

An Overview of the Ottoman Archival Documents and Chronicles

Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri ve Kroniklerinin
Genel Bir Değerlendirmesi

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Abstract

Both Ottoman chronicles and archival documents are equally valuable for Ottoman Studies. The scholars, particularly the historians starting with Mustafa Nuri Paşa, a nineteenth century Ottoman historian, have been well aware of this fact. A systematic work on Ottoman chronicles and archival documents started with the foundation of Ottoman Historical Society (Tarih-i 'Osmani Encümeni TOE) and continued well into the Republican period with Turkish Historical Society (TTK) founded by Atatürk. The academic research in Ottoman Studies has increased during the past few decades due to the intensive and systematic work in cataloguing and bringing the libraries and archives up to a modern standard. This paper is a summary of the structure of Ottoman documents as they were stored during the Ottoman period, and an outline of major Ottoman chronicles.

Keywords: Ottoman, Archives, Ottoman documents, Ottoman chronicles.

Öz

Osmanlı vakayinameleri ve arşiv belgeleri şüphesiz Osmanlı Tarih Araştırmalarının vazgeçilmez iki temel kaynaklarıdır. Ondokuzuncu yüzyıl tarihçilerinden Mustafa Nuri Paşa'dan bu yana bunun bilincinde olan gerek Osmanlı gerekse Modern Türkiye tarihçileri bu iki temel kaynağı mihenk taşı olarak kullanmışlardır. Osmanlı vakayinameleri ve Arşiv dokümanları üzerine sistematik çalışma ve araştırmalar Tarih-i 'Osmani Encümeni'nin 1908 yılında kurulması ile başlamış ve Atatürk'ün direktifi ile 1931 yılında kurulan Türk Tarih Kurumu ile devam etmiştir. Sistematik ve sıkı bir çalışma neticesinde hazırlanan ve bilgisayar ortamında web sahifelerine aktarılan kütüphane ve arşiv katalogları ve de belge

özetleri araştırmacıların kullanımına sunulmuş ve bu sayede Osmanlı Tarihi ve Araştırmaları üzerine çalışmalar bilhassa son çeyrek asırda hız kazanmaya başlamıştır. Bu makalemizde Osmanlı dokümanlarının Osmanlı döneminde muhafaza edildikleri nezaret ve daireler, Osmanlı Tarih yazıcılığı ve önemli Osmanlı kronikleri hakkında kısa bilgi verilmiştir. .

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı, Arşiv, Osmanlı belgeleri, Osmanlı vakayinameleri.

Introduction

This paper is presented under two subheadings covering: 1) the importance of Ottoman archives and a classification of Ottoman administrative offices from where the Ottoman documents were issued; and 2) the Ottoman chroniclers and an analysis of their works.

Ottoman Archives

Almost all countries of the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans were once under Ottoman domination. The Ottomans had bilateral relations with almost all the European countries, Russia, Iran and the United States, and the documents related to all these countries are preserved in the Ottoman archives. The history of these countries, which were dominated by the Ottomans for five or six centuries, can only be comprehensively understood through a thorough examination of these critical documents. Indeed the fact that the Ottoman documents are still used in some of these countries to settle local and frontier disputes in both national and international courts demonstrates their ongoing importance.

About 150 million of these documents, which are typically thick register books rather than single pages, are preserved in the Ottoman Archive (or to use its popular name the Prime Ministerial Archive) in Istanbul. The remaining, either in small or large quantities, are scattered in the other archives and libraries of Turkey and the countries mentioned above. Two wagon loads of documents from the Prime ministerial Archive were bought by Bulgaria under the pretext of recycling in their paper mill in 1930s¹.

The Ottomans were very organized and careful in recording documents as well as cataloguing and preserving them. This demanding task was shouldered by government officials both in the capital and provinces. Every

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¹ İlhan, M.M., "The Ottoman Archives and their importance for historical studies: With Special reference to Arab provinces" in *Belleten*, LV/213, August 1991, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu publication (cited hereafter as TTKB) 1991, pp. 419-420.

office was instructed to take utmost care in recording information on a daily basis into the registers and onto the documents. These registers and documents, which were kept in files, were put into sealed and tagged bags at the end of each month. The monthly bags accumulated, and at the end of each year were put into leather covered boxes, tagged with the name of the office and the year they belonged to. They were then stored in specially constructed buildings for future reference. All these documents were guarded day and night. Whenever there was a need to send a set of documents or registers from the provinces to the Porte or vice versa, they were accompanied by a contingent. Anyone, including the officials, attempting to change a word in a document to gain personal benefit was punished severely. All offices of the Ottoman bureaucratic system generally recorded information into the register books rather than onto paper. This system, with the exception of a change to file system in some offices in 1891, continued until the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Very few documents date back to the beginning of the Ottoman Empire. Among these is a copy of *vakfiye*², which dates back to 1219. Other significant documents which covered the reigns of early Ottoman sultans including Orhan (1324-1360) and perhaps his father Osman preserved in the Ottoman capital Bursa were unfortunately destroyed by Timur following the battle of Ankara in 1402. The documents and registers covering the period from the reign of Mehmed II (1451-1481) to that of Selim I (1512-1520) are in the hundreds. The documents and registers preserved in Edirne, the other Ottoman archives, were transferred to Topkapi Palace in Istanbul after Ahmed III's reign (1703-1730). The Ottoman documents which date from the sixteenth century are almost intact and number in the millions.

The classical Ottoman administration in the early period was basically run from three offices: Imperial Chancery (*Divan-ı Hümayun*), the Exchequer (*Hazine-i Amire*), and the Imperial Registry (*Defterhane-i Hakani*). The officials of these three offices held only fief holdings and were not paid. Therefore in the early classical period they were not called *me'mur* (a term meaning officers). Those officers who did not hold fiefs were called *me'mur*. They relied on (stamp) duties paid for their services, and it was only after 1834 (1254) that they were paid salaries along with the other officers and officials³. As the Empire grew additions were made to these offices particularly after Topkapi Palace became the heart of Ottoman central administration and remained so until the end of the eighteenth century. The whole empire before and after then was run from the Imperial Chancery

² Ilhan, M.M., *idem*, p. 421.

³ Pakalin, M.Z., *Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, art. 'Amedi' vol. I, p. 56, [cited hereafter as Pakalin, (TDTS)].

(*Divan-ı Hümayun*), and the Grand Vizier gave regular briefings to the Sultans about the decisions taken at the Chancery (*Divan*). The proceedings were drawn at an office (called *Divan Kalemi*) presided over by the *Beylikçi*, the Secretary of the Council of State, who was responsible to *Re'isü'l-küttab*, the chief of the scribes in the Divan⁴. The offices of the Imperial Chancery (*Divan-ı Hümayun*), prior to the foundation of *Bab-ı Asafî* (the Palace of the Grand Vizier) that followed the declaration of *Tanzimat* (the political reforms of Abdülmecid I, 1839-1861) in 1839, were four; *beylik* (*divan*, chancery or office of the Council of State), *tahvil* (*kese* or *nişan*, the office where the appointments of high officials and fief holders were made), *riius* (lit. heads)⁵ and *amedî* (the office that received provincial correspondence addressed to the Grand Vizier).

Beylik Kalemi⁶ or the *Divan Kalemi*, the office of the Imperial Chancery was presided over by the *Beylikçi Efendi*. The office was responsible for keeping the copies of treaties with foreign countries, Imperial edicts (*ferman*), patents (*berat*) and the *divan* proceedings. This office was also responsible for recording edicts (*emir*) and decrees (*hüküm*) into the registers called *mühimme*⁷, a series of the most important registers preserved in the Archive. The political, military, social and economic matters discussed in the *Divan-ı Hümayun* (the Imperial Chancery) were recorded in the *mühimme* registers. The grand vizier presided over the *divan* when both he and the sultan were in Istanbul. If the vizier was on a campaign or away from Istanbul for some reason he appointed a dignitary to represent him and preside over the *divan*. The grand vizier also held a *divan* meeting during a military campaign. When both the grand vizier and sultan were on a campaign or away from Istanbul for some reason the official representing the vizier presided over the *divan* in the capital. In each of these cases separate

⁴ Ahıskalı, Recep, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Reisülküttaplık (XVIII, Yüzyıl)*, İstanbul: Tatar 2001.

⁵ On *riius* see Göyünc, N., "XV. Yüzyılda Rü'us ve önemi" in *İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, XVII, 22 (1967), pp. 17-34.

⁶ According to Pakalın (*TDTS*), quoting "*Sefinetu'r-rüeasa*", a treatise on the biographies of *reisü'l-küttab*, the title "Beylikçi" was used after 1065/1655. This may explain why the word "Beylikçi" is put between brackets next to the word "Divan" in the Archive's guidebook (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, pp. 6, 7, 282, 328). The earliest Divan register is dated 1475. For details on *Divan-ı Hümayun* offices (*kalemleri*) see Tevfik Temelkuran, "Divan-ı Hümayun ve kalemleri" in *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, nu. 6, İstanbul 1975, pp. 129-175. For other usages of the word see art. "Beylik" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition, Leiden: E.J Brill, 1960-2002 (cited hereafter as *EI2*).

⁷ Quite a number of *mühimme* registers have been published by the General Directorate of Archives (T.C. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Genel Müdürlüğü). There is a good introduction both in Turkish and English on the *mühimme* documents in vol. 3 (*3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 966-968/1558-1560*, Ankara 1993, pp. IX-LVII).

mühimme registers were kept and were called *mühimme*, *rikab* (the Royal presence) *mühimmesi*, *ordu* (military) *mühimmesi*, and *kaymakam* (representative) *mühimmesi* respectively⁸.

Beylikçi, the head of ***Beylik Kalemi***, personally made draft copies of the most important and secret correspondence particularly those related to codes of law, military and foreign affairs referred to him by *Reisu'l-küttab*⁹ to whom he was directly responsible. *Beylikçi* as the head of three important offices –*beylik* (*divan*), *tahvil* (*kese* or *nişan*) and *rüüs* – cross-checked the patents (*berats*), Imperial edicts (*fermans*) and other writings coming to him from these offices and then ticked them with the word correct (*sahh*). The decrees (*emir*) and codes of law written in the *Beylik Kalemi* and considered as edicts (*ferman*) were marked with the word correct (*sahh*) directly by the *Beylikçi* himself. But if the decrees (*emir*) were a complaint, the chief clerk (*mümeyyiz*) of *Beylikçi* examined them first and sent only those he approved and put his sign onto the *Beylikçi*. The *Beylikçi* then marked them with the correct (*sahh*) sign and then sent them to the *Nişancı* to be inscribed with the Sultan's Imperial monogram (*tuğra*)¹⁰.

Tahvil Kalemi (document office for the appointment of high dignitaries) kept the patent for the appointments of the provincial judges (*kadıs*), viziers, governor generals (*beylerbeyis*) and minor governors (*sancakbeyis*) appointed by the Porte to the provinces. They also kept records of the fiefs given to them. When they were overloaded with work, they asked the Chancery office (*Beylik Kalemi*) and their experienced officers to prepare the papers for the appointment of viziers, *beylerbeyis*, *sancakbeyis* and other important dignitaries. In fact all the patents written by the *Tahvil kalemi* and *Beylik kalemi* scribes and corrected by the chief clerk had to be checked and delivered by the *amedci*, the private secretary of *Reisu'l-küttab*¹¹, in person¹².

Tahvil Kalemi was also known as *Nişan Kalemi* and *Kese Kalemi*. Whenever a *ze'amet* or *timar* was conferred upon someone the decree would first go to the ***Defterhane*** for a marginal note and rescript to make sure that

⁸ *Basbakalık Osmanlı Arsivi Rehberi*, second edition, İstanbul 2000, pp. 7-8; İ . H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi 1988, pp. 180-185.

⁹ For *Reisu'l-küttab* and his career during the reign of Selim III see Thomas Naff, "Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 83, No. 3. (Aug. - Sep., 1963), pp. 295-315; Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 242-248; Ahıskalı, Recep, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Reisülküttaplık*, İstanbul 2001.

¹⁰ Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 39-42.

¹¹ Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, p. 55.

¹² Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, p. 44.

it complied with the Shari'a Law and was then sent to the *Tahvil Kalemi*. The following documents were written in *Tahvil Kalemi*: the patents and Imperial edicts for the appointment of viziers, *beylerbeyis* and *sancakbeyis*; the decrees or memorandums showing the conferment of vacant *timars* and *ze'amets*. These documents were then sent to *Beylik Kalemi* for the preparation of their patents¹³.

Rüüs¹⁴ Kalemi or *Rüüs-i Hümayun Kalemi* (document office for the appointment of minor officers) looked after the documents pertaining to all those officials (except high dignitaries such as *kadıs*, vizier, *beylerbeyis*, *sancak beyis* and fief holders) who received their salaries from the treasury or pious foundations (*vakıfs*). These were office directors (*reis* pl. *rüüs*) as well as their chief scribes (*mümeyyiz*) and chief door keepers (*kapıcıbaşı*), castellans (*kale ağası*) and castle wardens/constables (*dizdar*), colonels of Janissaries (*kethuda*), teachers and professors (*müderris*), preachers (*va'iz*), Qur'an reciters (*devirhan*), imams, deliverers of Friday sermon and talk (*hatip*) trustees of pious foundations (*mütevelli*). The officials employed under the *Rüüs Kalemi* were numerous, reaching as many as 150 in the eighteenth century, ranging from clerk, apprentices (*şakird*) to novices (*mülazım*)¹⁵.

There were three types of *rüüs* kept at the *Rüüs Kalemi* (Office); *rüüs* issued from the *Rüüs Kalemi*, *rüüs* issued from the army while on a campaign and *rüüs* issued upon the order of the Sultan in Istanbul when the Grand Vizier was on a military campaign. The third type of *rüüs* is called *Rikab-ı Hümayun* (the Royal presence). Pakalin's definition of these three types gives us a more detailed understanding.

1. The *rüüs* issued from a *Rüüs Kalemi* (Office) covered the appointments and promotions of the offices of the *vakıfs* under the administration of Şeyhu'l-İslam and the *kadıs* (judges) of Istanbul, Eyyub, Galata and Üsküdar, the head eunuch and head butler of the Sultan's (Imperial) Harem (*Babu's-Sa'ade Ağası*) and also of the New palace. Also the promotions and appointments of the officers of the *vakıfs* and guards of the fortresses in Anatolia fell under this type of *rüüs*.

2. The *rüüs* issued by the Grand Vizier during a campaign covered the promotions and appointments of the officers to the *vakıfs* and guards of the fortresses in Anatolia.

3. The *rüüs* issued by the Sultan was of two types: a) *Küçük ruznamçe rüüs* covered doorkeepers, skirmishes (*avcı*), the clerks of the Imperial

¹³ Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁴ The word *rü'us* refers to a diploma of commission according to subordinate rank. *rü'us* is the plural of Arabic word *re's* which literary means head. See "Reisu'l-kuttab", *Eİ2*.

¹⁵ Uzuncarsili, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 45-46.

Chancery (*Divan-ı Hümayun Katipleri*), tasters (*çaşnigir*), and *divan çavuşes*¹⁶ (i.e. *Divan* guards). **b)** *Piyade* (infantry) *rüüs* covered the Palace chefs and cooks, standard bearers, *mehteran* (band players), water carriers of Imperial Chancery (*Divan-ı Hümayun sakalari*), Palace craftsmen, Palace physicians and surgeons, the doorkeepers of the Old Palace and Galtasaray Palace, chief officers of the fortresses in Anatolia, Arsenal workers (*tersane mensuplari*), wardens of trade guilds (*esnaf kethudalari*), and *mukata'a* clerks (*mukata'a katipleri*)¹⁷.

The *rüüs* registers were also given to the viziers appointed as commander generals (*serdar*). Such viziers were given permission to appoint governor generals (*beylerbeyi*), minor governors (*sancakbeyi*) and fief holdings in the name of the Sultan and record them in these registers called *Serdarlar Rüüs Buyrulduusu*.

There were also *rüüs* registers called *İkindi* (late afternoon) *Rüüsü* in which the grand viziers recorded the appointments made at the late afternoon divan (*İkindi Divanı*)¹⁸.

Amedi Kalemi (*Amedi-i Divan-ı Hümayun*), headed by *Amedci*¹⁹, was the most important office attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Re'is'ul-küttab*)²⁰. *Re'is'ul-küttab* wrote the reports and handed them over to *Amedci* to make copies. However, *Amedci* also drafted copies of minor reports. The office was responsible for recording and preserving the writs of Grand Vizier addressed to the Sultan, and Imperial decrees (*hatt-ı Hümayun*) and memorandums (*tezkere*) the Grand Vizier received from the Sultan. *Amedci* was in fact private secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the establishment of *Bab-ı Asafi* that is *Bab-ı 'Ali* at the end of the eighteenth century became the most distinguished office of *Bab-ı 'Ali* (Sublime Porte)²¹. The official statements and reports drawn up at the Porte by the grand vizier for submission to the Sultan, the grand vizier's letters to the leaders of foreign countries, copies of protocols, treaties and agreements with foreign countries, letters to ambassadors, translators and tradesmen

¹⁶ *Çavuşes* are members of a corps of heralds and messengers specially attached to the Grand Vizier as the chief of the Divan and often employed on important missions.

¹⁷ Pakalin (*TDTS*), vol. III ("Rü'us"), p. 71. For more details also see Uzunçarsılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 46-55.

¹⁸ *İkindi Divanı*: Council of State assembled in the late afternoon in the grand vizier's house.

¹⁹ The term *amedci* means "the receiver general of provincial correspondence addressed to the Grand Vizier" see *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, Istanbul: Redhouse Press 1968. See "Ameddji", *EI2*. Also see Uzunçarsılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 55-58.

²⁰ See Tayyib Gökbilgin, "Amedci" in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi 1978 (cited hereafter as *IA*); cf. D'Ohsson, *Tableau General de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris 1824, p. 166.

²¹ See Pakalin (*TDTS*) vol. I (art. "Amedi"), p. 56.

were all produced by this office. *Amedci* had the highest position in the office of the *Divan-ı Hümayun* and accompanied *Re'isü'l-küttab* to his meetings with foreign ambassadors and delegates recording all the discussions and decisions taken²². He was equal to the *Beylikçi* [Head of the Government Chancery Office] in rank and bore the title *hacegan*. He was also responsible for collecting stamp duty on behalf of *Re'isü'l-küttab* for the fiefs conferred and marked them in a register as *amed*, a Persian word meaning “arrived” with a connotation of income or revenue²³. The officials recruited for this office were carefully selected for their good behavior and ethics, and were required to know a foreign language. This office gained a greater importance at the end of the eighteenth century with the state administration passing to *Bab-ı Asaî* (the Palace of the Grand Vizier also known as *Bab-ı 'Ali*) and was charged with writing the decisions and resolutions taken in the Cabinet (*Meclis-i Vükela*) founded with the declaration of Tanzimat a series of reforms introduced by Abdu'l-Mecid I (1839-1861) in 1839. They were then transformed into minutes (*mazbata*). This duty continued until the declaration of the Second Constitution (*Meşrutiyet*) in 1908. The name was changed to the Chief Officer (*Baş Katip*) of the Cabinet. However, when a commissions/committee formed under the council the officers to be appointed with an Imperial rescript, the decision was taken to reinstate the classical Ottoman administration terms used in the early period for some officers including *Amedci* who then assumed the classical term “*Amedi-i Divan-ı Hümayun*”, a title used both for the seal of *Amedci* and the paper used by him.

Apart from these four offices from where the Ottoman documents were issued, there were a number of other offices that were of almost equal importance. Of these were the Office of ceremonies (*Teşrifatçılık*) and Office of Annalists (*Vakanüvislik*)²⁴.

Teşrifatçılık Kalemî (The Office of Ceremonies), also an office of *Divan-ı Hümayun* (hence *Teşkilat-ı Divan-ı Hümayun*), was founded by Suleyman I. The master of ceremonies (*teşrifatçı*) had to know all Palace rules and etiquette (*adab*) well in order to be able to organize Imperial ceremonies for important occasions such as celebrations and congratulations for the sultan's accession to the throne, wearing the robe of honour (*hil'at giyme*), giving as well as receiving presents from his subjects and foreign

²² Cf. İbrahim Hakkı, *Hukuk-i İdare*, İstanbul 1312, I, p. 37.

²³ “*Amedci*”, *IA*.

²⁴ There is detailed information on two other offices – the learned men (*hocas* or *hacegan*) and the translators (dragomans or *tercüman*) of Imperial Chancery (*Divan-ı Hümayun*) – in Uzunçarsılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 68-76.

princes, weddings, and circumcision of princes²⁵. His responsibilities also included organizing ceremonies for the distribution of salaries in the Divan, banquets and the reception of ambassadors, overseeing the delivery of the Treasury of Egypt, the launching of ships, sending the fleet to the sea, as well as annual conferment and appointments. This office, apart from keeping the registers pertaining to the ceremonies, was also responsible for keeping the registers of the taxes and dues (*resim ve harc*) of viziers, governors (*beylerbeyis*), and other high officials. From 1703 this office came under the authority of Grand Vizier²⁶.

Vakanüvislik Kalemi, an office of *Divan-ı Hümayun* was headed by a *vakanüvis* (annalist), whose duty was to record in an inventory all the registers and documents handed over to him. However, he was not allowed to see all the documents and therefore was orally instructed to record the secret ones. *Vakanüvis* were also official state historians who made use of registers and documents kept in the depots of Ottoman administrative offices²⁷. The *vakanüvis* as an institution of historiography was established at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first *vakanüvis* was the famous historian Mustafa Na'ima Efendi of Aleppo²⁸ and the last was Abdurrahman Şeref who was appointed to the office after the declaration of Constitution (*Meşrutiyet*) and the foundation of Tarih-i 'Osmani Encümeni. The office became vacant after the resignation of Lütfi Efendi (1817-1907)²⁹ perhaps sometime after his appointment to the post in 1886. Lütfi Efendi was then appointed as first *kadı* of Istanbul and on 10-15 January 1888 as the *kadıasker* of Rumelia.

Defterhane-i Amire, the Imperial Treasury of registers was also an important office. It was headed by *defter emini* (director of the registry of landed property) was in fact an Imperial office with an archive, near the Divan, where the land registers of various types were kept locked and could be opened only with the Grand Vizier's seal³⁰. The most important registers kept here were detailed (*mufassal*) and synoptic (*icmal*) registers of land

²⁵ "Marasim", *EI2*.

²⁶ "Marasim", *EI2*; K. Kepeci, *Tarih Lugati*, Istanbul 1952, s.v. *teşrifatçılık*; Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 58-64.

²⁷ See Ö.L. Barkan, "İmparatorluk Devrinin Büyük Nüfus ve Arazi Tahrirleri ve Hakana Mahsus Nüfus İstatistik Defterleri", *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, vol. 1, Istanbul 1941, p. 30.

²⁸ According to Ahmed Refik (*Naima*, Istanbul 1932, p. 6) the appointment was made in 1700.

²⁹ Pakalin (*TDTS*), vol. III (art. "Vak'anüvis") p. 575. For details see art. "Vekayinüvis", *IA* and Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 64-68.

³⁰ For a description of keeping and preserving the documents and the various types of the registers in the Archives (Hazine-i Evrak) see Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 76-110.

holdings as well as other registers pertaining to the land such as *ruznamçe* (daily conferment of fiefs, *hass, ze‘amet* and *timar*)³¹.

With the foundation of *Bab-ı Asaî* (the Palace of the Grand Vizier) in the late eighteenth century, the Ottoman administration underwent a number of changes and developments, including its expansion to four main administrative units:

Prime Ministerial (*Bab-ı ‘Ali*)³²

Treasury (*Bab-ı Defteri*)

Military (*Bab-ı ‘Askeri*)³³

Judicial (*Bab-ı Meşihat*)³⁴

Bab-ı ‘Ali (or Paşa Kapısı), known to the west as the Sublime Porte, comprised central offices of the government such as that of Grand Vizier, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*), Ministry of Interior (*Dahiliye Nezareti*) and the Council of the State (*Şura-yi Devlet*). With the development of *Bab-ı ‘Ali* following the political reforms of Abdu’l-Mecid in 1389 known as *Tanzimat* (Reforms), the classical Ottoman administration came to an end and the responsibilities of the Sultan passed on to the Grand Vizier. The traditional *divan* meetings and the practice of grand vizier giving regular briefings to the sultan were in time abandoned altogether and *Bab-ı ‘Ali* replaced *Divan-ı Hümayun*. The documents, registers and records of the Imperial Palace preserved at Topkapi Palace were transferred to a newly erected archive building on the Grand Vizier’s Palace premises upon a decree sent by Koca Yusuf Paşa, the Grand Vizier, to *Re’isü’l-kütub* in 1785. *Bab-ı Ali* basically comprised three main officials who answered to the Grand Vizier. *Kahya*, the official running the interior and military matters,

³¹ For details on land registers and how they were carried out see Halil İnalçık, *Hicri 835 Tarihli Suret-i Defteri Sancak-i Arvanid*, Ankara 1954, p. XI-XXXVI; Ö. L. Barkan, "Türkiye’de İmparatorluk Devirlerinin Nüfus ve Arazi Tahrirleri ve Hakana Mahsus İstatistik Defterleri (I) and (II)" *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, s. 20-59; 214-247; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, N. Beldiceanu, "Réglement ottoman concernant le recensement (première moitié du XVIe siècle)" in *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. XXXVII, 1978, pp. 1-40. J. Kaldy Nagy, "The Administration of the Sancak Registration in Hungary" in *Acta Orientalia*, XXI, 1968, pp. 189-219; Afyoncu, Erhan, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Defterhane-i Amire (XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıllar)*, Ph.D. thesis, Marmara University 1977; M. Mehdi İlhan, "The Process of Ottoman Cadastral Surveys During the Second Half of Sixteenth Century: A Study Based on the Documents From Mühimme Defters", in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Si Archeologie "A. D. Xenopol"*, vol. XXIV/1, 1987, pp. 17-25. M. Mehdi İlhan, "Tahrir Faaliyeti ve Bu Faaliyet Esnasında Karşılaşılan Güçlükler", *Ata Dergisi*, Nu. VII, Konya 1997, pp. 85-103; "Daftar-i Khakani", *EI2*; Afyoncu, Erhan, "Defterhane" in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. IX. İstanbul 1994, pp. 100-104.

³² "Bab-i ‘Ali", *EI2*.

³³ "Bab-i Ser‘askeri", *EI2*.

³⁴ "Bab-i Mashihat", *EI2*.

was an assistant to the Grand Vizier. *Re'isü'l-küttab*, the Minister of Exterior, was responsible for preparing the reports to be presented to the Sultan by the Grand Vizier. *Çavuşbaşı* was responsible for examining and investigating written petitions to be presented to the Grand Vizier, listening to people's complaints and bringing culprits to the court of justice³⁵.

Bab-ı Defteri (the Door of the Treasury) had offices both in the capital and provincial centers. This office was responsible for fiscal matters such as distribution of fiefs, collection of taxes and government spending. Compared to other offices, *Bab-ı Defteri* had more important and a higher number of documents. This office became the Ministry of Finance in 1837. The documents belonging to the Ministry of Finance are preserved in several archive buildings scattered in Sultan Ahmed and Bayezid quarters. This grand office prepared a summary report every six months and had thirty two offices and 700 officials under it at the beginning of nineteenth century³⁶.

Bab-ı 'Askeri: with the abolition of Janissary corps in 1826 (1241) Mahmud II moved the Chief Military Office (*Bab-ı Ser'askeri* equivalent to the Office of Field Marshall) to the Old Palace (*Saray-ı 'Atike*, the main building of Istanbul University). *Ser'asker* and his staff were provided new buildings in 1865 (1282). The documents relating to the Janissary corps such as conscription and pay rolls remained in the so called "*Efendi Dairesi*" (clerical office of the Janissaries) formerly headed by Janissary chief scribe. *Bab-ı 'Askeri* later in 1908 (1324) became the Ministry of War (*Harbiyye Nezareti*). While only a portion of the documents from *Bab-ı 'Askeri* were transferred to the Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Arşivi*), an important portion of the documents of this office were transferred to the archives of General Staff (*Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı*) based in Ankara.

Bab-ı Meşihat: the registers of judicial (*shari'a*) courts (*şer'iyye sicilleri*) of Istanbul were preserved in this office. The office was headed by *Şeyhu'l-İslam*, the Chief Mufti of Istanbul. The Chief Mufti run the office from his residence until 1826 (1241). It was after the abolition of Janissary corps that Mahmud II designated the residence of *Ağa* of Janissaries (*Ağa Kapısı*, the present day Istanbul *Müftülüğü*), near Suleymaniye Mosque, both as an office and residence to *Şeyhu'l-İslam*.

Ottoman Chronicles

The Ottoman chronicles number in the hundreds but only a small proportion of them have been published. As more are discovered and

³⁵ Pakalin (*TDTS*), vol. I, ("Bab-ı Defteri"), pp. 137-138; Gökbilgin, T., "Babıali", *IA*. Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 249-267.

³⁶ Pakalin (*TDTS*), vol. I ("Bab-ı Defteri"), p. 140. Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı*, pp. 334-337.

published, studies on Ottoman history and historiography will undoubtedly develop. This point was made by Halil Inalcik in 1958 at a conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London³⁷. The number of scholars who can make use of the chronicles whether published or in manuscript is increasing both in Turkey and Western universities. However there are still quite a number of academics and free-lance historians who have to rely on the edited versions in Modern Turkish or the works of those scholars who can read and make use of them in their publications.

Mustafa Na'ima's (1065-1128/1655-1716) History³⁸ was the first chronicle published by Ibrahim Müteferrika in 1734 (1147 A.H.) in two volumes. Although a number of other manuscripts were published, the Ottoman Historical Society (Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni, TOE), took the first serious step to edit and publish the rare manuscripts of chronicles such as that of Aşıkpaşa-zade³⁹ (803-889/1400-1484), Neşri⁴⁰, Lutfi Paşa⁴¹ and Şemdanizade⁴². Ali Bey, credited with editing Aşıkpasazade's History, used

³⁷ H. Inalcik, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography" in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East*, London: Oxford University Press 1962, p. 159. See V. L. Menage, "The 'Annals of Murad II'" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 39, No. 3 (1967), p. 570.

³⁸ Amucazade Hüseyin (Köprülü) Paşa some time around 1110/1698-99 commissioned Na'ima to complete the Ottoman History left in draft by the *müderriş* Şarih al-Menarazade Ahmed Efendi (d. 1067/1657). The work, better known as *Tarikh-i Na'ima*, was then presented to Amucazade under the title *Rawdat al-Husayn fi khulasat akhbar al-khafikayn*. The work covers the years 1591-1660. On Na'ima see "Na'ima", *EI2*; "Naima", *IA*; Also see Thomas, Lewis.V., (ed. N. Itzkowitz), *A Study of Naima*, New York: New York University Press 1972; C. Fleicher, "Royal authority, dynastic cyclism and "Ibn Khaldunism" in Sixteenth-century Ottoman letters" in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, xvii/3-4 [1983], pp. 199-203; Aktepe, M.M., 'Naima Tarihinin yazma nüshaları hakkında', *Tarih Dergisi* I, İstanbul 1949, pp. 35-52; Çelebi, A. H., *Naima, hayatı, san'atı, eserleri*, İstanbul 1953; Fındıkoğlu, 'Türkiye'de İbn Haldunizm' in *Fuad Köprülü Armağanı*, İstanbul 1953, pp. 157-166; Derin, F.C., 'Müverrih Naima Hakkında bir Arşiv Belgesi' in *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2-3, 1973, pp. 115-118.

³⁹ "Ashik-pasha-zade", *EI2*; N.S. Banarlı, *Resimli Türk Edebiyat Tarihi*, : İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi 2001, pp. 498-499 (cited hereafter as Banarlı). Aşıkpaşa-zade's History was the first systematic Ottoman History writing, see Mehmet İpşirli, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazıcılığı", in *Osmanlı*, vol.8, (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999) p.247.

⁴⁰ Neşri's *Cihannüma* is a valuable source for the early history of Ottoman Empire. See Fahriye Arık, *Neşri'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri*, İstanbul: Vatan Yayınları, 1936, p. 35; Faik Reşit Unat, *Neşri Tarihi Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmalara Toplu Bakış*, Ankara: TTKB, 1943, pp:23-24.

⁴¹ For Lutfi Pasha (1488-1563) and his work see Banarlı, vol. 1, pp. 606-608; "Lutfi Pasha", *EI2*; R. Tschudi, "Asafname", *ZDMG (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft)*, LVI (1911), pp. 599-603.

⁴² Şemdanizade, *Meri'üt-Tevarih*. See 'Ali Beg (ed.), *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, İstanbul: Matba'ia-i Amire 1332, p. a.

two manuscripts, one from Topkapı Museum Library and the other from the Vatican Library. Ali Bey's edition, an excellent work even by modern standards, was published in 1914. Unfortunately the start of First World War and the end of the Ottoman Empire brought the editing of the other manuscripts to a halt. Although 'Ali Beg also edited and published Lutfi Paşa's History⁴³, the work was only resumed by the Turkish Historical Society founded by Atatürk in 1930. Many manuscripts of chronicles including the ones cited above have been published since then⁴⁴, and others have been edited towards M.A. or Ph.D. theses both in Turkey and abroad. Hammer⁴⁵, the well known German historian of Ottoman, used both edited and manuscript copies of these chronicles. Hammer's History gained a great reputation. His work was later translated into Ottoman Turkish and revised with extra information by Mehmet Ata⁴⁶.

The Ottoman Empire was founded in about 1300. The earliest historical work that survives from this period is Ahmedi's (1334?-1413)⁴⁷ *History of the Ottoman Kings (Dasitan-i Tevarih-i müluk-i Al-i 'Osman)*, a small section of the author's *İskendername*, written some time in the 1390s⁴⁸. However, Ahmedi (d. 1412) according to Gönül Tekin continued to make additions to his *İskendername* until 1407 and presented it Emir Süleyman.⁴⁹ According to Kafadar "versified chronicle of the Ottomans... was written, as we have it, for Prince Suleyman..."⁵⁰ A second historical work, *Menakib-i 'Ali 'Osman* by Yahşi Fakih, the son of Orhan's imam, also dating back to the 1390s is only known to us because it was quoted by Aşıkpaşa-zade in his

⁴³ 'Ali Beg (ed.), *Tevarih-i Ali Osman: Lutfi Paşa*, İstanbul: Matba'a-i Amire 1341 (1922/23). Ali Beg for this edition used one manuscript from National Library of Viena and another incomplete manuscript brought to him by Tahir Beg who borrowed it from Şemseddin Efendi, the şeyh of (Mısri) Dervish Lodge. For the life of Lutfi Paşa (1488-1563), an Ottoman grand vizier and better known for his work *Asafname* (İstanbul 1326; Tscudi, ed., *Der Asafname des Lutfi Pascha*, Türkische Bibliothek, Berlin 1910, XII), see Gökbilgin, M.T., 'Lutfi Paşa' IA.

⁴⁴ For a list see the catalogue of Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara) published every year.

⁴⁵ Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph Freiherr von, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*. Pest, 1827-1835. 10 vols.

⁴⁶ *Devlet-i Osmaniyye Tarihi* / Hammer; trs. Mehmet Ata.-İstanbul : Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Matbaası, 1336, vols. 1-4

⁴⁷ "Ahmedi", *EI2*; Banarlı, vol. 1, pp. 387-396.

⁴⁸ Ahmedi, *İskendername*, study and facsimile by Ünver, İ., Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu publication 1983, fols. 65b-68a.

⁴⁹ Gönül Tekin, "Turkish Literature: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries" in *Ottoman Civilization*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Günsel Renda, vol. 2, İstanbul: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture, 2003, p. 508.

⁵⁰ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1995, pp. 93-94.

chronicle *History of the House of Osman*⁵¹, completed in 1484. These two early chronicles, that served as a source to fifteenth century anonymous chronicles *Tevarih-i Al-i 'Osman* and Oruc's *Tevarih-i Al-i 'Osman*⁵², are of *ğazavatname* and *menakibname* types as they cover the activities of the *gazis* and dervishes based on oral sources. Many learned men from Arabia, Turkistan and Crimea came to Istanbul during Murad II's reign. This eventually brought about developments in culture and learning particularly in the field of mysticism and history. In fact some scholars as a result came to consider Murad II's reign (1421-1444; 1446-1451) the start of Ottoman Historiography⁵³. Yazıcızade Mehmed's *Muhammediye* and Yazıcızade Ali's *Tevarih-i Ali Selcuk (History of the House of Selçuk)* are two important works of this period. In the former mystic elements and in the latter Oğuz-Kayı tradition are dominant factors in historical interpretation⁵⁴. Translations from Arabic and Persian and the daily records of certain events (*Takvimler*) also played a role in the development of historiography during this period⁵⁵. Further developments took place following Mehmed II's (1451-1481) conquest of Istanbul in 1453 with Şükrullah writing his *Behcetü't-Tevarih*⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Tarih-i Ali Osman* known as Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi, edited by 'Ali Beg, İstanbul: Matba'a-i 'Amire 1914, p. 84. According to Fuad Köprülü (art. 'Aşıkpaşa-zade' IA.) the phrase 'I have narrated the deeds (*menakib*) of the house of Osman upto Yıldırım Han from İmam-oğlu (Yahşi Fakih)' was misinterpreted by Katib Çelebi in his *Keşfu'z-Zunun* where he claimed that Aşık Paşa-zade's work 'was derived from Şeyh Yahşi Fakih b. İlyas' book and is one of the classical and weak Turkish histories. For an analysis of the passages derived from Yahşi Fakih see V.L. Menage, 'The Menaqib of Yakhshi Fakih' in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXVI 1963, pp. 50-54; Also see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 96-99.

⁵² For Oruc's work see V. L. Menage, "On the Recessions of Uruj's 'History of Ottoman'" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1967) pp. 314-322; V. L. Menage, "Another Work of Uruj's Chronicle" in *Der Islam*, Vol. 47 (1971), pp. 273-277; Irene Beldieceanu-Steinherr, "Un legs pieux du chronique Uruj" in *BSOAS*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 359-363; Oruc's work was edited by Babinger: Uruc b. 'Adil el-Kazzaz, edited by Franz Babinger, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman ('Annals of the House of Osman')*, Hannover: Heinz Laufer 1925.

⁵³ An abridged version of Aşıkpaşazade's History covering Murad I's reign is published by V. L. Menage, "The Annals of Murad II" in *BSOAS*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1976), pp. 570-584.

⁵⁴ "Murad II", IA.

⁵⁵ Mehmet İpşirli, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazıcılığı", *Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VIII, pp. 247-250; On *Takvimler* also see Osman Turan (ed.), *İstanbul'un Fethinden Önce Yazılmış Takvimler*, Ankara 1954; Nihal Atsız (ed.), *Osmanlı Tarihine Ait Takvimler*, İstanbul 1961; V. L. Menage, "The Annals of Murad II" in *BSOAS*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1976), pp. 570-584.

⁵⁶ The universal history resembles that of Ahmedi and was completed in 1460. See Imber, C., *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1481*, İstanbul: The Isis Press 1990, p. 2 (cited hereafter as Imber).

and Enveri his *Düsturname*⁵⁷, relying heavily on *Takvims* and *Menakibnames*⁵⁸. The turning point in Ottoman Historiography came with the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512). The well known sources of the classical period such as Aşıkpaşazade's *History of the House of Osman (Tevarih-i Ali Osman)*⁵⁹, Neşri's (d. before 1520)⁶⁰ *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*⁶¹ and Tursun Bey's *History of the Conqueror (Tarih-i Ebu'l Feth)*⁶² were written during his reign with a noticeable change in language, content and style. Ottoman historiography reached its peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Idris-i Bidlisi wrote his *Heşt Behişt* in Persian covering the reigns of eight sultans starting from Osman to Bayezid II⁶³. Then Bayezid II, upon the advice of Müeeyyed-zade Abdurrahman Efendi⁶⁴, the *kadıasker* of Anatolia,

⁵⁷ This verse chronicle was composed in 1464/65 and presented to the Grand Vizier Mahmud Paşa (d. 1474). See Imber, p. 2; Yınanç, M.H.(ed.), *Düstürname-i Enveri*, İstanbul 1982.

⁵⁸ On *Menakibnames* see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Menakibnameler: Metodolijik Bir Yaklaşım*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1997.

⁵⁹ Giese, F., *Die altosmanische Chronik des 'Aşıkpaşazade*, Leipzig 1929; 'Aşıkpaşaoğlu Tarihi' in Atsız, Ç.N. (ed.) *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, İstanbul 1977.

⁶⁰ "Neshri", *EI2*; V.L. Menage, *Neshri's History of the Ottomans: the sources and development of the text*, London 1964; F. Arık, *Onbeşinci asır tarihçilerinden Neşri'nin hayatı ve eserleri*, İstanbul 1936; F. Taeschner, "Neşri tarihi el yazıları üzerine araştırmalar", *Belleten XV* (1951), pp. 497-505.

⁶¹ Unat, F.R. and Köymen, M.A. (eds.), *Kitab-ı Cihannüma: Neşri Tarihi*, 2 vols. Ankara: TTKB 1987; Taeschner, Fr. (ed.) *Gihannüma: Die alt-osmanische Chronik des Mevlana Mehmed Neschri*, 2 vols. Leipzig 1951-55. On Neşri and his work see Taeschner, Fr. 'Ein Ausgabe von Neschri's altosmanischer Chronik' in *Der Islam*, vol. 3, nu. 29, 1949; Arık, F., *Neşri'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri*, İstanbul 1936; Unat, F.R., 'Neşri Tarihi üzerinde yapılan çalışmalara toplu bir bakış' in *Belleten*, vol. VII, 1943, pp. 177-223; Unat, F. R., 'Müverrih Mehmet Neşri'nin Eseri ve Hayatı Hakkında' in *Belleten*, vol. XXI, 1957, pp. 291-330; Tekindağ, M.C.Ş., 'Neşri' in *IA.*, vol. 9; Menage, V.L., *Neshri's History of the Ottomans, the sources and development of the text*, London, New York, Oxford: University Press, 1964. For a review of Menage's work see İncalcık, H. *Belleten*, vol. XXI, pp. 667-672, Shaw, S.J., 'Neshri's History of Ottomans: The Sources and Development of the Text' in *The American Historical Review* vol. 71 nu. 3 April 1966 pp. 1018-1029, and also J. Stewart-Robinson, 'V. L. Menage, 'Neshri's History of the Ottomans' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1970, pp 274-277; İncalcık, H., *Neshri's History of Ottomans*, London 1964.

⁶² Tursun Bey, 'Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth,' Arif, M. (ed.) *Tarih-i Osman-i Encümeni Mecmuası*, suppl. 1912; *Tursun bey, Tarih-i Ebu'l-Feth*, Tulum, A.M. (ed), İstanbul 1977; Kenan Inan, *A Summary and Analysis of the Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth (History of the Conqueror) of Tursun Bey (1488)*, a thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, April 1993; İncalcık, H., 'Tursun Bey; Historian of Mehmed the Conqueror's Time' in *WZKM (Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes)*, LXIX, 1977, pp. 55-71; İncalcık, H. and Murphey, R. *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Bey*, Chicago 1978.

⁶³ "Bidlisi, Idris", *EI2*.

⁶⁴ On Müeeyyedzade and İbn Kemal see İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* vol. II, pp. 662-664

appointed Kemal Paşazade as a *müderri*s of Ali Bey *medrese* in Edirne with an income of 30 *akçes* (per day). He then paid him 30.000 *akçes* to write the *History of the House of Ottomans (Tevarih-i Ali Osman)*⁶⁵ in Turkish as a counterpart to that of Idris' in Persian. Kemal Paşazade (1468-1534)⁶⁶ wrote his history first covering the period from the emergence of Ottomans to the end of Bayezid II's reign. However, later under the patronage of Sultan Süleyman II, he added Selim I's reign known as *Selimname (History of Selim)*, and that of Sultan Süleyman I known as *Süleymanname (History of Suleyman)* up to the battle of Mohacs and the conquest of Buda in September 1526. Then quite a number of anonymous *Tarih-i Ali Osman (History of the House of Osman)* followed⁶⁷. Writing *Selimnames* (histories of Selim)⁶⁸ and *Süleymannames* (histories of Süleyman)⁶⁹ almost became a tradition in this period. Reformation and change in Ottoman historiography came along with other institutional reforms and changes in the eighteenth century. The institution of *Vakanüvislik* (State Historiography) was founded and Na'ima⁷⁰ was appointed as the first *Vakanüvis*. By the nineteenth century the historians came to follow a much more systematic way of writing history. With Mustafa Nuri Paşa⁷¹ history was a discipline with its own

and 668-671.

⁶⁵ The work is in ten volumes (known as *defter*). See Parmaksızoğlu, İ., 'Kemal Paşa-zade' in *İA.*; V. L. Menage, "MS Fatih 4205: An Autograph of Kemālpashazāde's *Tevāriḫ-i Āl-i 'Othmān*, Book VII" in *BSOAS*, Vol. 23, No. 2. (1960), pp. 250-264. Şerafettin Turan, *Tevarih-i Ali 'Osman I-II. Defter, VII. defter* 1991; Şefaettin Severcan, *X. defter* 1996; Ahmet Uğur, *VIII. Defter* 1997; Koji İmazawa, *IV. Defter* 2000. All are the publication of Turkish Historical Society, Ankara.

⁶⁶ "Kemal Pasha-zade", *EI2*; Ş. Turan, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman: VII. Defter*, Ankara: TTKB 1991ş N. Atsız. "Kemalpaşaoğlu'nun eserleri" in *Şarkiyat Mecmuası*, VI (1966) 71-112 and VII (1972) 83-135.

⁶⁷ There are over fifty anonym histories scattered in the libraries of Turkey and Europe. Some of these have been published or translated into other languages. For a detailed account see Kreutel, R.F., *Der fromme Sultan Bayezid die Geschichte seiner Herrschaft (1481-1512) nach den altosmanischen des Oruç und anonymus Hanivaldanus*, Vienne 1978, Eileitung; Giese, F., *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, Teil I, Breslau 1922; Teil II, Übersetzung, Leipzig 1925; Öztürk, N., 'Yeni Bir Anonim Tevarih-i Ali Osman Nüshası ve Bir Düzeltme', *Prof. Dr. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız Armağanı*, Ankara 1995, pp. 443-448.

⁶⁸ Ahmet Uğur towards his Ph.D. used *Selimnames* and some other histories of the House of Osman such as that of Kemal Pasha-zade' and had it published under the title *The Reign of Sultan Selim I in the Light of Selimname Literature*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag 1985.

⁶⁹ Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname: The Illustrated History of Süleyman the Magnificent*, New York: Abrams 1986.

⁷⁰ Thomas, *A Study of Naima*. New York 1972.

⁷¹ Mustafa Nuri, *Netayicü'l-Vuku'at*, 4 vols. İstanbul 1327.

methodology. Abdurrahman Şeref (1853-1925)⁷² was the last *Vakanüvis* and Ottoman historian appointed to the post of *Vakanüvislik*⁷³.

The Ottoman chroniclers inherited the methodology of classical historians of Islam, particularly in their approach to general history. Before introducing their period and for that matter Ottoman History, they introduce the history of humankind from Adam to Christ, of Islam from the pre Islamic period to the end of Abbasid, and of Turkic people. Most of them also have an introduction (*mukaddime*) explaining their objectives, sources, characteristic features for a historian, and purpose of history. The division and sources of Ottoman chroniclers would vary depending on the period in which they lived and wrote their work. However, the division is generally chronological with a detailed narrative of campaigns, battles, important events, character of the sultans, viziers and their achievements. The information on the military, administrative and social institutions generally follows a detailed account of the sultan's reign. Some scholars, however, have approached the subject analytically. Adalıoğlu considers Aşıkpaşazade's history to be in three parts; the genealogy of the Ottoman Turks and their arrival into Anatolia, the legendary history of Istanbul and St. Sophia, the conquest of Istanbul and the events that follow⁷⁴. Ali Bey, however, in his introduction to the edited version comes up with a source-based division. According to Ali Bey, Aşıkpaşazade's sources for the period covered until Bayezid I's reign (1389-1403) was Yahşi Fakih, for Bayezid's battles in Hungary was Umur Bey, for the battle of Ankara and the events that followed was an anonymous *naib* (deputy) of Bursa appointed by Murad II, for Murad II's reign and battles the author's personal observations, and for the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II archival documents and contemporary chronicles. Neşri's chronicle is divided into three parts; the period from the foundation of Empire to the Battle of Ankara in 1403, the period of Interregnum, and the period of Mehmed I to 1497.

Most of the chroniclers were Ottoman officials such as *vakanüvis*, *müderres* or tutors to the princes. Na'ima and Mehmed Raşid (?-1148/1735)⁷⁵ were the first two official *vakanüvis*. Kemal Paşazade was a

⁷² For A. Şeref and his work see Mehmet Demiryürek, *Historians of Ottoman Empire*, pp. 1-9, website <http://www.ottomanhistorians.com/> extracted on 16th September 2005; "Şeref, 'Abd al-Rahman", *EI2*; Efdal ül-Din (Tekiner), *'Abd ül-Rahman Şeref Efendi tercüme-yi hali, hayat-ı resmîyesi ve hususîyesi*, İstanbul 1927.

⁷³ Necdet Öztürk, *Osmanlılarda Tarih Yazıcılığı Üzerine*, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999, p. 259.

⁷⁴ Hasan Hüseyin Adalıoğlu, 'Aşıkpaşazade' *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı publication.

⁷⁵ Rashid was a successor to Na 'ima as official Ottoman historiographer. See "Rashid, Mehmed", *EI2*. Rashid first wrote the history of the reign of Ahmed III (1703-1730), but later

scholar and a *müderriş*. Hoca Sa‘deddin (1536-1599)⁷⁶, as is clear from his title, was a tutor to Murad III (1574-1595) both as a prince and sultan⁷⁷. They were all very well educated and well versed in three languages; Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Almost all used a literary form of Ottoman Turkish and included much poetry in their works. Arabic and Persian syntax is a common feature of all chronicles despite the fact some scholars consider chroniclers such as Aşıkpaşa-zade or Neşri to have written in the common language of the people. It is true Kemal Paşazade’s language is superior to almost all, but this is only due to his heavy reliance on Arabic and Persian compared to the others. Mustafa Ali, a sixteenth century historian, criticized his predecessors for using Arabic and Persian syntax; yet he himself could not refrain from using a literary form of Ottoman Turkish. In fact the sentence in which he expresses this point is in itself difficult to understand:

“Ahsenu’l-kelam ma-zaletu’l-tamam ve ‘arafehu’l-hass ve’l-amm mazmununa mutaba‘at kılina yani ki ifadesi ‘amm ve istifadesi bera-yi hulus ve avan olub her kes fehm-u iz‘anıza mu‘ayeneten behremend ola”⁷⁸.

Mustafa Ali stresses this point also in his *Fusul-i Hall ü ‘Akd ve Usul-i Harc u Nakd* claiming that he prefers sentences free from Arabic and Persian words in order to make it comprehensible for high and low in following word:

“Hususa ki, havas u avamın fehm ü iz‘anı asan olsun için, ri‘ayet-i seci‘ ile inşaı, Arabi ve Farisi kelimelerden mürekkeb olan eda-yı belîğ ile imlayı münasib görmedim.”⁷⁹.

Neither Mustafa Ali nor any other historian could have avoided the use of Arabic and Persian vocabulary since these two languages already had a great impact on the literary style of Ottoman Turkish both in prose and poetry from the beginning of the foundation of Ottoman State. Mustafa Ali’s highly developed literary style can not be denied, although he wrote in a much more comprehensible language than say Kemal Paşazade.

Na‘ima and other chroniclers have relied on oral interviews, personal

revised it to begin in 1071/1660 where Na‘ima’s History ceased. Rashid’s History (Tarikh-i Rashid, 6 vols. Istanbul 1982) terminates in 1134/1772. Küçük Çelebizade İsmail Asım Efendi succeeded Rashid as *vakanüvist*.

⁷⁶ “Khodja Efendi”, *Eİ2*.

⁷⁷ Katip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, I, İstanbul, 1286, p.44. On Hoca Sa‘deddin and his work see M. Aktepe, “Hoca Sadeddin Efendi’nin Tacü’t Tevârihi ve Bunun Zeyli Hakkında”, TM XIII, 1958.

⁷⁸ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Historian Mustafa Ali An Ottoman Intellectual and Bureaucrat*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt publication, first published in 1996, p. 255.

⁷⁹ Abubekir S. Yücel, “Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali’nin Fusul-i Hall ü ‘Akd ve Usul-i Harc u Nakd Adlı Eseri” in *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. VIII/2, pp. 131-132.

observations, and chronicles and the written sources of their predecessors. As *vakanivists* and officials in the government circles they also had access to state documents. They used all these sources cautiously and critically. Although many Ottoman chroniclers were official historians, they believed in honesty and truth. Na'ima's advice to the historians reflect the rules of a modern discipline.

1. Always tell the truth and substantiate.
2. Discard tales of common folk.
3. Do not be content with 'simple annals', enable the reader to draw morals for himself from what you write.
4. Be impartial respecting human values and avoiding egotism.
5. Use plain language, and do not utilize literary style at the expense of clarity.
6. Limit yourself strictly to appropriate embellishment such as verses and quotations⁸⁰.

Chroniclers such as Na'ima and Rashid paid great attention to the reliability of sources whether oral or written. They were selective and careful in interviewing the eye witnesses in order to extract correct information for their chronicles.

Finally I would like to mention that the Ottoman chroniclers have been accused of not criticizing the Ottoman sultans as their patrons, a statement which is not always true. For instance, Aşıkpaşazade heavily criticizes Bayezid I who keeps Mutaharten's wife as a hostage in Istanbul and takes him along on his campaigns⁸¹. This criticism I found could only be expressed if the poetic form is used and literary translation is avoided in rendering particularly the poems in to English. I, therefore, translated the poem mentioned as follows:

**Why expect friendship from this threshold
Did you not separate me from my wife in cold?
Would I not be better than dead in this world?
Summer and winter letting me long for her
You are the cause of my separation for sure
Can you expect honesty as such in this enemy?
Bayezid, do not expect Taharten to be friendly**

⁸⁰ Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, New York 1972, p. 116.

⁸¹ *Tarih-i Ali Osman* known as Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi, edited by 'Ali Beg, İstanbul: Matba'a-i 'Amire 1333/1914, p. 73. Kafadar who had analyzed in his *Between Two Worlds* the foundation of Ottoman State through a critical approach to early Ottoman chronicles and the pioneer critics such as Gibbons, Köprülü and Wittek points out the same and some other specific criticisms in Aşıkpaşazade, see p. 100 of his book.

**Were you not the one who separated me from my prime?
The world first time ever faced such a crime
The black soil was even surprised this time.**

The poem in Turkish runs as follows:

Neden dostluk umarsın bu eşikten
Ayırasın beni sevdük eşimden.
Benim rahatım olmaya bu cihanda
Ki yollar gözleyem yaz ve kışından.
Sebep sen olasın bu firkatıma
Ne doğruluk umarsın bu düşmenden.
Bayezid, Taharten'den dostluk umma
Ki eydir, sen ayırdın yoldaşımdan.
Cihan bu nev'a suret tutmamışdır
Ki ani kara toprak etmemişdir.

Conclusion

A careful and correct simplification, transliteration and translation of Ottoman chronicles and archival documents which avoids slippages toward adaptation are essential for good analyses of historical events. Such an approach is as important as altogether avoiding distortion or misinterpretation. Translators need to be meticulous in their undertakings as the Ottoman chronicles and documents are critical in allowing historians, particularly of European and Middle Eastern countries, to gain a thorough and complete understanding of the histories of their countries. Indeed, without these documents, history may remain fragmented.