilikiye* branch of government and take the title of *paşa* in 1866. As a member of the *ulema*, his reputation was made on his knowledge of Islamic law.

Cevdet's appointment to the post of court historian was very much due to the fact that he was already working on a chronicle for the *Encümen-i Dânîş* (Academy of Science) and another history related project for the *Maârif-i Umûmiye Meclisi* (Council

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250 Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," IA, 283. İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnâl relates an interesting story concerning the reason for Recâi's dismissal from the editorship of *Takvîm-i vekâyi*, but does not mention his dismissal from the post of *vak'anûvis* at that time. See: İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnâl, *Son Hattatlar*, (İstanbul, 1970), 313.


252 Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," 283. For his official appointment see: BA, CD, nr. 14228.

253 Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," 283.


255 Ibid. 283.
for Public Instruction).\footnote{The Encaumen-i Dâniş was created in 1851 by the reformer Mustafa Reşit Paşa and had many of the leading reformers of the day as members. Its mission was to promote learning and scholarship in all fields of learning, especially ones that were not traditionally addressed in the Ottoman milieu. The council was short lived and ceased to meet by 1862, but it did produce some works, most notably those by Ahmet Cevdet. For more on the Encaumen-i Dâniş see: Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. II, 109-110. *Malîifes-i Uumûîye Meclisi* was responsible for implementing the Tanzimat Reforms in the area of education. Ahmet Cevdet was made a member of the council due to his appointment to the directorship of the Teachers’ College (*Dar ul-Muallimîn*) and would become the council’s chief secretary.} The Encaumen-i Dâniş appointed him to write a new history of events from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca to the time of the destruction of the Janissaries (1774-1826). This coincides with the events described in the last printed edition of Ahmed Vâsıf’s history and Mehmet Esad’s work on the destruction of the Janissaries (*Öss-i zafer*).

Ahmet Cevdet’s appointment to the vak’anûvislik coincided with the completion of the first volume of his chronicle entitled *Tarih-i vekây-i devlet-i aliyye* or as it more commonly called, *Tarih-i Cevdet*.\footnote{ID 20476 discusses the presentation and subsequent order to print the first volume of his history by the Imperial Printing House (*Matbaa-i Arıbre*). The irade was issued in March of 1855.} In the next year he subsequently presented and had published two more volumes of his work.\footnote{See ID 21277 and 21953 concerning these two volumes.} On the presentation of his third volume he was promoted in the ulema hierarchy to the rank of *Süleymanîye müderrisliği*.\footnote{See Kutuçoğu, 283.} Cevdet published two more volumes of his chronicle in October of 1858 and in January 1861, but his other concurrent appointments while holding the post of vak’anûvis prevented him from completing any additional volumes until 1869 after he left the position of court chronicler.\footnote{For the presentation of the fourth volume of Cevdet’s history see: ID 274841 and on the fifth see: ID 31170.}
Ahmet Cevdet Efendi's post as court historian came to an end in January 1866 when he took the major step of changing his career path from the İlmîye branch of government to the Mülkiye branch by accepting the governorship of Aleppo and taking a vezirship.\textsuperscript{261} Ahmet Cevdet Paşa forwarded his notes from his time as vak'anîvis to his successor Ahmet Lütfi Efendi.\textsuperscript{262}

Cevdet's chronicle covers the years from 1774 to 1826. The preparation of this work, which would eventually encompass 12 volumes, would occupy him for the next 30 years. The writing of his chronicle was not entirely done while in the post of court historian, but continued years after his appointment ended. The final three volumes were published by 1883. Cevdet's history shows a historian in development. While his first five volumes are influenced by past court chroniclers' style, the final volumes show a much greater attention to analyzing source materials and commentary on them. In a way Cevdet's work comes full circle back to the writings of Mustafa Niama with his source criticism and attention to methodological detail. It is interesting to note that Ibn Haldun was one of Naima's main sources for historical analysis and that two centuries later, Cevdet Paşa translates Ibn Haldun's Mukaddima into Turkish.\textsuperscript{263}

Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's contribution to Ottoman historiography is well documented and his history is considered, along with that of Naima, as one of the most important

\textsuperscript{261}His title was changed from Efendi to Paşa. On this career transition see: Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II, 64-66; Ali Olemzoğlu, "Cevdet Paşa," IA, 116.

\textsuperscript{262}Cevdet wrote his chronicle based on the appointment made by the Encümen-i Danış and thus never chronicled his own times. Cevdet forwarded sections of his notes from the time he was court historian to Ahmet Lütfi between 1870-1882. These notes were subsequently edited into a collection of memoirs (Tezâkir) that were transliterated into modern Turkish and published first by Tarihi Osmani Mecmuası in installments between 1953 and 1967 and again by the Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınım in 1963.

\textsuperscript{263}Ahmet Cevdet, Mukaddeme-i İbni Haldun, (İstanbul, 1860).
sources of Ottoman historiography. Cevdet was a man who led a life of split convictions in that he was an important figure in the reform movement of the Tanzimat, but he also strongly held many of the convictions of the conservative ulema of his day. Ahmet Cevdet not only was a successful governor, reformer of education, and historian, but also was the major contributor to the first modern legal code based on Shari‘a law, the neselle.

Ahmet Lütfi Efendi (1815-1907), Cevdet’s successor, was born in Istanbul and was from the ulema. His career in the ilmiye included teaching at the Medical School (Mekteb-i Tibiye-i Mülkiye), being a member of the Education Council (Meclis-i Ma‘ârif), and being a long-time editor of the official Ottoman gazette, Takvim-i Vekâyi.264

His name as a possible successor came to the attention of the sultan via a note from the Grand Vezir who recommended him to the post. His recommendation was based on his status in the learned hierarchy, his editorship of Takvim-i Vekâyi and his work in the office of the Grand Vezir.265 His appointment took some time, but he was able to take up the post by the end of March 1866.266

Ahmet Lütfi Efendi was to hold the post of vak‘anuvis for a total of 41 years, longer than any other vak‘anuvis, until his death in 1907. He was able to hold his position under three different Sultans; Abdülaziz (1861-1876), Murad V(1876), and Abdulhamid II (1876-1909). While Cevdet Paşa had not yet finished his work, Lütfi wanted to begin writing his chronicle from 1825/1826 where Cevdet left off. He had

264Takvim-i Vekâyi
265ID 37910.
266Kütükoğlu, 285-286.
trouble in writing his chronicle from the start as he had not yet received any notes from his predecessor.

He eventually received the notes for the events from 1826 to 1831 and began to write his chronicle. Much of his first work relied on official documents, Es'ad’s Öss-i zafer and chronicle. He completed his first volume in 1871 and titled it, Ayine-i Zafer. Eventually his work would consist of fifteen volumes and record the years from 1825 until 1876. Not all of the volumes were published. Matbaa-i Amire and Mahmud Bey Press published the first seven between 1873 and 1889. The eighth volume was edited by the last vak'ânüvis, Abdûrrahman Şeref Efendi and printed in 1910. The manuscripts for volumes nine through fifteen were presented to Abdûlhamid II between 1892 and 1903 and were placed in the Yildiz Library, but never published.

Lütfi Efendi wanted to have his reputation as a historian to be as great as Cevdet Paşa’s reputation, but it was never to be. Lütfi suffered from a lack of good source material for the time he was writing about, so he relied heavily on what archival documents he could obtain and material from the official Ottoman newspaper, Takvim-i Vekayı. He also wanted to advance his career in the İlimiye and thus did not want to overly offend anyone. His work lacks the breadth of source material and critical

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267 The manuscript copy of this volume can be found in the Hidivye Library in Cairo. Matbaa-i Amire published the printed edition in 1873.

268 Ibid. The Yildiz Library manuscripts were eventually transferred to the library of the Turk Tarih Kurumu in Ankara after the Yildiz Library was broken up after the formation of the Turkish Republic. See: M. Münir Aktepe, El2, “Lütfi Efendi,” s.v.

269 He did reach some of the highest İlimiye posts including the post of Rumeli and Anadolu Kadiaskerlik by 1887. See M. Münir Aktepe, El2, “Lütfi Efendi,” s.v.
analysis that marked Cevdet’s work. Lütfi was well aware of his work’s shortcomings and expressed it in his final volume.\footnote{For the text of this complaint see: Ibnüllamin, Son Asr Türk Şairleri, p. 893.}

Lütfi’s problems associated with his post as court historian might not have been entirely of his own making. His work ends at the beginning of the first Constitutional period in Ottoman history (1876-1878) and the long reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). The reign of Abdülhamid II in general is shrouded in a restrictive, dictatorial environment emanating from Yıldız Palace. It was no wonder that Lütfi might have had troubles gaining access to government agencies, high-officials or the archives during Abdülhamid’s reign.\footnote{On his reign see: Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II, chapter 3 and Erik J. Zürcher, Turkey: A Modern History, (London, 1993), chapter 7 for more on Abdülhamid’s reign.}

Ahmet Lütfi Efendi died in 1907 while still holding the post of vak’anüvis. Abdülhamid II did not immediately choose a successor to him though Muallim Naci (1850-1893) has often been named as a court historian.\footnote{The claims concerning Muallim Naci are made on the strength of one article in Nevvvâl-i Servet-i Fünun which stated that Naci was appointed to a new post called Tarihüvis-i âli Osman by Abdülhamid II in 1890. This assertion was continued by both Midhat Sertoğlu in Resimli Osmanlı Tarihi Ansiklopedisi and by Uzunçarşılı in Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı. No other evidence of Lütfi’s retirement has been found and Naci had died by the time Lütfi died in the post of vak’anüvis in 1907. Naci was indeed an important literary figure of the time and did write a history of the Ottoman Empire beginning with Osman. For more on Naci see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 270; Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II, 252. On the article in question see: “Muallim Naci,” Nevvvâl-i Servet-i Fünun, (Istanbul, 1310), 71-76.} The lack of appointment of a successor can be best attributed to events in the Ottoman Empire. In 1907 revolts began in many places in the empire which culminated in what is now called the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908. Not long after that a new constitutional government was emplaced. Abdülhamid II reigned as a constitutional monarch for only a short time as he
was deposed in April 1909 trying to regain his autocratic rule. His successor to the throne was his brother, Mehmet V Reşat (1909-1918).\textsuperscript{273}

Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi (1853-1925) was appointed to the post of vak'ânivîs on the 18th of May, 1909 by Sultan Mehmet V Reşat as the successor to Lütfi Efendi.\textsuperscript{274} Abdurrahman Şeref proved to be an able successor to Lütfi Efendi. He was educated at the Mekteb-i Sultanî (Galatasaray) and studied history at the Mahrecî Aklâm (Bureaucracy School), both of which were among the most advanced educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire. At the time of his appointment to the post he was professor of Ottoman and international history at the first Ottoman University, Darülfiünûn. A few months after his appointment he would be appointed as director of the Ottoman Historical Society (Tarih-i Osmanî Encûmenî) which was the precursor to the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu).\textsuperscript{275}

Abdurrahman Şeref was the last Ottoman vak‘ânivîs. He held the position from 1909 until the position was abolished in 1922 with the end of the Ottoman Empire. For all of Şeref Efendi's education, he did little to publish an official chronicle detailing events in the empire from 1876 on. He did edit, add some material, and publish the eighth volume of Lütfi's history in 1911.\textsuperscript{276} He also published history books for secondary education.\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{273}For a general outline of events during the last years of Abdülhamid's reign see: Shaw, II, 266-282.

\textsuperscript{274} BA, Sicîli-i ahvâl, def., LXXII, 87ff.

\textsuperscript{275}See: Bayrak, 7-8 and Kütükoğlu, "Vak‘ânivîs," 286.

\textsuperscript{276}The volume was published by Istanbul Sabah Basmevi. Abdurrahman Şeref's addition to Lütfi's work is titled Fezleke-i Ahval. See Bayrak, 17-18.

\textsuperscript{277}For example, Fezleke-i Tarih-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye, published in 1884, was a lise lesson book detailing the history of the Ottoman Empire. He also worked with the historian, Amed Refik Akinay to publish a work about the deposition of Abdülhamid II in 1918 entitled, Sultan Abdülhamid-i Samiye dair.
Şeref Efendi continued recording and arranging the events that occurred during his tenure as court historian. His daybook which contains the events surrounding the deposition of Abdulhamid II in 1909 and the reign of Mehmet V Reşat can be found in the archives of the Türk Tarih Kurumu in Ankara.  

Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi marked the end to over two centuries of tradition beginning with appointment of Mehmed Raşid Efendi in 1714 to the post of vak'anûvis. The office of court historian endured through periods of gross neglect but managed to record a unique, though with many acknowledged faults, view of the Ottoman polity. Their lives and chronicles gives us a vivid picture of the bureaucratic view of the Ottoman Empire while at the same time they reflect the literary mores of Ottoman society.

Some final remarks need to be made concerning the post of vak'anûvis in the larger perspective of time. Important elements in examining the bureaucratic position of vak'anûvis are: the competition within the Ottoman government between the scribal institution (kalemiye/müllkiye) and the religious institution (ilmîye); the court historian's access to government officials and documents and the major change in the nature of the position of vak'anûvis beginning with era of the Tanzimat; remuneration for the vak'anûvis; and placing the office of vak'anûvis in the wider scope of Ottoman "official" historiography.

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Kutuçoğlu, . The events from second Constitutional Period (1908-1909) have been recently published from his daybook by the Türk Tarih Kurumu. See: Dr Bayram Kodaman & Mehmed Ali Unal, Son Vak'anûvis Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi Tarihi, II. Meşrûtiyet Olayları (1908-1909), (Ankara, 1996).
Scribes vs. Alims in the Post of Vak'anûvis.

Table 3.0 Holders of the Post of Vak’anûvis and their Bureaucratic Origins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tenure as Vak’anûvis</th>
<th>Kâlemiye</th>
<th>İlniye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mehmed Raşıd Efendi</td>
<td>1714 to 1723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuçuk Çelebizâde Ismail Asum Efendi</td>
<td>1723 to 1730</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arpaeminizâde Mustafa Sami Efendi</td>
<td>1730 to 1734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huseyin Şâkir Bey</td>
<td>1734 to 1735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Râmi Mehmed Paşazâde Abdullah Re’fed Bey</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafızı Mehmed Efendi</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmed Suphi Efendi</td>
<td>1739 to 1744</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Süleyman İzzî Efendi</td>
<td>1745 to 1753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmed Hâkîm Efendi</td>
<td>1753 to 1766</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Çeşmizâde Mustafa Resîd Efendi</td>
<td>1766 to 1768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musazâde Mehmed Ubeydullah Efendi*</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envert Sadullah Efendi</td>
<td>1768 to 1774; 1776 to 1783; 1787 to 1789; 1791 to 1793 &amp; 1794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İbrahim Behçeti Efendi</td>
<td>1774 to 1775/76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafiz Süleyman Molla</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Vâsun Efendi</td>
<td>1783 to 1786; 1789 to 1791; 1793 to 1794 &amp; 1799 to 1805</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tesrifatî Hasan Efendi*</td>
<td>1786 to 1787</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esseyyid Edib Mehmed Emin Efendi*</td>
<td>1786 to 1787; 1792 to 1793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

279 An "*" denotes that the holder of the office was a substitute (vak'anûvis veklli or rikâb vak'anûvis) in Istanbul while the court chronicler was with the army.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tenure as Vak'anūvis</th>
<th>Kalemîye</th>
<th>İlimîye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halil Nuri Bey-Efendi</td>
<td>1794 to 1799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Muvakkitzâde Pertev Mehmed Efendi</td>
<td>1805 to 1807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Esseyyid Omer Amir Bey</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamîs Ayîntapî Mîtercîm Ahmet Asum Efendi</td>
<td>1807/08 to 1819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şanîzâde Mehmed Attâullah Efendi</td>
<td>1819 to 1825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahhasîflar Seyhi-zâde Mehmed Esad Efendi</td>
<td>1825 to 1848</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recâtî Mehmed Sâkir Efendi</td>
<td>1848 to 1853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akîf Paşâ-zâde Nâ'il Mehmed Bey</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Cevdet Paşa</td>
<td>1855 to 1866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Lütfî Efendi</td>
<td>1866 to 1907</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi</td>
<td>1909 to 1922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the more than two-hundred-year existence of the office of *vak'anūvis* there was a competition between the scribal class (*kalemîye*) and religious class (*ilmiye*) to provide qualified individuals for the post.\(^{280}\) Understanding the decision making process for appointments to the post of *vak'anūvis* is very hard to elaborate upon due to the lack of documentation. The competition between these two classes in the Ottoman polity can be examined in historical terms with a clear understanding of the make-up and historical relationship of both of these groups between themselves and the Ottoman center.

\(^{280}\) It is important to note that the *kalemîye* or scribal service of government would eventually become known as the bureaucracy or *milîkiye* during the age of reform in the 19th century.
As the table above clearly shows, the post of *vak'anûvis* was almost evenly split between the two groups. The *ilmiye* had 13 of its members appointed, while the *kalemiye* had members appointed 15 times to the office. The duration of appointments favor the religious class with their members holding the post for more that 120 years of the post's 208-year existence.

Both branches of the Ottoman polity had the educational background necessary for the position of *vak'anûvis*. The scribal class had to go through a rigorous education and apprenticeship as part of their education; one aspect concerned learning how to be a member of Ottoman literary culture or *adab*. The *ulema* or learned hierarchy had an extensive education in the *medrese* system before entering into the Ottoman polity. One difference between the two was that the *ulema* often crossed over into the scribal world and many members of the *ulema* were also skilled litterateurs.\(^\text{281}\) Needless to say, both of these groups would provide the most qualified individuals, as opposed to the military branch, for the position.

It appears that favor for one branch or the other came more often from the individual preferences of the grand vezir or sultan than from any formal process of choosing the next *vak'anûvis*.\(^\text{282}\) A good example would be Selim III's preference for men from the *kalemiye* during his reign. If patronage (*intisap*) ties had not already influenced a choice, candidates for the position were probably chosen from lists of qualified individuals drawn up by the *reisülkütâp* (*kalemiye*) and *şeyhülislam* (*ilmiye*) offices.


\(^{282}\) The only mention of some decision making process is noted in the above discussion concerning the appointment of Recâi Mehmed Şâkir Efendi.
The longest period that any one branch of government held the \textit{vak'anûvislik} was during the period of reform from Mahmud II to Abdülhamid II (1807-1908) which, with only a break of seven years, was held by the \textit{ulema}. The major reason for this being that the sultans during this period needed the continued support of \textit{ilmiye} to enact the major reforms of the \textit{Tanzimat}.\footnote{Uriel Heyd, “The Ottoman ‘Ulemā and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmūd II,” \textit{Studies in Islamic History and Civilization}, v. 9, (Jerusalem, 1961), 63-96.}

**Interest in “Official” History**

The stature of the office of court historian was very much dependant on the patronage of the sultan and/or grand vezir. Imperial interest would, more often than not, give the holder of the office access to other people, departments, and documents needed for the position. Members from the scribal class, the \textit{hacegân}, had the additional advantage of previously being from the various offices that the court historian needed access to for their chronicles.

The early court historians benefited from the patronage of both Ahmet III and Mahmud I both of whom were well-known patrons of the arts. The death of Mahmud I in 1754 began a general decline in the office of court historian. Access to the inner-circles of the Ottoman hierarchy, to secret documents and to other needed resources greatly hurt the ability of the \textit{vak’anûvis} to produce quality chronicles or detailed daybooks.

The decline in the office of court historian ended with the accession of Selim III in 1789. The sultan held a great interest for history and decided early to involve himself in the revival of the post of \textit{vak’anûvis} and of the writing of chronicles. Selim issued decrees that gave the \textit{vak’anûvis} renewed access to the departments of government and to
state secrets.  

This renewed access lasted through the appointment of Mütcem Asim Efendi, but with Selim III’s fall and the great changes within the Ottoman bureaucracy at the time, the position of court historian would never be the same.

Mahmud II continued patronizing the arts and appointments to the post of vak’anûvis continued, but the very nature of the central government changed with the adoption of a ministerial style of government and the decline of the importance of the Ottoman divan. The court historians’ traditional sources of information were to some degree supplanted by new governmental organs to which they had no or limited access. One major source for the court historians of the Tanzimat was the official Ottoman gazette, Takvim-i Vekayi (Calendar of Events).

Takvim-i Vekayi was the first Ottoman newspaper. It began publication in 1831 by order of Mahmud II and only ceased publication in 1922. The official Ottoman gazette had limited distribution to government bureaucrats (memûr) and the foreign embassies. All of the court historians, with the exception of Ahmet Cevdet and Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi, until the end of the empire held posts in the Takvimhâne (office which published the gazette) as editors. In fact, Mehmed Esad Efendi was the first editor of Takvim-i Vekayi.

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285 By the end of the Tanzimat period, the old designations for government officials had changed and bureaucrats became known as memûrs and the branch of government they were from changed from the scribal branch (kalenîye) to the bureaucracy (miûkiye).

286 Court historians who held posts in the Takvimhâne were: Mehmed Esad Efendi, director from 1831 to Dec. of 1837; Mehmed Recai, director from 1850-1853; Akifpaşazâde Nail Efendi, director, circa-1853 and Ahmet Lütfi Efendi who was the chief editor for the newspaper in intervals from 1838 on. Ahmet Cevdet did not hold a post in the Takvimhâne, but did participate in a commission to reform the newspaper in the 1860’s. See: H. Bowen, “Ahmad Djewdet Pasha,” EP, 285.
The official Ottoman gazette moreover became a major source for the court historians of the Tanzimat, especially Ahmet Lütfi. The declining state of access to government documents and officials was commented on by Mehmed Recât Efendi, who was director of the Takvimhane from 1850-1853, in his memo to the grand vezir mentioned above.\(^{287}\) The Tanzimat also represents a decline in the annalistic approach to writing history due to the influence of European historiography. The European, narrative approach to history can be seen in the writings of both Cevdet and Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi who worked on texts for the new Ottoman school system.

Making a Living

The post of vak'anûvis, unlike many other posts associated with the Divan-i Hümayûn, was not part of the annual appointment cycle (tevcihat). Rather, the vak'anûvis received his salary from additional posts assigned to him, or by gifts (atiyye) from the sultan either for works produced or by petition from the court historian himself for remuneration.

Most of the appointments to the Ottoman bureaucracy and religious administration were made on an annual basis. Each appointment had to be confirmed by the Ottoman sultan to remain in the post for another year. In addition, when a new sultan took the throne he had to confirm all of the appointments made by his predecessor for those persons to remain in office.\(^{288}\)

The court chronicler's salary was attached to revenue sources from other posts. Most, if not all, of the court historians were appointed to positions in addition to the post of court historian. It was these additional positions that actually gave the vak'anûvis an

\(^{287}\) ID 8618.

\(^{288}\) On tevcihat see: Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, vol III, 480-482 and Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin, 150-157.
income. If the court historian was from the ilmiye, he was appointed to a judgeship, religious administrative or medrese position. If he were appointed from the kalemıye, he would have been appointed to a clerk or chief clerk position attached to some department of the Divan Kalemıye.\footnote{More concerning the specific positions that court historians held during their tenures can be found in chapter 4.}

Often, though it can be difficult to tell from the sources, the additional position that the court historian had was not a post that actually required additional work, but a 'shadow' post. That is, a post created so that the government had additional revenues that could be given to people who might not have an appointment at the time, but needed a salary to live on. A majority of the high-level posts within the Divan Kalemıye had these 'shadow' posts. This was not always the case as some of the historians we have discussed had to relinquish their posts due to the heavy workload placed upon them.\footnote{For example; Mehmet Suphi had to give up his duties to take the post of beylikçi. Ahmet Cevdet had to give up his post due to his new duties on becoming a vezir. On bureaucratic organization and pay structures see: Gibb & Bowen and Findley, Bureaucratic Reform, 91-106.}

The revenues associated with these additional posts were not fixed and often could be tied to poorly paying revenue sources. These posts in no way could be considered as guaranteeing the vak' anıvis of having a living wage.

A major source of additional income came from the receipt of gifts (atiyye). The vak' anıvis would be well rewarded by the sultan on presenting a finished chapter or manuscript. These gifts came in the form of money (kuruş) from the treasury, robes of honor (hil'at), promotions in rank, or provisions from the sultan's storehouse. In addition, some court historians petitioned the sultan for remuneration on the basis of
financial hardship, etc. The importance of producing finished chronicles cannot be overemphasized as these payments often accounted for the only source of real income for the vak'anūvis.

The Vak'anūvislik and its Place in Ottoman Historiography

The office of court historian can be seen as a revival of "official" imperial patronage of history writing that had begun with the post of sehnnameci. The differences between the two posts are very apparent. While the post of sehnnameci had the duty of recording the grandeur of the Ottoman dynasty in imitation of high Persian literary culture, the post of vak'anūvis had a much different role. The vak'anūvis grew from dual needs of both the sultan and grand vezir.

First, they both acted as patrons of high literary culture. Historical writing had been turning away from the overly complicated and obscure historical prose with Persian at its core that was established after the fall of Constantinople. Rather, historical writing began to favor chronicle writing in a reportage style with a simpler Ottoman prose at its core. This development would continue to the end of the empire with the writing of historical prose in simple Turkish for mass consumption.

The second reason for the development of the post of vak'anūvis was that both the sultan and grand vezir wanted to sponsor historical writing which would validate their actions and which would serve a guide to future leaders as to what to do and what not to do. This need to validate actions was at the root of the founding of the post during the

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291 Concerning the receiving of gifts as salaries see the following archival documents as examples: CD 1632, CM 2478 or CM 578. The presenting of gifts/salaries accounts for a majority of the archival documents on the position of court historian. On the presenting of chronicles and the subsequent giving of a gift see the following archival documents: CM 939 or ID 27484. Concerning the petition of the sultan for economic aid see, HH 49493. On getting paid in kind from the Sultan's stores see: CM 6693.
trying years after the Peace of Karlowitz and the grave situation after the events surrounding Patrona Halil.

Placing the posts of vak'anûvis within the confines of the Divan-i Humayûn was a natural extension of the recoding duties of secretaries already active among the offices of the divan and the tradition of sending a recording secretary on campaigns and diplomatic missions. The rivalry between the ulema and kalemîye was only natural seeing that these two groups represented the most educated in the state.

Thus, the office of vak'anûvis recorded the events, with some exceptions, of the Ottoman Empire for over a two hundred year period. Very few other states in world history can claim to have such an important source concerning its central government.\textsuperscript{202} These chronicles, properly used, are an important source of material on the actions of the central government and will prove to be very useful to scholars in the future.

\textsuperscript{202} Two states that did have similar posts were Imperial China and the Venetian Republic.
Chapter Four: A Prosopography of the Office of Court Historian

Prosopography is the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of collective study of their lives. The method employed is to establish a universe to be studied, and then to ask a set of uniform questions - about birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of personal wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office, and so on. The various types of information about the individuals in the universe are then juxtaposed and combined, and are examined for significant variables. They are tested both for internal correlations and for correlations with other forms of behavior or action.

Lawrence Stone from "Prosopography."¹

The previous chapter examined the history of the office of vak'anūvis. While a history of the post of court chronicler is important, it does little to examine the lives or historical methodology of the men who occupied the post.² This chapter will use the tool of prosopography (collective biography) to examine the lives and bureaucratic careers of the men who held the office in order for us to understand better how the post of vak'anūvis was filled, what were the intellectual dynamics of the imperial center, how did members of this group enter into the bureaucracy, what were the bureaucratic patterns of both the Ottoman religious and scribal classes and, finally, how the social and educational backgrounds of this often very talented group of chroniclers affected their careers. This study will also take into consideration the element of time and career path by examining the variations between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the dual


² The historical methodology of court historians will be addressed in a future study.
career paths (*tarik*) of the scribal and religious classes from which candidates were chosen for the *vak'anûvislik*.

Lawrence Stone best defines the scope and purpose of prosopography in the quote beginning this chapter. Collective biography is the term most used by modern historians while social scientists have favored calling this method "multiple career-line analysis." Whatever the term preferred, prosopography can be best used as a tool of enquiry when the group for study can be easily delineated and sufficient data exists for the individuals in the data set. The office of *vak'anûvis* meets these criteria. This approach to Middle Eastern or Ottoman history is not new, but goes back at least three decades.

The use of prosopography as a historical method goes back to the 1920's and 1930's, but its use in the study of Middle Eastern history only goes back to the 1970's.\(^3\) Prosopographic studies on Middle Eastern history tend to rely heavily on data from biographical dictionaries (*tezkere* or *tezkire*, pl. *tezakir*), which make up an important genre in Islamic historiography. As with Middle Eastern historians from other fields, Ottomanists have concentrated on using biographical dictionary entries to examine elites, especially the military/ruling classes or the religious class (*ulema*).\(^4\)

Of the prosopographic studies of the Ottoman elites, many have concerned themselves with the Ottoman *ulema*. Probably the earliest study was published in 1972 by Norman Itzkowits and Joel Shinder and concerned itself with the office of *seyhülislam*

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\(^3\) Ibid. Stone's article, while dated, still gives a good overview of the field. The work most cited as the earliest in the Middle Eastern field is: Richard W. Bulliet, "A Quantitative Approach to Medieval Muslim Biographical Dictionaries," *JESHO*, 13, II (1970), 195-211.

during the era of the Tanzimat. This study includes detailed "how to" information which uses mainframe computers to correlate the data. This same data can now be easily collected and analyzed using a personal computer. Madeline Zilfi has used prosopography to study both the great mollahs of the eighteenth century and to provide source material for her important study of the Ottoman ulema during the postclassical age, 1600 to 1800.

Another area of study has concentrated on the Ottoman bureaucracy, career lines, patronage and elite formation in the Ottoman Empire. Hedda Reindl conducted a very useful study of elites during the reign of Bayezid II's reign, while Metin Kunt has contributed to the understanding of Ottoman central administration by conducting a prosopographic study of those appointed to provincial administration. Rifa'at Ali Abou-el-Haj's study of Vezir and Paşa households concentrates on the development of new centers of power which hurt the Ottoman sultan's ability to exercise power. Maria Todorova and Carter Findley have given us excellent studies concerning the ruling elite and Ottoman officialdom during the era of reform (Tanzimat). All these studies rely

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7 Hedda Reindl, Männer um Bāyezid. Eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Bāyezids II (1481-1512), (Berlin, 1983) and Ibrahim Metin Kunt, Sancaktan Eydalet, 1550-1650 arasinda Osmanlı Ümerasi ve II İdaresi, (İstanbul 1978).

heavily on data procured through prosopographic methods. Finally, the best starting point for any prosopographic study of the Ottomans would be the general overview on collective biography by Suraiya Farouqi.

The prosopographic study of the men who held the post of vak'anüvis will use data extracted from biographical dictionaries, both their own and other's chronicles, archival documents and other secondary sources. As with all source material, careful attention must be paid to the authors of the biographical entries and their motives. The data also must be examined and, if possible, correlated with other biographical data to ensure accuracy. Unfortunately, for some of the court historians there is too little data for meaningful use in this prosopographic study. Appendix A contains biographies of all of the court historians used in this study with short bibliographies of the works used to collect the study's data.

The prosopographic study of the vak'anüvislik will first concentrate on presenting the data while the second section of the study will provide interpretation of the data and will hopefully answer the questions posed above about the office of court historian. This analysis will examine the data both as a whole and by time period and tarik of origin.

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The Sources

The materials used to collect data for this prosopographic study come from three main groups of sources: the chronicles themselves, biographical dictionaries, and secondary sources. While these sources can tell us a lot about these individuals, they do have some limitations that will be discussed below.

The court historians themselves have provided some biographical material in their chronicles either about themselves or their colleagues. The biographical entries tended to be more complete in works which were presented to the sultan or which contained a petition by the author. An exhaustive reading of each chronicle would also bring to light additional information as the chroniclers would often interject their own opinions, analysis or details of events they witnessed, this material would invariably be found in entries titled, “lâyiha,” or “memorandum expressing one’s viewpoint on a subject.” The biographical information found in the chronicles can be found referenced in the Appendix.¹¹

Throughout Ottoman history learned men in the Ottoman Empire collected together biographies of important statesman, calligraphers, poets, ʿulma, and members of religious orders, just to name a few. Biographical dictionaries are an important part of Ottoman literary history. Without them, prosopographic studies of the Ottoman bureaucracy and ruling class would be impossible. Below is a general description of the biographical sources used with comments.¹²

Two of the most useful biographical dictionaries are Osmanlı Müellifleri (Ottoman Writers) by Bursa Mehmet Tahir Efendi and the Sicill-i Osmani (Register of

¹¹ Some examples of biographical information in the chronicles are: Râşid, Tarih, v. 1, 4-10 and v. 5, 449-454; and on Çelebizade Asım, Vasi, Tarih, v. 1, 178-180.

¹² One of the best sources on Ottoman biographical literature is Ağâh Sîrrî Levend, Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi, (Ankara, 1973).
Ottomans) by Mehmed Süreyya. *Osmanlı Mühürlərə* was first published between 1915 and 1924 and has gone through many reprints both in Arabic and Latin scripts. Bursa't Mehmet Tahir Efendi (1861-1924) was a teacher, military officer, member of the Committee for Union and Progress and member of the Parliament in 1908. The work, in three volumes, has been criticized for being incomplete and full of errors and care should be taken when using the entries. Most of the material contained in his biographies can be found in older tezkire literature.\(^{13}\)

*Sicill-i Osmanî* is one of the most important and complete sources on Ottoman officialdom. Mehmed Süreyya (1845-1908), its author, was a historian, newspaperman, and government official during the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. The work, published between 1891 and 1895, is invaluable for the study of the Ottoman bureaucracy.\(^ {14}\)

Apart from the general works discussed above, other biographical dictionaries were used to gather information on the vak'anûvis. Many of these older, contemporary works concern the lives of poets, so if the court historian was a poet, there was a good chance he was included in some biographical dictionary. The works discussed are in the order of date written.

*Sâlim tezkiresi* or *Tezkire-i Sâlim* by Mirzâzâde Sâlim Mehmed Emin (1687/88-1743) was begun in 1720 and presented to the grand vezir Damad İbrahim Paşa in 1722. Sâlim was the son of the şeyhülislâm Mirza Mustafa Efendi (d. 1722). Like his father Sâlim had a career in the ulema. This dictionary contains the biographies of 415 poets


\(^{14}\) On Mehmed Süreyya see: Bayrak, *Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları*, 153-154 and Govsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 361. Care should be taken to use the original Ottoman version of this work as the transliterated versions contain omissions and errors.
who lived between 1688 and 1720. The work is contemporary with many of the early
court historians, most of whom were poets, and is one of the most important biographical
dictionaries from the Tulip Age. The 1899 edition, printed by İkdam Matbaası, was used
for this work.¹⁵

Nuhbetü’l-Asār li Zeyli Zübdetü’l-Es’ar by Ismail Belig Efendi (d.1729) is
another important collection of biographies of poets from the Tulip Age. Belig was also
from the ulema and spent most of his life in Bursa. Because of this connection to Bursa,
he wrote a biographical dictionary with the lives of poets who had been born or who had
spent considerable time in Bursa. He completed the work in 1726. This work contains
the biographies of four of the vak’anūvis. The sole copy of this work is available at the
Istanbul University Library; TY 1182.¹⁶

Tuhfe-i Hattātin by Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saideddin is an important collection
of biographies of famous calligraphers from the 1640’s to the 1780’s. Müstakimzâde was
a member of the ulema and spent most of his life as a müderris. He was also an
important member of the Nakşbendiye tarikat. The work used was the edition
transliterated from the Ottoman by İbnülemin Kemal Inal and published in 1928.¹⁷

Adab-i Zaraftâ by Arapzâde Hüseyin Râmiz (1718-c.1784) is a continuation of the
biographical dictionary by Sâlim (above).¹⁸ Râmiz was a college professor (müderris)
and kadi who wrote many works including a history that covered the years 1768 to 1774.
The work contains about 400 biographical entries and is a major biographical source for

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¹⁵ For more on this work see: Levend, Türk Edebiyati Tarihi, 311-316.

¹⁶ On Belig’s work see: Ibid., 316-320.

¹⁷ On Tuhfetü’l Hattatın see: Ibid., 399.

¹⁸ It was very common for the writers of biographical dictionaries to copy and add
biographies to dictionaries written in the past; think of it as writing an updated edition of
a work.
the latter part of the 18th century. It is thought that he completed the manuscript the year he died. The copy used here was a manuscript from Istanbul University; TY 91.\(^\text{19}\)

*Bahçe-i Safi-i-endül or Esad Tezkiresi* by Sahhaflar Şeyhizâde Mehmed Esad Efendi (1789-1848). This biographical dictionary is the only one written by a court historian. The work is another continuation of Sâlim's work and contains 206 poets from the period of 1722/23 to 1835/36 when the work was completed. The manuscript used was from Istanbul University, TY 2095, and was copied by a Nail Bey.\(^\text{20}\)

Finally, *Hattinetïll-Es'ar or Fatin Tezkiresi* by Fatin Daud (1813-1866/67) was written in 1854/55. Fatin was a member of the scribal class and had been in the *Divan-i hümâyûn kalemi*. Fatin's work was written as a continuation of Sâlim's work and the biographical dictionary of Safâyi written in 1719. The work contains poets from the period after Ahmed III. The work used in this study was the published edition.\(^\text{21}\)

In addition to the above biographical dictionaries which concentrated on poets, three works that contain biographies of historians were used. The most important work for this study was the work by Cemâleddin Mehmed Karsîzâde called *Aynîn-i Zurafâ* which was edited by Ahmed Cevdet Paşa and published under the name *Osmanî Tarih ve Müverrichleri* in 1896/97. This work contains biographies of most of the court historians up to that time. Much of his work was based on earlier biographical dictionaries.\(^\text{22}\)

*Die Geschichtsschreiber Der Osmanen Und Ihre Werke* by Franz Babinger, first published in 1927, and *Osmanî Tarihi Yazalan*, written in 1982, by M. Orhan Bayrak both contain biographies of many of the court historians. These works for the most part


\(^{22}\) On Cemâleddin's work see: *Ibid.*, 380-381.
are also based on Turkish biographical dictionaries and contain many of the same errors. For example, many of the biographies contained in Babinger are his own translations of the Sicill-i Osmanî into German. Babinger supplements his work with valuable information based on European sources.

Finally, three other works must be mentioned. A quick reference for many of the important figures of Ottoman history remains the 1945-46 work by İbrahim Alâettin Govsa (1889-1949) called Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi. This work too was based on Turkish biographical dictionaries, but it continues to be valuable as it assembles together both the artists (poets, calligrapher, etc.) and the bureaucrats.23 Also, The Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition and its Turkish counterpart, the İslam Ansiklopedisi were used in the collection of data for this study.

The Data

The data presented here is based on the biographical information collected on the twenty-eight men who held the post of court historian from 1714 to 1922. Analysis of the data will examine the men who held the post of vak'anîvis with respect to: age, place of birth, family and social origins, education/training, patronage, career lines, data specific to the position of vak'anîvis, sufism, and literary pursuits. In addition to presenting data on the group as a whole, the data will also be presented showing the differences between the ilmiye and kalemîye branches of government and between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Some comments are necessary here concerning the size of the data sample. Most prosopographic studies rely on two factors to ensure accuracy; first, the larger the sample, the more conclusive the result would be and second, the sample should have a well-delineated group for study.

23 For a biography of Gövsa see: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 101-103.
The study of the office of court historian provides a well-delineated group. Some information could be found for everyone holding the post. The study of a small group of government bureaucrats fits into Lawrence Stone's definition of the "elitist" school of collective biography. This group is concerned with "small-group-dynamics" which examines the interaction within the group with respect to family, marriage, economic ties, etc. This current study fits within that sphere.\footnote{Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," 47.}

The size of the sample can also be an important factor for making conclusions based on the data. Too small a sample makes generalization much more difficult to support.\footnote{For more and other pitfalls concerning the use of collective biography see: Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," 57-62.} In previous studies of the Ottoman bureaucracy, much larger samples were used. Maria Todorova's study of the ruling elite between 1826 and 1878 uses 95 people.\footnote{Maria Todorova, "Composition of the Ruling Elite," 104.} The seminal study of the office of Şeyhülislam by Itzkowitz and Shinder uses data based on a sample of 129 men who held the office between 1451 and 1924, while Zilfi's study of the great mollas had a sample of 237 men.\footnote{Norman Itzkowitz and Joel Shinder, "The Office of Şeyh-ül-islam," 95; Zilfi, "Elite Circulation," 321.}

While the size of the sample group for this study is small, insightful conclusions, albeit imperfect, can be made about the nature of intellectuals and the state. The careful selection of questions to ask the data helps frame the collection of the data and is as important in determining the outcome of the study as the data itself. The conclusions made here will be supplemented with data from other studies of the Ottoman bureaucracy and society to help give a more complete picture of the nature of Ottoman officialdom.

Finally, the data collected from biographical dictionaries is not necessarily complete. The chronology concerning the birth/death and appointment dates is often
missing or has only the year without a month. Converting from the hıceri, or Muslim, calendar without a month will generally give a result of two years making some tabulations difficult. Many of the positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy were annual thus making some dating easier.

Data concerning the early careers of the men who would eventually hold the post of vakı'anûvis is missing, especially with respect to the teaching careers of men who were müderris and the apprenticeships of men from the kalediye branch of government.\textsuperscript{28} Other deficiencies in the data will become apparent as it is presented in the following sections. The effort of this study is to examine trends and relationships between career paths and the bureaucratic careers of intellectuals rather than achieve complete accuracy. The methodology resulting from this study could be used in future studies with larger subject groups.

\textit{Place of Birth}

Of the total respondents, six (21\%) had no indication of place of birth. Seventeen or 61\% of the court historians were born in Istanbul and 5 respondents (18\%) were born in the Ottoman provinces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.0 Place of Birth</th>
<th>18\textsuperscript{th} Century</th>
<th>19\textsuperscript{th} Century</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provinces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows that a majority of the court historians came from established families in the Ottoman capital, but there are some notable exceptions. It is interesting

\textsuperscript{28} Both Ahmet Lütfi and Abdurrahman Şeref Efendis held the post of vakı'anûvis in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, but a majority of their lives were spent in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This study's data has them included with the holders of the office in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.
to note that some of the most well known of the vak‘anivis did not come from Istanbul. Ahmet Vasif, who reached reisülküttab, the great scholar Muterçim Asım and Ahmet Cevdet all came from the provinces.

All three of the men above came from regionally recognized centers of learning: Vasif from Baghdad in Iraq, Asım from Antep (Ayntab or modern Gaziantep) in southeast Anatolia and Cevdet from Lofça (modern Loveç) in Bulgaria. By benefiting from the local availability of well-educated scholars in their own hometowns, they were able to enter into their respective career paths more easily in Istanbul.

It also should be noted that three of the five men who came from the provinces were members of the ulema which could indicate the better availability and possibly quality of a medrese education over an apprenticeship in a regional administrator’s office.

Age

Data concerning factors dealing with age is based on the data from twelve (43%) of the twenty-eight holders of the office of court historian. The data collected and presented here looks at lifespan, age entered into government service, and age entered into the post of vak‘anivis.

The longest lived of the respondents was Ahmet Lutfi Efendi who lived to a very advanced age of 92, while the shortest-lived of the court historians was Şanizâde Atâullah Efendi who died while in exile at the age of 55. The average lifespan for all of the respondents is summarized below.

30 A majority of the birth dates come from the 19th century; only 14% of the respondents with birth dates came from the 18th century. Most biographical literature does not list date of birth. It appears that either the authors did not feel the information was useful or that accurate records of births was not kept. Date of death is usually listed or can be determined from the inscription on the person’s headstone.
Table 4.1 Average Lifespan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>İlimişe</th>
<th>Kalemiye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For All Respondents</td>
<td>67.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Century Average</td>
<td>66.75</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Century Average</td>
<td>68.38</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data suggests a few things. First, the Ottoman elites, especially scholars, lived long lives. Most of the posts that these men held were not of the politically sensitive nature that could have resulted in exile or execution due to political rivalries or the displeasure of the sultan.

Second, members of the ulerma have a slightly longer lifespan than their kalemiye counterparts. This might be caused by the sources of income for each of these branches of government. The incomes of the members of the ulerma were very stable and guaranteed, allowing them to possibly live longer than members of the scribal branch. More research would need to be done in other areas of the bureaucracy for comparison.

Finally, a majority of the men who held the position of vak'anûvis never made it to some sort of retirement. Of all of the court historians, only Ahmet Cevdet and Şanîzâde, who was in exile at the time, were awarded pensions. All of the other members of this group held a government post at the time of their death.

The average age in which the respondents entered into their respective careers in the scribal or religious branches of government sheds light on the time it took to train a perspective teacher/judge or a member of the scribal class; a total of 28% of the respondents contained the date at which they entered government service. Table 4.2 summarizes the data.
Table 4.2 Age Entered into Government Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>22</th>
<th>iltmey</th>
<th>Kalemiye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Century Average</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Century Average</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first set of figures that invite examination is the large variation in average age of entry into government between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One explanation for this disparity would be the increase in the venality of office and the expansion of government during the 18th century. It is also interesting to know the change in patterns for the entry into the ranks of the uleren or scribal class. While the men of the pen took a much longer time in the 17th century, it appears that the wait was much shorter in the 19th century. One such explanation would be that the apprenticeship program in the kalemiye was not as long as it had been.

Finally, we can examine the data on age and see at which age each of the twelve respondents was appointed to the post of vak'anivis. These numbers give us an indication as to how long in their respective bureaucratic career each of these men were when they were appointed as imperial chronicler.

Table 4.3 Age Entered into the Post of Vak'anivis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>iltmey</th>
<th>Kalemiye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Century Average</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Century Average</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the data from Table 4.2 with that of 4.3 we can see that all of these men were well advanced in their bureaucratic/religious careers. This would be necessary

31 The expansion of government and with it the growth of abuses that began earlier in the 17th century continued until the reform movement of the 19th century. The problems of the government were often addressed in 'advice' literature that became widely read. See: Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, 290-293.
as appointment to the post of vak'anîvis was very much dependent on one's developed literary cum scribal reputation. Finally, twenty-five percent of the court historians died while holding the post.

Family and Social Origins

By examining the family and social origins of the men who held the post of vak'anîvis we can answer a few important questions about both the post of court historian and the career paths of these individuals. Was there a change in social patterns between the 18th and 19th centuries? How did social origins change between the ilmiye and kalemiye? Did the son follow his father in the same career path (tarik)? Did the holders of the post of vak'anîvis come from literary families? The role of patronage and career lines will be addressed in detail in a later section, but some of the data will be relevant here too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4</th>
<th>Occupations of Vak'anîvis Fathers (18th century/19th century)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father's Occupation</td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ulema:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kadi</td>
<td>3/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesser ulema</td>
<td>0/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Ulema:</td>
<td>3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonulema:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalemiye:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reis efendi</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beylikçi</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hacegân</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kisedari</td>
<td>0/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>başkâtib-Tophane</td>
<td>0/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total kalemiye:</td>
<td>3/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palace:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arpa emini</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balucilar kethûdası</td>
<td>1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Palace:</td>
<td>2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vezir Rank:</td>
<td>0/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 examines the occupation of the court historians' fathers. Of the respondents ten or 36% were those whose fathers could not be identified. Of the fathers who could be identified, the career paths break down as follows: *ulema* (29%), *kalemiye* (18%), Palace (.07%), vezir, provincial and others account for about .03% each. If we examine the same results by century, the following results are arrived at for the 18th century: not identified (55%), *ulema* (17%), *kalemiye* (17%), Palace (11%), vezir, provincial and others (0%). The results for the 19th century are: *ulema* (50%), *kalemiye* (20%), Palace (0%), vezir, provincial and others (30%).

The large "no information" result for the 18th century can be accounted for by the dearth of biographical data for the court historians of that century. If taken as a whole, the data shows that thirty percent of the men who held the office of court historian had fathers from the *ilmiye*. Factors that might explain why the *ulema* background might have produced more court historians might include: education, access to tutors, and stability of the career path.

The data shows that the social origins of court historians was split between the different branches of government in the 18th century, but the 19th century -- where the appointments to the office of court historian were evenly split between the *kalemiye* and *ilmiye* -- shows that a majority of the *vak' anüvis* came from a background in the religious class. This shows that even while the Ottoman Empire was on a path of reforming its
education system and literature and historical writing was beginning to be influenced by European models, the more traditional methods of historical writing were favored by the central government.

Table 4.4 also shows that the post of vak'anîvis was not one sought by fathers for their sons. Of the respondents there was only one reisülküttab and one vezir whose sons were court historians. Most of the other known fathers were lower level officials in the government. In career lines, the post of vak'anîvis might have shown literary or scribal prowess, but it was not a stepping-stone to a higher level in the bureaucracy. More will be said on the career lines below.

It also might be noted that a majority of the men who entered the vak'anîvislîk were from already established bureaucratic families either in the ulema or scribal class. As indicated above there were only three respondents from the provinces and one who’s father was a sandal maker. While the numbers are not conclusive, the lack of new members entering into the bureaucracy shows that even by the eighteenth century the political system had become self-perpetuating.32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.5 Father vs. Son Career Paths</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>18th Century</th>
<th>19th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father &amp; Son Ulema</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father &amp; Son Kalemîye</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Ulema &amp; Son Kalemîye</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Kalemîye &amp; Son Ulema</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Palace &amp; Son Kalemîye</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Nobility to Ulema</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Population to Ulema</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Indication</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 addresses the question concerning the son following the father in the same career path (tarîk). Of the twenty-eight court historians we can see that 39%

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32 For more on this phenomenon see: Joel Shinder, “Career Line Formation in the Ottoman Bureaucracy, 1648-1750,” JESHO, vol. XVI, pts. II-III, 221-223.
followed their fathers in the same career line. Also evident in the data was the lack of cross-institutional movement. Only eighteen percent of the respondents had fathers from other career paths.

One interesting group that is omitted from the sample is the military or seyyîye branch of government. As noted above, there was only one vezir from among all of the fathers of court historians and none of the fathers were associated with the Janissary Corps in any way.

Finally, court historians did not come from families with literary traditions. Among all of the court historians only three had fathers whose literary accomplishments were noted by biographers. Of these, two were poets and one, Akif Efendi/Paşa was known as both a poet and a münşi or expert in inşa.

Education

What was the educational level of the men who held the position of vak'ânûvis? Did their education have any impact on their being chosen for the post of court historian? Did the level of education or opportunities for training change with time or by career path? These questions can be asked of the data concerning education. In addition, the data was examined for the education-related fields of belles-lettres (insula), calligraphy (hat) and languages learned.

The data concerning education does create some challenges. For men who were trained as apprentices in the scribal class, little in the way of their apprenticeships can be found in their biographies. A few of the biographies do not even consider a scribe's professional career until he had reached the rank of bureau chief or hâce.

The sources for early education for boys who were going to have careers in the scribal class were varied. Some students might have personal tutors who would give them some educational basics in the Koran, literature and languages. As they grew up ---
and if the household had some wealth -- more specialized tutors in calligraphy, language, etc. would be hired to prepare the prospective scribes for quick entry into government service.

A student might also go to a religious elementary school (mekteb), but these schools usually would have students going into the religious class. For higher education they could enter into a medrese or religious college, but again this was not the norm for a scribal career. Most of the students went straight into apprenticeships with a government bureau. The necessary education in calligraphy, language and inşa would be provided by teachers within the grand vezir’s office.\(^{33}\)

The entry of someone into a scribal career (tarik-i kalemîye) begins with a period of candidacy ( Müzâzim) followed by an apprenticeship (şâgird). Once the apprentice had mastered a certain level of proficiency then he would be made an assistant scribe (halife/kalfa) and then he would become a full scribe (kâtib) after again proving a higher level of competency. It is at this point in a scribe’s career that many of the biographical dictionaries start.\(^{34}\)

Education in the îlmiye followed a slightly different path. Students would either enter the mekteb or have a private tutor in the Islamic sciences (ilm). This path of education would lead them to eventual entry into a medrese or as Zilfi calls them, “the academic proving ground for all aspiring ulema.”\(^{35}\) At the medrese the student would take classes in Arabic grammar (sarf) and syntax (nahv), Koranic commentary (tefsir),


\(^{34}\) Career lines for scribes changed over time as the Ottoman bureaucracy enlarged and then adapted to the changes imposed on it by the era of reform. The above career line is based on: Joel Shinder, “Career Line Formation, 228-231. For a perspective on the scribal class in the era of reform see: Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte 1789-1922*, (Princeton, 1980), 70-91.

\(^{35}\) Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 44.
Islamic law and jurisprudence (fīkh), prophetic traditions (hadīth), logic and dialectics (mantık), rhetoric (belagat) and scholastic theology (kelam).  

After completing his education at the medrese, about a seven-year process, a student would receive a diploma (rūūs) after passing a series of examinations. The new member of the ulema then had a few different career paths to follow: first, they could enter into a scribal/administrative career that would often lead to posts in the Ottoman bureaucracy; second, they could become judges (kadi) or jurisconsults (mufti) in the provinces; or third, they could become college professors (müderris) which could then lead to a career which might lead to the highest offices in the ilmiye hierarchy (i.e. one of the kazaskers or şeyhülislam).  

Most of the biographical dictionary entries concerning vak’anūvis with ulema backgrounds do not list specific educational backgrounds. A few do list the names of the medrese and the professors that they received diplomas from, but for the most part they note the first position they had after finishing their medrese training.

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36 Ibid.

37 There generally was a waiting period between the time one finished training and when one would take the examinations. Zilfi notes that for some in the eighteenth century the backlog of students was such that they had to wait eighteen years before being summoned. Zilfi, “Elite Circulation, 338.

Table 4.6 Educational Backgrounds of Court Historian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Education</th>
<th>Number of Respondents:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medrese</td>
<td>9 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medrese + Special Education</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medrese + Special Education + Reform Education</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribal Bureaus</td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribal Bureaus + Special Education</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Reform Education</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Indication</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.6 indicates, a majority of the court historians followed the prescribed education for their career paths. The data concerning education is by no means complete. Many of the court historians might have had special education before entering either a bureau or medrese, but the biographers failed to mention it. Of the members who did have special education, it is interesting to note that all four of the scribes were from the 18th century and were either from the Provinces (Vasif and Enveri) or had fathers in the Palace institution (Izzi and Hâkim). The converse is true of the 19th century where all of those with special education were from the *ulema*.

Very few of the court historians from the nineteenth century attended the newer schools being opened as a result of the reform movement starting with Selim III (c. 1789). Şanizâde attended the new medical school and took math classes at the naval engineering

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39 ‘Special education’ refers to any education outside of bureaus or medrese such as tutors, father or family members, etc. and ‘Reform education’ refers to any educational institution created during or after the reign of Selim III during the reform period in the Ottoman Empire: for example, the Teachers College (Dar ul-Muallimin), the Ottoman Imperial University (Darülfitnun-u Osmanlı) or Adolescence schools (Rüşdiye).

40 Chambers comments that the level of education had degraded by the nineteenth century and a thorough traditional education was only available to those with motivation to seek the best medrese teacher and find quality tutors. See: “The Ottoman Ulema and the Tanzimat.” in *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, Nikki R. Keddie, editor. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972: 36-37.
school. Abdurrahman Şeref was the only vak'anüvis whose entire education, and professional career, was within the confines of the new educational system.\footnote{For more of Şanizâde and Abdurrahman Şeref see Appendix A.}

The art of calligraphy, the expertise of a râmişi or official letter writer, and the knowledge of languages are all important aspects which could give the prospective appointee to the post of vak'anüvis an advantage over his competition. Skill in poetry, also an important factor on a prospective court historian's résumé, will be dealt with in a separate section below.

The role of the scribe or kâtib in the Ottoman state must be commented on here. The scribal corps of the Ottoman Empire had its roots in the chanceries of previous Islamic states. The scribe was expected to master a certain body of knowledge in order to perform his duties. Along with this knowledge was a code of behavior, which together combined to define the scribe within his milieu, and has been described as the "Ottoman way."\footnote{Christine Woodhead, "Research on the Ottoman scribal service, c. 1574-1630," in Festigabe an Josef Matusz: Osmanistik-Turkologie-Diplomatik, (Berlin, 1992), 313.}

Apart from the production of imperial documents and correspondence, the kâtib was responsible for much more. He needed to have general knowledge of all branches of Islamic knowledge, the major languages of the Islamic world, Persian, Arabic and Turkish/Ottoman, literature and other sciences. Calligraphy and the art of correspondence writing (inşa) were part of that general knowledge.\footnote{From this discussion it should be apparent that those educated in the medrese had some advantage over those who entered the scribal class as apprentices. A scribe would have to attend classes at the medrese or have tutors to learn what was expected of them in the Islamic tradition.}
Table 4.7 *Vak'anûvis* who were calligraphers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondents who were calligraphers</th>
<th>İlimiye</th>
<th>Kalemîye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th Century</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th Century</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 indicates the number of court historians who were known for their calligraphy. As shown in the above discussion, all who were scribes had to have some calligraphic skill. What the above numbers most likely indicate is the number of court historians who had an acknowledged *excellence* in calligraphy. It is interesting to note that all of the men whose biographies mentioned their skills in calligraphy were from the 18th century. Calligraphy might not have declined as an important art form among the Ottomans, but the attention to producing quality calligraphers in the government might have declined in the 19th century.\(^4^4\)

Table 4.8 Knowledge of *Inşa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>11 (39%)</th>
<th>İlimiye</th>
<th>Kalemîye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18th Century</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th Century</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Inşa* or belles lettres was also an important part of any scribe’s training. It was made up of two distinct fields, epistolography and the art of literary composition. The art of the *müşi* or one who was a writer of *inşa* was, like calligraphy, an important part of the Ottoman’s Islamic inheritance. The exact reproduction of letters and documents was part of every scribe’s knowledge. *Inşa* was dominated by a few manuals that contained samples of letters and documents considered to be the finest written. The memorization

\(^4^4\) Calligraphy was one of the centerpieces of Ottoman artistic culture. For more on calligraphy see: Midhat Sertoğlu, *Resimli*, 136.
of these works guaranteed a uniformity of documents produced. These manuals or collections of documents were called münşədt. Before the 18th century gifted münsis would reach the post of nişancı, but the importance of the post had declined. Only one of the court historians, Ahmet Vasıf, held the post of nişancı, but by then the post was more centered on foreign affairs than on document preparation.45

Table 4.8 indicates that almost forty percent of the court chroniclers were deemed skilled enough at inşa to have it mentioned by their biographers. Three of the chroniclers collected their letters together in a volume of münşədt. Mehmet Râşid collected his letters together while he was the judge of Aleppo and from his diplomatic mission to Iran in the late 1720’s.46 Çelebizâde Asum Efendi’s münşədt collected together over 234 letters from his career.47 Finally, Mehmet Esad Efendi collected his letters from a diplomatic mission to Iran (1835) and from his work on the Ottoman census (1831) together in his volume of münşədt.48

It is worthy of note that in the case of the men who held the post of vak’anûvis, more men from the ulema were known for the skills in inşa than men of the pen. Woodhead comments on this trend, which began in the 1630’s, where the source of major stylists both in epistolography and in other genres of rhetorical prose composition came from the ulema rather than from the scribes of the divan-i hümâyun. She also states that

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46 Many copies exist. The author examined: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, H. 1037, Münsa’ât-i Râşid. Copied sometime in the 18th century.


48 There are two known copies of his Münşədt.
the number of münseflı had greatly increased in numbers during the seventeenth century and had a lesser impact on the style of composition than had earlier manuals.\textsuperscript{49}

With inşa the kâtib learned the proper use of language in the production of documents in the central government, but what of the importance of languages themselves? The main languages in use in the Ottoman government and society were Ottoman (a complicated mix of Persian, Turkish and Arabic), Persian and Arabic. European languages, especially French, became more widely disseminated among the elite in the late nineteenth century. Each had their own importance and their own milieu.

Ottoman (Osmanlıca) became the major language of the central bureaucracy by the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Before then, Persian had played an important role in the Ottoman court due to its importance in statecraft and literature. Any member of the Ottoman bureaucracy was expected to have an excellent working knowledge of this language.

Arabic was the language of the ulemat. As guardians of the Islamic faith and purveyors of the Shari‘a law, knowledge of Arabic was indispensable for the religious class. Some knowledge of Arabic was important for all who practiced Islam, especially among the educated. Arabic was and would remain the main language for all written works concerning Islamic subjects.

Persian was the language of poetry. Earlier, it had held a higher place as the main language of the bureaucracy and of prose literature, but the introduction of Ottoman into both the bureaucracy and prose literature had changed that. Any Ottoman who was interested in writing poetry, and many were, had to learn Persian. Persian was not a

\textsuperscript{49}Christine Woodhead, "Ottoman Inşa, 145."
language taught at the medrese, but was learned from a tutor or perhaps from a literary patron.\footnote{For an excellent look at the Ottoman, Arabic, Persian linguistic triangle see: Kemal Silay, \textit{Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court: Medieval Inheritance and the Need for Change}, (Bloomington, 1994), 7-28.}

Knowledge of European languages did not appear among the bureaucracy until the age of Selim III and after. The Ottomans had always had a cultural superiority about them and had felt that European languages were not necessary. Most business with European states was done through the office of the Imperial Dragoman or through private individuals. The \textit{Tanzimat} really changed the official Ottoman line on European languages. French became a fashionable language to learn among the Ottoman elites. This newfound interest in European languages did not extend to the \textit{ulema} who continued to keep their traditional education with some exceptions.\footnote{Members of the \textit{ulema} who did wish to learn French had to do so in secret, as they risked ridicule from other members of the establishment if found out.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages Known</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Persian &amp; Arabic</th>
<th>Arabic, Persian, &amp; French</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18th Cent.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th Cent.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 (43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the men who attained the post of \textit{wak'ānīvis}, forty-three percent were noted by the biographers as having exemplary skills in language. It can be assumed that 46\%, or the total number of \textit{ulema} in our data had some level of Arabic training. It should also be noted that many of the court historians, as poets, would have had training in Persian. From the rest of the data in Table 4.9 we can see that eight (29\%) had education in both Arabic and Persian.

The nineteenth century produced three men who had considerable linguistic skills. Şanizâde Atâullah had a knowledge of Arabic and Persian. He added studies in French
and Latin due to his interest in medicine. Ahmet Cevdet, who was from the traditional ulema, learned French under the pressure of his patrons, Ali and Fuad Paşas. They had both learned French while with the translation bureau. Finally, Mutercim Asım was probably, among the Ottomans, the greatest Arabic and Persian linguist of the late 18th/early 19th centuries. His dictionary, Kartaşılı Muhit, left a mark in Otoman literary history.\footnote{Banarlı, Nihad Sâmi. Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi. (Istanbul: 1997), vol. 2, 823-824.}

**Patronage**

The role of patronage in the careers of both scribes and members of the ulema cannot be understated. By the eighteenth century intisâp, as patronage was known in the Ottoman setting, was the primary means by which members of both of the career paths could advance from the lower levels of government to higher offices; without patronage, the ambitious would languish in a lifetime of low level appointments. It is also important to note that while patronage played an important role in advancement, it had less to do with what positions one might occupy. The sequence and duration of posts held are part of the study of “career line formation,” an area of study that will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Patronage was engaged between members of the same career path, but the ulema also had to rely on establishing patron/client relations with the higher ranked members of the scribal class for advancement in scribal positions. Faroqhi best summarizes this relationship:
There obviously existed fairly close relationships between top-level administrators and top-level ulema, in which the administrators seemed to have been the dispensers and the ulema the receivers of patronage. While ulema acted as patrons for other ulema, the instances of their being patrons to ambitious members of the administrative hierarchy are quite rare.\(^53\)

For the *ulema*, the most important jump to be made for a successful career in the religious branch was between the upper-levels of the *medrese* system to the lowest level, *mahrec*, of the Great Molla hierarchy.\(^54\) Also important in the advancement process for the *ulema* was the role that family relationships played. In this study nepotism was classified as another type of patronage.\(^55\)

Scribes too, until the nineteenth century, had to make a leap from being among the mass of scribes to the privileged few who might qualify for the highest of posts (*reis efendi, nişancı, baş defterdar*, etc.). The post that would be the stepping-stone to the higher reaches was that of bureau chief (*hace*, pl. *hacegân*). Joel Shinder best summarizes the importance of this post in his article on career line formation:

Bureau chiefs and those whose personal backgrounds and connections placed them in direct line for assuming bureau-headships constituted the upper stratum of the finance section’s personnel. The lower stratum consisted of all those whose backgrounds and connections could not sustain the leap to bureau-headship, for both strata the essential criteria for recruitment were, in descending order, kinship, patronage (*inisâp*), merit, and favoritism (*ilîmâs*).\(^56\)

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\(^{53}\) Suraiya Faroqhi, "Social Mobility Among the Ottoman *'Ulemâ* in the late Sixteenth Century," *IJMES*, 4 (1973), 209.


\(^{55}\) Zilfi, "Elite Circulation, 47-53.

\(^{56}\) Joel Shinder, "Career Line Formation, 228."
By the time of Mahmud II, the post of bureau chief had become so debased that it became the lowest ring in the promotional system. The effects of this on career lines will be discussed below.

Finally, the presentation of literary works to either the sultan or grand vezir was a method used by the learned, in either of the institutions, to secure patronage. As we will see below, this method was one used very successfully by the men who held the post of court historian.

The patron/client relationship then was one of paramount importance to members of both the _ulema_ and scribal class. While securing the right patron could mean rapid advancement and success, selecting the wrong patron could result in career stagnation, dismissal, exile or even death. Patron/client relationships were by no means static; men moved from patron to patron as better opportunities might present themselves.⁵⁷

Table 4.10 below quantifies the data concerning patronage and the men who held the post of _vak’anüvis_. The data will look at client/patron relationships and try and identify those who helped in their career as court historians, but will also look at how many of these men were able to use the system to get to higher bureaucratic/ _ulema_ posts.

The data is also limited by the sources. Finding established relationships takes careful examination of biographies and the researching of every name contained in them. Many biographies contain little useful information of _intisap_ relationships. The number of patrons is definitely underestimated.⁵⁸

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⁵⁷ Another avenue of inquiry concerning patronage and career lines is the influence of paşa households/patrimonial structures on the post assignment process. This line of study looks at how duplicate structures of power based on the sultan’s household developed after the seventeenth century. These structures became more and more important as the quality of leadership from sultans decreased. See: Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683-1703: A Preliminary Report,” JAOS, vol. 94, no. 4 (1974), _passim_. and Carter V. Findley, _Ottoman Civil Officialdom_, 40-51.

⁵⁸ More patrons would inevitably turn up with a careful reading of the _vak’anüvis_ chronicles.
Table 4.10 Sources of Patronage Based on Total Number of Responses Per Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Indicated</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Sultan</th>
<th>Palace</th>
<th>Grand Vezir</th>
<th>Seyhülislam</th>
<th>Former Seyhülislam</th>
<th>other Ulema</th>
<th>Reis Efendi</th>
<th>Diplomat</th>
<th>Paşa</th>
<th>Beylikci</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ulema</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scribal</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 illustrates the broad range of sources of patronage in the Ottoman state. The data shows that the top patrons, excluding literature, of the men who held the post of vakıfüvis were the grand vezir and father with eleven responses each, followed by the şeyhülislam and sultan. Literature had the highest amount of responses due to the presentation of court chronicles, indicated by "C" in the table, to the sultan.

Fathers appear to be especially important as vehicles for entry into the scribal institution. Of the eight fathers who helped their sons into the scribal institution three were scribal officials, two from the palace, two were Paşas and only one was from the ulema. This data reinforces conclusions made by many authors on the development of hereditary recruitment of new members into the scribal class.⁵⁹

The most important block of patronage for the court historians or for anyone with literary pursuits was the grand vezir and sultan. The total number of respondents for these two figures should not be considered as patronage for literary interests only, but should also take into account their patronage as a part of their career line. Of course the sultan was the ultimate patron of literature. Having a work read and fancied by the sultan could lead to financial and material gain, possible promotion, and continued access to the

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upper reaches of government. Five of the group under study presented works to the sultan and were rewarded monetarily and with promotions.60

The large amount of ulema respondents with the sultan as a patron can be explained in light of the sultan's interest in the written arts, rather than favoritism towards the ulema by the sultan or a monopoly by the ulema on literary pursuits. During the period in which the office of vak'ânîvis was in operation there were three sultans who were especially interested in literature, especially history writing. Ahmet III, Selim III and Mahmud II took special interest in and rewarded well the production of historical works. Many of the respondents who were members of the ulema just happen to have been assigned to the post at time one of these men was in power.

Grand vezirs were also good patrons of the written arts and could act as conduits to the sultan. Much of the early development and success of the office of court historian can be ascribed to their interest in historical writing.

The data also show that the major sources for patrons remained within ones career path. Favor from the şeyhülislam was vital, though not indispensable, to advancement in the ilniye. Ahmet Cevdet serves as a good example of advancement without the patronage of the şeyhülislam. Cevdet was recommended twice for advancement from the Mekke to Istanbul neveliyet in the rankings of the Great Mollas of the empire. Twice the şeyhülislam, Sadettin Efendi balked at giving him the title. In order for him to advance, members of the scribal class who supported Cevdet used their influence and suggested that the matter go before the sultan to secure his advancement in rank.61

The data above also show that members of the scribal class had a much wider group of functionaries to choose from when seeking a patron. This helps explain why

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60 Three presented poetry, one a copy of a work on the conquest of Belgrade with commentary and the fifth was the famous dictionary of Muterçim Asım.
members of the *ulema* sometimes had to secure other sources of patronage away from the *ilmiye*.

Finally the data show that the production of chronicles would naturally lead to patronage. Each time a *vak'anüvis* presented a chronicle to the sultan he would receive a reward and was encouraged to continue in his endeavors. Naturally, the court historians who could regularly produce presentation volumes, i.e. final clean copies of the chronicle presented to the sultan, would have the most compensation and longer careers in the post of *vak'anüvis*. For example, Ahmet Vasif, in a career as *vak'anüvis* which spanned thirteen years, produced four volumes or sections of history that were presented to the sultan, and Ahmet Lutfi, *vak'anüvis* for over forty years, presented fifteen volumes of his chronicle to the sultan.

How did the men who held the post of *vak'anüvis* do in terms of reaching above the levels of *müderris* for the *ulema* and *kâtib* for the scribes? Table 4.11 summarizes their attempts at reaching the height of their prospective systems below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Path</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Respondents Attaining Hace(Scribes) or Mahrec (ulema) Rank</th>
<th>Highest Position Attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalemiye</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12 (80%)</td>
<td>1-Reisulkuttab; 3-Teşrifatçı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilmiye</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9 (69%)</td>
<td>1-Şeyhülislam; 2-Rumeli Kazaskers; 2- Anadolu Kazaskers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patronage did help the members of both of these groups reach the higher levels in government. The members of the *kalemiye* had a very high level of advancement (80%) and if the remaining two members of the scribal branch after it was reorganized into the civil service or *mülikîye* are taken into consideration then 93% attained a higher rank. The
sole member of the kalemiye who did not advance to the hace rank was Râmi Mehmed Paşa-zâde Abdullah Re'fed Bey (d.1744), about whom we have little information.

The religious branch was not as successful as the kalemiye in advancement. Sixty-nine percent of the members of the ulema reached the mahrec or lowest grade of the Great Mollas. The remaining members of the ulema remained in minor administrative positions or as college professors (müderris).

The table above also indicates the complete lack of advancement for members of both branches once they advanced to the hace or mahrec levels. The members of the ulema did better in their advancement by having 56% of those advancing reach the posts of Rumeli or Anadolu kâzasker and şeyhülislâm. For the scribal class only one member reached the rank of reisülküttab and three members reached the diwan level post of teşrifatçı which means that only 33% reached an advanced post. It is apparent that the post of vak'anûvis did not lead to higher office; rather it was a post that showed the literary acumen of most of its holders.

_Bureaucratic Appointments and Career Lines_

The study of governmental appointments and career lines of the men who held the post of court historian gives us a glimpse into the occupational dynamics of both the ilmiye and kalemiye branches of government. The following sections will examine what the representative career lines are in the two branches of government and then compare that to the careers of the court historians. We will examine the effect of being appointed to the post of vak'anûvis on one's career line. Finally, we will examine the effect of the reform movement on the careers of the men of the nineteenth century.

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62 The post of teşrifatçı could well have been ceremonial and used solely as a source of revenue.
Before examining the career lines of the court historians, let us establish what a
typical career path was for the religious and scribal classes in the Ottoman Empire based
on career line analysis by Madeline Zilfi for the ulema and by Joel Shinder, Bernard
Lalor, and Carter Findley for the scribal branch. The examination of career lines as
established by the above historians will fulfill two purposes. First, they will act as
guideposts by which to examine the vak'ânûvis' careers and second the study will
contribute to the discussion about the nature of the Ottoman bureaucracy.

From the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries the Ottoman state was the preeminent
Sunni Muslim state in the Middle East. As such, the Ottoman sultans were responsible
for the promotion and preservation of Islam as a way to support the dynasty's legitimacy
in the Islamic world. In this endeavor the Ottoman state created a religious class
unprecedented in size and organization whose job was the education of the Muslim
population and the application of Islamic law (Shari'a). Zilfi best summarizes the
importance of the ulema by saying, "Through schools and courts the ulema sought to
define the religious duties of the believer, delimit the norms of human relationships and
reinforce religious and cultural unity."

The development of this hierarchical organization, called the ilmiye, at the
Ottoman center began in the fifteenth century and was elaborated upon in subsequent
centuries. A major reorganization of the institution was undertaken during the rule of
Ahmet III (1704-1730). Members of the ilmiye had special privileges, chief among them

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63 The articles and books used for this section are: Madeline C. Zilfi, "Elite Circulation in
III, 318-364; Madeline C. Zilfi, The Politics of Piety, (Minneapolis, 1988); Joel Shinder,
"Career Line Formation in the Ottoman Bureaucracy, 1648-1750: A New Perspective,"
JESHO, Vol. XVI, pts II-III, 217-237; Bernard Lalor, "Promotion Patterns of Ottoman
Bureaucratic Statesmen from the Lale Devri Until the Tanzimat," Güney-Doğu Avrupa
Araştırmaları Dergisi, (1972), I, 77-92; Carter V. Findley, Bureaucratic Reform in the
Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte 1789-1922, (Princeton, 1980); Carter V. Findley,
Ottoman Civil Officialdom, (Princeton, 1989).

were freedom from taxation, freedom from confiscation of property by the state at death, and the support of pious foundations (evkaf), which gave the ulema some freedom from the sultan's purse strings. The ilmiye branch of government also developed into a counterbalance to the sultan and often worked with the Janissaries, the elite military corps, to have its interests protected at the Ottoman court.

The institutional chief of the ilmiye was the şeyhülislam whose role was legal, administrative and political. Under him stood the two chief military judges (kazaskers) of Rumeli and Anadolu, the two main territorial components of the Ottoman Empire. They were responsible for overseeing the judges (kadi) in their provinces and for the appointment of college professors (müderris). The remaining major posts of what were called the Great Mollas (Büyük Mevleviyet) were the judges of the most important cities of the empire. The judgeships were ranked and organized under four major grades (See Figure 4.0 below). Each grade acted as a stepping-stone to the next one. Also, for each grade there was an honorific or titular grade that was also part of the grading system. So one might hold the titular (payeli) judgeship before holding the actual (bilfiil) judgeship.65

Subordinate to the major judgeships in the ilmiye hierarchy stood the college (medrese) hierarchy. A majority of the medreses that supplied the ulema were located in Istanbul. Advancement along the ladder of college professors (müderris) would eventually lead to an appointment into the mahrec level of judgeships.

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65 The system developed over time as more applicants were available to fill the positions and as patronage as a rule took over. There are some instances where high-ranking ulema held payeli ranks almost their entire career.
**Şeyhülislam (Grand Múfti of Istanbul)**

**Major Judgeship (Great Molla) Hierarchy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Occupant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rumelia</td>
<td>Chief Justice of Rumelia and titular justices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatolia</td>
<td>Chief Justice of Anatolia and titular justices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İstanbul</td>
<td>Judge of İstanbul and titular judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haremeyn</td>
<td>Judges of Mecca and Medina and titular judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbaa</td>
<td>Judges of Edirne, Bursa, Cairo, Damascus and titular judges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judges of Aleppo, Eyup, Galata, İzmir, Salonika, Üsküdar, Yenişehir (Larisa), Jerusalem and titular judges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medrese Hierarchy (Diploma-holding Professors)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Occupant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darülhadis-i Süleymaniye</td>
<td>Süleymaniye's Darülhadis only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Süleymaniye</td>
<td>Four Süleymaniye medrese only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamis-i Süleymaniye</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musile-i Süleymaniye</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hareket-i Altmışlı</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibtida-i Altmışlı</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahn-i Seman</td>
<td>Eight Fatih medreses only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musile-i Sahn</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hareket-i Dahil</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibtida-i Dahil</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hareket-i Haric</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Subhierarchy Professors and Judges - Not Diploma Holders]

Beneath the college professors were a vast number of provincial judges, jurisconsults (*müfti*), college professors in provincial posts, administrators of *evkaf*, and mosque preachers (*vaizan*). Many of the posts lower than the college professor ranks did not require a diploma (*rûûs*) to hold the post. Without a diploma, these functionaries would not have the title of *ulema* nor have any of the associated benefits.

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65 Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 25. The organization above is based on the reorganization of the *ilmiye* during the reign of Ahmet III.
Now that we have delineated the ilmiye hierarchy, let us look more closely at a typical career in the ulema. All careers would start with either private tutors and/or attending a Quran school. The prospective âlim would then gain entry into a medrese.

Medrese education centered on the religious sciences, with special attention paid to theology, Quranic exegesis and jurisprudence. After three years of study a student graduated to a new level called dânişmend or scholar. From this point the student was eligible for novitiates (müelazemet). Appointment as a novice came from Great Mollas or by order of the Sultan.

A novice would continue his education by taking higher-level courses and working as an aid to a ranking member of the ulema while waiting to be eligible to take the exam for the rüus. A novice’s education was not limited to just one medrese, but was based on the professor and subject matter the student wanted to take. A student’s exam date was set by seniority (akdem fi’l akdem) and some students had to wait for years to take the exam. The ideal time from entrance to exam was twelve years, but the waiting period varied because of patronage and other factors. It was also during their period of time that many, because of economic or other reasons, might end their educational career and move into a scribal job within the religious branch [but not receiving ulema ranking] or possibly take the learned skills and move into a scribal career in the kalâmiye.

After the student passed his exam and received his diploma he was considered a member of the ulema with all of its privileges. The graduate then had to choose between a medrese career that could lead to the upper reaches of the ilmiye branch or go to the

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67 Zilfi, "Elite Circulation, 337.

68 Ibid., 319.
provinces as a judge. It was also possible for one who began his career as a judge to return and enter into the ranks of the müdderris.

The member of the ulema who chose to become a college professor would then have a long road of advancement through the eleven grades in the medrese hierarchy. The road to the mahrec grade of the Great Mollas took an average of 22 years to reach upon entering the ranks of the müdderris.69 Patronage again had a role in the length of one’s college career.

The ranks of the Great Mollas also took some time to get through. Zilfi again estimates that the average time was about 18 years to reach the post of Anadolu kazasker.70 Another aspect that is important to the Great Mollas was that the top posts in the ilmiye were more and more being concentrated in the hands of a few great Istanbul families.71 To those who were outsiders or did not count them among one’s patrons, advancement could be and most often was slow and frustrating.

Members of the ulema who did reach the mahrec level also had to worry about time limits for their appointments. Because there were so many upper-level ulema, the term limits to most judgeships was one year, though some were extended to sixteen months. It was also very possible that members of the ulema would have to wait a year or more to be appointed to another post or advanced a rank. In order to support these out-of-office Great Mollas the financial tool of arpaliks, grants of lesser magistratures (kaza), was used to support their lifestyles. These “arpalik-livings” as Zilfi calls them consisted of the right to compensation due to the judge’s office in exchange for oversight of that


70 Ibid.

71 The Great Molla elites is dealt with in Zilfi’s work, The Politics of Piety referenced previously, passim.
office by the Great Molla. Arpaliks became a regular, if not automatic component of the ilmiye system of remunerations.

Finally, when we consider the men who held the post of vak'anûvis we have to consider many of them as members of an elite literary class in addition to the regular career paths they had entered upon. As such, the sultan could and did remunerate them with titular appointments in the ulema and/or the granting of an arpalik. Zilfi best summarizes this important aspect of the ulema ranking system below.

They [titular ranks] were also given to the Sultan’s favorites and quasi-ulema --imperial physicians, astrologers and preachers-- to place them on a ceremonial footing with regular ilmiye dignitaries. In a society of few elite paths, each with ostensibly strict rules for membership, the ilmiye’s honorary ranks made room for ‘ulema,’ “the learned,” in a wider, less career-bound sense. Historians, poets, physicians and memorialists consistently numbered among the recipients of honorary ranks. Many had never been judges or muđerrises. Many had never attempted more than a few years of medrese training, not caring to continue on the road to ulema status. For some, that road had grown too long and narrow once the centuries made a profession of the pursuit of learning. The special talents of the nonulema learned argued for their inclusion among the official learned class. Thanks to imperial prerogative, they were able to acquire the perquisites of a career path whose restrictive criteria otherwise excluded them.72

Beginning with Selim III the ulema were challenged by a new reform movement which would have a great impact on them, but would leave them at the heart of the Muslim educational and, to some extent, the legal system until the end of the empire. The destruction of the Janissary Corps by Mahmud II left the ulema without a partner to influence or resist the sultan’s policies. From that time on the ulema began to work more closely with the sultan. In return, sultans from Mahmud II on began to include members of the ulema, some of them the court historians in this study, in the reform councils so that they would be part of the painful changes having to be made in the empire.

For the *ulema* who entered into administrative posts within the new bureaucracy, many of the old avenues of advancement had ended, but many new ones opened up. For example, careers in the new ministry of *evkaf* or the ministry of land registration opened up to members of the *ulema* seeking bureaucratic careers.

The career path of the scribe (*kâtib*) called the *tarik-i kalemiye* or later in the nineteenth century, the civil bureaucracy (*mütkiyeye*) was a much different career path, though sometimes overlapping, than that of a member of the *ulema*. There are essentially three career paths which we will examine in connection with the data on the men who held the post of *vak'anûvis*, that within the chancery of the grand vezir or the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı âli*), the offices within the financial department (*Bâb-ı defter* or *maliye*) and too some extent the Register House (*Defterhane*). The financial department was the larger department, but its importance for those seeking higher office had declined since the 18th century. The Porte with the Bureaus of the Imperial Council (*Divân-i Hümâyûn Kalemleri*) attached to it would become the major stepping ground for advancement for the scribal class.

A prospective member of the scribal class would enter into the financial department as a candidate (*müllâzim*). The appointment as a candidate was very much tied to kinship ties (relative in the bureau, etc.), patronage, or to a lesser degree merit. Once a candidate, the prospective scribe would expand his education by taking classes at the *medrese* and also being trained by tutors within the department itself.

The candidate would then graduate and advance to the rank of apprentice or *şagird*. At this point the *şagird* would be trained by a *kâtib* in calligraphy, *însa*, accounting and filing. Once he had completed his training he would continue in the bureau in which he was assigned until a scribal post opened up for him. Figure 4.1
summarizes the organization of the various departments, bureaus, department heads or bureau chiefs in the financial institution by the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{Figure 4.1 Organization of the Finance Section of the Ottoman Government

\textbf{Baş-Defterdar (Chief Comptroller) & Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Bureaus</th>
<th>Chiefs (Hace Rank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maliye Kalemi (Finance Chancery)</td>
<td>Maliye tezkercisi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarih-i Berat (Dating Bureau)</td>
<td>Maliye tarihçisi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhasebe (Accountancy)</td>
<td>Baş (Chief); Anadolu (Anatolia); Harameyn (Holy Cities); Cizye (poll-tax); Kuçuk Evkaf (Small Endowments).</td>
<td>Başmuhasebeci, Anadolu muhasebecisi, Cizye muhasebecisi, Kuçuk Evkaf muhasebecisi;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruznamçe (Day-Book)</td>
<td>Buyuk (Greater) &amp; Kuçuk (Lesser) or Evvel (First) &amp; Sani (Second)</td>
<td>Buyuk Ruznamçeci &amp; Kuçuk Ruznamçeci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukābele (Muster check)</td>
<td>Suvari (Cavalry) &amp; Piyade (Foot)</td>
<td>Süvari or Ath mukābelecisi &amp; Piyade mukābelecisi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukataa (Tax Farms)</td>
<td>Māden (Mines); Salyane (Yearly); Haslar (Estates); Baş (Chief Lease); Haremeyn (Holy Cities); Istanbul; Bursa; Avlonya; Kefe</td>
<td>Each bureau headed by a hace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mevküfat (Contribution in Kind)</td>
<td>Şehir Eminı (Imperial City); Matbah Eminı (Imperial Kitchen); Arpa Eminı (Imperial Mint); Tersane Eminı (Naval Arsenal); Sipah ve Silahdar Kalemleri (Issued pay certificates to these two troops); Büyük &amp; Kuçuk Kale Kalemleri (Kept rolls of fortress and frontier troops)</td>
<td>Mevküfatca; Each bureau headed by a hace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{73} This table reflects the organization of the finance section during the 18th century. Changes occurred in the 19th century, especially after the Tanzimat. The table is based on Joel Shinder, “Career Line Formation, 227-228; Gibb and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society, 130-135; and Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 68-71 & 353-361.
Mimar Başı (Chief Architect)

The şagird would then be appointed to a scribal post and be placed on the pay rosters as a full kâtib. It would be at this time that the scribe would enter into the ranks of those who were appointed on an annual basis (mansûb). Many of the posts in the Ottoman bureaucracy were confirmed on an annual basis. The appointment to one post was not a guarantee that one would keep that post the following year. One could be assigned to another scribal post or even be out-of-government for a time.

In his position as scribe he would probably remain for some time until he was given special duties or additional training at which point he would be made an assistant to a senior scribe or halife/kâlfâ. In time he would replace the senior scribe and eventually reach the post of ser kâlfâ or secretary to the bureau chief (hace).

The top post of a scribal career in the financial bureau would have been the bureau chief. Appointment to this post would have been after a long period of apprenticeship and work in the bureau, but this too could be affected by kinship and patronage ties. In larger bureaus the hace might have had some assistants who would have acted as intermediaries between himself and his staff. They would usually go under the name of kesedâr or purse-bearer.74

Within the above description of the financial bureau there were two different groups working within the system. Shinder describes these groups as being the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ stratum of personnel.75 The upper stratum of personnel had the connections, again either because of family or patronage, to reach the bureau chief level and then either remain indefinitely rotating among different bureau chief posts or even reach

74 Another important factor that affected the grading system was that of salary and the source of revenues it came from. For more on the difference of şerhli and gedik revenues and their impact on the grading system see: Joel Shinder, "Career Line Formation," 230-235.

75 Ibid., 228.
higher into the ranks of the financial bureau such as baş defterdar or head of the maliye department. The lower stratum would have continued rotating through lower scribal posts within the different offices and might possibly have reached the post of senior scribe by the end of their careers.

The chancery or Sublime Porte was the second source of scribal jobs in the Ottoman central government. The Porte became a much better source of scribal jobs with advancement than the finance bureaus by the late 18th century. Recruitment and advancement in the scribal institutions of the Porte were similar to that of the financial institution, but the competition for open scribal posts was much more intense. The scribal service here too was divided into an upper and lower service depending on one's ability to advance into the higher ranks.

Once the novice had advanced to scribe, his chief aim was to advance as quickly as possible from the lower ranks to the upper ranks of the service and acquire the important rank of hace with its privileges. The ability to move through the ranks, jump through grades (kaide-i teselliil), and secure a post in the smaller, more important bureaus was very much based on family ties, patronage, or the ability to pay. According to Lalor the best bureaus to be in by the late eighteenth century were the bureaus of the grand vezir's office (mekütbi-i sadaret odası), kâtibi and âmeci bureaus. The grand vezir's office was especially desirable as it provided access to both the grand vezir and the head of the chancery, the reis efendi. The hace rank also secured one in the rotation of bureau chiefs and allowed one access to the highest posts in the central administration.

The organization of the Porte with its departments, bureaus and chiefs is summarized in Figure 4.2 below. The Porte evolved organizationally over time. For

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76 Bernard Lalor, "Promotion Patterns, 78-79.

77 For more on the specific workings of the Divan-i Hümayun and the offices that supported it see chapter two above. Figure 4.2 is based on the following works: Gibb and
example, the grand vezir's office was an important stepping stone to advancement in the 18th century, but it was replaced by the financially more lucrative and politically more powerful ḍemedi bureau in the nineteenth century. The Tanzimat and its reforms resulted in a major restructuring of the Ottoman bureaucracy that is symbolized in its change of name from the scribal class (kalemiye) to the civil bureaucracy (mükiye). The consequences of these changes will be addressed below.

The nature of the lower scribal service concerning education, social structure and methods of advancement was very similar to that of the financial department. In contrast, upper scribal service, those with the hase rank, was different from that of the financial department because it had much more prestige and more avenues for advancement even though members held the same bureau chief rank.

Carter Findley, in his work on the Ottoman bureaucracy, has identified the advantages and disadvantages of being a member of the hasegan of the Porte. Among the advantages were: ceremonial precedence, receipt of robes of honor (hil'at), sharply increased entitlements to compensation, the ability to maintain larger households modeled after the grand vezir, and more lateral mobility in the bureaucracy. Many of the disadvantages he states are a result of the decline of the Ottoman center during the 17th and early 18th centuries. These disadvantages were: greater politicization of the bureaucracy, the brevity of tenure in a post due to the annual tenure system (tevcihat), payment of heavy appointment fees (caize), abuse of posts for quick material gain, and patrimonialism. 78

The final department under investigation is the Defterhâne or Registry. Its job was to keep track of all records concerning land registry. The head of the department was the defter emini. The Defterhâne was divided into three departments. The first department was the Icmâl or Summary department that summarized budgets of various government entities. The second was the Mufassal that created detailed financial records on financial resources and the third was called the Rûzname or daybook that recorded changes in land registry.

The Defterhâne had lost much of importance by the end of the 18th century as the timar or feudal system of land grants was in decline. The post of defter emini was

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considered a step in advancement to the *baş defterdar* post. In the 18th century the *Deftihâne* had about one hundred clerks attached to it.79 The Registry was converted into the Ministry of the Revenues (*Defteri Hakani Nezareti*) in 1871 during the *Tanzimat*.

The reform movement marked by the efforts of Selim III, Mahmud II and the *Tanzimat* all had a profound impact on the bureaucratic system described above. The entire structure was changed in order to emulate the ministry system of European states. For example, where there was once the *Reis Efendi*, now there was the foreign minister (*hariciye naziri*), and the *baş defterdar* became the finance minister (*maliye naziri*). Establishing fixed pay scales and schools for bureaucrats professionalized the bureaucracy. The once sought after rank of *hace* became the lowest grade in the new bureaucracy. The world of the scribe did not go away, but it was rapidly disappearing by the time the Ottoman Empire entered World War I. The effect of the *Tanzimat* on the office of the *vak'anûvis* will be discussed below.

Let us now turn to the men who held the post of *vak'anûvis*. We will examine their career lines and compare them to the 'typical' careers as outlined above in the *ilmiye* and *kalemiye* branches of government. This section will also examine the number and type of posts held to get some additional insight into the career lines of these men.80

79 Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, 127. There is some confusion on the location of this department in the central government's hierarchy. Stanford Shaw had the department as part of the financial department, while Uzunçarşılı has the department as being attached to the Imperial Divan. Gibb and Bowen have it as a separate entity according to *kanun* or imperial law. For more on the Deftihâne see: Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez*, 95-101 and Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I, 119.

80 For additional information related to this discussion see the section above on patronage, especially Table 4.11.
Table 4.12 Career Paths of Court Historians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Career Paths:</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>18th Century</th>
<th>19th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mütərris</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Molla (Judicial)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maliye</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porte &amp; Mülkiye</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 summarizes the main career paths of the men who were court historians. Each response indicates the career path in which the court historian spent a majority of his time. Other than the lack of appointments to the post of vak'ānūvis in the nineteenth century, a majority of the ilmiye that held the post came from careers as college professors. The two men who spent a majority of their careers at the Great Molla or nəvleviyet level were Çelebizade Asum Efendi and Mehmed Esad Efendi. Asum spent twenty-eight of his fifty-two years in the ranks of the Great Mollas which culminated in his appointment as șeyhülislam. Mehmet Esad had an eighteen year career as a college professor followed by a twenty-two year career in the ranks of the Great Mollas, but never advanced to the top spot as șeyhülislam.

The ulema represented among the court historians for the most part followed the typical career pattern established by both Shinder and Zilfi where a long college professorial career is followed by an equally long career in the ranks of the Great Mollas. There were exceptions to this generalization. Two of the court historians, Ahmet Cevdet and Ahmed Lütfi both began promising careers in the ulema, but left for careers in the new civil service. Ahmet Cevdet advanced to the rank of vezir and made important contributions to the implementation of the Tanzimat, while Lütfi returned to

the ULAEMa after thirty-seven years in service to the Porte. He would eventually reach the rank of Rumeli kazasker, but never advanced to the post of ṣeyhülislam.

A majority of the men who held the post of vak’anîvis came from the scribal class. In the eighteenth century most of the scribes (78%) came from the financial (maliye) department of the Ottoman Empire. This would indicate that the best scribal personnel of the day were found in the Bab-i Defteri.

The nineteenth century would be entirely different. The financial department would not even have one among its members assigned to the post of court historian; instead, all of the appointments came from the Porte or from the post-Tanzimat civil service (müilikiye). This supports the general literature on the Ottoman bureaucracy that saw a shift in the avenues of advancement from the maliye to the bureaus and offices supporting the grand vezir and the divan at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century.82

For a majority of the court historians who were among the scribal class, the promotional patterns were similar to the ‘typical’ ones established above. Eighty percent of the scribes who became court historians advanced to the hace rank. By examining their careers we can see that they spent the rest of their careers moving from the head of one bureau to another, especially for the scribes in the financial branch of government. Advancement to the highest levels of the scribal institution (başı defterdar for finance and reis efendi for the grand vezir’s chancery) was only accomplished by two court historians. The appointment of Recâi Efendi as defterdar was due to his father’s influence and Vâsîf Efendi received the post of reis efendi for only a short time before his death as a reward for his lifetime of service.

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82 Bernard Lalor, “Promotion Patterns, passim.
Table 4.13 Average number of appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Appointments</th>
<th>Ulema</th>
<th>Kulemiye</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg. 18th Century</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. 19th Century</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Avg.</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Table 4.13 are to shed light on the appointment numbers for each career path. These numbers are based on the available information and only show possible trends. Since many of the posts in the kulemiye and ulema were annual appointments, there must have been additional posts that these chroniclers had and are now lost to history. As indicated above, the number of appointments doubled from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Part of the increase in appointments was definitely as a result of the Ottoman reform movement beginning in 1839. Many of the later vak' anüvis were appointed to councils and other advisory committees in this period. The most appointed of the court historians turns out to be one of the important men of the Tanzimat, Ahmet Cevdet Efendi who held thirty-seven different posts during his long career.

Finally, the specific positions that these men held in their respective careers merits some comment. The ulema had very set career patterns compared to the scribal class. The posts that were available to them in the ilmiye hierarchy were much more limited. Unfortunately, very few of the teaching careers of these men have been preserved. We know the grades they advanced to in the medrese system, but the biographers very rarely tell us at which medreses they taught. Only appointments to the Fatih mosque's eight medreses (sahn-i seman) and the Süleymaniye mosque complex (Süleymaniye and Daru’l Hadis) are apparent by the grading system.83

83 The two müdderrises with the best-preserved records would be Mehmet Raşid and Ahmet Cevdet.
Members of the ulema were not just judges and educators. The office of the şeyhülislam had a need for scribes to administer to its many functions. Some of the men who held the post of vak'aniyvis were assigned posts as secretaries to the şeyhülislam, document drawers (tezkereci) for the military judges, and administrators (müfettis) of pious foundations. Many of these posts acted as temporary sources of income when they had failed to be appointed to a judgeship.

Another practice that impacted the career patterns of both the ulema and scribes was the giving of sinecure posts concurrent with their appointments as vak'aniyvis. These posts acted as rewards for their work or to help supplement their incomes. For the scribes these posts were generally sinecures of high level divan posts such as nişanç, teşrifatç, defter emini and beylikçi. The ulema were rewarded by titular mevleviyet posts.

Finally, the role of the Takvimhane or Imperial Printing House cannot be ignored when examining the appointment patterns of both the ulema and scribal class members to the post of court historian. The Takvimhane was established in 1831, during the reign of Mahmud II, in order to publish among other things the first Ottoman newspaper, the official gazette Takvim-i Vekayi. The first director of the Takvimhane was the court historian Şeyhizâde Mehmed Esad Efendi. Of the last five court historians, three had been appointed to the Takvimhane in some capacity.

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84 The office of court historian only paid well when the holder of the office presented works to the sultan and subsequently was awarded a cash gift, robes, and other benefits. For many of the court historians, that was not enough so they either were given titular appointments or held second jobs. Sometime, especially with Selim III and Mahmud II, the sultan would give cash gifts without any presentation of work made. Thirteen or forty-six percent of the twenty-eight court historians held posts concurrent with their office.


86 Recâi Mehmet Efendi, Nâil Mehmed Bey and Ahmet Lutfi Efendi.
The *Takvimhane* made an excellent recruitment source for court historians. The printing house had a mixed scribal/ulerma staff, many of whom were involved with the *Tanzimat*. The paper summarized the news concerning the central government and had access to information similar to that of the court chronicler. Men from that staff would already have editorial experience, knowledge of recent history and events concerning the central government and connections to news sources. In fact, the court historian Ahmet Lütfi has been criticized for his overuse of the official gazette as a source in his chronicle.\(^{87}\)

For the court historians there is very little evidence that holding the office created a career bounce and, as noted before, the post was not, by any means, an avenue to the upper levels of government. The data concerning appointments is not often accurate enough to indicate both the post immediately before or after the person held the post of court historian. The first *vak'anûvis*, Mehmed Raşid Efendi, provides us with one of the few good examples of rapid career advancement during his tenure as court historian, but patronage might have proved to be a more determining factor than holding the post of *vak'anûvis*.

Mehmed Raşid Efendi was a college professor of the *ibtida-i dahil* rank (see Figure 4.0 above) before his appointment to the post of court historian in 1714. Between 1714 and his dismissal as *vak'anûvis* and appointment as *kadi* of Aleppo (*mahrec* grade of Great Mollas) in 1723 he advanced 10 grades in the *ilmiye* system. His advancement, compared to the average of 22 years it took to advance through the teaching profession to the lowest of the Great Molla ranks, took only nine years.\(^{88}\)

As noted above the late nineteenth century saw a major change in the way the Ottoman government operated. The results of the *Tanzimat* and subsequent reforms

\(^{87}\) Kutukoğlu, "*Vak'anûvis*," 1A, 285-286.

\(^{88}\) See note 65 above.
altered appointment patterns for the men who held the post of court historian after the
great scholar Mütərcim Asım Efendi held the post from 1807 to 1819. Subsequent
holders of the post can be categorized as coming from two different career patterns
influenced by this age.

Şanızâde Atâullah Efendi, Mehmed Esad, Ahmet Cevdet, and Ahmet Lütfi were
all members of the irlîye who had strong views in favor of the reform movement. All
became active participants in the councils and advisory bodies that were to guide the
Tanzimat reform effort. This participation was not all the time in conjunction with the
upper echelons of the ulema.

Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi (1853-1925) represents the product of the reform
movement. He was the only member of the group of court historians to have an
education completely within the confines of reform educational institutions. His career
as an educator and reformer diverged greatly from the ulema, who had controlled higher
education until his time. It is fitting that the last court historian came from such a
background.

Literary Pursuits

Among the Ottomans, whether one was a lowly kâtib or a şeyhülislam, the
importance of poetry as the language of literary culture cannot be understated. The
Ottomans developed a literary culture under the influences of Arabic and Persian, but by
the fifteenth century, Persian divan poetry and its literary conventions were victorious.\(^9\)
Persian as the language of poetry, but modified by the development of the Ottoman

\(^9\) A divan refers to the collected works of a poet. A short collection was called a
divange.
language would remain dominant on the Ottoman literary scene until the end of the empire.  

Prose, on the other hand, had neither the glamour, nor the patronage that poetry had, but it too played an important role in Ottoman literary history. Prose writers wrote histories, compiled dictionaries, translated works into Ottoman with commentary, wrote biographical dictionaries, or commented on religion, just to mention a few. The role of the vak' anūvis serves as an example of the patronage of prose. 

Poetry was a major vehicle for advancement and/or reward in the Ottoman system. The men who held the post of vak' anūvis in the early eighteenth century were especially skilled at poetry. Raṣid, Çelebizade Asım, and Sami Efendis were especially well known poets of the Tulip Age (1718-1730) and were very much influenced by the Persian school and Nedim. Table 4.14 summarizes the poetic skills of the men who held the post of court historian. 

The eighteenth century accounted for a majority of men who wrote poetry as a total of all (71%) and for the century (83%). For many of the court historians of this age, their skill as poets was an important factor in getting them noticed and appointed to the post of court historian. It is also interesting to note that the split between the relative career paths and the writing of poetry is about equal showing that poetry was important to both the ʿulema and kâlemiye. 

In the nineteenth century, 60% of all the court historians of that century wrote poetry, but accounted for only twenty-nine percent of the total number. The slightly lower number can be attributed to either a lack of data, the influence of Western literary mores, or the impact of the reform efforts. Poets of both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have had to learn Persian to become a poet of any quality. Persian was generally not a subject of learning in either the medrese or the scribal offices, so

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education in Persian would have been sought out from tutors or through patronage and training by other poets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.14 Vak'antıvis as Poets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not write poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote Divan or Divançe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Court historians not only were poets, but also were skilled at writing prose. The most immediate training ground would have been their training in inqa which gave them the knowledge of epistolography. Of course many of the court historians wrote chronicles that contained a mix of both poetry and prose, but many of them wrote additional works. The types of works are summarized in Table 4.15 and indicate that the men who held the post of court historian had a wide range of expertise and knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.15 Prose Works of the Court Historians by Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genre:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History (Tarih)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Collections (Mündehit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations (Tercüme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.15 indicates, that court historians produced an additional seventy known works. A majority of the works were historical in nature. The high number of education responses can be accounted for by Şanizâde Atâullah, Ahmet Cevdet and Abdurrahman Şeref who all were involved in the modernization of the educational system and wrote works for students on everything from anatomy to logic. The court historians were also gifted translators who translated many works from Arabic or Persian into Turkish with commentary. Between the production of poetry and the writing of prose works the court historians were very prolific writers and some of the very best products of both the İlmiye and Kalemiye systems.

**Sufism**

Sufism or Islamic mysticism has a long history in the Ottoman Empire. Mystical Islam proved to be a very important part of Islamic practices among the rural Muslim population and acted as a bridge between the strict Sunni Islam of the Ottomans and the more isolated areas of the empire. It is not in the scope of this study to discuss the organization and beliefs of the various sufi orders of the Ottoman Empire, but it is important to note that some of the court historians were members of these orders. Their membership in a sufi order and that order’s beliefs might well of had an impact on many aspects of the court historians life including career patterns, patronage, and historical writing.91

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91 It is interesting to note that one court historian, Şanizâde Atâullah Efendi was accused by jealous competitors of being a member of the Bektaşî order, the sufi order associated with the Janissaries, which had just been outlawed and its members persecuted. Şanizâde was sent into exile and died two months later.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tarikat</th>
<th>18th</th>
<th>19th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Ind.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mevlevi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melamiye</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakşubendi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information concerning sufi order membership is very scant. It appears not to be a topic of interest for biographers. Of the twenty-eight only four had definite membership in sufi orders. Two were members of the Nakşubendi, an order founded in Bukhara in the 14th century. This order had a strong Sunni identity and an aversion to Shi'i Islam. It became the largest order in the Ottoman Empire by the 19th century and was favorably looked upon by the government.

The Mevlevi order was founded in Konya in the 13th century and is known around the world as the “whirling dervishes.” It also had a wide following in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the Melamiye order of sufis was a fifteenth century heretical offshoot of the Bayramiye order. It was often persecuted for its beliefs and its members were forced to conceal their beliefs.

**Conclusion**

The prosopographic study of the men who held the post of vak'anivis has given us a wealth of information and new avenues for the investigation of intellectuals in the bureaucratic setting. This study was not without its pitfalls. The sample was too small, twenty-eight men, to have conclusive results. In addition, the data for these men was

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92 One avenue of inquiry might be to look at grave location. Many members of sufi orders had strict instructions to be buried in the vicinity of their spiritual guide or sheikh, if he were dead or within an area set aside for that order.
often incomplete as there was little biographical information available.\textsuperscript{93} Further investigation into biographical dictionaries, archival documents, and chronicles could provide some additional information.

The post of court historian located within the offices of the \textit{Divan-i hümâyûn} was active from the early eighteenth century until the end of the Ottoman Empire. The sources for appointees were almost evenly split between the scribal and religious branches of government.\textsuperscript{94}

The men who held the post came from varied backgrounds. Many were sons of bureaucrats and religious functionaries who were long established in Istanbul. Others were from provincial intellectual centers and had decided to come to Istanbul to improve their careers.

Whether trained in the \textit{medrese}, by private tutors or on the job as an apprentice, these men entered into the lowest levels of their prospective career paths and began the arduous journey of advancement. The success of this journey—measured by advancement to the \textit{haceğân} for the scribal class or the Great Molla grades in the \textit{ulema}—was dependent not only on hard work and mastery of a vast body of knowledge, but was dependent on family ties, patronage and very rarely, merit.

Appointment to the post of \textit{vak'anîvis} was to some degree dependent on patronage, but the main qualification for a majority of these men was their literary

\textsuperscript{93} One such avenue of investigation into intellectuals in the bureaucracy would be to examine the writers of presentation volumes of history from the Topkapı Palace for a period of fifty years and conduct a similar study to the one above.

\textsuperscript{94} Kütükoğlu suggests in a few sections of his article on the \textit{vak'anûvis} that there was an established process for the selection of court historians and that there was some conscious effort to split appointment between the \textit{kâlembey} and \textit{ilmîye}. No documentary evidence has been found yet to shed light on the selection process. See: Kütükoğlu, "\textit{Vak'anûvis}," IA, \textit{passim}.
reputations. For many who came from the scribal class, a reputation as an accomplished münşi or calligrapher might have gotten one noticed. For the religious class, attention was paid to those who were also accomplished scribes or well known college professors. One aspect that most of the men who held the post had in common was their literary accomplishments. Many were very skilled poets --some in the eighteenth century were considered among the best poets of the era--while others were well known for their scholarship and prose writing.

A majority of these men’s careers in government was spent trying to attain higher ranks. Most of them had very typical careers and never reached the lofty goal of being reis efendi or şeyhülislam, but many of them became leading men of their day, either because of scholarship or statesmanship. The eighteenth century had the great poets like Râşid, Sami or Asım, while the nineteenth century produced great statesmen like the skilled diplomat Ahmet Vasıf or Ahmet Cevdet, a major figure of the Tanzimat. We should also not forget great scholars such as the translator Mutercim Asım or the writer of medical textbooks, Şanızâde Atâullah.

The data presented here helps us better understand the office of court historian and the men who held it. This study provides us with insights into the lives of intellectuals in service to the state, but a companion study of the court historians' texts and their historical methodologies is needed to complete the survey of the office of vak'ânûvis.

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Some of the appointments might very well have been based on venality. The short tenures and lack of biographical information on some of the court historians leads one to make conclusions in that direction.
Appendix

Bio-Bibliographic Essays of the Holders of the Office of Vak'ânûvis by Date of Appointment to the Office of Vak'ânûvis.

Mehmed Raşid Efendi (d.1735)

Mehmed Raşid was born in Istanbul, the son of Malatyâh Mustafa Efendi (d.1100/1688-89). His father was a retired judge (kâdi) who had reached the judgeship of Bursa during the reign of Mustafa II (1695-1703). Two-time şeyhülislâm Ebû Saidzâde Feyzullah Efendi made the young Raşid a novice (müddazîm) in 1692/93, thus beginning Raşid’s career in the ranks of the ulema. In 1704 he entered into the ranks of Muslim college (medrese) professors, with his first appointment to the Hacı İlyas medrese with the entry rank of iptidâ-i hârıç.\(^1\) In 1707 he was appointed to the Anbar Gâzi medrese with the rank of hareket-i hârıç and then advanced to the next rank (iptidâ-i dâhil) with his assignment to the Halil Paşa medrese in 1711.

Grand Vezir Damad Ali Paşa appointed Raşid to the position of court historian (vak'ânûvis) in 1714 while he continued his advancement in the medrese system with his appointment to the Hadım Hasan Paşa medrese and an advancement in rank to haraket-i dâhil at the end of that same year.\(^2\)

Raşid’s position as court historian caused him to leave the capital as the Ottomans declared war against Venice in response to Venetian violations of the Treaty of Karlowitz. In his capacity as vak'ânûvis he accompanied the army on its campaign against Venice to regain Morea (Mora) in 1715. On his return from the successful

\(^1\) For a list of ranks for the ulema see: Chapter 4, Figure 4.0.

\(^2\) It is not clear if Raşid’s appointment to Hadım Hasan Paşa medrese was made before or after his appointment to the post of vak'ânûvis.
campaign he was rewarded for his work with a promotion to the grade of *sahn-i seman*-appointment to one of the eight courts of the medrese at the Fatih Mosque.

Austria allied with Venice against the Ottoman threat in 1716 and the Ottomans advanced to meet the army of Eugene of Savoy at Peterwaradin (Varadin). Mehmed Rașid was with the Ottoman army in his capacity as *vak'anûvis* during the battle that ensued and witnessed the Ottoman army’s defeat. On his return to Istanbul, he was promoted to the grade of *iptidâ-i atmışlı* and assigned to the Hânkah-i Kahriye medrese.

After Nevşehirli Ibrahim Paşa became the grand vezir in 1718, Rașid accepted the task of continuing Naima’s chronicle. Rașid also advanced to the rank of *haraket-i atmışlı* and was appointed to the Bayram Paşa medrese. In 1720 he was assigned to the Buyuk Ayasofya medrese while also being appointed to the position of distributor of inheritances.³ Rașid reached the pinnacle of his teaching career with his appointment to a professorship at Süleymaniye having attained the rank of *süleymaniye müderrisliği* in 1723. He was also given the honorary position of Inspector of the Evkaf Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina as a source of additional income.⁴

Mehmed Rașid’s career as a college professor and as *vak’anûvis* ended in 1723 with his appointment to the post of *kâdi* of Aleppo.⁵ In addition to his judgeship Rașid was given the honorary post of *Edirne pâye-i mücерrede*.⁶ His appointment as judge lasted for a year, after which he returned to Istanbul. On his return trip he befriended and

³ *Askert kassamılık* is an office attached to each of the chief military judges (kazasker) of Rumeli and Anadolu. The office was in charge of distributing inheritances to the families of dead soldiers. On this post see: Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye Teşkilâtı* (Ankara, 1988), 121-125.

⁴ On the post of Inspector of the Holy Cities or *Haremeyn müfettişlik* see: Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye*, 208.

⁵ In the learned hierarchy after becoming a senior professor one would enter into the lowest grade of the judgeships called *Mahrec*. The *kâdi* of Aleppo is one such entry-level judgeship.

⁶ On this post see Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye*, 279.
became a patron to the poet Mustafa Münif Efendi, who would become a leading poet of the era.

Raşid was associated with leading figures of the Tulip Age (Lâle Devri), whether they be part of literary circles or close confidants of Sultan Ibrahim. His patron was the powerful Grand Vezir Damad İbrahim Paşa; their fortunes were consequently linked.

After some time of inactivity, he was temporarily transferred to the military branch of government (seyfiye) and made a diplomat (elçi) to Isfahan in the retinue of chief diplomat Eşgani Eşref Han. This 1728 appointment, led to him being awarded the titular rank of Mekke pâyesi and then later in the year the honorary title of Rumeli Beylerbeyliği pâyesi. With the latter title he was elevated to vezirial rank and thus would for a short time be Mehmed Raşid ‘Paşa’. Eşgani Eşref’s diplomatic mission to Iran included 300 people, including his friend Münif Efendi, and set out on the 2nd of September 1728. Raşid did not return to Istanbul from Iran until July of 1729.

Mehmed Raşid became an ‘Efendi’ again on his transfer back to the ilmiye branch of government and selection for the judgeship of Istanbul in 1729. Since judgeships were yearly appointments, Raşid was up for reassignment in 1730. 1730 proved to be a fateful year as the Patrona Halil rebellion broke out which brought an end to Sultan Ibrahim’s reign and the Tulip Age. Raşid was not immune to the intrigues of the rebellion and its aftermath and he would spend the next three years (1731 to 1734) in exile for his association with Grand Vezir Damad İbrahim Paşa, first in Bursa and then on the island of Limni. During the Grand Vezirate of Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa, when most of the hysteria

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7 The İlimiye branch awarded the Mekke pâyesi while the titular appointment of Beylerbey was a customary honor appointed to diplomats.

8 On Raşid’s diplomatic mission see: M. Çâvid Baysun, “Müverrih Raşid Efendi’nin Iran elçiliği dâir,” Tİ, IX, (1946-1951). His own correspondences dealing with his trip to Iran and also with his tenure as judge of Aleppo are collected together in two volumes. See: Fehmi Edhem Karatay, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi kütüphanesi türkçe yazımlar kataloğu, (İstanbul, 1961), vol. I, 433.
of the Patrona Halil rebellion had diminished, he was pardoned on the condition that he return to Istanbul and go into retirement at his home in Üsküdar.

His retirement was very short as he was able to enter into government service again with an appointment to the position of Anadolu kazasker in August of 1734. Mehmed Raşid Efendi died while holding this post on the 10th of July 1735.

Although Raşid Efendi was a leading poet of his time, he is most remembered for his chronicle of the age of Ahmet III. He wrote poetry in the Persianist style of Nabi and Sami. His poetry is collected together in a divan of which many copies exist. He was also a talented calligrapher having studied as a youth with the master of tâlik script of his day, kazasker Abdulbaki Arif Efendi.


9 Anadolu kazasker or kadi asker was the chief military judge of Anatolia. This position, along with the position of Rumelia kazasker, chief military judge of European Turkey, were the highest judicial posts before reaching the highest post of şeyhülislem.
Küçük Çelebizade Ismail Aşım Efendi (1685-1760)  

Aşım Efendi was born in Istanbul in 1685. His father was Küçk-Çelebi Mehmet Efendi (d.1706), a scribe who held the post of reisülküttab in 1697 through the patronage of Grand Vezir Kopruluzade Fazıl Ahmet Paşa.

Some authors have stated that Aşım earned his diploma (rûûs) from Şeyhülislam Erzurumlu Seyyid Hacı-Feyzullah Efendi in 1697, at the age of twelve. This seems unlikely, as he could not have completed a medrese education at such a young age. It is more probable that Aşım received the 1697 diploma as an honor to his father, who held the post of reisülküttab at the time. Aşım’s entry into the ranks of medrese professors is more realistically documented in 1708 when he received another diploma from Şeyhülislam Ebezade Abdullah Efendi.

Aşım’s professorial career began with his appointment to the Kenan Paşa medrese with the rank of iptidâ-i hâriç in 1708. His next advancement was in 1713 when he moved to the Dizdariye medrese and accepted the rank of haraket-i hâriç. Aşım remained at this rank for more than four years until he petitioned a relative Rikâb-i hümâyûn kaymakam Ibrahim Paşa for help in advancement. The petition was successful and Aşım went to the Ahmet Paşa medrese in Demir Kapı with a new rank of iptidâ-i dâhil. A short time later (in 1719) Aşım was elevated to the rank of musila-i sahn and assigned to the Arifiye medrese.

Aşım’s skills in prose and poetry had come to the attention of Damad İbrahim Paşa who was looking for a replacement to Raşid Efendi in the post of vakâanûvis. Aşım

10 Aşım’s date of birth is based on the biographical entry by Mestakimzade where he states that Aşım died at the age of 77. See: Mestakimzade, Tuhfe-i hattatûn, 650.

11 See Sâlim, Tezkeres. Feyzullah Efendi was famous for his zeal in abusing the rûûs system. For more on his life see: Zilfi, The Politics of Piety, 215-220.

12 Aşım’s education was completed under the tutelage of Abdülbaşi Arif Efendi who was among the leading ulema of his day. His education included poetry, calligraphy and music.
assumed Râşid’s duties in July of 1723. Not long after his appointment to write history, he was appointed to the medrese founded by his father-in-law, the kazasker Ömer Efendi, in the Molla Gürani district of Istanbul. By 1730 he had the rank of musila-i süleymaniye.

The fortunes of Asim took a bad turn with the downfall of his patron Grand Vezir Damad Ibrahim Paşa in the Patrona Halil revolt. As a result of the political upheaval, Asim lost the post of vak’anwis in 1730. He finally advanced from the professorial ranks to enter into judicial ranks in 1732 with his appointment as kadi of Yenişehir-i Fenâr with the titular title of päye-i Kudüs. He arrived at his new post in January of 1733 and stayed in the post for fifteen months.\(^{13}\)

On his return to Istanbul he spent almost four years without a job. Finally, he was appointed as kadi to Bursa in 1738 and then he was selected for the post of kadi of Medina in 1744; each was a one-year appointment. He was again without employment for the next four years. Asim left Istanbul sometime during this period and made the hajj to Mecca. His fortunes changed when the paternal uncle of his wife was made şeyhiislâm in 1748. Şeyhiislâm Ebu Ishakzâde Mehmed Esad Efendi appointed Asim to the post of kadi of Istanbul in 1748.

After a year as kadi of Istanbul, Asim was again without employment for six years. In 1755 he received the titular rank of päye-i Anadolu. However, not long after the appointment of Râğib Paşa as grand vezir, Asim Efendi’s fortunes began to change. Râğib Paşa had great respect for Asim’s scholarship and poetry and he was quickly appointed kazasker of Anatolia in April of 1755, followed by kazasker of Rumeli the next

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\(^{13}\) Most judicial appointments were made for one year as to keep the pool of available ulema always changing, but one could ask for an extension for various reasons.
year. As additional source of income Asım was given the arpalik for Kuşadası and a bit later the arpalik for Keşan was added.\(^{14}\)

In 1759 Asım was appointed again to the post of Rumeli kazasker, but that appointment was short as he was then appointed to the highest ilmiye post in the Ottoman Empire, şeyhülislam. Küçük Çelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi was not able to enjoy the post for which he had endured many years of uncertainty and slow advancement within the ulema as he grew sick and after a month-long illness died on the 16\(^{th}\) of February 1760. He held the post of şeyhülislam for only 232 days. Asım Efendi’s funeral was held at Fatih Mosque and was attended by many important dignitaries of both the government and the community.

Küçük Çelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi was recognized as one of the great poets of the Tulip Age. Though he was not as well known for his prose, he wrote a chronicle, a collection of letters, and other works that have not survived to the present day.


\(^{14}\) Arpaliks were sources of income for mostly out-of-office ulema of the higher grades. These sources of income came from lesser magistratures (kaza) of the empire. Sometimes, as is with the case of Asım above, an arpalik would be assigned in addition to the active post as a way of providing extra income. On arpaliks see: Zilfi, The Politics of Piety, 66-70.
Arpaeminizâde Mustafa Sami Efendi (d.1734)\textsuperscript{15}

Sami was born sometime in the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century in Istanbul. His father was Arpa Emini Osman Efendi and, as his name indicates, he was a functionary of the ruling institution.\textsuperscript{16} Because of his father, it appears that he spent his youth in the Sublime Porte (\textit{Bab-i Ḍālt}).

He entered into the scribal service and made the rank of \textit{hace} or senior scribe. His first known governmental appointment was to the post of \textit{küçük ruznameci} or assistant keeper of the accounts that was part of the financial department or \textit{maliye}, a subdivision of the scribal institution or \textit{kalemîye}. His next appointment appears to have been to the post of city superintendent (\textit{şehir emini}).\textsuperscript{17} He then was assigned to the post of army payroll keeper (\textit{piyade mukabelecisi}) in 1725/1726.

Because of his reputation as a poet and calligrapher, he was appointed to the post of \textit{vak′anîvis} in either 1730 or early 1731. He died while holding this office in 1734. He was best remembered for his excellent poetry and was considered one of the ablest followers of the great Ottoman poet Nabi.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} According to the biographers Fatin and Bursa\c{s} Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Sami incorrectly has his title Bey, not Efendi.

\textsuperscript{16} The \textit{Arpa Emini} is the Commissioner of Forage Supplies for the Palace. He might have had wider responsibilities and had some oversight by the \textit{kadi} of Istanbul. This post was part of the outside service (\textit{birun}) of the palace and had the rank of \textit{hace}. See: Gibb and Bowen, \textit{Islamic Society}, 85 & 133; Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez}, 68-71.

\textsuperscript{17} This post was originally a post to supervise stipends and construction associated with the Topkapı palace and public buildings of Istanbul. It also had supervisory authority over the city's water supply. See: Gustav Bayerle, \textit{Pashas, Bega}, 140; Midhat Sertoğlu, \textit{Resimli}, 302; Gibb and Harold Bowen, \textit{Islamic Society}, 84-85.

Bibliography: Ramiz, Tezkeresi, 136-138; Belig Efendi, Nuhbetü'l-Asâr li Zeyli Zübdetü'l-Es'ar, 33a-34a; Fehmi Edhem Karatay, Istanbul Kütüphaneleri, I, 140; Kütükoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," IA, 276; Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 50; Bursa'lı Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Osmanlı Müellifleri, 232-233; Fatih, Tezkere, 180-181; Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanlı, III, 7; Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry, vol. 4, 58-66; Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 343; Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 46; Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 270-271.
Hüseyin Şakir Bey Efendi (d. 1742)

Hüseyin Şakir Bey-Efendi was born in Istanbul. Hüseyin’s father, Mustafa Bey (d.1717/1718), was a member of the ʿulma. His grandfather was Gümürkçü Hüseyin Paşa (d.1685/1686) an important Ottoman official who had held many vezirial posts including governor (vali) of Bursa. 19

His father had been the kadi of Edirne at the time of his entrance into the ʿulma as a novice. Şakir Bey-Efendi advanced to the lowest ranks of the professors (iptidâ-i hâriç) after presenting an eloquent poem to Sultan Ahmet III and his grand vezir, Damad İbrahim Paşa. He was appointed to the post of vakʿanûvis in 1734 and held the post until he was appointed to the post of kadi of Aleppo in 1735. He died in 1742. His appointment to the post of vakʿanûvis was based on his poetic skills and knowledge of inça. He was also a gifted calligrapher.


Hıfızı Mehmed Efendi (d.1752)

Not much is known of Hıfızı Mehmed Efendi’s life. He was born in Istanbul and had a career in the ulema. Hıfızı Mehmed Efendi was appointed to the post of vak’anîvis for a time in 1739 and helped collect the daybook material dating from Samî until his time. He at some time was a substitute kadi (naib) to a Mahmud Paşa. It is also known that he was a poet and a member of the Melâniye order of dervishes.20 He died in 1752.


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20 On this sufi order see: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 106-107.
Mehmet Suphi Efendi (d. 1769)

Mehmet Suphi Efendi was the son of Halil Fehmi Efendi who held the post of beylikçi during the time of Ahmet III.21 He was born in Istanbul at an unknown date. His career in the scribal class began with his appointment as a clerk to the chief secretary of the grand vezier’s office (Mektubî-i sadr-i âdî). He completed his scribal education during his appointment as a secretary in the grand vezier’s council (vezir-i âzam divan kâtibiği). According to one source he was with the army in the war with Austria and Russia that lasted from 1736 to 1739.22

He entered into the ranks of the hâcegân and had a long career of appointments associated with the Divan-i hümâyûn. His first post was küçük evkaf muhasebeci or chief accountant to small endowments in 1739.23 He was also selected for the post of vak’anâvis to replace Hifzi Efendi in that same year. His appointment was based on his writing style and knowledge. At first he was given the task of recording the events from 1736 to 1739, but this was changed by Grand Vezir Hekimoğlu Paşa to encompass all of the events from 1731 until the grand vezir’s appointment in 1742. He was to hold the post of vak’anâvis until 1744 when his duties from an earlier concurrent appointment as beylikçi, in 1743, made it impossible for him to hold both offices.

As was the custom in the bureaucracy, appointments (tevcihat) were held on an annual basis, so in 1745 Suphi was removed as beylikçi and given the post of maliye

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21 The beylikçi was the chief of the Divan Bureau that kept all records concerning the deliberations of the Imperial Council and drew up official copies of the edicts made by that council. See: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 20, Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 118; and İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 40-43.


23 SO states that he was appointed to the post of küçük evkaf muhasebeci in 1737/38.
teskereci (official in charge of writing memoranda for the financial branch of the government). In 1747 he was appointed to the post of arpa emini and the following year he was made başmuhasebeci for the first time.24

His next known post was that of director of the Imperial Mint (Darphane emini), which lasted from 1757 until July 1758. In March of 1759 he was chosen for the post of secretary of the Janissary Corps (yeniçeri kâtibi).25 In April 1762 he was given the post of chief of the office of cadastral registers (defter emini).26 In April 1764 he was appointed arpa emini for the second time. In March 1767 he was selected for the second time to hold the job of başmuhasebeci. Suphi’s last appointment was as a secretary, possibly as yeniçeri kâtibi again, to the army in the war with Russia that had begun in 1768.27 He died at the army’s winter quarters in Babadağ in the reign of Mustafa III in June of 1769.28

24 On the post of arpa emini, see note 16 above. The başmuhasebeci oversaw the accounts of Rumelia and the cizye (taxes on non-Muslims). The post was one of the most important of the secretaries of the Finance Department. See: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 18, and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 34 and Gibb and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society, 136.

25 Also known as the yeniçeri efendisi. He was appointed by the grand vezir to act as his representative to the corps. He was responsible for the pay registers and payments to the soldiers. See: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 160 and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 343-344.

26 The defter emini supervised the registration of all hase, zeamet or timar land assignments. The office was connected to the financial institution (maliye) of government. Also sometimes called the commissioner of registers. See: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 119; Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 34 and Ismail Hakkı Uzuncaşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 95-96.

27 Ramiz states in his biography that Suphi held this post at the time of his death. According to Bayerle this post stayed in Istanbul and did not travel with the army. See: Ramiz, Teskeresi, 169 and Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 160.

28 Babadağ was located in Bulgaria in the province of Silistre. On the war, which ended with the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca in 1774, see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 247-251.
Süleyman İzzi Efendi (d. 1755)

Süleyman İzzi was born in Istanbul. He was the son of Halil Ağa who was a palace functionary, baltacılardı kethüdası, in service to Hadice Sultan (d.1743) the daughter of Mehmed IV. İzzi was educated first by his father and then by a group of private tutors. He was also trained in calligraphy by one of the leading calligraphers of his time, Hoca Mehmed Râsim Efendi.

Due to his father’s connections with the palace İzzi was able to enter into government service as a novice (halife) in the Divân-i hümâyun kalemi. His first official appointment was the post of kale tezkereci, which was followed by selection for the offices (kâtiblik) of both the sipah and silâhdar. These offices were all part of the financial (maliye) department of government and came with the rank of hâcê.

In 1739 he was appointed as the chief scribal officer for the grand vezir (mekûbi-i kethüda-i sadr-i âltı). In this capacity he accompanied the grand vezir and imperial army on its successful campaign to retake the city of Belgrade. İzzi was inspired by the conquest and decided to make a copy of Kara Çelebizâde Abdülâziz Efendi’s work, the

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29 The baltacılardı were part of the inner service of the palace and acted as guards, as well as having other duties. The baltacılardı kethüdası was a post associated with the harem and was open to highly educated members of the palace service. Some sources note that his position was that of teberdar which is the same as baltaci. On this position see: Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı , 432-438. Mehmed IV’s reign was from 1648 until 1687.

30 Râsim trained him in both the nesih and sülüs styles of Arabic script.

31 The kale tezkereci was in charge of correspondence concerning large fortresses in the empire. The post was split between large (büyük) and small (küçük) fortresses, but the sources are not specific concerning to which one İzzi was appointed. See: Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, 133. The sipah and silâhdar were both mounted units of the Ottoman army. This office handled the appointment, dismissal, payment, etc. to these units. See: Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanlı, and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 298-299 under ‘Suvari Mukabalesi.’

32 On the war see Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. I, 243-245.
Süleyman-name, which details the first conquest of Belgrade by Süleyman the Magnificent in 1520. He attached to the end of his work a five-folio page account of his own observations and impressions of the re-conquest of Belgrade.33

In July of 1745, İzzî was chosen for the post of vak'anûvis to replace Mehmet Suphi Efendi. His appointment has been attributed to the recommendation of the reisülküttab, Emârzâde Haci-Mustafa Efendi. While in the position of vak'anûvis he was given additional duties first as küçük evkaf muhasebeci in October of 1746 and then appointed to the position of chief of ceremonies or teşrifatçı in October 1747.34

In 1753 İzzî decided to go on the Hajj to Mecca and relinquished his position as vak'anûvis. He died in 1755.35 He was buried next to the tomb of Şeyh Muradzâde Efendi who was his mentor in the Nakşbendi sufi order.36

Süleyman İzzî was an expert at inşa which helped him in attaining the position of vak'anûvis. He was also a poet and produced a divân, but his poetry was not as well accepted as his prose. He also, in accordance with his sufi ties, translated the work of Salah al-Din b. Mubarak al-Bukhari called Anis at-tali bin va'uddat as-salîkin.37

Bibliography: Fatin, Tezkere, 29; Râmiz, Adâb-ı Zurafa, 210; Ismet Parmaksizoğlu, "İzzi," IA, s.v.; Ismet Parmaksizoğlu, "İZZİ," EI², s.v.; Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anûvis," IA, 277; Bayrak, Osmandi Tarihi Yazarları, 123-124; Bursaş Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Osmanlı

33 This work was later presented to the Sultan. It can be found at the Topkapı Sarayî Kütuphanesi, Emânet hazinesi, nr. 1395.

34 The position of chief of ceremonies in this case was probably a sinecure.

35 It is not clear where he died. Most sources state that he died in Istanbul, but a few state that he died while on the Hajj.

36 For a brief history of the Nakşbendiye see: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Begs, 117-118.

37 For a good copy of his work see: Süleymaniye Kütuphanesi, Duğumlu Baba 230.
Seyyid Hâkim Mehmed Efendi (d. 1770)

Hâkim was born in Istanbul at an unknown date. His father was kafesdar Bıçakçı Emir Çelebi. He was privately tutored by Esad Hoca in general knowledge and he learned the sülüs and nesih scripts of calligraphy from İsmail Efendizade Abdi Efendi. He also had additional calligraphic training from Soyluçzaede Necib Eyyubi. Hâkim entered into the scribal service of the Porte (Bab-ı âdil) as a novice in the sadaret mektupçu kalemi. He attained the rank of hâce.

His first known appointment was the post of vak'anîvis on a temporary basis in 1753 to replace İzzî Efendi who had gone on the Hajj. His selection was based on his abilities in poetry and inşa. His position became permanent in 1755 on the death of İzzî. He was to hold the post of vak'anîvis until 1766.

He was chosen for the position of cebeciler kâtibi in May of 1759. In May of 1761 he was given the post of sipahiler kâtibi. He was made maliye tezkerci in 1763 and later in 1766 he was made again cebeciler kâtibi. Soon after in that same year he was appointed to the post of küçük ruznameci. These jobs were held concurrent with his vak'anîvis post.

Hâkim Mehmed Efendi died in 1770. He was a member of the Nakşibendi order of dervishes. He was also a poet of some note and knew both Persian and Arabic well.

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38 Kafesdar could refer to the famous "cage" of Topkapı Palace. It is possible then that his father was attached to the harem in some way.

39 An accounting office associated with the armory. See: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Beğs, 26; and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 55.

40 Also known as ruzname-i sani or second accountant. He was responsible for the records of salaries of the palace servants and minor officials of the Imperial Council. See: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Beğs, 129; and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 34.
Çesmizâde Mustafa Reşid Efendi (d. 1770)

Mustafa Reşid Efendi was born in Istanbul. He belonged to a family that had a long line of service in the Ottoman **ulema**. His father was Mehmet Said Efendi who held the judgeship of Mecca (**Mekke-i mükerrerme kadısı**) at the time of his death.

Reşid Efendi had a **medrese** education and entered into the ranks of the **ulema** (**tarik-i ilniye**) in 1742. He was trained in the **talik** scrip of calligraphy by Fındikzâde Ibrahim Efendi and had further training in **talik** from a master of that era, Kâtipzâde Refi Efendi. He rose through the ranks of the teachers, but his promotions and assignments are not known.

According to Bayrak he held some administrative posts in the **ulema** bureaucracy including the post of certificate writer to the military judge (**kazarkerlik tezkerecişi**) and secretary to the **şehhiîlislam** (**resîhat mektupçusu**), but he does not give any dates or the duration of these appointments.

Reşid Efendi was appointed as **vak'anûvis** to replace Hâkim Efendi in 1766. He was to hold the post for about two years. It is not known why Reşid was dismissed as **vak'anûvis**, but it could have been related to Ottoman preparations for war. His health was known to have been declining and he died nine months after being appointed to the **Darûlhadis-i Sûleymaniye medrese** in February 1770. Reşid Efendi was also a poet and a divân of his works exists.

Bibliography: Bayrak, **Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları**, 76-77; Kütükoğlu, "**Vak’anûvis**," IA, 277; Mustakimzâde, **Tuhfe-i hattâtın**, 744; Cemâleddin, **Ayine-i Zürefa**, 54-55; Bursali

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41 The founder of this **ulema** family line was Çesmi Mehmed Efendi who had entered into the **ulema** in the mid-17th century. See: Mehmed Süreyya, **Sicill-i Osmanî**, vol. 2, 93-94.

42 This was the top grade for diploma-holding professors in the Ottoman Empire and it was often reserved for retired high-level **ulema** functionaries.
Musazâde Mehmed Ubeydullah Efendi (1718-1782)

Musazâde was born in 1718. Very little is known about him. He was from the ulema and had held at least one judgeship in 1747 before becoming rikâb vak'ânûvis or substitute court historian in 1768. He held the post until 1770. In late 1772 Musazâde was assigned to the post of müneccim or astrologer and then from 1780 until his death in 1782 he was chief astrologer to the sultan (müneccimbaşi).43


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Elhac Enveri Sadullah Efendi (1735-1794)

Enveri Sadullah Efendi was born in the northern Anatolian city of Trabazon in 1735. The name and profession of his father is not known. At a young age he moved to Istanbul for education that included Arabic, Persian, and poetry. After he completed his training, through patronage, he managed to secure entry into the grand vezier’s office (Bab-ı âlt). He reached the ranks of the hace.

With the beginning of the war with Russia in late 1768, the Ottoman government reorganized the office of vak’ânâvis by having the main appointee to the post accompany the army while a substitute would stay in Istanbul and record the events relating to the central government. The latter appointment went to Musazâde while the former appointment went to Enveri. Enveri Sadullah Efendi was in the post of selâm ağası to the grand vezir, Yağlıkçızâde Mehmet Emin Paşa in 1768 when he was recommended for the job by the famous Ottoman diplomat Ahmet Resmi Efendi. Like a modern-day war correspondent Enveri departed Istanbul and met the Ottoman army gathering at Hantepesi in Rumelia.

During the war Enveri attracted the attention of Silâhdar Mehmet Paşa (d.1780) who had become grand vezir and army commander-in-chief two months after the Ottoman army’s disastrous defeat at Kartal in the Danubian Principalities in August of

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44 The selâm ağası corresponds to the teşrifatci or master of ceremonies associated with the palace. In fact, the grand vezir’s household was modeled after the sultan’s with many of the same bureaucratic positions. See: Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, 152. The story of Ahmet Resmi Efendi suggesting Enveri as a candidate for vak’ânâvis is repeated in some of Enveri’s biographies, but not all. On Ahmet Resmi Efendi see: Govsa, *Türk Meşhurlar*, 25.

45 On Hantepesi as an Ottoman marshalling point see: İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 4, sec. 1, 375.
Due to Silahdar Mehmet Paşa's patronage, Enveri was appointed to the post of master of ceremonies (teşrifatçı) in 1771. In 1772 he was appointed to the post of second secretary to the grand vezir (tezkire-i sani or küçük tezkire) and as the war with Russia ended in 1774 he was selected for the post of secretary to the armory (cebeciler kâtiplik).

Enveri returned with the army to Istanbul and began to write a chronicle of events dating from his appointment as vak'anûvis. He had not completed the chronicle before his dismissal from the position in late 1774. He remained out of office until December of 1776 when he was chosen for the post of vak'anûvis for the second time under the patronage of both the grand vezir, Derviş Mehmet Paşa (1735-1777) and the şeyhülislam Vessafzâde Mehmed Esad Efendi (1707-1778).

Enveri was chosen for the office of teşrifatçı for the second time in 1777. He was appointed başmuhasebeci in 1779 and in 1782 he was advanced to the post of mevkıfatçısı or director of the bureau of retained revenues (mevkıfat kâlemî). In September of 1783 under the patronage of the grand vezir Halil Hamid Paşa he was made chief secretary to the grand vezir (tezkire-i evvel or büyük tezkereci). Because of the demanding nature of the post, it was decided that he should end his second tenure as vak'anûvis. His tenure as chief secretary to the grand vezir lasted until September of 1785 and a few months later

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46 On Silahdar Mehmet Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 249.

47 This appointment was made while Enveri was with the army, so it is most likely that the post was an honorary assignment for the income rather than an official post with duties attached to it.


49 This department kept track of money accrued from unused state expense allocations. It also maintained military depots. For more on this department see: Gustav Bayerle, Pashas, Beğs, 108 and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 209-210.
he was able to secure another appointment as *Anadolu muhasebeci* (Accountant for Anatolia).\(^{50}\)

Enveri could be found again in possession of the post of *vak'ânîvis* in July of 1787. A few months later his tenure as *Anadolu muhasebeci* was ended and he was appointed as *bûyük tezkereci* for the second time. As 1787 came to a close Enveri was again to resume his role as war correspondent as the Ottomans entered into another disastrous military bout with Russia and Austria over the Balkans and the Crimea.

Enveri accompanied the army under Koca Yusuf Paşa (d.1800) in its campaigns along the border regions of Rumelia. He returned to Istanbul in the winter of 1789 after being replaced as *vak'ânîvis* by Vasif Efendi who was a favorite of the new sultan, Selim III. In 1790 Enveri was assigned to the post of *suvâri mûkabelecî* (comptroller of ledgers of the *bölükât-i erba'a*).\(^{51}\)

With the end of the cessation of hostilities in the war with Austria in October 1791, Ahmet Vasif was appointed to the diplomatic mission sent to see that the treaty of Sistova was carried out, and in his place as *vak'ânîvis*, Enveri Efendi was again chosen. Concurrent with his job as *vak'ânîvis*, he was assigned again to the post of *Anadolu muhasebeci*. His fourth tenure as *vak'ânîvis* was to end with the return of Vasif in 1793.

Selim III sent Ahmet Vasif into a brief exile, which was to lead to Enveri's fifth term as court historian in July of 1794. Enveri Sadullah Efendi died in Istanbul while holding the post of *vak'ânîvis* and *Anadolu muhasebeci* in November of 1794.

Enveri had one known son named Enver Ali Efendi who was also in the service of the scribal branch and reached the rank of *hace*. He died in December of 1819.

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\(^{50}\) This financial department kept the accounts of various tax-farms and imperial domains and the pay rolls of veterans and troops garrisoning the Archipelago. See: Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society* 132-133 and Midhat Sertoğlu, *Resimli*, 15.

Antebli Behçetî Hasan Efendi (d. 1775/1776)

Behçetî Hasan Efendi was born in Antep at an unknown date.\footnote{Antep or modern Gaziantep is a city in modern southeastern Turkey near the border with Syria. In the past the city has had many names including: Ayintab, Beda, Bida, Hatap, and Dolicheunus among others.} The name of his father has not come down to us. All that his biographers state was that he came to Istanbul and was a member of the ulema. He was a secretary to Kara Halilzade Said Efendi and was appointed vak'anüvis in 1774. Behçetî held the post until his death in 1775 or 1776.\footnote{The appointment as a secretary is mentioned in Sicill-i Osmanî and possibly refers to the historian Karahalilzade Said Mehmed Efendi who was a member of the ulema and one-time şeyhülislâm. He died in 1754. See: Bursali Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Osmanlı Müellifleri, v.3, 132.} He was known as a poet.

Bibliography: Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 56; Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 65; Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî, vol. 2, 32; and Kutukoğlu, "Vak'anüvis," IA, 277.
Şişman Molla Ömerzâde Süleyman Efendi (d. 1807)

Şişman Molla’s place and date of birth are not known. His father was Ahsakah Omer Efendi. He received his diploma from the three-time şeyhülislam Dürrizâde Mustafa Efendi and in July of 1764 he entered into the ulema. He had a career as a müderris.

In 1775 or 1776, Şişman Molla was appointed to the post of vak’anûvis. He held the post of vak’anûvis for only a short time, as he was not performing in the job. This lack of performance was noticed by both the grand vezir, Derviş Mehmet Paşa and the şeyhülislam Vessafzâde Mehmed Esad Efendi who removed him from the post and appointed Enverî to replace him.

In 1793/1794 he was appointed the kadi of Yenişehir-Fanâr. A year later, in 1795/1796, he was awarded the Edirne payesi and during the next year he was advanced to the paye-i Mekka. He was promoted to the Istanbul payesi in 1799/1800 and then in 1802/1803 he was made kadi of Istanbul. He died in his home in Fındıkhâ, Istanbul in 1807.

Ahmet Vasıf Efendi (1739-1806)

Ahmet Vasıf Efendi was born in Baghdad in 1739. Nothing is known about his family, but he did receive a traditional education in the Islamic sciences and in the scribal art in Baghdad, Aleppo (Halep) and Van. He spent a lot of his youth reading. His first jobs were with libraries in Baghdad as a copyist. Later he found a patron and position as librarian to Kel (or Gül) Ahmet Paşazade Ali Paşa who was governor of Aleppo or Kars at the time. He continued in Ali Paşa's retinue, now as a secretary (kâtib), as he was appointed commander of Bender front (ıltavat or Aksu seraskeri) in the war with Russian which began in 1768.  

Ali Paşa was killed in the war in 1769 and Vasıf Efendi now attached himself to the retinue, again as a secretary, of the commander (serasker) of the Hotin front Abaza Mehmed Paşa. In 1771 Vasıf was captured by the Russians in the siege of Yenikale in the Crimea and sent to St. Petersburg for about nine months. Vasıf was chosen by Catherine II to convey letters of peace to the Ottomans in 1772, an event that would elevate Vasıf to a career as a diplomat. Vasıf, on his release, was summoned to Istanbul and then promptly sent to another front as the peace talks proved inconclusive (May, 1772).

In August of 1772, the grand vezir and commander-in-chief of the army, Muhsinzade Mehmed Paşa (1706-1774) sent Vasıf Efendi to the peace talks being held in the Moldavian (Boğdan) town of Fokşani in order to lengthen the talks. Vasıf managed to keep the Russian negotiators, led by Ramnzov busy for an additional forty days, which greatly pleased the grand vezir.

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54 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. 4, sec. 1, 379-381.

In October of 1772 Vasif Efendi was again sent with a peace delegation headed by the reisülkittab Abdürezzak Bâhir Efendi/Paşa (1730-1780) to Bükres (Bukarest) to negotiate a peace treaty, but the talks broke down after six months and Vasif returned to the front.\(^{56}\) While with the army he witnessed many battles including the final major defeat of the Ottoman army in 1774 at Kozluca, after which the Ottomans were forced to open peace negotiations again. These peace negotiations resulted in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca signed on July 21, 1774.\(^ {57}\) Vasif Efendi was also involved in the negotiations surrounding this treaty. He went to the Russian army’s camp at Yaş (Jassy) to meet with Catherine the Great’s representatives and try to renegotiate on behalf of the people of the Crimean Khanate who were being given independence. They wanted to continue to recognize the suzerainty of the sultan, but Vasif’s mission was a failure.

How Ahmet Vasif spent the years between the end of the war in 1774 and his next appointment in 1783 is not exactly known. It appears that, through the patronage of Abdürezzak Bâhir Efendi/Paşa, he was attached to the âmedî odaşı and it was during this period that he reached the rank of bureau chief.\(^{58}\) His next position came during the reform efforts of the grand vezir Halil Hamit Paşa (1736-1785), who appointed Vasif along with beyliği Raşid Efendi to refurbish Ibrahim Mütferrika’s press which had been neglected since his death in 1745. Vasif oversaw as matbaa-i âmire nâziri (director of

\(^{56}\) On Abdürezzak Bâhir Efendi/Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 14.

\(^{57}\) For a summary of the treaty see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 250.

\(^{58}\) The âmedî odaşı or ‘office of the receiver,’ was established about 1777 and was responsible for correspondence to foreign governments and embassies from the grand vezir or chief scribe (reis efendi).
the Imperial Printing House) the publishing of the collection of chronicles by vak’anıvis’ Sami,SUPHı, and Şakıır in 1784 and left after a dispute with Raşıd not long afterward.59

Ahmet Vasıf was first appointed to the post of vak’anıvis on November 3, 1783 and began to record events from where Enverı had left off in 1782. While holding the position of vak’anıvis he was also appointed to the additional office of account keeper for the fleet (kalyonlar defterdar or kalyonlar kâtibi) in August of 1784 and in August 1785 he was found in the position of mevkıfatı̈.

Vasıf’s first appointment as vak’anıvis ended in July 1787 when he was appointed by the Ottoman government to go on a diplomatic mission with Azmi Efendi to Spain and Morocco. The principal purpose of this dual mission was to discuss the access to the Medıiterranean of the Russian fleet. Azmi went to Morocco (Fas) while Vasıf departed for Spain. As a diplomat (elçi) for the Ottoman Empire Vasıf was given the appropriate rank and titles, so in the same year he was made Anadolu muhasebeciliği paye-i reft‘asııı and orta-elçilik rütbesı for the mission.60 Vasıf left by boat for Spain on July 1, 1787. His mission landed at Barcelona and, after some time in quarantine, he had meetings with the king and his ministers in Madrid, viewed troops and armaments, and even saw the great palace of Grenada. He was away from the capital for ten months.61

59 Much has been written about the first Ottoman press opened by Muteferrika in 1723 that operated until his death in 1745. The press briefly was reopened by Kadi Ibrahim between 1747 and 1756 and then again under Vasıf and Raşıd from 1783-1797 at which time the equipment was sold to the French embassy. See: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 230-232 for a list of works published by the press; Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Tarihi, vol. 4, sec. 2, 519-522; and Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1, 236-238, 257.

60 Middle Diplomat. The meaning for this word is generally used in the context of visiting diplomats to the Ottoman Empire rather than to people sent abroad. See: Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 279.

61 Vasıf’s travels to Spain are recorded in his own work titled: İspanya Sefaretnamesi, Istanbul Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Emanet Hazinesi, no. 1438. Also see: Unat, Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri, 144-147.
In April 1789 Selim III became the twenty-eighth sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Not long after, he selected Vasif Efendi as vak‘anüvis for the second time to replace Enveri who was with the Ottoman army in the field. The war with Russia and Austria had begun in 1787 and Enveri had been with the army since it departed on campaign. At the same time as he was appointed to the post of court chronicler he was also given the position of Anadolu muhasebeci and the post of administrator of tax farms (Istanbul Mukataacılığı). It was also at this time that Vasif Efendi managed (kethüda) Hadice Sultan’s household. Hadice Sultan was one of Selim III’s sisters.

Vasif accompanied the army commander Karahisari Ahmet Paşa on the ill-fated Maçın campaign which ended in a resounding Ottoman defeat in April of 1791. In May of 1791, while with the army, Vasif was removed as Anadolu muhasebeci and was appointed to the post of başmuhasebeci and along with teşrifatı Hacı Mustafa Efendi was appointed to the army secretariat (ordu tahrirat kâtiblik). Ahmet Vasif was again called on for his diplomatic skills. He left the army with an Ottoman delegation and proceeded to Kalas to negotiate a cessation of hostilities with the Russian commander Prince Repnin in August of 1791.

In October of 1791 Vasif was removed from both the post of vak‘anüvis and that of başmuhasebeci in order to supervise the Ottoman occupation of forts taken by the Austrians in the war as a part of fulfilling the terms of the Treaty of Sistova (Ziștovi). He returned from Austria and spent a short time without holding an appointment, but in May of 1793 he was again given the position of Anadolu muhasebeci. Not long after that he was again in the post of vak‘anüvis (June 1793).

\(^{62}\) The Istanbul Mukataası dealt with administering the tax farms of Istanbul, some other tax farms in western Thrace, registered receipts from the market dues of Istanbul and Edirne, and dues on silks and objects made of gold and silver. See: Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society 134.
Ahmet Vasif was known for being an ambitious man and his ambitions finally led him into conflict with the head of the chancery (*reis efendi* or *reisülküttab*) Raşid Efendi and, more importantly, Sultan Selim III. In July of 1794 Vasif was removed from his offices and exiled to the island of Midilli (Mitilene) for attempting to better his position directly with the sultan. His banishment was not long however and he was forgiven in December of 1794.

After a long period of inactivity in government and personal hardship, Vasif was again appointed to the post of court historian in May, 1799 after the death of *vak'anüvis* Halif Nuri. In 1799 he was also appointed to the post of *Anadolu muhasebeci* and then later in the year to the post of *büyük ruznameci* (senior accountant).\(^63\) In 1802 Vasif was appointed as *nişancı* (affixer of the imperial seal) and later that same year he was appointed senior accountant (*büyük ruznameci*) again.

Ahmet Vasif Efendi’s career reached its pinnacle with his appointment by Selim III as *reisülküttab* on the 5\(^{th}\) of August 1805. Because of the demanding nature of his job, especially with the diplomatic struggles between France and the Triple Alliance, he relinquished the position of *vak'anüvis*. It was because of the stress of the job that Vasif was forced to resign the post for health reasons after fourteen and a half months. No long afterward Ahmet Vasif Efendi died in Istanbul on 20\(^{th}\) of October 1806.

Vasif was survived by two sons and two daughters. Both of his sons, Lebib and Vassaf Efendis, were *müderris*. One of his daughters married Şâlih Bey from the *hacegân-i Divan-i hümâyun*. Vasif Efendi was also a poet of minor repute and very little of his poetry has survived to this day.\(^64\)

\(^{63}\) Director of the register of daily financial transactions at the Imperial Treasury, also called *baş ruznameci*.

\(^{64}\) There are two known examples. One is a section of his *Divançe* which can be found in Istanbul Universite Kütüphanesi, İbnülemin yazm., nr. 3692. The other is a section of

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poetry found in a scrapbook found in Baghdad and not dated; British Museum, Add. 7939, folio 273, n.d.
Teşrifatı Hasan Efendi (d.1797)

Hasan Efendi was the son-in-law to Kâmil Ahmet Efendi/Paşa who had appointments both as reisülküttab and administrative intendant of the grand vezir's office (sadâret kethüdasi) in the 1750's.65 He followed in the father-in-law's career path in the kalemiye and attained the rank of hace. He was for a while the commissioner of reservoirs (bendler bina emini).66 In July 1786 he was given the job of teşrifatçı and then in 1787 he was made rikâb vak'anûvis at the departure of Vâsit Efendi for Spain. He was to hold the post until the outbreak of war with Russia and Austria later in that year at which time we was reappointed to the post of teşrifatçı. Sometime after 1789/1790 he was director of the state press (matbaa emini). In July of 1797 he died.


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66 This position appears to have been a subordinate to the şehir emini and was responsible for the reservoirs which supplied Istanbul with its water; see: Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, 357. The post could also have been a post under the başmuhasebeci; see: Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez*, 354.
Esseyid Edib Mehmed Emin Efendi (d. 1801)

Edib Mehmed Efendi was born in Istanbul. His father was a functionary in the central government named Ali Bey, but nothing is known of the latter's background or career in government. Edib Efendi attained the rank of hâce and his first known appointment was that of teşrifatçı at an unknown date.

Edib was appointed to replace Teşrifati Hasan Efendi in 1787 as rikâb vak'anûvis. He recorded the events in the capital from then until he was dismissed in 1789. In May of 1792 he was reappointed as teşrifatçı and then as rikâb vak'anûvis. His assignment as rikâb vak'anûvis lasted until June of 1793. He died in 1801.

Edib Efendi had a good reputation as a poet. He had one known son, Süleyman Necib Efendi.

Halil Nuri Bey Efendi (d.1799)

Halil Nuri was the grandson of the former grand vezir, Abdullah Naili Paşa (1698-1758). His father was Naili Abdullah Paşazâde Feyzullah Şakir Bey. His birth date is not known.

Nuri entered into the kalemiye and reached the rank of hace in 1784/1785 and held the post of tarihçi (dater) in the financial office of government. In 1787/1788 he was appointed secretary to the gun carriage drivers (top arabacilar kâtibi). Nuri then was a clerk in the âmadi bureau.

In October of 1794 Nuri was made maliye tezkereci and a short time later was appointed Küçük ruznameci. He was appointed as vak’anüvis from 1794 until his death in 1799. It is also possible that he held the post in the âmadi bureau during his tenure as vak’anüvis.

Nuri was the son-in-law of Reiszâde Mustafa Aşir Efendi who was şeyhülislam between 1798 and 1800. Nuri was well known as a poet, master of inşa (belles letters) and had at least one son, Mehmed Nebil Bey.

67 He was grand vezir for a short time during the reign of Osman III. See: Govsa, Türk Meşhurлarı, 3.

68 His father was also in the scribal institution and held various posts reaching the rank of hace between 1751/1752 and his death in 1762/1763. See: Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmani, vol. 3, 125.

69 The tarihçi or tarihçi kalemi dated all official documents emanating from the maliye departments. See: Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, 130 and Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez, 360.

70 On the top arabacilar see: Gibb and Bowen, Islamic Society, 66-68 and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 319.

71 Ismail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahlî Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 148.
Bibliography: Kütükoğlu, "Vak'ânîvis," IA, 279; Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarlari, 173; Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî, vol. 4, 590; Bursalı Mehmet Tahir Efendi, Osmanlı Müellifleri, vol. 3, 114; Fatin, Tezkere, 321; Cemâleddin, Ayîne-i Zürefa, 59; and Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 323.

72 His son had a career in the ulema. See: Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî, vol. 4, 540.
Muvakkitzâde Pertev Mehmet Efendi (1746-1807)

Muvakkitzâde Pertev Mehmet Efendi was born in 1746 in Istanbul. He was the son of the chief timekeeper (muvakkit) of the Sultan Ahmet mosque, Pertev Mehmed Çelebi. He received a traditional education and entered into the scribal branch of government.

He was chief secretary to the grand vezir (mektubi sadr-i âli) and later he was appointed as a clerk in the arnedi bureau where he reached the rank of hace. He was appointed vak'anûvis in 1805 to replace Vâsî Efendi. He accompanied the army on its campaign in the Principalities during the war with Russia and Britain beginning in 1806.\[73\]

Pertev Efendi grew ill in Silistre and died while the army wintered in Edirne in 1807. He was a very well respected poet and a pupil of poet Hoca Edirnevi Neşet Süleyman Efendi (d.1807).\[74\]


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\[74\] On Hoca Edirnevi Neşet Süleyman Efendi see: Bursâli Mehmet Tahir Efendi, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, vol. 2, 279.
Esseyid Ömer Amir Bey (d. 1815)

Ömer Amir was born in Istanbul at an unknown date. His father was the deşterhâne-i âmire kisedarî Himmet Efendi. He began his scribal career with an appointment as a scribe in the office of cadastral records (deşterhâne kâtibi). He subsequently was assigned, with the help of Beylikçi Izzet Bey (d. 1809), to the amedî bureau as a scribe and then reached the hace rank in that same office in 1807.

In October of that same year Ömer was assigned to the post of vak'anûvis and rode out to the Imperial Army (Ordu-yi Hûmayûn) wintering in Edirne to replace Pertev. His career as vak'anûvis was cut short due to illness, attributed to excess alcohol consumption by one biographer, and he was forced to resign in that same year. In 1808 he was made the deputy to the second secretary to the grand vezir (tezkere-i sani vekili). In April of 1808 he was appointed to the post of maliye tezkereci.

In 1809 he was appointed silâhdar kâtibi and in the following year he was given the post of tezkere-i sani. In 1812 he was made maliye tezkereci for the second time. He died in 1815. He was a well-known poet of his time and, like Pertev Efendi, was a pupil of the poet Hoca Edirnevi Neşet Süleyman Efendi. He was also was accomplished in the art of belles lettres (inşa).


75 Purse-holder in the imperial register house/cadastral office.

76 On Beylikçi Izzet Bey see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 197.

77 Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 64-65.
Ahmet Aşım Efendi was born about 1755 in the city of Ayıntap (modern Gaziantep). He came from a famous line of religious scholars. His father, Seyyid Mehmed Cenâni, a well-known poet, was the chief clerk (baş kâtip) of the local Shari’a court.

Aşım benefited from the fact that Ayıntap was the regional intellectual center that brought scholars from all over to teach in the schools. He was at first trained by his father and then by the wider scholarly community in the Islamic sciences, Arabic and Persian philology, literature, and Hadith. His excellent knowledge of the Persian, Arabic, and Turkish languages would greatly help him in his career as a translator (mütercim).

Ahmet Aşım Efendi began his professional career working in the same Shari’a court as his father. He then entered into the service of the administrator of the Ayıntap “tax farm” administrator (Ayıntap mukataası), Nuri Mehmet Paşa (d.1791/92), as a secretary to his council (divan kâtibi).

In 1789 Ayıntap was placed under siege by an army of 30,000 under the command of Daldabanoğlu Mehmed Ali Paşa. Aşım and other members of the intellectual community went to the nearby town of Kilis to seek refuge. He lost most of his library and possessions in the siege. In 1890 he went to Istanbul while his family returned to Ayıntap. After his arrival in Istanbul he spent time seeking a patron among

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78 Some of his teachers were: Ömerzâde Hâfiz Efendi, Hacı Hasanzâde Efendi, Hoca Necib Abdullah Efendi, the poet Rûhi Mustafa Efendi, Hacı Mehmed Efendi and his brother Ahmet Efendi who was well know for his knowledge of Hadith.

the Ottoman elite. He found that patron in kazasker Tatarciência Abdullah Efendi (d.1797) who helped him secure a müdderis position.\textsuperscript{80}

In 1796 Asım presented a section of his as yet uncompleted translation of a dictionary called Tibyân-i nâfi' dar tarcamâ-i burhân-i kâfi' by Husayn b. Halaf Tarbrizi to Sultan Selim III who had a great appreciation for the arts. The sultan was impressed with the work and he presented Asım with a gift of a house and 300 kuruş. In addition he was assigned to a medrese with the rank of hareket-i hariç. At the same time he received an additional monetary gift and permission from the sultan that allowed him to bring his family to Istanbul, but events were to change his plans.

First, the house the sultan had given to him as a gift burnt down and caused him great distress and then the French under Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798. The French invasion forced his family, who had only traveled as far as Aleppo, to return to Ayıntap due to the uncertain situation. To make things even worse, the patronage by Sultan Selim III caused some jealousy among the ulama which resulted in attempts to reduce his favor by some of its members including the future şeyhiislâm and deposer of Selim III, Şerifzâde Mehmed Ataullah Efendi.\textsuperscript{81} As a result in order to make fun of Asım, he was given a judicial district (kaza) near Rusçuk as an arpalık (supplement to salary) that was virtually worthless.

Asım's financial distress caused by the vengeful members of the ulama came to the attention of Selim III and he again provided financial gifts which helped Asım

\textsuperscript{80} For a biography of Tatarciência Abdullah Efendi see: Mehmed Süreyya, Sıciili-i Osmanlı, vol. 3, 390-391. It is interesting to note that Tatarciência fell from favor and was banished in 1794 and accompanied Ahmet Vâsi Efendi to Midilli.

\textsuperscript{81} On the future şeyhiislâm see: İsmail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 149 and Bursa Mahmut Tahir Efendi, Osmanlı Müstelliferi, vol. 1, 271. Other opponents identified by Asım were the müdderis Ataullah Efendi and Hoca Mühib Efendi.
recover from the loss of his house and the loss of income due to the *arpalik* assignment. Asum Efendi would forever have bad feelings for high-ranking *ulema*.

After the French evacuated Egypt in 1801, Asum felt it was safe for him to travel and he petitioned Selim III to make the Hajj (*Hac*) and then return to Istanbul with his family which he had not seen since he left Kilis in 1789. He left Istanbul and stayed in Egypt for a while and then in 1802 he arrived in the Hijaz for the Hajj.

In Medina he met his old teacher Hoca Necib Abdullah Efendi and it was Necib who encouraged Asum Efendi to work on a translation of the Persian/Arabic dictionary of Firuzabadi called *Kamīs al-Muḥīt*, an endeavor that would earn him great fame in the future. On his return from the Hijaz he visited Damascus and Aleppo before returned to his hometown of Ayntap for a reunion with his family, after which they returned to Istanbul.

In November of 1805 Asum began his work on the dictionary. In 1807 or early 1808 Mutercim Asum Efendi was appointed to the position of *vakʿanūvis* a post which he would hold until shortly before his death in 1819. 1807 was to be one of the most distressing years for Asum as it was the year that his great patron, Selim III was deposed by conservative elements of the army and *ulema*. Asum Efendi had been depending on gifts from the sultan as his major source of support; with Selim III gone his future was very uncertain.

During the reign of Sultan Mustafa IV (May 1807 to July 1808) while the conservatives were in power, Asum Efendi lived without a salary or a patron, both of which were needed to survive in the official Ottoman milieu. He did give a lecture to the new sultan for Ramadan and for that received an allowance (*Ramadan harçlık*). He was forced to sell his books and borrow money to survive, but throughout this period he did continue the translation of his dictionary.
It was also at this time that Aşım Efendi met the Iranian ambassador Hey müfüsi Ak İbrahim who had come to the capital with the returning Ottoman ambassador Seyid Refi' Efendi. Ak İbrahim was a poet, astronomer, scholar and Shiite theologian who sought out scholars in Istanbul on his arrival. The şeyhülislâm Ataullah Efendi assigned Aşım to show the Iranian around the capital to meet scholars as he would not find anyone else to do the task. Ak İbrahim was astonished when the scholar brought out pages from his translation of Firuzâbâdi and they also discovered that they both had interests in poetry and astrology. Throughout his stay in Istanbul, the Iranian ambassador expressed his admiration of Aşım’s knowledge and scholarship, but to no avail; Aşım was still ignored by the conservative ulema who had resented him during the reign of Selim III.

The deposition of Mustafa IV and the downfall of the conservative forces in 1808 did not come without a price as Aşım Efendi’s patron Selim III was killed. His legacy did not die with him as the new sultan; Mahmud II (1808-1839) became a force for reform and a great patron of the arts himself. Aşım was now given many opportunities within the ulema ranks, as well as patronage from Mahmud II himself. Aşım Efendi’s days of poverty and neglect from the ruling institution were over.

Mütercim Aşım Efendi began to advance in the ranks of the müderris until he was appointed into the ranks of the sülleymaniye. Mahmud II allocated funds to build a new house on the site of his old home. During this period in time Aşım continued to work diligently on his dictionary until he completed and presented the work that he named El Okyânusü’l basit fi tercemi’l Kamûsü’l Muhit to the sultan on December 13th 1810. The sultan ordered the work printed and distributed among all of the public libraries.²²

In April 1814 Aşım Efendi was appointed as judge of Selânik (kadi-i Salonika). He returned to Istanbul after his appointment and died at his house in Üsküdar in 1819. He and his wife Kerime Hanım (d.1843) had two sons, Ismail Nevres Efendi, a müderris,

²² This was done between 1815-1818. See: BBA, H.H. 18010.
who died a short time before his father in 1819 and Recaiüldin Hâmid Efendi (d.1842) who was a poet. Aşım was also the maternal uncle of the Cenânzâde Mehmet Kadri Paşa who was grand vezir for a short time under Abdülhamid II. 83


83 Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 202 and İsmail Hâmi Danişmend, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi 92.
Şanızade Mehmed Ataullah Efendi (1771-1826)

Şanızade Mehmed Ataullah was born in Istanbul in 1771. He was the son of Şanızade Mehmed Sadık Efendi (d.1789) who was from the ulema and had been the kadi of Medina at one time.⁸⁴ His education was extensive. He had a traditional medrese education, but then continued and studied medicine (tib). He also studied mathematics at the naval engineering school (mühendishane) where he would meet many future friends and patrons.⁸⁵

He entered into the ilmiye in November 1785 and became a müderris in 1793. In December 1814 he was appointed Havass-i Refia or as the kadi of Eyüp.⁸⁶ Because of his fame as a scholar, Şanızade was appointed as vak'anüvis in 1819 to replace the ailing Asım Efendi. He enjoyed the support and patronage of many including both Selim III and Mahmud II.⁸⁷

In September 1821 he was given the rank of Mekke payesi and the post of inspector of pious foundations (evkaf müfettişliği).

Şanızade had made some enemies among the ulema, especially the chief physician to the sultan (hekimbaşı) Behçet Mustafa Efendi (d.1832). These enemies


⁸⁶ On the term Havass-i Refia see: Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli 137. Cemâleddin states that he was appointed in April 1816; Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefa, 67.

⁸⁷ Bursa Mehmet Tahir Efendi, in OM, gives us an interesting list of friends, patrons and associates. Among them are: Hüseyin Rifki Efendi (d.1814) who was a famous mathematics and engineering teacher [Govsâ, Türk Meşhurlarî, 180]; Kethüdâzade Mehmed Arif Efendi (1771-1848), a famous religious scholar of the day who argued for the teaching of disciplines other than just the Islamic sciences [Govsâ, Türk Meşhurlarî, 44]; Bağ Hoca Ishak Efendi (d.1834) who was the director of the army engineering school during the reign of Mahmud II and was a renown scholar of his time [Govsâ, Türk Meşhurlarî, 191]; Ismail Ferruh Efendi (d. 1840) who was the first ambassador to England [Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmani, vol. 4, 14]; and Müneccimbaşi Osman Sâib Efendi.
secured his removal from the office of vak'anûvis in September 1825 and then had him exiled with a pension to Tire in the province of Aydın. His enemies accomplished this by falsely accusing him of being a member of the Bektâşı order which had been just been outlawed during Mahmut II’s destruction of the Janissary Corps.  

Şanizâde’s contribution to Ottoman literature was not just in the historical field. He wrote numerous works about medicine and mathematics that became standard works in Ottoman schools. His contributions in those fields and in history made him one of the leading intellectual figures of his time. His contributions were also an important contribution to the modernization movement begun by Selim III and instituted by Mahmut II. He was also an astrologer, poet, musician and painter. He was the first of the court historians to know a European language, French, and being in the medical field he also learned Latin.


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88 Şanizâde would have been both a rival in the ulema and in the medical field. On Behçet Mustafa Efendi see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 69. The destruction of the Janissaries was called the vakâyı hayriye or Auspicious Event and occurred June 15, 1826. The Bektâşi order of dervishes were closely allied with the Janissary Corps and their disbandment was important for the success of the reforms begun by Mahmut II. See: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 20-21.

89 For example: Miyârî’l Ettiyyâ (Measurement for Doctors), a translation of the work by Stoerck and the first medical dictionary translated from the west, published in 1819; Kâvârî’i Cerrahîn (Laws for Surgeons), published in 1828; or Usul’î Hesap (Arithmetic Method).
Mehmet Esad Efendi was born in Istanbul in 1789. His father, Hacı Sahaflar Şeyhi Ahmet Efendi, was a well-known judge. His father and other private teachers in the Islamic sciences educated Esad.\textsuperscript{90} At the age of fifteen, Mehmed accompanied his father on his new appointment as kâdi of Medina. The trip was to end in tragedy as the boat they were traveling on sank and his father drowned (December 1804).\textsuperscript{91} Esad returned to Istanbul to resume his education.

Mehmed Esad was fortunate that he acquired Mehmet Sait Hâlet Efendi (1761-1822) as his patron. Hâlet Efendi was ambassador to France between 1802 and 1806 and was an important member of the conservative ulema that overthrew Selim III. He would play an important role in Mahmud II’s early reign, but was eliminated after the Ottoman debacle in the Balkans in the early 1820’s.\textsuperscript{92} Hâlet Efendi helped secure Esad’s first appointment as a müherris with the rank of ıbtià-i hariç in May of 1808.

By December 1815 Esad had reached the rank of hareket-i dâhil, but left the post due to economic hardship and was appointed in 1817 as kâdi of Ada-Pazarı instead. In 1818 he was appointed as an assistant to the secretary of the şeyhülislâm (mesihat mektupçusu yamazlığı). He held various judgships and müherris assignments reaching the rank of sahz-i seman. In 1825 while working as a secretary in the office of the judge of Istanbul (İstanbul kâdülü vekayi kitâbeti), Esad Efendi was given the post of vak’anîvis to replace Şanizâde, an appointment he was to hold until his death in 1848. He completed a section of his history which covered the years 1821 to 1824 shortly

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{90} For a biography of Ahmet Efendi see: Mehmed Sureyya, *Siçil-i Osmany*, vol. 1, 276.
\item \textsuperscript{91} SO states that he died in 1218 = April 1803 to March 1804.
\end{itemize}
before the Auspicious Event and was rewarded by the sultan with 10,000 kurş and a
promotion in the ilmiye to hareket-i almışlı though it is not known if he was an active
müderris at this time.

The year 1826 was important in the reform movement of the Ottoman Empire as
it marked the Auspicious Event or the destruction of the Janissary Corps. Esad Efendi
was to play a role in these events. He helped draft a document that would reorganize the
Janissary Corps and create the Eşkinciyan a special unit of Janissary troops who where to
be trained in European weapons and tactics. The creation of this military unit led to the
revolt of the Janissary Corp and their supporters. He was also to read the imperial edict
(ferman) that announced the destruction of the Janissary Corps at the Sultan Ahmet
mosque.

Not long after, Esad was commissioned by the Sultan to write the official history
of the Auspicious Event. The completed work named Üss-i zafer was presented to the
sultan and subsequently published in 1828.\(^{93}\) As a reward for his work Esad was given
the post of inspector of the pious foundations (evkaf müfettişliği) and the titular post of
judge of Uskudar (Üsküdar mahreći pâyesi).\(^{94}\)

Mehmed Esad's work had gained the attention of the reforming sultan, Mahmud
II. In the years that would follow Esad Efendi would be a reform-minded moderate
member of the ulema who would help Mahmud II and his successor to make reforms
more acceptable to the ulema and Muslim population in general. This can be seen in
Esad's future appointments, especially in education.\(^{95}\)

\(^{93}\) Lütfi, Tarih, vol. 1, p. 207.

\(^{94}\) Some biographers have him holding the actual post of kadi.

\(^{95}\) For more on this period and the relationship between the ulema and reform see: Uriel
Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulemâ and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud
II," in Scripta Heirosolymitanak, IX, Studies in Islamic History and Civilization,
(Jerusalem, 1961), 63-96.
In April of 1828 war broke out again with the Russians because of the Greek rebellion and czar Nicholas's ambitions. Selim Mehmed Paşa (1771-1831), the grand vezir and commander of the army, appointed Esad as judge of the army (ordu kadisi) with the Edirne payesi and in this capacity he was to record the events of the army as was the responsibility of the vak'ânîvis.96 He recorded the events with the army from its departure to its arrival in Şumen in central Bulgaria. He returned to Istanbul before the end of the year.

In 1829 he was awarded the Mekke payesi and at the same time he was given Yalakâbâd/Yalova as an arpalik. In 1831 Esad was sent to the districts of Sofya (Sofiya) and Şehir-Köy as a part of the Ottoman census.97 A short time later, in October, Esad Efendi was appointed as the first director (nâzuri) of the official Ottoman newspaper Takvim-i Vekâyi (Calendar of Events).98 In May of 1833 he was given the Istanbul payesi with Sakiz as an arpalik.

In September of 1834 he was chosen as the kadi of Istanbul and he held the post for sixteen months. He was awarded the Anadolu payesi in September of 1835. In 1835 he was also sent on a diplomatic mission to Iran to congratulate the new ruler, Mehmed Şah on his accession to the throne. The mission to Iran had damaged his health and he spent most of late 1836 and 1837 recovering.


97 The census was conducted between 1831 and 1838 by order of Mahmut II. See: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 40.

98 The Ottoman government between the years 1831 and 1923 issued the paper. For more on the paper see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 35; and Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli, 308.

219
In December of 1837 he had a disagreement with the head of the Finance Ministry, Nâfiz Paşa over payments for the upkeep of Takvim-i Vekâyi and quit his post as the director. Not long afterward he was appointed to the quarantine commission (karantine nezâreti) and was given the Rumeli payesi. From 1838 to 1841 Mehmed Esad was a member of the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (Meclis-i valâyi ahkâm-i Adliye) that was formed to review and create legislative proposals in connection with the reform movement (tanzimat).

In August 1841 he was appointed to the position of representative in Istanbul of the Sherif of Mecca (nakibüleşraf). He was then selected to be the Rumeli kazasker (chief military judge of Rumelia) and held the post from May 1843 until October 1844.

The remainder of Esad’s career was concerned with education in the Ottoman Empire. In 1845 Esad was a member of an advisory council within the Port concerning educational reform. This work was followed up with an appointment to the Council of Public Instruction (Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye) in 1846 and finally at the end of that year Esad Efendi was made minister of general education (Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti). In January of 1848 he was appointed chairman of the Council of Public Instruction (Meclis-i Maarif Reisi), but died not long after the appointment.

Mehmed Esad was a poet, but not well known for his verse. He had a good knowledge of both Persian and Arabic. His other claim to fame was his book collecting; hence his moniker “Sahhaflar,” or “dealers in second hand books” which he loved to collect. His library, which was built on the grounds of his house in Yerebatan, contained over 4,000 volumes and is an important collection for Ottoman historical research today.

99 The location of the newspaper was in the takvimhâne near Beyazıt Universitesi. For more on the takvimhâne see: Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Devineri., vol. III, 388.

100 Also called the Nakib Efendi. This was also a title for the leader of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad in the capital. See: Uzunçarsılı, Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye, 161-172.
He had a son named Ahmet Ziya-al-din Efendi (d.1854/55) who was a müderris and an unknown number of daughters.

Recâi Mehmed Şakir Efendi (1803-1874)

Recâi Mehmed Şakir Efendi was born in the Sütluce district of Istanbul. His father was Ahmet Nurüddin Efendi (d.1849) who had been a chief scribe to the kadi, Mehmed Tahir Efendi (1747-1838).\(^{101}\) He was educated in the Islamic sciences at Beyezid mosque, but also had a private education that included calligraphy, for which he would become known, and the Arabic and Persian languages. He also was a hafiz (one who knows the Koran by memory) and a poet.

At the age of sixteen, in 1819, he entered into the office of his father who was chief scribe in the office of mines (maden/maadin kalemi) at the time.\(^{102}\) He then went on to do apprenticeship work in both the defterdar and divan-i hümâyûn scribal offices. He became a scribe in the bureaucracy when he was appointed to the non-Muslim tax accounting office (çizye muhasebeciliği) of Kasab Başı Şakir Efendi.

Recâi was appointed as secretary to the council (divan kâtibliği) of the commander of Imperial Arsenal (Tophane müşiриyeti), Damad Halil Rifat Paşa (d.1855), sometime between 1829 and 1834.\(^{103}\) In 1837 Recâi Mehmed was promoted to the rank of hâce and he was appointed to the âmedî office.

Recâi was next made editor of the official Ottoman gazette Takvim-i Vekayi and advanced to the civil rank of rütbe-i mütemayızı.\(^{104}\) In 1848 Recâi Efendi was promoted to the rank of rütbe-i ulâ sunf sanisi (rank one class two) and appointed to the post of

\(^{101}\) Tahir Efendi was the şeyhülislâm who issued the fetva or religious decree that authorized the destruction of the Janissary Corps. See: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 373.

\(^{102}\) On this department in the financial bureau see: Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimdiri 193.

\(^{103}\) On the long military career of Mehmet Halil Rifat Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 164-165.

\(^{104}\) As a part of the reorganization during the Tanzimat, the bureaucracy was reformed and a new ranking and promotion system was implemented. Rütbe-i mütemayızı corresponds to the rank of colonel in the army.
vak'ânîvis to replace Şanizâde Efendi. He also became a deputy (vekil) in the âmedî department at the departure of Mehmet Fuad Efendi/Paşa from his âmedî post to an appointment in Wallachia and Moldavia.\(^{105}\)

After taking the post of vak'ânîvis, Recâî Efendi wrote a memo to the grand vezir outlining the need for reform of the post of court chronicler. His proposals were not acted upon and Recâî spent most of his tenure as court historian inactive.\(^{106}\) He would eventually resign from the post of vak'ânîvis in 1853 having little to show for his tenure in this post.

In 1849 he was appointed to the post of director (nażır) of the Imperial Printing House (takvîmîhane-i âmirî or takvîmîhane) that published the Ottoman gazette, Takvîm-i Vekâyî. He was removed from the post in 1853, the same time as he resigned from the post of vak'ânîvis. His departure from both posts was as a result of an incident that happened to Recâî in Beyoğlu, the European quarter in Istanbul, which left him in jail for the night and damaged his reputation.

For the next two years Recâî was out of office and faced hard times. His fortunes changed when he was appointed to the education council (meclîs-i maarîf) and a little later he was again appointed to be the director of the takvîmîhane. He was removed again from the post as takvîmîhane nażîrî in order to be appointed to the supreme council of judicial ordinances (meclîs-i valîyi ahkâm-i adliye). This post lasted for two years at which time he was removed during a period in which the government was cutting salary expenses.

In 1861 he joined a commission that was organizing aide for emigrants who had fled from the Caucasus region (Kafkasya). In 1864 he was appointed as the provincial

\(^{105}\) These two countries are collectively known as Memleketiyn or “the two countries” in Ottoman sources. On Fuad Efendi/Paşa, one of the major architects of the Tanzimat, see: Govsa, Türk Meşkurları, 144-145.

\(^{106}\) For the text of the memo see: Cemâleddin, Ayine-i Zürefâ, 105-111.
representative in Istanbul (kapukapı kethudağı) for Bosna and Işkodra (Bosnia and Scutari in Albania). According to İnal, Recâi spent two days a week working and the other days he spent reading and writing at his house (yaltı) in Vaniköy. In 1874 Recâi Efendi’s wife died and he followed not long afterward.

Recâi was known for his calligraphy and the fine engraved books he would present to friends and patrons. He wove the covering (Kâbe örtüsü) for the Kaaba in Mecca. He was also had a love for European and traditional music. He could play both the ney (reed flute) and the violin. He could be often found in Beyoğlu attending the theater.

Recâi Mehmed Efendi was married twice. His first wife had two children that died in infancy, so he married Rabia Adviye Hanım, the daughter of Seyfullah Bey who was a descendent of Timurtaş Paşa. His children include Recâizâde Mahmud Ekrem (1846-1913), a minister of education, and Recâizâde Celâl the writer. He is also the great-grandfather of Ercümen Ekrem Tağ.  


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107 Midhat Sertoğlu, Resimli 166.
108 On Recaizâde Mahmud Ekrem see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 111.
Akif Paşazâde Nâïl Mehmed Bey (d. 1855)

Nâïl Mehmed Bey was the son of Akif Efendi/Paşa (1787-1845) who had held many important administrative posts during the reign of Mahmut II and had a reputation for his literary skills. Very little is known about his life.

Nâïl had been a clerk in the âmedî odası and then was appointed both head of the Takvîmhane and as vak'ânîvis in 1853. He would hold the post of vak'ânîvis until his death in 1855.

It was also known that he was a member of the meclis-i vâlâ (supreme council of judicial ordinances).

Bibliography: Bayrak, Osmanlı Tarihi Yazarları, 165; Kütükoğlu, "Vak'ânîvis," IA, 283; and Babinger, Die Geschichtsschreiber, 356.

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109 Akif Efendi/Paşa was very important in the early reform movement and was responsible for being the patron of Mustafa Reşid Paşa. See: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 22 and Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 29-30.
Ahmet Cevdet Efendi / Paşa (1822-1895)

Ahmet Cevdet was born in Loğça (Lovec) in northern Bulgaria in 1822. His father was Hacı İsmail Ağa, a member of the Yularkıranoğlu notable family, and his mother was Ayşe Sünbül Hanım, a member of another local notable family called the Topuzoğlu. Ahmet Cevdet’s family had a tradition of service to the Ottoman dynasty as local officials and religious functionaries. Ahmet Cevdet, under the vigilance of his grandfather Hacı Ali Efendi, was to continue that tradition by training to enter a career in the imâye.\(^{110}\)

Cevdet received his education in Loğça from the local ulemâ and at the primary school (mekteb).\(^{111}\) His private tutoring from the ulemâ included learning Arabic grammar from Hâfız Ömer Efendi, the jurisconsult (mâftû) of Loğça and the Islamic sciences with Hacı Eşref Efendi the deputy judge (hâkim naibi) of Loğça.\(^{112}\) He also studied rhetoric and logic with Hâfiz Mehmed Efendi who had replaced Hâfiz Ömer as mâftû. While Loğça offered a better than usual educational situation for provincial cities, Cevdet’s education reached an impasse and so in 1839, the year the Tanzimat began, Cevdet left home and traveled to Istanbul to further his education.

Ahmet’s education in the medrese system lasted from 1839 until 1844 when he received his diploma (icazet) from Birgevi Şakir Efendi at the Dülgeroğlu Mosque. He received his education from some of the leading ulemâ of the day. His education also included studying Persian and mesnevi literature, a type of poetry, at the Murad Molla

\(^{110}\) Cevdet’s father was a member of the local governing council and his grandfather was both an accounting clerk (muhasebe kâtibi) and director of affairs (müdîr-i umur) to the local nobility of Loğça.

\(^{111}\) Instruction at the primary school would have been limited to moral and religious principles and to the reading and reciting of the Koran.

\(^{112}\) Cevdet studied with Hacı Eşref’s son who was also named Ahmet and would become one of the great men of the reform era, Ahmet Midhat Paşa.
tekke from Hâfiz Tevfik Efendi and Mehmed Murad Molla. He also spent time at the residence of Süleyman Fehim Efendi (d.1848) in the Karagümruk district of Istanbul. There he met many important people of the day and was exposed to the literary elite of Istanbul. It was there that he also received the mahlas or pseudonym ‘Cevdet’ by Fehim Efendi in 1843 so that his poetry would be more remembered.

Ahmet Cevdet did not limit his education to the religious sciences and he even states in his memoirs that the upper classes of the medreses held less attraction for him that the philosophical and literary subjects. Akin to this, he sought out and was tutored by a Colonel Nuri Bey at the Imperial Military Engineering School in modern mathematics, read engineering journals, and Ishak Efendi’s works on mathematics. He was also interested in astronomy.

Cevdet worked hard and finished his schooling in five years (about half the normal time to complete a degree). In 1844 he took the qualifying exam for entry into the judiciary ranks (tarik-i kaza) and was appointed to his first post in the ulema as the kadi of Premedi with the rank of çanat. He never went to Premedi, which was located in the province of Janina in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. It appears that the post was nominal or that he hired a deputy or substitute (naib) to hold the post.

In June of 1845 Cevdet relinquished the position of kadi and became a müderris at the lowest rank of iptida-i hariç that earned him his diploma to teach (rûûs). He

113 A tekke is the lodge of a dervish order, in this case the Nakşubendi, where people would worship and learn. See: Pakaln, Osmanlı Tarih Deýimleri., vol. III, 445. Cevdet even received a diploma from Murad Molla which allowed him to teach the poetry of Rumi.


116 Çanat or çinad rank was the lowest rank in the ilmiye heirarchy of judges appointed by the Rumeli kazasker. See: Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin İlimiye, 92.
continued his teaching career for about a year and then he entered into a relationship that would move him into the upper ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy and become one of the great men of the Tanzimat.

In 1846, probably through the patronage of the şeyhülislam Arif Hikmet Bey Efendi (1786-1859), Ahmet Cevdet was assigned as an Islamic legal council to the father of the Tanzimat, Mustafa Reşid Paşa (1799-1858).117 This would begin a relationship that would include Cevdet moving into Reşid Paşa’s house and being a tutor to his two young sons and last until Reşid’s death. It was under the influence of Reşid that Ahmet Cevdet began to see the importance of the reform movement to save the Ottoman Empire. It was also possibly under Reşid’s influence that Cevdet began to be interested in language reform and he also began to learn French.118

Between April and August of 1848 Cevdet was out of government due to reactionary forces which pushed his patron, Reşid out of office as grand vezir. Also in 1848, Cevdet’s literary friend Fehim Efendi died at the age of 62 and left his family in dire financial straits. Cevdet’s friends urged him to complete a commentary on the Azeri poet Tabrizli Sa’ib on which Fehim had been working. Cevdet completed that work and presented it to the Supreme Judicial Council with a petition for the deceased family to receive a state pension. Not only did the family receive a pension, but Cevdet received a gift and a promotion in ranks in the ildiye. In March of 1849, by imperial order (irade) Cevdet received a gift of 5,000 kuruş and a raise in rank to hareket-i hariç.

117 Arif Hikmet Bey Efendi was şeyhülislam from 1846 to 1854, see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 45; and Ismail Hâmi Danişmand, İzahli Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 153. On the father of the Tanzimat, Buyuk Mustafa Reşid Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 322-323; Ismail Hâmi Danişmand, İzahli Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi vol. 5, 76ff; and Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 58-69.

118 French became the major foreign language learned by the reformers of this period.
In August of 1850 Cevdet Efendi was given membership (azalık) in the council on public instruction (meclis-i maarif-i umumiye) and made director (müdür) of the teachers training school (darülmuallimin) on the suggestion of Arif Hikmet Bey Efendi. The appointment to the teachers' training school lasted only about a year, but in that period he was able to make advances in the admission and training of future teachers. Ahmet Cevdet would never be free again to pursue the path of scholarship and teaching he and his grandfather had envisioned so many years ago. Cevdet was caught up in the reform movement and the politics of the center.

Ahmet Cevdet not only worked with Mustafa Reşid Paşa, but with his protégés, Mehmet Emin Ali Paşa (1815-1871) and Keçecizâde Mehmet Fuad Paşa (1815-1869) as well; both of whom rotated with Reşid among the posts of grand vezir and foreign minister between 1839 and 1871. Cevdet later would act as an intermediary between them after they had drifted apart on state matters. It was with Fuad, who would later become an important patron, that he spent the autumn of 1850 in Bursa where they worked on writing a simplified grammar book of the Ottoman language and drew up plans for the first steamship company on the Bosphorus to operate ferries.

Cevdet returned to Istanbul and began working in his newly appointed posts. He wrote new regulations for the teachers' training school and was elected to be the reporter (muharrir) for the education council. Ahmet Cevdet also played a major role in the

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19 On the darülmuallimin see: Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri., 400.


21 The grammar book was titled Kavâid-i Osmanlıye (Rules of Ottoman Grammar) and would be published under the name Kavâid-i Türkiye for students in 1870.
foundation of the Encümen-i Dâniş or Academy of Knowledge. The Academy was approved by Sultan Abdulmecit and created by imperial order in May of 1851. The sultan was impressed with Cevdet’s work and ordered that Cevdet’s rank be improved. Arif Hikmet Bey Efendi proceeded to promote Cevdet to the rank of hareket-i altmış in that same year.

As a part of the publishing program for the Encümen-i Dâniş, Cevdet agreed to write a new history of the Ottoman Empire beginning from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca to the destruction of the Janissary Corps (1774-1826). He would have three volumes published under the Academy’s auspices by 1854. This would lay the groundwork for his appointment to the post of vak’anîvis and on their presentation to the sultan would lead to his promotion to the rank of süléymaniye in the medrese system.

In March, 1852 Cevdet and Fuad Paşa traveled to Egypt on a fact-finding tour to determine if the current governor (valî) Abbas Paşa was abusing power. Cevdet went along to give advice concerning the inheritance due to the heirs of Mohammad Ali that they claimed had not been forthcoming from Abbas. The matters concerning Abbas Paşa were solved and the two men returned to Istanbul by June 1852.

In 1855, Cevdet was appointed vak’anîvis at the death of Nail Bey. He was given access to state secrets and, according to Cevdet, while Raşit was in office as grand vezir, he never left his side. He would hold the post of vak’anîvis until 1866. Also briefly in 1855 Cevdet served on a commission to enact legal reform in the empire, but the report that was created was never completed or issued. This marked the beginning Cevdet’s long and significant association with legal reform in the Ottoman Empire.

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123 Richard Chambers, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 149-150.
In February 1856 Ahmet Cevdet Efendi moved from being a müderris to being a judge when he accepted the post of kadi of Galata that was the lowest level (mahreec) of the great mollaships. He sat at his first divan which was a court of appeals at the age of thirty-four. Ten months later he was promoted up the ranks to the titular rank as kadi of Mecca (Mekke-i Mükerrreme) or Mekke payesi. This promotion was probably arranged by his patron Reşid Paşa who had become grand vezir again in November of 1856.

It was also during Reşid Paşa’s grand vezirate that Cevdet was made a member of the High Council of Reform or the meclis-i ali-i tanzimat (February 1857). Later he was appointed as chairman of a commission (arâzi-i seniye komisyonu), attached to the beylikçi office, to codify Ottoman land law. Cevdet’s father also died in 1856 in Egypt while returning from the pilgrimage.

The period of 1858-1859 proved to be very tragic years as Cevdet lost most of his major patrons. Mustafa Reşid Paşa, the father of the tanzimat, died in 1858, while another important patron, the former şeyhülislam Arif Hikmet Bey Efendi died a year latter. \(^{124}\) Another patron that had emerged was the şeyhülislam who had followed Arif Hikmet into office, Meşrezbâde Mehmed Arif Efendi, and he also died while in office in 1858.\(^{125}\) The loss of these important patrons hurt Cevdet’s position in government, but he would soon develop other contacts within the ruling elite.

In 1860 Ahmet Cevdet accompanied the new grand vezir Kâbrî Mehmet Emin Paşa (1813-1865) on an inspection tour of Bosnia and Niş to work to solve the unrest

\(^{124}\) Not long after the death of Reşid Paşa, Cevdet was offered the governorship of Vidin and a vezirate, but he turned it down to remain in the ildenie branch of government for the time.

\(^{125}\) On şeyhülislam Mehmed Arif Efendi see: İsmail Hâmi Danişmend, 4izahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 154.
there and allay threats of European intervention. Cevdet provided Mehmet Emin with valuable advice during the tour, which lasted four months, and on their return the grand vezir rewarded Cevdet with a promotion to the Istanbul rank (İstanbul payesi) in the ilmiye. The advancement was confirmed by imperial ferman in January 1861.

In June of 1861, Abdülmecid I died and was replaced by his brother Abdülaceiz as sultan. Mehmet Emin Paşa was replaced after about six months by Ali Paşa. The next decade of the tanzimat was to be dominated by Ali and Fuad Paşas. One of the first orders of business was to reorganize the reform movement within the government, and as a consequence Ali Paşa had the council of the tanzimat abolished and its duties transferred to a newly reorganized meclis-i vâlây-i ahkâm-i adliye. Cevdet was made a member of this new council. In addition he served on a commission to reform the official Ottoman newspaper, Takvim-i vekayi.

In September of 1861 Ahmet Cevdet was sent on a special assignment to the province of İşkodra (Scutari) in Albania to handle a revolt there. As a commissioner (komiser), he was given special powers in both military and civilian affairs to restore order and correct the situation. He quickly corrected the situation and returned to Istanbul before the end of the year.

In 1862, during the grand vezirate of Fuad Paşa, Cevdet was appointed to a special office within the Bab-i âli which examined reports from inspectors in the field both in Rumelia and Anatolia. In 1863 Ahmet Cevdet was promoted to the rank of

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127 Cevdet's advancement to the Istanbul rank in the mevleviyet (judgeship) was some time in coming as some in government wanted him to be advanced to this higher rank in 1859, but the advancement had been blocked twice by the şeyhülislâm Seyyid Mehmet Sa'duddin Efendi who favored legal work over scholarship for advancement. His hand was finally forced by the grand vezir who threatened to send the matter to the sultan for his consideration. See: Richard Chambers, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 158-161.
kazasker of Anatolia and was being considered for the position of şeyhülislam by some in the reform movement. Cevdet refused to listen to any such talk.

Just after Cevdet’s ilmiye promotion, he was appointed as miftettish or inspector in Bosnia to enact reforms and take care of the unrest there. He spent the summer in Mostar and the winter in Bosnasaray (Sarajevo) and was successful in ending the revolt and creating a regional military force. For his success Cevdet was given the Order of Osmani, second class; an award never before given to someone from the ulema. On Cevdet’s return trip to Istanbul, in November of 1864, he had the chance to make the acquaintance of the new French ambassador to Istanbul, M. Moustier. Moustier was so impressed by Cevdet that he praised him at the highest levels of the Ottoman government.

In additional to official praise, Moustier made a personal visit to Cevdet’s house and Cevdet was forced to return the complement as a matter of courtesy. This was actually a breach of etiquette as the ulema were not supposed to be involved with foreign dignitaries. In addition, Cevdet’s actions and adulations resulted in some resentment in both the Porte and among the ulema. Cevdet decided to leave the capital on his own initiative to let things calm down.

His place of temporary exile was to be Eastern Anatolia with the newly formed Reform Division (Furka-i Islahiye) under the command of Derviş Paşa (1817-1896). He was given extraordinary powers in civil matters, as a commissioner again, to work to pacify the region and improve recruitment for the army. Cevdet arrived in İskenderun in May of 1865 and remained in the area until October of 1865.

On his return to Istanbul Cevdet found that the situation had changed little. There was still talk of him becoming şeyhülislam and much of the animosity towards him.

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128 Derviş Paşa was also from Cevdet’s hometown of Loľça, see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurleri, 103.
remained. To remedy this, Fuad Paşa, who was Cevdet's major patron, persuaded Sultan Abdulaziz to transfer Ahmet Cevdet Efendi from his rank as kazasker in the ilmiye to the rank of vezir. To allay Cevdet's fears of not having sufficient income, the sultan issued a patent (berat) that assigned to Cevdet a personal salary in perpetuity. In January 1866, Ahmet Cevdet turned in his 'Efendi' of the religious class and became a 'Paşa' in the bureaucracy.

In March of 1866 Ahmet Cevdet Paşa was appointed as governor (vali) of Aleppo (Halep). In this capacity and with his move to the bureaucracy he was forced to give up his post as vak'anvvis. He remained as governor of Aleppo until February of 1868 at which time he was recalled to Istanbul to become president (reis) of the council of judicial regulations (divan-i ahkâm-i adliye).

Under the presidency of Cevdet, the legal system of the Ottoman Empire was greatly changed. He instituted the mixed court system (nizamiye) in 1869, which secularized the court system and allowed the participation of non-Muslims in the judicial system. Cevdet also became the first justice minister in 1870 when the ministry of justice (adliye nezareti) was created. At the same time Cevdet instituted classes to better educate judges in proper procedure and he began work on creating a legal code (mecelle) based on haneefi law.

He was justice minister until April of 1870 at which time he was appointed as governor of Bursa. He was removed from the post of governor after only a short time and was out of government life until August 1871, when he was appointed again to work on the mecelle, as president (mecelle cemiyeti reisi) of the legal code association, of

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129 The ulema who reached the rank of mahrec and above were always guaranteed an income, usually via an arpalik, whether in office or not. Being a member of the bureaucracy had no such guarantee of income. This was a major difference between the two career paths.

which the fifth volume was being completed, and he assumed the presidency of the
tanzimat department of the council of state (surya develet). Cevdet was to supervise the
writing of the ncelele code until the publication of the final volume in 1877.

In August of 1872 Cevdet was reconfirmed as the president of the legal code
association and was appointed again to the council of judicial regulations. In January of
1873 he was appointed to the council of state again and in April Ahmet Cevdet Paşa was
appointed to the position of minister of education (maarif-i umumiye nezâreti). In this
post his energies went toward reforming of the primary schools for boys (sibyan
mektepleri), creating curricula for more advanced schools, and reorganizing the
darulmuallimn.

In April of 1874 Cevdet was appointed as assistant to the president of the council
of state (surya-devlet reis muavinlîği). In November of 1874 he was removed from his
post and appointed as valî of Yanya (Jannina) by the grand vezir Hüseyin Avni Paşa
(1820-1876) who wanted to remove Cevdet from the capital in anticipation of deposing
Abdülaziz.131 Avni Paşa was removed from power in April of 1875 and Cevdet was able
to return to his ministerial post for education not long afterward. In November of 1875
he was made minister of justice for the second time.

During the second grand vezirate of Mahmud Nedim Paşa (1817-1883), Cevdet
incurred his displeasure by opposing concessions in custom duties to foreign capitalists
and he was sent on an inspection tour of Rumelia in March of 1876.132 On his return he

131 Abdülaziz was overthrown in May of 1876 and shortly thereafter committed suicide or
was murdered depending on the account. On Hüseyin Avni Paşa see: Govsa, Türk,
Meşhurrlar, 178-179 and Ismail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahi Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi,
vol. 5, 87. On the events concerning the deposition of Abdülaziz see: Stanford Shaw,
History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 162-163 and Enver Ziya

132 Mahmud Nedim Paşa was one of Abdülaziz’s favorites, see:İsmail Hâmi Danışmend,
İzahi Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 87 and Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman

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was dismissed from the ministry of justice and was about to be sent to Syria to be governor when Nedim fell from power and for a third time he was made minister of education.

After the fall of Abdülaziz and the short reign of Murad V, Abdülhamid II became sultan in August of 1876. In November of that year Ahmet Cevdet found himself appointed to the post of minister of justice again. The accession of Abdülhamid II also marks the beginning of the constitutional period in Ottoman history. Cevdet's friend from Loşa and fellow reformer Ahmet Midhat Paşa (1822-1884), who was a major force behind the adoption of the constitution, became grand vezir in 1876. Cevdet and Midhat Paşa had a falling out over the constitution; Cevdet was concerned with what he thought were too many concessions to the sultan. While Midhat Paşa did not remove Cevdet from his ministerial post, relations did remain tense.

After the removal of Midhat from the post of grand vezir, Ahmet Cevdet was appointed as the head of the ministry of the interior (nezareti-i dahiliye), a post he held for most of 1877 and then he was appointed to be minister of pious foundations (evkaf nezareti). That appointment as evkaf minister was very short as he was appointed by the Porte to be the governor of Syria in February, 1878, again, to get him out of Istanbul.

His appointment as governor of Syria lasted about nine months at which time he was replaced as governor by Midhat Paşa. While governor he helped reorganize the provincial government and put down a revolt in Kozan. He returned to Istanbul in December of 1878 and was appointed to head up the ministry of commerce (ticaret nezareti).

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133 Much has been written on Ahmet Midhat, see: Ismail Hâmi Danişmend, Taahli Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi, vol. 5, 88; Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, chapters 2 and 3 passim; and M Tayyib Gökbilgin, “Midhat Paşa,” IA, vol. VIII, 270-282.

134 Roderic H. Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876, (Princeton, 1963), chapter 10 passim.
In October of 1879 with the dismissal of Tunuslu Hayrüddin Paşa (d.1890) as grand vezir, Ahmet Cevdet acted as president of the council of ministers (meclis-i vükela) for ten days until Küçük Said Paşa (1838-1914) was appointed to replace him.\footnote{On Tunuslu Hayrüddin Paşa see: Ismail Hâmi Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. 5, 91. Küçük Said Paşa was nine-times grand vezir under Abdülhamid, see: Govsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 340-341.} He was then appointed for the fourth time as the minister of justice, a position he would hold for three years.

In 1881 Cevdet Paşa was involved in the inquisition of Midhat Paşa on charges that he was involved in the death of Abdülaziz. Cevdet himself went to İzmir (Smyrna) with a delegation to bring him back for trial. The trial was manufactured by those in power and under the influence of Abdülhamid II, who had become more and more autocratic. Midhat Paşa was convicted and sentenced to death which was changed to a life sentence of exile. Midhat went on to spend the next three years in Arabia at which point he was strangled by order of Abdülhamid II in 1884.

Cevdet's appointment as justice minister ended in November of 1882 after which he spent a few years out of office. His last official appointment came in June of 1886 when he was appointed justice minister for the fifth time. This assignment would last for four years. During this time he was also active in special meetings with Abdülhamid over political problems. He also chaired a commission that composed an imperial order that modified the regulations for governing Görün (Crete) that had just had a rebellion in 1889. He resigned his ministerial position in May of 1890 after having political differences with the grand vezir Mehmed Kâmil Paşa (1832-1912).\footnote{On Kâmil Paşa see: Govsa, *Türk Meşhurları*, 204.}

Cevdet Paşa spent the last few years of his life in retirement, pursuing literary interests and spending time with his two daughters, Fatma Aliye and Emine Seniye. He died on the 25th of May 1895 at his home in Bebek.
Ahmet Lütfi Efendi (1815-1907)

Ahmet Lütfi was born in Istanbul in 1815. He was the son of Nalıncı Mehmed Ağা, a master sandal-maker. His early education was at the local mekteb where he learned the Quran and became a hafız. He also was educated in music at the house of Mahmud II’s imam, Mehmet Zeynelâbidin Efendi (1749-1822).\textsuperscript{137} In addition to music, Lüfi was a poet.

He originally enrolled at one of the engineering schools (hendesehane-i berriye) to learn mathematics in 1828-29, but left the school after three or four months because he did not want to enter into a military career. Instead he decided to pursue a traditional education for a position in the ilmiye. He studied, among other things Arabic and Persian literature, at the medrese of Amcazâde Hüseyin Paşa and by 1831/32 he was made a müderris.

In 1837/38 he was appointed to a job working at the Takvimhane, the official Ottoman press. He also at this time gave a lecture to the sultan for Ramadan and for that received an allowance (Ramadan harçlık). He also prepared and presented to the sultan a translation of Gazzâlî’s work, Ta’lim al-muta’allim (The Training of Students).

In 1839 he was appointed to a post in the grand vezir’s office (mehtubi-i sadr-i âlti) as a Persian translator or possibly a teacher. As a result of this appointment, Lütfi left the ilmiye and joined the scribal class/bureaucracy with a fourth level rank (rütbe-i rabi). In April 1845 he was appointed as a clerk to the council of public improvements (imar meclisi) for the provinces of Vidin and Niş in the Ottoman Europe. He returned to Istanbul in 1846 after the council was closed down and resumed his old duties in the grand vezir’s office.

\textsuperscript{137} On Zeynelâbidin see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 412.
In 1847 he was advanced to third level rank (rütbê-i salis) in the bureaucracy and became the chief clerk (bağ kitabet) to the control council (meclis-i zabûta). In the next year he was appointed to the Takvimhane again and was put in charge of editing and producing the official Ottoman gazette, Takvim-i Vekâyi.

In 1849 Lütfi was sent to Filibe (Piliopolis) in Bulgaria to assist in the collection of outstanding taxes (tahsil-i bakaya) for nine months. He returned to Istanbul and took up his job at the Takvimhane again. Also in 1849 he began a two-year clerical assignment to an investigation committee in Anatolia (Anadolu heyet teftişîyesi). When he returned to Istanbul in 1851 he was again assigned to the Takvimhane as a proofreader (musahhîh).

In 1856/57 he was promoted again to the rank of second level class two (rütbê-i sani sınıf-i mütemayîz). In 1860/61 Lütfi was made a member of the medical council (tubbiye meclisi) and taught Turkish belles-letters (ingûa) at the medical school (mekteb-i tubbiye).

In 1864/65 he was again promoted to the first rank class two (rütbê-i evvelî sınıf-i sani) and made a member of the education council (meclis-i maarîf). In addition to these duties he was put in charge of putting in order materials for the official Ottoman gazette, Takvim-i vekâyi and made director of all government printing (matbuat nazuruğî). In 1866 he took up the post of vak‘anîvis, a post he would hold for the next forty-one years. He was also elevated to the rank of first level class one (rütbê-i evveli sınıf-i evvel) in 1873 in the bureaucracy.

In 1876, in order to improve and stabilize his salary, Lütfi returned to the iltîmiye and was given the equivalent rank to his civil rank, which was the titular rank of kadi of

138 On the control council that was in charge of the Istanbul police see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II, 91.

Istanbul (*Istanbul payesi*). He was given membership in the council of state (*şura* *devlet*) in 1877. He was promoted to the post of *kazasker* of Anatolia in 1879 and in December 1881 he was elevated to the titular post of *kazasker* of Rumelia (*paye*). Due to a dispute with other members of the ulema, Lütfi did not advance in the ranks. In 1887/88 he was given the actual (*bilfiil*) post of *kazasker* of Rumelia, but the increase in rank did not lead to additional advancement in the *ilmîye*. At the conclusion of the *kazasker* appointment he was made a member of the council of state again. He would continue in that capacity until his death in March of 1907.

Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi (1853-1925)

Abdurrahman Şeref was born in Istanbul in 1853. His father was the onetime chief clerk of the arsenal (Topâne-i amire), Hasan Efendi. Abdurrahman Şeref benefited from the reform effort in education begun under Mahmud II and attended first the Eyüp Rüşdiye school and then attended the mekteb-i sultanı at Galatasaray in 1873.¹⁴⁰

After graduating from Galatasaray, Abdurrahman Şeref went on to a career spent mostly in education. His first teaching appointment was at the mahrec-i aklâm, a civil service school, in 1874. Later he also began teaching at the teachers' school (darülmuallımlın) and at Galatasaray. In 1877 he was appointed director of the civil service school (mekteb-i mülkiye) and taught courses in geography, Ottoman history, Islamic history, statistics and morals. The appointment would last sixteen years.

Between 1893 and 1908, Şeref Efendi was director of the Galatasaray lycée. Not long afterward he was made a member of a committee (tedkik-i müllefât komisyonu), under the auspices of the ministry of education (maarif nazırı), which examined literary works to be used in schools. In 1898 he was made a professor of history at the first Ottoman university, Dârülfrûnûn.¹⁴¹

In 1906 Abdurrahman Şeref was appointed to the ministry of property records (defter-i hâkâni nezareti) which had been created from the defterhane in 1871. In the

¹⁴⁰ Rüşdiye or adolescence schools were begun in 1838 to educate Muslim males and provided education in mathematics, language and the sciences to those who wanted to advance to the more specialized military or civil schools. The mekteb-i sultanı at Galatasaray was opened in 1869 and was organized along the lines of a French lycée and paid for by the personal funds of the sultan. On these schools see: Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II,47-48 and 107-110.

same year he was made a member of the chamber of notables (meclis-i ayân) of parliament and in December he was made minister of education (maarif nazari).

Abdurrahman Şeref left the post of minister of education in 1907 but was again appointed to the post in 1909 just before the events which would lead to the downfall of Sultan Abdülhamid II and the institution of a new constitutional government. His tenure as education minister was cut short by the change in governments. After the coronation of the new Sultan, Mehmed V, Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi was appointed to the post of vak' anûvis to replace the recently deceased Lütfi Efendi. He would hold the post of vak' anûvis until the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1922.

While he had no official cabinet duties at this time, Şeref was still busy as an assistant to the head of the senate (heyet-i ayân reeisliği) and he became the first director of the Ottoman Historical Society (Tarih-i Osmanlı Encümeni), a post which he would hold until his death.\(^\text{142}\)

Abdurrahman Şeref was not actively involved with the Committee for Union and Progress while it was in power, but did hold the post of minister of education in 1911-12 and remained in the post of vak' anûvis. After the end of the First World War, the CUP government collapsed and its members went into exile. Müşir Ahmet İzzet Paşa (1864-1937), commander of the eastern front during the war, took the job of grand vezir for a short time to make peace. Şeref was appointed minister of pious foundations (evkâf nazari) in the cabinet, but quickly turned in his resignation and left government again.\(^\text{143}\)

During the second grand vezirate, May 1919 to July 1919, of Damad Ferit Paşa (1853-1923), Şeref Efendi was a member of the council of ministers (meclis-i vükelâ),

\(^{142}\) This historical society would play an important role in the development of the modern Turkish historical conscience and was the ancestor of the modern Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu). The Society was founded in November of 1909.

\(^{143}\) On Ahmet İzzet Paşa see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 199-200; İsmail Hâmi Danışmand, İzahî Osmanlı Tarihi Konulmalı vol. 5, 103-104; and Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol.II, 327-328.
but he left after a change in that body. Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi was appointed minister of the Postal and Telegraph Department and made the president of the council of state (surayi devlet reisi) during the grand vezirate, October 1919 to March 1920, of Ali Rızâ Paşa (1859-1933). He then became a minister in the cabinet of grand vezir Salih Paşa (1864-1939) and also took on the duties of education minister. As a result of his new duties he withdrew as president of the council of state. He continued until the end of Salih Paşa’s grand vezirate in April 1920.

Abdurrahman Şeref remained out of government with the exception of his membership in the senate for the remainder of the Ottoman Empire’s days in existence. He was involved in politics during this period as he with a Dr. Esat formed a group called the National Congress (mili kongre) in order to reconcile all of the various political parties in Istanbul that had emerged with the downfall of the CUP. This group worked, through a series of meetings, to focus attention on the impending peace treaty and to encourage resistance to it. This group helped bring the issues of the day to the attention of the public and would aid the growing nationalist movement centered on Mustafa Kemal. With the arrival of the national independence army (kuvâ-i millîye) in 1922 the Senate was abrogated and the end of the Ottoman Empire was near.

After the formation of the Turkish Republic, Abdurrahman Şeref Bey became a deputy (mebûs) for Istanbul in the Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi) in 1923.

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144 Damad Ferit was grand vezir five times after the end of the First World War, see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 136-137; and Ismail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahî Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi vol. 5, 104-106.

145 On Ali Rızâ see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 39 and Ismail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahî Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi vol. 5, 105.

146 Salih Paşa’s grand vezirate lasted but twenty-five days. On him see: Govsa, Türk Meşhurları, 342-343 and Ismail Hâmi Danışmend, İzahî Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi vol. 5, 105.

While in Ankara he was involved with the Society for the Instruction of Islam (Cemiyet-i Tedrisiyye-i İslamiyye) and was the director of the Red Crescent Society (Hilâl-i Ahmer). Abdurrahman Şeref died in Istanbul in February of 1925.

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148 After the end of the Ottoman Empire, all titles, Paşa, Efendi, etc. were abolished and the simple title of 'sir' or Bey came into use.

149 The Red Crescent Society is the equivalent of the American Red Cross.
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