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HACHETTE RÉALITÉS

Ibrahim Metin KUNT

DERVIŞ MEHMED PAŞA, VEZİR AND ENTREPRENEUR : A STUDY IN OTTOMAN POLITICAL-ECONOMIC THEORY AND PRACTICE *

Derviş Mehmed Paşa was grand *vezir* of the Ottoman Empire from March 1653 to October 1654, in the early, turbulent years of the reign of Mehmed IV. It is in itself a sign of at least a degree of success that he was in office for more than a year and a half in the period of eight years from the accession of Mehmed IV to the coming to power of the illustrious Köprülü Mehmed Paşa, a period when no less than fourteen appointments were made to the position of grand *vezir* for an average of seven months in office. Derviş Mehmed Paşa was dismissed in October 1654, not because of incompetence or because he fell victim to intrigues as did so many grand *vezirs* during this period, but because he was suffering from a stroke and was unable to attend to matters of state. Then, in the words of Naîmâ, « the pain of dismissal lead to the worsening of health », and he died two and a half months later, in January 1655¹.

* This article represents one aspect of my prosopographic research on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman *ümerâ* (governors); for more general conclusions see my forthcoming study *Sancaktan Eyalet : 1550-1650 Arasında Osmanlı Ümerâsı ve İl İdaresi* (Sancak to Eyalet : Ottoman Ümerâ and Provincial Administration, 1550-1650). The research was facilitated by a grant from Boğaziçi University which enabled me to spend the academic year 1974-75 at Princeton University as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Near Eastern Studies. At Princeton discussions with my colleagues Norman Itzkowitz, William K. S. Tobin and Engin D. Akarlı were very helpful in shaping and developing my ideas. I presented an earlier version of the article at Princeton, the University of Michigan and New York University in Spring 1975 and benefitted from discussions at all three institutions.

¹ Mustafa Naîmâ, *Târih-i Naîmâ* (Istanbul 1281) IV : 23.

He was among the richest men of his time and left behind a fabulous fortune. A partial list of his treasures includes 95,000 gold coins (*flori*) and 800 purses of silver *kuruş* together amounting to more than fourty-four million *akçes*, other coins and jewelry, and gold and silver utensils. The existence of other hidden treasures, including two cases of jewels, was voluntarily (before he was put to torture?) revealed to the sultan by the *paşa's kethüda* (steward), the highest official in his household. In addition, Derviş Mehmed Paşa had vast quantities of valuable cloths and furs, and his armory was replete with gold-inlaid muskets and swords of all kinds. According to the usual procedure of the time, this vast treasure was confiscated into the imperial treasury². In the standard Ottoman chronicles and biographical dictionaries this immense wealth is mentioned as the most remarkable thing about Derviş Mehmed Paşa.

Usually the biographical notices provide very little information on the early life of a prominent Ottoman; in the case of Derviş Mehmed Paşa there is no information whatsoever³. He is variously estimated to have been sixty⁴ or seventy⁵ years old when he died, so he must have been born around 1590. He was a Circassian by origin, but how he came to enter the Palace service, or if indeed he was in the Palace service, we do not know. In «central» Ottoman sources⁶ there is only a single reference to the *paşa* as a young man, in Evliya Çelebi's famous travels-cum-memoirs, and this is corroborated by a seventeenth-century Damascene biographical dictionary⁷. Evliya Çelebi reports that in the time of Osman II (r. 1618-22) Derviş Mehmed was

² Naimâ, IV : 23. Kâtip Çelebi in his *Fezleke* (İstanbul 1286), II : 396-7 has 1,100 purses (*kese*) which comes to the same amount of *akçes*.

³ For biographies of Derviş Mehmed Paşa see Osmanzâde Ahmed Tâib, *Hadikat ül-Vüzerâ* (İstanbul 1271) I : 98-9; Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmânî* (İstanbul 1308-11) II : 331. Also see İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* (Ankara 1954) III/2 : 406-8; *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, «Derviş Mehmed Paşa» (Cavid Baysun); *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition, «Derviş Mehmed Paşa» (V. J. Parry).

⁴ Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, II : 396.

⁵ Naimâ, VI : 29.

⁶ By «central» I allude to writers and works reflecting the court or at least İstanbul attitudes, biases and tradition, as opposed to provincial or local sources. The distinction becomes significant, I think, in the treatment Derviş Mehmed Paşa receives from various near-contemporary authors.

⁷ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme* (İstanbul 1314) I : 279; Mehmed Emin bin Fazlullah el-Muhibbi, *Hülâsat ül-eser fi a'yân el-karn el-hâdi aşer* (Cairo 1284) II : 157-8.

one of the slaves of the *dâr üs-saade ağası* (chief black eunuch). This reference, if accurate, is significant for two reasons : one is that by the late-sixteenth century the *dâr üs-saade ağası* had emerged as the most powerful official of the Palace, especially because his office had come to include the supervision of the *vakfs* (pious foundations) for the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. As such, many of his own slaves and officials appointed to his retinue experienced contact with bureaucratic procedures and economic and financial issues, a fact which may have implications for Derviş Mehmed Paşa's financial success. The expression «of the slaves of the *dâr üs-saade ağası*» is ambiguous; it may have meant either that Derviş Mehmed was one of the imperial slaves assigned to the retinue of the *dâr üs-saade ağası*, or that he was a personal slave of the *ağa*⁸. The fact that Tayyazade Atâ does not include Derviş Mehmed in his list of *vezirs* originating from the *enderûn* implies that Atâ for one assumed that he was not an imperial slave⁹.

The second important thing about Evliya Çelebi's reference to this early point in Derviş Mehmed Paşa's career is that another later grand *vezir*, Tabanyassı Mehmed Paşa, was also in the service of the same *dâr üs-saade ağası*, Hacı Mustafa Ağa¹⁰. This is significant because when next we hear of Derviş Mehmed it is as the *kethüda* of Tabanyassı Mehmed Paşa. Tabanyassı was grand *vezir* from 1632 to 1637, and its famous as the chief assistant and instrument of Murad IV in his efforts to discipline his unruly imperial army and to bring order to his realm. It was in 1636 while his patron Tabanyassı was still in office that Derviş Mehmed received his first imperial appointment, as governor of Damascus, and came to be called Derviş Mehmed Paşa. My research on the Ottoman *ümerâ* (governors) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows that of the 52 persons appointed as *beylerbeyi* (governor general) in the 1630's, only three directly came

⁸ For examples of personal slaves of Palace officials serving in the Palace along with their masters see my «Kulların Kulları», *Boğaziçi University Journal-Humanities*, III (1975), 27-42.

⁹ Tayyazade Atâullah Ahmed, *Tarih-i Atâ* (İstanbul 1291-3).

¹⁰ For Hacı Mustafa Ağa see *Hamilet ül-Küberâ* (Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi MSS, 3876/2), f. 37a-38a. For Tabanyassı Mehmed Paşa see Müneccimbaşı (Ahmed Dede), *Sahâif ül-Ahbâr* (Ottoman translation, İstanbul 1285) III : 678; *Hadikat ül-Vüzerâ*, I : 77-9.

from service in another *paşa's* household¹¹. It was probably a combination of both Tabaniyassı's power and prestige and Derviş Mehmed's abilities that he is included in this group of *kethüda*-turned-*paşa*, a small group to be directly appointed governor without holding any intermediate state office.

From 1636 until 1652 Derviş Mehmed Paşa served as governor with rank of *vezir* in Damascus, Diyarbekir, Bağdad, Diyarbekir again, Musul, Aleppo, Anatolia, Bosnia, Silistre (Özü), and Anatolia again. His last post before being appointed grand *vezir* was *kapudân-i deryâ* (commander of the navy); his appointment was due not to his experience in naval affairs but to his great wealth: the grand *vezir* Tarhuncu Ahmed Paşa hoped that he would use his own funds to construct yet another fleet to fight the Venetians in what had already become a protracted and costly war over Crete. However, it appears that Derviş Mehmed Paşa preferred to become grand *vezir* himself rather than to spend his riches to win glory for another. After a short tenure as *kapudân-ı deryâ* he was finally appointed to the highest post of the empire in March 1653.

In the spring of 1654 the Ottoman fleet won a victory over the Venetian fleet — a minor victory which did not much change the course of the war, but still a victory eagerly awaited by all Ottomans. Other than this, however, the chronicles of the time record no event of consequence during the year and a half that Derviş Mehmed Paşa was in office — a fact which is remarkable in itself.

Again it is Evliya Çelebi who supplies us with a personal observation not recorded in the chronicles¹². In the same spring of 1654 Evliya Çelebi accompanied his master Melek Ahmed Paşa from Sofia to Istanbul. Evliya, who had been away from the capital for two and a half years, noticed a very different atmosphere in the city: they had left in the fall of 1651 after a violent rebellion and power struggle in which Melek Ahmed Paşa was dismissed as grand *vezir*; now everybody seemed to be happy and joyful. The Kağıthane Deresi, one of the Sweet Waters of Europe, had become a veritable playground complete with fireworks after dark, thousands of tents with musicians, singers, poets, acrobats, magicians — a foreshadowing of the cele-

¹¹ Nearly two-thirds of all new *beylerbeyis* in this period came from the palace service, inner as well as outer, and about a quarter were still promoted from provincial administration.

¹² III: 488-91.

brated Tulip Period of the early eighteenth century. Evliya Çelebi explains that in the two years before Derviş Mehmed Paşa came to power, under the two previous grand *vezirs*, the people of Istanbul had suffered from shortages, inflation, reduced incomes and the plague, not to mention fear of the Venetians just outside the Dardanelles. But since Derviş Paşa had come to power, he had restored with his able administration, honesty and open-handedness, both the supplies and the morale of the capital. Even making an allowance for Evliya's characteristic exaggeration, it appears certain that the people must have looked upon Derviş Mehmed Paşa's term of office as a pleasant interlude in a troubled time.

* * *

However, although Derviş Mehmed Paşa appears to have been at least a moderately successful grand *vezir*, it is not this aspect of his career which is extraordinary. What is much more remarkable about Derviş Mehmed Paşa are his economic activities and theories, which are related in some detail by Naîmâ, the early eighteenth century historian, in the context of the *paşa's* term as governor in Bağdad¹³. That Naîmâ is the only source for the *Paşa's* economic activities and the views attributed to him may seem to weaken my argument: it may be objected that it is too precarious an undertaking to build a whole analysis on one source alone. Naîmâ, however, is famous for just such anecdotes, additional material and observations with which he enriches an otherwise unremarkable chronicle. He seems to have been a careful and conscientious researcher; I see no reason to view his remarks with suspicion just because they are not corroborated by other chronicles and histories¹⁴.

Bagdad was reconquered in 1638 after an interlude of fifteen years of Safavi occupation. The first Ottoman governor to be appointed was Küçük Hasan Paşa, but he was dismissed only four months later to make way for Derviş Mehmed Paşa, who then remained in office for three years. There are two reasons given why Derviş Paşa

¹³ Naîmâ, VI: 22-9.

¹⁴ On Naîmâ as Ottoman official and historian see Lewis V. Thomas, *A Study of Naîmâ*, N. Itzkowitz, ed. (New York 1972). I must admit that I myself have questioned Naîmâ's accuracy in a particular passage, but on different grounds: «Naîmâ, Köprülü, and the Grand Vezirate», *Boğaziçi University Journal — Humanities I* (1973), 57-64.

replaced Küçük Hasan Paşa within four months. A local Bağdad chronicle of the seventeenth century, *Gülşen-i Hulefâ*, states that Küçük Hasan Paşa was too gentle and tolerant a man to take charge and deal with the serious problems of a newly conquered area¹⁵. A tough, dominating personality («*hâkim-i kakhâr*») was needed, and Derviş Paşa was deemed able to do the job. Nazmizâde Murtazâ, the author of the chronicle, adds, «*Gülzâr-ı hükûmetleri küll-i hoşbûy-i adl ü insâfdan hâli idi*» («the rose garden of his days of rule lacked the slightest trace of the fragrance of justice and tolerance»). Why this local chronicler presents Derviş Mehmed Paşa as a brutal and ruthless tyrant may become understandable after we review the *paşa's* economic activities as governor.

Naîmâ presents a different picture. Derviş Paşa was already a very rich man, he comments; even before he had attained the rank of *paşa* he used to make loans to tax-farmers, governors and other officials. Because he had political connections and backing debtors paid him back on time, and with the interest he charged his wealth grew very rapidly. He already had accumulated two thousand purses (about eighty million *akçes*) when he was made *paşa*. He was appointed governor of Bağdad, according to Naîmâ, mainly because he had a «well-fitted out household» («*kapusu mükemmel olduğundan*» — a cliché we will encounter again later on) and so that he would undertake the rebuilding and economic development of Iraq. Again, as when he was appointed *kapudân-ı deryâ* later on, the implication is that his personal wealth, along with his ability, would help him in the task. On the one hand his large retinue would help him in establishing Ottoman political authority, and because he was rich he would be able to support this household without resorting to oppression; on the other hand, to the Ottoman mind, the fact that he had succeeded in gaining personal wealth signalled that he would make a good administrator¹⁶. And, according to Naîmâ, he succeeded very well.

The average term a *beylerbeyi* enjoyed at a particular post in this period was about a year¹⁷. The fact that Derviş Mehmed Paşa was allowed to stay on in Bağdad for three years may be taken as an indication that his contemporaries thought highly of his rebuilding job.

¹⁵ Nazmizâde Murtazâ, *Gülşen-i Hulefâ* (Istanbul 1143), 79a-80b.

¹⁶ That many people were astounded at the appointment of the penniless and bankrupt Köprülü Mehmed Paşa as grand *vezir* in 1656 is a good illustration of this Ottoman attitude.

¹⁷ See my *Sancaktan Eyalete*.

Let us study more closely Naîmâ's description of the *paşa's* activities in Bağdad. To increase agricultural production the *paşa* opened up some uncultivated but fertile areas for large-scale grain production in partnership with the *şeyhs* of the nearby bedouin tribes (to secure their protection?). He sent agents to buy flocks of sheep from the nomads of northern Iraq, brought the sheep to Bağdad and sold them at his own butcher shops in the city. He also operated his own bakeries where he processed his own grain supplies. The primary object of these activities was to feed the members of his household (which, including his immediate entourage and troops, numbered ten thousand) without becoming a burden on the city's economy.

Again to provide for the clothing needs of his household — uniforms for his troops, robes of honor to be distributed, etc. — he sent agents, each equipped with a capital of at least one hundred purses (four million *akçes*), to India, Basra, and Aleppo. The usual customs duties and transportation charges were waived for his agents because of their master's rank and reputation. Of the merchandise he brought to Bağdad he kept what he needed, and the rest was transferred to the merchants of the city at double what it cost him for them to retail to the people. What he received from the merchants covered his initial outlays.

He also sent agents to Iran and India to import luxury items, pearls, and other goods which he then sent on to be sold in other parts of the empire. This trade in luxury goods alone is reported to have netted him forty million *akçes* a year. He also made a profit on his sales of cloth to the merchants of Bağdad, and sales of bread and meat to the people even though he supplied these items cheaply.

Thus, according to Naîmâ, everybody was happy: the people acquired their basic food supplies at low prices, the merchants retailed the cloth and made their profit, the sheep-raising nomads made money, and the bedouin tribes shared in the grain business. Obvious losers, however, were the state, which did not collect customs duties on Derviş Mehmed Paşa's trade, and the people who helped with the transportation of his merchandise. But we will return to this question later on.

Naîmâ relates a story heard from the *paşa's* *kethüda* which illustrates the difference between Derviş Mehmed Paşa's method and those of an ordinary Ottoman governor. Derviş Paşa's predecessor as governor of Bağdad, the gentle Hasan Paşa, charged the leaders of the local garrison («*yeniçeriler*») five purses for the melon-growing conces-

sion on the banks of the Tigris. Then, when he wanted to buy melons for his household, he paid the concessioners the five purses back. When Derviş Mehmed Paşa came to Bağdad, he gave the concession to one of his own men, and also started new melon patches and vegetable gardens elsewhere near the city. Of the produce, as with the bread and meat, he kept what he needed and sold the rest to the local inhabitants. From the transaction he allowed his agent to make a profit and still collected twenty purses for the imperial treasury as the concession fee. The comparison shows that while Derviş Paşa collected much more for the treasury and that he himself did not have to spend anything for supplies for his own household, the people who otherwise would have made huge profits on the concession, that is the local *yeniçeri* leaders, were deprived of this extra income. Perhaps, then, it is as a representative — descendant rather — of this local elite which lost a source of extra income they had come to view as their prerogative that Nazmizâde Murtazâ, the chronicler of Bağdad, regards Derviş Mehmed Paşa as a ruthless tyrant. The Damascene biographical dictionary mentioned above (n. 7) is equally uncompromising, calling him a *zâlim cabbâr* (a cruel oppressor), probably for similar reasons. The provincial view of Derviş Mehmed Paşa is in striking contrast with approving comments of « central » Ottoman writers like Evliya Çelebi and Naîmâ¹⁸.

It is unfortunate that Derviş Mehmed Paşa's term of office as governor of Bağdad is the only context in which his methods are explained. Bağdad was obviously a special case: even in normal times its distance from the capital allowed its governor greater freedom of action. Furthermore, Derviş Paşa was at Bağdad under highly unusual circumstances: the area had just been reconquered after fifteen years of Safavi rule. In those fifteen years the Ottomans attempted several

¹⁸ One « central » author who agreed with the provincials was Mehmed Halife who, in the first draft of his *Târih-i Gilmânî*, referred to Derviş Mehmed Paşa as « *bir zâlim câhil kölemen* » (« a cruel, ignorant slave »); but the author removed these epithets from the final, expurgated version. See Bekir Kütükoğlu's fascinating study of the two versions of this work: « *Tarih-i Gilmânî'nin İlk Redaksiyonuna Dair* », *Tarih Dergisi* 27 (1973), pp. 21-40 (reference to Derviş Mehmed Paşa on p. 29). It may be sufficient to explain Mehmed Halife's hostility to point out that he seems to have been a protégé of Tarhuncu Ahmed Paşa whom Derviş Mehmed Paşa succeeded as grand *vezir* (Kütükoğlu, p. 25). I should add, however, that in a different context Naîmâ, too, mentions the *paşa's* notoriety as an oppressor (V: 252).

times to retake the city, the whole of Iraq thereby becoming a battleground between the two empires. We can safely assume that economic life in the province was largely disrupted. Naîmâ himself points out that Derviş Mehmed Paşa was chosen specifically to undertake the economic development of the area. It seems it was this disruption of economic activities that allowed the *paşa* to cultivate fertile but unused lands — why unused, if not for the war? In the volume of trade, too, we might suspect a sudden decrease at the time of the Ottoman takeover, especially if the merchant community of Bağdad was more closely integrated with Iran during the Safavi interlude. Finally, Derviş Paşa took over at a time when the political structure of the city and of the province was also changing. Power relationships which had developed under the Safavis had broken down; the Ottoman power structure had not yet taken form. This would explain the ease with which the *paşa* was able to take the concessions from the *yeniçeri*s and give them to his own men.

One would like to know more about Derviş Mehmed Paşa as governor elsewhere in the empire — in Aleppo, for example, which was still an important post of the Levant trade, or in Bosnia, where also a fairly prosperous and active merchant population seems to have been emerging in the mid-seventeenth century. I would suspect the *paşa* would have been much more circumspect in his dealings with the local elite in such other areas. Nevertheless, the fact remains that *he* was chosen for the job to be done in Bağdad and not somebody else, presumably because he had a better sense of politics and because of his entrepreneurial abilities.

* * *

Naîmâ also relates some general views of Derviş Mehmed Paşa on the economic activities of an administrator. I would like to quote these views in full as they deserve close attention (VI: 26-7; my translation).

There are three means of gaining wealth: agriculture, commerce and political authority (*emâret*). Crafts have also been considered by some as a fourth means; nevertheless, it would be proper to limit the means of wealth to the three mentioned above since most artisans are unable to provide for their living, since they keep of the produce of their crafts barely enough to subsist on while most of the fruit of their labor falls to the rich merchants of that particular commodity.

It has traditionally been the case that agriculture and trade have been the more profitable [to an individual] in direct proportion to [his] power and position in society (*kuvvet-i câh ve uluvv-i nâm*). This is so because people serve a person of power and high position (*câh ve nâm sâhibi*), work for his gain both with their labor and with their funds, without asking for immediate remuneration, hoping to become closer to him and expecting future benefits. Some others fear his power and oppression and therefore give up an expected share of their profits, or they too may work for him. Thus, in either of these two ways, the payment for the people's services and one-fourth of their labor being due to the person of position, he should amass a huge fortune in a short time.

If a ruler or governor (*vâli ve hâkim*) is not able to expand his capital, to increase his income or to obtain necessary supplies through engaging in commerce and agriculture, he is afflicted by two kinds of evil and will be damned in this world and in the next. One of these evils is that he will be forced to violate the people's property and seize their money and goods; thus he will become an oppressor. The second evil is that he will not be able to keep the money that he wrongfully seized from the people; he will spend it on necessities like food and clothing and other supplies; this money in the end will fall into the hands of perfidious speculators and usurers while he will fall into shame and ignominy. He will, in effect, have gained for speculators and usurers; he himself will be burdened with the consequences of these evil deeds. Thus, all such a ruler (*hâkim*) is able to achieve is the destruction of the country and the dispersal of its people.

When introducing this quotation Naimâ says, « The following remarks are derived from ancient philosophers (*kudemâ-i hükemâ*); some wise men are reported to have attributed them to Derviş Paşa ». Let me give the original of this curious introductory statement: « *Bu naklideceğimiz kelâm kudemâ-ı hükemâdan menkûldür; bazı ukalâ-ı avâm Derviş Paşa'dan naklitmişler* ». The statement indicates that Naimâ was aware that these views were not original. Does he also imply that he does not think it was Derviş Mehmed Paşa who studied the *kudemâ-ı hükemâ* and paraphrased them? In view of the fact that, as we shall see below, the passage attributed to Derviş Paşa follows earlier works almost verbatim, was it taken from a work

that the *paşa* wrote? This is highly unlikely — we certainly would have heard of such a work if it existed; none of the biographical notices indicate that the *paşa* had a taste for reading let alone authorship. What seems more likely is that a scholarly habitué of Derviş Mehmed Paşa's *meclis* (salon) detected a certain similarity between what the *paşa* used to say and certain Islamic classics, and when this hypothetical person decided to record the *paşa*'s views for posterity, he chose to couch them in phrases, paragraphs even, taken from earlier works. The contents of the passage, then, are not original; neither do I think the language represents Derviş Mehmed Paşa's speech. Nevertheless, for all practical purposes the passage does represent what contemporary Ottomans took to be the *paşa*'s ideas, so I shall continue to refer to him as the « author » of the passage. Incidentally, « *kudemâ-ı hükemâ* » is an expression used to refer to the Greek classics by classical Islamic authors; in the Ottoman context it seems to have included the Islamic writers themselves.

On closer study this passage appears to be based on the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldûn. Nevertheless Derviş Mehmed Paşa diverges from Ibn Khaldûn in some important respects; the changes he introduces in the text, which must be deliberate, seem to me to be what is really significant. First let us look at the classification of the means of gaining wealth. Ibn Khaldûn quotes earlier authorities to the effect that « a living is made by (exercising) political power (*imârah*), through commerce, agriculture, or the crafts »¹⁹. But Ibn Khaldûn goes on to say that he at least does not consider the exercise of political power to be a *natural* means of making a living and devotes the rest of this particular passage to a discussion of the other three means. It is therefore significant that Derviş Mehmed Paşa should keep « *emâret* » but exclude the *crafts* from his classification. His view that the craftsmen « keep of the produce of their crafts barely enough to subsist on » should probably be taken as an exaggeration to mean that artisans cannot accumulate large capital. Certainly Professor Inalcık's research

¹⁹ Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah*, Franz Rosenthal, trans. (London 1958) II : 316. Although Ibn Khaldûn specifies al-Harîrî among his sources Rosenthal notes that he has not been able to find the passage in the works of al-Harîrî. For Ottoman interest in Ibn Khaldûn see Z. F. Fındıkoğlu, « Türkiye'de Ibn Khaldunizm », *Mélanges Fuat Köprülü* (Istanbul 1953), 153-64. Fındıkoğlu was not aware of this particular passage in Naimâ attributed to Derviş Mehmed Paşa, but as it will become apparent the passage is much more than just another example of Ottoman Ibn Khaldûniana.

on capital accumulation in the Ottoman Empire arrives at a similar conclusion²⁰.

Now for the question of *emâret* (or *imârah* in Arabic) and its role in gaining wealth. In both Ibn Khaldûn's and Derviş Mehmed Paşa's views there seems to be a serious confusion. First let us look at Ibn Khaldûn's views on the subject. Under the heading « The various ways, means, and methods of making a living » he says, « Sustenance and profit may be obtained through having the power to take them away from others and to appropriate them according to a generally recognized norm. This is called imposts and taxation ». (II : 351). Here he is obviously talking about the authority of the state, and, as we have seen, he does not consider it a natural means of livelihood. Yet in a later passage, which obviously is the source of part of Derviş Mehmed Paşa's ideas, under the heading « Ranks [*cah*, the same word Derviş Mehmed Paşa uses] are useful in securing property, » he says

We find that the person of rank who is highly esteemed is in every material aspect more fortunate and wealthier than a person who has no rank. The reason for this is that the person of rank is served by the labor (of others). They try to approach him with their labor, since they want to be close to (him) and are in need of (the protection) his rank affords. People help him with their labor in all his needs, whether these are necessities, conveniences, or luxuries. The value realized from all such labor becomes part of his profit. For tasks that usually require giving some compensation (to the persons who perform them), he always employs people without giving them anything in return. He realizes a very high value from their labor. It is the difference between the value he realizes from the (free) labor (products) and the prices he must pay for things he needs. He thus makes a very great (profit). A person of rank receives much (free) labor which makes him rich in a very short time. With the passing of days, his fortune and wealth increases.

²⁰ Halil İnalcık, « Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire », *The Journal of Economic History* XXIX/1 (March 1969), 97-140. In his well-known work on ethics, the sixteenth century Ottoman writer Kınalızâde Ali states that while some earlier authorities mention only commerce, crafts and agriculture among ways of gaining wealth, some others also add *emâret* (*Ahlâk-i Alâî*, Bulak 1248, Book II : 7-8). Thus Ali is much closer to Ibn Khaldûn than he is to Derviş Mehmed Paşa.

and then he adds, « It is in this sense that the possession of political power (*imârah*) is one of the ways of making a living ». (II : 326-7).

It seems that Ibn Khaldûn contradicts himself, first rejecting *imârah* as a means of livelihood in the sense of the state collecting taxes, then accepting it in the sense of a person with political power using it to gain economic benefits. (It may be that Ibn Khaldûn rejects it as a *theoretical* means of gaining wealth but recognizes it as a fact of life.) The second point is that there seems to be a confusion between *imârah*/political authority and *câh*/rank or *sâhib-i câh*, a person who has *some* political power. Perhaps there is no confusion here at all : perhaps by both terms Ibn Khaldûn refers to the ruler and the state, as one. But surely there is a confusion in Derviş Mehmed Paşa's usage of the two terms, or at least a deliberate rejection of *emâret* as the authority of the state to collect taxes. In Derviş Mehmed Paşa's words it is not clear how *emâret* brings wealth other than in conjunction with other economic activities. His man of power uses his power to further his agricultural and trade interests, as in Ibn Khaldûn's second case; but the exercise of power alone, as in Ibn Khaldûn's first case, is not a source of income. His man of power is not the ruler collecting taxes but an official using his power²¹.

It may be that for Derviş Mehmed Paşa and other Ottomans it was unnecessary to make the distinction between the sultan and the state on one hand, and the officials of the state, its representatives, on the other. Certainly there are strong indications that the modern distinction between the state and its officials — not to mention the distinction between the state and the ruler — was a very blurred one in the Ottoman world. But in this particular case I think the distinction needs to be made; considering Derviş Mehmed Paşa's trade activities, we note that the state was deprived of customs duties it would have collected if that trade had been carried out by merchants rather than the agents of the *paşa*.

But let us return to an examination of the differences between Ibn Khaldûn and Derviş Mehmed Paşa. We have seen that the *paşa* thinks a person holding power should undertake economic activities so he will not be a burden on the people. This goes directly against what Ibn Khaldûn writes (II : 93-6. The section bears the heading,

²¹ Kınalızâde Ali accepts *emâret* as a means of gaining wealth in yet a *third* sense, because it involves receiving remuneration (*vazâif ve 'ulûfât*) from the state (II : 8)!

« Commercial activity on the part of the ruler is harmful to his subjects and ruinous to the tax revenue »). According to Ibn Khaldûn, in the last stage of the decadence of a society the ruler, to augment his revenues, may directly engage in commerce and agriculture. But in fact this is harmful to the economy as a whole in that the ruler is in unfair competition with the people, with the result that the earnings of the people decrease and therefore the tax revenues of the state decrease. The small profit the ruler realizes is negligible compared to the tax loss. Even if his activities are profitable, he would, for example, be deprived of customs duties. It appears Derviş Mehmed Paşa — or whoever it was that formulated his ideas — did not read his Ibn Khaldûn too carefully, or ignored what he did not like. In any case, Ibn Khaldûn goes on to remind his readers that the Persians made sure that their kings did not own farms or engage in trade. He concludes this section by saying that state income can only be increased through just treatment of subjects, which increases tax yield.

This last point is surely the cornerstone of classical Ottoman thought on statecraft as well. Other models for Ottoman social and political ideas, writers like Nasîr ad-dîn Tûsî certainly make the same point²². Tûsî further states, and Ottomans generally agree, that justice demands that members of the four classes of society should remain in their proper place²³. These are Tûsî's words on the duties of the ruler (p. 230):

The emperor is obliged to consider the state of his subjects, and devote himself to maintaining the laws of justice, for in justice lies the order of the realm. The first condition for justice is that he should keep the different classes of mankind correspondent

²² Nasîr ad-dîn Tûsî, *The Nasirean Ethics*, G. M. Wickens, trans. (London 1964), especially pp. 158, 217, 230.

²³ See *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*, III: 8: « Bu tavâfîfin ba'zı âhîrin 'amelin eylese yine müeddâ-i fesaddır, meselâ ümerâ ve sipahiler ticaret ve hırâfete iştigâl eyleseler » (If some of these [four] groups attempt to do the work of another, if, for instance, commanders and caval-rymen take up trade or crafts, this leads to disorder). For a seventeenth-century Ottoman statement on state and society by Kâtip Çelebi, a follower of Ibn Khaldûn and contemporary of Derviş Mehmed Paşa, see *Düstûr el-amel li-islâh el-halel* (Istanbul 1280); for modern analyses of Ottoman political views see Halil İnalçık, « Osmanlı Padişahı », *Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* XIII/4 (1958), 68-79, especially 74-7; Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600* (London 1973), 65-70; Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman, Oklahoma 1963), 36-64.

with each other, for just as equable mixtures result from correspondence of the four elements, so equable combinations are formed from the correspondence of the four classes.

Clearly, then, in Derviş Mehmed Paşa's words and deeds we see a serious departure from medieval Islamic and classical Ottoman political theory. Naîmâ, too, is well aware of this departure but defends the *paşa* vigorously. Some books on ethics, he says, state that kings, ministers, and officials should not engage in commerce and agriculture. This, however, is only when they monopolize economic activities to the exclusion of the people. Then it can be considered unjust and even sheer tyranny; but to supply one's own needs and protect oneself from the deceit and trickery of hoarders is surely not what is meant in these books²⁴! It is a good try on Naîmâ's part, but he wants to have his cake and eat it too. It is clear that Derviş Mehmed Paşa's views cannot be reconciled with the earlier classics.

* * *

This brings me to the last portion of my discussion, namely, why there should be this significant departure from earlier theories. What were the conditions that turned an Ottoman *vezîr* into an entrepreneur at the risk of upsetting the theoretical balance of society? Why did Derviş Mehmed Paşa think that the only alternative to his activities was oppression of and exactions from the people? And was he justified in thinking so?

I suppose most Ottoman historians would agree with Derviş Mehmed Paşa, looking at the realities of seventeenth-century Ottoman society. The empire underwent a major crisis, a time of troubles, at the turn of the sixteenth into the seventeenth century. Ottoman historians generally agree that the crisis marked the end of the classical period of Ottoman history, with new institutions emerging or at least the classical institutions undergoing serious transformations.

It is not necessary here to go into a discussion of this period of crisis; it has been well described by historians like İnalçık and Akdağ;

²⁴ To be fair to Derviş Mehmed Paşa and to Naîmâ I should add that Ibn Khaldûn, too, has misgivings about the honesty of merchants; he believes one needs either a forceful personality or « protection of rank » not to be cheated in business (II: 342-3). But could not a dishonest merchant also secure the protection of a corrupt official?

most recently the consensus has been summarized by Barkan²⁵. What is not so well known is how this crisis and transformation eventually led to new situations that emerge fully in the eighteenth century. Seventeenth-century Ottoman history has been studied very little; we need to know more about this intermediate period before we can fully understand the later institutions.

We should, however, look at some aspects of this « time of troubles » to be able to place Derviş Mehmed Paşa in the context of his time. The basic feature of the crisis is that the empire was hit by severe inflation, coming east from Spain and the western Mediterranean at exactly the same time that the Ottoman army had to be reorganized to adjust itself to new conditions of warfare in central Europe. This reorganization required a larger standing army and resulted in the downgrading of the « feudal » *timar* cavalry. As the standing army was paid in cash and required other direct expenditures, the burden on the central treasury, at exactly the time of the inflation, grew immensely. To be able to provide for the much larger standing army the state had to resort to emphasizing taxes paid in cash, regularizing the *avâriz* taxes, which until then were collected as extraordinary taxes in times of sudden shortages. Thus the solution resorted to by the state was to increase the tax burden on the subjects of the empire.

When we consider the position of an individual Ottoman *vezir* or *paşa* we discover a similar situation. There were pressures on Ottoman officials to maintain larger households and employ thousands of troops while at the same time their traditional incomes dwindled. In the seventeenth century there were too many *paşas* competing for the same number of posts and therefore many of them had to spend more and more time between appointments. But a *paşa* had to maintain a large household even when he was out of office, for appointments went to those who had a « *mükemmel kapı* » — « a well-fitted out household ». Furthermore, while in former times officials were able to gain much more than their official revenue provided through successful campaigns and raids into enemy territory, booty did not come so easily after the end of the sixteenth century. In the old days an

²⁵ Mustafa Akdağ, *Celdli İsyanları* (Ankara 1963); Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 41-52; Halil İnalcık, « Adaletnameler », *Belgeler* II/3-4 (1965), 49-145; Ömer Lütfi Barkan, « The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East », *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6/1 (January 1975), 3-28.

Ottoman *vezir* did not know how to spend all his income. Lütü Paşa, a mid-sixteenth century grand *vezir*, said that of his official and private annual income of two million *akçes*, he spent one half, gave away a quarter as largesse and alms, and ended with half a million *akçes* unspent²⁶. Peçuyî, a seventeenth-century historian who was a native of Hungary and therefore was well acquainted with frontier conditions, reports that in the sixteenth century the income of a frontier *paşa* or *bey* far exceeded that of a *vezir*. In our day, he says, all the *bey*s and *paşas* are impoverished²⁷.

The state was aware of this situation and tried to supplement the *paşas*' incomes. In the 1630's, for example, we see that more and more *beylerbeyis* were given the incomes of *sancaks* (districts) as additions (*zamîme*) to their regular revenues. Also more and more members of the households of *paşas* were given government positions and fiefs while still in the service of their masters.

But this was not sufficient. To be able to feed, clothe, and arm the thousands and tens of thousands of troops they had to maintain on their own, the *paşas* and *vezirs* too resorted to extortions from the people, to levying their own extra-legal taxes. Their exactions had become such a fact of life in the seventeenth century that, in the words of a modern scholar, « tax collection and banditry collapse into the same undifferentiated activity of living off the land, so that whether or not a man is a rebel comes to depend less on what he does than on the more or less fortuitous fact that he has or has not an official authorization for his maraudings »²⁸.

One story from Naîmâ illustrates this point very well. In the early 1630's a certain İlyas Paşa was considered a rebel against the state and was accused of oppressing the people. A government force under the command of Küçük Ahmed Paşa captured him and brought him to the sultan, Murad IV. Murad immediately ordered him executed, then turned to Küçük Ahmed Paşa, the commander of the government troops. « There have been complaints about you, too », he said, « I hear you have exacted illegal monies from the people on your way to battle ». Küçük Ahmed Paşa, terrified that he was going to lose his head too, defended himself by saying that he had spent the money

²⁶ Quoted in Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netâic ül-Vukuât* (İstanbul 1327), I : 117.

²⁷ İbrahim Peçuyî, *Tarih-i Peçuyî* (İstanbul 1281-3), I : 8ff.

²⁸ M. A. Cook, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia* (London 1972), 40.

he raised on employing more troops to fight the rebel İlyas Paşa, that it was in the sultan's service that he had resorted to extortions. Murad then gave a long lecture on the virtues of justice and the need to treat subjects well, and, in the end, bestowed a robe of honor on Küçük Ahmed Paşa and appointed him to a higher office ²⁹.

This, then, is the background against which Derviş Mehmed Paşa's views and deeds should be studied. It was this new situation in the seventeenth century that justified the *paşa's* reformulation of Ibn Khaldûn, and Naîmâ's reinterpretation of the classics in his defense. But it is interesting that in the face of new conditions neither went beyond reformulation or reinterpretation; being more pragmatically inclined, they did not attempt to construct a new socio-political theory. It is also interesting to note that even when an Ottoman intellectual like Naîmâ deviated so much from classical views he felt constrained to deny that he was saying anything new or different, that he was reformulating or reinterpreting, as if because he kept the terminology and the phraseology the ideas were necessarily the same. Was he just paying lip service to old masters, or did the traditions weigh so heavily on him that he could not even perceive the significance of the critical changes he *did* introduce in old analyses?

As for the success of Derviş Mehmed Paşa's economic activities, although they can be seen as foreshadowing the career of Mehmed/Muhammed Ali Paşa of Egypt — two centuries later and in a very different context, to be sure — he does not seem to have had any followers. Naîmâ says that Murtazâ Paşa, who was governor of Bağdad shortly after Derviş Paşa, tried to imitate him but failed because « by nature he inclined towards oppression and tyranny ». (VI : 26). It was too easy for most Ottoman *vezirs* to use their political power fully and directly in the acquisition of wealth rather than to become more enterprising in their economic activities.

İ.M.K.

²⁹ Naîmâ, III : 134-42.

Jacob M. LANDAU

AN ARAB ANTI-TURK HANDBILL, 1881 *

An interesting, apparently as yet unexamined, handbill sheds new light on the early history of Arab nationalism in Syria. Still in manuscript, this Arabic handbill ¹ was forwarded in April 1881, to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs by A. Dobignie, *Chancelier* of the French Consulate in Alexandria ². It was also known to, and remarked upon by, other consular officials. Some background knowledge is available on the handbill, and more information can be gleaned from an examination of its contents.

The anonymous handbill, inciting the inhabitants of Syria against Ottoman rule, was printed in a fairly large number of copies and widely distributed. Dobignie himself sent five copies to Paris; he reported that most Consuls in Alexandria had received it. This could have been an attempt to recruit their support. In addition, one learns of copies reaching other Arabic-speaking lands : A. Grévy forwarded a French translation of the handbill from Algeria ³ and Vice-Consul L. Vission in Khartum sent a further copy of the Arabic original ⁴. This same handbill also appears to have reached Baghdad, where the British Consul-General C. Plowden remarked on it ⁵. Professor Zeine,

* The following is the text of a lecture given at the Eighth Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies, held at Aix-en-Provence, on September 13, 1976.

¹ See below, App. 1 for the Arabic version, and App. 2 for my English translation of it.

² The original is enclosed in the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs (further : AE), Corr. Pol. des Consuls de France, Egypte, vol. 2, fol. 107-108, A. Dobignie's No. 24 to Barthelémy St. Hilaire, dated Alexandria, April 23, 1881.

³ See annotation on Dobignie's report, *ibid.*, fol. 107.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 493-495, enclosed in L. Vission's despatch No. 4, to the French Foreign Minister, dated Khartum, June 28, 1881.

⁵ Public Record Office, Foreign Office 195/1370, Turkey (Baghdad) 1881, vol. I, No. 21, dated May 20, 1881 — mentioned by Z. N. Zeine, *The emergence of Arab nation-*