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Political And Social Structure Of The Shirvan Emirate According To Salih Bin Han Budak's Târîhu'l-Ensâb

*Salih Bin Han Budak'in Târîhu'l-Ensâb Eserine Göre Şirvan
Emirliği'nde Siyasal Ve Toplumsal Yapı*

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Abstract

This article examines the political and social organization of the Emirate of Shirvan through Salih bin Han Budak's *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, Ottoman archival documents, and waqf records. Focusing on the author's account of local government in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it situates Shirvan within the changing administrative arrangements of the Ottoman eastern provinces. The study investigates how dynastic succession, central appointments, religious authority, and local service relationships sustained the emirate. These arrangements are examined in their historical contexts, with attention to the differences between administrative terminology and actual practice.

The evidence indicates that Shirvan's rulers exercised local authority under Ottoman sovereignty. Imperial recognition and military obligations coexisted with dynastic control over appointments, revenue collection, and relations with neighboring emirates. "Shared authority" describes this unequal distribution and negotiation of governing powers; it does not imply equal sovereignty between the sultan and the local dynasty. Salih Bey's distinctions among beyzades, ghulams, tribal chiefs, and the population he calls "our Kurds" reveal the importance of status, service, and dependence within the emirate. Waqf revenues, taxation, and extraordinary collections provided resources for maintaining these relationships. Read critically alongside administrative records, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb* illuminates both the workings of local government and the ruling dynasty's representation of its own legitimacy.

Keywords: Shirvan Emirate, Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, Local Authority, Ottoman Provincial Administration

Öz

Bu makale, Salih bin Han Budak'ın *Târîhu'l-Ensâb* adlı eseri, Osmanlı arşiv belgeleri ve vakıf kayıtları üzerinden Şirvan Emirliği'nin siyasal ve toplumsal örgütlenmesini incelemektedir. Müellifin 18. yüzyıl sonları ile 19. yüzyıl başlarındaki yerel yönetime ilişkin anlatısını merkeze alan çalışma, Şirvan'ı Osmanlı doğu eyaletlerinin değişen idarî düzenlemeleri içinde ele almaktadır. Hanedan içi veraset, merkezî tevcih, dinî otorite ve yerel hizmet ilişkilerinin emirliğin devamlılığındaki rolü araştırılmaktadır. İdarî adlandırmalar ile fiilî uygulamalar arasındaki farklılıklar gözetilerek söz konusu ilişkiler tarihsel bağlamları içinde değerlendirilmektedir.

Kaynaklar, Şirvan yöneticilerinin yerel yetkilerini Osmanlı hâkimiyeti altında kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Merkezin tanınması ve askerî yükümlülükler; tayinler, gelirlerin tahsili ve komşu emirliklerle ilişkiler üzerindeki hanedan denetimiyle birlikte işlemekteydi. "Paylaşılmış otorite" kavramı, yönetim yetkilerinin eşitsiz dağılımını ve müzakere edilmesini ifade etmekte, padişah ile yerel hanedan arasında eşit egemenlik bulunduğu anlamına gelmemektedir. Salih Bey'in beyzâdeler, gulamlar, aşiret reisleri ve "bizim Kürtler" olarak adlandırdığı topluluklar arasında kurduğu ayrımlar, emirlik içindeki statü, hizmet ve bağımlılık ilişkilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Vakıf gelirleri, vergiler ve olağanüstü tahsilatlar, söz konusu ilişkilerin sürdürülmesini sağlayan maddi kaynaklardı. İdarî kayıtlarla birlikte eleştirel biçimde okunan *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, yerel yönetimin işleyişine ve hanedanın kendi meşruiyetini sunma biçimine ışık tutmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şirvan Emirliği, Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, Yerel Otorite, Osmanlı Taşra Yönetimi

Introduction

Kurdish emirates were local power structures that emerged in the mountainous and strategically significant regions of Mesopotamia. These structures were shaped by the defensive advantages afforded by geography and the political dynamics resulting from regional power balances. Their prominence in the military, administrative, and political spheres became particularly evident during the intensified rivalry between the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Although the emirates governing areas such as Cizre, Bitlis, Hakkâri, İmâdiye, and Hasankeyf did not achieve complete political independence from these two major powers, they negotiated varying degrees of local authority within this competitive setting.¹ In this context, emirates should not be viewed merely as local entities striving to sustain their positions vis-à-vis central empires but rather as historical exemplars of how center-periphery relations took shape.

The Ottoman–Safavid conflict reshaped the region’s administrative organization in the sixteenth century. Following the Battle of Chaldiran, the Ottoman government incorporated local dynasties into an imperial framework while preserving some of their hereditary rights. İdris-i Bitlisî’s diplomatic efforts contributed to this process, and the incorporation of Diyarbekir brought a new administrative framework to the eastern provinces.² Some Kurdish beys retained hereditary administrative privileges under arrangements described as *yurtluk-ocaklık* or *hükümet*.³ Their position combined recognition of Ottoman sovereignty with a continuing role for local dynasties, shaped by frontier conditions and regional power relations.⁴ Ayn Ali Efendi distinguished hereditary Kurdish *sanjaks*, whose holders were not ordinarily subject to dismissal and replacement,⁵ from *hükümet sanjaks*, described by the formula *mefrûzu’l-kalem ve maktû’u’l-kadem*.⁶ In this context, the formula referred to exemption from ordinary fiscal registration and intervention by outside officials.⁷ These legal descriptions should nevertheless be compared with administrative practice. Nineteenth-century centralization and the Tanzimat reforms progressively curtailed

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- 1 Erdal Çiftçi, “Administrative Structures in the Upper Ottoman Kurdistan During the 18th Century / Di Sedsala 18’em de Pergala îdarî li Bakurê Kurdistanê Osmanîyan,” *Nubihar Akademî* 1, no. 4 (2015): 47; İbrahim Özcoşar and Mehmet Sabri Deniz, “Hakkârîli Nasturîlerin Osmanlı Merkez Otoritesi ile İlişkileri,” *Kadim Akademî SBD* 5, no. 2 (2021): 97.
 - 2 Nejad Göyünç, “Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nin İlk İdarî Taksîmatı,” *Tarih Dergisi* 23 (1969): 31–32; Yezdan Ferruhi and Areş Eminpur, “Şah İsmail, Kürd Ümerası ve Diyarbakir’in İran’dan Ayrılması,” trans. Ercan Gümüş, *Kurdiname* 5 (2021): 135.
 - 3 Şahin Mustafayev, “Safevi Tarih Yazımında Osmanlılar (Şah İsmail ve Şah Tahmasb Devirleri),” *Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3, no. 1 (2018): 23; Bilgehan Pamuk, “XIX. Yüzyılda Çapakçur (Bingöl) ve Yöresinde Ekonomik Faaliyetler: Madencilik ve Yaygın İş Kolları,” *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (2011): 106.
 - 4 Yaşar Yücel, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Desantralizasyona Dair Genel Gözlemler,” *Belleten* 38, no. 152 (1974): 661, 684; Martin van Bruinessen, *Ağa, Şeyh, Devlet*, trans. Sabiha Banu Yalkut (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 238.
 - 5 Yurtluk ve ocaklık üzere olup azl ve nasb kabul itmezler.
 - 6 mefrûzu’l-kalem ve maktû’u’l-kadem
 - 7 Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân* der Hulâsa-i Mezâmîn-i Defter-i Dîvân (İstanbul: Tasvir-i Efkâr Gazetehanesi, 1280), 29.

hereditary government and extended direct provincial administration.⁸

Kumiko Saito's study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century timar records demonstrates why these arrangements cannot be reduced to a single, fixed model. Dirliks could be granted without a preceding survey, while rulers of some hükümet sanjaks received revenues outside their own jurisdictions. The resulting practices connected local dynastic interests to Ottoman administrative institutions in different ways.⁹ The present study approaches Shirvan from the complementary perspective of a ruler's narrative, asking how hereditary claims, imperial recognition, and local relationships operated in everyday government. Earlier records establish an institutional background; they are not assumed to describe unchanged practices in Salih Bey's lifetime.

Shirvan provides a case through which to examine these relationships. Its beys appear separately in Şerefnâme,¹⁰ Evliya Çelebi describes their local authority within Van Province,¹¹ and Ottoman records employ such designations as Şirvî, Shirvan Sanjak, and Shirvan Government.¹² The terminology is examined in relation to the date and purpose of each record rather than treated as evidence of an unchanging status.

The sources fall into three groups. Ottoman archival documents illuminate appointments, military obligations, administrative status, and dealings with provincial governors. Records in the Archives of the General Directorate of Foundations document the emirate's endowments, property relations, and local legal and economic arrangements.¹³ The principal narrative source is Salih bin Han Budak's *Târîhu'l-Ensâb: Mebâhis fî Târîh-i İmâreti Şirvan*, used here in Tahsin İbrahim Doski's 2005 edited publication. Salih Bey states that he drew on personal observation, historical works, property deeds, official documents, and oral accounts.¹⁴ His references to works including *Hayâtü'l-Hayevân*, *Ahbâru'd-Düvel*, *Şerefnâme*, and *Târîh-i Taberî* place his narrative within a wider written tradition.¹⁵

The analysis considers the author's position as both ruler and narrator. His descriptions of succession, service, taxation, and reform are read as evidence of political practice and as claims through which he represented his dynasty and his own government. Where their

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- 8 Musa Çadırcı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Türkiye'de Yönetim (1839–1856)," *Belleten* 52, no. 203 (1988): 615–16; Ahmet Çaparlar, "Osmanlı Taşra Teşkilatındaki İdârî Düzenlemeler (1864–1868)," *BENGİ Dünya Yörük-Türkmen Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1 (2022): 77; Cengiz Kartın, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid'den Paris Barış Konferansı'na Kürtler," *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 50 (2020): 232.
 - 9 Kumiko Saito, "16. ve 17. Yüzyıllar Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'sunda Timarların Çeşitli Biçimleri: Farklı Uygulamalara Tek İsim Koymak," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 51 (2018): 64–65, 78, 88–89, <https://doi.org/10.18589/oa.591824>.
 - 10 Şerefhan, *Şerefnâme*, trans. Mehmet Emin Bozarslan (İstanbul: Deng Yayınları, 2009), 176.
 - 11 Evliya Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 4/1 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 15, 253.
 - 12 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı (BOA), Ali Emîrî IV. Mehmed (SMMD.IV), Folder no. 41, File no. 4724.
 - 13 Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi (VGMA), Folder no. 2, File no. 1, 1-8.
 - 14 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb: Mebâhis fî Târîh-i İmâreti Şirvan*, ed. Tahsin İbrahim Doski (Duhok: Dar Spirez, 2005), 21.
 - 15 Cevat İzgi, "Hayâtü'l-hayevân," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 17 (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1998), 18–20; Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 21.

subject matter overlaps, archival and waqf records provide a basis for comparison; they are not taken to corroborate every episode in the narrative. The study therefore concentrates on the mechanisms of government in Shirvan, especially in the period described by Salih Bey. It uses “shared authority” to describe the unequal and negotiated exercise of governing powers under Ottoman sovereignty, while distinguishing legal authority from the practical ability to enforce decisions.

1. Shirvan Sanjak

Shirvan Sanjak, referred to in Ottoman official records and chronicles by terms such as the Emirate of Shirvan, the Sanjak of Shirvan, Mir of Shirvan, and the Government of Shirvan, is a district of present-day Siirt. However, historical sources suggest that it was more than just a settlement. The Shirvan dynasty held local authority in this region for at least four centuries.¹⁶ This continuity signifies not only the regional dominance of a single dynasty but also the existence of a local administrative and political structure in the eastern Ottoman provinces that diverged from the classical sancak structure of governance. Geographically, Shirvan lies in the mountainous hinterland of Siirt, within the wider Siirt–Bitlis–Hizan region. Although the origin of the name is not definitively known, some sources hold that the region took its name from the “Şirvi”, “Şervan” or “Şirvan” principality that once governed it.¹⁷ Conversely, there are cities and dynasties named Shirvan in different geographical regions, the most renowned being the Shirvan region in Azerbaijan, associated with the Shirvanshahs dynasty.¹⁸ However, the Shirvan in question here is located in the eastern Ottoman provinces, developed along the Siirt-Bitlis-Hizan line, and was governed by a local dynasty. Evliya Çelebi's description of the region, mentioning it alongside its central village Küfre, states: “We arrived at the town of Kefre-i Şirvan. The Kefre region is within the Van Province and under the rule of the Şirvan ruler; it is a large and well-maintained town with gardens, flowing water, and pleasant fountains. Its ruler is a tribal chief.”¹⁹ This description indicates that Şirvan was perceived as both a prosperous center and a region possessing local authority. The phrase “under the rule of the Şirvan ruler” suggests that the region maintained the status of an emirate within the classical Ottoman administrative structure.

The establishment of the Shirvan Emirate is noteworthy for its continuity with the local dynasties. Hasan bin İbrahim, regarded as the founder of the emirate, established his principality in Küfre and, prior to his death, sought to ensure the dynasty's continuity by distributing administrative power among his sons. According to Salih bin Han Budak, the Şebistan Fortress and its annexes were allocated to Mir Muhammed Gevr, the Küfre/Kifre/Küfra Fortress to Mirza, the İrun (Eruh) Fortress to Mir Şemseddin, and the district of Avel (Baykan) to Mir Mecdeddin. Mir Şah Muhammed, by contrast, received no fortress but was directly appointed as regent. The author further notes that Abdal Bey II, Zeynel Bey,

16 Şerefhan, Şerefname, 176; Çelebi, Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, 14.

17 Şemseddin Sami, Kâmusü'l-A'lâm, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Mihran Matbaası, 1311), 2854; Bekir Sami Seçkin, Siirt Tarihi (İstanbul: İstanbul Siirtliler Derneği Yayını, 2005), 157.

18 Elnur İsmayılov, “Şirvanşahların Safevilerle Mücadelesi (XV–XVI. Yüzyıllar),” Balıkesir İlahiyat Dergisi 17 (2023): 330.

19 Çelebi, Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, 15.

and Mir Azdin, who resided in Küfre, were descendants of the elder Zeynel Bey. These three later became the founding figures of subsequent Shirvi tribes, and the author himself traces his descent to Mir Azdin. The construction of Kormas Castle is also described as a significant stage in the history of this dynasty.²⁰ This evidence indicates that Shirvan was a dynasty-centered emirate with an organizational structure based on castles and affiliated territory. The information provided by Şerefhan is crucial for understanding the position of the Shirvan beys between the Safavid and Ottoman spheres of influence. According to him, Mir Shah Muhammed, the Bey of Shirvan, was among the Kurdish beys detained in Shah Ismail's palace in 1510. However, unlike other Kurdish beys, he was not imprisoned but was specially welcomed in the palace, dressed in Qizilbash attire, and granted ownership of Kufra, the center of Shirvan.²¹ In the later period, the Shirvan beys became subordinate to the Ottoman sultans, with the region granted to them as a hereditary fiefdom or estate. Indeed, the expression “Şirvi Bey subordinate to the Governor of Van” in a decree dated 1559 clearly reveals the place of the Shirvan beys within the Ottoman administrative hierarchy. Another significant document states that a copy of the decree was ordered to be given to “Şirvi Begi Mir Abdal Beg”, indicating that the Shirvan beys were local administrators recognized by the central government and addressed in correspondence.²² In these documents, the Shirvan beys are referred to as “mir” and “beg” assigned duties in campaigns, and the sanjak is recorded as “Shirvi”. The emirate was based on a “Nahiye” system formed around a central fortress. The Shirvan Emirate consisted of the following nahiyes:²³

- Raşan (Center: Kormas)
- Baruj (Center: Tağar)
- Dabinan (Center: Darkûs)
- Kûr and Garbî
- Nîrb, Bahr, and Rüstak (Tillo).

Shirvan's administrative position changed over time. Evliya Çelebi described it as the “Şirvî, or Shirvan Kurdish Sanjak” and included it among the sanjaks of Van Province subject to the sultan's authority of appointment and dismissal.²⁴ Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century records examined by Saito provide a more detailed picture. Rivalries between the Küfre and Kernî branches temporarily divided Şirvî into two jurisdictions, each recorded as nısf-ı Şirvî. Her classification places them among livâ-type sanjaks. The Şirvî bey held a dirlik in Bitlis in 1540, and a record of 1568 identifies estimated revenues in Şirvî itself. Other grants to members of the ruling family were likewise registered at estimated values.²⁵ Hereditary rule thus coexisted with forms of incorporation into the timar system. The terms emirate, sanjak, and hükümet should not automatically be equated with either a single fiscal

20 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 55.

21 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 41.

22 BOA, Bâb-ı Asafî Mühimme Defterleri (A.DVNSMHM.d), Folder no. 3, File no. 234.

23 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 9.

24 Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, 253.

25 Saito, “16. ve 17. Yüzyıllar,” 68–69, 74, 77, 84.

regime or political independence.

The appointment records cited here for 1675 and 1140 AH describe the sanjak as held on an ocaklık basis,²⁶ indicating the continuing importance of hereditary claims.²⁷ Nineteenth-century records, including those dated 1223 and 1298 AH, use the term kaza in describing Shirvan's place within the provincial administration.²⁸ Since the earlier usage predates the Tanzimat, the appearance of this term alone cannot date the end of dynastic government. The later description of Shirvan as a kaza subordinate to the Siirt Sanjak documents its position in the nineteenth-century administrative hierarchy.²⁹ Its changing designation and the restriction of local dynastic power must therefore be examined as related developments whose chronology cannot be established from terminology alone.

2. Salih bin Han Budak and His Work, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*

Salih bin Han Budak was the fifteenth member of the Shirvan dynasty and served as a local ruler in the capacity of emir for an extended period. His historical significance derives from his participation in dynastic conflicts and dealings with Ottoman officials, as well as the account he left of these experiences. In this context, Salih Bey emerges as a significant figure who both observed and documented Shirvan's political and social order. Salih bin Han Budak was the son of Han Budak bin Salih Bey, a Shirvan emir who passed away in 1201 AH/1786-1787 AD. He was born in 1176 AH/1763 AD at Kormas Castle in Shirvan. His mother was the daughter of the Emir of Hizan, and he was the only son and had nine sisters. Classical historical sources offer no separate biographical account of him: the principal information about his life comes from his own work, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, and from correspondence preserved in the General Directorate of Foundations Archives. In a document dated H. 1227/M. 1812-1813, Salih Bey articulates his lineage as follows:

*“This poor man is first of all the son of Han Budak, son of Salih Bey, son of Süleyman Bey, son of Emir İzzeddin el-Mısrî, descended by lineage from Eba Eyyûb el-Ensârî, originally from Şirvan (Şirvî), residing in Kormas Castle, the deputy of the imaret during his lifetime, and a follower of the Şafî'i school of thought, the second Salih el-Ahresi”*³⁰.

The author identifies himself as “al-Amir Salih bin Han Budak al-Kormasi al-Shirwani” within his own work.³¹ He further asserts, “This humble servant's lineage reaches from Abu Ayyub al-Ansari to Banushirvan”, a formulation taken directly from Şerefhan's Şerefnâme.³² This emphasis on lineage indicates that the Shirvan rulers' legitimacy rested not on de facto governance alone but was also buttressed by claims of religious and historical descent. The

26 ber vech-i ocaklık üzere tevcih edildiği.

27 BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d, Folder no. 135, File no. 289; BOA, SMMD.IV, Folder no. 41, File no. 4724.

28 BOA, AE.SMST.IV, Folder no. 24, File no. 1622; BOA, Yıldız Resmi Maruzat (Y.A.RES), Folder no. 15, File no. 20.

29 BOA, Y.A.RES, Folder no. 15, File no. 20.

30 Bu fakir, evvela Han Budak'ın oğlu, Salih Bey'in oğlu, Süleyman Bey'in oğlu, emir İzzeddin el-Mısrî'nin oğlu, neseben Eba Eyyûb el-Ensârî'ye dayanan, aslen Şirvanlı (Şirvî), Kormas Kalesi'nde mukîm, yaşadığı dönemde imaretin naibi, mezhep olarak Şâfiî olan ikinci Salih el-Ahresiyim. VGMA, Folder no. 12, File no. 2-2.

31 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 5.

32 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 47.

assertion of lineage extending to Abu Ayyub al-Ansari enhances the foundation of Islamic legitimacy, while the nisba “al-Misri” suggests the family's Egyptian origins.

Salih Bey spent his childhood and early youth within the emirate's governing household. In his account, he attended his father's divan from a young age and succeeded him after his death. He describes a ceremony in Tillo through which his authority was recognized, while explaining that Yusuf Ağa initially exercised effective control over the administration:

“When my father passed away on April 20, 1201/May 1, 1787, I accompanied his body to Tillo Village. The people of the Shirvan district, along with the notables and nobles, convened in Tillo. After interring my father, they brought me to Sheikh Mustafa, who was seated on Sheikh Fakirullah's post. They adorned me with a white woolen garment. The people of Shirvan conferred upon me the authority to rule over the emirate. They appointed Yusuf Ağa, the son of Şahin Ağa, as my administrator, as he had also served as my father's administrator... Due to my youth, the government relocated to Küfre. Yusuf Ağa assumed the roles of judge and administrator, leaving me with only the title of ruler”³³.

The narrative is significant because it shows that succession within the Shirvan emirate was not determined by dynastic connections alone; ultimate legitimacy was conferred through the endorsement of local notables, beys, and influential sheikhdom circles. Notably, the ceremony's occurrence in the presence of Sheikh Mustafa, who held the spiritual succession of Sheikh İsmail Fakirullah, underscores the role of local religious authority in legitimizing the emirate.³⁴ A remarkable aspect of Salih bin Han Budak's life is his multilingual and culturally diverse upbringing. In addition to Kurdish, he was proficient in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. His work occasionally incorporates Kurdish expressions verbatim and includes terms from the local Siirt Arabic dialect as well. However, his Arabic style, though functional, shows strong influence from local linguistic practices and does not exhibit the literary polish of classical Arabic writing. He personally recounts his acquisition of the Turkish language as follows:

“While I was a hostage/guest in the palace of Murad Pasha, the Governor of Diyarbakir, news arrived that Mahmud II had killed the Sultan Mustafa. Murad Pasha told me, ‘You have learned Arabic and Persian, but your Turkish is deficient.’ I learned Turkish from the court scribe. I also learned the Ottoman script from Muhammed Bey, Emir of Botan. Because Murad Pasha knew Turkish, he became the Pasha/Governor of Muş”³⁵.

33 Babam 20 Nisan 1201/1 Mayıs 1787 senesinde Allah'ın rahmetine varınca, cenazesi ile beraber Tillo Köyü'ne gittim. Şirvan Nahiyesi'nin halkı, makul (eşraf) ve beyzâdeleri Tillo'da toplandılar. Babamı defnettikten sonra beni Şeyh Mustafa'nın yanına götürdüler. Şeyh Fakirullah'ın postunda kendisi oturuyordu. Bana yünden beyaz bir elbise giydirdiler. Şirvan halkı emirliğin hükmünü bana verdiler. Şahin Ağa'nın oğlu Yusuf Ağa'yı babamın da müdebbiri olması hasebiyle bana da müdebbir yaptılar... Ben küçük olduğum için hükümet Küfre'ya taşındı. Yusuf Ağa hâkim ve müdebbir oldu. Bana da hükümden sadece isim kaldı. Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 90.

34 Abdülkadir Özcan, “İstanbul'da Culus ve Kılıç Kuşanma Törenleri,” in *Büyük İstanbul Tarihi*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İSAM and İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş., 2015), 385.

35 Diyarbakir Valisi Murad Paşa'nın sarayında rehin/misafir olarak bulunduğum sırada, II. Mahmud'un Sultan Mustafa'yı öldürdüğü haberi geldi. Murat Paşa, bana -sen Arapçayı ve Farsçayı öğrenmişsin Türkçen eksiktir-. Bunun üzerine onun divan kâtibinden Türkçeyi de öğrendim. Botan Miri Muhammed

This statement highlights both the author's linguistic environment and the significance of proficiency in Turkish within the provinces for administrative progression and interactions with state institutions. Salih Bey's scholarly contributions are also noteworthy. He translated the section on the Shirvan dynasty from Şerefhan's Şerefnâme from Persian to Arabic and incorporated it into his work as well. His description as an emir who "always wore white clothes" and his response to the inquiry about this, "Don't you see the splendor and brilliance of scholarship in my time?" reflect the value he placed on scholarship and scholars.³⁶ This seemingly minor yet significant detail reveals that, beyond his military and political identity, he presented a multifaceted profile as a local emir distinguished by his close association with scholarly circles. Salih Bey's familial connections are also significant in terms of his political network. His first wife was the daughter of the Emir of Hizan. He subsequently married Naile Hanım, daughter of Murad Pasha, Governor of Diyarbekir; and later Şerife Sultan, daughter of Murad Pasha's brother Yusuf Pasha. A noteworthy aspect of these marriages is that the connections between the local emirate and the central government representatives were established through kinship ties. The most striking example is when Murad Pasha, while holding Salih Bey hostage in his palace over the issue of operating the mines in and around Shirvan, betrothed his daughter to him. As the author notes, Pasha even covered the engagement expenses himself.³⁷ This incident demonstrates that the relationship between local emirs in the Ottoman provinces and representatives of the central administration was not limited to official duties and loyalty to the sultan. In contrast, these ties assumed a more intricate structure through marriage alliances and patronage networks. Salih bin Han Budak passed away in 1243/1827 and was interred in Tillo, adjacent to the tomb of Sheikh İsmail Fakirullah. The date of death is clearly recorded as 1243/1827 on the tombstone inside the mausoleum.³⁸ His burial in Tillo also underscores the strong connection between the Shirvan dynasty and the Sheikhdom in Tillo.

Salih Bey's historical significance lies in the account he left of events in which he participated and of the society he governed. *Târîhu'l-Ensâb: Mebâhis fî Târîh-i İmâreti Şirvan* draws partly on Şerefhan's Şerefnâme, but its treatment of dynastic descent is accompanied by accounts of conflicts, alliances, relations with governors, and regional social and economic life.³⁹ The work offers a local ruler's perspective on the exercise of authority within the Ottoman provincial order. Salih Bey names earlier works, including *Hayâtü'l-Hayevân*, Ahmed b. Yusuf al-Karamânî's *Ahbâru'd-Düvel*, Şerefnâme, *Târîh-i Taberî*, and a *Cihannümâ* attributed in the account to Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı.⁴⁰ He also states that he possessed decrees, charters, and registers issued by the Ottoman government and regional governors.⁴¹ His description of collecting written materials and consulting

Bey'den de Osmanlıca hattı öğrenmiştim. Murat Paşa Türkçe bildiği için Muş paşası/valisi oldu. Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 119.

36 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 118.

37 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 116.

38 Ali Boran et al., Tillo'daki Tarihi Eserler (İstanbul: Siirt Valiliği İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yayını, 2013), 200.

39 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*.

40 İzgi, "Hayâtü'l-hayevân," 18–20; Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 21.

41 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 21.

informants indicates that personal observation, documentary evidence, and oral transmission all contributed to the narrative.⁴²

These features make the work valuable while also requiring attention to the author's interests. Accounts of his ancestors, rivals, followers, and reforms were written from within the ruling dynasty. Claims of descent, legitimacy, and just government are therefore analyzed as part of the text's political perspective. This distinction is especially relevant when moving from Salih Bey's description of a practice to an assessment of how widely or consistently it operated.

3. Center–Periphery Relations in the Emirate of Shirvan: Conflict, Alliance, and Patronage

The relationship between the Ottoman government and the Shirvan dynasty combined formal subordination with substantial local responsibilities. A center–periphery perspective draws attention to the distribution of power among actors at different levels,⁴³ but the particular rights and obligations involved must be established from historical records. In the eastern provinces, hereditary administration could coexist with imperial appointments, military service, and intervention by provincial governors.⁴⁴ Such arrangements provided the institutional setting within which conflict, alliance, and patronage developed. Ayn Ali Efendi's treatise of 1607 distinguished Kurdish hereditary sanjaks from hükümet jurisdictions in the following terms:

*“The province of Diyarbekir consists of eleven Ottoman sanjaks, eight Kurdish bey sanjaks, and five hükümet jurisdictions. Although these eight Kurdish sanjaks were granted as sanjaks at the time of the conquest and are counted as such, they are held as yurtluk and ocaklık and are not subject to dismissal and appointment; when their holders die, they are granted to their sons upon the governor's recommendation ... The hükümet jurisdictions, however, have not been surveyed ... they are exempt from ordinary fiscal registration and the intervention of outside officials, and their rulers retain control of the revenues accruing there.”*⁴⁵

These categories recognized hereditary rights within the Ottoman administrative framework, but the extent of local discretion depended on the arrangements documented for each sanjak. Within this context, the Emirate of Shirvan was classified as a sanjak subordinate to the Sublime Porte. However, its governance was conducted by local dynastic members, with this status perpetuated through hereditary succession within the dynasty. Ottoman correspondence describing “Mir Muhammed, your servant, currently holding

42 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 21.

43 Seçkin Arpalier, “Merkez-Çevre Teorileri ve Modern Dünya Sisteminde Eşitsizlik: Malezya Örneği Üzerine Bir İnceleme,” *Toplum Ekonomi ve Yönetim Dergisi* 5, no. 3 (2024): 516.

44 Yücel, “Desantralizasyona Dair”, 661, 684; Van Bruinessen, *Ağa, Şeyh, Devlet*, 238.

45 Eyalet-i Diyarbekir on bir Osmanlı sancağı ve sekiz Ekrâd begi sancağı ve beşi hükümettir. Bu sekiz Ekrâd sancağı hin-i fetihde gerçi sancak tarikiyle verilmiştir ve sancak itibar olunur, lakin Yurtluk ve Ocaklık üzere olup azl ve nasb kabul itmezler, fevt oldukda vali arzıyla oğullarına virulur... Amma hükümetler tahrir olunmamıştır... mefruz'ul-kalem ve maktu'ul-kadem olup ebvâb mahsulatı her ne ise kendüler mutasarrıftır. Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân*, 29. For the administrative meaning of mefrûzu'l-kalem ve maktu'u'l-kadem, see Saito, “16. ve 17. Yüzyıllar,” 89.

the Shirvan Sanjak subordinate to Van Province⁴⁶ indicates that the central government recognized Shirvan as a sanjak and its governor as an official mir.⁴⁷ The local emirs' ability to maintain their status depended on two things: dynastic legitimacy and recognition by the Ottoman government. To assume the position of sancak bey (sanjak governor), they were required to receive ceremonial elements such as decrees, robes of honor, and banners dispatched from the Sublime Porte or regional governors. Salih bin Han Budak specifically notes that he possessed five original decrees belonging to his ancestors, asserting that these documents were among the fundamental pillars of the dynasty's legitimacy.⁴⁸

One of the most prominent manifestations of the relationship between the center and the provinces is the role played by central and regional powers in the power struggles within the Shirvan dynasty. According to Salih Bey, in 1088 AH, while Mir Muhammed-i Reş was ruling the Shirvan emirate, Mir Azdin, a member of the same dynasty, attempted to seize the emirate with the support of his uncle, Ismail Ağa. Ismail Ağa applied to the Governor of Van to make his nephew the emir, and the governor sent a robe of honor to Mir Azdin. Similarly, a robe of honor was requested from Said Han, the ruler of Bitlis, and with this support, Mir Azdin defeated Muhammed-i Reş and seized the Shirvan emirate.⁴⁹ This event illustrates that the governorship of the sancak was initially shaped by the power struggle within the dynasty and subsequently formalized through the robe of honor and approval sent by the central administration. Shirvan's relationship with the central government was not confined to symbolic recognition; it was maintained through military obligations and administrative loyalty. A decree dated 1140 AH specifies the military obligation attached to the Şirvî Sanjak:

*“Süleyman Bey was granted the sanjak on an ocaklık basis in return for providing five hundred infantrymen. Should he fail to bring these troops on campaign or neglect an important duty of the state, his ocaklık would be revoked and he would face severe punishment.”*⁵⁰

Another appointment record describes the hereditary basis on which the sanjak was held.⁵¹ Such grants recognized dynastic claims while making their continuation conditional on military service and loyalty. Nineteenth-century records employ the designation kaza and document changes in Shirvan's provincial affiliation.⁵² Its successive connections with Diyarbekir, Kurdistan, Van, and Siirt should be understood within this changing administrative hierarchy.⁵³ The record describing “Shirvan kaza, subordinate to the Siirt

46 Eyalet-i Van'a tâbi bilfiil Şirvan Sancağı mutasarrıfı olan bâ'is-i arz-ı ubudiyet Mir Muhammed kulları.

47 BOA, SMMD.IV, Folder no. 41, File no. 4724.

48 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 51.

49 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 57.

50 ber vech-i ocaklık” Süleyman Bey'e beş yüz nefer piyade karşılığında tevcih edildiği, seferde bu askerleri getirmedeği ve devlet için mühim bir işte tembellik göstermesi hâlinde “ocaklığın ref” olunduktan sonra eşedd-i ikab ile muakkab olunacağı. BOA, A.DVNSMHM.d, Folder no. 135, File no. 289.

51 BOA, AE.SMST.IV, Folder no. 24, File no. 1622.

52 BOA, Y.A.RES, Folder no. 15, File no. 20.

53 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye (C.DH), Folder no. 225, File no. 12715; BOA, İrade Meclis-i Vala (İ.MVL), Folder no. 173, File no. 5135.

Sanjak” establishes its later administrative affiliation; it does not, by itself, identify the precise moment when hereditary government ended.⁵⁴

A more direct means of enforcing compliance was the detention of local rulers as hostages (girev). In the episode placed around 1808, Murad Paşa, governor of Diyarbekir, sought to operate mines in Shirvan and Hizan and summoned Salih Bey to Diyarbekir.⁵⁵ According to Salih Bey, the governor gave assurances invoking respected religious figures, but subsequently kept him in his palace while the mining work proceeded. The author recounts the invitation as follows:

*“Murad Pasha became the Pasha (governor) of Diyarbekir in 1221, and he sent me a message saying, ‘You are our brother and our friend. Come to Diyarbekir and save us, help us.’ He gave us a pledge of protection in the name of God and His Messenger. He also gave assurances in the name of Abdul Qadir Gilani, Uways al-Qarani, Sheikh Ismail Tillovi, and Sheikh İbrahim Hakki”.*⁵⁶

Despite this, Salih Bey and several of his loyal followers were detained in Diyarbekir for six months.⁵⁷ This incident illustrates a control mechanism devised by the central administration to maintain oversight over local emirs without eliminating their presence. Salih Bey's narrative indicates that this form of hostage-taking was not merely an act of crude coercion; rather, it was accompanied by a discourse of honor, hospitality, and protection. Murad Pasha's gesture of hosting Salih Bey in his palace while simultaneously arranging the betrothal of his daughter to him demonstrates that this method of control was reinforced by the establishment of political kinship ties.⁵⁸ Provincial loyalty was thus sustained by a combination of military pressure, administrative directives, protection, and alliance-building.

One of the primary areas of contention between the central authority and the provinces has been control over economic resources. Specifically, mining operations were perceived as a interference with resources controlled by local rulers. In a separate but related incident, when Murad Pasha demanded the surrender of Kormas Castle to facilitate mining operations, Salih Bey refused and ordered his men to defend it.⁵⁹ This incident illustrates that, although the emirates were subordinate to the Ottoman Empire, they possessed the capacity to resist central authority to protect their local authority and resources. In this context, waqf records corroborate that local power in Shirvan extended beyond political and military domains, being perpetuated within the framework of waqf, property, and legal relations.⁶⁰ They add

54 BOA, Y.A.RES, Folder no. 15, File no. 20.

55 Mehmed Süreyya, Sicill-i Osmanî, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Matba‘a-i Âmire, n.d.), 359; BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun (HAT), Folder no. 107, File no. 4270.

56 Murad Paşa, 1221 yılında Diyarbekir Paşası (valisi) oldu, bana, sen bizim kardeşimiz ve muhibbimizsin. Diyarbekir’e gel ve bizi kurtar, bize yardım et diyerek haber gönderdi. Bize Allah adına Resûlullahın emanını (güvencesini) verdi. Ayrıca, Abdülkadir-i Geylani, Üveysil Karanî, Şeyh İsmail Tillovi ve Şeyh İbrahim Hakki adına güvence verdi. Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu’l-Ensâb*, 114.

57 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu’l-Ensâb*, 114, 119-121.

58 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu’l-Ensâb*, 116.

59 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu’l-Ensâb*, 116-117.

60 VGMA, Folder no. 8, File no. 1, 1-8.

evidence of the property and legal arrangements through which members of the dynasty exercised local influence. The geographical distance between the center and provinces is also a significant factor contributing to this tenuous relationship. Salih Bey notes that major political events in Istanbul, such as the deposition of Selim III and the accession of Mustafa IV, were known in Shirvan, although their causes were not fully understood by the author. In this context, the note stating that “the cause of this conflict in 1223 is unknown” illustrates the limits of the information available to this provincial observer.⁶¹ The passage concerns the circulation of information and should not by itself be taken as a measure of the effectiveness of imperial authority. In the provinces, alongside the central authority, powerful local emirates exerted decisive influence within their own regions. Notably, influential emirs such as the Emir of Botan intervened in the administration of weaker emirates, appointing mutasarrıfs or, in local parlance, malxoy/müdebbers to their side, thereby securing effective control over administration. This demonstrates that the center-periphery relationship in the Ottoman provinces was not unilateral; rather, a multicentered power structure existed. The fact that powerful local actors such as the Botan could place their own men alongside relatively weaker beys, such as those of Shirvan and Hizan, appointed by the sultan's decree, suggests that power in the provinces was not shaped solely by the discretion of Istanbul; regional power centers also exerted influence over administrative and political balances. The example of Shirvan reveals, through Salih Bey's account, that the center-province relationship in the Ottoman eastern provinces cannot be interpreted solely in terms of subordination or conflict; rather, it took shape within a more complex landscape where conflict, alliance, and patronage were intertwined.

4. Political Organization, Legitimacy, and Administrative Structure in the Emirate of Shirvan

The political organization of Shirvan combined dynastic entitlement with the practical need to secure support. Membership of the ruling family made a claim to office possible, while military resources, local acceptance, religious endorsement, and recognition by imperial or provincial authorities helped make that claim effective. Salih bin Han Budak's self-description in a foundation record illustrates the language through which he presented his standing: “El-fakir es-Salih Beg es-sani el-Ahresi bin Han Budak bin Salih Beg bin Süleyman Beg bin Emir İzzeddin el-Mısırî evvelen ve Ebû Eyyûb el-Ensârî neseben ve's-Şirviyyü vatanen ve Kal'atü Kormas meskenen ve bi imâreti'l-vakti nâiben ve's-Şâfi'ıyyü mezheben”.⁶² The genealogy, religious affiliation, place of origin, residence, and office each establish a different aspect of his identity. His use of “al-Emir Salih bin Han Budak al-Kormasi al-Shirwani” in his own work serves a similar purpose.⁶³ Claims linking the dynasty to earlier ruling lineages also contributed to its presentation of historical legitimacy.⁶⁴

61 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 34.

62 VGMA, Folder no. 12, File no. 3.

63 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 5.

64 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 10, 47, 91; Şerefhan, Şerefname, 176.

The distinction between beyzades and those described as “our Kurds” or “our ghulams” further indicates the importance of rank and dependence in this political language.⁶⁵ These expressions are examined more closely in the discussion of social organization below. Relations with neighboring rulers also affected the exercise of authority: intervention by the emir of Botan could constrain the choices of rulers in Shirvan and Hizan, even where their appointments had received Ottoman recognition.⁶⁶ Local government thus depended on relationships operating at several levels within and around the imperial administration.

In the Emirate of Shirvan, the position of emir was retained within the ruling dynasty, but it was not governed by an automatic rule of succession. Salih Bey's account suggests that military conflicts, sieges, assassinations, and purges were prevalent among members of the dynasty.⁶⁷ This indicates that the political structure of the emirate was not predicated on a fixed rule of succession but rather on an actual power struggle. Mir Azdin's acquisition of the emirate exemplifies this dynamic. According to Salih Bey's account, Mir Azdin acted with the military and political backing of his uncle, Ismail Agha; Ismail Agha, in turn, assured him, “I will make you the ruler of Shirvan; I will spend all my wealth and power for you”.⁶⁸ This statement clearly demonstrates that the emirate was determined more by alliances and support networks than by the order of succession within the dynasty. Another critical phase of this struggle emerged when the Governor of Van sent a robe of honor (hil'at) to Mir Azdin. The robe of honor was a significant symbol in Ottoman political culture, indicating the recognition of sovereignty and office.⁶⁹ In the incident described by Salih Bey, the struggle within the local dynasty and the recognition of central authority became inseparable. Mir Azdin's power was contingent upon his ability to eliminate his rival with military support; however, the formalization of this power was only feasible with the approval of provincial centers such as Van and Bitlis.⁷⁰ In the same context, Salih Bey's mention of the five original decrees belonging to his ancestors underscores the importance of these documents in the legitimacy memory of the dynasty.⁷¹ However, the same text also implies that a decree alone was not sufficient to secure political authority; without the actual acceptance of the people and tribes, sovereignty remained fragile.⁷² Therefore, in Shirvan, sovereignty depended on both symbolic recognition from above and the balance of power formed below.

The divan was the administrative center of the Shirvan emirate. It functioned not merely as an advisory council but as an institutional hub where appointments, judgments, deliberations, and political decisions were made. The author's inclusion in the divan at a young age indicates that the ruling class was cultivated with political experience from an

65 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 79, 143-144.

66 See Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*; VGMA, Folder no. 8, File no. 1, 1-8.

67 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 67-70.

68 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 57.

69 Mehmed Zeki Pakalın, “Hil'at,” in *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 834.

70 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 57.

71 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 51.

72 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 58.

early stage.⁷³ This implies that the emirate was not simply an arbitrary tribal chieftainship; rather, it possessed a central core that fostered administrative continuity and political education in the royal family. The administrative cadre formed around the divan further corroborates this assertion.

Table 1. Administrative Core and Functions of the Emirate of Shirvan.

Role	Function
Divan	Central body for decision-making, appointments, justice, and political deliberation
Müdebbir	Chief official responsible for daily administration; the emir's principal aide
Malkoç / Kâhya	Execution of administrative tasks and central coordination
Hazinedar	Oversight of financial management
Divan Efendisi / Kâtip	Handling of correspondence, record maintenance, and management of decrees and official documents
İmrahor	Supervision of equine affairs, travel logistics, and palace management
Tavladar	Management of hunting activities, personal protection, and security
Musallim / Dizdar / Subaşı	Administration of provincial matters, fortification security, and maintenance of public order

The responsibilities outlined indicate that the emirate's administrative organization possessed an institutional framework. Notably, the office of the "müdebbir" was integral to the emirate's daily administration. Yusuf Ağa, serving as the müdebbir for Han Budak, effectively managed the emirate on behalf of the young heir after his demise. Therefore, the role of the müdebbir extended beyond mere advisory functions, encompassing the responsibility for the emirate's routine operations.⁷⁴ Similarly, the existence of roles such as scribe and court official underscores the significance of correspondence and record-keeping within the emirate's bureaucratic framework. The presence of a treasurer indicates a designated responsibility for managing resources, although it does not by itself establish a separation between household wealth and the emirate's finances. The Emirate of Shirvan also exercised governance over regions beyond the central fortress through official appointments. Positions such as the musallim, dizdar, and subaşı represented the emirate's authority in the provinces. The appointments of Muhammed Ağa as "musallim" to the Kafra and Sheikh Cuma districts, and Ibrahim Mafaki as musallim to the Ahkis Fortress, illustrate the centralization of appointment power within the emirate.⁷⁵ The appointment of Zübeyd Bey as subaşı to the Bahr region further indicates that security administration was a distinct function.⁷⁶ This organizational structure demonstrates that the emirate's authority was systematically maintained at the central citadel and in provincial districts and forts.

73 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 13.

74 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 90.

75 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 79, 83.

76 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 71.

The administrative geography of Shirvan delineates the organization's boundaries. The text references units such as Râşân, Bârûc, Dâbînân, Nîrb, Bahr, and Rüstâk within the emirate's sub-district structure.⁷⁷ The emir renewed his authority by visiting these sub-districts biannually: a practice indicating that sovereignty in Shirvan was upheld not only through documents and decrees but through the ruler's physical, recurring presence.⁷⁸ In Shirvan, sovereignty was maintained through a practice of dominance that was both established and continually manifested. A notable institution within the emirate's administration is the "Ghulam" system. The ghulams were loyal servants personally bound to the emir, and they constituted the military and administrative cadre of the emirate. The author's statement that administrative duties were transferred from the "begzades" (noblemen) during periods of betrayal to "our Kurdish ghulams" illustrates that the ghulams functioned as a military and administrative bureaucracy.⁷⁹ Salih Bey's practice of rewarding favored ghulams with marriage and economic resources, such as mills and income, clearly reveals the system's logic of fostering loyalty.⁸⁰ Conversely, the emirate's military organization relied more on a tribal mobilization system than on a centralized and regular army. The author's statement, "I gathered the soldiers and went to him", describes the mobilization of a fighting force; the role of tribal support must be assessed alongside the alliances recorded in the surrounding episodes.⁸¹ This structure indicates that the emirate's capacity to govern the provinces was heavily dependent on local tribal chiefs' support. The fact that the faction securing tribal support prevailed in power struggles among the dynasty members corroborates this. Therefore, in the Emirate of Shirvan, military power was not merely a means of defense but also a fundamental determinant of political sovereignty. The political organization of the Emirate of Shirvan integrated what might elsewhere have been separate domains. It was neither an aristocratic structure resting solely on dynastic partnership nor a loose confederation operating on tribal power alone; it was a local regime in which dynastic legitimacy, council-based administration, ghulam cadres, and tribal military support reinforced one another.

This structure had implications for Shirvan's external relations. *Târîhu'l-Ensâb* illustrates that relations among the emirs included warfare and coercion as well as established forms of protocol, correspondence, and negotiation. Council meetings, correspondence, embassies, gift-giving (peşkeş), hunting parties, ritual kinship (kirvelik), and seeking refuge (dehâlet) were the fundamental tools in this repertoire. When Salih Bey's father, Han Budak, passed away, the fact that the news was conveyed to the Emir of Botan, Mir Muhammed, through a respected scholar like Molla Davud, and Mir Muhammed's response of sending his own slave and 60 bolts of cloth as a condolence, signifies more than a mere gesture of sympathy; it represents a recognition of political legitimacy.⁸² Similarly, the fact that Hacı Osman Ağa of Siirt sent secret messages offering 20 purses in an effort to secure

77 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 9.

78 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 147.

79 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 135.

80 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 124.

81 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 149.

82 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 92.

support against his rival Bekir Ağa demonstrates that alliances were often formed through clandestine rather than official diplomatic channels.⁸³

Table 2. Principal Instruments of Political Relations in Shirvan and Its Vicinity

Political Instrument	Function
Divan visit (Divan ziyareti)	Demonstrating allegiance, expressing loyalty
Letter/Envoy (Mektup / Elçi)	Proposal of alliance, issuance of threats, expression of condolence, negotiation
Hunting party (Av partisi)	Intelligence gathering, fostering rapprochement, negotiation, demonstration of military prestige
Gift / Tribute (Hediye / Peşkeş)	Repairing relations, conferring honor, reinforcing loyalty
Ritual kinship (Kırvelik)	Terminating enmity, establishing enduring friendship
Protection / Refuge (Dehâlet / Sığınma)	Ensuring personal security, providing temporary protection, offering political assurance
Hostage (Rehin / Girev)	Ensuring loyalty

The practices summarized in Table 2 gave political relationships recognizable forms. Visits, correspondence, gifts, ritual kinship, and refuge could communicate loyalty, negotiate protection, or repair a damaged alliance. Their significance depended on the circumstances in which they were used. Together with the offices discussed above, they help explain how the emir maintained relationships with his household, local communities, neighboring rulers, and representatives of the Ottoman government.

5. Socio-Economic Structure in Shirvan

Salih bin Han Budak's narrative distinguishes social groups through lineage, office, service, and dependence. Members of the dynasty and those entitled to claim the emirate are described as begzâdât or beyzades. The principal branches are associated with Mir Azdin, Mir Zeynel Begi, and Mir Abdal Begi.⁸⁴ Other groups appear as "Kurds," "Shirvan Kurds," "our Kurds," and, in contexts of personal service, "our ghulams."⁸⁵ Statements such as "Before our time, the Kurds had nothing" and "We gave the administration of the lands taken from the beyzades to our Kurdish ghulams" mark a distinction between dynastic entitlement and advancement through service.⁸⁶ The possessive "our" locates these groups within the emir's political sphere. It does not establish that "Kurd" lacked an ethnic meaning, or that every use of the term denoted the same social category.

A cautious comparison helps clarify the distinction. Drawing on Şerefnâme, Saito distinguishes ruling families from the tribal formations they governed, while her study of administrative records also shows that members of an emir's family could be described among his followers.⁸⁷ This comparison concerns the relationship between genealogy, service, and classification; it does not demonstrate that Şerefnâme used an expression identical to Salih Bey's "our Kurds." In *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, the surrounding episode and the

83 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 106.

84 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 55, 148.

85 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 79, 143-144.

86 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 144.

87 Saito, "16. ve 17. Yüzyıllar," 67-70. The comparison here follows Saito's reading of Şerefnâme and the administrative records; it does not attribute Salih Bey's wording to Şerefnâme.

author's own position determine the social implications of the term. Reading it simply as a synonym for all reaya would obscure differences between dependants, officeholders, and the wider taxable population.

Naming practices offer further evidence of these distinctions. Dynastic figures appear as beys, including İsa Bey, Han Budak, Han Hüseyin, and Salih Bey; tribal leaders appear as ağas, including Şahin Ağa, Yusuf Ağa, and Kasım Ağa. Other people are identified by place, such as Muhammed of Nuvin, Ebû Bekir of Küfre, Abdullah of Helsan, and Yusuf of Kormas.⁸⁸ These patterns show how the narrative registers differences of standing, although titles alone cannot reconstruct a complete social hierarchy.

Table 3. Social Groups and Functions in the Emirate of Shirvan

NO	Social Group	Basic Function / Location
1	Sheikhs and Sayyid	Spiritual legitimacy, mediation, social influence
2	Emirs and Beyzades	Dynastic aristocracy, political dominance, claim to inheritance
3	Ghulams / circle of loyalty	Administrative-military responsibilities; core cadre loyal to the emir
4	Aghas and tribal chiefs	Regional military authority, local social influence
5	"Our Kurds" / subject population	Production, taxation, service, and subject population of the emirate
6	Non-Muslims/Yazidis	Production, crafts, taxation, and local economic exchange

Table 3 summarizes groups identified in the narrative; it should not be read as a set of mutually exclusive or permanently fixed ranks. Van Bruinessen's discussion of expressions such as "our Kurmanji" provides a further comparison for the relationship between political dependence and social designation.⁸⁹ The ghulams illustrate the possibilities of advancement through service. Salih Bey's account of transferring lands from beyzades to "our Kurdish ghulams" indicates that personal loyalty could give people outside the dynasty access to administrative responsibilities and resources.⁹⁰

The narrative also describes Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Salih Bey gives a total population of 14,168, comprising 9,655 Muslim Kurds, 4,113 Armenians, and approximately 400 Syriac Jacobites.⁹¹ These reported figures place the non-Muslim share at roughly one-third; they are treated here as the author's enumeration rather than an independently verified census. The inclusion of revenues from six Christian households in Shatvan among waqf resources shows their place in the local economy.⁹² His reference to collecting taxes from "dhimmis and Kurds" further indicates distinctions among subjects within the fiscal order.⁹³ Religious affiliation, taxable status, and dependence on the emir could therefore intersect without forming a single hierarchy.

The economic resources described in the sources help explain how these relationships were sustained. Revenue collection funded the ruling household, armed followers, and

88 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 79.

89 Van Bruinessen, *Ağa, Şeyh, Devlet*, 146.

90 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 135, 144.

91 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 9.

92 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 49.

93 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 147.

local institutions, while appointments and grants connected service to access to resources. Waqf income, ordinary levies, gifts, and the proceeds of conflict must nevertheless be distinguished: their coexistence does not establish that they formed a single treasury or were all at the emir's unrestricted disposal.

Earlier fiscal records provide a limited regional comparison. Saito identifies estimated *dirlik* grants to the Şirvî ruling family and the continuation of *timar* arrangements in Bitlis despite its designation as a *hükümet*. For Cezîre, she identifies grants to the emir's followers outside their own jurisdiction.⁹⁴ These sixteenth- and seventeenth-century examples show that hereditary government was compatible with different forms of fiscal incorporation into the Ottoman system. They establish a comparative background, rather than direct evidence for the collection practices described by Salih Bey in a later period.

Salih bin Han Budak's analysis elucidates that the emirate's economy was characterized by a multifaceted financial structure rather than a singular, uniform tax system. This structure comprises various intertwined sources, including endowment revenues, periodic collections, tributes, gifts, political transfers, and the spoils of war. The endowment deed of the Zeynel Bey Madrasa illustrates the first of these, endowment revenues, in particular detail. Its recorded sources of income included shares in the salt mine, various mills, land and farm revenues, and fees collected from Christian households.⁹⁵ Conversely, expenditures such as the teacher's daily salary of twenty akçe, the salaries of the imam, muezzin, and cook, and the students' requirements for food, soap, baths, and shoes were meticulously documented.⁹⁶ These records indicate that the economic structure in Shirvan was not merely a collection of disparate elements; it also fostered a socio-economy organized around endowments, services, education, and daily consumption patterns. Documents from the General Directorate of Endowments Archive further demonstrate that this system was not merely theoretical but functioned as a *de facto* structure grounded in legal and financial records.⁹⁷ The transformation of currencies within the Emirate's economy is noteworthy. In the mid-17th century, the akçe was used as a unit of account, with salaries and grants specified in Ottoman decrees in amounts such as 9,580 akçe or 39,403 akçe.⁹⁸ By the early 19th century, the period in which the author lived, the *kuruş* and *para* had become the basic units of payment; the *Adlî* and *Mahmudî* gold coins minted during the reign of Mahmud II also became prominent in local economic life. Salih Bey notes that the *dinar* was not prevalent among the Kurds previously, but the use of gold increased during his time.⁹⁹ Furthermore, his observations regarding the year 1234/1819 are significant as they illustrate not only the change in currency but also rising prices and the erosion of purchasing power. The author states that “there is plenty of money, but goods are expensive”, indicating that the nominal increase did not correspondingly enhance prosperity; he mentions that in the past, a village would be required to contribute one hundred *kuruş*, whereas in his time this amount had

94 Saito, “16. ve 17. Yüzyıllar,” 74, 76–78, 84.

95 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 49.

96 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 49-50.

97 VGMA, Folder no. 8, File no. 1; VGMA, Folder no. 12, File no. 2-2.

98 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 51-52.

99 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 34.

risen to five hundred kuruş. Despite the nominal increase in coin circulation, Salih Bey notes that an act of charity once costing ten kuruş could no longer be accomplished even with ten purses; a vivid index of how sharply perceived purchasing power had fallen.¹⁰⁰ In the same passage, his reference to the enrichment of horse equipment, including the presence of silver equipment on the horses of slaves, indicates an increase in ostentation in the material culture.

The emirate's tax collection system illustrates the social dimensions of its economy. As documented by Salih Bey, the ruler personally visited the villages of Shirvan biannually, during spring and autumn, to collect a tax known as "masraf". However, this system was inequitable, disproportionately burdening impoverished peasants while exempting sheikhs, mullahs, aristocrats, and mosque officials.¹⁰¹ In addition to this levy, an additional levy termed "baş harç" (head tax) was imposed, ostensibly directed to the Shirvan steward. Moreover, the regular monthly payment of "bish" from the populace indicates that taxation within the emirate's economy served not only as an administrative mechanism but also as a personal and political instrument of control.¹⁰² Tributes collected from non-Muslim subjects constituted a significant component of this structure. Notably, the tribute from six Christian households in the village of Shatvan, recorded as waqf income, demonstrates that payments from non-Muslims were directly integrated into the financial system.¹⁰³ Plunder and loot were central to the extraordinary sources of income in Shirvan's economy. Wars were not merely the outcome of political rivalry but also a principal means of generating economic resources. During the siege of Siirt and the Hizan campaign, the victorious side's looting of villages, livestock, and movable goods from the defeated side was presented as a legitimate right.¹⁰⁴ The emir's allowance for his soldiers to loot until the afternoon, particularly after the capture of Siirt, clearly illustrates the operation of the war economy under extraordinary circumstances.¹⁰⁵ This indicates that the emirate's military activities cannot be solely attributed to defense or a struggle for influence; they also established a regime of plunder, wherein goods, animals, weapons, and various movable assets were economically circulated. Practices such as mukataa and cürm are noteworthy in this framework. The districts mentioned by the author functioned not only as administrative units but also as areas of financial dominance.¹⁰⁶ The revenues derived from these areas financed the emirate's military and administrative organization. Salih Bey's reference to collecting cürm during a circuit through the mountains (devr'el-cibâl),¹⁰⁷ links revenue collection to the ruler's movement through the territory and the exercise of local authority.¹⁰⁸ The association of cürm with wrongdoing in İbn Manzûr's Lisânü'l-'Arab provides lexical

100 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 127-128.

101 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 147.

102 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 147.

103 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 49.

104 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 103, 109, 111.

105 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 111.

106 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 9.

107 devr'el-cibâl ile cürm almak

108 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târihu'l-Ensâb*, 102.

context, but the precise fiscal character of the collection must be established from its use in the narrative.¹⁰⁹ Within the emirate, such collections transcended mere economic transactions and were visible expressions of political supremacy.

Natural resources constitute a significant component of Shirvan's economy. Historical records indicate the presence of mines in the region, believed to contain copper, silver, or gold, which were exploited during the Ahlat rule and subsequently by Ottoman pashas. As discussed earlier in relation to the Murad Pasha hostage episode, the mines in Shirvan were a recurrent source of contention between center and periphery. Beyond this political dimension, their economic performance was weak: despite Murad Pasha's efforts to process the ores, the anticipated profits were not realized, and expenditures surpassed revenues. Furthermore, these mines were perceived as inauspicious by the local populace, associated with disrespect towards Veysel Karani, and it was believed that those who attempted to operate the mines met untimely deaths.¹¹⁰ This narrative illustrates that economic resources are intertwined not only with technical or administrative factors but also with local beliefs and their legitimacy. The emirate's economy was bolstered by external resources. Grants, estate payments, and cash donations allocated to specific individuals and villages through imperial decrees should be considered. For instance, the allocation of twenty thousand akçe to a Kurd, followed by its cessation and reallocation, underscores the influence of central politics on the local economy.¹¹¹ Additionally, bribery, patronage, and gift-giving served as the economic language of political alliances. The fact that Hacı Osman Ağa of Siirt offered Salih Bey twenty purses in bribes to secure an alliance and also sent twenty-five purses of dirhams, horses, and weapons and that Murad Pasha provided five purses worth of cash and goods demonstrates that political allegiances were frequently reinforced through economic transfers.¹¹² The Namran tribe's annual payment of 100 kuruş as a sign of allegiance to the Emirate of Botan further reveals the financial implications of allegiance.¹¹³

Salih Bey presents several changes in taxation and inheritance as reforms of earlier practice. He states that the confiscation or sale of a deceased person's property had previously excluded heirs and that he abolished this practice. He also reports ending the one-tenth share of inheritance taken by judges and a levy on marriage payments. According to his account, the "Shirvan tax" on poor inhabitants, except in the Mavit region, was removed, while annual payments continued to be collected from wealthy subjects and dhimmis.¹¹⁴ These statements show how the author represented the justice of his government. They also suggest that collection practices could be altered by the ruler, although the narrative alone does not establish the extent or duration of their implementation.

109 İbn Manzûr, Muhammed b. Mükerrrem, "Cürm," *Lisânü'l-'Arab*, ed. Abdullah Ali el-Kebîr (Kahire: Dârü'l-Maârif, n.d.), 605.

110 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 116, 122.

111 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 51-52.

112 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 106, 112.

113 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 91.

114 Salih bin Han Budak, *Târîhu'l-Ensâb*, 147.

Table 4. Revenue Sources and Expenditure Categories in the Shirvan Emirate

Revenue items	Examples	Expenditure categories
Public taxes	Collection of goods and cash; a de facto indication of subordination.	Ghulam and soldier expenses
Foundation income	Salt mine shares, mills, land/farm revenues, levies	Expenditure on endowments and madrasas
Spoils of war/plunder	Animals, weapons, and movable goods obtained from wars	Construction activities
Tribute and fees	Payments received from non-Muslims and subject communities	Gift / bribe
Political transfers	Economic advantages arising from relations with the center.	Hunting and expedition expenses

6. Conclusion

The evidence examined here shows that the Shirvan dynasty exercised local governing powers within the Ottoman political order. Imperial recognition, hereditary claims, and military obligations defined the framework of its authority, while local acceptance and the ability to mobilize resources shaped its practical reach. Ferman and hil'at confirmed appointments, but succession also depended on support within the dynasty, religious circles, tribal networks, and neighboring emirates. The detention of Salih Bey by Murad Paşa illustrates how coercion, assurances of protection, and kinship could operate within the same relationship. "Shared authority" describes this unequal and negotiated exercise of powers under Ottoman sovereignty; it does not imply the absence of imperial authority or a uniform arrangement across the eastern provinces.

Salih Bey's descriptions of beyzades, ghulams, tribal leaders, and "our Kurds" reveal how lineage, service, and dependence informed the emirate's social distinctions. Tax collection, endowments, grants, gifts, and extraordinary revenues provided resources through which these relationships were maintained or contested. The narrative is especially valuable because it records such practices from within the ruling household. Its claims of descent, reform, and legitimate rule also require critical reading alongside administrative and waqf records.

The earlier use of kaza in documents concerning Shirvan cautions against assigning the end of dynastic rule to a single change of terminology. Within the broader nineteenth-century process of centralization, intensified by the Tanzimat, Shirvan's later designation as a kaza attached to Siirt places it within the reorganized provincial hierarchy, while the precise stages of the dynasty's loss of governing power require further documentation. The contribution of this study is to explain the administrative and social workings of that local authority, and the conditions of its Ottoman affiliation, through the combined reading of a ruler's account and the records of institutions with which he interacted.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was conducted in accordance with all the rules stipulated in the “Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions.” None of the acts specified in the second section of the Directive, entitled “Acts Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics,” were committed.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

The first and second authors contributed equally to the study, with each author accounting for 50% of the total contribution.

Author 1 contributed to all sections of the study.

Author 2 contributed to all sections of the study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no financial or personal relationships with any individual or institution in connection with this research. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI-assisted tools were used for language editing, consistency checks, and assistance with manuscript revision.